

Turned Inside-Out



**Literature,
Art, and
Testimony
from the
Inside-Out
Prison
Exchange
Program**

PRESENTED
BY THE
UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON'S
ROBERT
D. CLARK
HONORS
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON

Robert D. Clark
Honors College

THE FORMAT OF *TURNED INSIDE-OUT*

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is a national education program that brings together college students and inmates of correctional institutions for integrated courses. These classes are offered at more than one hundred institutions across the country, and involve thousands of individuals each year.

This publication includes student essays examining the five texts studied during three years of Inside-Out classes at the Oregon State Penitentiary through the University of Oregon's Robert D. Clark Honors College. These academic pieces are organized by subject, with letters of testimony and artistic expressions by students included between each section of essays. Information about the student contributors can be found on the last pages of the publication.

Inside-Out rules state that no last names may be used in the classroom. That rule is applied in this publication as well. Some student contributors decided not to include their names with their essays and artwork in the anthologies. They remain anonymous in this publication.

The Inside-Out Program also maintains a no-contact policy. After the school term ends, "inside" students and "outside" students may not communicate with each other. The editors of this magazine obtained special permission to work together on this publication.

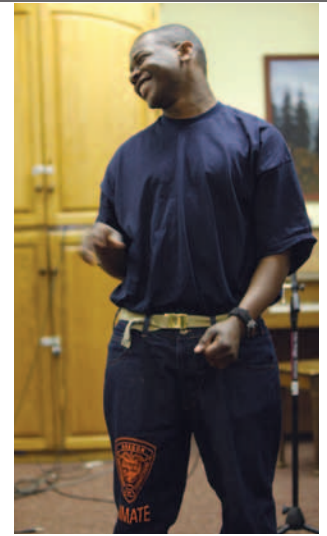
COVER: STATUE OF FREEDOM, BY JOEL, 2009

The Statue of Freedom, a bronze sculpture of a classical female representation of Freedom, was designed by Thomas Crawford before the Civil War. Since 1863, the statue has crowned the dome of the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

The statue represents the highest ideal of freedom, an idea so solidified and taken for granted that it becomes as inanimate as the statue itself. We tend to get trapped by the ideal, encased. The people breaking out of the statue represent the effort through which freedom is gained. It is not simply there to be had as the statue—to be gazed upon—but it must be realized after some sort of struggle of the mind.

In my own experience, waiting to get out, I had an idea of freedom that was fixed and grand like this statue. I imagined so many perfect things that I looked forward to, but ultimately did not quite find. Freedom is messier, but more colorful. It is much less ideal and much more human ... and I could never have been simply released back onto it. I found it through intellectual pursuits like those we shared in the Inside-Out class. I found freedom through understanding.

Joel participated in the 2009 Inside-Out class. He was released from Oregon State Penitentiary on June 5, 2009.



Letter from the editors **2**
 Letter from David Frank, dean of Clark Honors College **3**
 Staff List **3**
 Acknowledgments **4**
 Introduction by Professor Steven Shankman **5**
 Letter to the 2008 Class by French Fry **6**
 First Class, poem by Ray **7**
 Letter to the 2009 Class by Madeline **7**

8
Introduction to *The Brothers Karamazov* by Mike
The Brothers Karamazov essays by:
 ▪ Caleb
 ▪ Ray
 ▪ Roman
 Illustration by Alison K.
 ▪ Anonymous
 ▪ Joel
 ▪ Mike
 Illustration by Joel
 ▪ Amos
 ▪ Josh
 ▪ Alison F.
 Letter to the 2008 Class by Sam
 My Favorite Quote by Katy P.
 What's at Stake? by Liz
 Letter to the 2008 Class by Katy P.
 To Witness Dreams by Sam
 Letter to the 2008 Class by Michelle
 Personal Reflection 2008 by Rich
 Angst by Ray

