CARCERAL ACOUSTEMOLOGIES:
SONIC ENACTMENTS OF SPACE AND POWER IN PRISONS

by

Katie Hemsworth

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Abstract

[Author’s note: Please consider listening to the audio version of this abstract, which features my voice fed through impulse response (IRs) recordings collected by Dr. Matt Rogalsky at Kingston Penitentiary in 2013 (See Appendix A for photograph guide). As I discuss in Chapters Four and Six, impulse responses are used to closely represent the acoustic spatiality of a given environment, and thus my oral reading of the abstract is intended to sound like it would if I were speaking while moving through different locations inside the prison. The audio is experimental; it is meant to offer a more enriching sonic experience to accompany this written text, and to highlight some of the spatial arguments made throughout. I suggest listening with headphones, if available, to provide a more “inward” listening experience and to allow for greater detection of acoustical differences as my voice moves from one part of the prison to the next.]

Audio clip for abstract (click here)

Cultural geographers have long been interested in “the everyday,” but rarely is everyday life acknowledged in the context of incarceration. In Canada, the recent adoption of “tough-on-crime” policies has meant that increasing numbers of individuals spend their daily lives behind bars. In this dissertation, I ask: what do prisons sound like, and what is the role of sound in the way prisons are managed, conceptualised, and embodied? The recent flourishing of scholarship on carceral geographies has made crucial inroads in the study of the cultural politics and spatialities of incarceration, yet the notion of incarceration as a multi-sensory, embodied experience remains under-researched.

Drawing on Feld’s notion of acoustemologies, or auditory knowledges, I argue that one way to better understand the production of carceral space is through engagement with sonic techniques, histories, and materialities of prisons. Thinking about sound as a tangible and intangible force, I show how different conceptualisations of sound – including silence, noise, and music – (re)shape power relations in Canada’s prisons. In the midst of overcrowding and segregation in prisons, Canada’s political climate reverberates through its carceral soundscapes, leaving lasting soundprints on incarcerated bodies. Alongside these authoritative and often
oppressive uses of sound, I articulate how sonic tactics have also been employed to reclaim dignity and resist pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958).

To address how the everyday is negotiated sonically in prisons, I draw on situated narratives of individuals who have visited, worked, and lived inside prisons, recognising the experiences of people whose voices are often silenced in prison literature. This research employed a wide range of methods, including interviewing, blog analyses, archival research, and auditory techniques to investigate multi-sensory accounts of carceral life. Bearing in mind the political nature of access to Canadian prison environments, I urge researchers to explore the potential for sonic methods to navigate these challenges, to produce geographical and (trans)carceral knowledge, and to imagine alternatives to current practices of incarceration. I conclude with a call to consider more critically the role of listening in future research, as an instrumental route to empathy and reconciliation.
Acknowledgements

There are many voices that have shaped this dissertation, and many others yet to be heard. I would first like to acknowledge the crucial role of my participants, each of whom shared personal experiences that contributed to the shaping of this project. I’ll keep listening.

I extend sincere gratitude to the array of intelligent minds that comprise my doctoral committee, including Beverley Mullings, John Holmes, Martin Hand, Alice Hovorka, and George Lovell. A special thank you goes to my external examiner, Karen Morin, for arranging to attend my defense and sharing comments that will inform my future publications on this topic.

I could not have done this degree without the encouragement of two people I have come to cherish deeply: my co-supervisors, Laura Cameron and Joyce Davidson. Thank you, Laura, for asking profoundly intelligent questions while proving that critical geographers can dream and hope (and sing and dance!). Joyce: your strength, brilliance, and sharp wit shine through all aspects of your life; thank you for demonstrating that listening as an enactment of empathy is entirely achievable. I’d also like to thank both of your families, with a special nod to my small-but-mighty pal, E.R., for helping me step into wonderfully imaginative worlds away from theory.

Thanks to John Bond for tech support and friendship over the years. I appreciate Joan Knox, Sharon Mohammed, Kathy Hoover, and Sheila MacDonald for the help and encouraging words. I acknowledge the help of archival experts, including Cameron Willis and Heather Home.

I am grateful to many other academics who have guided me in thinking about sound, including David Butz, Matt Rogalsky, and Michael Gallagher. All three have contributed to my sonic imagination. Many thanks indeed to Hayden Lorimer, for offering feedback on a version of Chapter Four and for balancing heavy discussions with a fantastic sense of humour.
My PhD has been enriched by a rotating cast of characters in the Queen’s Geography graduate program. I thank you all for contributing to my intellectual and social experiences. Thanks especially to Kirsten, Kirby, Sinead, Kanina, Heather, Sean, Nat, Rudy, Alex and Giselle for being there every step of the way. Thanks in particular to my officemates, Christine and Rachel, for extending friendship and putting up with “The Rocketship” in its final, noisy stages.

I wish to send a special note of gratitude to the Ventresca family in St. Catharines and Welland. Thank you for your patience while Matt and I worked on our doctorates at the same time, and for sending us home with extra pieces of lasagna to fuel those long weeks of writing.

My family has been beside me throughout this entire process. Heartfelt thanks go to my brother Paul, whose cards and words of support kept me going when I needed it most, and to my twin sister, Callie, for knowing what I always needed to hear. If we have to be in two places at once, I’m glad you’re the person representing me in Thunder Bay. My parents, Susan and Rob, have extended unending love and guidance. Thank you both for showing me the importance of an education while reminding me to never hold my position in academia over anyone else’s forms of knowledge. I wouldn’t be here without your kindness, your capacity to listen, and your humour, all of which got me through the challenges and uncertainties of graduate school.

I am so appreciative of my partner for going through this process with me and taking time out of his own PhD to support me to the very end. Thank you, Matt, for simply understanding. Most of all, thank you for filling our home with the music that provided the soundtrack to our lives in Kingston. Wherever we end up next, I’m grateful you’ll be there.

During the course of this project, the world has lost some beautiful souls. I dedicate this dissertation to the memories of artist-activist, Peter Collins, and the many other lives lost behind bars, as well as my music teacher, Jim Jack, and my beloved grandmother, Marjorie Miller.
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List of Abbreviations

CSC – Correctional Service of Canada
KP – Kingston Penitentiary
P4W – Prison for Women
CI – Correctional Investigator
CO – Correctional Officer
RJ – Restorative Justice
UCCO – Union of Canadian Correctional Officers
Chapter 1

Introduction: Making Space for Sound

Introduction

“I shot a man in Reno / Just to watch him die.” So sings Johnny Cash in arguably the most famous line of “Folsom Prison Blues” (1958), the live version of which features the crowd of inmates responding in an outburst of cheers and applause (At Folsom Prison, Johnston, 1968).

It might seem clichéd to begin a dissertation about sound and music in prisons with a nod to “Folsom Prison Blues” – the song people immediately mention when they learn about my research topic. Yet its value not only as an historical splice of popular culture, but also a sonic representation of incarceration, reveals much about prison soundscapes, auditory cultures, and the production of carceral subjects and space. It endures as piece of music in a genre typically associated with prisons (blues rock), featuring an instrument commonly accepted in prisons (guitar), with lyrics about prison. The song evokes a nostalgic moment in the history of incarceration when live music and rehabilitation seemed more closely entwined.

What is most curious about the song, however, is its sonic portrayal of prison subjects, recorded live – so we are told – when Cash performed the song in concert at Folsom Prison in 1968. Although the performance was indeed recorded, is not widely known that the boisterous hollers responding to the murderous line were added by producer Bob Johnston during the post-production stages (Streissguth, 2005). As Michael Streissguth (2005) reports, inmates were in...
fact very careful to remain quiet upon hearing the line, likely aware that a rowdy reaction would lead to punishment by the guards watching over the room. The spliced additions, which included not only inmate reactions but also disruptive announcements over the loudspeaker, contribute to the album’s sense of hyper-reality, actively shaping carceral imaginations about what we expect prisons and their confined residents to sound like. Popular culture is powerful in shaping sonic and cultural imaginations of prisons, but it is worth questioning if these are sufficient or socially just.

Bearing this in mind, I ask: what do prisons sound like, and why? This is a key question that drives the research presented in this dissertation, which takes place “far from Folsom Prison,” as the song goes, in Kingston, Canada. Prisons and punitive practice in Canada have deep histories, yet these histories are full of silences, omissions, and erasures of particular spatial knowledges of incarceration, or what Dominique Moran (2012) theorises as “carceral space.” First-hand accounts and popular culture representations of prison experience are saturated with references to sound and the emotional reactions to carceral soundworlds (see Darabont, 1994; Kohan, 2014), but sonic experience and ways of knowing – what Stephen Feld (1996) calls “acoustemologies” – remains a haunting silence in prison scholarship. One participant in my research stated, “Prisons look bad, but they sound worse.” If Canadian prisons today are “overwhelmingly noisy” and “hard on the ears,” to quote my research participants (see Chapter Five), the silencing of such complex soundworlds from the broader public should be of greater concern.

As a geographer, I am particularly interested in the material and discursive role of sound in the production of carceral space, but also the ways in which conceptualisations of space and

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3 See Chapter Three for an in-depth discussion of the research design.
power affect prison soundscapes and their accompanying embodiment. In other words, sound is both a cultural reflection and active producer of space. Yet sonic ways of knowing remain undervalued as epistemological approaches to understanding the world. Indeed, despite the fact that our world is literally vibrating with sound, academic language tends to privilege a visual conceptualisation of knowledge, betraying our multi-sensory environments. To know something is to “see”, to “show”, to “have perspective”, and to “gain insight.” For centuries, geographers have placed trust in visual representations of space: maps, grids, blueprints, images, and landscapes. Prisons are “out of sight, out of mind,” but what of their aural architecture? How might we understand “the carceral” (Moran, 2014) differently if we pay closer attention to soundscape and acoustic space?

In an institution where mobility is extremely limited, restrictions are made on personal technologies and media players, and where privacy is discouraged through building design, inmates are literally “captive audiences” (Jewkes, 2012). In other words, incarcerated populations have little choice over what they hear and very few means of controlling what is heard, volume levels, and the spaces through which undesirable sounds may enter. Building on this theme of control, as an exercise of power, I am particularly compelled by the capacities for sound to enact power as a multi-layered force. Sound vibrations physically act on our bodies and other material objects, while intersecting with the sound waves we also produce and project from our physical bodies. Sonic force also extends beyond the physical and into the cultural, social, and political. As Michael Bull (2007: 21) writes, “sound colonises the listener but is used to actively recreate and configure the spaces of experience. Through the power of sound, the world becomes intimate, known and possessed” (see also DeNora, 2015). David Hendy (2013: xvi) unpacks this power to include the profound capacity of sound to influence us and other beings in
unconscious ways; the ability of powerful people and institutions to shape the sonic environment or listening habits of others, rendering other soundscapes “out of place” (see also Bailey, 1996; Connell and Gibson, 2003; Matless, 2005); and, I would add, the powerful capacity of our bodies to hear and be heard. My use of acoustemology as a conceptual foundation for this research (see Chapter Two) calls for greater attention to the ways in which space, knowledge, and power are interconnected in the complex soundworlds of incarceration.

**Overarching research aims and questions**

My research is driven by four overarching aims. First, it works to theorise how sound and listening might contribute to conceptualisations of space, time, and place, and what this might mean for ways of being and knowing in prisons. Secondly, thinking about sound as a multi-faceted force, it seeks to understand how sound and sonic techniques reproduce and agitate particular power relations in carceral systems. Thirdly, it explores the ways aural cultures (including those mediated by music) in prisons emerge, articulate space, and produce particular kinds of subjects. Finally, it imagines and demonstrates the potential of sonic methods to open up new ways of knowing carceral experience.

My research questions, designed and transformed in dialogue with the above aims, are situated within the context of Canadian prisons but are relevant to other geographical contexts. The questions are ongoing and answers are always partial, but together they contribute a more robust analysis of sound in prisons than has been offered in geographical scholarship to date. Spanning broader issues of spatiality, temporality, power, culture and embodiment, and future soundscapes, my research questions are as follows:
1. Spatiality and temporality

*How does sound (re)constitute space and time in prisons?*

- How does sound enhance and/or mitigate different kinds of isolation in prisons?
- What is the role of sound and sonic technologies in “doing time” and “doing space”?
- What does an exploration of the carceral contribute to conceptualisations of acoustic space?
- What makes prisons unique acoustic spaces? What can prison soundscapes add to existing conceptions of acoustic space?

2. Power

*What is the role of sound in the circulation of power in prisons?*

- What are the histories of sonic mechanisms of power in Canadian prisons?
- How have sound and sonic technologies been used to strengthen dominant techniques of power in prisons?
- How have sound and sonic technologies been used to resist dominant techniques of power in prisons?

3. Culture, emotion, and embodiment

*What can a greater attentiveness to sound tell us about the cultures of prisons?*

- How are auditory cultures created or shaped by incarceration?
- How do the specific cultures of prisons shape soundscape?
- How is sound a modality of emotion in prison environments?
- How does music mediate embodied experiences of carceral space?

4. Questions about the future

*What futures are possible for carceral soundscapes?*

- How should different prison stakeholders engage with carceral soundscapes in the future?
- What role might sound and sonic arts (including music) play in addressing current and future crises of incarceration?

Some of these questions are addressed more explicitly in one chapter, such as those specific to the histories of sonic mechanisms of power (see Chapter Four). Most, however, are addressed in different ways across multiple chapters; questions about techniques of power, for instance, are addressed by all three substantive chapters (Four through Six), but along different trajectories. I
outline the conceptual and methodological frameworks for these questions in Chapters Two and Three, but in order to understand the context in which they are asked, I must first discuss the current state of incarceration in Canada.

**Why prisons, why now? Political urgency during Canada’s correctional crisis**

At the time of this research, which was conceptualised in 2011 and begun in 2012, the state of prisons rested heavily in the hands of a Conservative government led by Stephen Harper, along with his colleagues, Vic Toews (Minister of Safety) and Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism). Throughout the last nine years of Conservative leadership, Canada’s incarceration laws and operations have shifted toward those of the United States and reflect neoliberal agendas in support of the prison industrial complex. Mandatory minimum sentencing, double-bunking, administrative segregation, back-door initiatives for privatisation, and stricter parole regulations have all become part of the political pillars that uphold the Harper

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4 Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been leader of the Conservative Party of Canada since 2006, preceded by over ten years of Liberal leadership. This is not to suggest that the prison industrial complex was not perpetuated by the Liberal party, but rather to mark a noticeable shift in broader policies that have led to new kinds and lengths of sentences.

5 It is important to note that Canada still continues to follow the former US model for incarceration, despite the fact that the US government has begun to shift away from practices like double bunking which have since been recognised as a violation of human rights.

6 My use of the term neoliberal refers to a set of political discourses, policies, and agendas that privilege individual and corporate independence through privatisation, capitalism via unregulated, money-mediated markets and de-centred processes of globalisation (Peck and Tickell, 2002). The effects of neoliberal policies span different scales (see Herod and Aguiar, 2006) and are often at the detriment of less privileged members of societies (Harvey, 2005). I acknowledge that the term is far more complex and variable (O’Malley, 2014) than my use of it here; an analysis of the multi-layered connections between neoliberalism and the prison industrial complex is beyond the scope of this research. Loïc Wacquant (2011: 208) offers a more extensive account of the dialogue between prisons, neoliberalism, and political economy, using the term *prisonfare* to “designate the policy stream – encompassing categories, programs, and discourses – that confronts urban ills by rolling out the police, the courts, jails and prisons, and their extensions” (see also Wacquant, 2009b; Wilson Gilmore, 2007; O’Malley, 2014; Peck and Theodore, 2009).
Government’s “tough-on-crime” agenda (Bill C-10, 2011; Conservative Party of Canada, 2011; Mallea, 2010).

In 2010, the Harper Government announced the closure of six federally-funded prison farms, based on the assertion that agricultural skills were no longer valuable for inmates and the broader communities into which they would eventually be released (Reeve, 2013). The closure of the farms was met with fierce opposition, including a “Save Our Prison Farms” campaign⁷ and several peaceful protests in Kingston, most of which made use of sound and music as part of their demonstrations. At a Kingston town-hall meeting (“The Cost of Silence?”, 2014), Bob Lovelace, an indigenous activist, Queen’s Indigenous Studies professor, and former political prisoner, drew a poignant (Foucauldian) connection to the elimination of the prison farms, stating, “Now, instead of training inmates to become farmers, we’re training them to be inmates.” Indeed, concerns about the lack of programs to replace the prison farms, and the resulting idle time of inmates, continue today. The prison farm clashes culminated with the arrests of twenty-three protestors for civil disobedience in August 2010 after attempts to block trucks with livestock from leaving the prison turned violent at the hands of the police force.⁸ I raise the prison farm issue here as a key topic that ignited my own interest in Kingston’s prison system, and because the closure of such farms has eliminated numerous agrarian sounds from their carceral soundscapes, a point I address further in Chapter Six.

Shortly after the elimination of the prison farm program, in April 2012, Vic Toews unexpectedly⁹ announced the forthcoming closure of Ontario’s Kingston Penitentiary, the Regional Treatment Centre on the same site, and Leclerc Institution in Laval, Quebec, in a move

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Footnotes:
⁷ www.saveourprisonfarms.ca.
⁸ For a first-hand account of the events leading up to and after the arrests, see Hurley (2010).
⁹ The announcement was made without prior consultation with wardens and staff at both institutions.
that would allegedly save $120 million.\textsuperscript{10} The closure of these institutions, in addition to the broader changes to criminalisation and punishment as well as prison conditions such as double-bunking (Sapers 2011-2012), has been met with widespread opposition in Canada from diverse communities and outspoken criticism by the Correctional Investigator of Canada.\textsuperscript{11} The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers-Syndicats des Agents Correctionnels du Canada-Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (UCCO-SACC-CSN; hereafter referred to as UCCO), for instance led demonstrations outside Kingston Penitentiary to voice concern about the resulting overcrowding and related violence as well as the economic impact of relocation (VandenBrink, 2012; see also UCCO, 2015). According to one of my participants who expressed disappointment with the closure of “a very human place, compared to other institutions,” other Kingston Penitentiary employees were likewise upset with the announced closure, not least because many of them learned about their relocation, termination, or forced early retirement through the media.

Families of inmates who had relocated to be nearer their incarcerated relatives have also been affected by the decision to close the institution, for a number of reasons, one of which being that Kingston Penitentiary was one of the few institutions accessible by public transit. Broader opposition to the closure of one prison, only to overcrowd or open others, is related to concerns of social justice and human rights violations, the need for prison reform or abolition, and points to the broader systemic issues of crumbling social support which lead to unnecessary and costly

\textsuperscript{10} In a Town Hall meeting in Kingston on March 16, 2013, Jason Godin, President of the Canadian Correctional Officers Union, stated that the Conservative government and CSC have yet to demonstrate how this estimation of $120 million was calculated.

\textsuperscript{11} The Correctional Investigator, Howard Sapers, is the ombudsperson for federal corrections. The Office of the Correctional Investigator responds to and investigates grievances from inmates and staff and provides an Annual Report with recommendations for the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). In May 2015, it was announced that the Harper Government would not renew Sapers’s contract (see Tremonti, 2015). The decision has sparked suspicion in light of the Conservatives’ ‘tough-on-crime’ agenda and Sapers’s outspoken criticism of the current state of incarceration. Between 2004-2015, Sapers has advocated for greater access to mental health services, response to the over-representation of Aboriginal populations in Canada’s prisons, and demanded action to address the growing population of other visible minorities, women, and aging prisoners.
practices of criminalisation. In both mainstream and alternative Canadian media, these kinds of decisions by the CSC have been portrayed in a negative light; furthermore, amidst inmate strikes and riots, the attention has led to the enhanced isolation of prisons from public consciousness by restricting access to journalists and researchers (see Chapters Two and Three).

The current climate of correctional institutions and Canadian penal policy injects political urgency into this research. As Table 1.1 shows below, incarceration rates are increasing (Statistics Canada, 2015: 251-006), despite decreases in crime across Canada (Sapers, 2012; Ricciardelli et al., 2014). Hyperincarceration, double-bunking, over-representation of racialised groups, and harsher penal policy through “tough-on-crime” agendas have implications for the way offender populations are managed and perceived. Drawing upon his experience photographing Kingston Penitentiary, Geoffrey James (see James, 2014) adds to the prison vocabulary, stating, “The term that I heard over and over again from the officers was warehousing. Which pretty much sums it up.”\(^\text{12}\) Indeed, intersecting with carceral practice, Canada’s broader political, historical, and cultural contexts actively shape everyday experiences of incarceration, particularly through warehousing and overcrowding, and serve as catalysts for violence within the institutions. Changing penal policy and discourses are not always inherently sonic, but as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, their effects can be heard inside and outside prison walls if we make a more concerted effort to listen.

In the following subsections, I trace four key issues and populations that reflect the current crisis of Canadian prisons: the over-representation of Aboriginal populations, women as

\(^{12}\) This quotation is from an interview with *Prison Photography* (see Brook, 2015). ‘Warehousing’ in this case refers to an emphasis on the storage and confinement of inmates through the reduction of mobility, programs, and activities (Demers, 2014).
the fastest growing sub-population in adult corrections, the mental health crisis in prisons, and the growing sub-population of older inmates.

Table 1.1: Total number of persons in Canadian correctional institutions and under community supervision

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<td><strong>Number of persons</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total actual in-count</td>
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<td>13,760.70</td>
<td>14,265.80</td>
<td>14,470.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incarceration rates per 100,000 adults</td>
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<td>50.85</td>
<td>52.06</td>
<td>52.01</td>
<td>53.63</td>
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<td><strong>Number of persons</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total community supervision count</td>
<td>7,565.80</td>
<td>8,818.80</td>
<td>8,834.60</td>
<td>8,746.40</td>
<td>7,754.30</td>
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Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Table 251-006 (last modified 2015-04-22)

Aboriginal Populations

As of 2014, Canada’s Aboriginal population comprised roughly 3 percent of the nation’s total population. However, Aboriginal people are alarmingly overrepresented in Canada’s correctional institutions, comprising 24 percent of the total provincial incarcerated population and 20 percent of federally incarcerated populations (Statistics Canada, Juristat, 2015). This drastic overrepresentation is not new. According to a Statistics Canada report (Perrault, 2009), the issue was raised in 1989 by the Royal Commission into the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, and by numerous others since then, including the Auditor General of Canada (Auditor General of
Canada, 2002; see also Sapers, 2012, 2013, 2014) and most recently, in the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015a). 13

Figure 1.1: Kingston Penitentiary Aboriginal ground

The Aboriginal ground at Kingston Penitentiary was a site in which the seasonal cycle of ceremonial song, drums, dance, and conversation could be heard. Source: Geoffrey James (2014, used with permission).

Given the continued disproportionate rate at which Aboriginal adults are incarcerated today, the Canadian government has failed to respond to the crisis in a satisfactory way. The overrepresentation of Aboriginal populations in federal and provincial prisons points to systemic racism, marked by continued discrimination, and highlights the ongoing, violent legacy of

13 Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which launched in 2008 and came to the end of its five-year mandate in May-June 2015, was designed in response to the social injustices faced by Aboriginal people, particularly those brought about by dislocation from Aboriginal land and forced placement in residential schools. According to the TRC’s (2015b) website, “the truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing.” For a list of the Calls to Action pertaining to Aboriginal justice and imprisonment, see TRC (2015a: 397-399).
Cultural histories of pain and struggle, including but not limited to “the residential school system, negative experience in the child welfare or adoption system, family histories of substance abuse, poverty and poor living conditions, lack of formal schooling” (Sapers, 2014: 44) all factor into the conviction of crimes by Aboriginal people. However, as Madelaine Jacobs’s (2012) doctoral research warns, to stop at incarceration as an effect of systemic racism would be to ignore the continuation of trauma and racialised violence during, after, and as a result of incarceration. Jacobs explores historical-geographical relationships between indigenous persons and the Canadian state, concluding that incarceration is “a cause of trauma, a tool of assimilation, rather than a more recent effect” (2012: 243). In Chapter Five, I explore the ways in which prison soundscapes contribute to an “acoustic dystopia” (Cusick, 2013: 285) of trauma.

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14 One of the worst assaults – physically, culturally, and spiritually – of white European settlers on Canada’s indigenous populations was the forced dislocation of children into residential schools. Canada’s colonial legacy of “displacement and dispossession” (Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi, 2011: 8) endures long after the dismantling of the residential school system, particularly through the racist perpetuation of extreme poverty, mental illness, substance abuse, and natural resource exploitation on ceded and unceded territory (see also Egan, 2011).
Figure 1.2: Percentage of incarcerated Aboriginal adults by province/territory, 2010/2011

This graph compares the percentage of Aboriginal adults in the total provincial population with the percentage of Aboriginal adults in custody. British Columbia and Nunavut excluded due to unavailability of data.


Women as a rising sub-population

Several of my interview participants had experience working in or visiting Prison for Women, Canada’s first maximum security prison built in 1934. After a long history of controversy, including unethical testing on inmates, staff-on-inmate and inmate-on-inmate abuse, and other “cruel, inhumane, and degrading” treatment (as outlined in Justice Louise Arbour’s report, *Commission of Inquiry into Certain Events at the Prison for Women in Kingston*, 1996), Prison
for Women closed in 2000. The closure of the prison, however, did not signal decreased rates of incarceration for women. According to the most recent Correctional Investigator Report (Sapers, 2014), adult women comprise one of the fastest growing sub-populations in federal prisons. The rise in this population is reflective of a governmental shift toward ‘tough-on-crime’ policies introduced in the last ten years:

Over the last decade, the number of women offenders (incarcerated and in the community) increased by 30%. The growth in the [federally sentenced women] population has been largest within the incarcerated population. Since 2004-05, the number of women in custody has increased by 66.8%.

Of further concern is the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in Canadian prisons. When combined with statistics that show the already disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal men, the likelihood of multiple people from the same community – or even the same household – being incarcerated is much higher. Sapers (2014: 45) outlines the state of incarceration for Aboriginal women as of 2014, and the noticeable change in grievance rates:

More than one in three women inmates are of Aboriginal ancestry. While their relative proportion within the total incarcerated population has remained stable over the past decade, the total number of Aboriginal women inmates has more than doubled since 2004-05. Reflecting this growth, the number of complaints to the Office by women offenders increased by 41.37% (from 336 to 475) over the last five years.

Although useful for identifying overrepresentation, statistics do not offer a comprehensive picture of the complex reasons and political histories that have contributed to such high rates of incarceration, nor do they speak to their broader effects on Aboriginal communities. Mandy

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15 The exterior security wall was demolished in 2008, but the main structure still stands. On Prisoners’ Justice Day in 2015, I attended a women’s healing circle held on the former prison grounds to honour the women who lived and died inside Prison for Women. At this circle, there were numerous calls for greater commemoration of what occurred in the prison, and the lasting effects on inmates after relocation or release. Due to methodological challenges, I have elected to leave the discussion of Prison for Women (and other women’s institutions in Canada) for future research, as the complicated history of women’s incarceration deserves more focused attention than I was able to provide with this specific research project. For a collaborative film project that share’s women’s experiences inside Prison for Women, see Eyes in the Back of Your Head (Mackey, 2003).
Wesley (2012: 1) writes that “the story of how so many Aboriginal women came to be locked up within federal penitentiaries is a story filled with a long history of dislocation and isolation, racism, brutal violence as well as enduring a state of poverty beyond poor.” Citing statistics from Amnesty International (2004), she explains that Aboriginal women are 3.5 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be victims of violence and experience much higher rates of sexual abuse, 75 percent of which occurs before the age of 18 (Wesley, 2012: 6; see Amnesty International, 2004). Kim Pate (2001: 1), executive director of the Elizabeth Fry Society, further explains the context of increasing rates of incarceration for women and girls:

As we see the further erosion of the [sic] Canada’s international reputation as human rights defenders of women, children, especially those most vulnerable because of multiple intersections of marginalisation and discrimination, be it race, sexual orientation, ability – particularly disabling mental health issues – or those escaping violence, we are witnessing the exponential growth of women in prison.

The connections Pate makes to growing mental health concerns points to another layer of Canada’s crisis of incarceration. I address these concerns in the next section, and develop them further in Chapters Four through Six.

Mental Health Issues

The percentage of incarcerated individuals in Canada who are diagnosed with or identify as having mental health and substance abuse issues is on the rise. Research from the John Howard Society (2013; see also Jones, 2009; Service, 2010) recognises that prolonged segregation harms rather than helps most mental health issues, resulting in higher rates of suicide and self-harm (see also Sapers, 2014), yet there continues to be insufficient attention to this carceral crisis. A report

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16 The continued connections between current incarceration of women and systemic violence highlights the intergenerational effects of the residential school system, considered the worst physical, cultural, and spiritual assault on Canada’s indigenous populations.
by University of Toronto’s International Human Rights Program (IHRP, 2012) concludes that women with mental health issues face discrimination in the correctional system, particularly those who identify as Aboriginal: “CSC has not created a risk assessment tool that is appropriate for women, properly distinguishes between needs and risks, and addresses the over-classification of Aboriginal women as maximum-security.” Gendered and racialised layers of mental health thus interact with spatialities of security, and variation can be great even in the same prison. Solitary confinement (termed “administrative segregation” in Canada), for instance, is a particularly extreme space in which individuals are even more isolated than the general population, featuring very little stimulation or communication, and provide almost no face-to-face contact for 22-24 hours per day. As I will demonstrate, sonic expressions of depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety (among others) are commonly heard in solitary units, auditory evidence that insufficient attention and resources exist for populations suffering from mental illness.

Sapers (2015) explains that mental health issues in prisons include those who are incarcerated for reasons related to mental illness, those whose existing mental health challenges are exacerbated by incarceration, and those who developed new struggles with mental health as a result of their conditions of confinement. Mental health is an important topic in the context of research because for every individual – incarcerated or not – mental health shapes perception and interpretation of sensory stimuli, a key part of which is sound. Similarly, sonic environments can have drastic effects on a person’s mental well-being (Wener, 2012). Mental health and emotional experiences are deeply linked, and for particular concerns such as anxiety or post-traumatic stress, carceral environments are known to exacerbate these mental and physical struggles (Sapers, 2014). Although my study does not place mental health at its centre, it contributes to
research on mental health in prisons through an examination of its close connection to the explicitly sonic characteristics of carceral environments that become embodied in emotional and physical ways. The further marginalisation of people with mental illness in prisons is not an appropriate solution for providing effective care and respect for the challenges and often unintended consequences of mental health issues. Placing such individuals like Ashley Smith\footnote{Ashley Smith was a teenaged inmate at Grand Valley Institution for Women, a federal prison in Ontario. She died by self-strangulation while under suicide watch in a segregation cell while correctional officers and supervisors watched at a distance on video cameras. These staff members were charged with negligent homicide, but the charges were later withdrawn. Smith’s death has sparked renewed debate over the use of solitary confinement or “administrative segregation” as a way to manage mental health, when studies show that segregation in most cases is detrimental to a person’s mental well-being (Story and Desson, 2013; Story, 2015; see also Guenther, 2013).} in solitary confinement deepens mental struggle, in large part by reducing the ability to be heard or by fueling the perception that nobody is listening. After all, as David Hendy (2013: 189) writes, “to be out of earshot is to sometimes be out of mind – isolated, neglected, misunderstood.”

**Figure 1.3: Stripped down segregation cell for violent offenders**

This image, photographed and titled by Geoffrey James (2013, used with permission), depicts a segregation cell that has been stripped of most materials for the alleged safety of inmates and staff. The removal of soft materials alters the way sound waves travel, as there is little to absorb them. See Chapter Five for a discussion of the emotional experiences of sound in segregation cells.
Aging populations

Aging prisoners are another subpopulation that is demonstrating steady increases. According to the most recent report of the Correctional Investigator (Sapers, 2014), one in five inmates is 50 years of age or older. Given the demographic effects of the ‘baby boom’ generation, such rates are perhaps not surprising; yet demography is not the only explanation, giving further cause for concern. With the forthcoming introduction of new legislation resulting in lengthier sentences (Bill C-53, 2015), the likelihood of inmates growing old in prisons is increasing. Older prisoners are important to acknowledge in this research because they require a different set of resources and attention, but are often placed in general population, which has been shown to lead to neglect and conflict with other inmates. As I explain in Chapter Six, this is particularly evident in the contestation over music played in prison cells. From another auditory standpoint, aging inmates also struggle with hearing loss (Fazel et al., 2001), some of whom have trouble accessing proper medical care and hearing aids, which has dangerous implications in an environment where hearing could be an important mode of safety and survival.

Key terms

I use a number of key terms throughout this dissertation. In most cases, the terms are flexible, have multiple definitions, and it is important that they are read as such. Some words are used to represent a host of similar, if not synonymous, concepts for organisational purposes as a way to promote consistency and flow. In this section, I break down some of these terms and explain their use throughout the dissertation. In Chapter Two, I delve further into key concepts such as acoustemology, soundscape, and acoustic space.
Correctional facilities: prison or jail?

In Canada, a correctional facility is any institution designed to incarcerate people who have been sentenced or are awaiting trial for a criminal offence under Canada’s *Criminal Code* (2015 [1985]). Typically, adult correctional facilities include prisons and jails. In this dissertation, I use the term “prison” in the broad and popular sense of the word, to encompass any correctional facility in which people are incarcerated for criminal offences. It should be noted, however, that the official definition of a prison in Canada is a federal correctional institution which houses offenders whose sentences span two years or more. The term “jail” refers to a provincial correctional facility for individuals with a sentence of two years less a day. Federal prisons are differentiated by security level: maximum, medium, and minimum. All offenders begin in maximum security prison until their sentences have been finalised, after which they might be moved to another security level. Although one would assume that people who have been sentenced for more violent crimes would be held in maximum security, it is common for offenders to be moved around between different institutions and different security levels. An inmate who was charged a lifetime sentence in the 1970s, for example, might now be in a minimum security institution if they are not seen to pose a serious risk to others in prison, or if they do not require protective custody.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^{18}\) For profiles of the institutions discussed in this dissertation, see Appendix K.
Sound(scape), silence, music, noise

I use the term “sound” as a key term that is more neutral than other conceptualisations of sound (such as noise or music). In this dissertation, sound refers to sound waves that are translated through the ear and other parts of the body by vibration. Although I primarily refer to human perception of sound, a broader appreciation of sound includes sound waves that intersect with other objects, bodies, and species. Although the material properties of sound might be understood as neutral, the meanings we attach to sounds are always culturally, historically, and politically mediated. Upon perception, sound can quickly become localised, temporalised, commodified, romanticised, racialised, gendered, and personified, among other interpretations. This is where we begin to see differentiation in the way sounds are constituted, leading to distinctions between silence, music, and noise.

When I refer to soundscape (Schafer, 1977; Thompson, 2002), I include sounds heard and made that comprise a sonic environment, the technologies that mediate them, the objects that interact with sound waves, and the cultural and historical contexts we bring to listening. A carceral soundscape might consist of any combination of the following materialities: sounds of living beings; sound capturing technologies; inanimate objects that make audible sounds; material objects that interact with sound waves to shape sound; and technologies that mediate the soundscape, including headphones and radios. Such categorisations are not fixed, but help conceptualise the sonic environment more fully; they provide context for emotional responses to, and expressions of, sonic stimuli. I address soundscape more fully in Chapter Two.

I write about silence as one way of conceptualising sound, rather than a statement of its absence or subordination in relation to sound. Sonic vibrations are always in motion, even if they are not detected by human bodies, and thus silence as “empty” sonic space cannot exist.
Furthermore, identifying an environment as silent is often an anthropocentric statement, meaning that there are fewer human-made sounds (e.g., bodies, voices, and machines); depictions of “nature” often include some notion of silence, when in fact the sounds often associated with the natural environment can be layered and plentiful. However, the term remains useful as a way of distinguishing between “thick” and “thin” or “hi-fidelity” and “low-fidelity”\(^{19}\) conceptions of acoustic space. When participants describe certain parts of prison as “eerily silent,” I take this to mean that there are fewer sounds that represent human activity and life. It is also important to note its use as a verb: to silence, which comes equipped with even more political implications not unlike erasure, marginalisation, and oppression. When I write that particular voices have been silenced, I mean both physically, in that they are unable or not permitted to speak, as well as politically, meaning that specific groups of people are systematically oppressed through an inability to have their opinions, experiences, and concerns heard by more dominant groups. With this in mind, I recognise that silence can be used as a form of cultural violence, or as slam poet Jaimie G (2015) puts it in *Dear Canada*, that “silence and violence is too easy of a rhyme.”

Music is an equally loaded term that varies in definition, use, and context. Debates about the definition of music are well documented (Attali, 1985; Connell and Gibson, 2003; Leyshon, Matless and Revill, 1998), as are the experimental sound art performances that question traditional definitions of music (Cage, 1952; 1961). Broadly speaking, “music” often refers to purposeful and structured collection of sounds, typically made in some form by humans (but also machines and computers), that are meant to evoke emotion and project meaning to listeners. Music is commoditised; it is produced, distributed, and consumed at varying scales, including in

\(^{19}\) Schafer (1993: 43) describes a high-fidelity soundscape as “one in which discrete sounds can be heard clearly because of the low ambient noise level.” He contrasts this with low-fidelity soundscapes, in which individual sounds are less distinguishable from one another and are often characterised as dense, muddy, or cacophonic.
prisons. This dissertation does not set out to define music in new ways; however I do discuss how conceptualisations and interpretations of what constitutes “music” are spatial, temporal, cultural, and political, and may take on alternative meanings in prisons. It is clear that to a band rehearsing a folk-rock album in a prison chapel (see Chapter Six), what they are producing is music; yet to the staff whose office is next to the makeshift “jam space,” the muffled and distracting sounds can just as easily be perceived as “noise.” In this dissertation I use the term music when people tell me it is music, or when it is an activity that is commonly described as such (e.g. choirs, albums, bands, instruments, radios). When there are stark differences of interpretation between something that is considered sound or music or noise or silence, I unpack these variations as they emerge. I recognise that music includes and sometimes is constructed as silence, and depending on sonic content and spatial context, music can easily be interpreted as noise.

Noise is simultaneously a powerful and fragile conceptualisation of sound (Attali, 1985). To call something “noise” instead of the more neutral “sound” or the more structured and purposeful “music” has geographical implications; such sound is typically considered out of place, out of sync, or out of context, often indicative of “the social distinction between nature and culture” (Leyshon, Matless and Revill, 1998: 2; see Attali, 1985). Noise is also used to describe polyphony – many voices or sounds occurring at once – or is perhaps better known as the more value-laden cacophony, which implies harshness and discordance. In common use, noise is often a commentary on the volume of a soundscape; when participants and other accounts of incarceration state describe prisons as “noisy,” I understand this to mean that they are full of polyphonic, multi-directional sounds at higher volumes than desired. As I explain, a “thick” soundscape might not always be a result of the sounds themselves but rather the
architectural and material features that shape how sound vibrations are perceived. When different conceptualisations of sound are deconstructed to reveal constellations of spatial, temporal, cultural, and political contexts, it becomes apparent that terms like “noise” and “silence” are not always in opposition with each other, instead undergoing continual negotiation. As I show in Chapters Four through Six, one way to “silence” noise is to drown it out with more sounds.

Restorative justice

Throughout the dissertation, I allude to the need for alternative approaches to crime, punishment, and rehabilitation. One philosophy that has recently been added to CSC’s penal practices (though perhaps not extensively used) is restorative justice. On its website, the CSC (2014) defines restorative justice as a philosophy and an approach that:

…strives to provide support and safe opportunities for the voluntary participation and communication between those affected (victims, offenders, and community) to encourage accountability, reparation, and a movement towards understanding, feelings of satisfaction, healing, safety and a sense of closure.

Restorative justice is considered to be a progressive (though not necessarily new\(^\text{20}\)) approach that offers an alternative to traditional responses to crime and justice. In most cases, a restorative approach to justice involves some of the following practices and objectives:

1. Informal process involving victims, offenders, and other affected community members that aims to discuss wrongful events and actions, the harm done, ideas for how to respond to and repair harm, and prevention strategies for future conflict.
2. Emphasis on empowering people whose lives are affected by harmful acts.

\(^{20}\) Restorative justice has been used, to varying degrees and often under different names, by a number of communities and cultural groups as a non-violent form of dealing with crime and other forms of harm. In an interview with *Rabble*, Halifax poet laureate and prison activist El Jones (Fenner, 2015) states that “restorative justice, in particular, comes out of communities of colour. It's developed by indigenous and communities of colour — black communities — and it’s formed in response to, obviously, disproportionate incarceration” (see also Usher and Lawrence, 2011). In addition to these communities, restorative justice has spiritual connections to notions of repentance and transformation, among other values (see Armour and Bender, 2007), including Quakers who, notably, were central to the formation of the modern penitentiary.
3. Redirect focus away from stigmatisation and punishment of the “perpetrator” and toward recognition of and responsibility for any wrongdoing as a key step towards reintegration into the community.
4. Decision-making process guided by principles of respect, non-violent and non-coercive conflict resolution, and inclusion.
5. Attention to pain (emotional and physical) done to victims and the resulting needs to be met with tangible outcomes.
6. (Cautious) emphasis on strengthening or repairing relationships between people and communities involved.

(Adapted from Johnstone and Van Ness, 2013: 12-13; see also Braithwaite, 2003)

In prioritising dialogue, the above approaches to restorative justice typically require a mutual willingness by people who have harmed and people victimised by those actions to eventually meet in person. In many cases, this is simply not possible, is unsafe, or is too painful for one or more parties.²¹ My suggestion in Chapters Six and Seven is that music or other forms of sound art might serve as an alternative to in-person communication, offering a more-than-linguistic way of communicating pain, struggle, grief, guilt, responsibility, and (possibly) reconciliation.²²

**Structure of the dissertation**

The remainder of the dissertation unfolds as follows. In Chapter Two, I outline a conceptual framework for the project, including a review of interconnected literature in three key areas: acoustemology (acoustic or auditory epistemologies), carceral power, and hauntology. The first

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²¹ Restorative justice is a complex and controversial approach that has been criticised by some for its idealistic and even “seductive” philosophies (Acorn, 2004) that are perhaps not realised “on the ground” (see also Daly, 2002; Robinson, 2003). Others prefer the term “transformative justice” for its emphasis on community relationships and transformation of self, rather than victim-centred approaches that may disguise “tough-on-crime” agendas (Johnstone and van Ness, 2013; Jones, 2012; Sullivan and Tiffet, 2001). I do not have the space to go into these criticisms and differentiations in this dissertation, but welcome further research that identifies tensions and presents empirical findings that evaluate community-based restorative justice in action.

²² Note that music played a central role in the closing events of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in May-June, 2015.
two areas highlight distinct, emergent bodies of literature. Acoustemology embraces sound as a key way of knowing and organising space, and outlines the importance of acoustemology in theory as well as in method and practice. My attention to sound through an acoustemological framework does not deny the importance of other senses in the production of carceral space; rather, it creates room for multi-sensory experiences that might be more accessible through an appreciation of acoustic space. In the second part of the literature review, I survey the growing field of carceral geographies. My particular interest in this revived subdiscipline contributes to embodied and emotional experiences of incarceration. As I show, these seemingly disparate bodies of literature are in fact connected in numerous ways. I use the notion of hauntings as a form of silence, echo, and absent-presence as a key thread that weaves these conceptual strands, stitching them together to take new shape.

In Chapter Three, I provide an overview of the methodological considerations that structured my conceptualisation of the project, separated into three parts. Part I opens with a commentary on the challenges of conducting socio-cultural research in and about prisons, building to a (somewhat speculative) call for circumventions and interventions in multi-institutional ethics procedures. In Part II, I situate my work within a qualitative feminist research methodology. Part III details the specific methods and techniques used to explore my research questions. Much of my discussion of methods focuses on interviewing as an important way of understanding first-hand experiences of prisons, but interviews are situated within a broader methodological framework that includes online, archival, and sonic methods.

In Chapter Four, I explore the historical geographies of sound in the Canadian prisons system. This discussion focuses specifically on Canada’s oldest penitentiary, Kingston Penitentiary, which opened in 1835 and closed during this research project in 2013. I use
archival materials to provide a multi-layered account of the silent system that dominated penal management in the penitentiary’s first century of operation. I discuss the ways silence was used as part of a disciplinary regime – one that was abolished in the 1930s but which continues to haunt the prison in other forms. The chapter moves into a more contemporary discussion of technological change in prisons, investigating the ways in which shifting technologies have shaped and responded to the carceral soundscape. It ends with a methodological discussion of the utility of sonic methods for “doing time” (Moran, 2012) in historical and contemporary geographies.

In Chapter Five, I situate sonic geographies of prisons in the everyday. Prisons are sites of unusual segregation, “cruel and unusual” punishment, and are haunted by thick histories of injustice and conflict. At the same time, with high incarceration rates in Canada, “the everyday” for an increasing population is lived in prison and carceral experience is often constituted by strict routine. I use this paradox as an intersection at which to locate the emotional and embodied experiences of sound in prisons, as they pertain to both the mundane geographies of prisons and the extraordinary, unusual experiences of pain and discipline. Chapter Five is titled “Feeling the Range” to account for what participants describe as sonic knowledge of carceral atmosphere. This involves listening for emotion, silence, and less tangible information that is useful to guards and inmates alike. As part of this acoustemological articulation of affect, I divide the chapter into three sections that each trace the contradictory and complex ways in which prisons are “felt” sonically: dis/orientation, dis/connection, and in/dignity.

Chapter Six presents a focused conversation about music in prison, as a mediating conceptualisation of sound that is used in enabling and constraining ways, and that actively constructs acoustic space in prisons. Interview participants highlight the therapeutic,
rehabilitative, and resistant potential of music in prisons. In the same breath, they recount stories that capture the capacity of the sonic, lyrical, and contextual elements of music to incite conflict, “invade” personal space and cause emotional strife. I explore a case study of the production of a music album at Pittsburgh Institution, just outside Kingston, to explore the potential for music to foster a sense of belonging, purpose, and dignity, and to enable new relationships among inmates and staff.

Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter, summarises the findings of this research project, provides an overview of key contributions, and points to openings for future research on sonic spatialities of prisons. I engage with the term *resonance* in the conclusion as a way of imagining how sound might create connections through its reach. Throughout the dissertation, I show how such connection has been used in both therapeutic and harmful ways. Asking the reader to think critically about the *use* of sonic knowledge, I end by calling for the recognition that sounding and listening are enactments of resonance that can become political acts of reciprocity, empathy, and hope.
Chapter 2

Selected Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

My research is guided by a sense that geographical scholarship requires a stronger appreciation for the sonic constituents of everyday experience. Drawing from and extending beyond oral history as a practice worthy of scholarly attention (see L. Cameron, 1996, 2001), Susan J. Smith’s (1997) call for greater engagement with sound in and as geographical inquiry helped ignite what is now nearly two decades of critical scholarship on the geographies, histories, and cultural politics of sound, listening, and auditory media (see, for example, Anderson et al., 2005; Born, 2013; Bull, 2000, 2007; Cameron and Rogalsky, 2006; Connell and Gibson, 2003; Gallagher, 2011; Gallagher and Prior, 2014; LaBelle, 2010; Matless, 2005; Sterne, 2003; Toop, 2010, 2011; Wood and Smith, 2004). Indeed, in addition to accounting for sonic sensibilities of place, geographers are well-positioned to contribute to literature on sonic spatialities of power (Gallagher, 2011; see also Gallagher and Prior, 2014; Paglen, 2006; Smith, 1997). Although the relationship between space, sound, and power remains under-represented in geographical studies, a number of scholars have made great strides in developing sound studies.

One way to know about space is to explore its acoustic properties, and to consider the vital, yet under-appreciated, role of sound in the production of geographical knowledge. Steven Feld (1996) terms this approach *acoustemology*. Reflecting on his experiences with the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea, his explanation identifies geographical connections between sound and place:
Sounds emerge from and are perceptually centred in place, not to mention sung with, to, and about places. Just as ‘life takes place’ so does sound; thus more and more my experiential accounts of the Kaluli sound world have become acoustic studies of how senses make place and places make sense.

Feld urges others to consider the potential of sonic sensibilities to inform how and what we know about the world in general, and the places we saturate with meaning. Acoustemological approaches to the world, however, are not new. Oral traditions, part of which involve listening to the landscape (or soundscape, as I explain shortly) and using voice as place-making initiatives, have endured for millennia despite deliberate and unintended silencing of oral knowledges with visual representations of the world. Only in the past few decades, however, have scholars made these connections between landscape, place, and orality, particularly in the context of indigenous traditions (see, for example, Basso, 1996; Borrows, 2001; Cruikshank, 1992, 1994; Feld, 1996).

A more directed interest in place and orality emerged out of related scholarly attention to oral history work (see L. Cameron, 1996; Thompson, 2000 [1978]). In 1996, Laura Cameron wrote that “listening for pleasure” offered another way to appreciate oral histories, and that doing so simultaneously uncovers and blurs lines of presumed cultural opposition between (in the case of her work) Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals of Sumas Lake, British Columbia. Oral history as a deeply personal, archival, and participatory endeavour (see L. Cameron, 2001; 2014) is thus an integral part of an acoustemological approach, and in the past two decades we have seen new opportunities emerge. Attention to oral history has since inspired other ways of connecting sound, space, and knowledge; a list that includes influential writers such as Marshall McLuhan (McLuhan, 2004; McLuhan and Carpenter, 1960; McLuhan and McLuhan, 1988), Walter Ong (1982), and Jacques Attali (1985). In this chapter, and indeed, throughout the dissertation, I explore what is required to engage with acoustemology as an epistemological approach, and consider how ontological relationships between sound and space offer alternative ways of
theorising space. This will act as important groundwork for thinking about the kinds of methods appropriate for research that explores the geographies of sound in its many forms and uses, as I elaborate in Chapter Three.

