

# On the Outside

From Lengthy Imprisonment  
to Lasting Freedom

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### **Law and Society Series**

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The Law and Society Series explores law as a socially embedded phenomenon. It is premised on the understanding that the conventional division of law from society creates false dichotomies in thinking, scholarship, educational practice, and social life. Books in the series treat law and society as mutually constitutive and seek to bridge scholarship emerging from interdisciplinary engagement of law with disciplines such as politics, social theory, history, political economy, and gender studies.

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# Telling Tales: State Talk, Con Talk, and Back Talk

1

The genesis of this book goes back to the mid-1980s. At that time, we were two eager young undergraduate students studying criminology at the University of Ottawa. The two of us working-class gals came to our studies with some ‘baggage’ – members of Melissa’s family had been incarcerated and Chris’s sex work career had certainly exposed her to the criminalized world. Moreover, as active members of the Prisoner’s Liaison Group we were politically engaged and, among other things, regularly attended the Lifers’ Group at Collins Bay Penitentiary in Kingston, Ontario. Perhaps most importantly, we knew people who had ‘done time’ and, in some cases, a great deal of it. For the most part, these individuals appeared to lead lives that were no different than those of everyone else we knew – they went to work and/or attended classes, had friends, raised their children, struggled financially, and fell in and out of love. There were, however, moments when the challenges posed by the everyday world were suddenly visible – in, for example, the look of fear and confusion when confronting new technologies, in their antiquated gender role expectations, in their linguistic codes that did not quite ‘fit,’ and in their evident discomfort with traffic or crowds. Other times, the implications of correctional control were evident – when a weekend break required a parole officer’s home visit or when travel

restrictions prevented driving across the provincial border to view the changing fall leaves.

We spent long evenings around Melissa's kitchen table drinking countless cups of tea, discussing the conversations we heard everywhere and those we never heard at all. We wondered why no one was talking about the men and women who went to prison, were released, struggled and faced challenges as they resettled back into society, and never returned to prison. Instead, everywhere we looked – in the newspapers, from our classmates, and on television – we heard about the high rates of recidivism and the danger former male prisoners posed.<sup>1</sup> Faced with a disconnect between 'what everyone (appeared to) know' about ex-prisoners and what our own experiences were telling us, we turned to criminology – after all, we had faith that our discipline would provide us with insight and information. Here too we were largely disappointed. With the exception of a couple of (already dated) ethnographies (that is, Erickson et al. 1973; Irwin 1970) and a handful of accounts of former prisoners (that is, Carr 1975; Murphy, Johnsen, and Murphy 2002), most of what we did find was positivist research that sought to 'fix' or rehabilitate prisoners while simultaneously claiming that "nothing works" (Martinson 1974). The critical literature, with its structural focus, spoke of the implications of prisonization (Goffman 1963b) and asserted that prisons fabricate criminals (Cohen 1985; Foucault 1977). Everywhere we turned, however, the experiences of our friends and loved ones were absent. Where was the acknowledgment that individuals successfully endured and transcended the negative psychological and social aspects of imprisonment?<sup>2</sup> Where were their stories – stories that we knew to be filled with accomplishments and setbacks, struggles and triumphs, agency and tenacity, joy and fear.

Twenty years later, by the time Chris was a professor and Melissa a college teacher and doctoral student, these questions continued to resonate. Despite a few notable exceptions (Jamieson and Grounds 2002; Maurina 2001; Maurina and Immarigeon 2004), pathways to crime continued to be a criminological preoccupation. The interest in release and reintegration was largely limited to positivistic searches for the correlates of recidivism (for example, Magura et al. 1993; Schafer 1994; Schwaner 1998). We recognized that the silence regarding those who 'make good'

not only contributed to the illusion of the ‘dangerous ex-convict’ but also meant that the experience of the complex and sometimes treacherous path out of prison and onto the street was invisible. This lacuna pushed us to think about the politics of knowledge, and so we turned to the insights of Michel Foucault (1984/89, 462-63):

The work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others; it is, through the analyses that he does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and to participate in the formation of a political will.

