**Imprisonment and Reform**

“One should recall that the movement for reforming the prisons, for controlling their functioning is not a recent phenomenon. It does not even seem to have originated in a recognition of failure. Prison ‘reform’ is virtually contemporary with the prison itself: it constitutes, as it were, its programme.”

—Michel Foucault

It is ironic that the prison itself was a product of concerted efforts by reformers to create a better system of punishment. If the words “prison reform” so easily slip from our lips, it is because “prison” and “reform” have been inextricably linked since the beginning of the use of imprisonment as the main means of punishing those who violate social norms. As I have already indicated, the origins of the prison are associated with the American Revolution and therefore with the resistance to the colonial power of England. Today this seems ironic, but incarceration within a penitentiary was assumed to be humane—at least far more humane than the capital and corporal punishment inherited from England and other European countries. Foucault opens his study, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, with a graphic description of a 1757 execution in Paris. The man who was put to death was first forced to undergo a series of formidable tortures ordered by the court. Red-hot pincers were used to burn away the flesh from his limbs, and molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin, and other substances were melted together and poured onto the wounds. Finally, he was drawn and quartered, his body burned, and the ashes tossed into the wind. Under English common law, a conviction for sodomy led to the punishment of being buried alive, and convicted heretics also were burned alive. “The crime of treason by a female was punished initially under the common law by burning alive the defendant. However, in the year 1790 this method was halted and the punishment became strangulation and burning of the corpse.”

European and American reformers set out to end macabre penalties such as this, as well as other forms of corporal punishment such as the stocks and pillories, whippings, brandings, and amputations. Prior to the appearance of punitive incarceration, such punishment was designed to have its most profound effect not so much on the person punished as on the crowd of spectators. Punishment was, in essence, public spectacle. Reformers such as John Howard in England and Benjamin Rush in Pennsylvania argued that punishment—if carried out in isolation, behind the walls of the prison—would cease to be revenge and would actually reform those who had broken the law.

It should also be pointed out that punishment has not been without its gendered dimensions. Women were often punished within the domestic domain, and instruments of torture were sometimes imported by authorities into the household. In seventeenth-century Britain, women whose husbands identified them as quarrelsome and unaccepting of male dominance were punished by means of a gossip’s bridle, or “branks,” a headpiece with a chain attached and an iron bit that was introduced into the woman’s mouth. Although the branking of women was often linked to a public parade,
contraption was sometimes hooked to a wall of the house, where the punished woman remained until her husband decided to release her. I mention these forms of punishment inflicted on women because, like the punishment inflicted on slaves, they were rarely taken up by prison reformers.

Other modes of punishment that predated the rise of the prison include banishment, forced labor in galleys, transportation, and appropriation of the accused's property. The punitive transportation of large numbers of people from England, for example, facilitated the initial colonization of Australia. Transported English convicts also settled the North American colony of Georgia. During the early 1700s, one in eight transported convicts were women, and the work they were forced to perform often consisted of prostitution.40

Imprisonment was not employed as a principal mode of punishment until the eighteenth century in Europe and the nineteenth century in the United States. And European prison systems were instituted in Asia and Africa as an important component of colonial rule. In India, for example, the English prison system was introduced during the second half of the eighteenth century, when jails were established in the regions of Calcutta and Madras. In Europe, the penitentiary movement against capital and other corporal punishments reflected new intellectual tendencies associated with the Enlightenment, activist interventions by Protestant reformers, and structural transformations associated with the rise of industrial capitalism. In Milan in 1764, Cesare Beccaria published his Essay on Crimes and Punishments,41 which was strongly influenced by notions of equality advanced by the philosophes—especially Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. Beccaria argued that punishment should never be a private matter, nor should it be arbitrarily violent; rather, it should be public, swift, and as lenient as possible. He revealed the contradiction of what was then a distinctive feature of imprisonment—the fact that it was generally imposed prior to the defendant's guilt or innocence being decided.