This particular chapter establishes connections between recent and foundational research that gives sound a central focus, combining the work of geographers with the important contributions of other sound studies scholars, in order to develop a conceptual framework of “carceral acoustemologies” for my dissertation. In the first part of this chapter, I unpack the term “acoustemology,” an approach to knowledge that embraces sound, listening, and auditory media as key ways in which we can make sense of the world. Such an approach involves an examination of the ontological and material properties of sound, accompanied by an exploration of how sound studies scholars have taken up the epistemological relationships between sound, space, and embodiment. As part of this, I outline the various definitions, uses, and critiques of soundscape, pointing to its use as an empirical tool that helps us understand more philosophical ways of knowing about acoustic spatialities. The second part of my framework focuses on spatialities of carceral power. This section draws from the recent outpouring of research in carceral geographies, a rapidly growing subdiscipline that addresses the spatialities and experiences of incarceration. In the third component of the chapter, I introduce hauntology as a framework that effectively fuses the seemingly disparate fields of sonic and carceral geographies.

I wish to follow along Gallagher and Prior’s (2014) well-articulated path by clarifying that my particular focus on sound in this dissertation is not to deny the role of other senses in our understandings of our world, nor do I wish to make idealistic claims about sound and auditory media to such a degree that I neglect the importance of historical, cultural, and political context
(see also Sterne, 2003). As many scholars have demonstrated, interpretation of situated experiences will benefit from the recognition that our lives are shaped in different ways by a combination of senses (Attali, 1985; Bull, 2000, 2004, 2007; Erlmann, 2004; Hoover, 2009; McLuhan & Parker, 1968; Porteous, 1990; Rodaway, 1994; Schafer, 1994; Smith, 1994, 1997; Sui, 2000; Thompson, 2002; Tuan, 1993). Indeed, Juhani Pallasmaa’s (2005) profound book, The Eyes of the Skin, articulates how human experience and architecture are connected by phenomenological experience, which values the role of the body in quests for knowledge. His notion that all senses rely on tactile, or ‘haptic,’ knowledge is particularly poignant, and useful for my own methodological framework (see also Parr, 2001; Paterson, 2009). Bearing these ideas in mind, we must remember that experiences of any environment include all of the senses to varying degrees, sensitivities, and abilities. This dissertation therefore presents aural-tactile experiences of sound at the centre of its analysis, while also paying heed to David Matless’s (2005: 746-747) clarification:

…however to mark out the sonic is not to argue that it can be granted autonomy, or that it provides some privileged arena for social and cultural enquiry. While arguments for the study of sound and music as going ‘beyond’ the visual have been important in establishing a field for legitimate study (Smith 1997), geographical studies of the sonic and/or the musical may not benefit from presentation as an advance on supposedly conventional or restricted visual approaches. As Richard Leppert notes in discussing the ‘sonoric landscape’ and the ‘particularity of musical sonority’ within this, ‘sonoric landscapes are both heard and seen’ (Leppert 1998: 294).

As I discuss shortly, Leppert’s notion of ‘sonoric landscapes’ is synonymous with soundscape (Schafer, 1994). In the next section I describe some of the material properties of acoustic space, drawing connections between ontologies of sound and space, to help us imagine the potential of an acoustemological approach to experience.
Part I. Acoustemologies

Resonances between sound and space

Theories of acoustic space emerge out of a growing concern that conceptualisations of space have been predominantly visual (Smith, 1994). Several scholars are now compelled by the argument that space exists, at least in part, “outside the realm of the visual” (Cavell 2002: 21, emphasis in original; see also Bull 2000; L. Cameron, 1996; Johnston and Lorimer, 2014; McLuhan & McLuhan 1988; Revill 2000; Smith 1994, 1997, 2000). I use this chapter as a launching point to consider how conceptualisations of carceral space might broaden if we push the boundaries of the visual realm and welcome a multi-sensory appreciation of spatiality.

Ontological approaches to acoustic space posit that space includes sound, and as a result, space has the material properties of sound (Cavell 2002; McLuhan 2004; McLuhan & Carpenter 1960). Recognition of sonic indifference to fixed boundaries is crucial to an interpretation of acoustic space (McLuhan, 2004). We cannot see through buildings, but sound waves can permeate architectural materials and so we might hear sound through them. As I highlight in this dissertation, this presents alternative opportunities for spatial orientation. Further, sound moves through us as something that is more closely connected than sight to the nervous system (Cavell, 2002; McLuhan & Parker, 1968; Schafer, 1994; Simmel, 1997). Sound, therefore, is not subject to the same barriers, blockages and trajectories that are present using a visual perspective, although, as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, this does not mean that acoustic space is entirely open or untouched by attempts to block and stake claim to it. Indeed, varying uses of sound as a technique of pain and exclusion highlight attempts to harness certain properties (e.g., high decibel levels) to drown out others (e.g., lack of identifiable margins) for particular agendas.
A musical chord – three sounds played at the same time, for example – demonstrates that sounds can be overlapped without one necessarily being omitted from sensory perception by another. Sonic reach is difficult to measure, because sounds move in multi-directional ways, bouncing off and being redirected by material objects. Acoustic space is open, at least in potential, because sound is less fixed by boundaries (McLuhan, 2004) and has resonant properties that shape space through reverberation and layering. Although rooted in sound, acoustic space is constituted by interplays between different senses, which McLuhan posits as “audile-tactile” (McLuhan, 2004; see also Cavell, 2002; Marchand & Postman, 1998; Sui, 2000), and others describe as haptic experience (see Pallasmaa, 2005; Parr, 2001; Paterson, 2009).

Indeed, sound is not only heard but also felt in multiple ways; sound vibrations act on and through our skin, resonating through the body (Boyd and Duffy, 2012).

Finally, sound, as vibration – and therefore movement – provides a kinaesthetic experience that Lefebvre (2004) conceptualises through his work on “rhythmanalysis,” or the rhythmic account of everyday environments (see also Born, 2013). Lefebvre’s positions rhythm at the conjunction of space and time, highlighting the ways in which space is in motion (see Crang and Thrift, 2000; Thrift, 2006). He writes: “Rhythm is always linked to such and such a place, to its place, be that the heart, the fluttering of eyelids, the movement of a street or the tempo of a waltz. This does not prevent it from being a time, which is to say an aspect of movement or of a becoming” (2004: 89; see also Guattari, 1996). If developed only somewhat speculatively by Lefebvre (see McCormack, 2008), rhythmanalysis is particularly useful for thinking through the coexistent “pulses” that constitute carceral environments and their subjects in enabling and constraining ways (Goodman, 2010; see Chapters Five and Six). As I explain
later, thinking through the connections between sound and rhythm in prisons offers new ways of “doing time” and “doing space.”

If we think of space using the aforementioned acoustic terms – including unfixed, multi-sensory, and kinaesthetic – there are parallels with Doreen Massey’s (2005) suggested approaches to thinking of space as open. She argues that space is produced by interrelations of a variety of actors, processes, and materialities; as such, space holds potential for multiplicity as a sphere of “co-existing heterogeneity” (2005: 9). In other words, if we imagine space to have (relatively) unfixed boundaries and as constituted by a multiplicity of sensory properties, there is potential for the existence of diverse – rather than homogeneous – populations, knowledges, and appropriations. Massey continues by stating that space is always being remade, and as such, is never closed or static (2005; see also Lefebvre 1991 [1974] for more on the production of space).

Massey’s spatial notion of co-existing heterogeneity resonates with acoustic space because of the way we experience sound. Georg Simmel (1997), for instance, argues that hearing is a more inclusive act than seeing, because the ear is a differently – and in some cases less – discriminating apparatus than the eye (see also McLuhan 2004; Ong, 1991; Voegelin, 2010). Such accounts of sonic experience are promising (if somewhat idealistic, as I explain later), and indeed inspire many of the ideas presented throughout this dissertation. If sounds are overlapping and multi-directional, and we experience them as such, then I would argue that when we appreciate properties of sound and hearing for their metaphorical purchase, we might discover potentialities for alternative and perhaps more diverse enactments of space. One step toward exploring this potential is by embracing acoustic or auditory epistemologies in the production of geographical knowledge. I explore such acoustemologies (Feld, 1996) in the following section.
Sonic ways of knowing

Expanding our understandings of spatiality to include the acoustic offers new opportunities for understanding and transforming the complexities of spatial interaction (see, for example, Blesser & Salter, 2006; Cavell, 2002; Massey, 2005; Smith, 1994, 2000). As Attali (1985: 6) argues, “more than colours and forms, it is sounds and their arrangements that fashion societies.” I would not suggest we ignore the important role of colours and forms, or indeed other visual properties, in helping to weave the cultural fabric of different societies. Instead, I suggest that we consider how acoustic experiences are especially rich for thinking about alternative spatialities, in ways that might be overlooked when privileging the visual.

A key figure in the criticism of geography’s ‘visual bias,’ Susan J. Smith states: “Geography is, after all, a quintessentially visual enterprise, traditionally using observation as the route to knowledge, and regarding sight as the measure of truth” (1997: 503; see also 1994; 1997; 2000). The privileging of the visual has played a major, though under-recognised role, in the displacement of particular cultural traditions. In a Canadian context, the privileging of the visual has facilitated the marginalisation and oppression of Aboriginal populations, whose local and historical knowledges are deeply rooted in oral/aural cultures (see Cameron, 1996; Cruikshank, 2001; Sparke, 1998). As I explained in Chapter One, Aboriginal people now comprise roughly one-quarter of Canada’s adult incarcerated population. The steady increase of Aboriginal prisoners is a reflection of the violent legacy of colonisation (Jacobs, 2012), much of which was built on visual, textual, and cartographic knowledges as the dominant ways in which to claim territory. Although I do not explicitly discuss Aboriginal experiences of sound and
orality in prisons due to a lack of primary source material,\textsuperscript{23} it is important to recognise the disproportionate rate of incarceration for those whose knowledges and tools of representation have not “fit” into Euro-centric epistemologies of vision.\textsuperscript{24}

Sound is used to carve out space, create knowledge about the world, demarcate and blur boundaries, and establish dominance in the world (Bull, 2007). Even in art, arguably a more expressive and multisensory field than geography, the visual has been privileged to such a degree that it has silenced sonic interpretation of everyday experience. Feminist geographers discuss “the gaze” not only as a visual way of understanding the world but also as a discursive process that reproduces unbalanced and contested power relations, which also shape how people experience their environments (see, for example, Rose, 1993; Smith, 1994; Sui, 2000). This privileging of the visual is troubling to scholars who advocate for a more inclusive and hybridised understanding of spatial experience (Smith, 1994), not least because visual description is exclusive to those who can see (Golledge, 1993; Butler & Bowlby, 1997).\textsuperscript{25} This concern about an exclusionary scholarship is one of Smith’s (1994) three major criticisms of the visual bias, along with its neglect of the role of other senses in the constitution of space, and its subsequent exclusion of music as a major art form from the ‘cultural turn’ of human geography.

\textsuperscript{23} In Chapter Three, I explain that I was not permitted inside prisons to speak directly with inmates. None of my participants openly identified as Aboriginal, and when asked about specific cultural groups within prisons, few people were able to speak in detail about Aboriginal communities, programs, and experiences of incarceration. A few participants noted the “Changing of the Seasons” ceremony at Kingston Penitentiary (see James, 2014) and the Aboriginal ground on which it is held (see Figure 1.1).

\textsuperscript{24} See, for example, the trial of \textit{Delgamuukw v. British Columbia} (1997: 3 SCR 1010) in British Columbia, in which Gitskan tribe elder, Mary Johnson, sang a ceremonial song as evidence of territorial jurisdiction (the Gitskan and Wet’suwet’en peoples, represented in the case, claimed land through oral tradition, including the Gitskan collection of “adaawk” and the Wet’suwet’en “kungax,” a spiritual song or dance). Judge McEachern replied, “I have a tin ear,” and dismissed the appeal. See also Cruikshank (1992).

\textsuperscript{25} One could make the counter-argument that a sonic sensibility of place is exclusive to those who can hear, and this would be a fair concern. However, the haptic experiences of sound vibration provide people with hearing impairments with different ways of perceiving sound.
The tools used to experience the sonic world are different from those used in visual accounts of space. The ear is a most important knowledge apparatus that combines sound and vibration to receive and transmit to the brain information about an environment (Bull, 2000; Schafer, 1994; Simmel, 1997), but so too are other bodily systems, including the central nervous system and the skin. Sound is taken in, moves through, and resonates in our bodies (Bull, 2000, Cavell, 2002; 2006; 2007; Schafer, 1994). Even when our listening produces hierarchies of attention by being unconsciously selective (hearing a baby cry in the night but not a thunderstorm, for instance), we still embody other sound vibrations because we are unable to stop them from physically interacting with our bodies.

Yet, as Sterne (2003: 19-29) cautions, scholarly opposition between sight and sound has enabled an ‘audio-visual litany’ based largely on an “ideology of immanence” (Schrimshaw, 2005: 28) within sonic experience (as opposed to visually fixed boundaries). Sterne critiques these stark divisions between sight and sound, questioning the supposed innocence of listening and hearing, which undermines the many ways in which listening and sonic techniques, like vision, are also political, discriminatory, and inseparable from their cultural histories (see also Schafer, 1994). Technologies such as stethoscopes, for example, blur boundaries of interior and exterior, combining immersive with distanciated listening that, to some degree, parallel perspectival properties of sight. A noteworthy distinction, however, is that although the stethoscope involves listening in a disembodied way (one cannot directly listen to the inside of another person’s body), it also allows for great intimacy in hearing something, such as a heartbeat, that is not otherwise explicitly audible.

As Sterne (2003) notes, the early nineteenth century featured great fascination with the ear, listening, deafness, and acoustics in a variety of fields (see also Samuels et al., 2010), which
had considerable implications for the technological evolution of hearing, listening, and sounding technologies. Today, we can point to evolving technologies that further shape sonic ways of knowing: hearing aids, headphones, audio recorders, and white noise machines are but a few.

Throughout this dissertation, I explore the many technological transformations that influence what and how people hear in the context of prisons, and their connections to broader social and political change. In advocating for an acoustemology of experience, I also acknowledge that the production, interpretation, and organisation of sound (and music) are inherently political.

One empirical tool that extends out of acoustemology is the notion of soundscape. In the next section, I define soundscape and offer a brief overview of its critiques, concluding that the term still has considerable purchase for its ability to articulate the materiality and cultural characteristics of sonic environments.

**Soundscape**

The term *soundscape*, as a sonic extension of landscape or “any acoustic field of study,” was developed by R. Murray Schafer (1994: 7; see also 1968, 1977; Truax, 1974, 1996) as somewhat analogous to the material and discursive construction of landscape. Expanding Schafer’s definition, Emily Thompson (2002: 1) writes that soundscape is not just a physical environment that includes or is shaped by sound, but is also a *way* of perceiving a sonic environment; like landscape, she states, “it is both a world and a culture constructed to make sense of that world.”

As Thompson explains (2002: 1), our understanding of soundscape must include an interpretation of the properties of the sounds themselves, but also the surrounding material objects in an environment that further give shape to, or perhaps destroy, these sounds. According to Schafer (1994), acoustic fields of study can include intentionally-produced sonic events, such
as concerts or songs, but soundscape can also refer to unintentional acoustic events that result from sonic combinations. In the case of my research on prisons, for example, people do not necessarily enter a prison to experience it as an acoustic event, as they might if they attended a musical concert; nevertheless, prisons can be analyzed as soundscapes that combine different sounds, ranging from human voices to doors closing to footsteps echoing through long corridors. Schafer (1994) writes that thinking about soundscape requires us to open our ears, or in his words, to become “earwitnesses,” in order to hear events in our everyday lives.

Some of the work within soundscape studies and acoustic ecology have been criticised for projecting moralistic undertones through a chronology of changing soundscapes that place greater value in the environmental and cultural processes of rural or agricultural over urban, industrial soundscapes. Schafer, for instance, romanticises the sounds of an idyllic past, lamenting the drowning out and even extinction of rural agrarian sounds by the hypersonic, mechanical, and invasive soundscapes of urbanisation (see Schafer, 1994). In this regard, spatial distinctions between noise, sound, and silence are present, with the sounds of urban centres (heavily populated with humans and machines) being identified as invasive species choking out the more pure sounds of “nature” (see Matless, 2005). These distinctions serve as a reminder that hearing and listening are, after all, deeply social and political acts (Attali, 1985; Smith, 1994, 1999; Schafer, 1994; Thompson, 2002).

While I find validity in the critiques of the moralistic and at times positivist characteristics of acoustic ecology, I do not wish to make sweeping claims about the subfield, nor do I think Schafer’s concerns about disappearing soundscapes are entirely unfounded. The
marginalisation, silencing, or endangerment of particular sounds and sonic environments highlight power imbalances that are bound up in often androcentric value systems\textsuperscript{28} and these are questions that deserve attention. Yet I think there is still work to be done on striking a more effective balance between questioning what kinds of voices, bodies, and sonic beings are privileged over others. Such an endeavour involves being cautious about our own agendas and value systems that dictate how we interpret a sonic future of hybridity (Whatmore, 2002) between humans, non-humans, machines and digital technologies, and other materialities (for a discussion of more-than-human soundworlds and musical relations, see Chapter Six).

In engaging with the term ‘soundscape,’ I follow Gallagher and Prior’s (2014: 273) commentary that soundscape remains useful as a kind of shorthand “to encompass a set of sonic methods that investigate the relationships between sound, setting and listener,” which I will explore further methodologically in Chapter Three. Schafer’s notion of soundscape and its associated classifications of sounds are useful to my research to the extent that certain sounds are often perceived as more “organic” in the context of particular spaces, including those associated with my case study sites. This creates tension between what people identify as “in place” and “out-of-place” sounds (Attali, 1985; Leyshon, Matless and Revill, 1998; Schafer, 1977; see also Cresswell, 1996). This characterisation, along with other distinctions of “background” and “foreground” sounds (LaBelle, 2006), is one example of how soundscape and its elements are constituted spatially. Furthermore, for me, the utility of soundscape as shorthand extends to constructions of place. We might describe place as rooted but fluctuating intersections between sound, setting, and listener, as noted above (Cameron and Rogalsky, 2006; see also Born, 2003).

\textsuperscript{28} See, for example, ongoing work by the Cornell University Bioacoustics Program (Cornell University, 2015), which studies the importance of bioacoustics in the vitality of bird, elephant and whale habitats. Such habitats are endangered when anthropogenic sounds disrupt or silence the acoustic habitats of animals that depend on sound for communication and breeding.
Finally, as Samuels et al. (2010: 338) add, the concept of soundscape “provides some response to
the ephemerality dilemma by offering a means to materialise sounds, their interrelations and their
circulations.”

Soundscape and sound studies literature have grown in conjunction with the work of
anthropologists and ethnomusicologists (Born, 1995, 2005; Erlmann, 2004; Feld, 1982, 1996;
Fox, 2004; Hirschkind, 2006; Rice, 2003; Samuels et al., 2010). Similarly, sociologists have
made great strides highlighting the very situated and power-laden practices of listening,
particularly in the context of mediated sound and music (Bull, 2000, 2007; DeNora, 2000; Back,
2007). Historical work on sound has helped to develop histories of noise and listening (Attali,
1985; Sterne, 2003), transformations in soundscape (Thompson, 2002), and technological
changes to sonic environments (Corbin, 1998). This area is closely tied to auditory or aural
culture studies (Arkette, 2004; Bull and Back, 2003; Carpenter, 1973; Cusick, 2009, 2013;
O’Dwyer, 2011; Oliveros, 2011) which trace how cultural practices shape the ways sonic
environments are built and perceived, as well as the formation of auditory cultures based on
shared sonic interests or techniques.

More recently, the growing engagement between sound studies and digital media has led
to a focus on the evolution of audio technologies and their mediation of everyday life (see Bull,
2000, 2007; Gallagher and Prior, 2014; Droumeva and Andrisani 2011; Sterne, 2003). This work
acknowledges that we use technologies to mediate sound, and the proliferation of mediating
technologies in everyday life has had audible effects on the sonic environment. As Schafer
(1994) chronicles, urban soundscapes in particular have increasingly become characterised by a
constant hum of flatline, beeping, and rhythmically-repetitive sounds that represent the
ubiquitous presence of all kinds of machines. This is especially the case in institutions like prisons and hospitals that manage and monitor large populations over long periods of time.

Indeed, sonic exploration of prisons is in many ways commensurate with Tom Rice’s (2013) work on hospital ward soundscapes. As Rice explains, hospitals are very noisy environments with an acoustic profile that includes beeping monitors, constant footsteps, voices, pneumatic machines, and rattling heating systems, to name but a few sounds that make up a “grating symphony” (2013: 4). He writes that these produce a “cacophony of illness” (169) that, when combined with the loss of personal control over privacy, proximity, and dignity, can create a rather suffocating environment. Like hospitals, prisons are designed and operated in ways that force its confined inhabitants to listen passively as a “captive audience” (Jewkes, 2002) compelled to overhear intimate knowledge of their neighbours. In this regard, a “technologically mediated sound world” (Rice, 2013: 174) becomes a constructed utopia that offers escape from a patient or inmate’s immediate surroundings. As Rice reminds us, however, such technologies are not always readily available or permitted in these institutions of confinement. If hospitals are institutions for rehabilitation, care, and recovery, then surely greater attention to the importance of soundscape on patient well-being is required.  

As I demonstrate in the chapters that follow, Rice’s work on hospital acoustemologies informs and resonates with my observations about the role of sound in treatment and rehabilitation in prisons. To be sure, prison soundscapes are both reflections and builders of the broader socio-political conditions in which they are situated, and have deeply emotional effects

29 According to an article on CBC News Ottawa (2015), health care professionals are indeed exploring different ways to measure and address noise in hospitals. At Ottawa Hospital, for example, administrators installed decibel-reading “ears” in the wards to visually display the level of noise at all times. The signs are meant to collect information about when and where noise occurs at undesirable levels and act as a visual indicator reminding staff and visitors to be respectful of the impact of their noise on recovering patients.
on their inhabitants. Before delving into the carceral soundscapes specific to my research, it is first necessary to overview existing and forthcoming literature in the emergent field of ‘carceral geographies’ and the spatial articulations of power in prisons.

**Part II. Geographies of carceral power**

As I explain in Chapter Five, cultural geographers and sociologists have long been interested in the constitution of “the everyday” (see, for instance, Cresswell, 1996). Prisons have fallen outside this domain of inquiry, largely because part of their very function is the removal and segregation of people from everyday citizenship, and thus have an extra-ordinary character as ‘forbidden,’ secretive places. Yet for an increasing population, “the everyday” is, in fact, experienced through the realm of incarceration.

It is evident that prisons seem to have their own version of the everyday. Regrettably, for an increasing population, the remainder of their entire lives will be spent behind bars.30 Many Canadian prisons operate on quasi-militaristic routines, with unwavering timetables ordering inmates’ daily movements and behaviours (in ways described by Foucault, 1977), strict regulations about personal and cell maintenance, and restricted “free” time. Seemingly extra-ordinary practices, like solitary confinement or “The Count” – in which prisoners are called over loudspeakers numerous times a day to be physically counted – become routine, and carceral subjects are trained to comply. In this hypercarceral moment, which sees the disproportionate incarceration and targeting of already marginalised groups (see Chapter One), greater attention to

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30 In March 2015, the Harper Government introduced new legislation that would eliminate the option of parole for life sentences, meaning that certain prisoners will never leave prison (see Fine, 2015; Payton, 2015). Typically, under the ‘faint-hope’ clause (*Criminal Code*, 2015 [1985], 745.6), offenders serving life sentences in Canada are eligible for parole after 25 years.
transcarchical power in and outside prisons is urgently needed. The recent “punitive turn” in geography (Moran 2014) attests and responds to this call for inquiry; in this section, I trace a route through recent literature that has extended this new direction.

Dominique Moran (2011, 2013, 2015; see also Moran et al., 2011, Moran & Morin, 2015) presents the concept of ‘carceral geographies’\(^{31}\) to account for a growing interest, and indeed concern, about the spatialities and practices of incarceration. More recent literature on carceral space is in dialogue with Foucault’s conceptualisation of disciplinary power and governmentality (1978; discussed below); Goffman’s theorisation of “total institutions,” featuring “like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable length of time” (1961: 11)\(^{32}\); and Agamben’s (1998) work on \textit{homo sacer}\(^{33}\) invoking law-suspending states of exception. Moran (2012; 2015) notes that although historical and popular conceptions of prisons tend to focus on “doing time” as the key way in which prisons are experienced and constituted, geographers are equally, if not more, concerned with the spatialities of incarceration.

In her historical account of carceral geographies, Moran (2015) acknowledges previous work by historical geographer Chris Philo, whose seminal text on Foucauldian geographies (1992) offers compelling extensions and critiques of Foucault’s catalogue. This is particularly evident in his engagement with Foucault (1977) throughout his development of the historical geographies of madness, asylums, and mental health. In 2001, Philo urged population

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\(^{31}\) See also carceralgeography.com.

\(^{32}\) Moran (2015: 88) points out that Goffman’s introduction of the total institution was not necessarily meant to “convey a hermetically-sealed institution” without any outside contact, but his work does not go far enough to account for the “transcarchical” (Allspach, 2010). His work, however, is a product of its time; since 1961, we have seen drastic changes in technologies that mediate and blur the seemingly stark boundaries of prisons, as I show in Chapters Four through Six.

\(^{33}\) Through the notion of \textit{homo sacer} and spaces of exception, Agamben argues that sovereign power is increasingly characterised by the ability to suspend law, rendering particular groups such as refugees and prisoners of war unprotected by human rights, and reducing them to bare life (see also Pratt, 2005, for extensions and criticisms of Agamben’s work). I argue, in this dissertation, that sound is one tactic used by people to resist this violent reduction.
geographers to account for growing numbers of incarcerated people as a means of understanding the relations between populations, bodies, institutions and space. More recently, he has established key connections between security studies and carceral geographies, the latter serving as a sub-strand of the former. Carceral geographies, Philo writes, involves “specifically alighting on the spaces set aside for ‘securing’ – detaining, locking up/away – problematic populations of one kind or another” (2012: 4). This emergent subdiscipline includes previous work on prison geographies (see Sibley and van Hoven, 2009), immigration detention spaces (Ingram and Dodds, 2009; Martin and Mitchelson, 2009; Mountz, 2010), and historical geographies of asylums (Philo, 1999; 2004). In this dissertation, I focus primarily on federal prisons as key sites of incarceration, but recognise the many similarities between prisons, jails, detention centres, and asylums, particularly through similar power-laden intersections of class, race, gender, and (dis)ability. Former inmate Alex Hundert\(^{34}\) (2012) summarises on his blog (see Appendix I) that all of these places “are warehouses for people from targeted communities – communities of colour, immigrants, poor people, indigenous people, and people disabled by inadequate supports for mental health.” Given these connections, I see my work contributing to carceral geography literature in a broad sense of the term, including other kinds of confining and “warehousing” institutions.

Until recently, geographical research on prisons was largely preoccupied with prison design and architecture, drawing spatial connections to Bentham’s Panopticon as Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* began to gain traction among cultural theorists and historians (see Driver, 1985; Philo, 1992, 2001; Ogborn, 1985). My project reflects on the foundational work of these geographers, who made key contributions to the study of power in and through prison design,

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\(^{34}\) Hundert is a Canadian activist who was incarcerated at the Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishine, Ontario, and held as a political prisoner for his role in the G20 protests in Toronto in 2010.
while also exposing ocularcentrism and other conceptual gaps present in their approaches. The notion of panopticism, after all, is premised on the idea of an “all-seeing” articulation of disciplinary power, yet this marginalises other important ways of understanding carceral space and power. Injecting a much needed multi-sensory analysis into these past accounts, I also extend my analysis into the emotional and embodied experiences of incarceration. In doing so, my research traverses, to varying degrees, what Moran (2014; see also 2015) identifies as three broad areas of inquiry in the emerging field of carceral geography: 1) Nature and experience of carceral spaces; 2) Spatial or distributional geographies of carceral systems; 3) Relationship between the carceral and an increasingly punitive state.\(^35\)

I consider my research to respond primarily to the first body of the above literature, given my specific interest in the role of sound in the situated experiences and spatialities of incarceration. As Moran outlines, research in this area of inquiry often involves critiques, deconstructions, and reinterpretations of Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (1978). For example, Teresa Dirsuweit (1999) explores relations of gender and sexuality in a women’s prison in South Africa, examining the relationship between the physical spaces of a prison compound and the ways in which spatial and material tactics are used to reclaim personal, domestic space. Her work thus stands in contrast to Foucault’s conceptualisation of docile bodies, highlighting tactics of transgression and resistance, and expressing agency despite seemingly omni-disciplinary power within penitentiaries. As I note in Chapters Five and Six, my findings resonate with Dirsuweit’s work, particularly in the use of music to (temporarily) push back against authoritative boundaries and carve out meaningful, personal, and perhaps even dignified spaces. Sibley and van Hoven (2008, 2009) similarly note that there are moments (however fleeting) in

\(^{35}\) See www.carceralgeography.com.
which prisoners actively question and redefine the cultural spaces of prisons in material and imagined ways (Sibley and van Hoven, 2009). Their work is also inspired by Leonard Baer (2005), who reflects on the importance of spatial modification as a place-making initiative undertaken by inmates. Finally, Valentine and Longstaff (1998: 134) explore the potential for food to create an extension of home, with varying effects for different kinds of inmates: “the power of food to dramatize the distance from home is most keenly felt by prisoners from ethnic and religious minorities.” I build from these writers to explore the ways in which sound and music similarly contribute to spatial modification or re-constitution, and to query how sound might play a role in how prisoners come to conceptualise ‘home’ and ‘the everyday’ while incarcerated.

Scholarship from the second realm of inquiry, spatial or distributional geographies, has focused on the locational distribution of carceral facilities and the interdependencies on prisons and localities (see, for instance, Mitchelson, 2012). In the United States, Bonds (2006; 2009) traces the links between prison siting and economic development, in relation to infrastructure, labour, and other special services associated with prisons, while Glasmeier and Farrigan (2007) pay particular attention to the increasing trend and impacts of locating prisons in poor, rural towns. In this dissertation, I am less concerned with the distributional geographies of carceral systems, but acknowledge the historical and political contexts that help explain the locational distribution of prisons in Canada and Kingston, in particular, as well as the resulting impacts on the cultural and political landscape. In doing so, I note the work of Radhika Coomaraswamy (1998), which attends to human rights and geographies of health in prisons with a particular focus on violence against women, as well as a host of scholars who illuminate issues of class and race in the way prisons are structured and operated (Gilmore 1998; Parenti 1999). These studies
highlight political economies of incarceration and address the increasing shift in North America toward super maximum security (“supermax”) prisons as part of broader neoliberal agendas (see also Gilmore, 2007; Grayson & Taylor, 2000; Rhodes, 2004). Such agendas, which run on goals of profit and efficiency, are connected to the production of the prison industrial complex, privatisation and outsourcing of prisons, the production of disposable groups (Brown, 2005; Sudbury, 2004, 2009), and “the criminalization of almost everything,” particularly poverty (Healy, 2004; see also Herbert, 2008; Wacquant, 2009b; Workman and McIntosh, 2013).

Like other researchers whose work addresses the geographies of the carceral, I am indebted to, but move beyond, Goffman’s (1961) concept of the total institution. Instead, I draw on the term “transcarceral” (Allspach, 2010) to account for the notion that the carceral extends far beyond traditional spaces of confinement (see also Moran et al, 2011; Morin, 2013; Pallot, 2007). I imagine sound to be an especially useful tool for blurring the otherwise bounded spaces typically associated with incarceration (see Chapter Five in particular). This notion of the transcarceral brings us to the third area of inquiry, as outlined by Moran, which explores the political relationships between carceral space and the punitive state, recognizing that ‘re-confinement’ occurs beyond prison walls, and that penal and technological change has blurred the spatial distinction between “free” and “imprisoned” (see also Baer and Ravneberg, 2008). In the context of hyperincarceration (Peck and Theodore, 2009; see also Peck 2003) and the prison industrial complex (Gilmore, 2007), the prison acts not as the sole representation of incarceration but as “a locus on the carceral continuum” (Moran, 2012; Wacquant, 2009b; 2011). Wacquant (2011: 3; see also 2009a,b) describes the recent crisis of hyperincarceration as exemplifying “a brutal swing from the social to the penal management of poverty.” My work on the leakiness of sound, as a way to problematise the taken-for-granted boundaries associated with carceral space,
draws from these scholars and is inspired by those who call for a critical examination of causes and solutions to hyperincarceration (Wacquant, 2011; Gilmore, 2007; Peck and Theodore, 2007; Morin, 2013; Davis, 2003).

My research on carceral acoustemologies is very much focused on the body as a central site of knowledge, experience, and politics. Prisons are unique sites to explore the body as a political space because prison architecture and regulations are elements of a spatial logic (Morin, 2013) that facilitates the confinement and restriction of bodies. As discussed earlier, Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (1977) is central to understanding how disciplinary relations of power are enacted through auditory cultures. His analysis of shifts in prison structures and systems of punishment also provide historical context and theoretical grounding for my chapter on music in prisons, and informs my investigation of carceral power as de-centred and entangled (Sharp *et al.*, 2000). Conceptualisations of the body as a site or space of struggle, identity, and knowledge production (Butler & Parr, 1999; Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]; Longhurst, 2001), are also important for understanding how spaces of the prison are negotiated through the body, particularly in the context of confinement (Nast & Pile, 1998).

Nast and Pile’s notion of “excess” resonates with sonic coping mechanisms in prisons, such as music, as a way to alleviate or temporarily escape the oppression of spatial and social constraints. In this regard, and recalling Sibley and van Hoven’s (2009) criticisms of Foucault (1978), I do not fully accept Foucault’s argument that prisoners, as “docile bodies,” merely engage in self-surveillance without agency. Rather, I investigate how constricted bodies, such as those confined to cells, use sound and auditory media to expand their conception of space, to resist authorities, and to explore “spaces that are unseen [/unheard] and not susceptible to regulation by the regime” (Sibley and van Hoven, 2009: 199).
A rather blatant example of the body as a site of politics is the stark gendering of prison spaces (Dirsuweit, 1999; Eljdupovic and Bromwich, 2013; Janssen, 2005; Jewkes, 2002). Most prisons in Canada are designed to accommodate one gender group per facility. Over the two-centuries of penitentiaries in Canada, Kingston Penitentiary has been the only prison to house both men and women simultaneously, though the two groups were isolated in separate quarters (Curtis et al., 1985). The gender-based design of prisons leaves little room for varied expressions of gender and sexuality, particularly for populations who do not identify with a normative male-female binary. In the past few years, there has been a marked increase in media attention to the placement, isolation, and treatment of transgender prisoners in Canada.36 Until recently, for example, transgender women have typically been placed in men’s institutions, even if they have undergone sex reassignment surgery, and are knowingly subjected to severe discrimination and violence, which typically results in their placement in solitary confinement (Kirkup, 2015). In January 2015, however, Ontario’s Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services announced a monumental shift in policy, which now permits inmates to self-identify their gender, and thus have some control over their placement, although the claim process remains complicated at this time (Kirkup, 2015).

I raise this tension because gendered segregation not only affects the placement and experiences of both inmates and staff, but also because it has also led to the gendering of scholarship on prisons (Mason and Stubbs, 2012). This, combined with popular accounts of prison life in various forms of media, shape who we imagine when we think of incarcerated

36 This issue is also addressed in the popular Netflix series, Orange is the New Black, which both reflects and seeks to change the discourse on LGBTQ populations in prisons.
populations.\textsuperscript{37} Research proposals on women’s correctional institutions in Canada are sent to a separate committee for review beyond an already (seemingly) impermeable research application process. I speculate that, because there are fewer barriers to researching men’s prisons (at least on the basis of the research ethics process), women’s experiences of incarceration have been marginalised in academic scholarship. This sets forth a cyclical motion, as it means more information and resources will be available on men’s institutions, thereby perpetuating the silencing of accounts that might be unique to women’s prisons. This is not to suggest that men’s and women’s institutions are vastly different; however, there are gendered nuances that deserve to be probed further. Janine Janssen’s (2005) work on tattoo cultures and masculinity in prisons and Teresa Dirsuweit’s (1999) exploration of gender and sexuality in a South African women’s prison are useful examples for unpacking gender, sexuality, and performativity in prisons. Perhaps most notably, Yvonne Jewkes’s (2002) book, \textit{Captive Audiences} makes important inroads that connect media in prisons (televisions, radios, and music players, for example) with gendered relations of power. I draw from her work to consider how sonic media might open up new ways of being, of producing space, and of “doing” time (Scannell, 1996; Moran, 2013).

\textit{Sonic engagements with carceral space}

Geographical attention to sound in spaces of incarceration has gained traction over the past decade, particularly through literature and methods that embraces multi-sensory iterations of experience. I draw frequently from this host of scholars throughout the dissertation, and so I will

\textsuperscript{37} Recall the opening reference in the dissertation to Johnny Cash’s \textit{Live at Folsom Prison}, which features the voices of male inmates in the live recording, further perpetuating how gender gets taken up in the production of the ‘typical’ inmate. This is also the case for gendered prison cultures in television, film, and music, but see \textit{Orange is the New Black} for an exception to male-dominated prison references.
refrain from providing an exhaustive review of their work here. However, I wish to introduce a few key writers in this subfield, as their work has been paramount in shaping my conceptualisation, methodology, and communication of my own project.

Brandon LaBelle’s (2010) depiction of aural architecture and control in the Auburn Prison in upstate New York provides an alternative understanding of ‘home,’ namely in the context of a prison, investigating the segregation of individual bodies into cells. His discussion of the cellular structure of the prison is reminiscent of both Malpas’ (1999) concept of nested place (a body, within a cell, within a block, within a prison) and Foucault’s notion of the cellular body as a mechanism of biopolitics and discipline (1977). The segregation of bodies, LaBelle writes, is a multi-layered disciplinary strategy. He explains (2010: 67): “As spaces of incarceration, the prison thus separates on a number of levels: to separate criminals out from society as a whole, to separate criminals within the prison itself according to the rank of the crime, and finally, to separate prisoners from each other on a cellular and individual level.” This physical separation of bodies is further enhanced by a “silent system” initiated at Auburn Prison in 1817, which restricted inmates from communicating with each other, and, as stated by the board of directors at the time (LaBelle 2010: 68), to “commune with their corrupt hearts and guilty consciences in silence” (quoted in Lewis 2002: 81). In this regard, silence has largely been used in spaces of incarceration for purposes of surveillance, discipline, and isolation.

In a short piece entitled Recording Carceral Landscapes, Trevor Paglen (2006) reflects on his attempts to record audio in a handful of California’s prisons, as an experiment in hearing the architecture of prison systems. Yet the recordings he accessed revealed unexpected findings: what was most notable in the Special Housing Unit at Pelican Bay for instance, was the silence, rather than the expected noise. He writes that audio recordings of this unit actually speak very
little about the material soundscape, but volumes about “the unspoken and unacknowledged structures of the state: (2006: 56). Paglen concludes that “the silence of the SHU is the silence of both ‘business as usual’ and total domination” (56). I use interview and archival findings to expand on the conceptualisation of silence as a modality of sonic power in Chapter Four, situating it within historical transformations of prison architecture and management. But, as I also show, silence is just one of many articulations of sound. Although not primarily geographers, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller (2005a) produced deeply geographical work through their sound installation, *Pandemonium*, which explored the sonicity of a cellblock at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia:

Using the existing elements in the prison cells Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller have made the entire Cellblock Seven into a giant musical instrument, producing a percussive site work. This instrument, controlled by a computer and midi system, is made up of one hundred and twenty separate beaters hitting disparate objects such as toilet bowls, light fixtures and bedside tables found within the prison cells. (Cardiff and Bures Miller 2005b)

Indeed, as I explain in the forthcoming chapters, sound art is increasingly appealing for geographical inquiry and expression. The groundbreaking work of Cardiff and Bures Miller (2005), as well as Paglen (2006) is particularly informative and inspirational for future explorations of connections between sound, art, and carceral space.

Cardiff and Bures Miller’s work, curated by Julie Courtney, was profound not only for its experimentation with sound and space but also for its affective character that produced feelings of fear, dread, and even torture among participants (Courtney, 2005; Torchia, 2005). Torture represents a different extension of a sonic spectrum – one that captures the violent and oppressive capacities of sound. As I elaborate in Chapters Four and Five, Suzanne G. Cusick (2013) writes of the “acoustic dystopias” associated with carceral soundscapes. She notes, in particular, that although music might be used for emotional relief in prisons, it too often
contributes to a “sonics of suffering,” that in its most extreme form constitutes a kind of torture in certain facilities. Music, in this sense, can become a source of carceral pain (Sykes, 1958; see also Ignatieff, 1978) not only because of the physical vibrations of sound waves crashing into bodies but also because inmates are, as Yvonne Jewkes (2002) describes, “captive audiences.” Jewkes writes that the technologies of mediation in prisons, including television and recorded music, can sometimes serve as reminder of a person’s segregation. According to some of Jewkes’s participants, audio media “causes distress, reminding them of happier times in the past” (2002: 91). This resonates with my discussion in Chapter Five regarding disconnection, which fluctuates between something that is actively sought by and imposed on inmates.

I take up this discussion about the dynamic and often contradictory uses of music, as an example of audio media, in Chapter Six. Much has already been written about the capacity for music to evoke emotion (Duffy, 2007; Juslin and Sloboda, 2001; Wood, 2002; Wood and Smith, 2004) and to act as a trigger of memory (DeNora, 2000; Jewkes, 2002). Indeed, as Tia DeNora (2000: 67) writes, music is a mobilising vehicle through which “the past comes alive,” an idea that I first explore in Chapter Four. Despite the well-articulated connections between music, emotion, and well-being, relatively little has been written on the role and status of music programs in prisons, and none that explicitly refer to the Canadian context.

In 1987, Michael Thaut identified correctional facilities as challenging but important new sites for music therapy, particularly for offenders with severe mental illness whose needs may not be met by other kinds of therapy. Daveson and Edwards (2001) provide what might be considered the most detailed overview of work on music therapy in prisons, focusing particularly on the fields of correctional and forensics psychiatry. They confirm that clinical and research literature on music therapy in correctional psychiatry and, in prisons more generally, is still
sparse, despite calls for more in-depth research from Thaut (1987, 1992) and Hoskyns (1995). Drawing on a case study in a women’s prison (location undisclosed), Daveson and Edwards (2001: 140) noted that, according to participant reports, “song writing and song parody (substituting lyrics into pre-composed material) consistently allowed for self-expression, while vocal recreation (singing of familiar songs) and listening to songs sung assisted in relaxation.” Their work parallels Sarah Hoskyns’s (1995) claim that group music therapy in prisons could lead to changes in self-perception, communication, and adaptation to change, and further connects with Kjell Skyllstad’s (2008) work on the potential of music to play a key role in transformative justice and other forms of conflict resolution (see also Hirsch, 2012; Urbain, 2008).

As these authors note, there is much work to be done on music programs and education in prisons, and to query whether music is an effective response to current conditions of confinement. I use this dissertation to address gaps in this area of inquiry, regarding music as an important and unique extension of sonic experience, and give voice to the complexities associated with use and impact. In Chapter Six, I argue that if music is to be used for education and therapy purposes, it would be best done as an ongoing endeavour in empathy, collaboration, and emotional expression; as a choice elected by and in active consultation with inmates, rather than as a corrective or prescriptive measure.
Part III. Emotional Geographies and Affective Hauntologies

Sound is an absence, a haunting; this is its nature. Sound is absence, beguiling; out of sight, out of reach. What made the sound? Who is there? Sound is void, fear and wonder. Listening, as if to the dead, like a medium who deals only in history and what is lost, the ear attunes itself to distant signals, eavesdropping on ghosts and their chatter. (Toop, 2011: 170)

Sonic experience is dynamic in large part because the fluid qualities of sound and listening are constituted by nuanced relationships with emotion. My work is underpinned by an appreciation of the crucial role of emotion in the construction, performance, and perception of everyday life, primarily informed by the work of feminist geographers (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Davidson, Bondi and Smith, 2005; see also Ahmed, 2004). As such, the questions I ask of participants, of other research materials, and of myself have been rooted in the notion that sound, as well as incarceration, is experienced through and as emotion. Chapter Five offers the most in-depth treatment of the interrelations between sound, emotion, and carceral experience. However, since emotion cannot – and, in my opinion, should not – be written out of research that does not explicitly interrogate emotion, connections to the emotional capacity of sound in historical (Chapter Four) and musical (Chapter Six) accounts of prisons pulse throughout the dissertation.

In prisons, great efforts have been made to suppress certain emotional expressions associated with aggression and intimidation (LaBelle, 2010), with programs and spaces designed to channel emotion in ways that are (normatively) deemed ‘safe’, productive, and rehabilitative.

Scholarly interest in emotions is not new; a concerted engagement with emotional knowledge is noted to have begun in the 1970s with humanistic approaches (see, for example, Rowles, 1978) but has become more established in geography since the early 2000s. Anderson and Smith’s (2001) editorial intervention marked a shift from (at best) acknowledging the effect of emotion in scientific pursuits – but then taking great care to eliminate or ignore it – to thinking
critically about the ways in which emotion helps construct, organise, and make sense of the world. In this regard, feminist and post-structuralist writers would argue, the power of emotion to shape knowledge and enact change is something to be appreciated, if not always welcomed. I draw inspiration from Anderson and Smith by embracing the potential of emotional “ways of knowing, being and doing” to “take geographical knowledges – and the relevance that comes with them – beyond their usual visual, textual, and linguistic domains” (2001: 8).

If Anderson and Smith’s paper broke new ground to establish emotion’s home in geography, Davidson, Bondi and Smith’s (2005) edited collection, *Emotional Geographies* could be said to have laid the foundation (see also Smith, Davidson, Cameron, and Bondi, 2009). In their introductory chapter, editors Liz Bondi, Joyce Davidson, and Mick Smith (2005: 1) address the absence of emotion in much geographical scholarship, at least explicitly, explaining that “emotions are never simply surface phenomena, they are never easy to define or demarcate, and they [are] not easily observed or mapped although they inform every aspect of our lives.” As cultural practices, emotions are not simply felt passively; rather, emotions *do* things, shaping social relations and mobilising communities (Ahmed, 2004) in both tangible and intangible ways. Indeed, qualitative researchers struggle with finding ways to engage and express emotion (Bondi, 2005), particularly when the language we use to describe emotions is unable to capture or represent what is felt by people. The task of writing about and with emotion leads emotional geographers to search for new methodologies that might provide alternative means of expression (Moss, 2002). Joyce Davidson and Christine Milligan (2004: 525) point to the ways in which articulations of emotion are spatially mediated, noting that “we speak of the ‘heights’ of joy and the ‘depths’ of despair, significant others are comfortingly close or distressingly distant.” Such spatial articulations resemble Gresham Sykes’s conceptualisation of the “pains of
imprisonment” which employs metaphors of weight and depth to communicate pain that might not be visible. Building on Sykes’s work, Ben Crewe’s addition of “tightness” is further reminiscent of Davidson and Milligan’s spatial conceptualisation of pain, expressing a new type of bodily confinement than the more obviously physical examples of prison walls and cells.

My research on sound and spatiality shares many of the same struggles as emotional geography, not least because I am interested in how emotion is deeply connected to people’s sonic and musical experiences, but also because sound studies have been relatively absent in the discipline of geography for many of the same reasons noted above. Like emotion, sound informs our everyday thoughts, movements, and interactions, and yet sound, too, is difficult to conceptualise. The methodologies used for researching other geographical phenomena are typically not sufficient for studying sound, largely because geographers, as I have mentioned, tend to employ visual methods. Setting out to explore sound thus requires openness to alternative (and potentially more fruitful) approaches.

Connected to emotion is the notion of affect, a term that is as difficult to define as its effect on us, but that might well be understood as “the fluctuations of feeling that shape the experiential in ways that impact but nevertheless evade conscious knowing” (Thompson and Biddle: 2005: 6). In this dissertation, I make the case that sound has affective qualities that contribute, in important ways, to the embodiment and constitution of carceral space. Following Boyd and Duffy (2012), geographers would benefit from examining the importance of sound and music for “thinking through the affective and intuitive processes that constitute self and place –

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38 Sykes (1958) provided an early account of the shift from the infliction of physical pain to embodied suffering in prisons. According to Sykes, “pains of imprisonment” included the deprivation of liberty, the deprivation of goods and services, the deprivation of heterosexual relationships, the deprivation of autonomy, and the deprivation of security (see pp. 63-83). I provide a more detailed account of Sykes’ contributions, as well as Crewe’s revisitation of the pains of imprisonment, in Chapter Four.
that is, how we know place experientially” (see also Duffy, 2009). Likewise, Thompson and Biddle (2005) explain the connections between sound, spatiality, and affective experience that circulate through bodies. They foreground the affective potential of sounds “that put us at ease” and others that, in being experienced as out-of-place, “call us to alert and make our heart race, filling us with a sense of unease” (11). In Chapter Five (“Feeling the Range”), I exemplify how sonic atmospheres or pulses are felt by inmates and staff in ways that might be vital to their safety, but that cannot be generalised, demonstrated or easily represented. According to Boyd and Duffy (2012: 4), sound produces affective energies that spread “like wildfire” (Thrift, 2008: 235) passing through human and non-human bodies in “contagious” ways.