22
Introduction to *The House of the Dead* by Wil
The House of the Dead essays by:
 ▪ Katie D.
 ▪ AJ
 ▪ Jenny
 ▪ Josh
 Illustration, View from the Inside-Out classroom by Anonymous
 The Troupe by Ray
 Letter to the 2009 Class by Peter
 Living by Matthew
 If There Are Answers by Katie D.
 A Twist of Fate by Josh
 The Path I Laid by James

30
Introduction to *The Idiot* by Paul
The Idiot essays by:
 ▪ Leslie
 ▪ Joel
 Illustration, "The Idiot" by Anonymous
 Letter to the 2009 Class by Daniel
 Freedom by Anonymous
 Scribbles in the Dark by Katie D.
 Thought by Jodi
 The Question by David
 Letter to the 2009 Class by Leslie
 Illustration, Mandala by Leslie
 Letter to the 2008 Class by Tom

36
Introduction to *Crime and Punishment* by Chuck
Crime and Punishment essays by:
 ▪ Marc
 ▪ Katie H.
 Letter to the 2009 Class by Andrew
 Letter to the 2009 Class by Matt
 Final Reflection by Josh
 Polarities by Kelly
 Back of the Circle by Darcie

42
Introduction to *Don Quixote* by Tareq and Terrence
 Escape by Justin
 Illustration, Don Quixote by Bobby
 Life by Wil
Don Quixote essays by:
 ▪ Bobby
 ▪ Liz
 Letter to the 2009 Class by French Fry

48
Profiles of contributing students

53
Afterword: Letter from Lori Pompa, founder and national director of the Inside-Out Program



Participating in Inside-Out classes with mixed groups of students from the University of Oregon's Clark Honors College and the Oregon State Penitentiary has been a transformative experience for everyone involved. Through three years of literature and ethics courses, seventy students have created amazing memories and insights that have impacted their individual lives. The works included in this publication tell our stories.

Madeline—The Inside-Out Program challenged my understanding of social division and I have felt my world view change before me. Compassion and acceptance were modeled with such honesty that

I cannot help but push myself to become a better person. I will be working abroad by myself next year, and because of this class, I am not nervous, but consumed with anticipation of the artificial barriers I hope to transcend.

James—I'm humbled that I've had the privilege to meet such amazing and inspirational Outside students, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to create Turned Inside-Out. It's been an unforgettable experience, and I hope that it sheds light on this amazing program that changes opinions, shatters preconceived notions, and allows all involved the chance to come together as a group.



Katie—I have arrived at the most profound trust in the commonalities with my fellow human beings, regardless of our place in the world. Since the first day of class, I have tried to live this belief in every day, and to live life as “wild and precious” as the poet Mary Oliver tells us to.

Each Inside-Out class compiled anthologies of student work as final projects. The essays, poems, letters, and artwork included in Turned Inside-Out were selected from this body of work to demonstrate the importance of connection across social boundaries and recognition of our common humanity. We are profoundly grateful to all of our classmates, even if their work was not included. The class was only what it was because of what we were together.

Madeline James Katie

**“While there is a lower
class, I am in it, while
there is a criminal
element, I am of it, and
while there is a soul in
prison, I am not free.”**

Eugene V. Debs, upon
receiving a ten-year
sentence for publicly
criticizing World War I.

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The Clark Honors College is proud to sponsor this publication of essays from our Inside-Out classes. The Inside-Out Prison Exchange program is based on a prophetic vision of education, understanding, and redemption. The essays you will read unveil a truly radical pedagogical experiment, one featuring an academically rigorous syllabus, a traditional class format of dialogue and discussion, and students from the “inside” (incarcerated individuals) and the “outside” (Clark Honors College students) who engage in seminars behind the walls of the Oregon State Penitentiary. We are fortunate to have professors willing to leave Eugene and the ease of our campus to teach Inside-Out courses in Salem. We are also blessed to have the intelligence and direction of Melissa Crabbe, Assistant National Director of Inside-Out, and the leadership of our future peacemakers, Katie and Madeline.