Foucault’s words speak to the importance of engaging with questions of truth and power, of reflecting on knowledge and politics, and of destabilizing the false theory/practice binary. They push us to think about the intersections and interplay between these dynamics, and they challenge us to be subtly subversive. We have taken Foucault’s words to heart, and in this book we seek to make the invisible visible by recounting a story that is rarely told: the journey of men who have successfully resettled (Correctional Service of Canada 1998) into the community after spending long periods of time incarcerated in some of the most punitive and secure institutions in Canada.

In putting these men’s stories ‘on the record,’ we are seeking to present counter-narratives that challenge the dominant discourse.<sup>3</sup> This undertaking can be destabilizing because it obliges us to navigate the tension between ‘truths’ – what we ‘know’ and what the men ‘know.’ Indeed, so ingrained is the moral condemnation of ‘the criminal,’ that merely validating the stories of ex-prisoners and attending to their experiences can be disconcerting. Here again we are inspired by Foucault’s work. His studies on mental illness (1964), the prison (1977), and sexuality (1978) excavated the conditions of possibility that allowed particular understandings to emerge and others to disappear. In the process, he challenged the historical record with its embedded supposition that we are progressing by demonstrating that current ways of knowing/doing/being are neither inevitable nor, in some absolute sense, ‘better.’

Destabilizing ‘what we know’ brings to the fore the question: why are some truths ‘true’? Put in terms of this book, why are some stories (of recidivism and violence) always told and others (of struggle and success) so rarely recounted? Does it speak to a conspiracy of mind control? Is it indicative of an Orwellian ministry of ‘thought police’? We firmly reject such a notion and instead recognize the need to attend to the economic, social, political, and technological contexts in which ideas become thinkable or, more to the point, unthinkable. This possibility alerts us to the intersection of truth, knowledge, and power – in short, “each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true” (Foucault 1980b, 131). This assertion is supported when we trace Western penal discourse.

### **The Contemporary Tale**

A particular narrative about ‘the criminal’ is recounted in movies, newspapers, websites, and political discourse. There are some minor variations in the details but, for the most part, it states: “Criminals are not like us. They are dangerous. The criminal justice system fails and these predators keep committing new offences because we are soft on crime. The solution is to *get tough* – to have more *law-and-order*.” This narrative is repeated often enough that it becomes common knowledge – presumed to be the truth – it must be so because we hear it everywhere. It is further legitimated when our elected leaders authoritatively, and unquestioningly, reproduce this ‘knowledge.’ As a case in point, in Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s (2011) *Speech from the Throne*, he offered up the following words:

The Government of Canada has no more fundamental duty than to protect the personal safety of our citizens and defend against threats to our national security. Our Government will move quickly to re-introduce comprehensive law-and-order legislation to combat crime and terrorism. These measures will protect children from sex offenders. They will eliminate house arrest and pardons for serious crimes. They will give law enforcement officials, courts and victims the legal

tools they need to fight criminals and terrorists. Our Government will continue to protect the most vulnerable in society and work to prevent crime. It will propose tougher sentences for those who abuse seniors and will help at risk youth avoid gangs and criminal activity. It will address the problem of violence against women and girls. Our Government has always believed the interests of law-abiding citizens should be placed ahead of those of criminals.

The Conservative Party of Canada put rhetoric into law when they pushed the Omnibus Crime Bill (C-10) through Parliament. The (euphemistically named) *Safe Streets and Communities Act* came into effect on 12 March 2012.<sup>4</sup> Ironically, these laws are being implemented at a time when even conservative Texas lawmakers, long advocates of ‘law-and-order’ policies, are declaring the approach a social and fiscal failure and are moving to repeal minimum sentences and adopt community solutions (Milewski 2011).

Given that crime rates have been falling steadily for the last two decades (Statistics Canada 2010a), Prime Minister Harper has shrewdly drawn on common ‘knowledge’ to invent a social problem for political currency (Mallea 2010). To this end, he is evoking the most primal of emotions (fear) and employing an ancient conceptual frame (good versus evil) when he vows that his government will protect the innocent, the victim, and the law-abiding citizen from the threat embodied by ‘the criminal.’ Perhaps because this binary thinking is so primordial, it is also appealing – a straightforward problem and self-evident solution to ensure safety and security for all ‘deserving’ Canadians.

