

volunteer taught college classes—is all done by “selected inmates.” The pay is horrible: the Prison Policy Initiative identifies that the average minimum pay of a prisoner per day is \$0.33 and the maximum is \$4.73.¹ But in such a constrained environment, these jobs are often coveted because it means time out of a cell to move around, talk with others, and sometimes, as many identify, be treated as a colleague.

These sets of workers assure the business as usual of the carceral state. State and federal agencies have largely stripped funding for art, education, mental health services, and recreational opportunities—both within and outside prisons. Thus in the prison we volunteer teach. Prison needs the almost free labor of those caged within to function. Without the bodies and the work of imprisoned people, prisons would not exist. Our bodies extend and naturalize the prison, and this work is often justified through the affects of care and love.

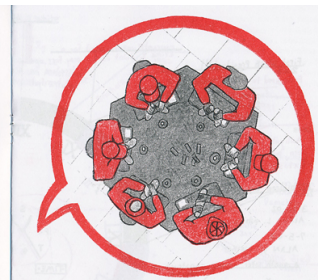
Yet simultaneously the possibility of exceeding these everyday constraints also exists. As a connection with the outside world, college classes provide forms of educational support and make another link between free and unfree spaces, reminding outside communities (some of which rarely feel the impacts of the widespread confinement in our society) that indeed, prisons exist. Imprisoned workers create expanded infrastructural capacities to add to the limited offerings provided by prison chaplains or volunteer coordinators, whose positions still barely exist in the state prison budget. The time offered by both is critical, lifesaving even, in a place where segregation, depression, and state violence are common.

Yet this affective labour and its corresponding humanistic logic subsequently reinforce the carceral continuum. What does it mean to offer care and to listen, yet be unable to alter the dominant and inhumane power structures? What does it mean to be a temporary and mercurial buffer between the institutional forms of state violence and people’s bodies? Might caring mobilize particular logics—punitive and otherwise—that knit people into compromising relationships with work, the state, and each other? But, perhaps, on some days, this feeling time can also change the state, push up against its power, and restructure its logics, in due time.

GROWING TIME

Being a shortie, someone with less time, not an adult, can mark one for more surveillance, more scrutiny. Yet, who counts as an adult, or a juvenile or a child, is fluid and never innocent. While those who are fifteen can be culpable and accountable for crimes as adults, the state protects that same age cohort through

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laws that stipulate that a fifteen or sixteen-year-old is unable to consent to sexual acts, except in some states where a girl of said age may marry a man, with parental consent. Most states, including Illinois, require and sanction an abstinence-based sex education curriculum because those in school are too young to be sexual, yet many courts do not hesitate when sentencing the same body to an adult prison or placing a ten-year-old on the sex offender registry.

Assessments about who has had enough time to grow up are not neutral. While the total number of juveniles locked up over the last three decades continues to decline, African American youth are still five times more likely than white youth to end up behind bars.² Youth of color are disproportionately more likely than white youth to be removed from their home, transferred to adult court, sent to adult prison, and more. Police and other disciplinary systems target non-heterosexual and non-gender conforming youth, and “consensual same-sex acts more often trigger punishments (from schools and courts) than equivalent opposite sex behaviors.” Non-heterosexual girls experience fifty percent more

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Due Time

This booklet, designed by Temporary Services, is authored and illustrated by an Illinois-based group of artists, teachers, activists and prisoners. It sensitively explores the movement in time in prison, as compared to the speed of life and labor on the outside. Here's the first paragraph of the introduction:

"Inside prisons, time is slow. People mark time, struggle to accrue good time, and imagine ways to make up for lost time with loved ones. Time lingers: waiting to be “keyed out,” waiting for a letter, waiting for a hearing, waiting to get through the gates, waiting for a visitor. Time works against people, particularly the non-white and the poor: select nine-year-olds become juveniles culpable for their actions, some fifteen-year-olds are tried as adults, and people struggle to survive sentences of eighty years (equivalent to a natural life, yet not sentenced as such). If sentenced before or after the signing of specific laws, one can serve vastly more or less time. Mandatory minimums, indeterminate sentences, “truth in sentencing,” parole, and probation all produce specific kinds of time: “hard” time, surveilled time, analog time, stretched time.”

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