Far too often our policies of punishment and incarceration are counter-productive. Inmates are locked up in prisons that do not allow for the possibility of reading, writing, speaking, and thinking under the guidance of a professor and the presence of other well prepared students. The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program demonstrates that higher education and the liberal arts can serve as forces of enlightenment and liberation. The Clark Honors College students who participate in this program testify that it has transformed their lives. These essays offer compelling proof of this testimony, and I hope this is only the first of many issues of this journal.

David A. Frank, Dean
Robert D. Clark Honors College
University of Oregon

*Turned Inside-Out is dedicated to Lori Pompa,
for her vision.*



Chapman Hall, home of the Robert D. Clark Honors College



2007



2008



2009

The editors of *Turned Inside-Out* would like to gratefully acknowledge the following organizations:

The **Robert D. Clark Honors College** at the University of Oregon, which has been generous with monetary and moral support since the first Inside-Out class in 2007.

The **Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program**, and all Inside-Out instructors across the country.

The education department of **Oregon State Penitentiary**.

We would also like to thank the following individuals, without whom this publication would have been impossible:

Professor Steven Shankman, our instructor and the initiator of Inside-Out at the University of Oregon;

David Frank, dean of the Robert D. Clark Honors College, for his encouragement and foresight;

Nancy Green, who directs the education programs of the prisons in Salem and provided leadership, compassion, and weekly support of our editorial meetings;

Lori Pompa and **Melissa Crabbe**, the leaders of Inside-Out, who supported our work and allowed us to create this publication as part of the Inside-Out alumni efforts;

Katherine Gries, our adviser in this project, who helped us navigate the complicated process of creating a magazine;

Herb Chereck, UO registrar, who created a credit option for the Inside students and who has been an invaluable supporter of Inside-Out.

Special thanks to the donors who support prison reform initiatives: This publication is proof that your generosity is deeply meaningful.

Finally, thank you to each of our classmates. This publication is for you.

For the past three years, I have taught a University of Oregon Honors College class on “Literature and Ethics” at Oregon State Penitentiary, the state’s one maximum-security prison. My classes are part of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange program. One of the things that is unique about the Inside-Out model is that it consists of a mix of incarcerated students (“inside” students) and university students (“outside” students).

Every Wednesday evening for the past three spring quarters, I have taken a van filled with University of Oregon Honors College students up to the State Penitentiary in Salem where we studied the novels of Dostoevsky. This publication features the writing of the students in these classes. In these selections, the students reflect on the books we read together, on their experience of the class, or on life in general.

The first year (2007), we read two novels by Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, based on the author’s formative experience as a prisoner in Siberia for four years, and *Crime and Punishment*. The second year (2008), we read *The Brothers Karamazov* and Emmanuel Levinas’s book *Ethics and Infinity*. Last spring (2009), we read Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot*, whose protagonist, Prince Myshkin, was modeled on Cervantes’ hero. We also read a selection of transcriptions of the last set of lectures that Levinas delivered at the Sorbonne in 1975–76; the subject of these lectures is “God and Onto-theo-log-y.”

Inside-Out classes proceed through real dialogue. There are no lectures. We sit in a circle, with inside students sitting next to outside students. The atmosphere is electric. No one ever yawns—or at least very rarely.

Inside-Out. The name of the program refers to the fact that each class taught in the program consists of incarcerated students—students on the inside—and those from outside the prison walls. But to me, the phrase “inside-out” suggests

something that happens, emotionally, to those participating in the class. You’re turned inside-out, emptied of your ego as you transcend labels and categories—“student,” “teacher,” “murderer,” “prisoner,” “criminal”—and respond to the other as fully human. The class becomes a community of learning based on the dignity of every individual. It is a transformative experience for those involved. We not only read about and discuss ethics in these classes, but the students enact the ethical encounter in which the ego (the “moi”), as Levinas, in his book *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* (p. 117), describes this encounter, is experienced as “a being divesting itself, emptying itself of its being, turning itself inside out [*à l’envers*].”

