



EMERALD STUDIES IN CULTURE,
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE ARTS

SENSORY PENALTIES

EXPLORING THE SENSES IN
SPACES OF PUNISHMENT
AND SOCIAL CONTROL

EDITED BY:
KATE HERRITY
BETHANY E. SCHMIDT
JASON WARR

Sensory Penalties

EMERALD STUDIES IN CULTURE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE ARTS

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This series aims to take criminological inquiry in new and imaginative directions, by publishing books that represent all forms of criminal justice from an 'arts' or 'cultural' perspective, and that have something new to tell us about space, place and sensory experience as they relate to forms of justice. Building on emergent interest in the 'cultural', 'autoethnographic', 'emotional', 'visual', 'narrative' and 'sensory' in Criminology, books in the series will introduce readers to imaginative forms of inspiration that deepen our conceptual understanding of the lived experience of punishment and of the process of researching within the criminal justice system, as well as discussing the more well-rehearsed problems of cultural representations of justice.

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Sensory Penalties: Exploring the Senses in Spaces of Punishment and Social Control

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Lastly, a special acknowledgement from Kate ...

And thanks to Bethany and Jason for their patience with me as I struggled to get things done in the wake of my Mum's unexpected death. My chapter here formed part of an ongoing discussion with her, begun in my thesis acknowledgements, which was painful to finish without her. These lessons in love and loss forge all of us too and have a place within these pages.

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Foreword

Alison Liebling

The air itself can become punitive ... can be an agent of slow violence. (Jewkes & Young, this volume)

Reading this creative and engaging book is like being taken on a sensory journey – through Tunisia, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Denmark, Sweden, Japan, North America, Scotland and (less exotically for this reader, perhaps) England. We encounter many different kinds of prisons, asylum and deportation centres, a courtroom, a probation hostel and a city street, learning that violence, trauma and dignity ‘exist and interact together’ (Stanley, this volume) and that ‘sensory knowledge has the capacity to unearth previously overlooked meanings and understandings’ (Schmidt & Jefferson, this volume). This book is the first major publication in a broader project aimed at expanding our moral repertoires and theoretical resources via a more ready attunement to the senses in our work. The authors invite others to do what they are doing – sometimes for the first time – noticing the sounds, smells, feelings and sensations present in the places where we do fieldwork. The result is a remarkably moving, vivid and distinctly human collection of essays on experiences of the carceral.

The book’s origins lie in friendships, intellectual encounters, a PhD or two, and a conference panel at the European Society of Criminology Conference in Sarajevo in 2018. This is the best kind of organically evolved rationale for bringing together a stimulating and well-organised collection of essays which, together, tell a new story, deeply. We inhabit and come to know our world, and the other people in it, in a body that feels, sees, hears, smells, can touch and be touched. Forgetting this, as Rowan Williams (2018) argues, is ‘a philosophical mistake’ (p. 67). Our bodies work intelligently, reading cues, interpreting tones and registering injustice (as I lightly argued in Liebling, 1999). The sensory and the moral work in tandem. What George Eliot calls ‘the vibrations of fellow feeling’ can help us to survive and grow (in prison, but also more broadly; see Liebling, 2020). Their absence or human vibrations of a different kind – ‘tiny nervous blows that are truly the “ultimate unit of consciousness” – can also create anguish, conflict and suffering’ (Liebling, 2015; Raines, 2010, p. 186). That we ‘vibrate’, resonate and ‘know bodily’ (Williams, 2018) constitutes critical aspects of both our experience and our practical intelligence.

Each contribution in this volume has something significant and distinctive to offer. Herrity describes the fluctuating rhythms and sounds of prison life, the process of ‘becoming sufficiently familiar with these rhythms to decipher

and interpret them' and an exceptional officers' familiarity with 'the everyday tune that's normal for here', acquired through deep engagement over time (this volume). She shows how prisoners 'read the sound' of what is happening around them. Warr evokes the 'trappedness' and fear of being in a cell during a fire (or flood, or pandemic) – features of imprisonment we should not evade. 'Text ... flattens sensory experience', he argues, obscuring our understanding, limiting our dialogue and critique. We need 'vividness' to fully appreciate 'embodied captivity' (Warr, this volume).

In a beautiful series of passages by Stanley (truncated here), she describes her extensive encounter with a man who dies in a prison hospice:

My initial encounter with Daniel in the prison yard would prove to be the first in an intense journey he would invite me to share, an expedition through the extremes of punishment in disciplinary segregation to the humanity enacted in prison hospice ... the *feel* of Daniel's life and death illuminating brutality and beauty, indignity and intimacy, in a contemporary prison medical unit ... what is framed as institutional care may take on the form of harm, thus illuminating 'repression and compassion [as] profoundly linked'. (Stanley, this volume)

Other chapters illustrate the value of 'moving with' our research participants across space and time (Weegels, this volume), within and beyond the prison, seeing how 'mind-body-and-environment' operate together, dynamically, almost rhythmically. The position of 'observant participator' helps to make more visible concealed dimensions of power in operation. Canning's account of 'being lost in the field' – emotionally and politically as well as geographically – is powerful and instructive as she describes personal encounters in Denmark's barely known 'triangle' of asylum, immigration and deportation centres.