However, incarceration itself eventually became the penalty, bringing about a distinction between imprisonment as punishment and pretrial detention or detention until the infliction of punishment. The process through which imprisonment developed into the primary mode of state-inflicted punishment was very much related to the rise of capitalism and to the appearance of a new set of ideological conditions. These new conditions reflected the rise of the bourgeoisie as the social class whose interests and aspirations furthered new scientific, philosophical, cultural, and popular ideas. It is thus important to grasp the fact that the prison as we know it today did not make its appearance on the historical stage as the superior form of punishment for all times. It was simply—though we should not underestimate the complexity of this process—what made most sense at a particular moment in history. We should therefore question whether a system that was intimately related to a particular set of historical circumstances that prevailed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can lay absolute claim on the twenty-first century.

It may be important at this point in our examination to acknowledge the radical shift in the social perception of the individual that appeared in the ideas of that era. With the rise of the bourgeoisie, the individual came to be regarded as a bearer of formal rights and liberties. The notion of the individual's inalienable rights and liberties was eventually memorialized in the French and American Revolution. “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” from the French Revolution and “We hold these truths to be self-evident: all men are cre-
ated equal..." from the American Revolution were new and radical ideas, even though they were not extended to women, workers, Africans, and Indians. Before the acceptance of the sanctity of individual rights, imprisonment could not have been understood as punishment. If the individual was not perceived as possessing inalienable rights and liberties, then the alienation of those rights and liberties by removal from society to a space tyrannically governed by the state would not have made sense. Banishment beyond the geographical limits of the town may have made sense, but not the alteration of the individual's legal status through imposition of a prison sentence.

Moreover, the prison sentence, which is always computed in terms of time, is related to abstract quantification, evoking the rise of science and what is often referred to as the Age of Reason. We should keep in mind that this was precisely the historical period when the value of labor began to be calculated in terms of time and therefore compensated in another quantifiable way, by money. The computability of state punishment in terms of time—days, months, years—resonates with the role of labor-time as the basis for computing the value of capitalist commodities. Marxist theorists of punishment have noted that precisely the historical period during which the commodity form arose is the era during which penitentiary sentences emerged as the primary form of punishment.42

Today, the growing social movement contesting the supremacy of global capital is a movement that directly challenges the rule of the planet—its human, animal, and plant populations, as well as its natural resources—by corporations that are primarily interested in the increased production and circulation of ever more profitable commodities. This is a challenge to the supremacy of the commodity form, a rising resistance to the contemporary tendency to commodify every aspect of planetary existence. The question we might consider is whether this new resistance to capitalist globalization should also incorporate resistance to the prison.

Thus far I have largely used gender-neutral language to describe the historical development of the prison and its reformers. But convicts punished by imprisonment in emergent penitentiary systems were primarily male. This reflected the deeply gender-biased structure of legal, political, and economic rights. Since women were largely denied public status as rights-bearing individuals, they could not be easily punished by the deprivation of such rights through imprisonment.43 This was especially true of married women, who had no standing before the law. According to English common law, marriage resulted in a state of "civil death," as symbolized by the wife's assumption of the husband's name. Consequently, she tended to be punished for revolting against her domestic duties rather than for failure in her meager public responsibilities. The relegation of white women to domestic economies prevented them from playing a significant role in the emergent commodity realm. This was especially true since wage labor was typically gendered as male and racialized as white. It is not fortuitous that domestic corporal punishment for women survived long after these modes of punishment had become obsolete for (white) men. The persistence of domestic violence painfully attests to these historical modes of gendered punishment.

Some scholars have argued that the word "penitentiary" may have been used first in connection with plans outlined in England in 1758 to house "penitent prostitutes." In 1777, John Howard, the leading Protestant proponent of penal reform in England, published The State of the Prisons,44 in which he conceptualized imprisonment as an occasion for
religious self-reflection and self-reform. Between 1787 and 1791, the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham published his letters on a prison model he called the panopticon. Bentham claimed that criminals could only internalize productive labor habits if they were under constant surveillance. According to his panopticon model, prisoners were to be housed in single cells on circular tiers, all facing a multi-level guard tower. By means of blinds and a complicated play of light and darkness, the prisoners—who would not see each other at all—would be unable to see the warden. From his vantage point, on the other hand, the warden would be able to see all of the prisoners. However—and this was the most significant aspect of Bentham’s mammoth panopticon—because each individual prisoner would never be able to determine where the warden’s gaze was focused, each prisoner would be compelled to act, that is, work, as if he were being watched at all times.