As is so often the case, common (non)sense collapses on reflection. First, who is the criminal? By definition, it is someone who has broken the law – something that applies to most, or more likely all, Canadians (Gabor 1994). Indeed, the large amount of unknown criminal activity – the ‘dark figure of crime’ – illustrates that very few *Criminal Code* violations actually make it through the funnelling and filtering process (recognized, reported, found by police, charged, and convicted) to be recorded in official crime statistics (Winterdyk 2006).<sup>5</sup> If we take a more legalistic approach, we can say the criminal is someone who has broken

the law, been apprehended by law enforcement, and been found guilty in court. Yet, even this designation applies to 3.8 million Canadians (Public Safety Canada 2011, 107), so that, in other words, approximately one in every seven adult Canadians is, legally speaking, a criminal!<sup>6</sup>

Second, there is the question of the get-tough-on-crime ‘solution,’ which is essentially to protect ‘good’ citizens by putting more ‘bad’ people in prison and keeping them incarcerated for longer periods of time.<sup>7</sup> This powerful rhetoric is substantively bankrupt, something Justice Minister Rob Nicholson implicitly acknowledged when he noted “unlike the Opposition, we do not use statistics as an excuse not to get tough on criminals” (quoted in Galloway 2011). Those individuals who are amenable to evidence-based research have pointed out that Canadians will not be safer from crime under the new regime because longer sentences and mandatory minimums do not reduce offending (Durlauf and Nagin 2011). Criminologists have also drawn attention to the implications of an overburdened correctional system wherein overcrowding leads to violence, and effective prison programs (for example, literacy, anger management, and vocational training) are cut (Mallea 2010).

Finally, the cost of the *Safe Streets and Communities Act* is estimated at a staggering \$19 billion (IRIS 2011) – money that as Irvin Cotler (2011), former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada, pointed out “cannot be used to invest in a social justice agenda, child care, health care, crime prevention, seniors or social housing. At the end of the day, we will have ... more crime and less justice.” Indeed, the abandonment of the rehabilitative ideal rapidly became evident. For example, on 16 April 2012, the Correctional Service of Canada announced that the award-winning Life Line program, which has helped life-sentenced individuals (including many of the men in this research) reintegrate back into society after prison, will no longer be funded due to federal budget cuts (Munn 2012).

The tale of the criminal, and the appropriate response to him, has not always been told using the imagery of Prime Minister Harper. Indeed, a review of the discourses that have emerged since Canada’s first penitentiary was erected in 1835 demonstrates that particular eras have had their own narratives and accompanying practices.

### The Stories Told

For most of Western history, wrongdoing has been sanctioned by expulsion, indentured servitude, corporal punishment, or death – jails were largely holding places for those awaiting trial or the execution of their sentence. The prison as a form of punishment in its own right emerged in the context of eighteenth-century dissatisfaction with public spectacles of corporal and capital punishment and the need for an ‘enlightened’ approach to ‘justice’ (Foucault 1977). This idea was espoused by classical theorists such as Cesare Beccaria (1764 [1986]) who thought that by ensuring swift, certain, and proportional punishment, rational persons, engaging in a cost-benefit analysis, would be deterred from committing crimes. The goal of the prison was to neutralize the ‘dangerous classes’ – those that posed a threat to the emerging bourgeois order (Goff 1999). Early places of confinement, which were characterized by disorder, filth, dismal overcrowding, and the total absence of classification, were condemned by reformers such as John Howard (1777 [2000]) as breeding grounds of disease, criminality, and immorality. His calls for reform were heeded by governments of the day who introduced a new type of institution “based on the principles of solitary confinement, religious instruction, and hard labour” (Garcia, 2005, 416).

By the nineteenth century, the penitentiary was an accepted response, and the story was that the system could be improved if punishment had “humanity as its ‘measure’” (Foucault 1977, 75). In practice, reformers were committed to ‘fixing’ the criminal through coercive policies that would “act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour” (138). To this end, they employed regulation and surveillance in institutions that “mimicked the discipline necessary for the factory system” (Scull 1977, 26) in order to produce corrected and reformed disciplined workers capable of enduring, and willing to endure, the labour conditions of nineteenth-century factories. In short, the prison was not only about ‘enlightened’ punishment through the deprivation of liberty but also about the “recoding of existence” (Foucault 1977, 236) by “organizing and training people into normalcy” (Goff 1999, 68).

In this context, there was a period of rapid prison expansion throughout Europe and North America that lasted into the twentieth century.