An evocative chapter on a Japanese prison by Jewkes and Young raises the question of differences in our perceptions of, or susceptibility to, the atmospheric and affective dimensions of prisons. Reading it brought to my mind that remarkable scene in Rex Bloomstein's powerful (and deeply sensory) film, *KZ* (German shorthand for concentration camp) where a young schoolgirl faints. She is one of a party visiting Mauthausen in Austria as tourists. They are listening soberly to the deliberately brash young male tourist guide, shaven headed and dressed almost as an SS officer, describing the unimaginable details of the atrocities committed there. Her classmates are concerned and try to help. They more vaguely grasp the reasons for her collapse. Why her? Does she know something the others don't? Her body certainly does: it *caves in* to distress. The bleak and unavoidable message of humanity's cruelty to humanity is transmitted directly and starkly, via her body, outwards to all. She reappears later in the film, talking about the visit and what happened to her: 'I fainted ... I could imagine the suffering', she says. An older tour guide is destroyed by his work, and the memories evoked by it. He hears footsteps. He has bad dreams. He is 'obsessed by the place', possessed by it.

In their chapter, Jewkes and Young describe the ‘visible and audible absence of the prisoners in most parts of the prison’, explaining how

absence-and-presence is evoked through a range of social, spatial and sensory practices which, in the case of the Japanese prison’s atmosphere, reinforces an impression of human sequestration, withdrawal, reduction, diminishment and silencing.

What is not there (said, acknowledged) can haunt us as much as what is there. The absence of sound, if we notice it, can move us. In a discussion with Rex about *KZ*, which I found I had to watch again as I was reading this manuscript, we agreed that the austerity of his film technique is precisely what makes it so powerful. There is no music; there are no other effects; the scenes are direct, unvarnished, cruel. Until later, when the personal stories of the tour guides are introduced, and they become more human: their grandfathers may have committed war crimes. They wanted to make these atrocities imaginable. We talked about sound and the senses, about sparseness, absence and presence, whilst I was writing this foreword. Very few books make these kinds of conversations happen.

As well as getting to know the participants in each contribution viscerally, each chapter also carries glimpses of the personalities of its authors. I felt this most overtly when reading Ian O’Donnell’s evocative and humble accounts of his encounters with local food, social rules and an iron roof in an Ethiopian prison (although a major disturbance in that prison after the fieldwork visits suggests that his description of its peacefulness may need revisiting). This intimacy with the authors is part of this book’s appeal, but the real contribution is the way in which ‘The Everything Else’ (Smoyer, this volume) – sights, sounds, smells, sensations – normally omitted from research accounts, brings ‘human syntax’ to life.

This book constitutes an intellectual as well as methodological project, with much relevance beyond criminology. Even the references are more than usually, refreshingly, ‘off the beaten track’. The editors suggest that we are experiencing something of a ‘sensory turn’ in social research and theorising more generally, perhaps linked to the growing dissatisfactions of individualised conceptions of experience, and with inadequate forms of ‘disembodied’ knowledge, including concepts of freedom. Rowan Williams has captured this argument in his book, *Being Human*. Here he draws on (and simplifies) Iain McGilchrist’s call for ‘larger horizons’:

Iain McGilchrist’s *The Master and his Emissary* offers an analysis of the history of Western culture in the last few centuries, based on the assumption that we are ... dangerously, misunderstanding the nature of our mental life in our current culture ... While it’s clearly an oversimplification to think that the two hemispheres of the brain work in isolation ... the fact remains that the two hemispheres privilege certain kinds of thinking ... and mapping

of the world we're in. The left brain, which is generally the more analytic, pattern-making, problem-solving bit of the brain, is a crucial element in identifying what specific challenges face us and what specific responses are needed. It's reactive ... something that breaks down into smaller rather than expanding to larger patterns ... it's one of the things that makes us the competent agents we are, people who know how to do things with things ... The right brain, on the other hand, which is less associated with certain kinds of linguistic skills, builds larger models; it sees larger horizons, it makes connections that are not just argumentative or functional or practical. It scans the horizon, it risks putting phenomena together in what might be unexpected patterns ... the left brain is the 'emissary' in McGilchrist's terms: it does the routine work for the larger pattern-building enterprise of the right brain. When things are going badly wrong, the left brain ... takes over in ways that end up shrinking our horizons, reducing our capacity to formulate and understand the very problems that we're out to solve. (Williams, 2018, pp. 49–51)

McGilchrist argues that the left hemisphere has gradually 'colonised our experience', usurping the 'more contextual, humane, systemic, holistic but relatively tentative and inarticulate right hemisphere' (his book's argument is neatly summarised and discussed in Rowson & McGilchrist, 2013). Mary Midgley (2010) calls this 'left-hemisphere chauvinism'. The right hemisphere is, paradoxically, bigger and heavier in all social mammals; it sees more (Rowson & McGilchrist, 2013) and 'is truer to what is' (Rowson & McGilchrist, 2013, p. 28). To neglect it is culturally and morally stifling. Without it, things we human beings need (like mercy, touch, recognition) go missing in the world (Davis, 2017, p. 393; and all that has been written on the new penology, including Liebling, 2011). Midgley (2010) summarises McGilchrist's argument as follows:

The encouragement of precise, categorical thinking at the expense of background vision and experience – an encouragement which, from Plato's time on, has flourished to such impressive effect in European thought – has now reached a point where it is seriously distorting both our lives and our thought. Our whole idea of what counts as scientific or professional has shifted towards literal precision – towards elevating quantity over quality and theory over experience – in a way that would have astonished even the 17th-century founders of modern science.