If we combine Howard’s emphasis on disciplined self-reflection with Bentham’s ideas regarding the technology of internalization designed to make surveillance and discipline the purview of the individual prisoner, we can begin to see how such a conception of the prison had far-reaching implications. The conditions of possibility for this new form of punishment were strongly anchored in a historical era during which the working class needed to be constituted as an army of self-disciplined individuals capable of performing the requisite industrial labor for a developing capitalist system.

John Howard’s ideas were incorporated in the Penitentiary Act of 1799, which opened the way for the modern prison. While Jeremy Bentham’s ideas influenced the development of the first national English penitentiary, located in Millbank and opened in 1816, the first full-fledged effort to create a panopticon prison was in the United States. The Western State Penitentiary in Pittsburgh, based on a revised architectural model of the panopticon, opened in 1826. But the penitentiary had already made its appearance in the United States. Pennsylvania’s Walnut Street Jail housed the first state penitentiary in the United States, when a portion of the jail was converted in 1790 from a detention facility to an institution housing convicts whose prison sentences simultaneously became punishment and occasions for penitence and reform.

Walnut Street’s austere regime—total isolation in single cells where prisoners lived, ate, worked, read the Bible (if, indeed, they were literate), and supposedly reflected and repented—came to be known as the Pennsylvania system. This regime would constitute one of that era’s two major models of imprisonment. Although the other model, developed in Auburn, New York, was viewed as a rival to the Pennsylvania system, the philosophical basis of the two models did not differ substantively. The Pennsylvania model, which eventually crystallized in the Eastern State Penitentiary in Cherry Hill—the plans for which were approved in 1821—emphasized total isolation, silence, and solitude, whereas the Auburn model called for solitary cells but labor in common. This mode of prison labor, which was called congregate, was supposed to unfold in total silence. Prisoners were allowed to be with each other as they worked, but only under condition of silence. Because of its more efficient labor practices, Auburn eventually became the dominant model, both for the United States and Europe.

Why would eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reformers become so invested in creating conditions of punishment based on solitary confinement? Today, aside from death, solitary confinement—next to torture, or as a form of torture—is considered the worst form of punishment imagina-
ble. Then, however, it was assumed to have an emancipatory effect. The body was placed in conditions of segregation and solitude in order to allow the soul to flourish. It is not accidental that most of the reformers of that era were deeply religious and therefore saw the architecture and regimes of the penitentiary as emulating the architecture and regimes of monastic life. Still, observers of the new penitentiary saw early on, the real potential for insanity in solitary confinement. In an often-quoted passage of his American Notes, Charles Dickens prefaced a description of his 1842 visit to Eastern Penitentiary with the observation that “the system here is rigid, strict, and hopeless solitary confinement. I believe it, in its effects, to be cruel and wrong.”

In its intention I am well convinced that it is kind, humane, and meant for reformation; but I am persuaded that those who devised this system of Prison Discipline, and those benevolent gentlemen who carry it into execution, do not know what it is that they are doing. I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony that this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers . . . I am only the more convinced that there is a depth of terrible endurance in it which none but the sufferers themselves can fathom, and which no man has a right to inflict upon his fellow-creature. I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body . . . because its wounds are not upon the surface, and it extorts few cries that human ears can hear; therefore I the more denounce it, as a secret punishment which slumbering humanity is not roused up to stay.46

Unlike other Europeans such as Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, who believed that such punishment would result in moral renewal and thus mold convicts into better citizens,47 Dickens was of the opinion that “[t]hose who have undergone this punishment MUST pass into society again morally unhealthy and diseased.”48 This early critique of the penitentiary and its regime of solitary confinement troubles the notion that imprisonment is the most suitable form of punishment for a democratic society.

The current construction and expansion of state and federal super-maximum security prisons, whose putative purpose is to address disciplinary problems within the penal system, draws upon the historical conception of the penitentiary, then considered the most progressive form of punishment. Today African-Americans and Latinos are vastly overrepresented in these supermax prisons and control units, the first of which emerged when federal correctional authorities began to send prisoners housed throughout the system whom they deemed to be “dangerous” to the federal prison in Marion, Illinois. In 1983, the entire prison was “locked down,” which meant that prisoners were confined to their cells twenty-three hours a day. This lockdown became permanent, thus furnishing the general model for the control unit and supermax prison.49 Today, there are approximately sixty super-maximum security federal and state prisons located in thirty-six states and many more supermax units in virtually every state in the country.