Conceptions of affective listening, many of which draw upon the writings of Jean-Luc Nancy (2007; see also Simpson, 2009) recognise that listening is a full- and multi-body experience. This includes the noticeable physical effects of sonic phenomena, such as the vibrations we feel and hear as sound or the headache that develops at high decibels. It also makes room for the unconscious ways in which sound acts on our bodies, as well as the ways in which our bodies act upon other materialities through our own capacities to make sound; in other words, as Spinoza wrote, sound plays an important role in “the bodily capacity to act and be acted upon” (see Duffy, 2013; Kanngieser, 2012). For Michael Gallagher (2013)39, sound art offers unique potential to experiment with, if not capture, the in-betweenness of affective experience, and the imaginative associations that might arise in welcome and unwelcome ways.

The notion of affective listening has strong connections to literature on hauntungs, which likewise invokes materialities and metaphors of silence, reverie, resonance, rhythm, pulse, and echo. If places are “haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can

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39 www.michaelgallagher.co.uk.
‘invoke’ or not,” as de Certeau (1984: 108) writes, then geographers seem well positioned to take up the notion of hauntings as a conceptual framing. Indeed, as Emilie Cameron (2011) notes, many already have, particularly those (re-)engaging psychoanalysis as a mode of geographical inquiry (Kingsbury and Pile, 2014; see also Bondi, 2014; Cameron and Forrester, 2014; Davidson and Parr, 2014) as well as interconnections between post-colonial, feminist, and posthumanist frameworks (E. Cameron, 2011; Gordon, 1997; Gunew, 2004). Throughout my dissertation, I utilise the metaphor of haunting as a way to conceptualise the space between what is absent and present – a lingering of sorts that is neither here nor there, yet seems to exist somewhere in an affective, if intangible, sense. Other writers use the term “uncanny,” invoking Freud’s work (1981; see also Emberley, 2014; Marinelli and Ricatti, 2013; Masschelein, 2011) to describe a similar affective quality, while others describe that which is “spectral,” “eerie,” or “ghostly.” I use the term “haunting” to encompass a variety of these concepts and experiences, though I recognise that there are linguistic differences that alter their meaning in particular contexts.

Here, I wish to make a case for hauntology (Derrida, 1994; see also Gordon, 1997) as a conceptual glue that bonds the sonic with the carceral, given that many of their shared attributes elicit a sense of the spectral, the ghostly, and the silenced (see Jones, Robinson, and Turner, 2012). Engagement with hauntings, ghosts, and the ‘uncanny’ (Freud, 1959) is not new to geographical scholarship (E. Cameron, 2008, 2011; Clayton, 2001; Lorimer, 2005; Pile, 2005; Roberts, 2013; Wylie, 2007). As Emilie Cameron (2011) writes, “ghosts allude to the presence of that which has been excluded, marginalised, and expelled; although themselves immaterial and spectral, they gesture towards the materiality of colonized and abject bodies.” Included within this imagination, I think, are Canada’s incarcerated populations, a disproportionate number of
which are locked away in prisons for reasons that reflect a colonial legacy (Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi, 2011; Emberley, 2014; Jacobs, 2012). As Emilie Cameron warns, however, hauntology is easily employed to romanticise and exotify a past that might distract from or reproduce everyday political injustices that currently leave imprints on material bodies and landscapes. My conceptualisation of hauntings is developed with this precaution in mind. Prisons like Kingston Penitentiary (1835-2013) bear the haunting weight of thousands of occupants, the historical transformations of disciplinary regimes, and the injustices that led to and constituted incarceration for centuries. However, unless these “carceral ghosts” are explored in dialogue with the political materialities of incarceration today, an approach that Moran and Morin (2015) call the “usable carceral past” (see Chapter Four), attention to such hauntings might fall into the trap of unreflexive romanticism.

More recently, sound researchers, including geographers, have engaged with Derrida’s articulation of hauntology as a way of thinking about the fleeting, ephemeral properties of sound and auditory space (Gallagher, 2015; Toop, 2010, 2011). David Toop (2011: 170) invokes the kinaesthetic properties of sound, writing that “sound is energy unleashed, yet also the perpetual emerging and vanishing, growth and decay of life and death, the perfect metaphor for a ghost.” The concept of haunting insists on attention to multiple, nested, and often silenced histories; this presents an opportunity to use hauntings as a way to bridge the theoretical, metaphorical, empirical, and the historical. Sonic methods such as soundwalks, audio drifts, sound installations, and impulse response tests (Cabot, 1978)40 can help access the layered, and often

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40 Impulse response tests (Cabot, 1978) collect the frequencies of a given space, such as a room, and offer a type of acoustic snapshot that can be used for representing and transfusing that space in other locations. See Chapters Four and Six for a more detailed discussion about the potential of the technique for experimentation with carceral spatialities.
silenced, histories of prisons at varying stages of research. I see my work being connected by hauntings through three key threads.

First, sound has ephemeral qualities (Samuels et al., 2010), particularly because of its fleeting and multi-layered properties, that blur boundaries of absence and presence (Thrift and French, 2002; Jones, Robinson and Turner, 2012). We might think of sound, itself, as a type of decay – an auditory form of ruination (Edensor, 2001; Gallagher, 2015; Lorimer and Murray, 2015; Stoler, 2013) that disintegrates as sound waves flatten, but that resonates as an echo. In addition to these ontologies of sound, we can also experiment with the ephemeral, fleeting, and spectral characteristics of hauntology through sonic methods. I explore the potential of such methods in Chapter Three, and discuss how future research might take up these methods as a way of expressing ideas, histories, and identities that might otherwise go unacknowledged in conventional research formats. Like sonic environments, spaces of incarceration are imagined as macabre and ghostly sites in which layered histories of pain, suffering, and abandonment linger. Indeed, carceral photography is popular for its depiction of derelict, condemned correctional facilities that invoke a haunted quality to the not-so-empty cells and hallways (see Jones, 2014). In Chapter Five, I take up the notion that prisons can be explored as powerfully affective sites that act on the body as the body intersects with carceral power. The same might be said of sound, which has the potential to elicit unsettling and often inexplicable visceral responses.

Secondly, I make the case that geographers would benefit from greater attention to both sonic and carceral space, two areas of inquiry that have been marginalised – even silenced – in everyday discourse and geographical literature. Yet, returning to de Certeau, they continue to inform and shape the ways in which we know and dwell in the world. I use this dissertation as an opportunity to “invoke” these disciplinary silences and invisibilities, removing the sonic and the
carceral from the margins and highlighting their potential for rethinking space. The concept of hauntings is therefore useful not only as a kind of affective absent-presence in sonic and carceral worlds, but also as a way to acknowledge ways of knowing and types of experience that are systemically excluded from geographical scholarship.

Finally, we might look to the constant leakiness of carceral temporalities and spatialities – echoing Allspach’s (2010) notion of the transcarceral (see also Moran, 2015) – in Kingston’s material built landscape. Stone walls and barbed wire of looming correctional facilities in the Kingston area suggest stark, impermeable boundaries, but these walls are circumvented by the materiality of stories and voice (E. Cameron, 2012; see also Emberley, 2014; Kanngieser, 2012) that leak through walls and gates, to be encountered by other ears and minds. Despite attempts to keep incarcerated experiences “out of sight, out of mind,” carceral pasts and presents (see Turner and Peters, 2015) are circulated through: ghost walks and whispers of former staff; the street busker telling stories of “doing time” in KP; the media’s incessant recounting of escape attempts and famous “cons”; and even letters snuck out of Kingston Penitentiary from Joseph Cleroux to Phyllis Halliday, preserved and transformed into historical fiction by the author who found them in her attic (Simonds, 1996). Indeed, as I show in Chapter Four, the penitentiary may be closed to the public, but it continues to shape the public imagination.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced a route through the multi-disciplinary literature that continues to shape the fields of sonic and carceral geographies, or what I call carceral acoustemologies. This layered framework simultaneously accounts for sonic ways of knowing about prisons and that also encourages us to consider what carceral experiences might tell us about the spatialities of
sound. I have also used the language of hauntings and hauntology as a point of convergence to argue that experiences of sound and incarceration are deeply emotional and politicised, and both are considered to share a sense of spectrality and ephemerality.

In Chapter Three, I discuss my methodological approach to studying the embodied and emotional experiences of sound in prisons. As I will demonstrate, my methodological approach emerges out of and further develops the scholarship I have outlined in this chapter. The discussion of literature in this chapter is not exhaustive, but rather stands as an overview of a range of scholarship that shapes my conceptualisations of sound, incarceration, and space. I will introduce more literature throughout the dissertation as it pertains to the specific topics discussed in each chapter. As both sonic and carceral geographies are relatively new and constantly transforming, so too are the theoretical, epistemological, and methodological approaches we might use to engage with the sonic experiences of prisons.
Chapter 3

Methodology: Research Design, Ethics, and Exclusions

Introduction

Emerging out of existing literature and the epistemological groundwork laid in Chapter Two, this chapter outlines the research design and methodological approaches I developed for studying spatialities of sound and imprisonment. The chapter is split into three parts that account for the ethical, methodological, and technical elements of my research design. In Part I, I begin with an extensive discussion about the challenges faced trying to do research in and about prisons, as a way of contextualising the account of methods that follows. Part of this involves providing an overview of my experience with multi-institutional ethics processes: one ethics proposal that was approved by Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board (see Appendix B), the other denied by Correctional Service of Canada’s Research Committee. When I write about barriers to access, therefore, I am primarily referring to the inability to conduct research inside prisons as a result of CSC’s rejection of my research proposal. I close Part I with an extensive discussion about the politics of institutional ethics processes, making a case for what I call the “ethical circumvention” of what I experienced to be misguided, bureaucratic research processes.

In Part II, I situate my research within a feminist qualitative research methodology, alongside a discussion about my own positionality as a way of placing myself in this research. I then provide a brief overview of methodological approaches to prison research, discussing the necessity for flexible and alternative methods that account for barriers to access, working with vulnerable populations, and negotiating contradictory understandings of what constitutes ethical research. In Part III, I discuss specific details and techniques of my research design. I outline the
multiple methods used to address my research questions, referring back to Parts I and II for context.

This chapter, therefore, serves two key purposes. In one sense, it is an explanatory discussion about my research design, laying important foundations for the remaining chapters and prepares the reader for what follows. However, I do not intend this chapter to exist as a stark cut-off point that bisects the dissertation along the lines of “research design” and “findings/contributions”; rather, I expect it to stand as a contribution of its own kind. I present a reflexive account of the challenges of conducting prison research, particularly using sonic methods, and leave behind ideas and recommendations that are meant to ignite future inquiry, experimentation, and action. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the openings and conjectures produced by my research design, some of which might inspire future projects and expanded methodologies.

Part I: Ethical barriers, circumventions, and interventions

“The Silent Treatment”

Despite the many different meanings to the word, “segregation” is typically understood and performed in prisons as administrative segregation (Corrections and Conditional Release Act, 2015 [1992]). As a euphemistic term for solitary confinement, this practice physically separates inmates from the general population in prisons. In Canada, administrative segregation can be used both as a form of punishment inflicted on inmates and a form of protection that inmates can request. Yet we must not forget that all inmates are segregated in varying capacities, even after release into transcarceral settings (Moran et al., 2011). Beyond the obvious physical isolation
that materialises through the prison walls, as well as locked doors and other physical restrictions inside, I am particularly interested in the segregation of ideas, communication, and opinions that shape how we understand prisons and experiences of incarceration.

Following the sonic theme of my work, I understand the segregation of critical thought and free speech as a ‘silencing’ process, which I will address here in two ways. First, it is evident that, as part of discipline and punishment techniques, freedom of speech for inmates in prisons is heavily restricted. Consequently, little is known of inmates’ everyday experiences of incarceration; our conceptualisations of incarceration are thus missing key accounts that might change our understandings. Second, I argue, Correctional Services Canada, especially under the Harper Government, have made a concerted effort to “muzzle” researchers who might otherwise provide insight into issues of social justice, treatment of inmates and staff, and the unjust power relations that weave throughout carceral spaces.

**Silencing of inmates**

As I explain in Chapter Four, Kingston Penitentiary’s first written regulations in 1836 stated that the entire system of discipline in the prison rested on the prevention of verbal sounds; inmates could only communicate with the staff using hand gestures, unless given permission to speak (Hennessy, 1999). These sonic rules, in place to varying degrees for a century, undoubtedly

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41 Anecdotally, I had opportunities to speak with other prison researchers in the Kingston area who told me that there have been greater restrictions on research inside prisons since the Harper Government came into power, some of whom were experiencing their own challenges with access that they had not experienced prior to that. This is not, however, to suggest that the previous (Liberal) party made socially just decisions about criminalisation and punishment.
affected how the prison was organised, how bodies moved, and how people attached meaning to the different spaces within the institution (LaBelle, 2010).

More recently, communication is less spatially and temporally regulated, although this does not mean that inmates are in control of their own voices and sounds. Indeed, much of the previous practices of sonic control have carried on, albeit in less formal ways and using different techniques. Mandy Hiscock’s blog, *bored but not broken*, identifies several instances when the vocalisation of grievances or particular political beliefs resulted in “informal” physical punishment from correctional officers or unwarranted restrictions on food, social communication, and outdoor activity (Hiscocks, 2012).

In addition to informal and inconsistent punishment from correctional officers, segregation and silencing further operate through the heavy monitoring of communication between inmates and other individuals both inside and outside the prison. According to Hiscocks, phone calls in federal prisons are recorded and time-restricted, and all outgoing and incoming mail is opened and read by CSC staff. As Dominique Moran (2014) writes in a discussion of the spatialities of visitation, visiting areas in prison are highly political, yet liminal, carceral spaces. In Canadian prisons, as one participant explained (telephone interview), visits must be scheduled and can be cancelled without notice, and visiting areas may be equipped

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42 Mandy Hiscocks is a Canadian woman who was accused of criminal conspiracy leading up to and during the G20 protests in Toronto, Canada, in the summer of 2010. She spent nearly one year imprisoned in both maximum and medium security levels at Vanier Institution for Women. She started her blog before entering prison and continued it while incarcerated by writing it on paper and dictating it over the phone to a friend who then posted her words online.

43 On *bored but not broken*, Mandy Hiscocks raised awareness about the severe lack of privacy in the context of Vanier’s mail system, and what she understood to be wrongful discrimination against researchers. In this post, she warned readers that her mail was held back because a researcher had contacted her to ask about her experience in prison. She was not given the identity of the researcher and would not receive that particular piece of mail until her discharge from Vanier.

44 This type of invasive surveillance informed my own concerns about confidentiality with participants, and my commitment to protecting their identities.
with disguised audio recorders. Silences are, therefore, just as much a part of the social interaction as the words spoken. Finally, inmates are not permitted access to Internet technologies, which reduces opportunities to learn about current issues, and to have their voices “heard” online (Sapers, 2012). Acts of re-temporalising and re-spatialising communication thus segregates inmates further by restricting what and how much can be communicated in short periods of time and in particular spaces.

Despite the systematic exclusion that involves segregation or silencing of opinions and experiences in prisons, inmates continue to explore creative ways of engaging with the non-imprisoned public through blogs, music, prison radio programs, telephone interviews with journalists, and messages through family members, among other tactics, as I will explain in later chapters. These forms of circumvention are crucial in the reconstitution of prisons and experiences of incarceration, yet can be challenging because they require time and reliable contacts. Not every inmate is fortunate to have these resources, but there are community activist groups who dedicate time and resources to facilitating communication across and within prison walls.

Restrictions on inmates’ ability to communicate with others, including the resulting self-censorship that occurs while under the surveillance of authorities that have the power to inflict informal punishment or extend a sentence, have major implications for how prison environments are understood by the non-incarcerated general public. As a researcher, I am in a privileged position to devote much time to the subject of prisons, and feel compelled to explore further the emotional and embodied experiences of prisons. An increasingly apparent challenge with

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45 This participant also speculated that there are likely many hidden recorders in other spaces throughout the prison.
46 These include, but are not limited to, Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG), CFRC 101.9 Prison Radio, and End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC), as well as religious activist groups.
carceral research, however, is the degree to which researchers in Canada have been restricted from gaining access to highly regulated research sites like prisons. In what follows, I explore how the silencing of experiences and alternative perspectives on prisons is extended to include the “muzzling”47 of researchers.

“Muzzling” of Researchers

After reading and hearing the journeys of other researchers who have been or are trying to gain access to prisons, a familiar story emerges. All too common for prison ethnographers are the unsuccessful cold calls to prisons, unreturned voicemails, exchanges with staff members who write down the details of the research that they will “pass along” to another authority figure, unlisted contact information, denied tour requests, and e-mails that are “lost” in an overflowing inbox. In this regard, I understand access to include not only permission to enter the property for personal and research purposes, but also access to inmates (by phone, mail, or in person), and to information about prison conditions, regulations, and management. Restricted access is often explained using the façade of protection, particularly for visitors. As Hiscocks blogged, CSC officials seem eager to use student tours of prisons to encourage youth to obey the law, yet gawking visitors “will never be allowed to ask our opinion on how this place is run” (Hiscocks, 2012). What is often disguised as protection – shielding visitors from hardened criminals (see Piché and Walby, 2010) – begs the question: protection of what, and whom? If visitors and

47 The “muzzling” of scientists has occupied much of the mainstream media’s attention in Canada and around the world (see, for example, Davison, 2012). The term is used to describe the silencing of scientists whose research reveals findings that might have undesirable implications for the Conservative agenda. I have borrowed the term and extended it to include researchers from an array of disciplines whose agendas do not coincide with the neoliberal values of the Conservative party.
researchers are not permitted to communicate with inmates about their experiences, it is arguably fair to speculate that CSC is protecting its own authoritative power to make unchallenged decisions about penal practice.

The difficulty of accessing prisons as research sites often leads to the abandonment of original methods in favour of more accessible approaches to understanding prison experiences (Mears, 2012; Piché, 2012). This might include talking to non-incarcerated individuals with personal experience of prisons (e.g., social workers, lawyers, or former employees) or reviewing reports that address inmate accounts. It was not my decision, nor my preference, to shift my focus to off-site, often secondary-sourced, data collection. However, when access becomes too great a barrier, it is necessary to find new ways of addressing the same research problem without compromising the broader ethical and political objectives of the research. A key factor in the ability to conduct a study in the intended research environment is the ethics application process. The ethics process used and evaluated by CSC necessitated a redirection of energy and focus in my research project. In the following section, I interrogate the current ethics processes at both university and penal institutions while reflecting on my own experiences with ethical dilemmas and, indeed, dilemmas about ethics processes. I argue that, although it is certainly crucial for researchers to practice ethical research, the ethics application process seems to serve bureaucratic purposes that ultimately privilege the protection of the institution over the researcher and research subjects (Dingwall, 2012).

**Research ethics processes: bureaucratic performances and hierarchies of value**

My research is multi-institutional, in that it is based out of a university but intended to be conducted in and about prisons, and thus required two separate ethics application processes. The
first application, submitted initially to my departmental ethics committee and later for full review to the General Research Ethics Board at Queen’s University, was an arduous process with the bulk of the difficult work occurring well before submission. All ethics applications should encourage critical thought about the purpose, nature, design, and dissemination of one’s research; this practice of constant reflexivity is heightened when the research involves vulnerable populations in what we might be called “closed” or “total” institutions (Goffman, 1961).

My project was granted ethics clearance by Queen’s University’s General Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A). The proposal, with copies of ethics clearance, was then submitted to the CSC for review by four separate “gatekeeper” committees: Regional Research Committee (RRC), Regional Deputy Commissioner, Director General Research at National Headquarters, and the Deputy Commissioner for Women. At any point along this chain of committees, the research proposal could be rejected, and the interpretation of the ethics proposal was the key document that determined the fate of the research. Within a rapid ten days of notification that my proposal was being forwarded to the first committee (RRC), I received an e-mail indicating that my research proposal was denied by the Regional Deputy Commissioner based on the comments provided by the RRC. According to the Regional Administrator of Policy and Planning, the proposal was denied because the research “did not contribute to the priorities of CSC and there was no anticipated benefit to the Service.” The following is a list of the criteria for assessment, according to the CSC Commissioner’s Directive 009 (2004):

1. Conformity with the principles of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act
2. Contribution to the achievement of the Mission and the priorities of the Correctional Service of Canada
3. Compliance with the Tri-Council's Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
4. Level of disruption to the implementation of correctional objectives from an operational perspective
5. Quality of the methodology
6. Qualifications of researchers
7. Anticipated benefit to corrections
8. Value for money

A brief glance at the criteria indicates the value placed on research in relation to the priorities of the Service, which do not seem to include the importance of the research to those most deeply affected by correctional decisions: namely, inmates and staff. This is particularly evident through the response that there “there was no anticipated benefit to the Service”, which I take to mean the authoritative and administrative levels of the CSC, rather than the inmates housed by the Service. Much of my ethics application was dedicated to showing how this research could be beneficial to the research subjects (inmates and staff) and broader communities; however, there is no explicit recognition of these groups in the criteria listed above.

My experience with the CSC research approval process demonstrates the use of an ethics application for bureaucratic purposes that, by my interpretation, benefit the institution rather than the potential research subjects (see Haggerty, 2004). Indeed, I have found that just as some research ethics boards at universities use “ethics” as a way to prevent legal conflict with subjects and their associated organisations, CSC appears to use the ethics application as a filtering process that, in some cases, may enable rapid rejection of research proposals for very vague reasons. It is easier and perhaps less contestable to say that research should not be conducted on the grounds of safety and privacy of participants or that there appears to be insufficient benefits to the organisation, rather than admitting that the CSC simply does not want critical researchers to shed light on prison conditions. Such a claim may seem speculative, yet when we consider the broader political climate of Canada addressed in Chapter One, the notion of silencing researchers and their subjects (inmates) may not be entirely off the mark.
This political context is relevant to the trajectory of my research because it a) points to the political urgency of research that addresses the implications of the federal government’s correctional decisions on the well-being of inmates and staff, b) raises new questions that inform my research (for example, the effects of increasing incidences of double-bunking on the sensory, embodied, and emotional experiences of prisons), and c) provides some explanation for the challenges with access to prisons as the key research sites, particularly for researchers whose objectives or interests may not align with those of CSC and the Conservative government. Indeed, this is not to suggest that no researcher can gain access to prisons as study sites, yet those who are permitted to conduct research with inmates as subjects tend to produce results that support Canada’s current “tough on crime” agenda. For example, psychological research that studies facial patterns of “criminals” is more likely to be granted access because this research helps law enforcement profile potential offenders, rather than research that is intended to better understand inmates’ experiences and well-being (Ward & Bailey, 2012). With this in mind, and when we refer back to the CSC’s list of criteria for acceptable research, it would seem that “anticipated benefit to corrections” and “value for money” are at the crux of the decision for what constitutes valuable research.

When questions of ethics are re-integrated into the above discussion, we again catch a glimpse of how the requirements of an ethics application might serve bureaucratic purposes more than the interests of the research subjects and researcher. I understand this to be the case for both institutions that evaluated my research proposal – Queen’s University and CSC – yet there are key differences between the two institutions. My experience with university research ethics processes is that, with Canadian universities’ emphasis on research, it is in the ethics boards’ best interest to help academics through the application process in ways that ultimately encourage the
successful clearance of ethical research. This is not to deny that the ethics application process is also a bureaucratic endeavour that protects the university from legal action in response to poor research practices. However, I argue that, when compared to other institutional ethics processes, the university’s main goal is to help researchers move forward to carry out their research ethically while thinking critically about the relations of power that are mobilised through particular methodological decisions. Multi-institutional research, particularly that which moves beyond educational institutions, reveals both stark and subtle differences in the way research is interpreted and valued.

Returning to the criteria provided by CSC for evaluating research and ethics proposals, objectives like “value for money” and “benefit to corrections” seem to illuminate the differences between penal and post-secondary institutions. Prioritizing finances, resources, and benefits to the institution that houses the research (in this case, CSC and its prisons) highlights a different value system than one that evaluates research presumably based more on quality, overall impact on the individual and collective well-being of research subjects (primarily inmates), and broader community benefits. CSC, by my estimation, uses the research ethics application strategically as a façade for an overprotective screening process that goes beyond ethics and quality of research, and enters into a practice that privileges research that supports criminalisation, punishment, and the prison industrial complex.

48 It is notable that such values reflect neoliberal corporate agendas that indicate a larger shift from public to private penal regimes.
49 This claim is indeed speculative, yet comes from an examination of the research that is published on the CSC website, as well as in-depth discussions with – and readings of – fellow researchers who have endeavoured to provide insight into the political, cultural, and social experiences of prisons. For examples of the ethical limits of “overprotective” gatekeepers, see Mautherner et al. (2002).
Ethical circumventions and interventions

The more I returned to my research proposal, the more concerned I became about meeting the feminist, political aims of my research: specifically, to investigate marginalised spaces in which typically silent – or silenced, as the case may be – voices and experiences are engaged. To me, this ultimately meant entering prisons to speak to the people most affected by discourses and practices of criminalisation and punishment, prison design, and social interaction within prisons, all within the specific context of acoustic space. Changing the spaces of my research might have meant abandoning not only my initial aims, but also the people and stories I sought in favour of ones that were more accessible.

I would like to advocate here for the potentiality of what I call “ethical circumvention of ethics” in the case of prison research. I understand this practice to involve three stages. First, as has been done, the process requires critical examination of the ethical concerns of my research, including risks, benefits, and confidentiality and anonymity, for my participants, myself, and the institutions I represent and study. Second, as I have laid out in the above discussion, it is necessary to consider how multi-institutional ethics processes work with and against each other, to get a sense of the values placed on particular types of research, how benefits and risks are interpreted, and the broader political and cultural contexts that shape each institution. This also requires direct attempts to make the study seem attractive for each institution in a way that does not threaten the ethical and political aims of the research. In many cases, a compromise can be made by reworking methods or making slight changes to the parameters of the research. In other cases, such as prison research, a compromise might mean sacrificing important goals in the name of researcher risk or lack of benefit to the broader correctional institution, thus reinforcing the
unethical silencing and alienation of inmates. This leads me to the third part of the process, which is the active circumvention of one institution’s understanding of “ethics” and “acceptable research” in favour of creating more inclusive accounts of carceral worlds.

Wilson and Hodgson (2012) point out the irony of research ethics committees (RECs) being unsupportive of research projects with “dangerous” or vulnerable populations, in part due to a lack of appreciation for the cultural context of the research. Drawing from their research with drug using offenders, the authors argue that “the very groups most in need of the research that can provoke awareness of ill thought out policies can be further isolated by the risk-adverse decisions of the REC” (2012: 115). Though my research does not primarily address carceral policy as a matter of priority, an investigation of how the soundscapes of prisons are partially produced by broader policies regarding inmate behaviour and treatment, physical or material design of prisons, and punishment, is meant to provoke the type of awareness urged by Wilson and Hodgson.

Prison research ethics boards, which are typically housed off-site and maintain “social distance” (Wilson and Hodgson, 2012: 125) from the research site, ultimately make executive decisions on behalf of the inmates and staff who experience prisons first hand. Such a process deprives potential participants of the opportunity to voice their opinions about the research and provide insight into why the research might be beneficial to those who spend the most time in carceral spaces. Wilson and Hodgson (2012: 126) write that “it could reasonably be argued that restricting research on stigmatised groups is discriminatory and unethical because it allows the consequences of social policy to remain hidden or stigmatised.” Indeed, the political urgency of hearing prisoners’ otherwise silenced experiences is increasing dramatically as the federal government pushes constrictive neoliberal agendas through legislature and into carceral spaces.
My research project moved forward, for the most part, outside of prisons, yet I continued to search for ways to counter and circumvent the overbearing attempts to keep prisons and their occupants hidden and silenced from the broader public. This meant exploring creative methods that could confront discriminatory interpretations of “ethics” while creating room for what I consider to be more ethical approaches to carceral knowledge. In Chapter Six, I discuss a case study that emerged in part through circumventive, creative actions. In 2013, I became aware of a musical collaboration between a local musician and inmates at Pittsburgh Institution. After contacting the musician to ask for more information, and organizing an interview with him, he later invited me to attend a recording session at the minimum-security prison. I made it clear that my research had been denied by CSC, and was concerned about gaining access as well as how I might explain my presence to the musicians at Pittsburgh.

The opportunity to visit a prison at that point in my research held great potential, and yet I was aware of the ethical risks of being granted access to the prison for reasons that did not clearly specify a connection to research. I spoke to the musician about how to negotiate this, and we decided that I would come as a relatively passive observer. It was, after all, true that I was interested in the production of the album, and that I supported musical collaboration between people inside and outside prisons. I thus entered the prison in the same way many other acquaintances of the musician had done: as someone with a passion for music, wanting to learn more about the process of collaborating on an album in prison. I did not conduct interviews, nor did I ask the inmates or staff questions related to my research; for the most part, I sat quietly, offering help with equipment when needed and sharing positive feedback. I did, however, use the experience as an opportunity to observe the daily operations of the prison where possible, and my ears were perked to establish my own sense of the prison’s soundscape. This included the
sounds of the “recording studio” (the chapel), but also the broader more-than-human soundscapes of the prison: birdsong, loudspeakers, doors, ventilation systems, jingling keys, among other sound events.\(^5\) My presence also afforded me the opportunity to hear other people’s reactions to particular sounds, including the loudspeaker and “disruptive” guards talking outside the recording space.

Given that I was advised not to share identifying information about myself for reasons of personal safety and to avoid raising flags with the CSC Research Department, I did not tell the inmates that I was a researcher. Instead, I explained that I was a student with an interest in music, and wanted to learn more about the importance of music in prisons. I struggled with this partial representation, because it potentially signalled a form of mistrust between me and the incarcerated populations whose experiences I truly valued. However, I felt that my presence in the prison was also an important display of interest, connection, and respect that allowed me to establish trust between myself and the incarcerated men who were sharing their emotions through the recording process, in my presence and on the album. To the extent that is possible, I feel that my interaction with the men working on the album was positive, respectful, and an enjoyable experience. I continue to share music with these men, through the CFRC Prison Radio show, which features a “Calls From Home” program that allows people to request music and share messages, using airwaves to permeate prison walls.

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\(^5\) See Chapter Six for a more extended discussion about more-than-human elements of carceral soundscapes.
Summary: Lessons learned in limbo

The challenges faced trying to follow through with prison research have elicited an array of emotional responses that ultimately shape how I imagine, pursue, and write about my research. Despite attempts to avoid finger-pointing, my experience remains laced with feelings of frustration, disappointment, and bitterness, but also hope, reflection, and creativity. Acknowledging my emotional responses to various interactions and blockages is important for what it can produce. Without experiencing frustration, for example, I might not have reconsidered the epistemological and ontological interpretations of ‘ethics’ and I might have neglected the passion that drove my political aims in favour of an easier or more efficient project.

Prison research is fraught with challenges of access and trust, both of which are situated in a wider environment of heavy securitisation, disciplinary regimes, and within a political context that casts inmates and prison conditions to the margins (Piché, 2012; Rhodes, 2001; Ward and Bailey, 2012). I encourage carceral researchers to find new ways of dissolving the barriers that prevent those most affected by incarceration from sharing their narratives and contributing to the co-constituted knowledge about prison experiences. I have argued that this might involve the creative circumvention of institutional ethics processes in favour of a more personal, political sense of ethical conduct. Drawing from methodological insights provided by Ward and Bailey (2012) as well as Wilson and Hodgson (2012), I have made a case for the elasticity of ethical boundaries, and encourage other researchers to challenge the bureaucratic practices of research ethics among institutions that privilege “value for money” and benefits to institutional authorities as evaluation criteria. I challenge other prison researchers to take the same opportunity.
Part II: Methodology

Feminist qualitative methodologies

My feminist qualitative methodology is bound to epistemological foundations that acknowledge the political and subjective nature of knowledge and experience (Moss, 2002; Rose, 1993). Feminist methodologies are well-suited to my research because I am particularly interested in exploring how sonic practice is constituted through embodied performance (Butler, 1990), which includes, but is not limited to, careful consideration of gender relations. Although, for reasons outlined below, my research ended up being primarily centred around men’s institutions, I remain committed to examining the ways in which carceral soundscapes are gendered and the role of sound in the enactment of gendered identities within prisons.

Feminist methodologies support my epistemological commitments that recognise and value partial, situated, and embodied knowledge (Bondi et al., 2002; Cope, 2002; Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1993; Smith, 2001). Donna Haraway’s notion of situated knowledge and experience is a key contribution of feminist theory; that is, people experience the world from and in a particular place, position, and time, all the while being shaped by cultural and historically specific value systems. Feminist methodologies recognise that knowledge comes from diverse, and often marginalised sources, and experiment with methods that try to access and engage multiple (and often marginal) knowledges. In this polyvocal process (see Crang and Cook,

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51 I am also indebted to Michel Foucault’s (1980) work on power/knowledge, which recognises that knowledge is inseparable from the variable power relations that shape its circulation. Throughout this dissertation, my discussion of “acoustemologies” is situated within the recognition that soundscapes and our perceptions of them are always reflective of particular value systems, agendas, and exclusions, and bodies are keys sites through which these politics of sonic knowledge play out.
2007), power relations become reconfigured in ways that might help dissipate some of the inequalities in academic research.

Feminist methodologies and praxis have also informed my commitment to reflexivity in the research process (Bondi, 1997; Rose, 1997). I heed Gillian Rose’s (1997: 307) assertion that “no feminist should produce knowledge that claims to have universal applicability to all women (or men).” As I discuss below, I recognise that my positionality affects the kinds of questions I ask and how I engage with the replies (or lack thereof). Further, I cannot fully remove myself from the underlying values that have emerged through my writing, and the kinds of knowledges produced through my interpretation and write-up of my findings (see Sale et al., 2002), but I continually re-evaluate these considerations with critical reflexivity.

**Positionality: Reflections and Declarations**

I came to this research identifying as a feminist cultural geographer with particular interest in sound and auditory media. I approach my epistemology with the recognition that power circulates as and through knowledge (Foucault, 1980). I am concerned with the political processes that allow dominant articulations of power to push particular groups – including women, people of colour, people with disabilities, and low-income populations, among others – to the margins.

My identity as a (white) woman was both enabling and constraining for these political objectives, particularly in my desire to interview inmates. My interest in emotional geographies (see Chapter Five), and the effort I put into creating safe emotional spaces for participants, is a common approach for feminist geographers, most of whom are women (but see Butz and Berg, 2002, and Hubbard, 2013, for feminist projects undertaken by men). In addition to being forthright with my interest in emotion and emotional geographies, it is possible that participants
felt more comfortable talking to me about personal and emotional experiences because women tend to be perceived – and respected – as emotional caregivers (Milligan, 2005; see also Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Davidson, Bondi, and Smith, 2007; Lawson, 2007). However, I also speculate that approaching prison research as a woman had its limitations and constraints, rooted in patriarchy and sexism. I was told in patronisingly protective terms by a male CSC associate over the phone that “if you were my daughter, I wouldn’t let you talk to these men” and have been asked why I would want to interview rapists and murderers who have harmed women like me. This is not to suggest that I was denied entry merely because I was a woman, but I repeatedly had the impression that a broader concern for my well-being and a prejudiced assumption about how a young woman would hold her own with “hardened criminals” (as I was constantly reminded) implicitly shaped decisions about access, safety, and confidence in my ability to carry out the project. In short, I do not think a man researching sound in prisons would have encountered the same “protective” responses.

I also recognise, however, that I hold particular privilege as a white academic and as such, am part of a systemic process that sees the inequitable treatment of “othered” groups (hooks, 1990; see also Bondi, 2003; Butz and Berg, 2002; Kobayashi, 2001). Specifically, I am less likely to be incarcerated or draw suspicion from authorities for mundane actions. I am also less likely to have (had) a family member or friend in prison because of the embedded and inequitable trust that accompanies being white, lower-middle-class, able-bodied, and heterosexual. This means I have access to spaces that incarcerated people or racialised

52 Indeed, I also received this warning (including one other instance in which I was an imagined “daughter”) from several other people, with no apparent connection to the prison system, when I have told them about my research topic.
53 I attach “lower” to “middle-class” to account for my precarious employment (however temporary) as a graduate student.
minorities, for instance, do not. I have spent significant time and energy negotiating this line in which I might use my privilege to enable the telling of more inclusive stories while doing so might mean reproducing the systematic oppression and marginalisation of particular socio-cultural groups. However, the very ability to navigate such a line highlights the position of privilege from which I write this dissertation.

My prior experience with prisons and incarceration was relatively limited, and my knowledge about the Canadian prison system has thus grown with a steep learning curve. I had never been inside a prison prior to starting this research, although I have personal experience of being a family member of someone who was incarcerated at a provincial correctional facility and thus have an appreciation for the broader implications of incarceration on families and communities. Having grown up in a city with a high “crime” rate (Thunder Bay, Ontario), I have long been aware of the over-incarceration of indigenous populations at an alarmingly disproportionate rate and have witnessed the effects of this on entire communities. I believe that a vast majority of people incarcerated are in those circumstances because they are part of communities that have been systematically oppressed for reasons that reproduce poverty, racism, sexism, ableism, and heteronormativity. This is not to deny the pain caused to victims, families, and broader communities by a number of incarcerated individuals; rather, it points to the need for greater attention to the social, political, and economic conditions that contextualise crime and the ways in which is handled.

I also come to this research with a musical background and pre-existing interest in the material properties of sound. I consider myself knowledgeable about musical content, context and use, and I remain adamant that social research about music must recognise situated experiences of listening and performance. Such explorations must also make sound more central
in the analysis of musical expression and impact (Boyd and Duffy, 2012; Duffy, Wood and Smith, 2007; Smith, 1997). My Master’s research (Hemsworth, 2010) studied the socio-spatial impacts of personal listening devices on public transit, with a specific interest in how music is used to (re)constitute kinaesthetic and multi-sensory, yet mundane, bus journeys. My findings from this research undoubtedly shape the phenomena and research questions I set out to investigate in this PhD project. I do not cherish all sound or all music; I find myself deeply affected by it, in positive and negative ways. This is part of the reason I am so compelled by research on the embodiment of sound, and aim to contribute to that body of literature through this dissertation.

I share these reflections and declarations regarding my positionality as a way of placing myself in this research, however shifting and partial my identifications are. A key concern for researchers is the assumption that they enter ethnographic research as outsiders; after all, the very fact that they have unanswered questions about a particular phenomenon or problem reveals a certain degree of unfamiliarity and genuine interest. Those, like me, who have relatively little-to-no pre-existing connection to the research subject(s), might come up against barriers that are related to their outsider status, including difficulty gaining access and trust or even knowing who to approach as stakeholders. At the same time, insider status is not exclusively beneficial. The potential challenge of being an insider is that it creates a situated experience that shapes the kinds of questions asked or the way the researcher approaches the material (Mullings, 1999). It is important for any researcher to think critically about the positionalities that both enable and constrain the research at any given stage, even if we can never fully represent or articulate them (Rose, 1997).  

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54 I recognise that, for the most part, I was considered an “outsider” because, especially in the beginning, I was neither a prison scholar nor a prison activist. At times, however, I occupied positions that re-positioned me away
Carceral methodologies: Challenges and creative approaches

In 2002, Loïc Wacquant observed that an extensive overview of research on prisons in the United States (Rhodes, 2001) offered few accounts of empirical findings. Following his concern, Sibley and van Hoven (2009: 199) insist that “detailed accounts of the carceral regime, including the lives of inmates and wardens, are needed in order to produce more nuanced interpretations of space and power inside institutions.” My work, and that of others acknowledged throughout this dissertation, represents an attempt to respond to such calls for more rigorous research through methodological approaches that seek more textured, situated, and personalised accounts of incarceration.

A major methodological challenge to socio-cultural prison research, as a number of prison scholars reflect, lies in the increasingly difficult issue of securing access to prisons (Simon, 2000; Crewe, 2006b; Paglen, 2006; Piché, 2012; Sibley and van Hoven, 2009). I understand this challenge as part of a broader political shift in what qualifies as valuable research for correctional systems as well as tightened security measures that privatise publically-funded institutions. One participant who has worked at numerous institutions within the CSC system and is familiar with its research protocol bluntly confirmed the increasing restrictions on research and access: “I’m not surprised at all that you didn’t get access. Unless you’re coming up with something to catch the bad guys or punish them, they’re not opening their doors to researchers like you these days” (telephone interview). Another sympathised (telephone interview), “even doing research inside the CSC is a nightmare. I can’t imagine trying to do it as an outsider!” Indeed, since beginning this research, I have developed a greater appreciation for the

from being an outsider, if not entirely an insider, based on the establishment of trust, increasing familiarity with prison issues, and the recognition of mutual passion about music, for example (see Mullings, 1999, for a useful analysis of insider/outsider, both/neither).
methodological challenges of prison research (see Piché, 2012; Rhodes, 2001) and have had to adjust my (perhaps over-ambitious) goals to acknowledge and at times circumvent these barriers. Politics of access and trust involved with conducting qualitative research within the prison, in particular, have likely deterred researchers from ethnographic research inside prisons, forcing others to find creative points of entry.

It is troubling to me that, in some ways, my work reproduces the marginalisation of women’s voices in carceral contexts – that I have not escaped my own participation in the processes of silencing (E. Cameron, 2015). Although some of my participants are women and share important experiences, I consider the (even) more marginalised, less “audible” voices of incarcerated women as figures that haunt this research, and strongly encourage others to “invoke” them in future projects as I too intend to do (de Certeau, 1984: 108). There are explanations for such systemic gaps and silences, as outlined in Chapter Two, particularly in terms of the dispersed geographies of women’s institutions and heavy restrictions on access to records and inmates. Yet it is also the case that these gaps went unfilled due to a persistently-ticking research clock that urged me to follow the leads I did have, and leave the others for future work. Where possible, I make every effort to illuminate the stories and voices of women (inmates, staff, and volunteers), and to highlight the gendered context of particular soundscapes. I do so through archival accounts of women’s experiences in Kingston Penitentiary and later the Prison for Women (nicknamed “P4W”), as well as drawing on first-hand narratives told through blogs (see Appendix I) and my own interviews with staff and volunteers. These included women who worked at the Prison for Women while it was in operation, as well as other provincial institutions, and who have more recently worked at men’s institutions in the Kingston area.
A number of prison scholars have been successful in their attempts to interview (Crewe, 2014; Story, 2015) or overtly observe (Morin, 2015) incarcerated populations. These achievements are noteworthy, and might be explained by differences in restrictions on researchers by geographical region or facility, existing networks between the researcher and prison “gatekeepers”, the timing of the research, or creative persistence. For some, research has included recruitment through prison newsletters (Valentine and Longstaff, 1998) or conducting covert recordings (Paglen, 2006). In what follows, I outline the methods used to conduct ethnographies of sound and prisons, combining such methods to research sound in prisons. Many of the methods employed are more typical of qualitative research, while others were valuable for their capacity to circumvent barriers to access and other restrictions that erect methodological walls around prisons and prison research. My research methods are summarised in Table 3.1, which shows the kinds of knowledge engaged by each method, how they respond to particular research questions, and their associated chapters.

Part III: Methods

1. Interviews

Between 2011-2015, I conducted seventeen semi-structured interviews\textsuperscript{55} with community members who have situated knowledges of prisons. When I proposed the research, I imagined almost three times as many interviews, and expected these to form the foundation upon which

\textsuperscript{55} Interviews were conducted in person, over the telephone, and in two cases (as preferred by the participants), over e-mail correspondence. In this section, I am primarily referring to the interviews conducted in person and over the telephone. I use the term “interview” to describe e-mail correspondence, despite the fact that the process was much more condensed, because I still initiated a dialogue with participants over multiple e-mails, beginning with a very general question (“what do prisons sound like, and what are the effects of the sonic environment on the people inside?”), and moving to more specific questions based on the reply (e.g., “can you tell me anything about music programs in prisons?”).
other methods were based, compared, and expanded. As I wrote in Part I, restraints primarily associated with challenges around access resulted in a methodological shift that saw fewer interviews, yet each interview was highly insightful and rich with personal experience and emotional testimony. These methodological challenges, combined with the rich material from the interviews I did conduct, provided opportunities to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, producing more varied data collection strategies that opened up new ways of understanding carceral experiences. I remain committed to interviewing as an important part of my feminist qualitative methodology because it provides a co-constructed space of knowledge in which individuals can provide in-depth detail about their lives, experiences, and opinions as they relate to my research topic. In addition to its effectiveness as dialogue, I value interviewing as a way to engage with oral histories (see Chapter Two), producing experiential, emotional, opinion-based, testimonial, and place-based knowledge.

In addition to offering the above epistemological opportunities, I am careful to recognise that interviewing is a performative practice (Domosh, 2003). As such, I acknowledge that I presented a particular version of myself as a way of shaping trust, comfort, and communication. In some cases, this involved thinking carefully about my reactions and demeanor during the interview; in others it meant disclosing particular political values if I found that a participant shared similar concerns (for instance, sympathising with a participant’s frustration with the cancellation of arts-based programs or the closure prison farms). I did not tell participants that I had been inside Pittsburgh unless we talked about that particular facility, because I wanted them to share their less-abbreviated descriptions of the institutions. Similarly, I expect that interviewees came to the interview with their own opinions, values, and agendas, all of which influenced what they shared with me, and what they decided to keep to themselves. This is not to
suggest deception from either the researcher or interviewee (see Visweswaran, 1994), but it encouraged me to think about the factors that limited a participant’s willingness or ability to share certain aspects of themselves and their experiences.

Finally, although I have kept it separate for organisational purposes, interviewing overlaps with my discussion of sonic methods because of its sonic connection to o/aurality. This is true of both voice, which Anja Kanngieser (2012) theorises as having nuanced sonic and rhythmic characteristics, as well as the aural environment in which the interview takes place. In this regard, as I discuss with sound in Chapters Four and Five, place is also a trigger of memory that might enable recollections of the past that might otherwise be forgotten. This is not to suggest that I held interviews in explicitly carceral spaces; however, interview location does have an effect on the discussion that unfolds (Elwood and Martin, 2000). Even seemingly unrelated sounds (such as those in a coffee shop) might trigger a memory about some aspect of a prison environment (prison meals, for instance). I was careful to attend to these non-linguistic aspects of the interviews, thereby combining verbal content with sonic and atmospheric qualities of the interview setting.

**Participant Recruitment Techniques**

Recruitment of participants was achieved through snowball, targeted, and convenience sampling (Abrams, 2010; Semaan et al., 2002). This means that I found it most effective to establish a target population, including inmates, staff, volunteers, and others associated with prisons, from which to draw participants. Given that I was not allowed to recruit inside prisons, all recruitment took place in and around the Kingston community. Although existing literature on recruiting
hard-to-reach populations tends to focus on finding a representative sample using randomised techniques (see Heckathorn et al., 2002), this was not possible because of the many restrictions placed on inmate and staff populations. Instead, I was interested in finding in-depth accounts that represented very situated experiences of incarceration, which may have been shared by others but were by no means expected to represent an entire population across the country.

Recruitment techniques were varied and were often done in spontaneous ways. Living in a “prison town” meant that I might meet someone affiliated with prisons outside traditional research spaces; this meant that recruitment often occurred “on-the-fly” and through unrelated social engagements. Other strategies were more carefully planned; for instance, I attended and distributed recruitment flyers (see Appendix G) at prison-related events and sent to them to “gatekeepers,” including the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies, as well as other known community members who had greater access to otherwise hard-to-reach populations. Some of these contacts were recruited through telephone and e-mail; in addition to sending the recruitment flyers over e-mail, I attached the letter of informed consent, a combined letter of information and consent form, to provide a more extensive overview of what was involved. I therefore relied heavily on snowballing and word-of-mouth techniques as a means of finding participants. Most participants, in fact, learned about my project through friends and colleagues who, upon learning the individual was affiliated with correctional services, would share my contact information with them, or would ask permission for me to contact them. I am very grateful to these individuals for spreading information about my research. These gatekeepers could also ease any initial concerns by speaking on my behalf, a statement that might not seem vital but was in fact immensely helpful in an environment of distrust, suspicion, and injustice.

56 These included, for example, non-academic, academic, and activist social gatherings that by coincidence included a prison employee or volunteer, or a mutual acquaintance of one.
Their assistance strengthens the case for the importance of networks with people who might have access to populations that researchers might not encounter otherwise.

**Characteristics of Research Sample**

I interviewed seventeen individuals: ten current and former employees of CSC, three volunteers, and four community members involved with prisons and prisoners’ rights groups, one of whom is a former inmate who shared experiences via e-mail. Part of my recruitment involved reaching out to the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society (both of which provided services and resources to those transitioning back into the community at the end of their sentences) to interview formerly incarcerated people. Both societies expressed interest but explained by e-mail that they were unable to help at the time due to a lack of time and more pressing priorities. During the research, parole regulations changed, becoming increasingly strict about parolees participating in activism related to prisons and Canada’s correctional system. As a result, and after learning about an individual whose parole was suspended and was re-incarcerated for “unauthorised associations and political activity” (Hansen, in *The Media Co-op*, 2012), I made the decision to cease active recruitment of current and former inmates to avoid jeopardising a person’s parole.