This is becoming a somewhat familiar critique, at least in some circles (George Eliot, my great guide, shares this 'refusal to adopt the quantitative view of human anguish', 2015, p. 299). I am very much on the side of integrated attention and thinking in our research lives, as well as in the world more generally: the kind of 'deep human regard' or 'ministry of presence' that ex-prison

chaplain, David [Beedon \(2020\)](#), describes so powerfully in his work with imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners. His account of ‘somatic wisdom’, or bodily sensations, in his own research is deeply insightful. Distressing interviews can also be, at one level, ‘beautiful encounters’ (p. 151) if we manage to connect, respond and even, for a moment, collude, or build, ‘affective solidarity’ (Collinson Scott & McNeill, this volume). Insight requires affective nuance, depth, perspective and engagement. Parts belong to a whole. Human beings must use all of their senses in order to make sense of, and navigate their way in, the universe.

We could stretch this argument further. Human beings must also use the senses to live morally or to work competently and compassionately in criminal justice professions (for examples of the opposite of these, see Reeves, this volume, and Flower, this volume). Zenon [Bankowski \(2013\)](#) argued that teaching lawyers artistic methods of movement (effectively, dance) developed their moral sensitivity (see Bankowski & Del Mar, 2013). Movement ‘brings us down to earth’, ‘shows us that we are vulnerable beings’, that our bodies are ‘weak and finite’. ‘The text’ (here, the law) is never enough: imagination is required in any particular application of a rule, as everyday experience teaches us. Respect for persons, for example, when we negotiate space with someone else’s space is, like so much of our moral life, ‘embodied’:

Ethics and ideologies are inscribed on and through bodies. Ethical virtue will depend upon bodily dispositions. How can an act be charitable when it is done stiffly with an angry face? ([Bankowski, 2013](#), paraphrasing Detmold, 1984)

The methodological and political are intertwined in the way we pay, or fail to pay, attention:

Attention is a form of discernment; seeing what people are saying when they are hurt, seeing conditions of injustice ... It is a way of ‘reading others’. ([Bankowski, 2013](#), p. 17, drawing on Simone Weil)

Time and patience are required (*attendre* – to wait for, or expect) in order to read the world. Thought about this way, attention is an ‘antidote to force’ ([Rozelle Stone & Davis, 2018](#)). It is, almost, reverence.

As someone who has always ‘thought with my body’, who has advocated the use of emotions as data and who supports the development and practice of ‘intelligent intuition’, as well as deep human regard, I was already well disposed to this sensory project. Reading this book took me further. It helps us build a larger and more nuanced picture of what it is to live, struggle or die, in spaces of punishment and social control. It adds significantly to our collective struggle to engage, observe and know.

The overall project, to which this book belongs, includes a blog (*Sensory Criminology*) which makes it a living mission. I am delighted to recommend it,

and I hope that it represents the signalling of a ‘sensory revolution’ in social and criminological research.

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Introduction: Welcome to the Sensorium

Kate Herrity, Bethany E. Schmidt and Jason Warr

The aim of this book is to invigorate a conversation about the role of sensory experience in the production of knowledge. Despite its resolute interdisciplinarity, criminology has lagged behind other areas of the social sciences in taking the ‘sensory’ seriously as both a source of knowledge production and means of empirical investigation. Our sister disciplines, however, have embraced the instructive potentials of foregrounding the sensory in recent decades (see [Cox, Irving, & Wright, 2016](#); [Howes & Classen, 2014](#); [Pink, 2015](#)). It is not a nascent conversation, nor methodology, but one that has both heritage and legitimacy. Anthropology, in particular, has a well-established history of including an examination of sensory experience in ethnographic practice. Whilst ethnography has enjoyed a renaissance in criminology in recent years, this has not been accompanied by greater engagement with the potential of sensory experience as a source of insight. We contend that turning the criminological imagination ([Young, 2011](#)) towards those experiences – which occur beyond the criminological gaze – opens up both old and new realms of inquiry.

We wish to return to those first-order epistemological questions: How do we know? What is it that we are knowing? [Serres \(2008\)](#) argues that we are sensorial creatures who inhabit a world in which we are bombarded with sensory data. Researchers, as human beings, cannot divorce themselves from the sensescapes – physical spaces which impose and evince sensory experience (see [Field, 2005](#)) – they occupy and navigate. Nor can they evade the ways interpretation of that sensory data fundamentally shape our understanding of those spaces and of the meaning they hold for participants. We know the world first, not a priori; not from some system of logical reasoning but through our sensory interactions with the environment and with others ([Serres, 2008](#); see also [Gibson, 1966](#)). This is where our first questions originate. Yet this understanding is often subjugated, by predominantly Western and andocentric forms of scientific idealism, which impose a visual reading of ‘accepted’ scientific methods ([Classen, 1997](#)). [Rosenfeld \(2011\)](#), discussing the historical importance of concepts of voice, the ear, and common sense (the mechanism by which it was thought we could regulate the morass of raw sensory input we are subject to), makes a similar point when she argues that this fundamentally [Aristotelian \(2012\)](#) perspective was, until recently, forgotten or subsumed by other traditions of science. Further, as [Grosz \(1993, p. 187\)](#) argues, the ‘crisis of reason’ – or fixation on rationality – has privileged the purely conceptual or mental over the corporeal:

it is a consequence of the inability of Western knowledges to conceive their own processes of (material) production, processes that simultaneously rely on and disavow the role of the body.