A description of supermaxes in a 1997 Human Rights Watch report sounds chillingly like Dickens’s description of Eastern State Penitentiary. What is different, however, is that all references to individual rehabilitation have disappeared.
Inmates in super-maximum security facilities are usually held in single cell lock-down, commonly referred to as solitary confinement. [C]ongregate activities with other prisoners are usually prohibited; other prisoners cannot even be seen from an inmate's cell; communication with other prisoners is prohibited or difficult (consisting, for example, of shouting from cell to cell); visiting and telephone privileges are limited.50

The new generation of super-maximum security facilities also rely on state-of-the-art technology for monitoring and controlling prisoner conduct and movement, utilizing, for example, video monitors and remote-controlled electronic doors.51 These prisons represent the application of sophisticated, modern technology dedicated entirely to the task of social control, and they isolate, regulate and surveil more effectively than anything that has preceded them.52

I have highlighted the similarities between the early U.S. penitentiary—with its aspirations toward individual rehabilitation—and the repressive supermaxes of our era as a reminder of the mutability of history. What was once regarded as progressive and even revolutionary represents today the marriage of technological superiority and political backwardness. No one—not even the most ardent defenders of the supermax—would try to argue today that absolute segregation, including sensory deprivation, is restorative and healing. The prevailing justification for the supermax is that the horrors it creates are the perfect complement for the horrifying personalities deemed the worst of the worst by the prison system. In other words, there is no pretense that rights are respected, there is no concern for the individual, there is no sense that men and women incarcerated in supermaxes deserve anything approaching respect and comfort. According to a 1999 report issued by the National Institute of Corrections,

Generally, the overall constitutionality of these [supermax] programs remains unclear. As larger numbers of inmates with a greater diversity of characteristics, backgrounds, and behaviors are incarcerated in these facilities, the likelihood of legal challenge is increased.53

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, absolute solitude and strict regimentation of the prisoner’s every action were viewed as strategies for transforming habits and ethics. That is to say, the idea that imprisonment should be the main form of punishment reflected a belief in the potential of white mankind for progress, not only in science and industry, but at the level of the individual member of society as well. Prison reformers mirrored Enlightenment assumptions of progress in every aspect of human—or to be more precise, white Western—society. In his 1987 study Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England, John Bender proposes the very intriguing argument that the emergent literary genre of the novel furthered a discourse of progress and individual transformation that encouraged attitudes toward punishment to change.54 These attitudes, he suggests, heralded the conception and construction of penitentiary prisons during the latter part of the eighteenth century as a reform suited to the capacities of those who were deemed human.

Reformers who called for the imposition of penitentiary architecture and regimes on the then existing structure of the prison aimed their critiques at the prisons that were primari-
ly used for purposes of pretrial detention or as an alternative punishment for those who were unable to pay fines exacted by the courts. John Howard, the most well known of these reformers, was what you might today call a prison activist. Beginning in 1773, at the age of forty-seven, he initiated a series of visits that took him “to every institution for the poor in Europe . . . [a campaign] which cost him his fortune and finally his life in a typhus war of the Russian army at Cherson in 1791.” At the conclusion of his first trip abroad, he successfully ran for the office of sheriff in Bedfordshire. As sheriff he investigated the prisons under his own jurisdiction and later “set out to visit every prison in England and Wales to document the evils he had first observed at Bedford.”

Bender argues that the novel helped facilitate these campaigns to transform the old prisons—which were filthy and in disarray, and which thrived on the bribery of the wardens—into well-ordered rehabilitative penitentiaries. He shows that novels such as *Moll Flanders* and *Robinson Crusoe* emphasized “the power of confinement to reshape personality” and popularized some of the ideas that moved reformers to action. As Bender points out, the eighteenth-century reformers criticized the old prisons for their chaos, their lack of organization and classification, for the easy circulation of alcohol and prostitution they permitted, and for the prevalence of contagion and disease.