In the process, the ‘truth’ of prisons as a solution to the problem of crime became ever more entrenched, although the justifications for it were reconfigured. By the 1930s, positivism, which sought to identify the causes of crime through the scientific method, asserted new ‘truths.’ The resulting story of physiological, psychological, and/or social determinism was one that co-existed, and sometimes displaced, classicalism as the prevailing penal tale. Crime came to be envisioned as the symptom of an underlying individual defect, with prisoners needing treatment and cure under the watchful eyes of ‘experts’ in prison. While the approach appears more ‘humane,’ it was, in practice, characterized by repressive and brutal punishment in the name of treatment – for example, restricted diets became euphemistically reframed as “behaviour modification meatloaf” (Ross and McKay 1980, 45). More to the point, the reification of the criminal as ‘a different kind of person’ is complete when the reform of rational actors (the classical model) is replaced by the rehabilitation of ‘sick,’ defective, or deficient beings who must be confined until they are ‘fixed’ (the positivist model).

By the 1960s and 1970s, a different ‘truth’ had taken hold and a new story was being told. The zeitgeist of this period was one of cynicism grounded in a discursive trope that the state was ineffective, the government’s efforts to reform prisoners were illusory, the correctional discourse mere rhetoric, and penal institutions more harmful than beneficial. Not surprisingly, this period was characterized by efforts to minimize the role of the ‘repressive’ state by encouraging more inclusive and community-driven responses to crime and deviance. In practice, elements of previous discourses remained and a bifurcated system emerged with corresponding divisions in the classification of criminals (Pratt 1999). On one end of the correctional continuum, less serious types of crimes received interventions aimed at diverting the most ‘deserving’ out of the penal apparatus. On the other end of the continuum, the ‘undeserving’ (those convicted of serious crimes) were locked away in prisons for increasingly long sentences (Cohen 1985).

By the 1980s, the idealism of the welfare era, with its commitment to the ‘social,’ was quickly disappearing and the social safety net became increasingly tattered as states shifted to the conservative right. Governments of the day employed the language of economic rationalism to

argue that the high cost of welfare programs was crippling the economy, leaving them with few options but to cut expenditures and rely on families and the private sector to fill the inevitable chasm in services and support. As Maureen Baker (1997, 2) explained, “the ideology of economic rationalism has been used by employer’s groups and financial organizations to promote their own interests of global trade and higher profits for the business sector. Yet, these groups have successfully persuaded governments that what is good for the business sector is beneficial to the nation.” As Nils Christie (2004) pointed out, the increased privatization of prisons and the off-loading of rehabilitative services are the result of this process. In other words, it is precisely this rationality that gave rise to the prison industrial complex.

By the turn of the millennium, market-driven neo-liberalism – characterized by individualization and the off-loading of responsibility and concurrent responsabilization of individuals, communities, and professionals – was firmly entrenched (Rose 1996).<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the story of risk came to dominate both criminal justice and political rhetoric; governments were expected to engage with risk management techniques and act accordingly. The search for a way to predict and control crime (and consequently criminals) became a significant pre-occupation, and, as a result, an unquestioning reliance on statistical analysis for decision making emerged. In this actuarial context, the criminalized individual was no longer a subject to be reformed or aided but, instead, was a threat to be minimized. To meet this goal, the correctional system endeavoured to reduce the likelihood of recidivism by discovering and preventing risk factors or by creating and installing protective factors. These techniques afforded the Correctional Service of Canada, the Parole Board of Canada, and other parts of the penal justice apparatus significant power and control justified on the premise of recidivism reduction (Thurber 1998).

Reflecting on these discursive shifts, we see that the criminal is being constituted in very specific ways in each time period – from one who can be corrected, to one who can be rehabilitated, and, finally, to one who must be managed. These linguistic and conceptual shifts mask consistent underlying themes. Over and over again, the stories have been predicated on the criminal as ‘other’ and pivot on the (modernist)

confidence in progress. Perhaps this should not surprise us since, as Stanley Cohen (1985, 157-58) cautioned:

The language which the powerful use to deal with chronic social problems like crime is very special in its banality. Invariably, it tries to convey choice, change, progress, and rational decision making. Even if things stay much the same, social-control talk has to convey a dramatic picture of breakthroughs, departures, innovations, milestones, turning points – continually changing strategies in the war against crime. All social policy-talk has to give the impression of change even if nothing new is happening at all.