What does excavating beneath these layered assumptions of understanding to return to our first principles mean for criminological inquiry?

Foregrounding the sensory, by thinking about sounds, smells, taste, and touch, and utilising these sources of information as a mechanism for understanding, presents a new way of exploring phenomena which has long been the focus for criminological inquiry. This heightens awareness to a range of facets of experience – of crime, of punishment, of victimisation, of state power, of harm, of control – that we have not accounted for in our classical and foundational texts. The way that people physically and sensorially experience the realities with which we are concerned, and what such embodied experiences mean for those people, we believe, presents a significant gap in the literature. This represents an opportunity for us to explore anew, to revisit, to re-examine our assumptions about the criminological world. It also allows us to widen the scope of our investigations of phenomena, settings, and events; an opportunity to expand our collective criminological imagination.

The Background to this Collection

This book began life as a panel at the 2018 European Society of Criminology annual conference in Sarajevo. Inspired by the ethnographic work of Kate Herrity into the affects and meaning of sounds in prison (Herrity, 2015, 2019), the editors convened a panel entitled ‘The Sensual Prison’. Our purpose was to explore wider sensory experiences of prison life and what such a focus could tell us about sociological and criminological thinking. In tandem, we wanted to expand beyond our Western-centric sensibilities into less represented sensory landscapes. All three of us are qualitative prison researchers, which has shaped the focus of this edited volume. This book’s contributing authors and much of our attention remain anchored in sites of confinement and in the global north. However, we have aimed to reach across fields, global divides, and methodological practices. We hope this collection serves as a starting point, and with an invitation perhaps, for an answering volume that further explores the sensory in other contexts. The conference panel began a conversation amongst some of the contributors, particularly Fergus McNeill to whom we owe credit for this book’s title, about the sensory nature of prisons, processes of social control, and how penalty can be encoded into the senses evinced within spaces of punishment and other sites and forms of surveillance. From that conversation emerged the idea of *Sensory Penalties*.

The title itself is a respectful nod to Pat Carlen’s (2008) seminal edited collection *Imaginary Penalties*. Various sociological and criminological thinkers sought to understand how overarching ideological, rhetorical, symbolic, and political conceptions of penal policy become constructed in the minds of those responsible for the operation of punitive edifices and thus embodied in penal

governance. Likewise, the aim of this book is to refocus attention from our ocular-centric way of thinking, to capture the fuller contexts in which these ideologically, symbolically, socially, and politically informed structures of governance are embodied, manifested, and experienced. We aim to utilise the ‘sensory’ as a theoretical and analytical mechanism for our understanding and investigation of such edifices and practices. By so doing, we move closer to the way the world *is* experienced, not as discrete packages of information but as a constant deluge of lived-working-body and sensory input which we sift and prioritise to make manageable (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009).

The use of this concept also echoes Garland and Young’s (1983) *The Power to Punish*. Like them, we believe that in order to truly understand the construction, intent, purpose, practice, and experience of structures of penal governance, we must move beyond the traditional penological canon to find what lies beneath. Only then can we understand both their composition and impact. We also share their explicit emphasis on the sociological as well as their contention that to elevate one aspect of the expansive apparatus of punishment to the exclusion of others is to risk distorting analysis and to obscure the complex relationships between different parts of the penal whole. They eloquently argue that:

The very contestability of social science suggests that its objects of knowledge are not simple reflections of naturally occurring events, but that social science creates its own objects by a process of theoretical and ... practical relevances and reflections. (Garland & Young, 1983, p. 2)

These conceptions provide our theoretical anchor. *Sensory Penalties*, therefore, has three interlocking themes. First, that the political, symbolic, and ideological are not only inherent to places and processes of punishment and social control but are encoded in the sensorial outputs and transmissions occurring within those places and processes. Second, that places and processes of punishment and social control are experienced sensorially by those subject to them, those who work within them, and those who are researching them. And third, that in order to fully understand and theorise about penalties, and places and processes of punishment and social control, we need to account for these multifarious sensorial experiences and their effects. We contend that penalty has an inherent sensory component. Sound provides a means of demonstrating this. Listening to the prison environment makes certain operations of power audible, and therefore symbolic violence more tangible, in ways which are eluded by a preoccupation with what can be seen. Hearing the jangle of an officer’s keys, for example, communicates different symbolic information to different parties within a penal setting. It can communicate the deprivations of liberty and autonomy, and of powerlessness, to a person locked within the prison, yet act as a comforting reminder of authority, and presence of colleagues and ‘back-up’, to a prison officer. The symbolic power of carcerality and indeed the wider facets of penalty are here embedded within the aural experience of a jangling key chain (Herity, 2019; see also Jewkes & Young, this volume, on the absence and presence of

sound in prisons). Thus, by honing our sociological attention to the ‘mundane, everyday sensory experience’ (Rhys-Taylor, 2013, p. 394), we are able to move towards a more robust scholarship that operates within a greater ‘democracy of the senses’ (Berendt, 1992, p. 28; Rhys-Taylor, 2013, p. 394).