Fourteen of the seventeen people interviewed have experience working, volunteering, or visiting more than one institution in Canada. Three of those interviewed had experience in both

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57 Future requests went unanswered.
58 Such a decision may seem overly cautious given my interview questions (see Appendix F), and I would agree; however, given that people on parole must report their whereabouts to an officer, and might be subject to further investigation as a result, I wanted to avoid having seemingly innocent discussions monitored or misinterpreted as unauthorised political activity.
men’s and women’s institutions across Ontario. A majority of my participants could speak to the differences in prison operations and cultures at varying security levels. None of my participants declared a strong allegiance to the Harper Government, though not all of them disclosed their political affiliations, and many expressed dissatisfaction with the way federal and provincial prisons are currently being run. I suspect that this explains their willingness to participate in my research; it may have been recognised that qualitative research on embodied, situated experiences of prisons holds potential for necessary change.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality, though seemingly straightforward when presented as a legal issue, is a philosophically and politically complex concept. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) write, confidentiality is championed as a key value in qualitative research, particularly that which engages with vulnerable populations, yet unreflexive promises of confidentiality can lead to unintended consequences. This is particularly the case when researchers write up their findings, as Baez (2002: 35) explains:

As such researchers also put in writing their understanding of respondents’ experiences, they must resolve a dilemma: (a) they can disclose accurately and faithfully their findings, potentially exposing respondents’ identities and placing them at risk of harm; or (b) they can withhold certain information (or alter it in some way), thus raising some questions about the accuracy of their studies. If qualitative researchers see themselves as political activists as well as researchers, they must resolve another dilemma: they have to reconcile their conflicting responsibilities as researchers/protectors and activists/exposers.

Given the sensitive nature of this research, and the politically-charged climate surrounding prisons in Canada at this time, I have elected to write about my participants in a more guarded
way than is typical of qualitative research.\textsuperscript{59} This means that in addition to providing name-based anonymity, I also consciously refrain from referring to positions, places of employment, ages, and gender-identifying pronouns as a form of protection.

I am aware of the limitations of this approach, particularly in terms of credibility, transparency, and the flattening of Canadian prison landscapes; however, it is of utmost importance to me that my participants cannot be identified for reasons including personal safety and economic vulnerability, part of which includes job security. Indeed, five participants were adamant that I not use any quotations that might reveal their identity. In a correctional system that employs thousands of people, it might be argued that such measures are over-cautious. However, certain institutions have only one person occupying a position, and it becomes relatively easy to narrow down an identity, particularly those who work in an institution housing the opposite gender. Where possible, I provide the information necessary to contextualise a quotation from an interview, and I ask that my readers trust my careful treatment of participants’ contributions.

\textit{Interview guide and process}

At the outset of this research, I recognised the complexity of sound, music, incarceration, and emotion.\textsuperscript{60} None of these intersecting and embodied topics are straightforward, and all of them

\textsuperscript{59} One exception is musician-producer Chris Brown (see Chapter Six), who indicated his preference to be named, and who would have been easily recognisable despite the attempts at protecting anonymity.

\textsuperscript{60} I did not identify emotion as a research topic in the letter of information inviting people to participate; I did, however, refer to an interest in emotional experiences of sound if participants asked for further elaboration on research topics. I also asked questions that demonstrated an interest in emotional experiences (e.g., “how did you feel the first time you entered the prison?”), “what kinds of emotions did that particular sound elicit?”). Often, these questions were inspired by responses from earlier participants who, without prompting, spoke at length about their emotional reactions to prison soundscapes.
can be challenging to put into words. I designed my interviews to allow participants to talk through their experiences, encouraging them to add and re-evaluate their points as they discussed particular themes. As Hoggart, Lees, and Davies, note (2002: 211), “Intensive interviews at least provide the interviewee with time to explore assumptions and habits, even if some aspects remain hidden.” My interview questions were carefully designed to encourage thoughtful and critical responses while respecting the possible silences (Bondi, 2003; Hyams, 2004; Krueger and Casey, 2000; Scarff, 2010) that may exist for personal or political reasons. For some participants, the silences were necessary to avoid saying something that could be misinterpreted by others reading my research findings. This was particularly evident among those currently employed by CSC, whose responses were noticeably guarded at times, and who often asked for reassurance that their names would not be published. Less common, but occasional and thus notable, were participants who declined to comment on particular lines of inquiry, including questions that probed further into controversial topics like solitary confinement and punishment.

I developed three separate semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix F) to account for different populations. These included: current and former inmates; warden and CSC authorities; and prison staff, volunteers, and community members. Each interview guide featured similar questions about daily prison life, soundscapes, music, and social interaction. The guides varied according to positionality; for instance, I included more specific questions about rules and regulations in the interview guides for wardens and CSC authorities who might have more information on how certain rules were created or enforced. I asked staff about employment history, job requirements, and prison cultures at different facilities.

At the beginning of each interview, I reminded each participant that they could refuse to respond to any question and that they had the right to withdraw from participating at any time. I
also asked permission to digitally audio-record the interview to provide a more accurate record and to help me remember our discussion. I began with a set of general questions about the prison (“what is a typical day in prison like for you?”) as well as questions about the individual’s purpose in the prison (“what was required of you to carry out your job each day?” and “how long have you worked in this particular prison?”). The interview then shifted to focus more explicitly on sound. I began this series of questions with a definition of soundscape to ensure my participants knew what I meant if I used the term. These questions ranged from asking participants to describe the different kinds of sounds they heard in prison and from what sources, to discussing the importance of hearing and listening in prisons (e.g., as a communication skill, a job requirement, or as protection), to the ways particular sonic experiences literally and figuratively moved them. After this introductory discussion about sound, the interview would typically turn to address sonic rules and regulations, as well as the broader prison operations within which these regulations were situated. The interview ended with a more focused conversation about music, as an example of sound, and the enabling and constraining ways in which music is engaged in prisons.

Although I used the guides as a way to stay on topic and to provide useful flow to the interviews, I adapted the questions in every interview to suit the situated knowledge and comfort level of each participant. I was happy to let participants take the conversation in whatever direction they saw fit, so long as we remained relatively on topic. Furthermore, creating a welcoming space in which participants felt they could expand on points or share feelings they might not otherwise express was important to me; this meant being careful not to interrupt participants if they were changing the subject or risk putting words in their mouths. Each participant had an opportunity to share anything else they wished at the end of the interview and
were encouraged to ask questions of me. At this time, I also asked if the participants anticipated me covering topics that I did not in fact inquire about. It is noteworthy that three people asked me how many people I was hoping to interview and warned me that I would not likely be successful finding too many participants due to the restrictive nature of the CSC.

**Transcription and Analysis**

I took handwritten notes during in-person and telephone interviews and those captured through audio recording were transcribed electronically into a Word document. The transcripts were stripped of any names to preserve anonymity. My handwritten notes were also typed and attached to the transcripts for both preservation and as a mnemonic device; that is, by typing out my notes rather than simply reading them, I felt that I was able to remember the interview and gain a better understanding of the topics covered. Although interviews were organised thematically, and thus already shaped the flow of conversation, I began each analysis performing a careful read of the transcribed interview, pulling ideas out of what the participants shared in an inductive process. This step was vital as it enabled the production of co-constituted knowledge to a greater extent than if I had simply approached the transcripts with a pre-existing set of codes. Pulling key ideas and themes out of interviews also prepared me for future interviews. For instance, if a participant mentioned an intriguing phrase, practice or concept (such as “feeling the range”), I would ask others if they were familiar with it, inviting them to elaborate on what it meant to them. Analysis of interviews followed a grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1978; Knigge and Cope, 2006) that allowed for flexibility and careful readings within and across transcripts, as I wanted my engagement with interview material to be an emergent, continually
transforming, and non-linear process. Although I read notes and transcripts to explore emergent themes, I was also very aware of the theoretical perspectives with which I approached the interviews. I began this project with experience in ethnographic research on music, space, and social interaction, which meant that I was already expecting particular themes to flow throughout the interviews. I do not interpret this as a problem, but rather as something that was important to reflect upon critically at various stages of the research project.

Analysis did not, therefore, simply “start” and “end” with the coding and interpretation of interviews. Rather, it was a combination of techniques that involved passively allowing themes to emerge from the mouths of participants while also refining and adding new themes of my own based partly on the constant evaluation of pre-existing and emergent theoretical frameworks. This involved using a combination of etic (analytic) and emic (participant-stated) codes (see Cloke et al., 2004). Analytic codes included overlapping yet somewhat distinct topics such as “prison sounds”, “emotional responses to sound”, “affect”, “bodies and embodiment”, “rules and regulations”, “silence”, “solitary confinement/administrative segregation”, “music”, “programs”, and “discipline and surveillance”, among others. Participant-spoken phrases and quotations that fit each analytical code were then copied and pasted into a corresponding file. For instance, phrases that came out of interviews, such as “feeling the range” or “pulse”, were copied under the analytical “affect” code. Given that my sample was relatively small and not representative of a larger population, I was less interested in using codes for the purpose of generalizing than for

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61 I elected not to use software for coding in large part because of the relatively small sample. Like Crang et al. (1997) and La Pelle (2004), I find value and utility in coding software, especially for assistance in labour-intensive work with transcripts, but I do not think software would have resulted in a more substantive or richer analysis in this research. I felt that without software, I pushed myself to think carefully about phrases, concepts, and particular issues within the context of each participant’s very situated story, which facilitated a deeper connection to each narrative before identifying patterns with others. Had I transcribed a much larger sample of interviews, and had interviews been the only (or central) source of knowledge in the project, I would have used software mainly for organisation and efficiency.
their utility to help identify commonalities and patterns across otherwise deeply personal narratives.

I have incorporated the individual and shared experiences of my participants throughout this dissertation in the form of narrative-based writing and quotations that both support and push the boundaries of my own conceptualisations of sound, incarceration, and space. I ask the reader to approach this work as a story shaped by me but told through many voices.

2. Archival research
In Chapter Four, I draw heavily from historical materials collected through Library and Archives Canada (RG 73), Queen’s University Archives (Kingston Penitentiary fonds, MF 2280-2352.13), the Canadian Penitentiary Museum, and Correctional Service of Canada online research archive, to explore the silent system at Kingston Penitentiary from 1835-1932 as one of numerous practices that highlights the role of sound and acoustic space in prison operations (see Chapter Four for specific materials consulted). I did not set out to write a dissertation that used archival materials as primary source material. However, barriers to accessing currently and formerly incarcerated people forced me to re-evaluate my methods and find new ways of exploring sound and auditory cultures in prisons. This is not to place archival research on the lower end of some methodological hierarchy; to be sure, there is great value in exploring archived materials especially to illuminate the changing historical contexts that shape geographical knowledge. Despite the disappointment I felt with being denied access to prisons for personal interviews, this barrier provided an opportunity to immerse myself more deeply in archival records that offered useful insight into historical geographies of sound in prisons.

Archival methods served three key functions throughout this research. First, archives provided access to documents, texts, and materials from different historical periods that are not
readily accessible in other locations or that might have been neglected in contemporary accounts of prisons. As I explain in Chapter Four, these materials, which serve as primary sources, are primarily non-auditory, yet tell us much about sound in prisons, including the silent system that dominated as a disciplinary regime for the first century of Kingston Penitentiary’s operation. These materials also reveal information about historical, political, and cultural practices that shape how prisons have been constituted and experienced across varying time periods. Secondly, exploration of archives and the accessibility of certain records provided important insight into what has historically been deemed worthy of recording and preserving. Many of the records, including those around the closure of Kingston’s Prison for Women, are restricted from public viewing. The way in which archival materials are made available to the public reveals deeply political processes within the archives, but also the CSC and the federal government. Thirdly, archival research served a contextualising purpose, spawning new ideas and lines of inquiry that could be explored through other methods, including interviews or media analyses. Future research could also add a fourth dimension to the utility of archives in this context. Following Claire Dwyer (2009; see also L. Cameron, 2014; DeLyser, 2014; Driver, 2010; Lorimer, 2010), there is rich potential in the opportunities archival research provides for creative and participatory collaboration or co-curation between researchers, archivists, and activists interested in prisons and art (see, for example, Cardiff and Bures Miller, 2005; James, 2014; Paglen, 2006).

3. Autobiographies and memoirs
Autobiographies and memoirs were important resources for gaining insight into the personal experiences of inmates and staff, particularly when access to correctional facilities was restricted.

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62 See Godfrey (2012) for an overview of using photographs and films as archival sources for criminological research. My work extends Godfrey’s account by suggesting that visual artefacts can be further approached with a sonic imagination.
Autobiographical accounts provided informative and emotionally rich first-hand accounts of prison life in general, as well as specific events, such as the 1971 riot at Kingston Penitentiary, outlined in rich detail by Roger Caron (1978; 1985). Although Shover (2012: 13) writes that “criminal life histories” are increasingly common in the United States (see, for example, Papa with Wynn, 2004), I found only a handful of published life stories and memoirs of inmates and staff in Canada (see, for example, Caron, 1978, 1985; Dubé, 2002; Schroeder, 1976; Thibedeau, 2012), perhaps in part because of the cost and challenge of getting published, and because such memoirs often use small-scale publishers less traceable through library databases. Further, it is possible that writing about prison experiences is emotionally and psychologically painful, and some might prefer to keep such memories to themselves or leave them in the past.

Autobiographical and memoir accounts have strengths and constraints, both of which are connected to the fact that they are typically “compiled without research influence” (Shover, 2012: 18). One challenge with authors having considerable discretion in telling their story, is that they may follow trajectories unrelated to my research, and I am unable to probe particular topics as I encounter them. However, I found the candid way in which stories were told to be particularly fruitful as they were not influenced by the power relations of a formal interview that might have yielded more guarded responses. Furthermore, if one of the burdens of prison is the amount of idle time, it is likely that life history authors have spent a considerable amount of time thinking about how they would like to tell their story (Shover, 2012), and this, I think, is something for the researcher to respect. Using first-hand accounts means learning from people who know prisons in ways I cannot, and I can reciprocate by helping to present their narratives in new spaces and formats.
4. Unsolicited weblogs (“blogs”) and prison interest websites
Several first-hand narratives were collected through online research of weblogs, or “blogs”, which are websites that feature personal accounts, opinions, and analyses of the person or group operating the blog. This was an important method for my research because it provided an alternative to conducting interviews, as many prison blogs include the stories of current and former inmates. Those currently incarcerated often require the help of someone outside prison who can post the blog on their behalf. Blogs are, of course, considerably different from an interview transcript, largely because they are written by individuals who have not been asked a series of questions by an interviewer; nevertheless, many prison blogs included information that was pertinent to my research questions. Furthermore, because blogs are user-directed, users are in control of what they post and not bound to bureaucratic processes of academic research, which can be as restrictive as they are protective. With blogs, readers can see the writer’s own values, priorities, and interests, and there is often potential to interact with the blogger or query a particular point through the comment section, if available (Wakeford and Cohen, 2008). I provide a list of some of the most popular and useful prison blogs in Appendix I.

Benefits to online research, particularly the exploration of blogs, include low-cost, instantaneous access to self-representations that are often structured around particular topics (Harricharan and Bophal, 2014; Hookway, 2008; Richardson, 2006). Blogs exemplify time-space compression capacities of the Internet and tend to be updated on a somewhat frequent or consistent basis. They are user-friendly and have an archival system that can be navigated with relative ease. Blogs are embedded with multi-media that can offer a more interactive experience for the user and can be employed by the blogger to illustrate one point in multiple ways. For the

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63 For example, Mandy Hiscocks’s blog, bored but not broken, was written with a golf pencil on scraps of paper and dictated over the phone to a friend who then typed and posted the blog on her behalf.
purposes of this research, blog analyses provided an effective method for collapsing geographic
distance between people who are dispersed across Canada and beyond (see Wakeford and
Cohen, 2008). In many instances, formerly incarcerated people had experiences in Kingston-area
prisons but have since moved home or to new locations, making these individuals and their
stories more difficult to reach through other methods.

The challenges with blog and website analysis lie in the decentralised, multi-directional,
and non-linear structure of the Internet. The researcher typically does not have the opportunity,
as they would with in-person interaction, to direct a discussion. Similarly, one never knows when
a blogger will decide to abandon their blog (Li and Walejko, 2008). Embedded hyperlinks create
the possibility for endless “drifting” that could take a researcher in rather unexpected directions.
To be sure, this is often an exhilarating research experience that leads to unexpected findings;
however, it also has the potential to derail research as it can yield an unmanageable array of data
(Snee, 2010). I used a semi-systematic process that allowed for whimsical exploration while also
structuring blog searches through keywords and key experiences. This involved carefully citing
each blog post and hyperlink, to allow others to retrace my steps or go in new directions. The
most useful blog entries were converted into text files, to save in one place and to facilitate
analysis (Snee, 2010).

To locate prison-related blogs, I experimented with a selection of Google search terms
that were often a combination of words to yield both the most possible and most relevant results.
These included keywords and keyphrases such as [“blog”, “prison”, “Canada”], [“inmate”,
“blog”, “Canada”], and [“Kingston,” “prison”, “inmate”]. I also used a blog search engine
through Google, and tried the same terms as a form of cross-referencing. I generally began each
blog or website analysis with a brief exploration of its design and structure. This was done by
scanning the main interface to get a sense of what was deemed most important for the main page, and to gain an understanding of the weblog/site’s hierarchical structure. I explored common menu options such as “About” and “History” as well as the archived posts which are often included as a list, and from there conduct a quick scan of the titles of blog or forum entries. I would then click on each entry that appeared related to my research, and perform a simple search function using sound or audio related keywords, including:

- sound, noise, silence, music, audio, listen, headphone, sonic, acoustic, ear, aural, quiet, rhythm, tone, atmosphere, choir, band, radio, CD, television

If any entries or articles emerged out of that process, those particular pages were saved and the keywords highlighted. From here, I copied relevant quotations into another Word document. In addition to saving particular quotations that initially struck me as important, I saved entries that shed light on particular prison experiences, including: solitary confinement, general population, double-bunking, parole, birth and death, entertainment, labour, sleep, visitation, and social interaction, among others.

A key challenge of online research is knowing which directions to pursue when the Internet can seem like a realm void of direction, and when to stop when there is no end. I made every effort to keep searches somewhat organised by keywords and particular geographical parameters (Canada, Kingston, specific Kingston prisons). I operated with the recognition that I would never reach a point of “saturation” with online research and should not try to do so, but to be as specific as possible in my citations and in my account of online research as an actively changing archive, so that my readers and future researchers will have a starting point on which to build their own searches.
5. Radio and news media analyses
As part of my research, I identified and analysed radio programs specifically related to prison issues. I conceptualise my attention to radio as both a sonic method and a form of media (content) analysis. Listening to radio programs was an auditory experience that enabled me to experience the potential of sound and airwaves to connect disparate populations through a communal listening experience. As I demonstrate later in this chapter and Chapter Six, this method was also participatory, in that I was able to use the radio to communicate with inmates listening to a particular prison radio show. I also drew heavily from the content of radio programs outlined below, garnering research ideas and questions that could be explored using other methods such as interviewing and blog analysis.

A key source of inspiration and ideas was CFRC 101.9FM, a campus and community radio station based at Queen’s University. CFRC airs a weekly, hour-long radio show, CFRC Prison Radio (CPR), which addresses a variety of socio-political issues in and about prisons. On the last Wednesday of every month, their “Calls From Home” program invites inmates and community members to request songs for each other, have messages and poetry read over the air, and enables community members to communicate their solidarity with those inside. Every other Wednesday, the station airs “Stark Raven”64, a Vancouver-based radio program that features documentaries, news, and analysis related to prisons and criminalisation. Every year, CPR broadcasts Prisoners’ Justice Day, an annual event to honour people who have died behind bars and raise awareness about prison (in)justice. Programming features music, poetry, documentaries, testimonies, and news on prisoners and prison issues. Some of the topics covered

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64 Stark Raven covers “Canadian prison conditions, detention & the war on terror, alternatives to prison, psychiatric survivor movements, criminalisation of migration & poverty, privatisation, security certificates, government policy, political prisoners, policing, the death penalty, the personal & political impacts of incarceration, prisoner's writings” (Stark Raven Media Collective, 2014).
include “prison conditions, political prisoners, indigenous prisoners, trans* prisoners, prison theatre, families of prisoners and restorative justice, along with loads of music and requests covering genres from reggae to metal” (CFRC Prison Radio, 2014). During their Prisoners’ Justice Day programming in 2013, CPR aired three songs from Postcards from the County, an album written by inmates working with H. Chris Brown\(^{65}\) at Pittsburgh Institution. Since then, CPR hosts have regularly integrated songs from the album into their show.

In addition to CFRC’s Prison Radio program, I consulted a variety of other radio programs\(^{66}\) that featured interviews with inmates, employees, prison activists, and scholars. Examples include numerous programs on CBC Radio, including interviews on Q and The Current, as well as programs on Radio4All, which featured an interview with well-known former inmate, Ann Hansen (Chappell, 2006). I refer to such programs in each of the remaining chapters, but most specifically in Chapters Five and Six. Radio therefore offered a mix of sonic and interview methods, as I was able to hear guests’ voices (in addition to their words) and could draw from these discussions as I would my own interviews.

To supplement and provide further context to my other methods, I also analysed content of newspaper and online news articles. This process was less systematic than others due to its supplementary nature; however, I was careful to use similar search terms as I had done with the blog research. News articles, obtained through the Google News search function, Canadian Newsstand database, Queen’s Library, and paper copies of Kingston Whig-Standard and The Globe & Mail, provided media accounts of prison-related events and issues; these include solitary confinement, the closure of Kingston Penitentiary, and accounts of riots and conflict,

\(^{65}\) Hereafter known as Chris Brown.

\(^{66}\) The A-Infos Radio Project (www.radio4all.net), a grassroots broadcasting collective that promotes democratic communications, was a particularly useful resource for locating interviews with inmates and prison activists.
among other topics. News articles helped shape my research questions and offered me current examples of key issues within Canadian prisons that might inform or be informed by my research.

6. Observation and participatory research
At the outset of my research, I planned to take tours of carceral facilities around Kingston to get a better understanding of the design features, spatial layout, sensory properties, and social interactions within the prisons. CSC’s denial of my research ethics application meant that on-site observation would not be possible. This was discouraging, given that it eliminated the ability to gain personal knowledge about the sensory, social, structural, and regulatory characteristics of particular prisons. Furthermore, it posed a problem of representation: what kinds of politics are in play when a researcher has little-to-no personal experience of the sites she is studying? For me, this meant placing a great deal of trust in other knowledge bearers who could be my “eyes and ears” inside prisons.

In August, 2013, over two days in two separate weeks, I spent a total of nine hours inside Pittsburgh Institution. These visits, which came together spontaneously toward the end of my fieldwork, emerged out of an interview and subsequent conversations with Chris Brown, a local musician and producer who entered the minimum security prison each week to play and record music with a group of inmates. Immediately after each visit to the institution, I took field notes and drew mental maps of the spaces I encountered. Observation included careful attention to layout of prison spaces, material objects, social interaction and individual behaviour, visibility

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67 In other research circumstances, nine hours spent over two separate days might not be considered enough time to conduct ethnographic research. However, given the challenges with gaining access to prisons (for researchers and visitors alike), the opportunity to spend four to five hours per session for observation was, in fact, unusual and highly productive for such a scenario.
of surveillance technologies, power dynamics, building materials and surfaces, movement and rhythms, and displays of emotion, among other features. These observations, which were primarily – though not exclusively – visual, allow me to engage with the multi-sensory properties of acoustic space, and to compare what I was hearing with what I was seeing. The time spent inside the prison was short but fruitful, and led to ongoing communication with the producer and musicians. As I explain in the next section, part of this continued communication was through song requests and messages over community radio (CFRC 101.9FM). In Chapter Six, I use these observations, in combination with other methods, to present a case study featuring the music-making initiative at Pittsburgh Institution.

The response from CSC also did not stop me from visiting the exterior of a handful of prisons and making observations outside the building. I organised my field notes into themes (including, for instance: design/architecture/building materials, spatial layout, social interactions of staff and public outside, and sources of sounds and other sensory stimuli). Although these observations were limited to the space outside the walls, they are important because they illustrate the ways in which the carceral extends beyond the walls and into the (sub-)consciousness of the surrounding community. During the time of research, I lived within walking distance from the neighbouring sites of Kingston Penitentiary and Prison for Women. This enabled me to walk past the prisons at various times of day and night, often as part of longer walks that included visits to sites associated with the prison’s history (e.g., the limestone quarry, the Penitentiary Museum and former warden’s residence, and the Church of the Good Thief, all of which were sites of prison labour in the late 19th and early 20th centuries). Observation occurred in both purposeful and informal ways, and was most useful for getting a sense of the affective atmospheres of the prison environs (Anderson, 2009; Turner and Peters, 2015),
particularly those captured by walking past the looming front doors or looking up to see shadows of officers with guns standing guard in the towers.

Rhoads and Wilson (2010: 38) write that “observational data, their use in the knowledge-building enterprise, and the phenomena of interest are linked, and observations reflect the presuppositions and values placed in the research environment.” In many respects, this is a statement about performativity in the research process. All research is in some way performative (Basset, 2010; Crang, 2003; Rose, 1993), and I acknowledge that my observations were shaped by the interests and purposes I performed throughout my research. Furthermore, my use of observation is not to develop universalities or to produce a “god’s eye view” that is somehow objective; indeed, as feminist cultural geographers have challenged, such an endeavor would be futile and conflates looking with knowing (Rose, 1993; see also de Certeau, 1984). I do not think that entering or walking around a prison with a pre-defined list of characteristics to observe (for example, architecture and building materials, number of people, social interactions, soundscape) compromises the value of observational research. Rather, it is important to critically evaluate what presuppositions can both enable and constrain, and to continually adjust observational techniques in attempt to become aware of what might otherwise be neglected.

7. Sonic methods
Throughout this project, I have advocated for a greater sensitivity to sound in everyday life and recognise the importance of sonic methods for such a task. At the outset of this research, I anticipated using sonic methods to a greater degree than was eventually realised. As I discuss in this chapter, my commitment to sonic methods was challenged throughout this research process, primarily due to the inability to gain access to prisons, and the time spent trying to overcome institutional barriers. Yet this does not mean that sonic methods are impossible in prisons or
similarly restrictive settings; I write about my intention for such methods here to establish a roadmap that others might find useful.

An exploration of soundscape necessitates the recounting of personal experiences with sound and auditory cultures, yet sensory experience is not inherently linguistic. Sonic methods provide the opportunity to engage with auditory, embodied, sensory experience, whilst offering new ways of constructing and disseminating knowledge. The fleeting, ephemeral qualities of sound, however, make sonic methods particularly challenging to carry out (Cameron and Rogalsky, 2006). As Samuels et al. (2010: 338) explain, “Scholars and composers have long suggested that one of the difficulties posed by sounds, as compared with images, is the inability to extract sounds from their temporal constraints.” Indeed, sound is embedded in place and notwithstanding its ubiquity it is also discontinuous. Despite and because of these contradictions, a number of sound scholars have made useful inroads into the investigation, expression, and analysis of acoustemological experience (see Chapter Two).

To a great extent, sonic methods require some degree of deep listening (Carlyle, 2007), which requires the listener to dedicate greater-than-average attention to the array of sounds that surround them. This can be an individual experience – by a researcher, for instance – or the method itself can be used to create a social gathering.68 However, sonic methods are not only about listening; they can also be about making sound to express, (re)present, and (re)construct knowledge. Perhaps most central to my research is the notion that we can use sound and listening to explore phenomena, events, and ideas that are not always directly related to sound. As I explained in Chapter Two, prisons do not exist for sonic purposes, nor do people visit them to

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68 Michael Gallagher outlines the ways in which collective listening to mundane sounds can become a social gathering. He refers to James Wyness’s articulation of ‘soond gaiterins’ (sound gatherings) as an example of how the seemingly simple act of listening with and among other bodies can spark conviviality and imagination. See www.michaelgallagher.co.uk/ and www.wyness.org.
have an acoustic experience, yet attention to sound can tell us much about the cultures, politics, and spatialities of prisons. The barriers faced trying to gain access to prisons in the Kingston area eliminated the methodological potential of in situ listening. My plans to use soundwalking and phonographic methods inside prisons were thwarted by my denied request to conduct research in carceral facilities. These methods remain important, however, and I elaborate on some of my proposed methods to spark sonic imaginations beyond this project.

Recognizing that sound is experience in and as motion, I had proposed to use soundwalking, a mobile practice of deep listening, as a method through which to personally engage with the soundscape of a prison (Schafer 1977, 1994; Westerkamp, 1974). Walking offers a relatively slow pace that allows the listener to become aware of sounds that might otherwise go ignored or undetected. Soundwalking inside prisons would likely have followed a pre-determined route, accompanied by a correctional officer. Typical soundwalking techniques would have been adapted or abandoned because of this surveillance; testing echoes or following a particular sound might not be possible in such restricted conditions. I also proposed to take audio recordings of specific areas within prisons, if permitted, which would have provided useful and lasting information about the acoustics and sonic characteristics of prisons, as well as filling a methodological gap in the aural preservation of carceral sounds. Another method I had hoped to employ were impulse response tests (Cabot, 1978), which collect frequencies of a given space and could offer an indication of the “acoustic signature” of a cell or range. These could then be used as filters or effects through which other sounds might be passed, as a form of re-enactment or to transfuse carceral soundscapes with non-carcelar settings. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I was not
permitted to conduct such tests within operational prisons, and requests to enter empty prisons for experimental purposes were denied.\textsuperscript{69}

Despite the inability to conduct explicitly sonic methods inside prisons, I managed to employ the fundamental techniques of such methods at particular times throughout the research. These include deep listening practices outside prisons and inside the one facility I was able to enter, existing audio tours including the Stones Project,\textsuperscript{70} and impulse response tests conducted by other scholars and sound artists. For instance, Matt Rogalsky’s impulse response recordings, collected during a tour of the recently closed Kingston Penitentiary, have been particularly useful for my own conceptualisations throughout this work.\textsuperscript{71} Notably, these creative projects have sparked imaginative ideas for future research. I invite fellow researchers to join me in persisting with these and other artistic, experimental, and exploratory methods for projects that may not be restricted by the same barriers in research protocol.

**Conclusion**

An arduous ethics process, combined with the challenges of gaining access to researchers and sites for prison research, has had several implications on the trajectory of my research. The original theoretical aims of my research, namely to develop a conceptualisation of sonic spatiality in carceral settings, had to be temporarily cast aside to deal with the methodological challenges of gaining access, ethics clearance, and trust in prisons. A shift in focus also means

\textsuperscript{69} Queen’s University now owns the former Prison for Women, which seemed promising for research purposes as I had been granted ethics clearance by the same institution. However, I was told by building managers that members of the public were not permitted to enter due to safety reasons.

\textsuperscript{70} The Stones Project is a community-based, multi-media initiative in collaboration with Queen’s University Archives that presents social histories of typically marginalised communities in Kingston. See http://www.stoneskingston.ca.

\textsuperscript{71} I provide a deeper discussion of such recordings in Chapters Four and Six, and further explore their utility for sonic and carceral researchers in the concluding chapter.
that the spaces of my research have changed. What were originally intended be more supplementary spaces (off-site research) became more central, while the intended main sites of research became more peripheral. In some ways, this work can be split into two discrete projects: one about the sonic spatialities of prisons, and another about prison methodologies. But while this dissertation has numerous branches, they are rooted in connected issues of embodiment, silence, hauntings, and justice.

In the next chapter, I present findings that emerged out of the need for flexibility in research design. Chapter Four reflects my methodological transition from in-person, contemporary research to archival research, exploring the historical geographies of sound in prisons and their lasting impact on contemporary institutions. Separated into two key time periods, each spanning roughly one century, I use aforementioned archival records to recount Kingston Penitentiary’s sonic past and the technological changes that have shaped its soundscape today. Chapter Four marks the first of three chapters in which my major research findings are discussed, each of them moulded by the methodological decisions outlined to this point.
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Chapter 4

Quiet Riot: Historical Geographies of Silence and Noise at Kingston Penitentiary

Introduction

In September 2013, Canada’s oldest and most notorious\(^{72}\) prison, Kingston Penitentiary, closed its doors permanently after 178 years. In a matter of days, it went from an overwhelmingly noisy institution to an eerily quiet one, a ghostly presence on Kingston’s waterfront. And yet it is not totally silent. Sound lingers, it escapes, and people escape with it. Inmates and staff carry their sonic histories with them, reshaping these narratives and the new places they occupy. Inside the (not-so-) empty prison, carceral remnants are mobilised by the prison’s echoes and resonances: layered emotional histories, thousands of voices silenced over centuries, and the creaks and moans of an utterly exhausted building. There is something hauntingly poetic about an institution that started and ended in so-called silence. A key aim of this chapter is to trace this history of silence as a powerful conceptualisation of sound.\(^{73}\)

One way to engage with historical geography is to consider how the past gets materialised on the landscape (Rosenzweig and Thelen, 1998; Morin, 2013a). I wish to respond to and build from this point with two main claims. The first is that a more robust history of

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\(^{72}\) I use the term “notorious” based primarily upon media representations of Kingston Penitentiary (KP), as well as inmate and staff memoirs (see Caron, 1978, 1985; Thibedeau, 2012), and because it is the primary site of prison tourism in Canada (for the role of Kingston Penitentiary and the neighbouring Penitentiary Museum in Canada’s “dark” tourism industry, see Walby and Piché, 2011; see also Turner and Peters, 2015). According to Thibedeau, a former correctional officer, part of KP’s notoriety was that being sent there “was about the lowest thing that could happen to a con” (2012: 35).

\(^{73}\) A version of this chapter has been published in Dominique Moran and Karen Morin’s edited book, *Historical Geographies of Prisons: Unlocking the Usable Carceral Past* (2015; see Hemsworth, 2015).
prisons must also involve the sonic materiality of landscape, or what Schafer (1977, 1994) terms “soundscapes.” Following Wener’s (2012) work on noise in prisons, I argue that if prisons are experienced aurally, then historical approaches to incarceration should involve asking what prisons have sounded like over the years, and should question more critically the role of sound in histories of surveillance. Despite the confining and restrictive spatialities of prisons, carceral spaces never exist in isolation. Prisons are thus situated within broader political and cultural contexts, their carceral soundscapes actively reflecting and shaping these contexts.

Secondly, a sonic appreciation of the past necessitates an epistemological approach that is attentive to the spatialities and temporalities of sound. This involves familiarising ourselves with the material properties of sound and considering how they might give shape to, and are constituted by, space and time. Intersecting the recent flourishing of carceral geographies (Moran et al., 2012; Moran, 2013a, 2013b, 2015; Morin, 2013a, 2013b; Philo, 2012), with Steven Feld’s (1996) writings on acoustemologies, or sonic knowledges, I argue that “carceral acoustemologies” have much to offer in the development of spatial knowledge about prisons and in the re-telling of sonic histories.

To illustrate the potential for sound to inform and re-imagine historical geographies of incarceration, I present a focused account of the Kingston Penitentiary’s storied past. Known informally as the “prison capital of Canada,” Kingston, Ontario, has the highest concentration of prisons in the country, having housed ten prisons in the greater Kingston area at various points over the past 180 years. Despite the importance of prisons in the city’s collective memory, many prison (counter-) narratives, beyond predictably sensational stories of high-profile criminals, escapes, and riots, remain silenced from Kingston’s public discourse. I draw from historical materials collected through Library and Archives Canada (RG 73), Queen’s University Archives
Kingston Penitentiary fonds, MF 2280-2352.13), the Canadian Penitentiary Museum, and Correctional Service of Canada online research archive, to explore the silent system at Kingston Penitentiary from 1835-1932 as one of numerous practices that highlights the role of sound and acoustic space in prison operations. Materials consulted include prison regulations and rulebooks; investigative reports and commissions between 1832-1934 and in the wake of riots in 1932 (Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries: Kingston Penitentiary Disturbances, 1932, 1933) and 1971 (Canada Commission of Inquiry into Certain Disturbances at Kingston Penitentiary during April 1971, 1973); punishment records between 1835-1898; warden and superintendent reports from 1835-present; reports of the Office of the Correctional Investigator (see Sapers, 2013); and media accounts of key historic events. I use these materials as a way of “restaging” histories of prisons (Turner and Peters, 2015). In other words, a key purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that Kingston Penitentiary, as “part of the ‘post-prison’ cultural landscape” (Morin and Moran, 2015: 3), is “still saturated with, and arguably communicative of, messages about the purpose of imprisonment both in terms of the system during which it was constructed, and during which it was protected, conserved, demolished, or left to decay” (Moran, 2015: 4; see also Walby and Piché, 2011).

This chapter’s historical analysis is split into two time periods. The first traces the history and effectiveness of the Penitentiary’s silent system from 1835-1932, as an example of the disciplinary role of sound in prisons. I then shift to a more contemporary focus, beginning with changes to prison regulations in 1933, following the 1932 riot, and carrying forward to the present day. Here, I outline the evolution of other auditory technologies, including loudspeakers, hidden microphones, and radios, as objects that have shaped the material landscape and
soundscape of prisons, and which continue to leave their mark on the sites and subjects of incarceration today.

This chapter culminates with a discussion of the methodological promise of sound for histories of incarceration. In the wake of increasing privatisation, secrecy, and silence that restricts much research in and about Canadian prisons (Piché, 2012; Yeager, 2008; see also Morin 2013a), sonic research methods like audio recording and oral interviewing are subject to great scrutiny and suspicion from correctional authorities. As Paglen (2006: 56) notes, these enactments of authoritative power over sound, even before entering prisons for research, moves sound projects “out of a textual regime and into a legal one.” Yet for those, like Paglen, who choose to take up the challenge of finding creative circumventions of overbearing restrictions, sonic methods can help permeate institutional silences, opening up critical space through which to explore untold – or re-told – narratives of incarceration, and asking new kinds of questions.

What did prisons sound like in the past, and what can this tell us about historical relations of power? How have cultural practices of listening and mediating sound in Canadian prisons evolved since 1835? What kinds of sonic methods might aid in the articulation of carceral pasts?

A cultural history of sound in prisons is important not only because it is vastly underdeveloped, but also because it provides important context for understanding and changing our contemporary approaches to incarceration, justice, and rehabilitation.

**Kingston Penitentiary (1835-2013)**

Kingston, Ontario, a city of roughly 125,000 people, currently hosts eight prisons of varying security levels located in its surrounding area. Kingston Penitentiary, or “The Pen,” was
constructed in 1833-1834 and officially opened in 1835. Initially called “The Provincial Penitentiary of the Province of Upper Canada,” it was built on the waterfront of an area historically known as Portsmouth Village. Its main building is a cavernous structure with rows of cells radiating from a central monitoring tower, and capped with a reverberating dome. Although the penitentiary’s population has predominantly been male, it housed small populations of women and children in its first hundred years, with women being incarcerated in Kingston Penitentiary until 1934. I do not have the space here to trace the effects of the shift from Kingston Penitentiary as a mixed-gender to male-only institution, but I draw on the experiences of women where possible. In Chapter Five, I elaborate on the gendering of carceral soundscapes.

Kingston’s alternate nickname, “Limestone City,” refers to the abundance of limestone in the area, much of which was been quarried and used to construct prominent city buildings by convict labour from what is now Kingston Penitentiary in the mid-1800s (Hennessy, 1999). Under the silent rule, to be discussed shortly, inmates’ voices would rarely be heard in the quarry. The high-fidelity sounds of limestone extraction were a striking “soundmark” (Schafer, 1994) of Portsmouth Village, where the penitentiary and the quarry were located. Prisons and prisoners have therefore played an active role in Kingston’s construction and its identity as a prison town, although most residents have never stepped through the penitentiary’s gates. For visitors, gazing at the exterior of the prison is a popular “dark tourism” activity as a site of suffering and punishment (Piché and Walby, 2010; see also Foley and Lennon, 1996).

The closure of Kingston Penitentiary saw the relocation of roughly 500 inmates to existing facilities. At this juncture of prison closure and relocation, and amidst troubling practices of hyper-incarceration and overcrowding, it is important to think about what still

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74 Women were relocated to Kingston’s Prison for Women, which opened in 1934, roughly 200 metres north of Kingston Penitentiary. It closed in 2000 and, like Kingston Penitentiary, remains unused.
lingers throughout the soundscape of the abandoned prison, what sits buried in silence, and what we can learn from the penitentiary’s audible past in order to change the future of incarceration.

Figure 4.1: Limestone façade of Kingston Penitentiary

This image depicts the north-facing façade of Kingston Penitentiary. To the south of the prison is Lake Ontario. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, guards or keepers were expected to live within the sound of the bell (see Simonds, 1996). Photograph by Katie Hemsworth (2010).
In Chapter Three, I pointed to the methodological capacity of sound as an undervalued way of knowing, experiencing, and reimagining incarceration; I use this chapter and those that follow as a demonstration of such capacities. Yet this potential is presented in tension with the place of sound in various embodied ‘pains’ of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958; see also Crewe, 2011; Ignatieff, 1978). Indeed, Sykes’s work on carceral suffering and deprivation, later expanded by Foucault (1977), pinpoints a shift from focusing mainly on the infliction of physical pain to embodied suffering of various physical, psychological, and emotional oppression in prisons. More recently, sociologists and ethnographers have expanded Sykes’ criminological work, including Ben Crewe, whose metaphor of “tightness” (Crewe, 2011), as a conceptualisation of suffering, is particularly profound. Crewe’s work highlights the ways in which power “is experienced as both firm and soft, oppressive yet somehow also light. It does not so much weigh down on prisoners and suppress them as wrap them up, smother them, and incite them to conduct themselves in particular ways” (522). He draws on the example of uncertainty, which I extend with my discussion of disorientation and its resulting feelings of anxiety and helplessness in Chapter Five. However, such accounts would benefit from greater attention to carceral sound, silence, and noise. As Wener (2012) has documented, and as I discuss further in Chapter Five, one of the first and most common observations people make upon entering a prison is that it is filled with noise from sources such as: security equipment, conversations, footsteps, clamorous
metal, old ventilation systems, and authoritative voices over a public address system.\textsuperscript{75} Focusing primarily on psychological well-being, he argues that this cacophonous soundscape has negative effects on embodied experiences of prisons.

Some of the pains experienced in prison are explicitly sonic (as in the case of overwhelming and unrelenting noise), others are exacerbated by sound (post-traumatic stress),\textsuperscript{76} and further pains are alleviated by sonic techniques (headphones). Binary soundscapes of silence and cacophony are stitched together by the discomfort they often elicit: both sonic extremes are extensions of enclosure, confinement, and metaphoric “tightness” that restrict incarcerated bodies through the interplay of firm and soft power (Crewe, 2011). At the same time, sonic tactics have been used by inmates to break through these restrictive walls and alleviate the tightness, as do sonic methods that might offer a critical re-evaluation of prisons from beyond their bounded structures.

Modeled after Auburn State Prison in New York, which operated under a strict code of silence and stood in contrast to Philadelphia’s segregation model, Kingston Penitentiary’s design and penal practices reflect Foucault’s (1977) articulation of discipline, punishment, and biopolitics that emerged alongside the penitentiary. Stretching this into a soundworld, Bull and Back (2003: 5) remind us that “the history of surveillance is as much a sound history as a history of vision.” If power relations materialise through technologies like the oft-cited panopticon, the “all-seeing” design and theory of surveillance conceived by Jeremy Bentham in the late

\textsuperscript{75} Such accounts contrast Trevor Paglen’s experiences recording sound in American prisons. This is likely because the prison he entered featured more restrictive segregation (Paglen visited the Special Housing Unit in Pelican Bay State Prison, a Supermax facility that confines thousands of people in individual cells underground for 23.5 hours per day), and because his account did not explicitly describe the initial process of entering the prison, which may have been more sonically eventful.

\textsuperscript{76} See Wener (2012) for an account of the effects of noise on prisoners’ psychological health. See also Allen (1995), Fullerton and Ursano (1997), and O’Brien (1998) for broader discussions about sound as a trigger for post-traumatic stress disorder.
eighteenth century, the same can be said about the attempts to use sound as a form of discipline and surveillance (Gallagher 2011), albeit in different manifestations. Although rarely acknowledged, Bentham (2013 [1791]) included in his panopticon sonic design features that were to further satisfy a disciplinary logic: ‘conversation-tubes’ allowed inspectors to give orders to prisoners and to listen into cells without being visible. He explains:

The . . . set of conversation-tubes is to enable an Inspector in the Lodge to hold converse in his own person, whenever he thinks proper, with a prisoner in any of the Cells. Fixed tubes, crossing the Annular-Well and continued to so great a length being plainly out of the question, the tubes, for this purpose can be no other than the short ones in common use under the name of speaking-trumpets.

This system of tubes, which might be referred to as a ‘Panaudicon’ (for a more contemporary example, see Rice, 2003), was abandoned partly because it failed to reproduce the dissymmetry of the Panopticon tower, which allowed authorities to watch without being seen by inmates. It is much more difficult to control the movement of sonic stimuli; the tubes worked as a two-way communication technology, which led, at least in part, to its abandonment. However, when used under the common rule of silence, the tubes would still have provided a means of aural control that could purposely disrupt and disorient an unsuspecting inmate. More recently, auditory technologies, such as microphones and loudspeakers, have reintroduced the dissymmetry of aural command and eavesdropping as a form of surveillance sought in earlier prison design, a point to which I will return in the section on contemporary sonic technologies.

In 1848, George Brown was commissioned to head an investigation of Kingston Penitentiary amidst increasing allegations of cruel and unusual punishment and poor prison conditions under the rule of Warden Henry Smith. Brown’s scathing report (Canada Provincial

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77 The tone of the Brown Commission seems warranted given the alarming prison conditions, however, it should be noted that Warden Smith was a close friend of Canada’s first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, who did not take kindly to Brown’s use of The Globe as an outlet for criticizing the government (Oliver, 1998).
Penitentiary Commission, 1849; hereafter referred to as the Brown Commission) outlines the prison’s “most frightful oppression - revolting inhumanity” and questions the effectiveness of a silent system nearly fifteen years into its use. Sound, at the time of the report, was a key problem that prison authorities attempted to control with harsh disciplinary measures. The notion of silence, as one conceptualisation of sound, is a useful approach for exploring historical geographies of prisons, given its historical role as a mode of disciplinary power and form of spatial knowledge. Silence occupies liminal spatial status as simultaneously vast and enclosing (Maitland, 2009). As I have noted, space is never truly void of sound; even when undetected by human ears, sound waves constantly engulf and shape space. In prisons, silence has been used and interpreted in a variety of ways (Paglen, 2006; LaBelle, 2010), from reducing human-made sounds, to sensory deprivation, to the systematic oppression and silencing of political voice. As I outline below, recognizing the escaping capacities of sound, an attempt to confine sound was another step to confining prisoners, at least in theory.

**Silent treatment at Kingston Penitentiary: 1835-1932**

Under the principles of Auburn’s silent system, prisoners at Kingston Penitentiary were ordered to “preserve unbroken silence” (Upper Canada Legislature, 1836; see also Brown Commission, 1849; Brown, 1850). Initially proposed by Quakers who sought reform through penitence instead of violence and exile (but who were also the first to denounce it after seeing its effects; see Gleissner, 2010) the silent system became valued by prison authorities as a tool to re-spatialise and re-temporalise inmates’ sense of aurality in an effort to produce docile bodies through “subtle coercion” (Foucault, 1977: 137). Occasionally, subtle coercion required enforcement. As
Curtis et al. (1985: 28) note, “anything that might disturb the silence and harmony of the institution [was] forbidden under pain of severe corporal punishment.” Similar to other material features of an environment that individualised movement and “thin out” or stratify space (see Sennett 1994), silence was used in the nineteenth century penitentiary to stratify spaces and the individuals occupying them. Indeed, as outlined in a report that set out plans for the penitentiary, “by this system every prisoner forms a class by himself” (Thomson and Macaulay, 1832), stripping inmates of mutuality and familiarity with their incarcerated peers. In this regard, the Auburn model of silence integrated aspects of the opposing Philadelphia model of segregation through the stratifying properties and uses of sound.

Silence at Kingston Penitentiary was conceptualised as an auditory, spiritual space in which ideological notions of purity, faith, and repentance resided (Thomson and Macaulay, 1832; see also Jackson, 1983; Oliver, 1998; Hennessy, 1999). Bodily sounds were limited to those that rendered audible certain techniques of biopower. Marching feet and the rhythmic sounds of manual labour were acceptable at particular places and times as sonic signals of disciplinary order, while other bodily sounds were deemed unacceptable noise (Curtis et al. 1985; Oliver, 1998) and met with severe punishment. Indeed, punishment records from the nineteenth century (Kingston Penitentiary, Punishment Record Books, MF2280) show a high frequency of instances in which inmates (men, women, and children) were punished with bread and water diets, cat o’ nine tail lashings, and dark cell confinement for breaking the silent rule. Distinctions were made between verbal sounds, other vocal sounds like laughing, crying, or singing, and other bodily sounds such as stomping and clapping (MF 2280.1). Under the silent system, the penitentiary could be characterised as a high-fidelity soundscape that seemed to amplify otherwise mundane sounds. This is a key difference between the penitentiary’s
soundscape toward the end of its operation; interview participants identify the prison in its final years as an extremely noisy, low-fidelity environment, featuring a low signal-to-noise ratio with dense layers of sounds. Silence is therefore not simply a conceptualisation but also a spatial *structure* of sound, “filling” and constructing carceral space in different ways than noise, marking distinctions between different historic periods.