### **The Story Not Told**

In this book, we aim to tell a different story by recounting the success and resettlement of those who have previously been criminalized. This story is not rooted in folklore but, rather, in evidence and experience. In direct contrast to the dominant discourse, data indicate that the former long-term prisoner is able to resettle into the community without jeopardizing the safety of other citizens. At this juncture, we need to emphasize that we are not referring to all of the individuals who have been incarcerated and released in Canada. Indeed, given that in 2008-9 alone, almost 90,000 adult criminal court cases resulted in custodial sentences for the accused, the full contingent of imprisoned people is well beyond the scope of this inquiry. We exclude the majority of prisoners, those who have received provincial sentences (less than two years) and instead focus on those individuals who have received severe federal sanctions (Thomas 2010). This choice was deliberate as it has usually been this smaller group, or rather their crimes, which have dominated the get-tough rhetoric and have strongly informed the tales we have been told.

By and large, the individuals who because of their crimes have received much media and political attention do not re-offend and return to prison. Over the past ten years, over 80 percent of day paroles,<sup>9</sup> over 70 percent of full paroles, and between 58 percent and 62 percent of statutory releases were successfully completed.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the great majority of the approximately 7,100 men

on conditional release from the federal system will never return to life behind the penitentiary wall (Public Safety Canada 2011). It would seem that success is the norm – recidivism the exception. This finding is even more evident when the data on revocation of conditional release (failure) are scrutinized – most of these returns to prison are for technical violations (for example, breach of conditions), and less than 2.5 percent are for new *Criminal Code* offences (Statistics Canada 2010b).

Despite this evidence, success is largely absent from the conversation. For example, the *Report of the Correctional Service of Canada Review Panel* acknowledges that “failures are far less than the successes” (Correctional Service of Canada Review Panel 2007, 129). Yet, the failures are the sole focus of the document. To counter this obsession with recidivism, we offer an alternative focus, a grounded methodological approach and an integrated theoretical framework that provide a point of entry to another story.

Our point of departure mirrors that of the United Nations’ *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, which was ratified by Canada in 1975 and which state: “The suffering that results from the loss of liberty and freedom by the fact of incarceration is punishment enough.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, we believe that individuals are sentenced to prison as punishment, not for punishment, and, having served their deprivation of liberty sanction, are entitled to ‘move on.’ Embedded in this approach is a categorical refusal to perceive criminalized behaviour as indicative of a ‘kind of person.’ This positioning is not a valorization of criminalized individuals but, simply, an acknowledgment of their humanity. Accordingly, this book does not concern itself with the psychology of the respondents, does not focus on their pre-prison lives or crimes, and does not engage with philosophical reflections about the role of punishment. Instead, we suspend judgment and give meaningful consideration to the challenges that these formerly incarcerated men have faced and to the strategies that they have employed to overcome these obstacles. Simply put, it is an examination of the common experience of success. It is the story of men who, like Alice from Lewis Carroll’s (1865) famous children’s tale *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, plummet into a bewildering environment in which they must make sense of their surroundings and the interactions therein and, after a considerable

period of time, ‘fall out of the rabbit hole’ and back into the real world, where they must re-adapt to the mundane.

### **Hearing and Writing This Story**

In order to tell this story, we sought out a research method that would shed light on the lived experiences of former prisoners. While quantitative data demonstrate that success is the norm, they do not illuminate the texture and nuance of the journey from sparse prison cell to one’s own home. To do so, we employed the Canadian government’s definitions of both long-term incarceration and successful reintegration and conducted twenty in-depth semi-structured interviews with men who had been incarcerated for periods of ten years or more and had been in the community charge-free for at least five. These men very generously took the time to share their stories and respond with remarkable candour to our often tedious probes. We asked them about their experiences preparing for release from prison, about their re-entry, and about the years since. We wondered what factors had helped or hindered them in finding a new place in the community after years of being removed from the social body.

The majority of the respondents (sixteen) were serving life sentences, and the amount of time in prison ranged from ten years to more than thirty – the median was seventeen years. Some of the men had been out of prison for considerably longer than five years; two had spent more than twenty years in the community post-prison. Although predominantly middle-aged, two were senior citizens and one was under the age of forty; most were white, although one man self-identified as Aboriginal; some had university degrees, while others had not completed grade school; some were married, while others were common-law, and still others were single. For the interested reader, an appendix at the end of this book details the methodology employed in this research and some of the ethical issues we confronted.