The reformers, primarily Protestant, among whom Quakers were especially dominant, couched their ideas in large part in religious frameworks. Though John Howard was not himself a Quaker—he was an independent Protestant—nevertheless he was drawn to Quaker asceticism and adopted the dress “of a plain Friend.” His own brand of piety was strongly reminiscent of the Quaker traditions of silent prayer, “suffering” introspection, and faith in the illumining power of God’s light. Quakers, for their part, were bound to be drawn to the idea of imprisonment as a purgatory, as a forced withdrawal from the distractions of the senses into silent and solitary confrontation with the self. Howard conceived of a convict’s process of reformation in terms similar to the spiritual awakening of a believer at a Quaker meeting.

However, according to Michael Ignatieff, Howard’s contributions did not so much reside in the religiosity of his reform efforts.

The originality of Howard’s indictment lies in its “scientific,” not in its moral character. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1756 and author of several scientific papers on climatic variations in Bedfordshire, Howard was one of the first philanthropists to attempt a systematic statistical description of a social problem.

Likewise, Bender’s analysis of the relationship between the novel and the penitentiary emphasizes the extent to which the philosophical underpinnings of the prison reformer’s campaigns echoed the materialism and utilitarianism of the English Enlightenment. The campaign to reform the prisons was a project to impose order, classification, cleanliness, good work habits, and self-consciousness. He argues that people detained within the old prisons were not severely restricted—they sometimes even enjoyed the freedom to move in and out of the prison. They were not
compelled to work and, depending on their own resources, could eat and drink as they wished. Even sex was sometimes available, as prostitutes were sometimes allowed temporary entrance into the prisons. Howard and other reformers called for the imposition of rigid rules that would “enforce solitude and penitence, cleanliness and work.”

“The new penitentiaries,” according to Bender, “supplanting both the old prisons and houses of correction, explicitly reached toward . . . three goals: maintenance of order within a largely urban labor force, salvation of the soul, and rationalization of personality.” He argues that this is precisely what was narratively accomplished by the novel. It ordered and classified social life, it represented individuals as conscious of their surroundings and as self-aware and self-fashioning. Bender thus sees a kinship between two major developments of the eighteenth century—the rise of the novel in the cultural sphere and the rise of the penitentiary in the socio-legal sphere. If the novel as a cultural form helped to produce the penitentiary, then prison reformers must have been influenced by the ideas generated by and through the eighteenth-century novel.

Literature has continued to play a role in campaigns around the prison. During the twentieth century, prison writing, in particular, has periodically experienced waves of popularity. The public recognition of prison writing in the United States has historically coincided with the influence of social movements calling for prison reform and/or abolition. Robert Burns’s I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang and the 1932 Hollywood film upon which it was based, played a central role in the campaign to abolish the chain gang. During the 1970s, which were marked by intense organizing within, outside, and across prison walls, numerous works authored by prisoners followed the 1970 publication of George Jackson’s Soledad Brother and the anthology I coedited with Bettina Aptheker, If They Come in the Morning. While many prison writers during that era had discovered the emancipatory potential of writing on their own, relying either on the education they had received prior to their imprisonment or on their tenacious efforts at self-education, others pursued their writing as a direct result of the expansion of prison educational programs during that era.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has challenged the contemporary dismantling of prison educational programs, asks in Live from Death Row,

“What societal interest is served by prisoners who remain illiterate? What social benefit is there in ignorance? How are people corrected while imprisoned if their education is outlawed? Who profits [other than the prison establishment itself] from stupid prisoners?

A practicing journalist before his arrest in 1982 on charges of killing Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner, Abu-Jamal has regularly produced articles on capital punishment, focusing especially on its racial and class disproportions. His ideas have helped to link critiques of the death penalty with the more general challenges to the expanding U.S. prison system and are particularly helpful to activists who seek to associate death penalty abolitionism with prison abolitionism. His prison writings have been published in both popular and scholarly journals [such as The Nation and Yale Law Journal] as well as in three collections, Live from Death Row, Death Blossoms, and All Things Censored.