The success of the silent rule at Kingston Penitentiary depended on strict enforcement by the keepers, known today as guards or correctional officers. Initial rules and regulations outlined by the House of Assembly (Upper Canada Legislature, 1836) stated that keepers “shall require of Convicts, labor, silence, and strict obedience.” Punishment records during the penitentiary’s first quarter-century of operation (Queen’s University Archives, MF2280) offer a glimpse into the struggle to maintain order and discipline through silence. Children, who were sentenced to Kingston Penitentiary in its formative years, were particularly disadvantaged by the silent rule. Emotionally-charged laughter and audible expressions of fear – perhaps more difficult for children to repress than for adults – were punished with bread-and-water diets, lashings, and dark cell confinement (Canada Provincial Penitentiary Report, 1849; see also Hennessy, 1999). In 1846, for instance, seven children were lashed with rawhide for “talking and laughing when at dinner” (Queen’s University Archives, MF 2280.2). One of these children, Antoine Beauché, who appeared to suffer from a mental illness,\(^78\) was cited in the Brown Commission (1849: 201) as a frequent target of violent lashings for noisy outbursts, and was often gagged in attempt to silence him:

> His usual offence was making a noise in his cell. Recollects one night, about two years ago, when witness was on guard over the prisoners, the Prison was disturbed by this boy. He awoke in a great fright, and commenced shouting out that there was something under

\(^{78}\) Indeed, archival records reveal that a majority of inmates punished for noisy and violent outbursts likely suffered from some form of mental illness; it is not clear, however, whether such challenges were exacerbated or caused by their incarceration.
his bed, and calling for the Priest to come and see him. He climbed up on the rails of his window and door, screaming at the height of his lungs; blood and froth came from his mouth. Keeper Hooper went to the Warden, and called him out of his bed. . . . Hooper and witness held him down on the ground, and the Warden flogged him with a rope’s end, as long as he could stand over him.

Here, as well as in punishment records for men and women (Library and Archives Canada, RG 73, MF T-1943; Queen’s University Archives, MF 2280.3), silence materialised historically as a form of violence and disempowerment.

According to the Brown Commission, a witness confirmed the violent silencing techniques used against Charlotte Reveille, an inmate labeled “insane” and “ill-behaved”. Records state: “Witness is asked, if the Inspectors did not, by minute of 5th April, 1847, order ‘Charlotte Reveille to be gagged whenever it might be necessary to reduce her to silence?’ and witness says, ‘they did.’” Silencing techniques were physical, psychological, and political. The notion of “reducing” a person to silence is particularly noteworthy, as it points to powerful hierarchies of sonic expression. In the case of Charlotte Reveille, it is implied that a person who is not permitted to make sound or who cannot be heard is diminished. Silence is a powerful act for the person who willfully chooses it, but not for the person upon whom it is forced.

The silent system of control was indeed powerful for particular purposes, yet easily betrayed by its practical fragility. This is exemplified in the noted difficulty inmates had obeying the silent rule, and their advantageous use of unlocatable sounds to resist confinement. Indeed, cited in the Brown Commission (1849: 116), witness Reverend R. V. Rogers testified that “the silent system is not at all carried out; the men talk and laugh in groups together through the yard, constantly; they know every thing going on outside, and the want of discipline is quite notorious and often noticed by strangers.” Despite the challenges of enforcing silent behavior, the rule remained in place from 1835 until the end of 1932 (Canada, Penitentiary Regulations 1933,
1934), after which silence was only demanded at particular times (Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries, 1934*: 23):

By regulation, as amended on January 1, 1933, wardens of penitentiaries are permitted to allow convicts to converse in a conversational tone before proceeding to work in the morning, during lunch hour, and up to seven o’clock in the evening, while confined in their cells.

The silent rule was only informally enforced thereafter. According to the report, there was little evidence that the abolition of the silent rule threatened security, although wardens expressed concern that inmates’ conversations held no reformatory value. Today, silence is used primarily alongside sensory deprivation and segregation in solitary confinement (Guenther, 2013), but it also persists as an act of symbolic and systematic violence through ex-communication, the silencing of “voices,” and changes to parole restrictions on community activism (see, for example, *Safe Streets and Communities Act, Bill C-10*, 2011).

The fluid, reverberating properties of sound that sound scholars might otherwise champion were – and in many cases still are – understood as threats to authoritative control and carried ideological underpinnings of disease and impurity. This notion follows Peter Bailey’s work on the distinction between sound and noise as something that developed in the nineteenth century with the bourgeois fear of the crowd (see also Attali, 1985). From the outset, unauthorised, prisoner-produced sounds were considered transgressive and even contaminating (Thomson and Macaulay, 1832; Canada Provincial Penitentiary Report, 1849; Evans, 1982). The failure of the silent rule was in large part connected to the uncontainable qualities of sound; if inmates at Kingston Penitentiary could use sound to permeate multiple spaces without moving, the mandate of “separate and away” as a form of decontamination was jeopardised.

Throughout the penitentiary’s first century, a docile prisoner was a silent one. The current soundscape of a typical Canadian, cell-style prison exists in stark contrast to the Penitentiary in
the 1800s, now typically characterised as noisy.\footnote{79 The exception to the commonality of noise in prisons might be found in spaces of solitary confinement, which restricts communication and prohibits the use of multi-sensory media, as well as spaces associated with therapy and reflection, such as the chapel. However, as participants inform me, these parts of the prison are not as quiet as one would expect, and even if a particular room is considered a ‘quiet space’ it is not removed from the surrounding soundscape that filters through walls and doors.} As one participant explained, with the influx in noise and sonic devices, silence has become so rare among the general population that it acts as an alarm signalling danger. Changing technologies have allowed old surveillance systems, like the Panopticon, to become entangled with current forms of micro-management; loudspeakers, hidden microphones, and sonic design features, which shape the way sounds travel throughout particular spaces. As I explain below, these transformations continue to leave “soundprints” (Atkinson, 2007) on prisons and their subjects.

Contemporary confinement and technological change: 1933-present

Kingston Penitentiary’s most infamous riot in 1971 lasted four days, culminating with the deaths of two inmates and the eventual release of guard hostages. An inquiry led by Justice J.W. Swackhamer (Canada Commission of Inquiry into Certain Disturbances at Kingston Penitentiary during April 1971, 1973) outlines a list of grievances that precipitated the riot, including: poor living conditions; monotony (notably, a word with sonic roots); overcrowding; overguarding; and fears regarding transfer to a new high-tech, maximum-security prison. Amidst the riot’s debris lay the prison bell, shattered by the blows of inmates seeking retribution for its years of noisy, unrelenting command. Among archival testimonies, the bell is frequently cited as the most symbolic piece of property damaged in the riot and an especially loathed mechanism of control in the prison.
As former inmate, Roger Caron, indicated in his prison memoirs (Caron, 1978; see also Caron, 1985), the interpretations of the bell’s sonic command depended on which side of authoritative rule an individual was placed. For the guards, the bell was an ally, a technology that saved them energy and promoted the kind of efficiency sought in carceral environments (see also Jewkes, 2002). However, even guards likely had differing opinions of the bell depending on spatial and temporal context. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, guards were required to live within the sound of the prison bell so that they could hear and respond to its audible signals in the event of a riot (Oliver, 1998; Hennessy, 1999). Highlighting the shifting spatial relations of power, guards were also disciplined sonically, training their ears and bodies to filter auditory signals. The bell links the past prison with the contemporary – a relatively simplistic yet efficient technology that commanded disciplined movement in the 1835 “Pen” as it did leading up to the
1971 riot and onward. The context in which a bell is heard, however, has shifted with broader penal change.

For those who experienced the bell’s commanding grip as another form of dehumanisation, it is not difficult to appreciate the fury that led to the silencing of the bell. Sounding thirty-two times daily, it was similar to other tools of torture both physically because of its loud vibrations, and mentally because it signalled their almost complete lack of control over their own bodies while causing psychological and emotional strife (Crewe, 2011). As Caron recounts (1985: 110), the moulded brass object took on a life of its own: a “bullying” monster that barked orders, tortured sleeping bodies, and physically agitated inmates’ central nervous systems. Indeed, his descriptions of the bell’s destruction read more like the killing of a living beast than an inanimate object, implying that the bell had its own agency to bully and fight their blows. The fact inmates targeted the bell specifically, rather than those who operated and conceived it, is indicative of its importance as a tool of discipline and symbol of oppression.

Not long after the riot, and alongside broader technological change, Canadian prisons assumed a shift in auditory technologies of spatial and temporal control. Perhaps the most notable was the introduction of electronic public address (PA) systems. Used as another form of space-time compression, PA systems in prisons are used to give orders to inmates, both individually and collectively, a key “improvement” on the bell. In his work on the loudspeaker, Seth Cluett (2010: 9) writes of the sound-projecting technology as “[enabling] a return to orality that extended language into space in the same way that literacy helped extend writing over time” (see also Cluett, 2013; and Ong, 2002). As a sonic technology that has been manipulated to be executed at high decibel levels and penetrate virtually every space in the prison, inmates and staff have little agency to ignore it. Instead, their bodies become tethered to the robotic sound of
the loudspeaker, and are forced to constantly “keep an ear out” for orders from authority figures. Perhaps most importantly, the PA system enforces and agitates daily rhythms, at times punctuating otherwise steady flows of work and whatever forms of silence or solitude a person desire in an otherwise cacophonous carceral soundscape. As Wener (2012) warns, this type of noise can have non-acoustic impacts, such as sleep deprivation, stress induction, agitation, and reduced concentration, many of which exacerbate or lead to depression. Relative continuity and calmness are disrupted by one voice demanding the attention of many, constituting the PA’s sonic dictatorship as noise that cannot be silenced or controlled by constrained inmates. The sonic quality of a loudspeaker varies considerably from the clanging, resonating effects of a bell, typically producing grainy, mechanised sounds that physically interact with bodies and leave their marks on the carceral soundscape.

Part of the loudspeaker’s effect in prison is that it is almost always used as a dictatorial tool; it is designed to enforce action and direct movement, rarely eliciting feelings of peace or comfort for those whose ears are trained to listen for it. This prompts the question: what would happen if the loudspeaker was used for different purposes? One of the most memorable scenes in the film *Shawshank Redemption* (Darabont, 1994) shows Andy, an inmate, locking himself in a control room and playing Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* over the loudspeaker. The scene is powerful because audiences come to it with a pre-existing cultural understanding of various elements: the purposes of loudspeakers, the places in which an opera is and is not heard, and the people who are meant to control a prison soundscape. In other words, we recognise the scene to be an act of transgression because operatic music is not *supposed* to be heard over loudspeakers in prisons. Likewise, inmates are intended to be controlled *by* – rather than controllers *of* – the PA system. Andy’s resistance in *Shawshank Redemption* was the subversive repurposing of an
invasive auditory instrument – a brief but vital escape from subordination and confinement (see Chapter Six).

The bell and loudspeaker are technologies that project sound outward; sound capturing devices have also evolved to heighten auditory surveillance in prisons. Gone are the plans of Bentham’s “listening tubes,” but technological innovations like the microphone have reintroduced the notion of asymmetrical surveillance. Now small enough to be hidden throughout spaces of visitation as a way to discretely record conversations, microphones facilitate “eavesdropping” on inmates, their visitors, and even staff members. Signs left on the walls of Kingston Penitentiary after its closure alerted people that they may be recorded at any time, encouraged self-monitoring and obedience (see Corrections and Conditional Release Act, 2015 [1992], sec. 94.1). One participant, a former employee who revisited Kingston Penitentiary after its closure, said in a telephone interview about the visit:

I learned things I never knew when I was in there. There’s a room at the front for visitors, who can sit at round tables with glass tops while visiting their family member. In the post of the tables there was a listening device. Well, I didn’t know that until I went back after it closed. We had staff meetings in there, so who knows what people heard or who was listening.

This practice of eavesdropping (on inmates as well as staff) calls for pause, as it highlights the potentially oppressive nature of aurality that is often forgotten when highlighting the value of sound-mediating technologies (Sterne, 2003; Goodman, 2010). The participant’s comments above might encourage researchers, in addition to prison authorities, to critically negotiate the ethics of listening and of recording sound (see also Paglen, 2006). As researchers, we must also remember that sonic methods for engaging with past and present carceral spaces are never removed from this politics of aurality.
Along similar lines of sound capturing technologies are sound *absorbing* materials, which also take sound inward, though not for surveillance purposes. Leslie Fairweather (2000) writes that sound absorbing materials, such as soft surfaces and baffling, are less common in prisons, particularly older institutions that used more durable, sound reflecting materials like stone and metal. 80 However, she suggests, “noise levels can also be reduced by limiting or dispersing audio systems, using sound-absorbing materials such as carpet or acoustic tiles, and limiting the metal-on-metal contacts of structure, equipment, or furnishings” (2000: 42). Throughout my interviews, participants cited very little evidence of building materials that manage noise level. Notably, when Kingston Penitentiary closed, visitors spotted what appeared to be sound absorbing pads on the walls, later learning that they were meant to absorb the bullets from warning shots. Although primarily intended to stop bullets from ricocheting and causing harm, the pads do stop bullets from raising further clamour by hitting other metal objects. 81 Participants noted that carpeting was present in certain rooms of newer institutions, including chapels, libraries, and psychiatric treatment facilities – all of which, as I note later, are spaces associated with quietude.

Revisions to penitentiary regulations in 1933 following the 1932 riot also saw changes to leisure affordances (*Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries*, 1933; Marr, 1988). The resulting slow introduction of radios into Canadian prisons was highly transformative in the reconstruction of carceral soundscapes. After the silent rule, the ability to listen to music and other radio programs was novel, with radios (and later televisions) quickly becoming a “cherished opiate of the convict” (Hennessy, 1999). Although still present and similarly

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80 Fairweather speculates that sound absorbent materials, such as carpeting and acoustic tiles, are less used because of the higher cost of installing, maintaining, and updating them.

81 Of course, the initial firing of a gun would still produce an extremely loud sound, regardless of whether the bullet is absorbed, with varying frequencies shaped by the acoustics of the room.
cherished today, the radio had contradictory uses and responses. It was effective as a community-building tool, given that it provided opportunities for communal listening and fostering an awareness of worldly issues, but these benefits were contradicted by its propensity to produce conflict. This was particularly evident as the portability of the radio turned listening into a more individual experience in each cell. Before headphones became widely available, many of these conflicts originated over the noisy “invasion” of one’s personal acoustic space by another’s radio, adding to already overbearing restriction and confinement (Crewe, 2011). Even recently, through the telling of Kingston Penitentiary’s past upon its closure, anecdotal evidence suggests that the last person to be murdered by a fellow inmate was killed over a dispute about radio volume. The emergence of individual radios in the 1950s-60s, partly through the formation of the Correctional Planning Committee in 1960 (Correctional Service of Canada, 2010; Ricciardelli et al., 2014), offered a greater sense of personal agency because inmates could control, to some extent, listening options and locations. Unsurprisingly, this sense of control remained relative. Despite predictable conflicts about volume levels, it was not difficult to see that these “aural pacifiers” could further aid in the production of docile, incarcerated bodies.

The radio served as a way to broadcast recorded voices to a greater public, breaking down and through some of the walls that previously severed communication and facilitated the rejection of inmates from surrounding communities (Sykes, 1958). Indeed, inmates who operated and participated in Kingston Penitentiary’s short-lived radio program from 1952-1955, *Kingston Penitentiary is On the Air* (see St. Onge, 2005), contributed to a special audible history that has shaped the penitentiary as we know it today, but that may have been forgotten in the public

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82 This anecdote was repeated on more than one occasion during my research, but I was never able to verify it. However, when asked whether they had knowledge about the incident, two participants indicated that, despite not knowing for sure, the idea of a person being killed over a noise conflict was not outlandish.
remembering of its past (see Figure 1). Regrettably, under the current regime in Canada, many prison programs such as radio shows and music performances, which once offered aural expression and connection to outside communities, have been discontinued.83

**Figure 4.3: Radio broadcast of a live musical performance by inmates at Kingston Penitentiary**

This image shows inmates playing string instruments as part of a *Kingston Penitentiary is on the Air* broadcast. Gathered around analog recording and broadcasting equipment, this musical performance was taped and distributed over radio airwaves. The radio show, run by inmates at the penitentiary, was in operation from 1952-1955 (see St. Onge, 2005). Source: Queen’s University Archives (used with permission).

The current conditions of incarceration in Canada reflect a crisis of double-bunking and overcrowding (Sapers, 2013; see also Ricciardelli et al., 2014). Given that incarcerated populations fluctuate with policy change (see Pizarro, Stenius, and Pratt, 2006; Ricciardelli, et al., 2014), this latest trend of overcrowding can most recently be tied to Bill C-10, an omnibus bill passed in 2011 that introduced harsher sentences, new criminal offences, and mandatory

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83 But see “Calls from Home” on CFRC Prison Radio.
sentencing. In other words, “people will be incarcerated for longer periods of time and more frequently” (Ricciardelli et al., 2014).

What kind of impact does overcrowding have on sonic experiences of incarceration? Put simply, crowded conditions are noisy. They act as primary triggers of pain (Sykes, 1958) and deepen oppression in contemporary Canadian prisons, increasing desperation to reclaim personal space. As Wener (2012: 197) indicates, crowding heightens noise levels, since “much of the noise in correctional settings is generated by the people there.” In addition to the very serious physical impacts of noise in prisons, including nausea and headaches (Stanfield and Matheson, 2003) and possible hearing loss (Jacobson, Jacobson, and Crowe, 1989), constant exposure to noise has myriad emotional and psychological effects (Méndez, 2011; Wener, 2012). A loss of privacy is in part experienced as a sonic threat to dignity and autonomy (see Rice, 2013), as multi-layered noise infiltrates people’s sense of personal acoustic space.

The introduction of headphones in prisons has offered some relief in the mediation of carceral soundscapes. In the past few decades, headphones have become prized commodities that help reclaim personal acoustic space while also filtering out undesirable sound. This practice connects with what Paget (2008: 119) describes as the personalisation of the cell, in which an inmate constructs a “defensible space” by making an “individual imprint on one’s surroundings” (see also Dirisuweit, 1999). In this case, inmates have made individual soundprints through the production of an auditory “bubble” (Bull, 2007; see also Goffman, 1971; Hall, 1964). Similar to personal radios, but more effective in the hushing of auditory media, headphones blur the boundaries between agency and powerlessness. The ability to create a private soundworld while filtering out unwanted noise offers a small, but crucial, opportunity to reclaim control and autonomy that is otherwise deprived upon incarceration. However, a key concern remains: prison
authorities may use headphones as pacifying technologies for the masses, instead of addressing the more threatening problem of overcrowding directly.

**Carceral acoustemologies: sonic approaches to “doing time” (and space)**

In this section, I borrow from Dominique Moran’s (2012) carceral play on words to explain how scholars might use sound and sonic methods to understand “doing” time: that is, by exploring the methodological potential of sound to articulate carceral time as well as space. Cautioning against the privileging of vision – or “ocularcentrism” – in geographical knowledge, Gallagher and Prior (2014) challenge the assumption that “earwitnessing” is less reliable than eyewitnessing (see also Smith, 1997; Sui, 2000). Sound is a useful conceptual tool for historical geography as something that is at once tangible and intangible, material as well as discursive. After all, we feel sound: we are physically and emotionally moved by vibrations, and we also use sound to construct space and time. A carceral acoustemology is indeed a useful conceptual tool, but its usability is perhaps more challenging to negotiate, not least because of the political climates in which researchers and prisons are situated. Oral histories are hard to obtain when requests to engage with inmates about personal experiences of sound are increasingly blocked by correctional authorities (see Chapter Three; see also Piché, 2011), as are audio recordings that are disallowed in the name of safety and privacy (Paglen, 2006). Beyond the challenges presented by heightened restrictions in both prisons and archives, geographical research that takes an historical approach would benefit from more extensive training on aural methods (Gallagher and Prior, 2014) that are reflexive of the productive and disruptive uses of sonic technologies.
For Morin and Moran (2015), the notion of a “usable past” is intended as a pragmatic approach to historical geography, recognising particular sets of interests and problems while still maintaining critical awareness of the political decisions behind the illumination of some pasts as “usable” (thereby rendering others less so). I remain cautious of the value-laden implications of such a term, but appreciate the urgency of certain conditions in the present that have been shaped by a multiplicity of historical interventions. This urgency is articulated by Morin and Moran (2015: 6), who state:

. . . the usable past as a conceptual framework helps us come to grips with that multiplicity by acknowledging that behind every version of the past are a set of interests in the present; all constructions of the past are in some sense an invention, a ‘retrospective reconstruction of historical referents to serve the needs of the present’ (Olick, 2007: 9). In the case of prisons and jails, we see one pressing ‘need of the present’ to frame the hyper- or mass-incarceration trends of today within well-articulated historical and geographical contexts.”

Approaching the “usable past” with a sonic sensibility may not always send us on a new search for historic auditory materials, nor does it necessarily require geographers to become experts in phonographic methods. As a starting point, we might simply revisit material remnants of the past with a redirected focus – to be attuned to that which we have overlooked – rendering something newly informative. Audio recordings of speeches inside prison walls, for instance, have useful content beyond the words spoken; voice is not simply verbal content but may also be analysed for aurality and soundscape (Kanngieser, 2012; Gallagher and Prior, 2014). Ambient sound in existing recordings (echoes, resonances, audio devices) might say something about the acoustic characteristics of a transformed space, or is largely unexperienced by the non-incarcerated public. Similarly, visual evidence, such as photographs of past and present architecture, sonic events (see Figure 4.2), or surveillance mechanisms (see James, 2014), might be revisited with an imaginative ear, eliciting an affective atmosphere (Anderson, 2009) that adds nuance to artistic representations.
Other emergent sonic methods offer rich potential for capturing the spatial characteristics of a given site, such that the essence of a past soundscape can be reconstructed long after it has evolved. Historical geographers might begin with soundwalks: aural exercises in deep, mobile listening (see Schafer, 1977, 1944; Westerkamp, 1974). Adapting the soundwalk method to one that is more historically layered and self-directed, Michael Gallagher (2015) has introduced the “audio drift,” stitching together stories, music, and ambient sound clips to capture the evolving history and atmosphere of ruins, effectively intersecting past and present. Similarly, impulse response (IR) tests (Cabot, 1978) offer an indication of the acoustic signature of a cell in a particular time and place and exemplify one way to simultaneously capture and reconstruct past soundscapes. This may be particularly useful to show differences in prison soundscapes as they vary by time and space, to recreate a listening experience that has been lost to changes in prison design. Such projects need not only be undertaken by researchers undertaking participatory historical methods (see L. Cameron, 2014). As I discuss in Chapter Six, for example, inmates at a Pittsburgh Institution acted as historians and carceral commentators through their collaborative production of a music album, Postcards from the County (Brown, 2014), which interweaves personal narratives and soundscapes of past, present, and future.

As is evident in the above examples, sound-based methods encourage experimentation with acoustic space as a way of invoking and evoking carceral pasts. In doing so, these methods enable rich collaboration and may foster empathy through an emphasis on the politics of listening. Echoing the work of Piché and Walby (2010), however, I caution against researchers

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84 Further, audio files from IR tests might be employed to transfuse a carceral soundscape into a non-carceral setting. An example of this is demonstrated by sound artist Matt Rogalsky, whose production of rock band PS I Love You’s album For Those Who Stay (2014) included impulse response-based reverbs recreating the acoustics of various locations within Kingston Penitentiary.

using such methods in prisons as another manifestation of carceral tours, which can lead to degrading treatment of inmates. Instead, and always reflexively, incarcerated populations might be engaged in facilitated listening and sound-making exercises, in which they create their own narratives of carceral space, becoming more active in constructing a history that might otherwise be silenced simply because of their incarceration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced histories of sound and sonic control in prisons through Kingston Penitentiary’s silent system and evolving auditory technologies, while making a case for an acoustemological approach to exploring carceral pasts. I have shown how material reminders of past soundscapes and sonic relations of power linger among us with potential to be creatively revived. We might capture, remember, or speak to this past by re-entering prison sites and experimenting with the sonicity of these spaces, or by re-engaging carceral histories with a revived sonic imagination. Methodologies that embrace the combined material and discursive properties of sound can help to weave the contemporary with the historic, the noise with the silence, and the presences with the absences, as we endeavour to change the current face of incarceration.
Chapter 5

“Feeling the Range”: Emotional Geographies of Sound in Prisons

Introduction

Guards call it “feeling the range”. When you are physically present you can sense the mood of the range through the sounds of conversation or raised voices (or lack of). If you spend enough time with a group of people you can read subtle emotion in their tones. With only the video screen far removed from the range you have no warning clues of sound. Suddenly, the range breaks into violence.

( Participant, e-mail communication)

As I argue throughout this dissertation, sound is one of the complex modalities of emotion and power that composes everyday life. For an increasing population, everyday life is experienced through incarceration. Despite the recent flourishing of scholarship on carceral geographies (see Chapter Two), the notion of “the everyday” in prisons, and the complex role of sound in the emotional and embodied experiences of incarceration, remain under-recognised. Material properties of sound, including resonance, vibration, and fluidity, inspire auditory epistemologies or acoustemologies (Feld, 1996) that value sound and listening as important ways of knowing and being known. The experience of sound waves through hearing, touch, and movement (Boyd and Duffy, 2012; Duffy and Waitt, 2013) is an embodied practice shaped by cultural, historical, and political context. In this chapter, I explore the emotional negotiation of sound, and the sonic expressions of emotion, as central to experiences of incarceration. I do so by drawing primarily from interviews; prison-related blog entries by incarcerated people; autobiographical accounts of formerly incarcerated people; and media interviews.

In Canadian prisons, the “range” typically refers to a common area into which individual cells open, occupied by inmates during the day while locked out of their cells. As the John
Howard Society\textsuperscript{86} of Ontario (2013) explains, “[the range] is typically quite noisy. . . . Usually the guards are outside of the range, looking in.” The range is a dynamic social space of varying uses and is a key site through which conviviality and conflict play out. As one participant articulated in this paper’s epigraph, inmates and correctional officers (COs) “feel the range” in numerous ways. For the purposes of this chapter, “feeling the range” is a threefold concept.

First, “feeling the range” highlights the affective potential of prisons and their sonic environments. We might think of this as an atmospheric kind of affect that is tangible and intangible at once (Anderson, 2009). When asked about the term, another participant replied, “yes, some of them refer to it as the pulse. What is the pulse of the institution doing? What are you hearing? What are you not hearing? In all different security levels, it’s important. If everything’s really quiet, and the men aren’t moving around a lot, I’m like, ‘what’s going on?’ you know?” (in-person interview). This description accounts for what Kanngieser (2012) articulates as sonic geographies of voice, which include non-linguistic aspects of communication like gestures and pauses. Secondly, “feeling” is a word that reflects tactility and haptic knowledge (see Johnston, 2012; Pallassmaa, 2005). Indeed, sound is a form of touch that intersects with and extends from our bodies. I use notions of haptic knowledge and acoustemologies to show how sound touches incarcerated bodies, and how individuals use sound as a respatialising extension of the body. Finally, the phrase connects to emotion through feelings, moods, and desires as they constitute prison life. I weave these three conceptualisations throughout to demonstrate the connections between sound, emotion, and affect as they play out in the context of prisons.

\textsuperscript{86} The John Howard Society is a non-profit organisation that advocates for “effective, just, and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime” (John Howard Society of Canada, 2013).
Emotional and affective powers of sound

As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the connections between sound and emotion, from a geographical perspective, run deep; of a multitude of connections, I will give two examples. First, sound is encountered through emotion. It elicits a spectrum of emotional responses that vary across different temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts. In other words, a person’s fluctuating emotional state, combined with the space they occupy, can change the way sounds are heard and perceived. Laughter is often interpreted with joyful emotions in one setting, yet in certain spaces might be connected with anguish, suspicion, or nervousness. This is particularly evident in prisons, which tend to elicit feelings of anxiety and distrust. One participant claimed, “when you hear laughter in prisons, it can make you forget where you are. Then you remember, and you get an eerie feeling. It’s like you can’t trust it” (telephone interview). Another participant (in-person interview) explained the common frustration with laughter in segregation:

And the officers laughing, sitting in the bubble, talking and laughing. That’s particularly annoying for people in segregation. You know, they’re not even talking about them or laughing at them or anything, but it’s such a sensitive issue… it just raises the suspicion level of what’s going on.

This is not to suggest that laughter is always interpreted with suspicion or as being out of place in prisons – indeed, it was also described as “heart-warming” by another participant (in-person interview) – but it reinforces the many sonic and emotional tensions discussed throughout this chapter.

Secondly, emotion is embodied as sound (Duffy, 2007), in that sonic expressions of the body project particular emotional and affective states. Marching might be employed to signal intimidation or anger, while high pitched vocal tones may reflect excitement. In other words,
sound is an important facet of emotional knowledge, though such knowledge is never static. Cultural differences in the expression and interpretation of emotion vary as they do with sound; perceptions of soundscapes vary with intersections of gender, age, ethnicity, ability, and class, among others. In many cases, the emotional experience of sound and the sonic expression of emotion are intertwined, further exemplifying their deep connections.

Others point to the violent capacities of sound. Steve Goodman (2010) uses the term ‘sonic warfare’ to call attention to the alarming and even torturous practices of aurality, investigating the “power of sound to instill dread” (65). He explores how our bodies react to unusually loud sounds, citing blood pressure fluctuations and nausea, and connects this to evolutionary perceptions of danger. One participant, who has worked at several prisons, explained the effects of hearing a riot squad entering the prison. In this case, sonic techniques of intimidation, while likely instilling dread in some, triggered a loud response from the inmates who would pick up on an aural atmosphere of anticipation:

When there was a problem in seg., they’d call in the squad, you know, the riot guys with all the gear, and I used to hear them coming. CRASH, CRASH, CRASH. The boots, they’d stomp as they come down the floor. It’s intimidation. Your heart is pounding. And that noise, depending on what was going on, I noticed it just made the guys’ reactions rise. There was a lot more shouting, a lot more yelling, a lot more carrying on because they knew they were coming. They could hear them coming, same as I could hear them coming. (in-person interview)

As Karen Morin (2013b; 2015) argues in the context of the United States, segregation or solitary confinement is not necessarily an effective solution to abating violence; rather, the extreme conditions of confinement, which can stir up feelings of dread, anxiety, and anger, might in fact produce more violent behaviour both inside and outside segregation units. The above quotation highlights the occurrence of acoustic violence, not just from the confined inmates but also, importantly, as a response to the intimidating sounds of an unseen riot squad. For Brett Story
(2015: 47), the auditory behaviour of inmates in segregation prompted, it would seem, by the riot squad further reinforces ideological categories of prisoners (“the worst of the worst”), “upon which extreme isolation is legitimated and the prisoner’s imminent or inchoate threat is pre-empted.” In this regard, affective atmospheres of intimidation and dread do not occur by accident, no matter how intangible or difficult to pin down; rather, they are actively constructed by techniques of penal authorities.

Indeed, expanding on Ben Anderson’s (2009) work, the concept of atmosphere is useful for exploring the blurring of tangible and intangible qualities of sound. Here, we find connections between sound, affect, and spectrality. As David Toop (2010) insists, sound is a type of haunting – it is ambiguous, fleeting, and ubiquitous. Prisons, and similar institutions that are already constructed as having ghostly pasts that are inexplicably both absent and present, seem ripe for analysis of the potential for sound to explore and invoke hauntings. As one participant reflected (in-person interview), “the prison had so many echoes. I hated being alone because the sounds made my mind wander. It made me think of how haunted the place must have been.”

Hauntings and uncanny experiences are common to the imagination of prisons, particularly older institutions with layered histories of emotional conflict, adding elements of intangibility that cannot always be explained but rather become embodied (see Gallagher, 2015; Toop, 2010).

It is difficult to convey the affective qualities of sonic hauntings through writing. As I move into a deeper discussion of the effects of the carceral soundscape on the body, I invite the reader to listen to a YouTube video recorded inside Bath Institution by an inmate, Peter Collins.87

87 Peter Collins, who was incarcerated for over three decades and serving a life sentence, is well-known in the Kingston and CFRC community for his activism, art, and music. He was diagnosed with an aggressive form of bladder cancer and as of January 2015, was given only months to live. In February 2015, CFRC dedicated an entire “Calls from Home” show to playing requests and messages of support for Collins, titled “Calls for Pete.” The message from Collins’ brother was played during this show. On August 13, 2015, Peter passed away.
(“Fly in the Ointment”, 2015), in which he spoke about a prolonged period of solitary confinement. I offer it intentionally as a lingering piece with little explanation other than the quotation below, leaving it to resonate with the listener-reader as a kind of ellipsis throughout the remainder of the chapter:

*Half-dressed and face down on my bed I was drifting in and out of consciousness. I felt her soft finger tracing a line along my back as she whispered loving words to me. I sank deeper into the gentle embrace of sleep’s cool darkness. I dreamt of being held, touched, and loved. At some point I woke in a disoriented fog. As I struggled to get my bearings I felt her fingers gently touch my arm and I closed my eyes again. It felt like a moment, but it could’ve been an hour, maybe more, when a loud noise jarred me awake. Instinct took over and I was on my feet, in an instant, ready to defend myself. Reality was slow to join me but caught up a moment later and I realized where I was. The smashing echoes of steel on steel seamlessly blended with angry screaming voices. The cacophony of noise was the prison’s endlessly cruel heartbeat.*

**Contextualising the Contemporary Carceral Soundscape**

“What does a typical day in prison sound like? There is no typical day in prison” (participant, telephone interview). Despite the extreme routinisation of prisons and homogeneous media representations of prison life, participants, like the one above, insisted that it was difficult to describe a typical day. Another participant reflected (telephone interview), “For as much structure as there is, I would argue that… although there’s a lot of routine, there tends to not be a lot of consistency.” They informed me that variation from one day to the next stems from different security levels, gender-based institutions, punishment routines, cultural complexity, and even weather.88

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88 According to one participant, Canadian prisons go under lockdown in foggy conditions due to the (perceived) heightened risk of escapes. I was unable to verify this with CSC or other policy documents.
Most accounts, however, like Melissa Stewart’s testimony in *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* (1997: 2), explain that prisons are overwhelmingly noisy: “The noise level was incredible, with clanging, banging, screaming, and cursing. Some curious prisoners were peering at me inside my cell, wondering who the new “fish” was and whether I would fit into the prison sub-culture.” Similarly, in an interview with *CBC* former Kingston Penitentiary warden Jay Pike described the noisy welcome inmates would receive upon entering the prison, with more seasoned inmates using the harsh materials of cell design to produce a soundscape of intimidation: “a big one is banging on the bars, because it’s a rather obnoxious sound and it’s intimidating.” New “fish,” as Melissa Stewart indicates, have to learn to negotiate the emotional implications of dealing with an acoustic dystopia (Cusick, 2013) of sounds in an already jarring introduction to prison life. According to all participants, a prison’s dystopia most notably includes constant buzzing sounds, PA systems, music, and shouting. One participant’s description stood out in particular (telephone interview):

There’s the buzzing… the PA systems for some reason seem very, very loud. I don’t know if it’s because it’s a largely concrete building where everything just kind of echoes. I’ve never been in a building where people have shouted more [laughs]. And I’m also talking about staff. Their front-line officers are security minded, right? So it’s not quiet. There’s a lot of noise. Everything feels quite abrupt, in many respects. You get startled quite frequently, especially in the beginning.

These observations are not unique to Canadian prisons. Lisa Guenther’s work in Tennessee resonates with the account above, pointing out that the volume of ‘background noise’ remains high even with the introduction of headphones:

Even now that most prisons require the use of headphones for music or television, the rumbling noise of ventilation systems, plumbing, and other mechanical noises, as well as the yelling, singing, screaming, or even talking of other prisoners, makes it difficult to hear

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89 In an interview for the documentary *Tales from KP*, former Kingston Penitentiary inmate, Rick Osborne, explains that new inmates are called “fish” because their gaping mouths, rendered speechless upon experiencing the prison for the first time, resemble a fish.
oneself think. In my own experience facilitating a discussion group on Tennessee’s death row, background noise is our biggest obstacle to communication. I return from the prison with my ears buzzing and my jaws aching from the effort of listening and speaking loud enough to be heard.

These stories are useful for the description of sounds heard in a maximum security prison, but also because they reveal how the soundscape takes an emotional and physical toll on people’s bodies (ears buzzing and jaws aching, as Guenther recounts), even in a short amount of time.

Considering the above quotations, and the recounting of the story about the riot squad, there seems to be something of a consensus among participants that the soundscape of a prison is laced with intimidation. This is particularly the case for new inmates. Sound itself signals a new world of incarceration that many are not yet prepared to negotiate and, as I explain shortly, disorientation is a common way that sound becomes embodied in prisons. For staff and volunteers, particularly those who work in capacities outside security (these might include therapists, lawyers, educators, and nurses, for instance), entering the prison for the first time is likewise an intimidating experience, having a lasting effect even after years of working in penal settings. One participant likened entering a prison as a “free” citizen to airport security checks, writing in a pre-interview report\(^\text{90}\) that “the same uneasiness that you get when at the airport ensues; although you know you do not have anything to hide, the sounds associated with security measures still frighten you” (in-person interview). The notion of feeling like a carceral subject as a visitor exemplifies Allspach’s (2010) notion of the transcarceral and is explored by Dominique Moran (2014) in her work on the liminality of prison visitation spaces. In other words, boundaries of inside/outside (see also Baer and Ravneberg, 2008) and incarcerated/non-

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\(^{90}\) The participant wrote this passage in a report unrelated to this project, and provided me with it prior to our interview, giving permission to use it for this research.
incarcerated (see also Comfort, 2002) are more permeable than might be expected of what Goffman (1961) identified as a “total institution.”

Moran’s use of liminality to express not-quite-free and not-entirely-captive subjectivities is commensurate with Crewe’s metaphor of tightness – power that is embodied through uncertainty and “the sense of not knowing which way to move, for fear of getting things wrong” (2011: 522). Crewe’s depiction of uncertainty is exemplified by one participant’s account of the halted rhythms associated with being a visitor, and always being kept “in the dark” about how long one must wait before gaining permission to move about the prison (telephone interview):

The process of getting in is just hell. . . . Once you’re in, it doesn’t mean you get to go to your destination. We waited for an hour and a half before someone brought us to where we were going. It’s a control thing. Some people say it’s like an airport with all the security scans, but it’s nothing like that. At least in an airport you’ll get notices if something’s delayed or if you have to go to another gate. They keep you in the dark here . . . . They sit you in this room when it’s supposed to be the end of your day and they won’t let you leave. They won’t tell you when you can go.

Another participant reflected on the unnerving feeling of entering a prison as a new employee (telephone interview):

It was odd…unnerving at times. We get searched on the way in. There’s a whole process where you go through the metal detector, and then you go through having your bag searched, and then you go through…

When the participant continued, it became evident that these strict procedures produce a securitised soundscape of entrapment or enclosure:

You have a lot of noises that are initially unsettling. The bars closing behind you and that feeling of being trapped – well, maybe not trapped – but you feel you’re enclosed somewhere that you don’t have the ability to get out. You know that you’re always at the mercy of who’s controlling the switchboard, in many respects, and you’re very much aware of that at every point.

And such enclosure is exacerbated by disorienting multi-sensory experiences:
There’s less light. Everything seems louder. Everything feels more narrow. You’re acutely aware that you no longer have the freedom you would to move about as you would in the community … or working anywhere else.

It became clear, from the above account, that sonic reminders of carceral setting exist alongside other sensory experiences thus result in what the participant termed “hyper-vigilance.” This leads to such feelings of entrapment or captivity even for those who are not supposed to be incarcerated.

Imprisoned populations constitute “captive audiences” (Jewkes, 2002) who cannot readily escape their acoustic surroundings. Although I write about sound as a cherished vehicle of escape in other parts of this chapter, incarcerated people are also betrayed by the fluid properties of sound that might otherwise prove useful in confined spaces. Unlike non-incarcerated groups who have greater access to resources that can mediate or avoid sound, inmates are unable to escape something that is beyond their control. Sounds associated with bodily functions, for example, are nearly impossible to avoid hearing, particularly in close quarters with limited materials available to dampen sounds or carve out a more private space. The inability to shut out sounds in prisons reinforces the lack of control over personal space in prisons and introduces or exacerbates feelings of helplessness and indignity.

Increased rates of hyperincarceration and resulting shared accommodation or double-bunking in prisons dramatically alter the already fragile emotional states of inmates and staff. In Canada, cells that were once designed for one person are now occupied by two or even three people. In 2013, for example, a paper forwarded by the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO) describing and expressing concern about Bath Institution’s increased rates of

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91 According to the *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator* (Sapers, 2013), the national double-bunking rate was roughly 21 percent of the total inmate population.
double-bunking predicted to heightened instances of “aggression, violence, injury from other and self-injurious behaviour” (*Double-Bunking at Bath Institution*, 2011; quoted in Sapers, 2013: 22). Inmates have also shared their concerns about double-bunking through grievances to the Office of the Correctional Investigator, as summarised by Sapers (2013: 22):

Being locked up in a space about the size of an average bathroom with another person inevitably means diminished privacy and dignity, and increases the potential for tension and violence. Inmates describe the experience to the Office as demoralizing and degrading.

These conditions contribute to what was described by several participants as a hostile atmosphere, aggravating existing tensions. As one participant claimed, these hostile conditions of confinement hinder rehabilitation (telephone interview):

> How can anybody spend 22 hours a day in a cell, never have a meal with anybody, have people banging on your cell while you’re trying to talk, and expect that they’re going to come out of there a better person? It’s such a hostile place, and the way they run it isn’t making it any less hostile.

As I have indicated, much of the aggression and hostility described above is connected to personal space. We can draw comparisons with Goffman’s (1971) work on personal space as something that is actively negotiated and regulated, a pliable but cherished “bubble” (Hall, 1964; see also Bull, 2000) that, when violated, is understood as a form of invasion. Indeed, invasion – however subjectively defined – occurs often under confined and immobilising prison conditions, and will only become more of a challenge with incarceration influx. Overcrowded inmates simply do not have sufficient resources available to cope with the loss of personal space, lack of control, and threat to dignity. Seemingly minor conflicts about sound – “the sound of cellmate’s fan when you’re double-bunked leads to a surprising amount of fights” as one participant shared (in-person interview) – can have major effects on emotional well-being in prison because personal space is compromised. Carceral soundscapes in Canada are therefore closely connected
to the situated political climate (outlined in Chapter One). The passing of omnibus bills favouring expansion, privatisation of services, and hyperincarceration have taken their toll on the aural experiences of prisons and the emotional struggles that result. Bearing this in mind, experiences of sound in prisons have more textured politics and might be more vital to a person’s emotional well-being than in other, less constrained, environments.

Two factors that shape the way aural cultures in prisons are embodied, and that mark difference across carceral spaces, are security level and gender. Participants explain that variations in security level produce different cultures not only because they are connected to particular crimes (and certain cultures are over-represented in specific sentences) but also because each security level has its own architecture, rules, and degrees of mobility (for a breakdown of security levels and units in women’s institutions, see Hiscocks, 2012). Several participants described minimum security as quieter than maximum security prisons because there are more “privileges” to lose in minimum, and if noise is “an easy way to get yourself into trouble,” as one participant explained (in-person interview), inmates will discipline themselves to avoid being sent to a higher level of security.

Interestingly, some descriptions of minimum security had underlying connections to, or assumptions about, gender. When asked about prison soundscapes, the most common terms used to describe what was agreed upon as a noisy soundscape were “aggressive”, “startling”, “abrupt”, and “harsh” – characteristics that are associated with stereotypical masculinity. Minimum security soundscapes were characterised in more feminine terms as “pleasant”, “soft”, “respectful” and “quiet.” Although the loudspeaker is a despised piece of technology among inmates and staff across varying security levels, a notable difference between maximum and minimum was the tone and volume of the loudspeaker. One participant even used a lighter, softer
and more feminine tone to impersonate commands over a minimum security loudspeaker, and noticeably shifted to a gruff, masculine tone to depict a PA command in maximum security.

Future research on the gendering of prison soundscapes might start by exploring security level as one way in which such aural cultures emerge.

In what follows, I explore three ways in which the emotional capacities of sound and listening emerge in prisons. I begin with an epistemological discussion of how sound is used for orientation and spatial knowledge while also having the ability to confuse and disorientate. From here, I move on to discuss how sound is used to stitch places together and make important connections beyond the cell, reconstituting space and time, and also show how sound can disconnect in productive and disruptive ways. Finally, I explore the role of sound in the enactment of power through resistance, with a focus on dignity in an undignified place.

Dis/orientation

[Author’s note: For a more sonically-rich interpretation of the epigraph below, please click on the following link to hear them read aloud by the author, using accompanying sound from Felix Blume’s (2013) recordings of a lunch-room in Tent Jail, Phoenix. The audio is meant to evoke the feelings of disorientation discussed in this section, as mediated by carceral soundscapes.]

Dis/orientation audio (click here)

Why I am here?
How long am I going to be here?
How do I get out of Prison?
Who put me here?
Who do I speak to, what do I say?
Who will help me?
What do I need?
What type of help do I need?
Where do I go? for help.
When do I get out?
When does someone tell me what I am supposed to do?
As I established in Chapters One through Three, sound is a key epistemological tool for knowing and organising our world. Sonic and spatial knowledge are combined in critical and recursive ways throughout prison environments. A person in a cell might listen carefully to pinpoint the location of guards, using carefully honed skills in echo-location, while many guards pay close attention to feel the range and so take necessary precautions if the sonic atmosphere or pulse warns of danger. In some cases, listening and making sound is the preferred form of knowledge gathering. In a Kingston Life feature, Lawrence Scanlon (2014) refers to a ‘code’ among inmates, explaining that “a prisoner must never look inside another’s cell unless uninvited,” suggesting that looking, or visual observation, is invasive. This means that non-visual ways of knowing become even more important. Indeed, several participants alerted me to the “code”; one explained, “in [this prison], you don’t look into other people’s cells” miming a fist punch, and continued, “you train yourself to listen without looking” (in-person interview). Similarly, I.M. GreNâda, an inmate serving a life sentence, blogged, “If staring is unrefined conduct on your side of the fence, in here it can forecast a body bag” (I.M. GreNâda, Dec. 21, 2014). The use of sound for orientating purposes becomes a carefully calculated act when other forms of sensory exploration might be met with violent consequences.

One way to know something is to feel it. This is evident in both a tactile and emotional sense. For guards, “feeling the range” is a learned technique that depends on a keen sense of hearing and enough experience in carceral settings to decipher the meaning behind tones,

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92 Echo-location refers to the use of sound for spatial navigation. More commonly used by non-human animals, such as bats, the practice involves listening to the spatial characteristics produced by the resulting echo, often by emitting sound waves into the air. Echo-location through tongue-clicking is also a technique increasingly used by people with blindness (see Miller and Spiegel, 2015). In Chapter Four, I refer to the use of impulse response tests, which capture an ‘acoustic signature’ of a given space, which achieves a similar echo-locational effect.
textures, and rhythms. Sonic input, when combined with physical proximity that allows for multi-sensory perception, can be used as a key source of information, some of which is vital for survival. One participant explained that the more recent switch from in-person to off-site surveillance has been criticised by guards as a safety concern, stating: “apparent casual conversations are filled with warnings if necessary. The camera without sound kills this important line of communication. Violence erupts but now it erupts without warning” (e-mail communication). The socio-spatial awareness afforded by in situ listening depends on affective listening skills (see Kanngieser, 2012) that are undermined by the switch to video-only surveillance.

Similarly, a keen sense of hearing is also of utmost importance to inmates trying to avoid harm in dangerous prison environments. Indeed, one participant, who spent decades in prisons across North America, explained over e-mail that hearing is not simply a skill, it is a survival mechanism. The individual recounted going through various levels of administration to obtain noise-cancelling headphones to mediate a very loud federal prison soundscape.

My [headphones] arrived and I placed them over my ears for the first time there was this blessed and silent relief. For about 30 seconds. I took them off. Put them on, repeating this over and over. It took me the full day to realize why I couldn’t wear them. In prison . . . your hearing is part of your survival.

Pointing to the importance of careful attention to not only the source of sounds, but the rhythms, tones, and out-of-place signals, the participant’s account is commensurate with Lefebvre’s concept of rhythmanalysis (2004). This is particularly evident in the participant’s commentary:

Like traffic and other city sounds the ongoing background noise in prison becomes how do you say “ambient” . . . ? But the rhythm you pay attention to. When the guards are going to pull a search they make different sounds, when a confrontation starts it starts long before a knife is pulled. Whether it’s silence or the sudden scrape of a chair or footsteps that are a little too hurried, something in the soundscape will alert you. To stay alive in prison you have to be listening and after the years roll on you realize you are listening all the time, not to the routine but to that small out of place in-between sound.
The identification of “in-between” sound is reminiscent of affective and visceral list
ening associated with feeling the range. The rhythm of hurried footsteps and the scrape of a chair might very well go unnoticed by a casual listener, but is vital to note when it might literally save a life. Sonic orientation, therefore, is not just about the critical identification of sound, but also an acute awareness of what lies in the decay of an echo or the slightest change of rhythms.