We had come to know the men as individuals, and we want to afford the reader this opportunity as well. In order to bring the men ‘to life,’ the next chapter introduces them through a series of vignettes designed to capture their individuality and, in some cases, their quirkiness. Moreover, throughout the book we present, to the best of our ability, their

complexity, their insights, and their struggles. Accordingly, we anchor our analysis in the men's narratives.

Precisely because we had come to know the men as people who were not defined by their crime or by their imprisonment, we struggled with terminology in the writing of this text. We had learned too much from the men about the negative impact of labels on their self-concept and on their public identity to replicate the language that informed a discourse that we were motivated to shift. Terms such as 'offender,' 'murderer,' and 'inmate' were obvious problems and easily avoided. Others such as 'parolee,' 'convict,' and 'former' or 'ex-' prisoner, which were used frequently by the men during their interviews, proved more difficult to resolve. If the men felt comfortable using these terms, could we? Using this language implied something that had happened to the men (to be convicted and imprisoned) rather than an inherent quality or master status. However, over time we came to appreciate that our writing was not in keeping with our political and research goals if we consistently used these words.<sup>12</sup> We then considered following the lead of the Correctional Service of Canada's Taskforce on Federally Sentenced Women, which eschewed the negative terms (for example, female offender or female inmate) and instead adopted federally sentenced women as their descriptor (Canada 1990). As such, we played with using the term 'formerly federally incarcerated men,' but this term also felt like a form of 'othering,' albeit one that was gentler and perhaps softer. Ultimately, while some stigma-loaded terms appear in the narratives, we refer to these individuals simply as "the men" and accept that this terminology is sometimes textually tedious.

### **"Making Sense" of the Stories**

At the same time as we recognize that social actors are the experts of their own lives, we are committed to situating these individuals within broader social and discursive contexts. As we endeavoured to make sense of what the men were telling us, we found ourselves turning to the theories and concepts of our academic disciplines. While we have strived to make this text accessible to a wide audience by not weighing each assertion down in heavy theoretical prose, we nonetheless believe that some preamble about the main philosophical and theoretical traditions

that inform this work is needed. The purpose of this section is two-fold: first, we want to demonstrate the importance of using an integrated theoretical framework that, in our case, draws on sociology, criminology, and geography; and, second, we want to ground the reader in our understanding of the principal theoretical traditions employed in order to provide a basis on which they can consider our analysis.

The first strand that we weave into our theoretical tapestry emerges from the work of critical human geographers. We begin with an understanding that place (in both cartographic and symbolic senses) is enmeshed in our daily lives. That is, locations and locales influence our actions and thoughts rather than being mere backdrops and, in turn, the geographic places themselves are transformed. For example, the discussion in Chapter 8 highlights the difference between having a 'place to live' and having a 'home' and how regulatory frameworks and normative social expectations condition this subjectivity. Ultimately, we concur with Tim Cresswell (1996, 16), who recognized that place mirrors and shapes the hegemonic landscape:

Place is produced by practice that adheres to (ideological) beliefs about what is the appropriate thing to do. But place reproduces the beliefs that produce it in a way that makes them appear natural, self-evident, and commonsense ... Thus places are active forces in the reproduction of norms – in the definition of appropriate practice. Place constitutes our beliefs about what is appropriate as much as it is constituted by them.

Appreciating that place creates, reflects, and disrupts power relations, and of course influences all social interactions, opens up a conceptual space for the work of symbolic interactionists. This theoretical tradition focuses on the way symbols (some of which are spatialized, gendered, racialized, or classed) create meaning and allow individuals and groups to situate themselves within a social milieu. This literature demonstrates that, through interactions with others, the individual comes to assume a role (or roles) that mediates how he sees himself (personal identity) and how he is seen by others (public identity):<sup>13</sup>

The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or not credited. (Goffman 1959, 252-53)

As Erving Goffman's quote suggests, symbolic interactionists have also alerted us to the consequences of being labelled, which includes confronting a constellation of stigmatic assumptions. For those who are criminalized, the rituals and ceremonies surrounding their conviction are designed to strip them of their "social citizenship" and burden them with a tainted identity (Bosworth 1999, 116). In Chapters 7 and 8, we will see how ex-prisoners negotiate multiple identities and manage the implications of stigmatic designations.