The extension of sensory inquiry into the criminological sphere is informed and inspired by an established body of literature on the anthropology of the senses. According to Pink (2009, p. 15), this work is characterised by three main issues: it explores the question of the relationship between sensory perception and culture, it engages with questions concerning the status of vision and its relationship to the other senses, and it demands a form of reflexivity that goes beyond the interrogation of how culture is ‘written’ to examine the sites of embodied knowing. Low (2012, p. 271) further notes that ‘sensory studies argue for the senses as social, revealing important insights pertaining to selfhood, culture, and social relations’. He also points out how sensory exploration confronts power imbalances in who produces knowledge and which knowledge is privileged:

A common point of departure in sensory writings deals with the imperialism of sight and/or the Western pentad sensory model that is critiqued as both Eurocentric and limiting in exploring various other sensory orders across different societies and sensory hierarchies. (Low, 2018, n.p.)

These fundamental themes – power, representation, identity, social relations, culture, knowledge hierarchies – neatly map on to the intentions of *Sensory Penalties*, as well as other more recent movements in our discipline, like southern and global criminology (Carrington, Hogg, Scott, & Sozzo, 2018; Travers, 2017) and attention to criminological decolonisation (Blagg & Anthony, 2019; Moosavi, 2019). Our aim is to disrupt epistemological assumptions about how criminological knowledge is produced, to consider the implications which arise from this for how we understand processes and practices of research, and to examine how different modalities of sensory engagement (beyond the visual) interact with the way people experience, and make sense of, their environments (Pink, 2009, p. 16).

Sensing and Sensemaking

We recognise that the inclusion of the sensory into our research and analysis can represent a leap of the criminological and sociological imagination. In the development of this book, the editors faced difficulties in communicating the relevance, importance, and practice of including the sensory in accounts of the field. Part of the problem here, as highlighted by Cox et al. (2016) and Howes and Classen (2014), is that our language and disciplines have been constructed through very particular conceptions of the world in which the sensory has been relegated to an amorphous, intangible, and unmeasurable realm. But we do not experience the world singularly. Our impressions of the environments we inhabit are constructed from a panoply of senses that arrive, not discreetly packaged but all of a sudden and altogether (Butler, 2015;

Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009). This fits ill with a ‘scientific’ tradition that has attempted to divide, describe, analyse, classify – and, crucially, observe – the physical and social world into discernible and distinguishable packets of information. Difficulty and hesitance in attempting to decipher what we mean by ‘instinct’ in the field offers a prime example.

Efforts to render this aspect of ‘knowing’ more tangible amplify this point. ‘Instinct’ as a process of situated response and adaptation in the context of research lies somewhere between feeling – detached and differentiated from emotion, the interpretation of physical sensation – and ‘sensemaking’ – the act of making sense, incorporating both the situated nature of knowledge and its relation to bodily experience (de Rond, Holeman, & Howard-Grenville, 2019). Yet we hesitate to explicitly refer to this facet of knowledge because it is too indistinct, too imprecise, and too ‘touchy feely’ (see Paterson, 2009). This reluctance highlights two interconnected problems. First, the largely objectivist ontology and positivistic echoes of our discipline’s past have imposed a lasting legacy on what is ‘legitimate’ scientific discussion. Instinct, with its relation to feelings, and sensemaking, is too ‘soft’ and vague to chime with this ‘objectified’ view. The second relates to the tangible and intangible nature of sensory data which informs our interactions with, and interpretations of, our environments (Mason & Davies, 2009). A link between the senses and instinct has been acknowledged as long ago as mid-nineteenth century (Bain, 1864). Whilst Bain explicitly focuses on the functions of mind and physiology, he notes that instinct and reflex are principally bodily reactions to sensory stimuli. What we think of, or refer to, as instinct is often the unconscious, or ‘common sense’ (Rosenfeld, 2011), processing of sensory data. Yet even in such an interdisciplinary field as ours, where old ontologies and epistemologies have been subjected to sustained critical revision since the 1970s, such discussions and inclusions invite hesitation. Why?

We are unused to utilising the language necessary for thorough sensory analysis and, as Carpenter and McLuhan (1960) note, lack the vocabulary for doing so. Our sensory experience is constructed from both discrete and overlapping sensory modalities (Keeley, 2002), which are frequently collapsed into a singular understanding, or interpretation, of our world. If we consider rain – interaction with rain involves touch, smell, sight, hearing, temperature, etc. – yet we reduce this into a singular message about the weather conditions. Criminology has neither been used to discussing these facets of experience in a way that ‘sounds’ suitably scientific nor assimilating this into our wider understanding of our discipline. One example of that is the initial hostile response that colleagues (two of whom are featured in this volume) received from reviewers over a paper which explored the notion of ‘sensing prison environments’ (Martin, Jefferson, & Bandyopadhyay, 2014). The reviews seemed to impose an intangibility to the discussion of ‘sensing’, which belied the rigorous empiricism that underpinned the work. Though rarely documented in formal ways, researchers often rely upon, and trust, their instincts in the field: we ‘know’ when something does not feel right and we can ‘sense’ a shift in mood or atmosphere. Liebling et al. (under review) describe how instinct played an imperative role in their team ethnography and their interaction

with the field, which speaks to Cox's (2018, p. 225; see also Merleau-Ponty, 2012) assertion that sensory perception requires a process of active, intentional interpretation:

Practiced intuition, grounded in expertise, played an important role in our research. Whilst social scientific methods provided a scaffold, judgement, feeling and instinct guided us through each decision, or each day. It is not always possible to distinguish between 'practical consciousness' (built up experiential knowledge) and good instincts, but a capacity to read a situation and know what it calls for, drawing on a wide range of information beyond 'scholarship', is essential ... We know much of what we know (for example, in a prison, that a riot is brewing, that violence is in the air, or that someone is upset) non-cognitively. Paying attention to the moods and sensitivities of those around us, the unspoken sub-text, required keeping the pathway to our intuitions or gut instincts unblocked. Being both receptive *and* questioning and checking our readings against those of others in the team, produced better readings of complex situations than being certain, or slavishly following all the methodological rules.