Unfortunately, those who come into prison with a hearing impairment (or develop deafness inside) may be at a particular disadvantage. One participant (in-person interview) explained that hearing aids are vital technologies for people with hearing impairments in prisons, but are often difficult to obtain or replace: “I had a man who was totally deaf one time… and his hearing aid got broken on the way to us. And he was really, really feeling at risk. Because he couldn’t hear them calling him, he was having difficulty communicating.” His request for a replacement allegedly took a long time. When he finally got his hearing aid, “it was a new world.” This is not to suggest that all inmates set out to inflict harm on others. Some, in fact, recognise the importance of looking (or listening) out for one another, as the participant explained, “There are a couple of guys that, you know, are really good. They took him on as their, kind of, project, you know? To let him know what was going on the best they could.” The participant added that staff\(^9\) can be sympathetic to the challenges faced by people who have trouble hearing, including the older inmates: “The older men, if they’re being paged and they don’t show up it’s probably because they haven’t heard it, and people will give them the benefit of the doubt.” This points, however, to the importance of addressing the safety and auditory needs of inmates with hearing disabilities as well as the challenges faced by a rapidly increasing

\(^9\) It is clear, based on my interviews, that many members of the CSC staff go to great lengths to help inmates access necessary medical care and will often take it upon themselves to ensure the inmates receive the assisting technologies they need (for example, picking up a hearing aid and delivering it in person).
senior population in prisons. Secondly, it identifies a need to re-evaluate the effects of prison architecture on disorientation, such as barred doors, particularly for those who may already have trouble identifying the source of sounds.

One participant, an employee whose job requires her\textsuperscript{94} to visit the range, explained barred versus solid doors allow inmates to feel the range in ways that make her acutely aware of her gendered subjectivity, leading to feelings of unease.\textsuperscript{95} She explained that inmates use a tracking system not unlike echo-location, paired with a ‘telephone’ technique to orientate and communicate her movements in a reversed form of surveillance:

There is also the difference between the solid doors versus the bar doors, because the guys, when there’s bars on their doors, sound travels so much quicker. So they would all communicate with each other to provide surveillance on the range. So if I came in, somebody would hear my shoes, and I’d never wear heels or anything, but somebody would hear female shoes or a light step or something, and they’d say “okay, FEMALE INCOMING!” and if I started going up the stairs they’d say “okay, SHE’S GOING UP THE STAIRS!” and they’d all communicate with each other to tell other people exactly where I was at every moment. It was so strange. I haven’t had that experience since working in a place where there were no bars, because they can’t communicate as freely through those doors as they would there.

Such auditory techniques lend new meaning to the term \textit{soundtrack}. The notion of tracking movement by listening and soundmarking a person’s location, or what Schafer calls “touching at a distance” (1994:11), is one way to circumvent invisibility and immobility.

For authorities, sonic technologies of penal management and soundtracking are productive and indeed, effective in the (re-)construction of carceral time and space. Technologies such as prison bells and loudspeakers help to mark and organise time (see Corbin, 1998), shape routine (Foucault, 1978), reduce the need for officers to collect individual inmates, and require fewer staff to manage the prisoner population. However, for those who have no control over sounds

\textsuperscript{94} This is the only time I reveal a participant’s gender, because it is central to the story.

\textsuperscript{95} For an analysis of relationships between male inmates and female officers, see Crewe (2006a).
that dictate movements and permeate thoughts, such mechanisms are abhorred. As I wrote in Chapter Four, accounts of Canada’s deadliest prison riot all point to the bell as the first victim of destruction in April 1971 at Kingston Penitentiary (Caron, 1985), because the bell imposed temporal and spatial control over people. The “brass monster,” as it was nicknamed at the time of the riot, was productive for authoritative purposes, but destructive for an inmate’s agency and emotional well-being. The bell’s ultimate demise in 1971 offered a rare moment of exuberance for its subordinates. Wayne Ford, a former inmate, recounted (Chong and Cutlert, 2013):

A friend of mine named Mikey Logan got the bell. Soon as he got out of his cell, he ran right down to the dome, found a big steel pipe or bar, and beat the living shit out of that bell. And just destroyed it into a million pieces eh? And he was just happy. The greatest thing that happened in the riot for Mikey was that he got the bell.  

Small “victories,” like the destruction of the bell, are important amidst common instances of struggle, much of which is fueled by the stressful and, at times, violent experiences of sound (Cusick, 2013). Such violence occurs in tangible and intangible ways. Sonic disciplinary devices, like loudspeakers, were described as “ear-piercing” by one participant, pointing to its physical effects. Other experiences of sound are harmful because they are destructive to a person’s emotional health. Confusion is an emotional experience and response commonly articulated in first-hand accounts of prisons, as exemplified in this section’s epigraph: a list of questions that evokes feelings of uncertainty and fear (Hiscocks, 2012). The use of sound to elicit disorientation is a punitive tactic that intensifies existing mental health conditions while also enabling new forms of suffering (Cusick, 2013; Goodman, 2010). In solitary confinement, where cell designs produce sensory deprivation, sensory “anaesthesia” (Rice, 2003) occurs, dulling awareness of

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96 Note that, in Chapter Four, I described Roger Caron as being the person to break the bell first. It is likely that both contributed to its destruction.

97 Goodman, for instance, notes the use of extremely loud or low-fidelity sounds to inflicting both physical and mental suffering through heightened blood pressure, hallucination, and the elicitation of dread.
one’s surroundings and increasing vulnerability. In heavily populated units, the swirling sea of sounds, intensified by architectural features like domes (LaBelle, 2010), would be extraordinarily disorientating. To add to the cacophony, this experience is intertwined with other uncertainties such as those outlined at in the above epigraph (“When does someone tell me what I am supposed to do?”) that accompany incarceration.

Unsurprisingly, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is commonly experienced by inmates, many of whom enter prison with their own histories of trauma and who experience further suffering once incarcerated, as well as staff, whose jobs might require putting themselves in harm’s way (Goff et al., 2007; Murphy, 2004; Rogers et al., 2003; Tam and Derkzen, 2014). One participant (telephone interview) speculated that “if they had the resources to properly assess the offenders, I suspect that at least half of the people in there have some kind of PTSD.” A history of post-traumatic stress is exacerbated by the fact that sound, as a carrier of emotion, memory, and place, serves as a powerful trigger of a person’s histories, including former trauma (Cusick, 2013; Goodman, 2010). Another participant (in-person interview) highlighted the memory-inducing effects of sound with a story about an individual from a war-torn country who brought his experiences with him:

[He] comes from a background in [a] country where there was war and that’s where it started . . . He is really, really affected by that . . . when we’re talking, he talks in a very low, quiet voice and so I try to mirror that back to him. But any noise around him and he’s just looking behind him. And it’s not that he’s particularly nervous, I just know that his mind is always – he’s battling – to stay focused. He’s battling to stay in the present.

When a riot or a less violent, yet noisy, event would occur, it would bring the man back to the atrocities he saw before coming to prison, causing emotional responses of anguish. Without intending to excuse the circumstances that lead to a person’s incarceration, it is still important to recognise that most people who are imprisoned in Canada have suffered their own trauma,
victimhood, and oppression over the course of their lives. Their nested memories are embodied through sound, which is fleeting, and can thus be awakened at any moment. Just as people bring their aural histories with them into prison, they also leave with these histories, newly shaped by the soundscapes in which they have been immersed. As one participant reflected, “the sound of a door closing loudly behind you stays with you long after you leave. And the keys – the clanging of keys against the guard’s leg or the sound of them being smashed against a door to scare people. You hear that and you don’t forget it” (telephone interview). Indeed, a common theme in this research is the inability to disconnect from the sounds that haunt a person after they leave a prison.

Figure 5.1: Interior entrance door at Kingston Penitentiary

This image shows the inside of the north entrance at Kingston Penitentiary. Participants often identify the sound of the thick, heavy door closing behind them as the first of many daunting experiences inside the prison. Source: Geoffrey James (2014, used with permission).
Sound is a tool to understand connection, but it also is connective tissue. The outspreading capacity of sound, which extends touch beyond bodily extremities, reconstitutes prison experience by allowing people to access different spatial and temporal contexts without requiring much movement. Sound stitches people and place together (Schafer, 1994), allowing for sociality to emerge in conditions that might otherwise prohibit it. Furthermore, sound connects people to other kinds of species; sound recordist David Dunn’s (1999) work on birds’ connections with humans through sonic imitation (e.g. the mockingbird) attests to this possibility (see also Dunn and van Peer, 1999). In prison, such sonic connections can be paramount for human and non-human friendships and as a way of interacting with other life beyond the cell.

Music is an emotional expression of sound that comes with its own geographies of embodiment and materiality (Boyd and Duffy, 2010; Wood, Duffy & Smith, 2007; see also Connell & Gibson, 2003; Leyshon, Matless & Revill, 1998). Listening to music in prisons is a communal and connective experience in multiple ways. First, it can be shared among incarcerated people sharing a radio or making music together, and secondly, it can be used privately to connect with other places and beings beyond the confines of prison walls. In both cases, these musical enactments navigate what Crewe et al. (2014: 64) term “emotion zones” – fluid and liminal realms of feeling that are neither “front stage” nor “back stage” (Goffman, 1959; see also Giddens, 1984). When playing and listening to music, inmates are performing identities that are neither fully inside nor outside the prison walls.

Music, as Smith (1997; see also Wood and Smith, 2004) reminds us, can be emotionally mobilising, eliciting, for example, feelings of belonging and struggle, creating spaces of
inclusion and solidarity. For some, music in prisons is a survival mechanism that has noticeable mental health benefits. Citing conversations with friends in prison, Chris Brown declared that the ability to make music – that is, to make a sound and to be heard – was vital for making it through a prison sentence, particularly in the context of double bunking and a lack of privacy. “One of the guys said that if they didn’t have music, he didn’t know if he’d be alive,” Brown reflected, “[or] he would have had himself carded, which means that you do something bad so you get sent to solitary.” The opportunity for music to produce spaces of solace that might temporarily reduce anguish in the midst of overcrowding does not solve current prison conditions, but highlights the need for further consideration of music’s important role in rehabilitation.

The ability to connect to socio-spatial contexts beyond the prison also plays a role in disconnection from one’s immediate surroundings. The effects of this interplay of dis/connectivity are varied. At an individual level, music can serve as a powerful tool to reach a desired emotional state or to distract oneself from the pains of imprisonment. Jose Vivar (2013), an inmate at Bath Institution who writes op-eds for Kingston Whig-Standard, muses:

. . . Andrea Boccelli, an Italian opera singer, plays nightly through my stereo speakers. Vietnamese love songs put me in a trance. French rap makes me feel a little rebellious. Mozart and German composers bring solace after a day jam-packed with anxiety.

For Vivar, music is used to mediate not only the surrounding sonic environment of the prison, but also emotion and identity. At the same time, several participants noted sonic conflict throughout cell ranges, noting that music is very often the source of such friction when it is permitted. One participant claimed (telephone interview), “at night, people would put their music on and vie for the noise space,” leading to “pure cacophony” of personal auditory experiences.

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98 As I demonstrate in Chapter Six, however, the ways in which music is used in prison can also produce conflict and disconnection.

99 I discuss this potential, along with the broader state of music in prisons, in Chapter Six.
Those who employ a radio as a means of creating an aural connection with something beyond their cell frequently, if unintentionally, “invade” others’ (subjectively defined) personal acoustic space. Herein lies the tension of our sonic world: aurality is closely tied to our conceptions of personal space, yet it is unreasonable to expect that we can draw boundaries around which spaces are acoustically ours and which are not, particularly in prisons. A person’s desire for what Michael Bull (2000) terms “mediated isolation” through personal auditory devices creates “bubbles” that are used to claim some control over one’s soundscape, but can also be interpreted as anti-social or dominating, eliciting feelings of hostility.

It is evident that much of the conflict that erupts over auditory expression in prison is connected to power and control. Inmates, who might otherwise see themselves as occupying similar or “horizontal” positions of power, use sonic devices in ways that disrupt power relations amongst their peers. The aforementioned cacophonous soundscape during “free” time – an ironic term in prison – can therefore be analysed for what it tells us about social relations of power in prisons. One participant (telephone interview) situated the competitive sonic environment within the context of control:

When you think about it, when you don’t have a lot of control over your environment, and you want to make a point or you want to feel some semblance of control, that is one thing that they can control and they know that other people can’t. So I think that that gets exercised as a way of trying to antagonize others at some points.

The participant went on to explain other manifestations of acoustic competition to express dominance:

I think it’s a way of trying to drown out other noises, sometimes. Or other ways of competing – like, I’ve heard multiple people next to each other BLARING various types of music against each other, just because they want theirs to…win…over others.

Finally, the individual points to the use of music to drown out unwanted noise from non-musical sources:
And then I’ve heard other people blaring their music because somebody else is screaming and yelling. So it becomes more of trying to have noise in the background. It tends to be . . . more aggressive music. And loud. Very loud.

This last passage is noteworthy because it highlights a response to emotionally troubling sounds, perhaps to be in control of one’s own emotional state through a preferred selection of music, which results in competitive and at times hostile negotiations of acoustic space. One person’s sonic solution becomes another’s sonic problem.

It is also apparent that, in addition to valuing music as a tool of disconnection, inmates and staff seem to value the spaces and times of day that might offer slower rhythms, focused attention, and an ability to experience quietude. Indeed, the notion of a slowed pace, which might also be understood as a technique of stillness (Bissell and Fuller, 2010), highlights that seeking out silence is not simply about find a quiet space, but also taking advantage of quiet moments and therefore quiet rhythms (Lefebvre, 2004). One participant’s description demonstrates these spatial and temporal elements (in-person interview):

There were some quiet places. In general population it was much quieter in the day because people were off working or at the school. The school was one of the quietest places in prison. It depended on teaching style, but the guys seemed to appreciate working in silence. It helped them learn but also just got them away from the noise.

Similarly, as this participant noted, private family visiting quarters were cherished not only for social and familial connection but also because they provided a (temporary) quiet escape from the noise in other parts of the prison. In this regard, it is notable that privacy seems of relatively little concern among prison administrators until members of the non-incarcerated public visit the institution.

The dire situation of prisons is such that inmates end up choosing between what might be considered two evils. Solitary confinement – often associated with sensory deprivation and
disconnection – is frequently elected over the noisy, overwhelming soundscape of the general prison population. One participant (in-person interview) who worked closely with incarcerated people said, “a lot of people find general population way too noisy. It’s too much to handle. Some of them even ask to be assessed by a psychiatrist and put into the Regional Treatment Centre, because it’s quieter.” Others, as I described earlier, might inflict self-harm or intentionally break a rule that will send them to segregation. And yet, the therapeutic silence temporarily afforded by solitary confinement too quickly re-materialises as oppressive silence. As a former prison employee explained to me, “generally in prisons it is hard to hear yourself think unless you are in the isolation unit. Then you can ONLY hear yourself think” (e-mail correspondence).

Solitary confinement has proven to be a contradictory topic throughout this research. While some participants confirm expectations that this form of segregation involves disconnection from virtually every aspect of prison life as well as the broader societies in which prisons are situated, others insist, rather, that solitary confinement is full of emotion that is difficult to contain, and is expressed in noisy ways. One participant (telephone interview), who was cited above noting quiet places (the school) and times of day (during work hours), stated that “people might assume segregation is the quietest place, but it’s not. Not at all, really.” Another interview participant (telephone interview), who has worked in a number of federal institutions and whose job occasionally involves visits to segregation, described the soundscapes of segregation as one of two extremes: “It’s either very, very quiet, or extremely loud. . . . But it

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100 The Regional Treatment Centre is a psychiatric facility that was located within, but institutionally separate from, Kingston Penitentiary.

101 The Corrections and Conditional Release Act (2015 [1992], 31.1: 21) states that an inmate might be confined to administrative segregation if “the inmate has acted, has attempted to act or intends to act in a manner that jeopardizes the security of the penitentiary or the safety of any person and allowing the inmate to associate with other inmates would jeopardize the security of the penitentiary or the safety of any person.”
tends to normally be extremely loud.” A loud soundscape in segregation is produced by “people screaming at each other, calling each other names, calling *me* names.” Another former staff member explained (telephone interview):

   They’re sent to a tiny cell with no mattress and only a steel toilet for decoration. They’re *angry*. So what are you going to do when you’re that angry? Shout at the top of your lungs. And stomp, or throw your body against the wall, because that’s all you have to make a noise. Sometimes it’s to vent, to let off frustration, other times it’s to get attention. To simply be heard.

Segregation cells are designed to isolate, and, unlike the open bar doors in this particular institution, they are solid and opaque; inmates would therefore have to yell very loudly in hopes of being heard by someone else. The participant whose job requires visits to segregation confirmed that these constraining material and architectural features of isolation units contribute to the cacophonous soundscape:

   And these – at the one that I work at – they’re not barred. They’re completely sealed . . . You’re speaking to the individual as confidentially as you possibly can be … so you’re speaking to them through this tiny little slit and meanwhile you’re trying to talk to them so that they can hear you but nobody else can hear you, and meanwhile some other people will be yelling at you while you’re trying to talk to them.

As this participant pointed out, the inability to hear or privately communicate with an inmate in segregation reduced the effectiveness of professional assistance: “How should we expect them to improve if we can’t even give them the help they need without being disrupted? It’s incredibly hard on them as it is, and hard on us, and then you have this noise stopping you from doing your job properly!” The individual’s exasperated remarks demonstrate how prison soundscapes can serve as a barrier to rehabilitation.

   As Peter Collins (2015) communicated in “*Fly in the Ointment*”, noise in segregation is a jolting reminder of reality: “smashing echoes of steel” and “angry screaming voices” quickly became sounds that rooted him in the segregation cell, startling him out of the reverie he
experienced as a fatigue-induced escape from the “prison’s cruel heartbeat.” If the cacophonous heartbeat evokes histories of pain and suffering, the desire for escape should not come as a surprise. One interview participant remarked (telephone interview) that “the noise was always the most jarring in segregation” because it often signalled debilitating mental and emotional pain. Indeed, to feel and hear agony is described as one of the more disturbing aspects of carceral knowledge (Caron, 1985, public lecture). When a person is cut off from nearly everything in their world, making a noise and being heard becomes a vital effort to grasp any sort of connection with another being. As I explain next, this often requires putting oneself in undignified and even dangerous situations.

**In/dignity**

it makes me feel diminished as a person. the real me is not allowed. the person that i am is disrespected and devalued. i’m infantilized, and i struggle to hold on to a sense of dignity. and it’s 24/7, day after day after day.

(Hiscocks, 2012)

They don’t even call it meal time. They call it “feeding.” It’s probably the most derogatory thing I heard in there. It’s distancing people so much from being anybody, anything.

(Participant, telephone interview)

In previous sections, I began with the arguably more affirmative qualities of sound that might be enabling for incarcerated people in prisons, and ended with a cautionary discussion of the more constraining properties of aurality. In this final section, however, I reverse the order. I do so, in part, to show that there really is no order in which these characteristics are experienced, nor is one end of the spectrum more significant than the other. This also demonstrates the inseparability of the productive and destructive capacities of sound, reminding us that the ways we engage with sound, and the meanings we attach, are continually undergoing reconstruction.
The ability to hear and feel others in a reciprocal way is equally important for maintaining a sense of dignity. The stripping of dignity in prisons occurs through a series of calculated actions, words, and tones that signal disrespect, as former inmate Mandy Hiscocks indicates on her blog, and as a participant recounted from one particular visit to a federal prison (“feeding” instead of “eating” or “meal time”). Earlier, I discussed the intense need for communication by those in solitary confinement, among other carceral spaces, as being closely tied to emotional well-being, belonging, and self-worth (see also Chapter Four). While incarcerated, people go to great lengths to make some connection with other beings within and beyond prison walls, much of which is achieved through the mobilising properties of sound. One participant (telephone interview) declared that “people who are made to feel insignificant use sound – whether that’s music or voice or theatre or some other way of making a sound with their bodies – to claim significance.” Incarcerated people are reduced to arranging their bodies in uncomfortable and humiliating ways in order to achieve a degree of dignity. Tom Rice (2013: 58) says of hospitals, “the first thing you lose is your privacy, the second is your dignity and the third is your sanity.” As the following narratives demonstrate, Rice’s claim can surely be applied to prisons, and an attempt to maintain one state often comes at the cost of another.

Roger Caron captured this notion of searching for dignity in undignified ways through his discussion of toilet communication during a speech in Kingston (Caron, 1983). Caron was so desperate to connect with incarcerated peers in solitary confinement that he would bail water out of the toilet and use the empty pipes as passages through which voices and other sounds could be exchanged. Inmates devised a “telephone” system using tapping to “call” peers in other cells. Those who communicated while in solitary trained themselves to listen in new ways, both to hear when someone was calling them, but also to pick up sounds that might otherwise go undetected.
What made an otherwise brilliant system so troublesome was that it required inmates to place their heads inside an unsanitary toilet, often with a blanket over their heads to enhance audibility.

As Greg McMaster, who has been in and out of segregation in a Canadian prison for eight years, testified in an online piece for CBC (Story and Desson, 2013), it is a price worth paying:

As disgusting as it may sound, when you’re a man in solitary confinement and you have not spoken to another human being in a month, you will take that water out of your toilet... All you know is that you need that contact. I’ve known men who’ve actually lost the ability to speak. Or to have a rational thought. It’s spiraling depressions, and you dig so deep into your soul just to stay alive. And then when you have human contact, whatever form it may be, you relish that.

Human contact can occur in a number of non-sonic ways, but in a segregation cell it is only achieved through acoustic space. There are numerous other instances in which sound threatens a person’s dignity because sound penetrates other boundaries of personal space. Deeply personal acts such as defecation, masturbation, and sob-ridden releases of repressed emotions are all audible to an otherwise silent range at night. To use a more disturbing example, Roger Caron (1983) recounted helplessly earwitnessing three suicides in the span of three days. The latter resulted in his inability to speak for days due to post-traumatic stress, eventually being forced into electric shock treatment to shake him out of his muted state. To hear such agony is deeply upsetting for inmates; it points to a duality of emotional strife: the emotional pain that is voiced through sonic expression and the emotional strife and helplessness caused by another person’s anguished sounds.

Prison diaries and blogs written by women (see also Arbour, 1996) also alert us to the soundscape of childbirth in prison, and the impossible position of those forced to helplessly listen to the sounds of mothers alone in childbirth. In her prison blog, Hiscocks (2012) outlines birthing practices at Vanier Centre for Women, stating, “during labour she’s handcuffed to the

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102 Such experiences can also be upsetting and haunting for staff, as participants often reminded me.
bed. . . . here when the baby is born it’s taken away within a few days and placed with family or the state while the mother completes her sentence.” The practice of shackling women in labour is a physical and sonic reminder of imprisonment, even during the most personal events. Sounds of childbirth are emotionally jarring for incarcerated mothers and others within earshot, not only because of their indication of pain, but also because they serve as reminders of how incarceration severs family relations.  

Other women in labour appear not to be heard at all or are ignored. As reported by CBC News (2012; see also Seymour, 2014, Ottawa Citizen), an investigation of a birth on the floor of a cell in an Ottawa correctional facility revealed that the incarcerated mother’s cries for help were actively ignored. “She was screaming and in a lot of pain, and nobody would help her” the woman’s mother described. Further, the woman’s painful pleas were allegedly interpreted as irritating and untrustworthy: “[the] guards ignored her calls for help and became irritated by her cries, transferring her from a shared cell to a segregation cell,” where she later gave birth alone.  

“Acoustic dystopias” (Cusick, 2013), including carceral childbirth and other troubling sound events mentioned above, contribute to the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958; see also Crewe, 2011) and further dehumanise incarcerated populations. Future research on the dystopias mentioned above might extend the scope of this project by focusing specifically on these traumatic sound events. 

Sitting in tension, but not always entirely in opposition, with the dehumanizing characteristics of carceral soundscapes, sound also provides for the (re)claiming of dignity in

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103 As of 2014, it was estimated that three in four incarcerated women are mothers to children under 18, two-thirds of whom are single caregivers (Sapers, 2014).
104 Tragically, the woman’s son died at 13 months of age after continued respiratory problems stemming from his birth. A lawsuit has been filed and an investigation is ongoing to determine if the infant’s death was connected to the mother’s labour conditions (Seymour, 2014, Ottawa Citizen).
prisons. Given that sound, as a modality of power, may be as productive and enabling as it is oppressive and constraining, it is useful to consider the ways in which sound and aurality can also become catalysts for resistance.

**Sonic Arts of Dignified Resistance**

The recursive relationship between sound and emotion has rich potential for acts – and arts – of resistance. Drawing from James C. Scott’s (1990) discussion of “hidden transcripts” and creative arts of resistance that circumvent authoritative power, I end with a discussion of how sound might become a terrain through which resistance is possible. Auditory space can very well become a hidden transcript that disguises resistance in ways that are productive for the emotional well-being of oppressed groups while going undetected by authorities. This is evident in the history of the penitentiary’s silent system, which once formed the basis of penal management (see Chapter Four). LaBelle explains (2010: 71): “The silent system is a disciplinary silence designed to bear down on the body as the final mark of the law and to force the criminal into a state of deep solitude while quite often leading to insanity.” Initiated in American and British institutions in the early 1800s and later adopted in Canada at Kingston Penitentiary in 1835, this system was abandoned in the 1930s due to its ineffectiveness (McCoy, 2012); it was impossible to stop sounds altogether. More importantly, inmates quickly recognised the benefit of dynamic properties of acoustic space that made it very difficult to detect the source, and used this as a form of sonic resistance.

As one individual shared with me, more overt examples of sonic arts of resistance were found in Kingston’s Prison for Women. Here, women would “break out into simultaneous singing or screaming” as a form of protest or noise demonstration while in lockdown. Despite the
fact that this would inevitably lead to further punishment, the idea was that noise could rarely be traced back to one individual, and that auditory space was a terrain through which acts of solidarity and resistance could be exercised. Sound may be a weapon that protests the biopolitical reduction of incarcerated beings to “bare life” (Agamben, 1995). Furthermore, it may also be used to resist what Lisa Guenther terms “social death” – a state in which the incarcerated body still performs basic functions, but “a meaningful sense of living embodiment has for the most part drained out of their lives” (Guenther, 2013: 165). In this regard, noise as a transgressive act helps reactivate political and social engagement, even if inmates are on the listening end of a noise demonstration. In other words, the mobile and prosthetic properties of sound (Schafer, 1977) enable individuals to reclaim connection, participation, and dignity that prisons might otherwise eliminate.

Noise demonstrations are a sound-leveraging form of resistance used in Canada to protest prison conditions, establish solidarity between incarcerated and non-incarcerated people, and permeate otherwise non-penetrable walls of the prison. Given the potential for more severe punishment, most noise demonstrations are more typically organised by non-incarcerated people, often self-identifying anarchists (Hiscocks, 2012), gathered on or near prison property. Mandy Hiscocks wrote about the uplifting experience of learning a noise demonstration had been organised by friends and supporters on her birthday. A challenge with noise demonstrations (or “demos”) is that it might lead to a lockdown in the prison. This is particularly problematic if a well-intended political mobilisation tactics result in the immobilizing of the very people being supported, for instance, during visiting hours or important appointments. This is why many noise demonstrations are organised at night, when most inmates are already in their cells. However, as
Hiscocks reported (“party on the inside, party on the outside”, 2012), the benefits of sonic connection often outweigh the confinement of a lockdown:

i’m reminded of a chat with a friend and co-“guilty” who spent time in Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene when a noise demo came his range got locked down. “shit,” I said, “that sucks.” but “no, it was awesome,” he replied. “the guys were banging on the windows, they loved it, and afterwards we had a great conversation about why anarchists support prisoners.”

It is evident that, in this case, a lockdown signifies authorities’ response to a loss of control. Inmates’ awareness of this power shift, even if it results in restrictive confinement, makes the noise demonstration worthwhile. She concluded, “so the inmates love noise demos and the jails hate them . . . keep up the excellent work, folks!” In prisons and jails, such seemingly small victories are in fact deeply important acts of mobilisation and rejuvenation.

In an institution that uses emotional manipulation as forms of punishment, simply living another day and seizing an ability to struggle becomes a political act. Inmates take advantage of sonic technologies to carve out and have some degree of control over personal spaces in which to reclaim self-worth that arises with the feeling of having a purpose or an ability to participate in something meaningful. As I discuss in greater detail in Chapter Six, hours spent ‘ear-witnessing’ the inmate-led production of a music album in a prison near Kingston alerted me to the potentially positive emotional effects and rehabilitative capacities of musical collaboration. Despite acting as possible lifelines, as an earlier quotation suggested, my participants told me that music programs are disappearing in Canadian prisons, primarily due to budget cuts that parallel the precarious circumstances of arts-based initiatives in other public institutions across the country (Robinson, 2012). However, as I will argue, those programs that remain are

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105 Hiscocks does not offer further details about this conversation, but it has been documented that anarchists support prisoners primarily because they do not support the prison industrial complex as a solution for crime and punishment (see Amster et al., 2009; Goldman, 1917; Scott of the Insurgency Counter Collective, n.d.; Turk, 2015).
important artistic spaces that use music to reclaim a voice: to make sound and share it with others.

Future work on sound in prisons might explore participatory methods that place these sorts of programs at the centre (see Daveson and Edwards, 2001; Draper, 2015). The power to hear and be heard is essential for dignity and mobilisation among subordinated populations like the thousands incarcerated across Canada. Current penal systems could improve and benefit from this recognition of the importance of sonic expression and knowledge, particularly for its rehabilitative potential, rather than silencing such expression because its empowering capacities deviate from current ideologies of incarceration.

Conclusion

In the hit Netflix series, *Orange is the New Black*, which depicts the lives of incarcerated women in the United States, an inmate nicknamed ‘Poussey’ asks, “Did it ever occur to you that we don’t want to get in touch with our feelings? That feeling our feelings might make it impossible to survive in here?” (Kohan, 2014). I have spent much of this chapter conceiving of sound as an emotional vehicle and arguing that the ability to feel and express emotion is a crucial part of that vital struggle to survive prison life intact. But, as Poussey indicates, it is also painful to open oneself to feelings in prison, especially when they are so often tied to broader experiences of trauma, violence, or injustice (Crewe *et al.*, 2014). Perhaps we need to take more seriously the assertion that it is not that we should simply attend to emotion in prisons, but that part of prison survival involves having control over the ways in which people engage with their emotional
states. Future research on the ways incarcerated people use sound to repress, rather than openly express, their emotions would add nuance to the fields of carceral and emotional geographies. And for those who do wish to engage with their feelings in less conventional ways, it would be beneficial to consider sonic arts (see Daveson and Edwards, 2001) as a non-linguistic realm of expression.106

I have identified prisons as sites that simultaneously illustrate the multi-layered, inclusive spatialities of sound as well as the harmful, exclusionary potential of sonic space. In doing so, I have made my own exclusions that highlight a need for deeper contemplation. I do not wish to fall into the assumption that all people in prisons have the same auditory capacities; this is certainly not the case. Indeed, further research is also required to gain an appreciation for the emotional and embodied experiences of inmates with various (dis)abilities107 that have an effect on how people perceive and make sound. Intersectional approaches that take into greater account the gendered and racialised experiences of sound in prisons are also crucial.

I have urged readers to consider what sound can tell us about prisons, their operation, and the emotional effects of incarceration, all of which are intertwined in the affective notion of “feeling the range.” One person’s use of sound to create a sense of connection is the source of another’s debilitating sense of intrusion. Escape attempts through music might be emotionally stimulating and therapeutic for someone, yet can be interpreted as anti-social or hostile by others. Sonic splices of dignity, agency, and solidarity are, after all, powerful enactments of survival acts and arts of resistance against a system that is designed to silence. In the next chapter, I

106 One participant told me that at least one minimum-security prison in the Kingston area has meditation therapy and ‘mindful space’ programs as a form of reflection, awareness, and expression. These practices encourage mindfulness through focused stillness, such as mediation, or by listening to ‘calming’ music.
107 A key gap in research on sound in prisons is the experience of deaf incarcerates, many of whom face greater threats to well-being due to violence, miscommunication, and insufficient health care (including an ability to obtain hearing aids). For an in-depth account of the struggles of individuals with hearing impairments in prison, see the film Deaf in Prison (HEARD, 2015) and visit deafinprison.wordpress.org.
explore with greater specificity the role of music, as one such example of sound art that
“lubricates circumstances emotionally,” as musician Chris Brown states (Hendra, 2014). In doing
so, I highlight the work music does in prisons, in ways that both alleviate and deepen the pains of
imprisonment, and investigate the role of music for challenging the conditions of confinement.
Chapter 6

“Pros and Cons”: Musical Collaboration and Conflict

Introduction

I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about. Truth is, I don’t want to know. Some things are best left unsaid. I like to think they were singing about something so beautiful that it can’t be expressed in words and makes your heart ache because of it. I tell you, those voices soared—higher and farther than anybody in a great place dares to dream. It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away. And for the briefest of moments, every last man in Shawshank felt free.

(Red, upon hearing Mozart over the loudspeaker in Shawshank Redemption; Darabont, 1994)

Building on the deep connections between sonic expression and emotional experience developed in Chapter Five, particularly in the reclaiming of dignity, this chapter investigates the spatial, political, and emotional articulations of music in prisons. In this introductory section, I begin with two divergent accounts of music in Kingston-area prisons before outlining the structure of the chapter.

In 2014, with the help of musician-producer Chris Brown, a group of inmates at Pittsburgh Institution, a minimum-security institution near Kingston, released a music album entitled Postcards from the County. The album, allegedly the first to be produced almost entirely inside a Canadian prison, features inmates singing and playing instruments, and includes songs penned by some of the incarcerated men as well as covers of songs written by Brown and other artists. Guest musicians were invited to collaborate on certain tracks, including local

108 See www.prosandconsprogram.com to play the album and to learn more about the project. The website includes an album download, project history, songwriting credits, and donation opportunities.
Kingston musicians, Sarah Harmer (‘How Deep in the Valley’) and Luther Wright (‘Northern’). The performance of songs written by local musicians like Brown, Harmer, and Wright roots the music in place (Kingston and Canada), with the incarcerated musicians claiming a sense of belonging and respect in the Kingston community. Each inmate approached the project with a different set of skills; some were musicians before entering prison and were permitted to bring in their own instruments, others picked up musical skills during incarceration, and some had very little musical experience but were interested in working on a creative project. Inspired by the closure of the prison farms in the Kingston area and a growing concern over the reduction in arts-based programming in Canadian prisons (see also Lecomte, 2003), Brown’s work on what he calls the ‘Pros and Cons’ project is rare and indeed noteworthy. The outcome of this collaboration at Pittsburgh shows great promise for the wellbeing of inmates whose lives are bound by routine, segregation, and punishment, and for the broader community who could learn much from incarcerated populations, but with whom they rarely have an opportunity to interact.

I was invited to attend two of their recording sessions in August 2013 as a participant observer, and prior to that, met with Brown for a two-hour interview where we discussed his role in the project, the early responses to the collaboration, and the importance of music-making in prisons. As Brown explained, some of the men in the group confided that they might not be alive had it not been for the weekly “jams,” or they might have done something to end up in solitary confinement as a way to escape the overcrowded and allegedly hostile conditions. Although I acknowledge potential concerns about the project where appropriate, the idea that music might serve as a survival mechanism or, as I outlined in Chapter Five, can be used to reclaim dignity, is also powerful. I am part of the community that celebrates and supports the success of Postcards from the County as a creative, therapeutic outlet that shows promise for rehabilitation and
reconciliation. This type of musical collaboration in prisons demonstrates opportunities for self-expression, political engagement, and restorative justice (see Chapters One and Seven) that might serve as a starting point for rethinking current discourses of criminalisation and punishment.

As a point of convergence, however, and by way of emphasizing the sonic tensions or ‘dissonance’ that weaves throughout this dissertation, we must be careful to avoid romanticising or sensationalising music in prisons. Music, as we know, can also oppress, order, and degrade (Goodman, 2010; Connell & Gibson, 2003; Sterne, 2003; Lausevic, 2000). Music has a powerful spatializing capacity to erect barriers that exclude particular subjects and dictate what (or who) is “in place” and “out of place” (LaBelle, 2006; Leyshon, Matless and Revill, 1998; see also Cresswell, 2002). Music has been shown to inflict a “sonics of suffering” (Cusick, 2013) that I argue connects with Sykes’ (1958) notion of pains of imprisonment (see also Crewe, 2011; Ignatieff, 1978), depending on its use and the context in which is played. Music is, after all, a socio-spatial enactment of power.

In prisons, the use of music to facilitate a disciplinary or punitive agenda is not only imagined; it is well documented. Suzanne Cusick (2006, 2013) identifies the use of “musical bombardment” by US troops to torture detainees in Guantanamo, Afghanistan and Iraq (playing music at decibel levels painful to the human ear, and selecting songs that would inflict emotional violence on prisoners). Steve Goodman (2010) also writes of the power of music as a sonic technique of violence and warfare, focusing particularly on the material properties of sound and their effects on the body’s physical and affective states (see Chapter Five). Indeed, several anecdotes stand in contrast to the uplifting success story at Pittsburgh. As previously mentioned, rumours prevail that the last inmate to be murdered in the prison was killed because he was
playing his music too loudly. Whether or not this rumour can be substantiated is not absolutely imperative; it is believable because, in overcrowded prisons, it is not difficult to imagine the host of sonic conflicts that occur over listening practices. To be sure, violent reactions are unsurprising in the broader context of punishment, emotional strife, and conflict. In equally extreme cases, though not a confirmed practice in Canadian prisons, music is increasingly playing a role in the torture of political prisoners. According to a recent report on the CIA’s detention and interrogation practices, “CIA detainees at the COBALT detention facility were kept in complete darkness and constantly shackled in isolated cells with loud noise or music” (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2014: 4). As Suzanne Cusick (2013) writes, music is both a vehicle for escaping and enhancing a “sonics of suffering” in prisons.

In this chapter, I ask: what insights can be gained from querying these stark tensions in prison music practices? I use the above tragedies, in contrast with the more uplifting experience of the music album at Pittsburgh, to illustrate the complex and contradictory nature of sound and spatiality in prisons, particularly the capacity of music to shape emotional well-being and social relations through the reimagining of space and time. As part of this overarching question, I consider the state of music in prisons, investigate music as a vehicle of carceral power and resistance, and use highlights from the Pittsburgh music collaboration to consider how music might be used to inform what I, and others, understand to be a crisis of incarceration (see Cusick, 2013; Moran, 2015; Piché, 2011; Piché & Walby, 2012).

To better conceptualise the above-mentioned tensions as they pertain to music, we must recognise that a richer analysis of music involves considering content, cultural, historical and political context, and use, and that all of these are shaped by particular performances of space and time. Listeners bring their own emotions and histories with them to each aural experience, as
well as the culturally constructed norms about sound, noise, and music within which listeners are embedded. One participant (in-person interview) highlighted the variability in response to music, as it engages with notions of power and space: “it could be your favourite song, and it would be one thing if you were playing it yourself, but to hear it blasting from somebody else’s cell when you don’t want to hear it – that’s going to be a problem.” The comment is underpinned by an ideology of noise (Attali, 1985) in contrast to other conceptualisations of sound. Indeed, the fluctuating distinction between noise, sound, and music are always in some part spatial: noise is that which is out of place (Cresswell, 2002), unwanted, and disruptive of arbitrary notions of personal acoustic space. Some sonic events are interpreted as music in one setting, noise in another; John Cage’s work, 4’33”, exemplifies these spatial and cultural distinctions, as does the selection of particular songs for the purposes of torture in a confined cell. In prisons, which feature spatialities of confinement and severe restrictions in movement and behaviour, there is heightened potential for conflicting interpretations and violent consequences of sound.

This chapter unfolds as follows. I begin with a discussion about the role and experiences of music in current Canadian prisons. This leads into a discussion about the ways in which music is channeled for the purposes of “doing time,” as the saying goes, but also as a means of doing space (see Moran, 2012). Throughout the entire chapter, but that section in particular, I consider the importance of music in the enactment and circumvention of carceral power. I draw from interview accounts and secondary texts to present findings about the experiences of music in prison, focusing closely on the ways in which music is used in and mediates carceral life. Many

109 Cage (1952; see also 1961) experimented with traditional definitions of “music” by presenting a piece in a concert hall that featured musicians under the instructions not to play their instruments for the duration of three movements. The piece encourages critical thought about what constitutes music, implying that any sounds can be understood as music in particular times, spaces, and structures.
of these effects are, indeed, positive and create opportunities for rehabilitation and provide spaces of comfort and healing in an otherwise bleak environment. I then introduce the case of Pittsburgh Institution inmates’ *Postcards from the County* album as an example of a music-making practice that has demonstrated relatively positive outcomes in the prison and broader Kingston community. A key thread that runs throughout this chapter is the creative potential of music to inform current and historical crises of incarceration in Canada, and as one realm through which change might be implemented.

**The state of music in Canadian prisons**

It is evident that music plays a key, if under-acknowledged, role in prisons, constituting carceral life in several ways. Indeed, in popular music, such as blues, hip hop, and rock ‘n’ roll, references to prisons and incarceration abound (Connell and Gibson, 2003; Gibson, 1998; Rose, 1994). In an historical context, there have been notable distinctions between modes, venues, and audiences associated with music in prisons. Over the past 180 years of prisons in Canada, music has taken many forms: singing, drumming, live guest performances, church choirs, radio, television, and recorded albums. In the mid-1900s, live music had a much greater presence than it does today. Inmates who operated and participated in Kingston Penitentiary’s short-lived radio program, broadcasted across the Kingston region from 1952-1955, *Kingston Penitentiary is On the Air* (see St. Onge, 2005), contributed to a special audible history that has shaped the penitentiary as we know it today, but has largely been forgotten.110

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110 However, a display and information about the radio show as well as a compilation for purchase (St. Onge, 2005) can be found at Canada’s Penitentiary Museum in Kingston.
Similarly, according to my participants, most music-based programs have been eliminated and music education in prisons is limited. When I asked one participant (telephone interview) about music education in Kingston-area prisons, they responded: “There’s nothing. If you asked around most of these prisons about music education, the staff and inmates would probably laugh at that question.”

In a radio interview (Lecomte, 2003), inmate Peter Collins, said that he was unable to bring his music tapes for learning guitar when transferred to Bath because they did not align with CSC policy on what constituted educational material. “At Bath they don’t recognise that . . . learning how to play an instrument is educational or therapeutic, I guess, in that regard.” Opportunities to watch live performances by guest musicians are also declining; growing suspicion, surveillance, and increased costs of securitisation have drastically reduced the opportunities for live performances (by inmates and guest musicians). Gone are the days of performances by famous musicians like Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison and B.B. King at Cook County Jail, in favour of more segregated, individualised listening experiences.

Music in prisons is not entirely a practice of the past, however, and the opportunities that remain for listening and expressing emotion musically are cherished by inmates and staff alike. One participant (in-person interview) explained that the therapeutic value of music is appreciated at most institutions, despite and the lack of funding for programs, updates to music libraries, and the creation of performance spaces:

We use music for therapy. We have a lending system through the library where people can take out CDs or tapes so that they can play them in their cells. But they don’t get updated very often. And music is used to help people get in touch with a spiritual side that they might not be able to access.

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111 This quotation refers to education programs that teach music or use music as an educational tool. The participant later acknowledged other musical initiatives, such as choirs and the Pittsburgh collaboration with Brown, have educational value.
Another participant (in-person interview) elaborated on the importance of music in constituting sacred, spiritual and emotional spaces:

Music is vital in so many ways. And we underestimate it. In the chapel, during service, some of the men will cry. They’re more likely to cry there because of the music than anywhere else. It’s tapping into something that allows them to release. And it’s so wonderful that they can do that.

This passage connects to Brown’s description of music as “emotional lubrication,” in which the music in the chapel elicits strong emotional responses from inmates, as experienced through sonic and lyrical content, cultural and historical context, and the characteristics of the space in which it is played.112

As I wrote in Chapter Four, radios are cherished pieces of technologies that provide emotional and cultural connections, reconfiguring time and permeating stark physical boundaries of prison walls. Currently one of the most effective ways of fostering these connections while also providing an outlet for debate around prison-related issues is the CFRC Prison Radio Program, based out of CFRC 101.9FM’s campus and community radio station at Queen’s University in Kingston. Covering prison and social justice issues each week, the program also features a “Calls from Home” segment at the end of every month, in which inmates and their supporters can send messages and request songs over the airwaves by telephone or (e-)mail.

Having similar effects as the noise demonstrations discussed in Chapter Five, it would seem that these sound splices can help inmates to re-establish dignity with the knowledge that others are

112 Although not a research objective, it is noteworthy that music associated with sacred space, religion (particularly of Christian faith), or spirituality is privileged in prisons, likely because of its facilitation of the production of docile and ‘moral’ citizens. At least two of the songs written by inmates on Postcards from the County featured explicitly Christian references to reformation, transformation, and enlightenment (see “Christian Highway” and “Road to Damascus”), which is not to deny the importance of the writers’ belief systems, but rather to note the ways in which music is used to produce sacred space inside prisons. Further research on the utility of music for the disciplinary project of penitence and as a medium through which to “inspire and reinforce ‘devotion’” (DeNora, 2000: 130; see also Lau, 2012) would be a welcome contribution to prison scholarship. For discussions about the geographical connections between music and religion, particularly through music’s capacity to reinforce (religious) social order, see Connell and Gibson (2003) and Leyshon, Matless and Revill (1998).
thinking about them, and that their words will be heard by a large population of listeners. Messages and song requests do not have to be long or detailed to have a profound effect; I suspect that, for dying inmate Peter Collins at Bath Institution, his brother’s words and song request had lasting effects: “Hi Peter, I’m just calling to tell you that I love you, and I hope you like this song, and I hope you like this show” (CFRC Prison Radio, 2015). The words and sounds of such a message may be fleeting, but the sentiment and meaning behind them are likely to endure in the mind of a person incapable of leaving a prison cell.

Although I dedicate much of this chapter to exploring some of the therapeutic, rehabilitative, and mobilizing capacities of music in contemporary prisons, it is also important to acknowledge the long and troubling history of music in spaces of detention, particularly that which is connected to slavery, war and conflict. Popular musical genres, such as rhythm and blues and rock ‘n’ roll are haunted by their historical connections to slavery, particularly the work gangs who developed the “call and answer” technique that accompanied movement, helped pass time, and served as a form of connection with other enslaved labourers (Garofalo, 1997). Music served a crucial function as a tool of cultural expression, solidarity, and resistance for political prisoners and activists in South Africa under apartheid (Hirsch, 2002; Buis, 2013). In concentration camps across the world, music has been played over the loudspeaker as a form of acoustic violence in physical and symbolic ways. Anna Papaeti (2013) traces the history of the use of music as an instrument of terror by the Greek military Junta in the mid-late twentieth century. Earlier, during the Holocaust, music was likewise an instrument of degradation and torture, with prisoners being forced to play music on command as part of their own torture or as a soundtrack for the torture of their peers (Fackler, 2007). Some used their captivity as an “opportunity” – a word that seems grossly inappropriate but points to a productive use of time –
to compose their own music and lift the spirits of fellow prisoners (see Kulisiewicz, 2008; Milewski, 2014). Indeed, the haunting legacy of the Holocaust lives on through cultural memories produced by post-war music (Frühauf and Hirsch, 2014; Milewski, 2014). Finally, music has been used in times of conflict for the social construction and reinforcement of ethnicity, as Mirjana Laušević’s (2000) work on the Bosnian conflict effectively demonstrates.

The most common musical practice today involves listening to music on audio devices, particularly radios, as well as televisions and cassette tapes. Most federal prisons in Canada have shifted to individualised listening through headphones (Commissioner’s Directive, 566-12), with some making them available for free or a (relatively) small commissary fee. In some institutions, however, headphones and audio-visual devices are sold at unaffordably high prices. Despite the fact that many audio devices are technically permitted in federal prisons (see Appendix H), most of this equipment must be brought into the prison within the first 30 days of admission or can only be purchased through commissary (Commissioner’s Directive, 566-12). In other words the soundscape of the cell, like so many other places, is an outcome of capital: an ability to listen to music at all is mediated by the political economy of prisons.

Following McLuhan (1967), the medium, in addition to the content and surrounding material environment, shapes the way music is heard and interpreted, in part because, I would add, it has the capacity to produce different spatialities. Cassette tapes in analog format project a

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113 Anecdotally, at a Prisoner’s Justice Day rally, one woman explained to the group of supporters that her partner was unable to obtain headphones in provincial jail, and elected to have his sentence extended in order to be placed in a federal prison where he could use headphones.

114 I was unable to obtain price lists for sonic technologies available through commissary. It is important to note, however, that inmates are paid very little for labour. According to Sapers (2014), inmates can receive a maximum of $6.90 per day (a $1 increase since the worker pay program was initiated in 1981). Inmates receive a minimum allowance of $1.00 per day (Commissioner’s Directive, 730). Money does not go far in prisons; Sapers (2014: 41) notes, for example, that cough syrup costs more than one full day’s pay.
different type of sound, compared to the compressed and high-treble digital format of the compact disc and the MP3\textsuperscript{115}; vinyl, if used at all in prisons, might fill prison spaces with a fuller or warmer tone than digitally produced music because its frequencies have not been compressed to the same extent. The differences may seem arbitrary but they can be deeply meaningful, particularly to people who have the time and ear to notice such differences, and for people whose surrounding building materials produce undesirable acoustic environments. In addition to being shaped by cultural histories the listener brings to music, listening practices are shaped by both the surrounding environment and the medium through which music is heard. If a cell’s architecture produces dissatisfying acoustics, the medium might be vital for eliciting the greatest possible listening experience for the environment in which it is heard.