Of course, interactions (symbolic or otherwise) do not occur in a vacuum and must be contextualized within socio-economic discourses, practices, and structures, including social, interpersonal, and intra-personal regulation "beyond the state" (Dean 1991). As Elizabeth Comack (2008, 26) has pointed out, criminalized men "encounter structural inequalities that operate to contour and constrain their lives." Therefore, social actors navigate and position themselves within "a set of pre-existing cultural categories some of which are hierarchically arranged" (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009, 280). Put another way, social stratifications speak to systems of privilege and constraint that condition the 'possible' through highly gendered, classed, racialized, and sexualized structural limitations and normative pressures. Moreover, intersectionality theorists have drawn our attention to how these axes of inequality are bound together into "interlocking systems of oppression" that condition the experience of social actors (Collins 1990, 221).

In addition, the men are situated within a particular insidious regulatory framework. Earlier in this chapter, we presented the 'stories that have been told' in order to trace the ways prisons and prisoners have been constituted in discourse and practice. It is important, in order to make sense of the experiences of the men, to explore the complex assemblage of techniques that constitute the regulatory context. To this

end, Foucault's work on governmentality affords us a complementary, albeit more theoretical, lens through which to think about the configuration of regulation. He identified three regimes of governance that are still in evidence today (Foucault 1980a [1991]). The first, which he termed sovereignty, pertains to the state's power over individuals. In contemporary society, we see sovereignty in the justice system's ability to take the life (metaphorical and social) of subjects (or to pardon those deemed worthy).

At the same time, the state also has the ability to monitor and assess the individual until such a time as he is transformed into a self-disciplining subject – one who is 'normalized' into conformity.<sup>14</sup> This regime is referred to by Foucault as disciplinary power. The third regime, articulated in Foucault's (1980a [1991], 1982, 2004) writings on governmentality, draws our attention to the complexity of governance in neo-liberal society and alerts us to significant shifts in the regulation of disaffiliated populations (Rose 1996). While the state retains the sovereign authority to criminalize and sanction, regulation is diffused throughout the social body by the state "governing at a distance" through initiatives that, though supported through state funding, appear to operate independently (Rose and Miller 1992). The burden of managing risk shifts from the state onto non-governmental agencies, outside experts, and perhaps, most significantly, individuals. We see this dynamic exemplified in the recent *Speech from the Throne* in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2011) pledged to:

Give law enforcement officials, courts and *victims* the legal tools they need to fight criminals and terrorists ... Canadians who are victimized or *threatened* by crime deserve their government's support and protection, and they should have the right to take reasonable steps to *defend themselves and their property* when the police cannot be there to assist them. Our Government will reintroduce legislation to clarify and strengthen laws on *self-defence, defence of property and citizen's arrest*.  
[Emphasis added]

We contend that cultural geography, symbolic interactionism, and governmentality provide a useful analytic point of entry. However, in order

to do justice to the complexity of the men's experiences, we also draw on other theoretical lenses. For example, in Chapter 9 we utilize labour theory to make sense of the men's relationships to work and in Chapter 10 we use feminist theory to consider how gender is implicated in carceral and post-carceral relationships.

### **Organization of This Book**

After introducing the men as individuals and as a collective in the next chapter, this book is divided into two sections that reflect the temporality of the ex-prisoner's journey: the first part, entitled "Inside Out," concerns itself with imprisonment, with the process of release (when an individual is discharged from prison), and with the early period in the community (re-entry). The first chapter of this section, "Being In: Negotiating Prison," examines the men's experience of prolonged incarceration. We provide an overview of the correctional system in Canada in order to situate the men's experiences within penal eras – from rehabilitation to the more contemporary risk management characteristic of neo-liberalism.

Using Foucault's (1988) concepts of technologies-of-the-self and technologies-of-domination as an organizing frame, Chapter 4, "Getting Out: Finding a Way to the Street," examines the process of release from prison. We reflect on the negotiation of the penal bureaucracy by prisoners and attend to their resistance of the actuarial techniques that removed their individuality. Once released from prison, the men began adapting to 'free' society. In Chapter 5, "Starting Out: Halfway There," we consider the tumultuous transitional period in the community residential facility when the men are on parole – halfway in and halfway out of prison. We will see that the planning done while in prison becomes muddled once the stark reality of re-establishing life on the outside is confronted.