Neglecting to acknowledge instincts, or be open to the senses, is born from an apprehension to incorporate the sensory in the manner in which we engage with the world and an insensitivity to our collective epistemological history. Embodied cognition, or the recognition of the body as a knowledge source, reflects 'the long-standing Cartesian mind-body dualism in Western culture that privileges thought over the supposedly separate and lower functions of the body' (Cox, 2018, p. 223). But, we do not think separately from the state of our body. What do we miss or overlook when we dismiss, ignore, or deny the senses? How do our researcher bodies perceive sensory stimuli related to pain, punishment, or deprivation? And how do the bodies of those inhabiting spaces of confinement or social control experience these environments? These questions are critical for considering how the sensory interacts with penalty.

This brings us to reflexivity and positionality. Falling into observational description and the pitfalls of colonial anthropology, rather than applying robust critical analysis, are hazards in sensorially-informed criminological research when employing a Western-centric ocular lens. Having to look beyond surface-level explanations and descriptions of places and processes of punishment and social control, to how they are experienced and what that means for subjected individuals forces us deeper into analysis. It also demands a new or more attuned reflexivity. Customarily we do not account for our existence as physical entities when we research the places we do. However, we recognise that taking into account our positionality, and considering its impact on our research assumptions and the effect that may have on those with whom we conduct research, is an essential element of conducting qualitative research (Hopkins, 2007). We need to consider too what our sensory positionality is and the effects of that on our research (Pink,

2015). For example, in Imai's (2010) ethnographic study conducted in the alleyways of Tokyo, she notes that whilst sharing food, the smells of the cooking and the taste of the food evoked very different sensations and memories for her than it did those with whom she was sharing the experience (see also O'Donnell, this volume). Their sensory experience was enshrouded in the particulars of their nostalgia and the two became combined to produce distinctly different experiences. However, it took some practice for her to begin to negotiate her own sensory positionality in such a way that it did not temper the experience of her respondents nor cloud her interpretation of their experiences. If we are to include the sensory in the exploration of the criminological, then we need to become much more practised in this process. This is especially true if we are to investigate the sensescapes of places and processes of punishment and social control where compounded vulnerabilities exist and are maintained.

A further point is raised by Imai's (2010) work: the relationship between sensory experience and memory. Herrity (2019) notes a collapse of time and traversing of space in the evocation of memory, which both amplifies and informs sensorial experience (see also Low, 2015). This requires us to move beyond a superficial understanding of subjective positionality in the interpretation of the sensory (like the variant understanding of the jangling key chain mentioned above) to a need to consider the role and interplay of prior history, memory, recall, and the sensorial present (Sparkes, 2009). In this regard, we cannot divorce our sensory experience from our memory, nor memory from our experience of the sensory (Seremetakis, 1994). Nevertheless, all those engaged in smelling a rose would accept that they are indeed smelling the same thing. Here we see an overlapping of seemingly competing ontologies, but ones that perhaps can be reconciled (Jackson, 2004), to some degree, by considering both these realist and constructivist positions. The traditional hard and fast disjunctions between these two positions or epistemologies are blurred by the consideration of, amongst other foci, the sensory (Cupchik, 2001). This has particular pertinence in the realm of penalty. In Canning's chapter (this volume), she highlights how prior histories (of hers and her participants) and trauma of conflict shape the experiences of people held in an immigration detention centre that borders lands utilised for military exercises. The constructed and the real here overlap and inform one another. However, not only does that history fundamentally shape individual experience of immigration detention but also how past trauma is reawakened and re-experienced in the present each time they are subjected to the sounds of shells and mortar. That they are subjected to such re-awakenings tells us yet something else about the nature of the sensory and how it is utilised in places of punishment.

It is a contention of this book that sensory penalties – and more broadly a sensory criminology – take us beyond the phenomenological. Though the individuals present in that sensorial moment are experiencing the moment differently, they are all situated in the same space: the same feels, smells, sounds, tastes, and sights exist and are emitted in the same ways but are interpreted and perceived differently. A prison, for instance, communicates particular forms of penalty through its sensory signifiers, but the interpretation of those experiences is as potentially

varied as those who inhabit and work in those spaces. As Sykes (1958) notes, there are as many prisons as there are prisoners. However, if we are to have a sensory criminology, we must accommodate both of these convergent and divergent realities in order to account for the experience of penalty and carceral life.