In other instances, the prison’s aural architecture (Connell and Gibson, 2003) might inspire artists in the production of music. The acoustics of the prison are attractive for musicians who wish to evoke carceral atmospheres. As I explained in Chapter Four (footnote 7), sound artist Matt Rogalsky (2014) used impulse response recordings he collected from a tour of Kingston Penitentiary as a reverberation filter for rock band PS I Love You’s album, \textit{For Those Who Stay}. Similarly, while visiting the album production process at Pittsburgh Institution, several men expressed a desire to incorporate the sounds of the prison, or sounds commonly associated with prison culture (chains, footsteps, loudspeaker), into the album as a way to evoke place through the music. Interestingly, the sounds people note to be the most oppressive and

\textsuperscript{115} MP3 players have recently gained approval by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons (see Smith, 2012), and are inspected to ensure that Internet connection has been disabled before distribution to prison commissaries for purchase. The Bureau has created a growing list of prohibited tracks based on the Recording Industry Association of America’s content rating system, that are deemed by spokesperson Tracey Billingsley as “disruptive to a correctional environment” (Smith, 2012). At the time of research, MP3 players were not yet permitted in Canadian institutions (see Commissioner’s Directive 566-12).
irritating, such as the loudspeaker, are also the sounds inmates wished to incorporate into their songs as one way of reproducing a sonic atmosphere unique to prisons, and as a way to root the music in place.

Inside prisons, music both contributes to and cuts through the cacophony of carceral soundscapes. As I have written, its cherished function as a mediating tool allows people to take some control over what they hear at certain times of the day, for music is typically only permitted at particular hours and during specific activities. One participant explained that such restrictions vary at different institutions, security levels, and in different parts of the prison: “In one prison, people could listen to music while they worked, as long as it wasn’t dangerous.”

For the most part, all institutions allow music or television in the evenings, up until a certain time” (telephone interview). Cellular acoustic worlds, however, lead to a tension: music is used to drown out other noise, but then contributes further to the thick layering of sounds, thus becoming a contentious commodity. Headphones pose a surface solution to this territoriality by creating acoustic pockets of privacy – hundreds of soundworlds playing at once, barely audible beyond individual earpieces. However, new problems emerge as sociality shifts inward, including expressions of hostility and distrust when a peer’s behaviour is interpreted as “anti-social.” The next section addresses the importance of music for marking, intervening, and reconfiguring time and space in prisons as important enactments of power.

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116 I take this to mean that music could be played through headphones while working as listening would not jeopardise the individual’s safety on the job by drowning out other important sounds.
Changing tempo

A point that weaved strongly throughout participant interviews centred on the utility of music for passing time in prison. One participant (telephone interview) reflected:

I know a lot of people who listen to music at the gym, or on a train or something, because they can forget where they are and they want the time to pass as quickly as possible, you know, without really being aware of it. Makes sense, right? Now imagine you’re in prison. There’s so much idle time. I don’t think people realize how much dead time there is in prison. It can really get to you. Music makes the time pass even just a little bit faster.

To be sure, prisons are in many ways constructed through notions of temporality and rhythm (Lefebvre, 2004). Punishment for crime is in large part measured by the amount of time a person will spend in prison; time is rigidly structured into timetables (Foucault, 1978); and cultural references and metaphors abound in which people “do,” “mark,” and “pass” time as a way of constituting carceral experience. And prisons, like music, have their own rhythms. Unsurprisingly, the rhythmic qualities of carceral spaces change throughout the day and in different spaces, but quite often they are shaped by the biopolitical dimensions of prison discipline. Borrowing Lefebvre’s conceptual tool of rhythmanalysis (2004), I argue that these rhythms are audible in the form of shuffled footsteps to particular spaces at particular times (e.g. meals), inmates being called to “Count” at regular intervals, enforced silence or the stillness of rhythms at night, and the thunderous, synchronised footsteps of riot squads.

Music, I have found, intervenes in the midst of rather militarised, restrictive rhythms of prisons, cutting through routinised movements and monotony and troubling the underlying ideologies of crime and punishment that give shape to these rhythms. In prisons, music is sound that punctuates carceral space and time, carving out layered spaces of emotion, identity, and self-
expression. In prisons, such a capacity is deeply cherished, particularly for those who are so acutely affected by boredom and monotony that their physical and emotional well-being is at risk. Reflecting on the Pittsburgh music project, producer Chris Brown indicated:

What is interesting from my perspective is that all of a sudden, them having something to work on week to week – the thing that is the curse, namely doing time – suddenly comes this great gift of application to themselves.

If time is to be “done” at all in prisons117, then we might look for better ways to make this time productive. I do not mean productive in a neoliberal sense, in ways that fuel the prison industrial complex by forcing inmates into labour, for instance. Rather, as Brown points out, large blocks of relatively idle time in prisons might be conceptualised in terms of spending, organizing, and articulating time as part of a process of rehabilitation and restorative justice.

Music is used to connect seemingly different times, serving as a mnemonic device (Connell and Gibson, 2003; DeNora, 2000) that stitches memories together, layers and redefines personal histories, and helps people imagine futures both within and beyond the prison walls. As a former employee (telephone interview) noted, “for [incarcerated people], music reminded them of the good things in their life before they got here. But I also think it can be used as inspiration for a better life ahead, if they can get out.” This interplay between past, present, and future is an under-recognised potential of music in prisons. In addition to its retemporalising capacity, the idea of connecting different conceptualisations of time is also rooted in a threading together of space and place.

117 Note that many prison abolitionist and anarchist groups contend that prisons are an ineffective solution to crime (see, for example, End the Prison Industrial Complex at epic.noblogs.org and Julia Sudbury’s work on black women’s resistance of the prison industrial complex, 2008, 2009) and that greater attention and resources should go into alleviating social conditions that lead to criminalisation, including poverty, racism, and insufficient support for those struggling with mental health issues.
Music is an emotional expression of sound that comes with its own spatialities of embodiment and materiality (Boyd and Duffy, 2012; Wood, Duffy and Smith, 2007; see also Juslin and Sloboda, 2001). We listen to certain types of music in particular places and for specific purposes (songs with upbeat tempos at the gym to encourage bodily intensity, for instance), and select private soundtracks to shape mood and pass time on daily commutes (Bull, 2007). Musical performance is in large part constituted by the embodiment of sound – making, taking in, feeling, moving to, and improvising with sound – all of which helps to produce material and imagined spaces. For disenfranchised and diasporic communities in particular, music is an important realm through which to express identities and mobilise a politics of belonging and struggle (Smith, 1997; see also Wood and Smith, 2004; Valentine, 1995). Beyond live performance, the space-time compressing capacities of recorded sound (and the proliferation of digital dissemination) provide further opportunities for connecting disparate bodies, cultures, and locales.

Following Dominique Moran (2012), therefore, I posit that music not only facilitates the commonly used metaphor of doing time in prisons, as evident above, but it also serves as a means of articulating, enacting, and reshaping space. This process of doing space is both a cultural and a political act that responds to and reconfigures power relations in prisons. When we talk about music in prisons, it is important to consider who is playing, listening to, and controlling the music, in addition to where it is played, for these distinctions are crucial to the ways in which the music is experienced. Furthermore, as I noted earlier, we cannot ignore the media through which music is played and heard, as these once again shape how sounds are experienced in and as space. Although I dedicate most of this chapter to illuminating the potential for music to produce spaces of inclusion, conviviality, and rehabilitation, the power
enacted through musical practice shifts across a dynamic spectrum. At a micro-level, listening to music is permitted in most prisons, through auditory devices such as radios and televisions, but this is subject to informal rules that dictate appropriate listening practices and settings. Music, therefore, is in some ways part of a broader biopolitical disciplinary system that regulates time, movement, and space (Foucault, 1977). As I have discussed in Chapters Four and Five, headphones, in particular, are valued not only by inmates but also staff, who recognise their mediating role in the production of docile bodies.

Music practices in prisons are not always positive or inclusive practices. Indeed, as I wrote in Chapter Five, the confined conditions in which a person listens to music, and the inability to remove oneself from a particular sonic environment, is a key source of conflict in prisons. This is exacerbated by a steady increase in the number of people incarcerated for longer periods of time and with harsher sentences (Bill C-10, 2011; Ricciardelli et al., 2014), which adds tension to an already hostile atmosphere, particularly as a result of double bunking. As one participant (in-person interview) who has worked in numerous prisons in Ontario, explained:

With more people sharing the same cramped quarters, we’ve seen far more conflict regarding music. Not everyone likes the same music. One person likes classical, another likes hip hop, and you have to compete to make sure yours is heard. Or you have someone trying to sleep while a neighbour is blaring the radio. It’s one of the most common sources of conflict in all of the prisons I’ve been in.

Similarly, during a talk given by Stephen Reid at the Kingston Writer’s Fest, Reid, an inmate and writer (see Reid, 1986; 2013) on day parole in BC, joked about the very different musical tastes in prison: “Well, think about it: you have an aging man in a cell with a young guy who only
listens to rap. What do you think is going to happen?" The invasion of one person’s music into another person’s perception of what is their own personal space is also produced by cell architecture, the most notable of which is the distinction between barred and solid doors. Although others noted that solid doors can intensify the feeling of entrapment (see Chapter Five), in the context of listening to personal music, they are interpreted by some inmates as advantageous for the ability to protect a personal soundworld. One participant who has volunteered in Kingston prisons reflected (in-person interview; written correspondence):

According to one [inmate], it can be difficult to block sounds out completely because he lives on a range where his cell has open bars, thus there is no solid infrastructure helping to keep the external noises from his cell. However, two [other inmates] live on a range where their rooms are doors. [They] agree that, having lived in both living arrangements, they enjoy the doors better as they are able to block out noises much more easily.

In addition to these sonic competitions for control over space and the negotiation of prison architecture in such acoustic management, there is also a temporal element, dictated by the rules about “free time” or permitted times in which inmates are allowed to play music in their cells. As quoted earlier, another participant (telephone interview), who has also worked in several Kingston prisons, explained that people would use music to “vie for the noise space” at night. Music, therefore, serves as an important respatialising and retemporalising tool that enables the reconfiguration of power relations and highlights one way in which bodies are extensive. Music in this case acts as a technology of the body that enables listeners to take up more space than otherwise available, sometimes in an assertive expression of dominance. Even seemingly minor or mundane acts, like having control over a radio, become cherished modes of power in prisons where agency is difficult to grasp and maintain.

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118 Although much of the conversation focused on the current state of double-bunking, Reid was adamant that double-bunking was not a practice when he was at Kingston Penitentiary decades earlier.
In a telephone interview, a representative from the Correctional Investigator of Canada’s office confirmed the connection between music and inmate-to-inmate conflict, stating: “The most common reason for friction or tension between inmates is because someone is playing their music too loud.” In the Correctional Investigator’s reports (Sapers, 2012, 2013, 2014), these grievances are situated within a deepening concern about overcrowding and a lack of personal space, rather than a suggestion that music, alone, is the problem. As two participants pointed out, and as the Investigator is likely aware, certain conflicts in prisons may be invited by the CSC because they are useful for justifying the necessity of criminalisation and punishment to the public. Prison authorities, and the governments that promote their existence, require constant justification and validation. Certain kinds of conflict within prisons only helps to reinforce the idea that inmates are hardened criminals from whom the law-abiding public must be protected. As Brown stated with reference to Pittsburgh Institution, the inmates are aware of their role as pawns in a penal game in which inmate-to-inmate conflict is used to grease the wheels of a
prison industrial complex. “They know [riots] are wanted,” he explained, in a conversation about overcrowding, “they’re just waiting for it.” These sentiments reflect what Karen Morin (2013c, 2015; extending Vidler, 1993) refers to as “spatial violence” – the reproduction of violence within carceral facilities facilitated by architecture, regulations and other spatial logics which, as I have shown, include spatialities of sound. Rather than mitigate violence within prison walls, it is often beneficial to manage prisons to “reproduce [violence], to provoke and perpetuate criminality” (Morin, 2013b: 396) if the prison industrial complex is to be sustained. Indeed, this logic might explain why, as two participants told me, conflicts about music are left by staff to settle among inmates.

However, and as I elaborate in the following case study, music acts not only as a source of struggle but also as a way of averting or resolving conflict. In this regard, the pacifying role of music is doubly valued by both staff and inmates, according to Brown:

On one level, music can be used to help pacify – I mean, either way it’s in service because if it’s pacifying and preventing revolt, on one level you could say that’s delaying a response, but on another level it’s causing people to reconcile with themselves and not do something that would be damaging to themselves and then to the society at large. Because now there’s an idea of patience – there’s projects to work on in time. And this is not always going to be at the helm, so we can wait it out rather than set fire to anything and have the crackdown rationalized. So you can say then that in itself that art therapy or music therapy even from the government’s perspective that it’s a positive thing because it’s helping to pacify the prison population.

In what follows, I explore an example of music-making inside a Canadian prison to demonstrate some of the ways music might be used to disrupt, if only temporarily, authoritative systems of power in prisons. Producing music collectively, and cultivating empathy through an ethics of listening (Lipari, 2014), inmates and community members collaborate in ways that present alternatives to current philosophies and practices of incarceration (see Silber, 2005).
Case Study: Pittsburgh Institution and Postcards from the County

Amidst the prison farm closures and subsequent protests (see Chapter One), local musician and producer Chris Brown, who actively protested the closure, became even more concerned with the shutting off of inmates from their broader societies. With the closure of many rehabilitative, educational, and arts-based programs, and the seeming disconnect between inmates and social support communities, Brown wondered how the community might maintain connection with those who are otherwise hidden from the world, considering music as a possible opportunity.

Community members quickly pointed him toward Kate Johnson, a former prison chaplain at Pittsburgh Institution, a minimum-security federal prison just outside Kingston, Ontario who supported his interest in making music with inmates. Beginning with members of the prison choir, and later becoming a small group of singers and instrumentalists of varying musical background, their weekly sessions transformed into a more purposeful, directed project. This collaboration shares some of the valued outcomes of other prison-based music collaborations in Canada, notably interdisciplinary artist’s Cheryl L’Hirondelle’s song-writing projects with incarcerated women at the Okimaw Ochi Healing Lodge in Saskatchewan, which led to the production of Prison Songs (why the caged bird sings) (Hoskins and Travers-Smith, 2013).

Likewise, Faith Nolan’s (2014) album, Jail House Blues, was created in collaboration with

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119 The CSC’s mandate states that “the Service shall provide a range of programs designed to address the needs of offenders and contribute to their successful reintegration into the community” (Corrections and Conditional Release Act (2015 [1992], sec. 76). However, based on interviews with parolees and formerly incarcerated men in Ontario, Ricciardelli (2004: 188) concluded that this mandate reflects more intention than reality: “for most of the men interviewed . . . positive supports or programs directed at promoting personal growth were thought to be lacking or non-existent.” See also Sapers (2013, 2014) and Hiscocks (2012).

120 By the time of writing, Johnson had begun a new position as chaplain at Queen’s University in Kingston.
women in Ontario jails. Similar music-based projects are expanding internationally, such as Canadian blues musician Rita Chiarelli’s music documentary *Songs from the Big House*, which showcases the experiences and songs of inmates at Louisiana State Penitentiary and the U.K.’s *Jail Guitar Doors Project*, an initiative led by Billy Bragg that provides inmates with musical instruments and facilitates collaboration with non-incarcerated musicians.

The idea of creating an album together spawned from working with inmates to re-record one of Brown’s songs, “Oblivion,” for the Skeleton Park Community Songbook, a collection of songs from Kingston-area musicians. The songbook was a grassroots project that welcomed collaboration between the musically experienced and inexperienced, the mainstream and marginalised. Despite being a very localised project (primarily with residents from the McBurney “Skeleton” Park neighbourhood in Kingston), the online release of the album gave musicians an extensive reach to geographically dispersed audiences. Brown recalls one inmate’s realisation that he could be heard by thousands, including other incarcerated peers, beyond the prison property:

He said “[…] I suddenly started thinking about all the guys I’ve known in here in seventeen years and all the institutions that I’ve been transferred from, and I realized that they were hearing this.” And it’s the first time that I thought that it might have an influence on what they’re thinking and doing in their cells – I mean, their sentences. Which is really interesting because then it adds another sense of purpose.

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121 Note that I became aware of these projects toward the end of this research. I refer to them briefly here with the plan to pursue them in future research on music in women’s prisons. Follow the *Prison Songs* project as it unfolds at www.cheryllhirondelle.com, and visit www.faithnolan.org for more information on Nolan’s work inside women’s jails.


123 See jailguitardoors.org.uk.
This sense of purpose grew into a much larger project: the inmate-led production of a music album, *Postcards from the County* (Brown, 2014). With Johnson’s help, Brown was permitted to bring in recording equipment – subject to a security scan – and other audio technologies that facilitated the production of the album almost entirely within the prison. In the weeks that followed, he taught some of the men how to use the equipment and created a space in which their ideas were embraced. Trust, honesty, and respect were key goals in Brown’s approach, and as he explained, part of the trust-building process meant treating the inmates as if they were any other musician with whom he was working:

…what happened is they started picking up the mantle and I was like, “okay, I’m just going to behave with you guys like I would with any other artist as a producer. I actually think you’re missing the mark.” You know, at first it was just about encouraging a space of experiment and self-determination and now it’s like, “okay, you guys are showing a great deal of respect on this so I’m going to come back at you with – I’m going to treat it with the same seriousness as I would any other album.”

This notion of honesty through criticism used vulnerability as an opportunity, rather than only a burden, to connect with what Brown considered more raw emotional states. It was undoubtedly a challenging process for the musicians, but this openness allowed the album to transform into a cultural and political piece of art.

To reiterate a point from Chapter Five, much has been written about the capacities of music to forge connections between otherwise disparate groups (see Connell & Gibson, 2003; Frith, 1996; DeNora, 2000; Rose, 1996). Incarceration in Canada segregates imprisoned people from the general population, erecting social boundaries that may not have existed before. For Brown, music was a key tool for breaking down at least some of these walls. In an interview with

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124 The importance of sound in revealing purpose and connecting across different spaces resonates with Bill Gunn’s (1955) and David Dunn’s (1999) explorations of the intersections between music and language across human and non-human species.
the Kingston Whig Standard, he stated that music “eradicated the distance between us rather quickly” (Hendra, 2014). Indeed, as he explained to me, music was a type of common ground to which each person (in their own way) could relate, which helped to get over some of Brown’s initial concerns about hierarchies and social distance, creating a connective space of mutuality, belonging, and eventually even friendship.

As noted in Chapter Three, I attended two of the weekly sessions, spending a total of nine hours at Pittsburgh. Because I was invited as a guest, rather than as a researcher, I was not permitted to interview inmates. However, they were aware of my interests in music and geography, and appeared unconcerned that I was there to simply observe and help with setting up equipment, offer feedback, and even sing background vocals in one song. Like Brown, and arguably more importantly for a young woman in a group of incarcerated men (some of whom, I was told, were in for rape and other forms of violence against women), I found that music acted as a connective tissue that dissolved some of the tensions and boundaries that seemed to be wedged between us. It opened up a space of relatability and familiarity that required very little verbal communication.125

During the recording process, a further bond was created in our mutual frustration with the loudspeaker, albeit to varying degrees, as I was not bound to its commands. As I outlined in Chapter Four, the loudspeaker punctuates the acoustic space of the prison, often disrupting rhythms and movements with its grating sound. In the recording session, almost every song was interrupted by the loudspeaker, and the men would be forced to start over, because the

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125 This is not to suggest that talking would have done the opposite, but rather to note that, despite being restricted with what we could talk about (due to my research not being supported by CSC), I felt that the music helped alleviate initial discomfort and unfamiliarity with each other.
microphone would pick up the voice. In the space of the chapel/recording space, I noted that I felt more connected to the inmates than the staff, and was keenly aware of the sonic reminders of power that continually re-situated us back into a prison when the music might have otherwise transformed the space into a recording studio. During one of the recording sessions in the chapel, for example, the guards were talking loudly outside the chapel doors. After having to stop the recording several times, Brown half-jokingly shouted (just out of earshot), “could you keep it down out there?! We’re trying to record here!” After we shared a laugh, acknowledging our collective frustration, one of the inmates noted that “Chris is the only one who can get away with saying that.” The others nodded in affirmation, a stark reminder that amidst the laughter and conviviality, we were still in a space with strict divisions of power.

Following Skyllstad (2008; see also Daveson and Edwards, 2001; O’Grady, 2009; Urbain, 2008), music serves important functions in prisons, including conflict resolution, connection, and self-expression. Music is also a medium through which prisons are (mis)represented, as evident in the Johnny Cash reference at the outset of Chapter One. This is often accomplished through lyrical themes that offer depictions of prison life, expressions of suffering and remorse, and oppressive experiences of disciplinary power. Despite the constant reminders of circumstance and authoritative power while in prison, I conclude that the Pittsburgh project is an optimal example of how music, and other arts-based programs, might enact positive change in prisons. Indeed, there is a multiplicity of benefits that should not go ignored by CSC, some of which include social opportunities, education, professional development, emotional and mental care, reconciliation, and restorative justice. I discuss some of these outcomes below,

126 The loudspeaker’s command would often include the name of an inmate, which could not be included in the recorded tracks for security and confidentiality reasons.
advocating for a return to arts-based programming as a more humane and effective approach to incarceration and rehabilitation.

“Banding” together: Music for collaboration, community, and belonging

The reintroduction of live music into Pittsburgh had several social outcomes, particularly in the form of building community and respect for others within the prison. These outcomes, although sometimes only temporary, reflect Laya Silber’s (2005) research on choirs in Israeli women’s prisons as a multi-vocal practice that fosters social harmony. According to one participant, men who might not have otherwise socialised together or experience hostility toward one another, spent time building trust and respect. Even if this was only accomplished in the music-making environment, conviviality fostered within the group enabled a sense of community, purpose, and belonging. The layout of Pittsburgh, a minimum security institution, already produces more opportunities for sociality – inmates are housed in group units rather than cells – but other institutions might look to the music initiative at Pittsburgh to encourage safe social interaction.

One participant explained (in-person interview):

There used to be music at KP. Now there isn’t, which is too bad, because it was a chance for those guys to do something together that had a positive effect. A lot of people would say, oh, instruments are too easily used as weapons. But they weren’t. The guys respected each other when they were making music together. That’s what’s so great about music – it brings people together.

In prisons like Kingston Penitentiary, where inmates were ordered to eat alone in their cells127, in which their isolation deprived them of the social function of meals (Valentine and Longstaff,

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127 This is also the case in Millhaven Institution. I was unable to determine when the shift from meals in cafeterias to individual cells occurred.
the opportunity of playing music together could have been vital to inmates’ sociality and emotional well-being through incarceration. In addition to the opportunity the music provided for fostering shared social space in the prison, the content of the music also highlights the collaborative nature of the project. In their cover of “Oblivion” (Open Hearts Society, 2007), for example, one can hear the group singing together in choir-like fashion, passing the main vocals back and forth in a call-and-answer form, all while guitars provide added nuance. The musicians work together “in sync”, finding a common rhythm, pitch, and harmony to the best of their ability in a restricted recording setting. If expressing oneself through music is a deeply personal and potentially exposing exercise, the inmates shared this vulnerability, learning to trust each other enough to express feelings that might have otherwise been suppressed.

Part of the collaboration also meant that the songwriters in the group learned to share creative license with other musicians. In “Christian Highway,” for example, the songwriter agreed that a fellow inmate would be more suited to sing most of the words he wrote. Other songs required musicians to share close physical and vocal space in order to capture harmony and evoke intimacy through sound. In a setting whereby inmates have very few things to call their own and relatively little they can control, sharing the microphone, the notes, and the credit is quite a profound example of reciprocity. Because these men worked in close proximity on a weekly basis, they were able to foster a sense of community, camaraderie, and informal citizenship as a group of artists that ‘banded’ together.
Emotional and mental wellbeing

As stated earlier in this chapter, the Pros and Cons initiative at Pittsburgh was cherished among its participants\textsuperscript{128} for the emotional and mental escape it provided from more oppressive aspects of incarceration. Music is a place-making practice, particularly because of its capacity to mobilise emotion, memory, and identity (Smith, 1997; see also DeNora, 2000, 2013; Frith, 1996; LaBelle, 2010; Wood & Duffy, 2007). As Skyllstad (2008) writes, one of the key reasons music is so valued in prisons is its ability to elicit happy memories, ones that represent a place and time far away from the current conditions of confinement. In this regard, music helps to construct spaces of therapy (Duffy, 2013), reminiscence, and familiarity. As one participant described, “people listen to music to take them anywhere but where they really are” (in-person interview). When inmates listen to or play music that reminds them of a happier time or place in their lives, they are taking some control over their emotional wellbeing in prisons – a difficult task, to be sure. In this regard, listening to music as a way to disrupt the more oppressive or depressing aspects of prison life is a mundane but important political act. Even if feelings of joy, amusement, and dignity are only experienced aurally by one person or a small group like the Postcards from the County musicians, these seemingly small circumventions of carceral power demonstrate the use of music as an act of resistance when part of the punishment involves emotional strife.

Of course, as I reiterate throughout this chapter, we must be careful not to use these stories to romanticise music in prisons or the actions that have led to some people’s incarceration. In

\textsuperscript{128} It is important to note here that I did not have access to those who had negative experiences with the project, as they were not present when I attended the sessions. I did, however, learn that some men who initially joined the group later left it to return to the choir; I did not find out why they decided to leave the instrumental group.
fact, part of the delay in releasing *Postcards from the County* was due to a lack of support from certain prison authorities and conflicting views on the ethical and legal implications of distributing music made by incarcerated individuals, some of whom have committed violent acts against human and non-human beings. Music can also exclude people for social, cultural, and political reasons; indeed, at Pittsburgh, Brown speculated that some people retracted from the band at Pittsburgh because they felt they did not belong and preferred the more familiar repertoire of the pre-existing choir. Furthermore, music can call forth painful memories that heighten suffering rather than calm it. Recall in Chapter Five that post-traumatic stress is a common mental health concern in prisons (Tam and Derkzen, 2014; Goff *et al.*, 2007), and is often exacerbated by particular sounds, as several participants explained (see, for example, Chapter Five). It is not surprising, therefore, that some people attach painful emotions to specific songs or genres, and that there is always potential for music to inflict distress at unexpected times in prison.

Adding further complexity with an example outside of Pittsburgh, one participant (in-person interview) shared a story in which music was used at a woman’s prison as tool to break through communication barriers with an inmate who was experiencing psychological trauma. The woman, in visible distress, would not respond to verbal aid. Knowing about the woman’s background and interests, the interviewee and another staff member began to sing and clap to a song they thought might speak to her. The woman responded almost immediately, re-entering a psychological space in which she was able to communicate with staff and accept their help. As several of my participants reminded me, while it may be tempting to criticise prison staff for their role in the production of carceral space, stories like the one above serve as a reminder that many staff members actively find ways to connect with inmates and are deeply concerned about
their well-being. In this instance, the staff used music to help the inmate access a safe(r) space psychologically, emotionally and physically, highlighting the potential of music as a form of care (Lawson, 2007) in prison.

For the core group of roughly eight inmates who remained throughout the album production at Pittsburgh, the recording space represented a time and place in which they could shape their own emotional and mental wellbeing both by showing up to each practice and by expressing themselves emotionally through the music. In my field notes after a second visit toward the end of the recording process, I wrote:

The guys seem to have a great sense of pride for what they’re doing. The album is so important to them, and sometimes that means they’re hard on themselves, mostly because they want to get it right. I’m sure this is connected to a need to demonstrate that they’re more than their sentence, their crime, their number . . . or maybe it’s a form of penitence . . . my guess is both. When they do get it right during a take, they’re so proud. It’s hard not to be affected by their positivity and determination.

Part of the excitement comes from what is enabled by the recording technology; contextualised within the historical values placed on the phonograph (Gallagher and Prior, 2014), the ability to hear one’s own voice and instrumental sounds played back to them can be quite profound, particularly to people who are rarely, if ever, afforded the opportunity. This was noted in a Kingston Life piece featuring an interview with Brown: “For the first time, musicians had the opportunity to hear themselves on tape – prompting explorations in writing, musical research and personal development” (Knowles, 2014). As mentioned earlier, inmates found further excitement and awe in the realisation that their music would be heard beyond prison walls. In all cases, such realisations have resulted in a sense of pride and dignity, particularly for those who began the project feeling vulnerable or lacking confidence.
Since my visits to the “recording studio,” the album has been released on a website\textsuperscript{129} and shared widely across the world. Kingston’s community radio station, CFRC 101.9FM, has been particularly dedicated to playing *Postcards from the County* during their Prisoner’s Justice Day broadcasts as well as their weekly Prison Radio program. Sharing the album over social media has only broadened its reach. Connection through music, being recorded, and being heard, presents an opportunity to challenge the notion, famously stated by Jean Vanier and resonating with Brown, “that prisons are as much to keep us out as much as anybody in” (Knowles, 2014).

The emotional value of collaboration on the music album extended to the non-incarcerated participants like myself, including Brown, particular staff members, and the invited guest musicians who found new meanings in old songs when playing them with the men at Pittsburgh. According to Brown, many of the guest musicians have carried the connections they made with inmates into non-carceral spaces, sharing stories about the men and the recording process at Pittsburgh and using music to help extend the inmates’ reach far beyond the walls. Others, like myself, have used the community radio station to maintain connections and camaraderie with the men at Pittsburgh by requesting songs and leaving messages on CFRC’s Prison Radio programme, and have used social media to extend the musicians’ reach.

Listening as a cultural and performative act (Attali, 1985; Smith, 2000), meaning that the way a song is interpreted is continually (re)shaped by dynamic factors like emotion, identity, politics and place. This is common when considering the interpretation of lyrics. At Pittsburgh, the opportunity to have a “creative stake” in the recording process, as Brown noted, exceeded expectations to the point where the musicians intentionally and unintentionally came up with

\textsuperscript{129} www.prosandconsprogram.com
alternative readings of Brown’s original work. Speaking about the choir’s early involvement in the recording of “Oblivion” for the Kingston Community Songbook, he reflected:

What immediately was evident to me was that the level of enthusiasm was way beyond anything I had expected. To the point where, on “Oblivion,” they totally came up with this counterpoint vocal arrangement, they wrote entirely different subtexts of verses that answer my original lyrics. In some cases they changed my lyrics unwittingly, they did one of those things where you think it’s something else, whatever, but I for the most part left that because what they were coming at was the exact feeling of the song but based on their experience, and that’s where the change of the lyric came in. Instead of “every feeling noticed by the mind”, they said “every fear endorsed by the mind.”

Indeed, Brown’s story points to the politics, cultures, and spatialities of listening that shape how and what is heard in a piece of music. In Chapter Five, I argued that emotion is a deeply situated and contextualising part of listening. If people hear music while suffering through fear, guilt, or anxiety, it is not surprising that they subconsciously hear or rewrite different lyrics that are in some way reflective of their own experiences while incarcerated. Allowing the inmates to take creative license on his songs, Brown helped to create a space in which the men had the chance to take ownership over the music in rehearsals and on the album. “It’s their song, as much as mine,” he said. Part of the pride expressed by the group, in rehearsals and heard through their music, seems to stem from Brown’s approach of treating the men as he would any other musician. Perhaps most importantly, this type of collaborative generosity and its enabling of respectful space, facilitated inmates’ (re)claiming of dignity in an environment that has a tendency to suffocate self-determination.

Reflecting on my experience as a guest during music rehearsals, and the commentary collected from those who are associated with the initiative, it strikes me that one of the outcomes of music-making at Pittsburgh is an ethics of listening (Gallagher & Prior, 2014; Lipari, 2014) and voice (Kanngieser, 2012), and the resulting empathy that sits at the intersection of these
outcomes. Music is used in Pittsburgh to reduce animosity and learn to foster reconciliation and empathy (see Skyllstad, 2008), serving as a way to think through and perhaps reach out to those who are suffering due to an inmate’s past actions or their absence during incarceration in a non-confrontational way. Empathy takes time, space, and an appreciation for listening (Nussbaum, 2013); it requires “hearing out” other people, even if such a practice is challenging or painful, locating spaces of communication that are deemed safe for sharing, and spending the time needed to listen in new ways.

Musical collaboration, as I have shown, requires a capacity for deep listening: to one’s own voice and sonic environment as well as to those of others. Emerging out of an ability to listen deeply and openly is an ability to improvise, something Brown encouraged the Pittsburgh musicians to practice. Improvisation is a valuable musical skill that offers potential for unexpected musical journeys, but is also applicable in non-musical environments for its promotion of problem-solving, flexibility, and open-mindedness. For long-term inmates, the burden of doing time can become an opportunity to practice empathy for themselves and others by learning how to listen deeply. The Pittsburgh musicians learn how to listen to each other in order to work together and to respect each other. As I suggest in the next section, an empathetic approach to listening goes beyond humans and into a broader world of more-than-human soundscapes.

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130 In Chapter Seven, I reflect on the importance of listening for future responses to incarceration and reconciliation.
Jail birds: More-than-human symphonies of sound

As I wait for the big gates to slide open, the crows fly over my head and scream at me again. I think how strange it is that we call a pack of crows a murder of crows. Why are they flying back and forth? Maybe there’s a murder of crows living in the prison and one outside and they’re just changing shifts.

(“Crows” by Ed Griffin, 2014)

First-hand accounts of prison life make reference to birds singing, insects buzzing, rats splashing, wind howling, and waves crashing (Caron, 1985; Griffin, 2014). In a facility designed to keep non-incarcerated beings out, these sounds may be barely audible but nonetheless signal life that permeates prison infrastructure. As I wrote in Chapter Five, sound waves act both as a force and as a connective tissue that enables this more-than-human relationality. A radio, for instance, is not only a machine but a re-spatialising extension of sound waves, voice, thought, and identity. A loudspeaker, depending on what is played through it, shifts between a monotonous technology of order and a bird-like carrier of lyrical voices, temporarily dissolving prison walls, as narrated by Red in Shawshank Redemption (Darabont, 1994) and cited in this chapter’s epigraph.

These references alert us to the more-than-human elements of carceral space. Incarcerated people are surrounded by a multiplicity of sonorous bodies – those that make sound but also shape the way other sounds travel. More-than-human soundscapes problematise nature/culture and human/non-human dichotomies\(^{131}\) by producing a sonic sense of hybridity (Whatmore, 2002) that recognises the inter-relational characteristics of many kinds of bodies; these include, among others, human and non-human animals, organisms, and machines all acting alongside and upon each other (Haraway, 1991). Indeed, if more-than-human relationalities are strung together by sound, and if sonic technologies dissolve boundaries that otherwise separate

\(^{131}\) See Noel Castree (2005; 2014) and Bruce Braun (2004) for a more extensive theoretical background on constructions of nature and of the blurred boundaries between nature, culture, and the social.
humans from non-human agents, then carceral researchers would benefit from greater attentiveness to these connections.

Imprisoned humans sympathise with caged birds, often drawing upon them metaphorically in art and literature (Griffin, 2014; Hoskins and Travers-Smith, 2013; see also Angelou, 1969). At the same time, as participants and prison writers note, uncaged birds that enter carceral spaces offer a sense of hope, intrigue, and freedom, inspiring imaginations of escape and transgressed boundaries. Indeed, writers commonly invoke the trope of birds as connectors to outside worlds (see Humphreys, 2015). Birds are comrades that have the ability to come and go, paying little heed to the barbed wire and high walls; like music, “jailbirds” might act as extensions of the incarcerated body. As one participant shared (in-person interview), birdsong\(^{132}\) is an example of a seemingly mundane or taken-for-granted sound perceived with heightened importance in prison: “I remember one of the men . . . he was in seg. for quite a while, and he actually befriended this little sparrow outside his window. And that little bird’s visit was so, so important. He would listen for it. That’s what got him through the days.”

Indeed, some individuals have trained themselves to develop an acute sense of hearing that allows for the detection of sonic signs of life. Greer and Cameron (2005: 43) identify this capacity for birds to stitch place, time, and memory together: “As affective shuttles between earth and sky, past and present, birds have long been entangling humans in bird habitats, transforming them into powerful sensual landscape.” For the man in segregation, the bird’s visit not only “got him through the days” through a sense of companionship, even if only heard and not seen, but also invited him into the bird’s habitat and acted as a connection to the world

\(^{132}\) I recognise that the term “birdsong” is an anthropomorphic description of the sounds birds make, which might be better described as bird calls, some of which are signals of distress. However, participants and blog accounts of bird calls refer to them in musical ways (if only because they are positively received by humans listening).
beyond the prison walls. Conservation of non-human prison species, such as birds and flies (see Collins, 2015), is therefore a form of “self-preservation” that protects not only the birds but also the “sensual experiences and memories of their bird encounters” (Greer and Cameron, 2005: 40).

We might locate similarities here with what Chris Brown expressed to me regarding his positionality as a person who could enter and leave, but always returned because of his friendships with (and commitment to) the men. Metaphorically, Brown is similar to the “affective shuttles” that fly in and out – “free,” but with a connection to other living beings inside. He said, “. . . those guys are my friends. I have so many experiences with them now and I have so many different ways of reading them. I used to also not talk about my life a whole lot because I didn’t want to be flaunting what’s going on outside, but then they’d want to hear about it.” Brown explained that sharing stories offered opportunities for escape and ideas for future songs, visual art, or poetry. He continued, drawing connections to the co-constitutive relations that shape the music they produce together:

So I guess that relates sonically in terms of what their input is, you know, because what their input by and large is constructed by this environment… as the music is coming in, so I guess the stories are coming in too… and going out, like I’m talking to you about it, or talking to other people when I’m on stage about it. So hundreds of people hear the words or the ideas or thoughts. Thousands of people heard them singing on the CBC. So… the sound is travelling over the wall.

Brown’s initial interest in the prison farms, as the inspiration for making music with inmates, provides another entry point into thinking about more-than-human interactions. Before their

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133 Such endeavours in bird conservation are not new; one of the most famous prisoners at Alcatraz (California) and Leavenworth (Kansas), Robert Stroud, was known as the “Birdman of Leavenworth/Alcatraz” for the relationships he built with birds, beginning with smaller conservation efforts and eventually becoming a well-respected ornithologist and making important contributions to avian pathology (see Stroud, 1933, 1943).
elimination, prison farms could be said to exemplify the potential of relationships fostered through values of care and reciprocity between incarcerated humans, animals, and plant life. Inmates learned to not only look after cows, for example, but to “listen after” them: to become more attuned to an animal’s sonic expressions of comfort and distress, with the knowledge that such care was reciprocal, providing companionship and nourishment in multiple senses of the term. Plants that attracted insects, birds, and herbivores contributed to a soundscape that signaled multi-species vitality on the prison farmland. With the closure of the prison farms, these soundscapes have been – or are soon to be – replaced by changing soundscapes that reflect newly built structures to accommodate influxes in the federal prisoner population.\textsuperscript{134}

In Chapter Five, I wrote that confinement forces inmates to listen differently, using techniques of hearing that were previously undeveloped or unexplored before entering prison. Some of these techniques are inspired by more-than-human ways of experiencing sound and producing spatial knowledge; these might include echo-location (a technique used by bats), vibrational or haptic perception (including seismic sounds, perceived through the feet) and experimentation with water and pipes. This auditory creativity may not always be learned through close proximity with differently-sensing animals in prisons; however, it is worth considering the potential for humans to learn alternative forms of perception, and in doing so, to perhaps build a deeper appreciation for, and connection with, non-human beings.

In this sense, sonic experience facilitates nuanced ways of being social, and I argue in this chapter that music – in its human and more-than-human capacities – provides ample

\textsuperscript{134} I recognise that this statement risks being interpreted as an ideological distinction between agrarian and non-agrarian soundscapes, for which Schafer was also criticised. However, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which penal policies, such as tough-on-crime agendas, shape the land on which prisons are situated, thus also altering their soundscapes.
opportunities for such hybridity in even the most confined environments. Ruth Panelli (2010) draws parallels here with indigenous practices and cosmologies, noting the importance of reciprocity and more-than-human friendships, part of what Nick Bingham (2006: 496) calls “being-with-others” and something facilitated by haptic experience (see also Rath, 2014). Part of a heightened appreciation for non-human sound sources is the capacity for these sounds to animate a prison’s stale atmosphere of despair, offering sonic splices of hope, connection, and togetherness that might be vital to survival, especially in segregation.

**Education, rehabilitation, and restorative justice**

_So, one of the guys said something to [a visiting musician] when we were in there talking about all these social justice issues and stuff. [The visitor] said, “this is the last place I’d expect to come in and have dialogue at this depth.” And he said, “well, everybody thinks we’re trapped, like we’re just mice in a cage. But really what it is, is that we’re just standing still and everybody else is moving, and we recognize the patterns.” And it was just such a profound... again, when you gain ownership of your perspective, rather than feeling it’s in the hands of a judge, jury, trial lawyer, you know... then I think you can start pulling out of victimhood and into a sense of autonomy. And that can kill you. That can be very painful. But if you’re not willing to do it, you’re going to be stuck in this repetition of anger, response, maybe winning something on a technicality... but then you don’t really own it. Whereas these songs that they’re writing? They’re theirs._

*(Brown, 2013)*

The promotion of empathy and care, as auditory relations of being (Lipari, 2010; 2014), extends into realms of rehabilitation and restorative justice. Lispeth Lipari’s work on listening as a practice in “receiving otherness,” or what she calls “listening otherwise” (2009: 45, emphasis in original; see also 2010, 2014) is particularly compelling here, because it acknowledges the reciprocal relationships afforded by sound, as well as the political, cultural, and ethical elements of how sound and sonic expression might be used. This occurs in many of the ways mentioned...
already, but also through education and knowledge transfer, non-violent conflict resolution, and reconciliation.

Through music education during album production, each of the men have had the chance to build skills, including the technical aspects of music recording and production, vocal or instrumental talent, and communication skills that are required for collaboration to run with little conflict. It is important to situate these skills within the context of the prison farm closures. The farm program was eliminated in part because, according to Canada’s Senate, Stephen Harper, and Vic Toews, it did not teach skills that were deemed appropriate for the contemporary economy. As demonstrated by the prison farm campaigns (see Save Our Prison Farms), such a decision continues to be vehemently contested, not least because it downplays the importance of agricultural knowledge and the development of an ethics of care (Lawson, 2007; see also Tronto, 1993) through mutuality and reciprocity among humans and non-humans. In a discussion about the closure of the farms, which inspired the album, Brown passionately situated it within his interpretation of the current crisis of incarceration:

It’s fascism. It’s nothing short of fascism. Because all of these pieces of legislation that fill the omnibus bill have been voted down for decades in our country. They’re not wanted, they’re completely unpopular and they’re shoving them through via a totalitarian method. So what’s a prisoner going to do? They’re the fucking—I said to them the other day, “so how does it feel to be the garbage basket of society? What does that feel like?”

Although Brown’s words might seem like a diversion from the discussion about the album, he strikes a chord, so to speak, with his point about the controversial omnibus bill – one that not only leads to hyperincarceration, overcrowding, and harsher sentencing, but also has additional additional...
effects such as program cutbacks. The challenge faced by those associated with the album at Pittsburgh is that it was constantly at risk of being shut down because changes to penal policy meant that resources were needed elsewhere. Arts-based programs, and the skills gained from participating in projects like *Postcards from the County*, were seen to hold little value in the context of a broader neoliberal agenda. My experience observing the album, however, was that the knowledge inmates were building through music and collaboration were those that could be transferred to many different economic, political, and social spaces beyond the prison.

At the same time, primarily through volunteers and prison activists, Canada is seeing greater advocacy for restorative justice as a philosophy and an approach to justice. As I discussed in Chapter One, restorative justice (in CSC’s terms) is intended to create safe and respectful dialogue “between those affected (victims, offenders, and community) to encourage accountability, reparation, and a movement towards understanding, feelings of satisfaction, healing, safety and a sense of closure” (Correctional Service Canada, 2014). If sound, and thus music, is an extension of our bodies, then making and sharing music is a creative way in which these groups practice *listening otherwise*, to recall Lipari. The tracks on the album are emotional outlets through which remorse, transformation, and even hope are expressed (see/hear, for example, “Christian Highway”), often in ways that leave the song open to interpretation by others\(^\text{136}\) and thus applicable in several contexts.

This is not to suggest that *Postcards from the County* only contains songs about hope and reform; the album also reflects sentiments of anger, hurt, and frustration, although expressed to a lesser extent on the track listing (but see/hear “Tangled Entwined” and “Truth in War”). Lyrical

\(^\text{136}\) In “Christian Highway,” it is not always clear if the words are being spoken to (or about) a God, a victim, or a family member.
and sonic expressions of dissonance (cognitive or otherwise) are equally important to processes of healing, including transformative justice, and create an emotional outlet through which hegemonic masculinities can be disrupted. My support of the album is also not meant to ignore the deep pain of victims\textsuperscript{137} or the past trauma of many inmates that might have played a role in their incarceration; rather, the album poses an alternate option \textit{in certain circumstances} to the current philosophies of justice and punishment. Among tense inmate relations, as Kjell Skyllstad (2008) and Lily Hirsch (2012) suggest, making a sound together has great potential for conflict resolution\textsuperscript{138} or aversion, and inspiring healing through alternative forms of communication and self-presentation. It is tempting to champion music programs in prisons, but if we romanticise such programs and their participants, it is likely that they will be used as end-of-pipe solutions. I wish to be clear that \textit{Canada’s crisis of incarceration cannot be solved by music}. An ability to participate in musical practices can, however, make it easier to survive another day. If music is used as a tool of disciplinary power in prisons (Cusick, 2013), we might redirect energy and resources into channeling its capacity to facilitate empathetic listening and embrace its potential to dissolve hostility, aggression, and disrespect.

\section*{Conclusion}

Situated within a discussion about the importance of music for “doing time and space” in prisons, I have used the case of the \textit{Postcards from the County} album production at Pittsburgh Institution as a way of highlighting just one example of how music might be engaged for

\textsuperscript{137} At their own request, inmates’ names were omitted from the album out of respect for victims and their families.\textsuperscript{138} For a broader discussion about music and conflict resolution, see Ritchie (2013).
surviving, responding to, and challenging current practices of incarceration. My personal experience of participatory observation at two of the rehearsals was largely positive, and stands as a highlight of my entire research journey. I have acknowledged that this type of musical engagement is not for everyone in prisons, and it certainly has the potential to be exclusionary. This is why a project like the album production must exist within a much more diverse set of programs that give people artistic and cultural choice – in other words, not one arts-based program but many, to create multiple and overlapping spaces that foster creativity, rehabilitation, and reconciliation.

Music is not inherently an ethical act, but the ontologies, epistemologies, and practices that we associate with music have ethical implications. Syncretism, layering, resonance, bodies working “in sync,” and the care-ful, collective act of listening highlight great potential for ethical and empathetic acts because they encourage multiplicity and recognise difference (Derrida, 1978; Rayner 1993). After summarising my research findings in Chapter Seven, I draw inspiration from Rayner (1993: 6) by offering an “exploratory gesture” toward the question of empathy and an ethics of listening in, to, and about carceral experience.
Chapter 7

Conclusion: Ideas that Resonate

Introduction

My research responds to a silence in carceral and geographical scholarship by exploring in depth the aural conditions of confinement in Canadian prisons. This has involved developing an appreciation for the historical and contemporary roles of sound in the production of carceral space, as well as the transformative effects of sonic technologies for managing and circumventing disciplinary systems of power. Throughout this project, I have been committed to engaging with the emotional and embodied experiences of prisons, and the ways in which they connect to an acoustemological approach. I understand the contributions of this research to be theoretical, empirical, methodological, and community-minded.

First, my key theoretical contributions lie in the development of literature on sound and spatiality, adding to a growing body of scholarship on the materialities and epistemologies of aurality. In the final section of this conclusion, I extend this theorisation of acoustemology to include a gesture towards a sonics of empathy through the notion of resonance. My focus on sound and listening also contributes to the growing field of carceral geographies, responding in particular to calls (Moran, 2015) for greater theorisation of the various spatialities and cultures that constitute prison environments. As part of this, I have further developed the concept of the “transcarceral” (Allspach, 2010; Moran, 2015) demonstrating how sound and sonic technologies act as extensions and connectors of (more-than-human) bodies.
Secondly, alongside and informing this theoretical exploration are contributions made through an empirical investigation of prisons as places with unique sonic histories, regulations, and aural architecture. These have included first-hand accounts of the emotional and embodied experiences of incarceration, including but also extending beyond policy and architectural analyses more typical of criminological scholarship. Detailed inquiries into the explicitly sonic experiences of prisons are scant in carceral, geographical, and sound studies literature; while my work has made inroads into this topic, there is much work to be done.

Thirdly, this research makes methodological contributions that offer new ways of thinking about established methods that I hope will inspire creative ways of engaging with sound, prisons, and spatiality. Although there were several systematic barriers to conducting research in prisons, and many of my proposed methodologies went unexplored, I have voiced potential for sonic methods and sound art to engage with transcarceral space, while also making a case for critically questioning how the Correctional Service of Canada’s research ethics applications might be more harmful than protective.

Although I recognise the potential for my findings to be used in ways that enhance, rather than mitigate, oppressive conditions of confinement, I am hopeful that my work will also contribute to community endeavours in social justice. As I have argued, sound art may be particularly fruitful for dissolving barriers of communication, participation, and audibility, and as something that might play a key role in processes of restorative or transformative justice. In exploring the above theoretical, empirical, and methodological opportunities, we might find more inclusive ways of engaging with communities, creating space for resistance and reconciliation in the face of Canada’s crisis of incarceration.
Summary of Key Findings

My research questions, outlined in Chapter One, broadly span topics of sound and spatiality; historical and contemporary enactments of power; culture and embodiment; and the role of aurality and sonic art in shaping the future of incarceration. Below, I briefly summarise key findings into categories that reflect the overarching themes of my research questions.