Abu-Jamal and many other prison writers have strongly criticized the prohibition of Pell Grants for prisoners, which
was enacted in the 1994 crime bill, as indicative of the contemporary pattern of dismantling educational programs behind bars. As creative writing courses for prisoners were defunded, virtually every literary journal publishing prisoners’ writing eventually collapsed. Of the scores of magazines and newspapers produced behind walls, only the Angolite at Louisiana’s Angola Prison and Prison Legal News at Washington State Prison remain. What this means is that precisely at a time of consolidating a significant writing culture behind bars, repressive strategies are being deployed to dissuade prisoners from educating themselves.

If the publication of Malcolm X’s autobiography marks a pivotal moment in the development of prison literature and a moment of vast promise for prisoners who try to make education a major dimension of their time behind bars, contemporary prison practices are systematically dashing those hopes. In the 1950s, Malcolm’s prison education was a dramatic example of prisoners’ ability to turn their incarceration into a transformative experience. With no available means of organizing his quest for knowledge, he proceeded to read a dictionary, copying each word in his own hand. By the time he could immerse himself in reading, he noted, “months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life.” Then, according to Malcolm, prisoners who demonstrated an unusual interest in reading were assumed to have embarked upon a journey of self-rehabilitation and were frequently allowed special privileges—such as checking out more than the maximum number of books. Even so, in order to pursue this self-education, Malcolm had to work against the prison regime—he often read on his cell floor, long after lights-out, by the glow of the corridor light, taking care to return to bed each hour for the two minutes during which the guard marched past his cell.

The contemporary disestablishment of writing and other prison educational programs is indicative of the official disregard today for rehabilitative strategies, particularly those that encourage individual prisoners to acquire autonomy of the mind. The documentary film The Last Graduation describes the role prisoners played in establishing a four-year college program at New York’s Greenhaven Prison and, twenty-two years later, the official decision to dismantle it. According to Eddie Ellis, who spent twenty-five years in prison and is currently a well-known leader of the antiprison movement, “As a result of Attica, college programs came into the prisons.”

In the aftermath of the 1971 prisoner rebellion at Attica and the government-sponsored massacre, public opinion began to favor prison reform. Forty-three Attica prisoners and eleven guards and civilians were killed by the National Guard, who had been ordered to retake the prison by Governor Nelson Rockefeller. The leaders of the prison rebellion had been very specific about their demands. In their “practical demands” they expressed concerns about diet, improvement in the quality of guards, more realistic rehabilitation programs, and better education programs. They also wanted religious freedom, freedom to engage in political activity, and an end to censorship—all of which they saw as indispensable to their educational needs. As Eddie Ellis observes in The Last Graduation, Prisoners very early recognized the fact that they needed to be better educated, that the more education they had, the better they would be able to deal with themselves and their problems, the problems

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of the prisons and the problems of the communities from which most of them came.

Lateef Islam, another former prisoner featured in this documentary, said, “We held classes before the college came. We taught each other, and sometimes under penalty of a beat-up.”

After the Attica Rebellion, more than five hundred prisoners were transferred to Greenhaven, including some of the leaders who continued to press for educational programs. As a direct result of their demands, Marist College, a New York state college near Greenhaven, began to offer college-level courses in 1973 and eventually established the infrastructure for an on-site four-year college program. The program thrived for twenty-two years. Some of the many prisoners who earned their degrees at Greenhaven pursued postgraduate studies after their release. As the documentary powerfully demonstrates, the program produced dedicated men who left prison and offered their newly acquired knowledge and skills to their communities on the outside.

In 1994, consistent with the general pattern of creating more prisons and more repression within all prisons, Congress took up the question of withdrawing college funding for inmates. The congressional debate concluded with a decision to add an amendment to the 1994 crime bill that eliminated all Pell Grants for prisoners, thus effectively defunding all higher educational programs. After twenty-two years, Marist College was compelled to terminate its program at Greenhaven Prison. Thus, the documentary revolves around the very last graduation ceremony on July 15, 1995, and the poignant process of removing the books that, in many ways, symbolized the possibilities of freedom. Or, as one of the Marist professors said, “They see books as full of gold.” The prisoner who for many years had served as a clerk for the college sadly reflected, as books were being moved, that there was nothing left to do in prison—except perhaps bodybuilding. “But,” he asked, “what’s the use of building your body if you can’t build your mind?” Ironically, not long after educational programs were disestablished, weights and bodybuilding equipment were also removed from most U.S. prisons.