This phenomenological ‘problem’ is not a new one (Giorgi, 2006). The distinct challenges with phenomenology have been recounted in depth elsewhere (see Farber, 2017; Noë, 2007) and are beyond the scope of this Introduction. What we contend here is that a focus on the sensory can allow us to avoid some of the more pernicious ontological traps associated with phenomenological approaches. A focus on the sensory, as with a focus on the symbolic, invites a bridging between subjective and common experience. In this regard, we arrive at meaning, and interpret our realities, through social intersubjective processes (Prus, 1996). Attending to sensory aspects of social experience facilitates an explicit connection between the subjectivity and commonality of experience, traversing these boundaries to arrive at shared meaning and understanding. This is specifically important as part of the qualitative research process. Taking into account one’s own sensory positionality, not just in design and analysis but in the field, makes a virtue of sensory subjectivity. Whilst it may not be transcended, it can be made explicit as a source of social learning. Sensory experience can be utilised as a means of inviting comparison with research participants – what am I hearing, what are you hearing, what am I smelling, this means *X* to me what does it mean for you? This enables the researcher to explore the means by which those sensory experiences acquire a social meaning. This turns positionality into a research tool and focuses us on the intersubjectivity of sensory experience as a means of uncovering both the subjective and shared experience of a particular sensescape. For instance, in the chapter by Schmidt and Jefferson (this volume), the overwhelming sensorium of extreme overcrowded conditions in a Tunisian prison could be elucidated only through the shared experience and intersubjective comparison that it allowed. What we see here is that sensory criminology, and a sensory epistemology more broadly, not only has the potential to collapse the distance between the subjectivities of individuals but also the now, as well as the pasts of those individuals.

A ‘Sensory Turn’ in Criminology?

Despite recognition that prisons ‘are peculiar places from a sensory perspective, managing to deny and deprive while, sometimes simultaneously, overloading the senses’ (Jewkes, 2014, p. 389), these sensorial accounts have not been well documented, or explored in depth, and even less so with other forms of social control or sites of confinement. The exception has been in the significant growth and interest in visual criminology, born out of cultural criminology, which situates crime and crime control in the context of cultural dynamics. Over a decade ago, Hayward (2009, p. 12) looked at ‘mediascapes’ and called for ‘a new methodological orientation towards the visual that is capable of encompassing meaning, affect, situation, symbolic power and efficiency, and spectacle in the same “frame”’. Not long after, Carrabine (2012, p. 463) advocated for criminology ‘to rethink its relations with the ascendant power of spectacle’, in part because of the

limitations of, and ethical questions around, visual representations of harm and crime. In more recent writings, visual criminologists have begun to consider the expansion of sensory engagement in sociological research by giving ‘primacy to the embodied, haptic, sonic, spatial, temporal, visceral – modes of phenomenological immersion and immediacy’ with accompanying ‘methods that are in tune with the social world’ (Brown & Carrabine, 2019, pp. 202–203).

Criminological scholarship related to the senses is now beginning to flourish, as researchers are attuning themselves to the sensorial features of detention, deprivation, control, and power, by incorporating new (or refined) methodological and theoretical approaches: Russell and Rae (2019) use ‘earwitnessing’ to explore how audible accounts of confinement shed light on the temporal and spatial aspects of carceral experiences; Cooper, Cook, and Bilby (2018) examine residents’ sensory perceptions of neighbourhood brothels; Hemsworth (2016) considers the atmospheric, haptic, and emotive potential of sound in prisons; Millie (2019) investigates yarn bombing as ‘a crime of the senses’; and Seal and O’Neill’s *Imaginative Criminology* (2019) brings forms of sensory ethnography to the study of places of crime, justice, and punishment, to highlight a few. ‘Sensory criminology’ is starting to be mainstreamed with the help of McClanahan and South (2020, p. 3), who have provided a convincing argument for ‘heightened criminological attention to the non-visual senses’ and how these ‘might uncover new sites and modes of knowledge and a more richly affective criminology’. It is on the heels of these pioneers that we present *Sensory Penalties*, a volume we hope will advance our thinking and understanding of how the sensory intersects with various forms of state and social control.

We have intentionally selected contributors who have an ethnographic sensibility. That is, researchers who have spent long periods of immersive presence in their respective fields. We sought to include authors of varying backgrounds, experience, and sites of research in order to maximise quality, range, and diversity. We encouraged contributions to sensorially provoke and evoke and creatively portray research and reflections that have typically been marginalised or left behind in fieldwork notes. We deliberately prohibited the use of visuals in the book, as an attempt to urge authors to find a ‘language’ and way of communicating that effectually described and represented their work and encounters. This is not, and has not, been a simple nor easy task. As noted above, the ontological and epistemological foundations of our discipline have, to some degree, militated against this process. Many of us have had to challenge and overcome not only our disciplinary training but also the limitations of the ‘scientific’ language we have been inculcated into using. Forging a path towards a new sensory epistemology in criminology has led to a degree of academic discomfort. A necessary discomfort and one that will hopefully reap rewards for those who come next – those who will help ground a sensory criminology into our shared criminological imagination.