Spatialities and temporalities of sound in prisons

Conceptualisations of sound (including silence, noise, and music) are inseparable from the spatial and temporal constitution of carceral experience. Individuals come into prisons with pre-existing understandings of noise, for example, and these histories are important for shaping how they interpret and influence carceral soundscapes. However, the prison is a place with its own set of rules, architecture, and histories, and is thus a key factor in the differentiation between sonic terms. In other words, certain sounds are heightened or experienced with more explicit emotion because they are experienced in a prison, and this is always in combination with other sensory experiences. Approaching footsteps might produce greater anxiety to a person in a segregation cell, because under such confinement an inmate cannot see their source but can hear and feel their resounding vibration, and this anxiety is exacerbated by a host of other dynamic factors that shape carceral experience.

Sound is an extension of bodies and power in prisons (as in other spaces). As part of this, it is used to personalise acoustic space to project individual identities and values. The prosthetic reach of sound (Schafer, 1994) works in multiple ways. A person can use their own body or cell
from which to project sound outward, acting as a sonic force on other people and objects. Part of this process might involve more the complex technique of echo-location to explore the spatialities of unseen spaces. Such practices bridge making and listening to sound, with listening being used as a way of taking in distant sounds and the objects or sources they represent. In Chapter Five, I explored the value of such skills for their connective purposes but also for their capacity to “sound out space” – to experiment with acoustic space and produce spatial knowledge that is not available through other means.

_Carceral soundscapes as reflections of social, political, and architectural histories_

Prisons and punitive techniques have extensive, dynamic sonic histories. Kingston Penitentiary’s past includes extreme articulations of sound, including the century-long silent rule (1835-1930s) and the explosive riots in the twentieth century. However, many historical accounts remain relatively unknown to the public because of the restrictive secrecy around Canadian prisons and because of the systematic silencing of marginalised populations. This dissertation is in part an attempt to share some of the forgotten or silenced histories of incarceration while presenting methodological opportunities for engaging with carceral hauntings.

In Chapters Four and Five, I demonstrated the effects of architecture on the reinforcement of isolation and confinement, in part achieved through the production of acoustic space. Paget (2008: 119) writes that “institutional life is mediated by institutional architecture.” In some cases, penal practices have moved on from the architecture that was perceived as most effective; limestone is sometimes harder to change than disciplinary techniques. Stone walls, cavernous domes, metallic bars, and long hallways direct sound in particular ways, all of which have
significant effects on the bodies and objects that come into contact with sound waves. I have argued, however, that the soundscape is not merely a result of architecture, but also a form of architecture. The notion of aural architecture (Connell and Gibson, 2003) in prisons presents openings for future research, particularly as prisons are increasingly being built with sound actively worked into architectural plans (Fairweather, 2000; McConville, 2000), and as North American architects have made media headlines with the refusal to design solitary confinement cells (Chak, 2014; Sperry, 2014).

**Sound and listening as embodied enactments of power**

The material properties of sound contribute to the spatial violence (Morin, 2013c; 2015) and pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958), because sound is always a physical force of vibration. Furthermore, changes in technology mean that sound in prisons can be amplified to extreme decibel levels that can inflict physical pain on a person’s ears or entire bodies, and can result in other physical and mental health effects such as nausea, headaches, cardiovascular conditions, anxiety, and depression (Méndez, 2011). In this regard, sound (including music) might play a role in the torture of inmates, even when it is not considered torture by prison authorities. I found no evidence of music being used for torture in Canada as it has been used in the United States (Cusick, 2013; Méndez, 2011), but this does not mean that sound and certain uses of music do not have debilitating effects every day in Canadian prisons. If Canada shifts further into neoliberal models of privatising the prison industrial complex, extra care must be taken to ensure that auditory techniques are not used as a form of punishment or torture.
Attention to the role of sound for the purposes of controlling inmate populations through discipline, surveillance, and even physical punishment is not to deny the potential for sound to produce spaces of therapy and conviviality. Some inmates ask to enter segregation because general population is sonically overwhelming, and there are other therapeutic environments within prisons that are deeply valued as sites of quietude and stillness, including chapels and schools (see Chapter Five). However, I have argued that sensory deprivation in segregation has myriad mental and physical effects that are likely to emerge with prolonged confinement, even if an inmate benefits initially from it.

The capacity to make multiple sounds (and kinds of sounds) at once demonstrates the open and multi-layered qualities of acoustic space. If sounds are extensions of other entities (bodies, objects, places, identities) then such layering offers potential for more inclusive and convivial spatialities, including the more-than-human relations discussed in Chapter Six. In Chapter Five, I wrote about the connective capacity of sound, which acts as a mobile thread between otherwise disparate bodies, materialities, and places. Music is particularly rich here because it carries such an array of meanings, memories, and cultural values that might not be accessible in a prison cell. In all cases (music or otherwise) a key to inclusivity and conviviality is the ability to listen to other voices, beings, and soundprints.

Dignity

Conceptualised as spaces of “bare life” (Agamben, 1995) and “social death” (Guenther, 2013), prisons strip individuals of dignity through physical and social isolation, lack of personal space, and the loss of agency. Throughout this research, I have explored the role of sound in producing
carceral practices of (in)dignity. Acoustic space is one way in which personal space is enacted, and in overcrowded, cramped prison conditions, certain sounds can become a source of embarrassment and vulnerability. Similarly, unpredictable sonic tactics of intimidation, including barking police dogs and the startling kick of a cell door at night, as several participants related, pushes people into further despair, anxiety, and dread. Some inmates have put themselves in vulnerable positions to reclaim a sense of dignity, using sonic forms of expression such as music, as I discussed in Chapter Six. In extreme cases, such as solitary confinement, inmates put themselves in undignified and unsafe positions, such as placing a head deep into a toilet at Kingston Penitentiary, simply to hear and be heard by another person. Like visibility, but even more so in a prison environment, audibility is perceived as a key means of obtaining a sense of dignity. The ability to draw sonic connections with other beings is bound up in values of participation, respect, and power.

Music and sonic arts of resistance

Music is a medium through which sonic and non-sonic experiences of incarceration are negotiated. For most inmates, personal music offers the opportunity to reconstruct the soundscape of the prison into something more appealing (Chapters Five and Six). As one participant pointed out (telephone interview), inmates cherish their personal music (or music-playing devices such as radios and televisions) to regain some semblance of control, highlighting connections between sound, power, and space. Music is used as an extension of the body (DeNora, 1999) and helps to project a particular facet of an individual’s identity, in some cases

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139 For an account of vulnerability and struggle in prisons, see Liebling (2012).
serving to assert dominance or aggression over the acoustic environment. As I discussed in
Chapter Four, the introduction of headphones was beneficial to both inmates and authorities. For
inmates, headphones facilitated private listening experiences which enabled them to carve out
their own personal soundworld (Valentine, 1995; see also Bull, 2007) in a loud and
disorientating prison; for the guards, headphones act as aural pacifiers that help to quiet a mass
population, a form of discipline that reduces the need for intervention. However, this does not
mean that headphones are a solution to prison soundscapes or “unruly” populations. The ubiquity
of headphones in certain prisons can also have unintended consequences, producing privatised
bubbles that reduce interaction, contributing to the stratification of an inmate population, rather
than promoting mutuality. The production of “cellular” bodies (Foucault, 1978) can lead to
territoriality and hostility that might contribute to, rather than alleviate, the pains of
imprisonment (Sykes, 1958).

Music programs, which have mostly been dissolved in Kingston-area prisons, are
cherished opportunities for education, rehabilitation, and dignity. However, as I assert in Chapter
Six, music programs do not solve current crises of over-incarceration; they must be used
alongside more sustained efforts to change current discourses of criminalisation and punishment.
It is not sustainable – nor is it just – to continue incarcerating people whose circumstances are
situated within broader social conditions of poverty, for example, and assume that music will
solve further problems exacerbated by hyperincarceration. Yet for those currently in prisons
struggling with purpose, dignity, and respect, I have shown that music-making initiatives like
Postcards from the County at Pittsburgh Institution can have powerful potential for agency and
emotional well-being, and these effects will extend into broader communities.
Silences and Limitations

In writing about the need to attend to unheard voice and sonic histories, I have produced some silences of my own. I take responsibility for the omissions that occurred by my own decisions – those that were left for future research as a result of time, space, and my own emotional strain – as well as the unintended consequences of my research design. Indeed, some of these silences may not be apparent to me at this point, and may emerge in time. However, as I explained in Chapter Three, some of the methodological gaps and unheard voices did not occur through purposeful neglect, but were thwarted by unique limitations associated with trying to conduct research in and about prisons. This was exemplified by the denial of access to conduct interviews with people inside prisons based on an evaluation of my ethics application, which also included the disavowal of more experimental sonic methods such as audio recording, impulse response tests, and soundwalking.

I regret that, despite setting out to hear a wider array of voices and experiences, particularly inmates’ first-hand accounts of prison life, I was unable to fulfill a commitment to sonic methods in the ways I had originally planned. Likewise, given the broad scope of this research, which included encounters with the sonic, cultural, historical, political, material, and discursive dimensions of aurality, I was not able to delve deeply into the perspectives of what might be considered some of the more subordinated prison populations. These include: Aboriginal and other racialised non-white populations, women, people with disabilities, queer-identifying individuals, and older inmates. Each of these groups has its own set of challenges and painful histories within the prison system, reflecting and extending from their treatment in spaces beyond the prison. Yet this is not to suggest that they are homogeneous populations, nor does it
mean that there are not contours, patterns, and linkages across these groups. Despite challenges with speaking directly to incarcerated individuals, I have demonstrated the potential of alternative methods to access the stories of hard-to-reach populations, including close readings of blogs (see Hiscocks, 2012), memoirs (see Caron, 1978, 1985), and multi-media art (see Collins, 2015). Further research into the situated and connective roles of sound for particular cultures in prisons would strengthen the study of carceral soundscapes.

**Transcarceral geographies: Opportunities for future research**

In order to hear the architecture of the prison system, I had to listen to the places where prisons rose with the stroke of a pen, where racism was manufactured and fostered for private gain, and where one person’s gain in the abstract world of finance meant that the state would have more prison beds to fill. To record the prison system, in other words, I only had to walk down my own street, with the tapes rolling. (Paglen, 2006: 57)

While writing this conclusion, I was interrupted by a knock at the door – a cheerful delivery person, presenting me with my new license plates. These seemingly mundane pieces of tin quickly transformed in my hands upon the rather ironic realisation that all Ontario license plates are made by inmates. The licence plate number bore resemblance to the personal identification number of an inmate; the former facilitating mobility, the latter restricting it. The object thus represents much more than a legal ability to drive, although conspicuous consumption often restricts knowledge of the practices and people that lie hidden behind the shiny plates. For me, the irony of writing about transcarceral geographies while holding an object that represented how the prison industrial complex operates – through the forced labour of the very people whose stories I sought to engage – was deeply unsettling, revealing, and haunting.
An awareness of such hauntings, however, holds potential for critical reflection about what it means to be “transcarceral”, as Paglen demonstrates above (see also Moran, 2015), and to attend to the materialities of everyday life that represent and constitute this carceral leakiness. For me, this involves thinking about the role of sound in extending carceral space into traditionally non-carceral settings (and vice versa) and the political implications of such connectivity. Transcarceral practices can be oppressive and painful – the policing of women’s bodies, or racist carding practices, for instance – and must be revealed as such. However, conceptualisations of transcarceral can also promote multi-layered and multi-placed histories through audio walks (Stones Kingston, 2014), prison radio programs (CFRC Prison Radio), and sound art projects (Cardiff and Bures Miller, 2005).

The closure of Kingston Penitentiary set off a firestorm of media stories, prison tours, and a renewed interest in Canada’s penal practices, most notably solitary confinement. It is important, however, to move beyond popular accounts of prison escapes, riots, and Canada’s most infamous murderers, as are typically in the media spotlight, and to think critically about the transcarceral implications for different stakeholders: the KP inmate with anxiety who is forced to move to an unknown prison; the aging Millhaven inmate who is now double-bunked with a young person carrying a CD player; the employee who must decide between early retirement and learning the security protocol of an unfamiliar, more modernised prison; the Office of the Correctional Investigator, who must manage an influx in grievances by inmates and staff alike; the families of inmates, who must now learn new rules about visitation and who can no longer access the prison by bus; and the broader Kingston community, which will experience an economic loss with hundreds of jobs being terminated.
The closure opens the door for creative engagements with place and space, but these must be considered with great care so as not to romanticise or sensationalise the prison, its complicated histories, and its inhabitants who deserve respect and dignity despite the circumstances that led to incarceration. There are many stories that need to be told to rework Kingston’s (and Canada’s) public memory so that it includes its troubled past with prisons. There are others that might stay hidden, out of safety or personal choice. And there are stories that can only be told if they are done so in unconventional, non-textual, and non-linguistic ways, without stifling bureaucratic forms to sign and without the assumption that literacy is a universal skill. This is where sonic methods can be useful forms of expression, participation, and experimentation.

The role of art, including but not limited to sound art, is where I imagine lies the potential to create transcarceral connections and interventions. Indigenous performance artist, Peter Morin, for example, uses voice and resonance to communicate with and reconstitute material structures that dot Canada’s landscape as symbols of colonialism. Morin (2015) experiments with resonance by “singing back” to colonial objects, setting in motion reciprocal exchanges. Drawing inspiration from Morin’s work, future research might investigate the role of sound art in the production and intervention of transcarceral space in the public sphere as well as inside prisons. Art is increasingly used to breathe new life into decommissioned prisons like Alcatraz and Eastern State Penitentiary (and possibly Kingston Penitentiary?), building and consuming affective spaces of haunting, decay and ruin. Art reconstructs these former prisons as transcarceral artscapes that engage with complex debates around incarceration and (social) justice. How might sound art and auditory media act as extensions of carceral bodies in enabling and constraining ways? What kind of political and creative potential do sound art and auditory
media hold for communicating embodied carceral experiences? Finally, how might sound art confront the exclusion of incarcerated bodies from the “democratic” public sphere? These are all questions worthy of inquiry and that have the potential to form connections between researchers, artists, and incarcerated and non-incarcerated community members.

**Re-sounding prisons: Listening for a sonics of empathy**

I elected to explore sonic spatialities in carceral environments because previous work on the characteristics of acoustic space has taken a fairly idealistic tone (McLuhan, 2004); indeed, such optimism produces a hopeful (dare I say) vision for future engagements with space, but has neglected to consider the cultural and historical politics of aurality in highly restrictive spaces like prisons. I have found that the far-reaching, multi-layered capacities of sound inspire possibilities for more inclusive enactments of space and identity in prisons; however, as Michael Gallagher (2013; see also Gallagher and Prior, 2014) argues, we must be careful not to assume that such properties are always enabling and positive for all subjectivities. Indeed, sound and listening are also techniques of power that can add to the pains and invasiveness of imprisonment, as in the case of incessant loudspeakers and audio recording as eavesdropping surveillance. Despite the contextual recognition that aurality in prisons is part of violent and oppressive penal regimes, albeit in different ways from visual techniques of power, I remain drawn to the political potential of acoustemologies for producing more inclusive, just, and hopeful societies. I wish to end with a brief discussion of how listening and resonating bodies might enable such ideals through a sonics of empathy.
In the American Association of Geographers’ (AAG) Presidential Column, Mona Domosh (2015) wrote about everyday microaggressions, concluding that we must recognise the importance of listening as a political act of care as a means to support others without appropriating their experiences as our own, and as a way of taking a stand when other ears are plugged. As I wrote in Chapter Six, listening as a practice in care resonates with Victoria Lawson’s (2007) work on care ethics, which advocates for reshaping unequal power relations through the formation of new relationships, institutions, and caring spaces. Such a call is echoed in Lispeth Lipari’s (2009: 45) notion of “listening otherwise,” which reimagines listening as “receiving otherness” (see also Nussbaum, 2013). To these empathetic approaches we can add Lisa Guenther’s (2013) insistence that we try to imagine imprisonment (or solitary confinement, in the case of her work) despite recognising that it is impossible to understand without having experienced it. After all, she writes, “the act of imagining opens up an elsewhere and an otherwise within our current situation; it allows us to transpose ourselves into another place and time, another social position, and another subjectivity” (Guenther, 2013: 165).

Throughout this research, I conclude that although hearing can be passive, listening is a form of agency that can be channeled to produce more empathetic ways of engaging with the world. To understand the crisis of incarceration in Canada, we must first create spaces of collective and participatory listening that embraces polyvocality without flattening individual experiences. It would seem that resonance – as ontology, epistemology, and metaphor – captures this collective potential. Resonance is sound that reverberates, swirls, and touches other objects at a distance long after a sound is made; it is amplified sound, but it need not be so amplified as to harm or drown out others. Many voices sounding at once can contribute to this amplification
of sound, as in the case of Occupy’s human microphone,\textsuperscript{140} although my conceptualisation of resonance is as discursive as it is material.

We might think of resonance as a form of taking in and letting “sink in” alternative forms of knowledge through active, communal listening. As communicated through Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) during its closing events in 2015, new ways of listening and sounding are becoming central to political action and processes of healing. For (settler) researchers, this means not only providing outlets for voices to be heard, but to also recognise the limits of academic knowledge. Reverend Stan McKay (a residential school survivor) urges us to not only embrace polyvocality but to also listen for it: “We all have stories to tell and in order to grow in tolerance and understanding we must listen to the stories of others” (World Council of Churches, 2012; in TRC, 2015: 10). Indeed, as Emilie Cameron (2015: 35) writes, “To be actively humble, to know without speaking, to be silent, to engage our not knowing respectfully – these are the lessons we have not yet learned.” In other words, it is important to find new ways to facilitate and experiment with resonance – to form a deeper appreciation of what haunts Canada’s colonial system of incarceration, in order to change it.

The over-representation of Canada’s indigenous populations in its correctional system points to a need for listening to silenced groups as part of a reconciliation process, and as an opportunity to learn from people who experience the effects of a transcarceral colonial legacy. In many ways, listening and resonating as sonic ways of knowing are commensurate with indigenous methodologies that embrace communal experience, relationality, collective

\textsuperscript{140} Also known as “the people’s microphone,” the human microphone is both a sonic practice and an object that circumvents the need for permits often required with amplifying sound devices like loudspeakers. Instead, human amplification is created when crowds gather around a speaker and repeat what the speaker says in unison for others to hear at a distance. See Lerner (2012).
witnessing and performed memory (L. Cameron, 1996; Robinson and Martin, forthcoming 2016; Gaertner, forthcoming; see also Appendix J). Indeed, attention to the ephemeral, resonating, and spectral qualities of aural experience is certainly not new to indigenous ways of knowing, and engagement with these techniques might lead to a deeper appreciation for the social conditions that contribute to trauma and violence. Affective and empathetic listening are rooted in greater attentiveness to our world, both human and non-human, particularly to those whose experiences are vital but too often occupy these positions of elsewhere and otherwise. For both indigenous and non-indigenous people, it is worth considering how we might “sing back” (Morin, 2015) to the stones of Kingston Penitentiary as it moves into a new phase of life, “re-sounding” Canada’s troubled history of incarceration, and creating sonic spaces of hope for the future.
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Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). (2015a). Honoring the truth,


Appendix A
Audio-visual guide for abstract

Please click on the link below. It will open up the audio for “KH Abstract Carceral Acoustemologies” on SoundCloud. Consider listening while viewing the accompanying images. https://soundcloud.com/captive_audience/kh-abstract-carceral-acoustemologies/s-1L5eQ

1. Audio begins with no impulse response (recorded in an office in Kingston, Ontario)

“Cultural geographers have long been interested in “the everyday,” but rarely is everyday life acknowledged in the context of incarceration. In Canada, the recent adoption of “tough-on-crime” policies has meant that increasing numbers of individuals spend their daily lives behind bars.”

2. KP IR 3b - main dome 3b XY (XY and MS refer to microphone positions)

(Photograph by Matt Rogalsky, 2013. Used with permission)

“In this dissertation, I ask: what do prisons sound like, and what is the role of sound in the way prisons are managed, conceptualised, and embodied? The recent flourishing of scholarship on carceral geographies has made crucial inroads in the study of the cultural politics and spatialities of incarceration, yet the notion of incarceration as a multi-sensory, embodied experience remains under-researched.
"Drawing on Feld’s notion of acoustemologies, or auditory knowledges, I argue that one way to better understand the production of carceral space is through engagement with sonic techniques, histories, and materialities of prisons. Thinking about sound as a tangible and intangible force, I show how different conceptualisations of sound – including silence, noise, and music – (re)shape power relations in Canada’s prisons.”
“In the midst of overcrowding and segregation in prisons, Canada’s political climate reverberates through its carceral soundscapes, leaving lasting soundprints on incarcerated bodies. Alongside these authoritative and often oppressive uses of sound, I articulate how sonic tactics have also been employed to reclaim dignity and resist pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958).”
“To address how the everyday is negotiated sonically in prisons, I draw on situated narratives of individuals who have visited, worked, and lived inside prisons, recognising the experiences of people whose voices are often silenced in prison literature.”
“This research employed a wide range of methods, including interviewing, blog analyses, archival research, and auditory techniques to investigate multi-sensory accounts of carceral life.”
“Bearing in mind the political nature of access to Canadian prison environments, I urge researchers to explore the potential for sonic methods to navigate these challenges, to produce geographical and (trans)carceral knowledge, and to imagine alternatives to current practices of incarceration. I conclude with a call to consider more critically the role of listening in future research, as an instrumental route to empathy and reconciliation.”
Audio Clip Production Details

1. Recording details for abstract and Chapter Five questions (“Dis/orientation” epigraph)
   Recordist: Katie Hemsworth
   Date: August, 2015
   Audio recorder: Edirol by Roland R-09 24-bit wave recorder, MS
   Type: Wave
   Sample rate: 44.1KHz
   Recorded in 8x10x12 room
   Recording environment: windows and door closed, recorder sitting on towel to reduce tabletop sounds. Construction in the distance (possible background noise).

2. Recording details for impulse responses
   Recordist: Matt Rogalsky
   Date: November, 2013
   Type: Wave

   “The IRs were recorded quickly due to limited opportunity between tour groups. A Zoom H2N recorder was used, in 48k 24bit surround mode for simultaneous front (XY, 90°) and rear (MS, 120°) recordings, using balloon pops. The files provided here are only roughly edited, with no fading of reverb tails.”
   (Rogalsky, 2013)

3. Audio editing program
   REAPER (Rapid Environment for Audio Production, Engineering and Recording) Digital Audio Workstation
   v.4.78/x64 rev 0495d0 (evaluation license)
   FX (used to mix Hemsworth’s recordings with Rogalsky’s impulse responses): VST: ReaVerb (cockos)

4. Audio clip mixed with Chapter Five questions
   Title: “In a jail for women, voices inside a large room (Tent Jail, Phoenix)”
   Recordist: Felix Blume
   Date: October, 2013 (uploaded)
   Retrieved from: http://www.freesound.org/people/felix.blume/sounds/202335/ (Creative Commons license)
   Type: Wave
   “Sound recorded by a MS setup Schoeps CCM41+CCM8
   Sound Devices 788T recorder with CL8
   MS is encoded in STEREO Left-Right
   recorded in september 2013 in Arizona (USA)
   Sound Reference: @CD130918T009” (Blume, 2013)
Appendix B
Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board Approval

July 17, 2012
Ms. Katie Hensworth
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Geography
Queen’s University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #:G GEO.137.12
Title: 'GGE0-137-12 Explorations of sound, music, and spatiality in prison environments'

Dear Ms. Hensworth:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a full board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GGE0-137-12 Explorations of sound, music, and spatiality in prison environments" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, PhD
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Joyce Davidson and Dr. Laura Cameron, Faculty Supervisors
Dr. Mark Rosenberg / Dr. John Holmes, Co-Chairs, Unit REB
Joan Knox, Dept. Admin.
Appendix C
Letter of Informed Consent: Prison authorities, staff, volunteers, community members

Informed Consent Letter for Prison Authorities, Employees, Volunteers, and Community Members

Project Title: Explorations of sound, music, and spatiality in prison environments

Researcher:
Katie Hemsworth, PhD Candidate
k.hemsworth@queensu.ca
613-583-6542

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a Kingston-based study that will explore how sound (including music) shapes people's experiences of prison environments in central and eastern Ontario. It aims to find new ways of thinking about sound and space using personal stories and opinions, and would benefit from insight from people who have first-hand knowledge of prisons.

WHAT'S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to meet with me for a conversation about your experience as an employee, volunteer, or regular visitor in a prison environment. I will ask you a series of non-invasive questions that will help guide the discussion. Interviews are open-ended, meaning that you are encouraged to share your experiences with as much description and detail as you would like. I expect our discussion to last approximately one hour, but this depends on how much you wish to share and how much time you are able to spend with me. If you give permission, I would like to audio-record these interviews so that I have a more accurate record of what you said. This recording will only be used to help me remember and interpret our conversation.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Possible benefits of participation include raising awareness about how you and other individuals might be affected by the everyday sounds you hear in prisons (what some have termed the prison's “soundscape”). Prison personnel might benefit from an improved understanding of how sound affects the overall experience and well-being of inmates and prison employees on a daily basis, and the research findings might be useful for future design initiatives, educational and rehabilitation programs.

Possible risks might include emotional or psychological stress that could arise when sharing personal experiences in the context of prisons. Please remember that it's up to you to decide how much information you are comfortable sharing, and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you simply do not like. If it would be helpful to talk to a professional about any concerns that might arise during our conversation, I can provide you with contact details for someone who might be able to help.
CONFIDENTIALITY
Your identity will remain confidential. Transcripts, contact information, audiotapes, and any other information that can be linked directly to you will be locked in an office at Queen’s University and only I and my supervisors will have access to this information. Three years after the study is complete, I will destroy all materials that can be linked to you. If I wish to use any quotations that have a possibility of indirectly identifying you, I will contact you for your permission prior to publication. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study unless you wish to be named. With your permission, anonymous quotations from your interview will be assigned a pseudonym (a false name).

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not need to participate in any part of this study. If you do agree to participate, you don’t have to answer any questions for any reason at all and you can still withdraw from this study at any time by contacting me. If you do decide to withdraw, our audio-recorded conversation and any other information you provide will be destroyed immediately.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and books, and will be presented at academic conferences. A non-academic overview of the findings will also be distributed to prisons and prison-related community groups. A complete copy of the dissertation will be available online through Queen’s University Stauffer Library.

This study has been granted clearance (#6007124) according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen’s policies. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board by telephone at 613-533-6081 or by mail at Research Ethics Office, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6.

Thank you for considering being involved in this project. If you would like to be involved, please read and sign the section below.

YOUR CONSENT
I agree to participate in the study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask additional questions in the future at any time. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by getting in touch with Katie using her contact details listed at the top of this letter.

Name: ____________________________

Permission to audio-record interview:  Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.
Appendix D
Letter of Informed Consent: Former inmates

Informed Consent Letter for Former Inmates

Project Title: Explorations of sound, music, and spatiality in prison environments

Researcher:
Katie Hensworth, PhD Candidate
prisonsounds@gmail.com
613-893-6542

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a Kingston-based study that will explore how sound (including music) shapes people’s experiences of prison environments in central and eastern Ontario. It aims to find new ways of thinking about space using personal stories and opinions, and would benefit from insight from former inmates, like yourself, who have first-hand knowledge of prisons.

WHAT’S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to meet with me for an interview about your experience as a former inmate in a prison environment. I will ask you a series of non-invasive questions that will help guide the discussion. Interviews are open-ended, meaning that you are encouraged to share your experiences with as much description and detail as you would like. I expect our discussion to last approximately one hour, but this depends on how much you wish to share and how much time you are able to spend with me. If you give permission, I would like to audio-record these interviews so that I have a more accurate record of what you said. This recording will only be used to help me remember and interpret our conversation.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS AND RISKS
Possible benefits of participation include raising awareness about how you (and others) might have been affected by the everyday sounds you heard in prison (what some have termed the prison’s “soundscape”). The interview provides an opportunity to think and talk about your experience of sound in a space that I hope you will find safe and non-judgmental. It also provides an opportunity to take part in research that you might find interesting and educational and could lead to improvements in the well-being of inmates.

Possible risks might include emotional or psychological stress that could arise depending on the kind of personal experiences you wish to share. Please remember that it’s up to you to decide how much information you are comfortable sharing, and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you simply don’t like. If it would be helpful to talk to a professional about any concerns that might arise during the interview, I will provide you with contact details for someone who might be able to help (for example, a counsellor).
CONFIDENTIALITY
I will make every attempt to keep all information you provide confidential. In the event that I bring along an assistant to help take notes during our interview, please know that the assistant will sign a confidentiality form stating that they will not share your information or what you say in the interview with anyone other than me. All information that can be linked directly to you (including contact details and audio recordings) will be kept in a locked office and only I and my supervisors will have access to your information. Three years after the study is complete, I will destroy all materials that can be linked to you. Your name will not appear in any written report resulting from this study, but I may like to use some of the information you have provided in reports or publications. If you agree, I will quote you using a false name (also known as a pseudonym).

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not need to participate in any part of this study. If you do agree to participate, you don’t have to answer any questions for any reason at all and you can still change your mind later and withdraw from this study at any time by contacting me. If you do decide to withdraw, your interview recording and any other information you provide will be destroyed immediately.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and books, and will be presented at academic conferences. A non-academic overview of the findings will also be distributed to prison education centres for inmates and staff to read.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have questions about this study or would like any further information, please get in touch with me using the contact information provided at the top of this letter.

This study has been granted clearance (#6007124) according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen’s policies. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board by telephone at 613-533-6081, by e-mail at chair.GREB@queensu.ca, or by mail at Research Ethics Office, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6.

Thank you for considering being involved in this project. If you would like to be involved, please read and sign the section below.

YOUR CONSENT
I agree to participate in the study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask additional questions in the future at any time. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by getting in touch with Katie using her contact details listed at the top of this letter.

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Name: ________________________________

Permission to audio-record interview: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Appendix E
Letter of Informed Consent: Current Inmates

Informed Consent Letter for Current Inmates

Project Title: Explorations of sound, music, and spatiality in prison environments

Researcher:
Katie
Queen's University at Kingston
[PO Box to be determined]

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a Kingston-based study that will explore how sound (including music) shapes people’s experiences of prison environments in central and eastern Ontario. It aims to find new ways of thinking about space using personal stories and opinions, and would benefit from insight from current inmates, like yourself, who have first-hand knowledge of prisons. Understanding inmates’ experiences of sound is important for this research, and I value any information and opinions you are willing to share.

WHAT’S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to meet with me for an interview about your experience as an inmate in a prison environment. I will ask you a series of non-invasive questions that will help guide the discussion. Interviews are open-ended, meaning that you are encouraged to share your experiences with as much description and detail as you would like. I expect our discussion to last approximately one hour, but this depends on how much you wish to share and how much time you are able to spend with me. If you give permission, I would like to audio-record these interviews so that I have a more accurate record of what you said. This recording will only be used to help me remember and interpret our conversation.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Possible benefits of participation include raising awareness about how you (and others) might be affected by the everyday sounds you hear in prisons (what some have termed the prison’s “soundscape”). The interview provides an opportunity to think and talk about your experience of sound in a space that I hope you will find safe and non-judgmental. It also provides an opportunity to take part in research that you might find interesting and educational and could lead to improvements in the well-being of inmates.

Possible risks might include emotional or psychological stress that could arise depending on the kind of personal experiences you wish to share. Please remember that it is up to you to decide how much information you are comfortable sharing, and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you simply don’t like. If it would be helpful to talk to a professional about any concerns that might arise during the interview, I will provide you with contact details for someone who might be able to help (for example, a counsellor or chaplain).

CONFIDENTIALITY
I will make every attempt to keep all information you provide confidential; however, due to the high security measures in place in the Canadian prison system, it is not possible to guarantee confidentiality of your identity. If
you sign the form below, it means that you understand that it may not be possible to fully protect your information and identity since interviews may be seen or heard by prison officials and written communication between us may be opened. In the event that I bring along an assistant to help take notes during our interview, please know that the assistant will sign a confidentiality form stating that they will not share your information or what you say in the interview with anyone other than me.

All information that can be linked directly to you (including contact details and audio recordings) will be kept in a locked office and only I and my supervisors will have access to your information. Three years after the study is complete, I will destroy all materials that can be linked to you. Your name will not appear in any written report resulting from this study, but I may like to use some of the information you have provided in reports or publications. If you agree, I will quote you using a false name (also known as a pseudonym).

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. I would like to emphasize that you do not need to participate in any part of this study. If you do agree to participate, you don’t have to answer any questions for any reason at all and you can still change your mind later and withdraw from this study at any time by contacting me. If you do decide to withdraw, your interview recording and any other information you provide will be destroyed immediately.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and books, and will be presented at academic conferences. A non-academic overview of the findings will also be distributed to prison education centres for inmates and staff to read.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have questions about this study or would like any further information, please get in touch with me using the contact information provided at the top of this letter.

This study has been granted clearance (#6007124) according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen’s policies. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board by telephone at 613-533-6081 or by mail at Research Ethics Office, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6.

Thank you for considering being involved in this project. If you would like to be involved, please read and sign the section below.

YOUR CONSENT
I agree to participate in the study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask additional questions in the future at any time. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by getting in touch with Katie using her contact details listed at the top of this letter.

Name: ________________________________

Permission to audio-record interview: Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

*Last name has been withheld at the request of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board.
Appendix F
Interview guides

Preliminary Semi-Structured Interview Guide #1:
Current and former inmates

[Questions are only for structure/ideas – I will not ask all questions and will adapt the order accordingly]

At the beginning of each interview, remind the participant that s/he has the right to refuse to respond to any question and also has the right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

Prison Characteristics
1. Can you walk me through a typical day in prison?
   - Where do you spend your time, and what do you do?
   - What does it sound/look/smell/etc. like? (we’ll get into sound in more detail shortly)
   - Who do you see or talk to on a daily basis?
   - What kind of privacy do you have (where and when)?
2. What are your overall thoughts about being in prison, whether positive or negative (or both)?
   - How do you feel in the prison?
   - How do you feel about the prison?
3. What do you think would make your prison experience better?

Sound, hearing, listening
4. What kinds of sounds do you typically hear in the prison? What produces them?
   [Explain that this description of a sonic environment is called “soundscape,” and that I might use this word at other points in the interview. Ask if they need further clarification about the definition of soundscape.]
5. How do the sounds change in different areas of the prison, and at different times?
6. How important is it for you to be able to hear in the prison? In what instances is being attentive to sound crucial?
7. Do you think having a strong sense of hearing is strategic as an inmate? If so, how?

Rules
8. How is sound part of the everyday rules that inmates must follow?
9. How does the volume level of inmates’ radios, televisions and other sonic devices change throughout a 24 hour span?
10. How does the volume level of inmates’ listening devices (e.g., radios, televisions, etc.) change throughout a 24 hour span? Is it loudest at certain times of the day? Is this regulated by the prison staff? Is it regulated by the inmates under an informal code?
11. Does sound play a role in any kind of punishment at this facility? For example:
    - sensory deprivation spaces or “the hole”
    - inmates forced to listen to certain types of music at loud volumes
    - inmates being restricted from making verbal sounds (e.g., talking)
-inmates being punished for listening to music too loud
-auditory media or instruments confiscated

12. Are you aware of situations where music, in particular, has been harmful to either inmates or staff?
13. What kinds of rules are in place about playing instruments (what/when/where/if at all)?

Music
14. Tell me about the role music plays in your life inside the prison.
   - How does this compare to the role it played before incarceration?
   - How important is music to you while you’re incarcerated?
15. Do you play any instruments? Did you play them before coming here or did you learn them in prison? What kinds of instruments are available to inmates, and how does the lending process work?
16. How might it be possible for an inmate to make music in his/her cell?
17. What kind of music do you listen to? Do you feel your musical tastes and needs are met in prison? Why or why not?
18. How does music help you (or other inmates) manage your thoughts in prison?
   - what kind of effect does music have on how time passes in prison?
19. What are your emotional responses to music?
   - Do you think this has changed over time (for example, since coming to this prison)?
20. If you listen to music in prison, how do you listen? E.g., radio, television, CD player, MP3 player, through headphones, etc.
21. Tell me about how you’re able to select music, and how long you can keep it for.
22. Where can inmates listen to music? When can inmates listen to music?
   - How do you feel when you can hear another inmate’s music?
23. When inmates listen to music, is it usually in groups or is it more private?
24. What kinds of programs involve music/art? How has this changed over time?
25. What is the role of music in your ability to connect with people and places outside the prison walls? Is this important to you, or would you rather not have these connections?

Former inmates

[same guide as above for the most part but in past tense as appropriate, as well as the following questions]

1. What was your overall experience of prison life? How did this change over time?
2. What is your memory of the kinds of sounds you heard the prison?
3. How would you compare your experiences of sound and music in the prison to the spaces of your life now?
4. How important was sound in the ‘survival’ of prison life?
   - How important was music in this process?
5. Do sounds/music you hear outside prison now remind you of your time in prison? How so?
   How do you feel about this?
6. How did music affect the social relationships formed in the prison, if at all? Have these relationships continued beyond your prison life?
7. Did prison inspire you to pursue music after you left? If so, how?

[Script for the conclusion of each interview]
We’ve come to the end of the interview, so I’d like to thank you for this very insightful discussion. Before we part ways:

-Is there anything else you wish to add, now that you’ve thought more about certain topics?
-Is there anything you wish to change in any of your responses, or would you like to return to a question again for any reason?
-Do you have any questions for me?

I very much appreciate you taking the time to participate in this interview. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you wish to talk further about this topic. You can find my contact information and any other details about publication of results in your Informed Consent letter.
Preliminary Semi-Structured Interview Guide #2:

Corrections officers (COs), guards, and other staff members and volunteers

At the beginning of each interview, remind the participant that s/he has the right to refuse to respond to any question and also has the right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

Prison Characteristics
1. Can you walk me through a typical day in prison?
2. What are your overall thoughts about working in a prison, whether positive or negative (or both)?
   - How do you feel in the prison?
   - How do you feel about the prison?
3. What do you think would make your daily experience of the prison better?

Characteristics of job position
4. How long have you been working here, and what drew you to this job?
5. What kind of behaviour is expected of a ____?
6. What is your relationship with inmates? How much contact do you have, and how does this vary depending on the spaces of the prison?

Sound
7. What kinds of sounds do you typically hear? What produces them?
   [Explain soundscape]
8. How do the sounds change in different areas of the prison, and at different times?
9. How much do you pay attention to sound in your job?
   - Do you think having a strong sense of hearing is strategic as an officer/guard? How so?
     (If not, why?) Is it something you notice regularly, or only on occasion?
10. Do COs (and other staff members) use sonic codes to communicate with each other? How so?
11. What is the role of sound in performing your duties (e.g., something that helps, something to get around?)
12. How does the volume level of inmates’ listening devices (e.g., radios, televisions, etc.) change throughout a 24 hour span?
13. How do the sounds of the prison change at night? What must people who work night shifts take into account in terms of sound?

Rules
14. How does sound play a role in the everyday rules and regulations that inmates must follow?
   - What kinds of sounds are permitted?
   - How loud can they be?
   - Are there any objects in the prison, like a bell or a buzzer, that signal different commands to inmates?
15. Does sound play a role in any kind of punishment at this facility? For example:
   - sensory deprivation spaces
-inmates forced to listen to certain types of music at loud volumes
-inmates not allowed to talk to other people
-auditory media or instruments confiscated

16. Can you think of any situations where music, in particular, might have been harmful to either inmates or staff?
17. What kinds of listening devices are allowed in prison (e.g., radios, MP3 players, etc.)
18. What kinds of rules are in place about singing or playing instruments (when/how/where)?
19. Can staff listen to music? If so, how is it regulated? What kinds of devices can they use?

Music
20. What is your relationship with music? E.g., music lover, ‘passive’ listener, musician (which instrument?), etc.
21. How, if at all, do inmates and staff use music to connect with each other?
22. Can you think of any instances when music might have been harmful either to inmates or staff?
   -Have you ever known it to be used as punishment?
23. How do you think inmates might use sound or music to their advantage, or to push limits? (e.g., resistance, communication with other inmates, mockery of staff?)
24. Can you tell me anything about music programs at the prison, either current or in the past?
25. Overall, what kind of role do you think music should play in prisons?

[Read end-of-interview script]
Preliminary Semi-Structured Interview Guide #3:

Warden and Correctional Services Canada (CSC) Authorities

At the beginning of each interview, remind the participant that s/he has the right to refuse to respond to any question and also has the right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

Prison Characteristics
1. Can you walk me through a typical day in prison?
2. What are your overall thoughts about working in a prison, whether positive or negative (or both)?
   - How do you feel in the prison?
   - How do you feel about the prison?
3. What do you think would make your daily experience of the prison better?

Characteristics of job position
4. How long have you worked in this facility? Could you share any relevant work history in prison/carceral facilities?
5. What kind of behaviour is expected of a warden?
6. What is your relationship with inmates? How much contact do you have, and how does this vary depending on the spaces of the prison?

Sound and Rules
7. What kinds of sounds do you typically hear in the prison? What produces them?
   [Explain that this description of a sonic environment is called “soundscape,” and that I might use this word at other points in the interview. Ask if they need further clarification about the definition of soundscape.]
8. How do the sounds change in different areas of the prison?
9. How does sound play a role in the everyday rules and regulations that inmates must follow?
10. How does the volume level of inmates’ auditory media (e.g., radios, televisions, etc.) change throughout a 24 hour span?
11. Does sound play a role in any kind of punishment at this facility? For example:
   - sensory deprivation spaces
   - inmates forced to listen to certain types of music at loud volumes
   - inmates not allowed to talk to other people
   - listening devices or instruments confiscated

Engineering/design/architecture
12. To the best of your knowledge, how is this prison designed taking sound into consideration?
Do you think the original architects designed the facility in a particular way to create a specific sonic environment?
   - Or, what kinds of structural/design changes have been made since then that have taken sound into consideration? Why do you think this is?
13. If you were asked to redesign this prison or build a new one, (how) would you take sound into consideration? What is your position on the importance of sound?

Music
14. What is your relationship with music? E.g., music lover, ‘passive’ listener, musician (which instrument?), etc.
15. How, if at all, do inmates and staff use music to connect with each other?
16. When music is played in the prison, what are the acoustics like, and how does this change depending on the location?
17. Can you think of any instances when music might have been harmful either to inmates or staff?
   - Have you ever known it to be used as punishment?
18. What kinds of rules are in place about singing or playing instruments?
19. How do you think inmates might use sound or music to their advantage, or to push limits? (e.g., resistance, communication with other inmates, mockery of staff?)
20. Can you tell me anything about music programs at the prison, either current or in the past?
21. Overall, what kind of role do you think music should play in prisons?

[read end-of-interview script]
Appendix G
Recruitment Flyer

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH ON
SOUND AND MUSIC IN PRISONS

I am seeking participants who would be willing to share personal stories and opinions that might help me understand the role of sound (including music) in people’s experiences of prisons. Sample questions include:

- What do prisons sound like, and why is this important?
- How important is listening in prison?
- How do certain sounds make you feel when inside a prison?
- How does prison architecture affect the way sounds travel?
- What is the role of music in prisons?

Participation is voluntary, confidential, and your real name will never appear in any report of findings. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact me. I will provide you a letter that explains the project in greater detail, which also includes a consent form.

Thank you for considering being involved in this project!

Please contact KATIE HEMSWORTH by e-mail at k.hemsworth@queensu.ca

or by mail at:
Katie Hemsworth, PhD Candidate
Geography Department
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, D201
Queen’s University
Kingston K7L 3N6

*This project has received ethics clearance from Queen’s University Research Ethics Board (#6007124).
*I am not an employee of the Correctional Service of Canada.
### Appendix H
**Personal Property of Offenders in Men’s and Women’s Federal Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stringed instrument, wind instrument or keyboard (maximum of 1 meter in length and no amps) (stringed instrument at the Institutional Head's discretion in maximum security)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audio-visual equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - One piece stereo system (100 W total permitted but no condenser microphones, microphones, short wave capability or detachable speakers permitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Walkman type radio/CD player (non-recording)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - Audio cassettes, audio CDs or CD-ROM disks (combined) No CD-RW, CD-R-Write, MP3 Players, iPods, DVD or &quot;burned&quot; permitted (exception: PBC digital recordings on CD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - Video game cartridges/discs (as per CD 764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - TV converter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Cassette/CD cleaner (dry type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Walkman type radio/cassette player (non-recording)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Headphones (no wireless and maximum 10' long)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Game system – Game Boy, PlayStation 1, Nintendo or any other game computer (console or hand-held) that does not have data or other communication capability and is available commercially on the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - TV with remote control (maximum 16&quot; model only, with headphone jack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - coaxial cable (10' maximum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from “Personal Property of Offenders”, Annexes B and C, *Commissioner’s Directive 566-12*)
## Appendix I
### Blogs and Prison Activist Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bored but not broken</td>
<td>Mandy Hiscocks</td>
<td><a href="http://boredbutnotbroken.tao.ca/">http://boredbutnotbroken.tao.ca/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated Inkwell</td>
<td>I.M. GreNāda</td>
<td><a href="http://theincarceratedinkwell.org/">http://theincarceratedinkwell.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison State Canada</td>
<td>Sher</td>
<td><a href="http://prisonstatecanada.blogspot.ca/">http://prisonstatecanada.blogspot.ca/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC)</td>
<td>EPIC (prison abolitionist group)</td>
<td><a href="http://epic.noblogs.org/">http://epic.noblogs.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Resistance</td>
<td>Alex Hundert</td>
<td><a href="https://alexhundert.wordpress.com/">https://alexhundert.wordpress.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Behind the Walls</td>
<td>Michael Jackson (professor)</td>
<td><a href="http://justicebehindthewalls.net/">http://justicebehindthewalls.net/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J
Kingston Penitentiary Photographs (2013)
i. Main Dome
Connects all cell blocks. Site of “Kangaroo Court” during 1971 riot. Cavernous dome structure creates a low-fidelity soundscape with significant reverberation, while sound waves ricochet off metal and glass.

(Photograph by Laura Cameron, 2013, used with permission)
ii. Main Dome - Ceiling
Image shows the ceiling of the main dome. The architecture produces a “swirling” effect in which the sources of sound waves are difficult to identify, producing disorientation (see Chapter Five).
iii. Main dome from above

(Image by Geoffrey James, 2014, used with permission)
iv. Average cell in Kingston Penitentiary
All items in the cell are anchored to the wall or ground. A steel toilet is located directly next to the bed. “Fuck the Warden” (FTW) is a common phrase written and etched into walls around the prison.

(Photograph by Laura Cameron, 2013, used with permission)
v. Changing of seasons ceremony on Aboriginal ground

(Image by Geoffrey James, 2014, used with permission)
## Appendix K

### Institutional profiles for Men’s and Women’s Facilities Cited in this Research

Source: Most information adapted from information on Correctional Service of Canada website (CSC, 2015).\(^{141}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution (MEN’S)</th>
<th>1. Security level 2. Date opened</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>1. Medium 2. 1972</td>
<td>Inmates housed in three units: two contain ranges, one consist of 13 houses Shares property with Millhaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Bay</td>
<td>1. Maximum/medium/minimum 2. 2014/1930/1962</td>
<td>In medium unit, inmates housed in 3 units, incl. segregation unit and transition unit Planned expansion in 2013-2014 for 96-bed maximum living unit and 50-bed minimum living unit Chateau-style architecture has prompted its local nickname “Disneyland North”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontenac</td>
<td>1. Minimum 2. 1962</td>
<td>Located behind Collins Bay Institution Former site of prison farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyceville</td>
<td>1. Medium/minimum 2. 1959/1963</td>
<td>Direct observation living units Planned expansion in 2013-2014 for 50-bed living unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millhaven</td>
<td>1. Maximum 2. 1971</td>
<td>Radial design model, direct observation living units Planned expansion in 2013-2014 for 96-bed living unit Shares property with Bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh (also written as “Pittsburg”)</td>
<td>1. Minimum 2. 1963</td>
<td>Housed in over 35 residential units Former site of prison farm Postcards from the County album (Brown, 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{141}\) Rated capacities are estimates based on information available through the CSC website, which has not updated its institutional profiles. My request for current information from CSC was not returned prior to submission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>1. Security level</th>
<th>2. Date opened</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Pentitentiary (CLOSED)</td>
<td>1. Maximum</td>
<td>2. 1835</td>
<td>Main dome built c. 1859 to enclose what was previously a courtyard Site of major riots: 1932, 1954, 1971 Penitentiary closed in 2013 Future of site uncertain as of 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Treatment Centre (CLOSED)</td>
<td>1. Maximum/medium/minimum</td>
<td>2. 1959</td>
<td>Psychiatric facility with inmates housed in two direct observation living units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution (WOMEN'S)</td>
<td>1. Security level</td>
<td>2. Date opened</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison for Women (CLOSED)</td>
<td>1. Maximum</td>
<td>2. 1934 (*but see note)</td>
<td>Built as solution to overcrowding in the Female Department at KP *During construction in 1932, was opened to accommodate men from Kingston Penitentiary due to overcrowding Closed in 2000 after a long history of controversial incidents 1994 riot spawned the “Arbour Report” (Arbour, 1996), both of which precipitated its closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Valley Institution for Women (Kitchener, Ontario)</td>
<td>1. Maximum/medium/minimum</td>
<td>2. 1997</td>
<td>Residential houses, a residential-style living unit, and a direct observation living unit 44 new accommodation spaces planned for 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanier Centre for Women (Milton, Ontario)</td>
<td>1. Maximum/medium</td>
<td>2. 2003 (current facility); 1970 (previous facility)</td>
<td>*Included because it is the site of Mandy Hiscocks’s (2013) incarceration and because many federally-sentenced women begin here awaiting trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</table>