Part 2 of the book, entitled "Outside In," is about resettlement, which is the period when an individual is able to decide where he will live without daily monitoring by representatives of the state. In much of the American and Canadian literature, the term 'reintegration' is used to connote a similar meaning, but we have rejected this language as it is often bound to ideas of rehabilitation and behaviouristic discourses.

We also use the term resettlement differently than do some British scholars (see, for example, Maruna, Immarigeon, and LeBel 2004), who regularly employ it to refer to all activities and programs from sentencing onward. In order to reflect broader contextual issues surrounding an ex-prisoner's location in the community, our use of resettlement closely mirrors that employed in the literature on political prisoners. More specifically, we contend that the ex-prisoner's ability to return to, and find, a sense of community is bound up with regulatory frameworks and political trends. The paroled men do not simply reintegrate back into their previous communities but, instead, must negotiate, resist, and respond to the penal apparatus and other government agencies. In this way, the notion of resettlement, which is the relocation of individuals after an upheaval of sorts, is particularly apt.

Part 2 is comprised of six chapters, each of which addresses a particular issue encountered as the men seek to settle into society. In order to provide a nuanced analytic lens that renders visible the layers of experience, each of these chapters foregrounds a specific conceptual framework. Chapter 6, "Negotiating 'Freedom': Echoes and Reverberations," focuses on how the men grapple with the nebulous nature of 'freedom.' Drawing heavily on the work of governmentality theorists, we contend that power relations are rendered visible in the lives of these men who consciously engage in self-regulation and responsabilization as they endeavour to remain out of prison.

In some ways, this self-governance requires the individual to reconceive himself as a social citizen rather than as an ex-convict, and in Chapter 7, "Identity: Fractured and Fragmented Selves," the complex nature of both the personal and public persona of the 'ex-prisoner' is examined. This chapter also considers the multitude of identities that are enacted by the men as they endeavour to 'fit in.' In Chapter 8, "Stigma: Negative Expectations and Amazing Reversals," we extend the analysis from the previous chapter in order to address questions about 'marked' identities. We see that the men engage with their expectations of stigmatization and that they develop strategies to manage their discreditable status (Goffman 1963b).

Critical human geographic theory is employed in conjunction with symbolic interactionism in Chapter 9, "Home and Homelessness: Being

In and Out of Place,” in order to explore the ways that place is entangled in the resettlement of formerly incarcerated individuals. We consider how the men’s experiences in various locations sometimes leave them feeling profoundly out of place and, at other times, comfortably in place. Chapter 10, “Work and Finance: Navigating the New Economy,” incorporates labour theory to examine how the men’s struggle to ‘catch up’ plays out in their efforts to be fiscally stable and to forge ‘meaningful’ places for themselves in the wage economy. We end the chapter with reflections on those who ‘opt out’ of this normative expectation.

Chapter 11, “Interactions: Etiquette, Intimacy and Fitting In,” examines the challenges those who have been incarcerated confront as they endeavour to negotiate interpersonal relationships. Using Goffman’s dramaturgical theory as a conceptual point of entry, we consider the way prisoner-generated scripts, and the constraints imposed by state surveillance, undermine their ability to realize social and interpersonal intimacy.

In the conclusion to the book, “Final Thoughts: Understanding Life outside ‘the Rabbit Hole,’” we tie together the theoretical strands to consider on the significance of successful resettlement. Here we reflect on the narrative themes that emerged over and over again and that weave through the book – masculinity and ‘being a man,’ the aspiration for ‘normalcy,’ and the profound need to feel ‘in place.’ This synthesizing chapter is organized along a major theme – struggle – as we contemplate the ways in which struggle has manifested itself for the men in their attempts to find meaningful lives after prison.

We wrap up the text with a brief epilogue in which we reflect on our journey since the research was completed. Like the men we interviewed, we also grappled with the relativity of success. For us, however, the tension pivoted on our ability to put committed scholarship into practice and make the research meaningful to men who were dreaming of, planning for, or on the road to resettling in the community after many years in prison.

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