As a new area of study within criminology, we believe it is necessary to frame our research in relevant and applicable ways that will be accessible to readers. Therefore, we have organised this book into four sections, each with a thematic focus, but all with a blend of methodological, empirical, and reflective components. In the first section, *Making Sense of the Sensory*, the authors consider and

contemplate creative (or less traditional) methodologies, including forms of data collection and interpretation, and engagement with participants and the field. In Kate Herrity's opening chapter, she explores the processes and practices of social control and order and how these are interwoven with the rhythms of life in the pub and the prison. The sensory experiences of these seemingly disparate spaces of pleasure and punishment, she argues, offer a means of understanding the maintenance of and disruption to orderly life. Jason Warr then presents a visceral account of how the concept of 'civic death' is encoded within the sensorial experience of being locked in a prison cell during a fire. He writes that the experience of enclosure, of trappedness, is a sensorial one in which the symbolic components of penalty are communicated to the incarcerated. Next, Jo Collinson Scott and Fergus McNeill showcase their use of two novel methods for exploring and representing criminal justice imposed forms of supervision of people within the community. Framed with debates about 'imaginary penalties' and 'counter-visual criminology', they recount what an engagement between criminology, creative writing, and music can offer both academic and public understandings of supervision as a relatively invisible and inaudible form of punishment. Daina Stanley concludes this section by taking us to a maximum-security prison infirmary in the United States where her ethnographic work followed the journeys of imprisoned men at the end of life, and the prisoners who care for them. She critically reflects on her bodily engagement within this unique space, with a specific emphasis on how the role of her hands and touch intersected with the carceral 'deathscape'.

The second section focuses on empirical research experiences and findings, as they relate to *Sensing the Field*. Bethany Schmidt and Andrew Jefferson explore prison life in post-revolution Tunisia where stark, overcrowded conditions are juxtaposed with a reform agenda oriented towards the arts and creativity. They contemplate the contradictory tendency of prisons to be over- and understimulating, sensorially vibrant and sensorially oppressive. In Julienne Weegels' chapter, she argues that the management of (public) secrets is central to understanding the sensory qualities of the power that the hybrid Nicaraguan penal regime exerts. In particular, she notes how this regime is (re)produced precisely through an imposed and partial muting of the senses – the rendering unspeakable, un-seeable, and un-heard of the violence that is deployed to keep it in place. Carla Reeves' contribution expands the penalty sphere by describing the research she carried out in a transitional housing unit for those on probation who were recently released from prison. She details how becoming embedded within the physicality of the research site allowed her to feel some of the same impacts of the constraints of the architecture and interpersonal power relations on her sense of being that the residents also experienced. In the last chapter of this section, Jennifer Peirce describes her study of pre- and post-reform prisons in the Dominican Republic, which highlights the distinct sensory manifestations between old and new spaces. She pays particular attention to the spatial, corporeal, and aural differences between the two prison designs and what this tells us about everyday order, power, and surveillance.

The third section, *Subverting the Senses*, challenges conventional notions of data and data collection by disrupting the sensory order and forms of sensemaking

in and out of the field. Victoria Canning's chapter explores the role of activism in ethnography by focussing on the production of a confinement continuum through three key spaces in Denmark: an asylum centre, a deportation centre, and a closed immigration detention centre. In grappling with the contrast between seeking sanctuary and safety, and the limits of everyday freedom, this chapter addresses her own sensory unease in the very existence of such spaces. The last chapter in this section, from Lisa Flower, takes us into a Swedish courtroom. She demonstrates how the emotional landscape of the courthouse can be mapped out by paying attention to the sensual experiences that are shaped by the law's overarching emotional regime aimed at triumphing the absence of emotional involvement in judicial processes.

The final section, *Sensory Reflections*, is comprised of reflective pieces that explore the researcher's embodied and personal accounts of 'sensing' whilst in the field. Yvonne Jewkes and Alison Young present a sensorially attuned narrative located within a Japanese corrections facility. Their chapter draws out the many aesthetic and atmospheric similarities that Kyoto Prison shares with other prisons, whilst highlighting other aspects of its regime, operation, and daily life that are quite distinct from those found elsewhere. Amy Smoyer then shares 'the everything else' – a series of vignettes extracted from fieldwork notes that reflect the tensions between activist and researcher, the formal and informal, and the raw encounters experienced *in situ*. Ian O'Donnell's contribution relies exclusively on primary data generated by his eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin with a view to providing a thick description of a previously unexamined carceral world in Ethiopia. He argues that sensory experiences can be building blocks for shared understandings. Finally, Alistair Fraser explores 'the street' as an affective atmosphere. He contends that the street represents some of the most vital components of the criminological imagination – a site of danger and protection, crime and culture, art and politics – though has largely been represented as an inert backdrop. He aims to refocus the criminological gaze to the street itself; exploring the unique intersections of bodies and buildings, codes and regulations, movement and stacticity, that together create a unique atmospheric dynamic.

This book is not designed to be an ethnographic 'how-to' in terms of researching places of punishment or processes of social control, though in charting sensory experiences whilst doing research we go some way to reducing the gap between textbook accounts and the reality of navigating 'the field'. There have been a number of recent texts focussing on this aspect of criminological research, most significantly Drake, Earle, and Sloan's (2015) *The Palgrave Handbook of Prison Ethnography*. Nor is this book designed to be a how-to-do sensory ethnography, as Pink's (2015) *Doing Sensory Ethnography* is a comprehensive dive into practice. This book is also not merely a reflective account of the immersive, embodied, and sensory experience of researchers in the field of prison studies. Rather, the collection is designed to offer an accessible entryway into exploring how penalty is encoded in differing facets of sensory experience, what it means for knowledge production in penalty more generally, and to take sensory data seriously. We want readers to come away from this book with an understanding of how paying attention to sensory modalities, or categories (Pink, 2015), can

help us to explore the rather hidden and strange world of prisons, punishment, processes of control, and the concepts and ideologies on which they are built.

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