

Punks, Snitches, and Real Men: Negotiations of Masculinity and Rehabilitation Among Prison Inmates¹

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North American prisons are centers of state power, as well as focal points of media representation and public imagination. Despite popular scholarly portrayals positing prisoners as helpless subjects whom the state unilaterally classifies and disciplines, I argue that by negotiating and performing various masculinities, prison inmates create new forms of empowerment through which social transformations take place. We see that correctional institutions allow inmates spaces for negotiation of the terms of confinement by expanding the minimums of personal agency afforded by imprisonment through communities of support. These communities configure competing paradigms of masculinity by defining alternative pathways of rehabilitation. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2010 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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I am standing in the middle of the block, my arms outstretched as if I've been crucified. In each hand I hold the lanyard of a bucket filled with water. My arms tremble and I begin to wonder who exactly I'm trying to impress. The block has grown silent since the ordeal has begun, but I can feel a hundred sets of eyes staring at me. Even the easygoing old correc-

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