Over the more than thirty years of my academic career, I’ve had the privilege of teaching literature at a number of fine universities, including Stanford, Princeton, Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Oregon. My most memorable and transformative classes, however, have been taught at none of these esteemed institutions, but rather at the Oregon State Penitentiary. Once you read the selections in this publication, I think you’ll see why.

Steven Shankman
Distinguished Professor of English and Classics,
University of Oregon
UNESCO Chair for Transcultural Studies,
Interreligious Dialogue and Peace
Director, Center for Intercultural Dialogue



• FRENCH FRY •

I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS WILL TURN OUT OR IF ILL BE ABLE TO FIND THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE HOW THIS CLASS (LIT 421) HAS AFFECTED ME, BUT I'LL GIVE IT A WHIRL! ^H IF IT DOESN'T WORK OUT - WELL, IT'S ALL PART OF THE ADVENTURE - ONE THAT I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

I MUST SAY THANK YOU! THIS OPPORTUNITY WE WERE GIVEN, HAS GIVEN ME THE CHANCE TO GROW, TO LEARN. A CHANCE I NEVER EXPECTED TO HAPPEN WHILE I WAS HERE. OF COURSE I HAD TO JUMP OFF THE COBWEBBS FROM PARTS OF MY BRAIN I FORGOT I HAD. ESPECIALLY WITH ENMANUEL LEVINAS' "ETHICS AND INFINITY" - THAT WHIRLED MY HEAD AROUND. ^H FOR SO MANY YEARS IT'S BEEN EASIEST TO HIDE WITHIN MYSELF AND JUST FLOAT ALONG ON AUTOPILOT, GOING DAY TO DAY AND ONTO THE NEXT. WITH THE DAYS SO MUCH THE SAME, WEEKS COULD PASS AND I WOULDN'T NOTICE. WITH THIS CLASS, I LOOKED FORWARD TO WEDNESDAYS. I COULDN'T WAIT TO WALK IN AND SEE ALL OF "THE OTHERS." ^H

"EVEN THERE, IN THE MINES, UNDERGROUND, YOU CAN FIND A HUMAN HEART IN THE CONVICT AND MURDERER STANDING NEXT TO YOU, AND YOU CAN BE CLOSE TO HIM, BECAUSE THERE, TOO, IT'S POSSIBLE TO LIVE, AND LOVE, AND SUFFER!" (PAGE 591)

- FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY - THE BROTHERS KARAMZOV -

TO THE OUTSIDE STUDENTS (YA KNOW WHO YA ARE), THE PROFESSOR, AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN "INSIDE-OUT", I OWN COMPLETELY AND FULLY TO YOU ALL. THANK YOU FOR COMING IN AND STANDING NEXT TO US! YOU'VE ALL REVIVED AND REBORNED MY FROZEN HEART. JUST REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE WILLING TO LOOK FOR "THE OTHER", WHEN MOST GET LOST IN THE FACE. SO SMILE! ^H FOR YOU ALL HAVE LET ME SMILE!

Dear Inside-Out Class,

First of all, thank you. I don't believe I can express how much I have loved getting to know all of you during these last ten weeks. Here are five incredible lessons you have taught me that I will treasure for the rest of my life:

Commit to each moment wholeheartedly. Never before have I quite been able to grasp the importance of being completely involved wherever you are. What have I missed out on before?

Be thankful for the opportunity to learn from the people around you. In most other classes I've been a part of, the students pack up quietly after lecture is over and immediately go their separate ways. This class has taught me the beauty of being openly thankful for the chance to learn from and about someone else.

Common ground between any two people is abundant. It's never impossible to relate to anyone. The only excuse is that the conversation hasn't yet begun.

Expect to be humbled. It's not about me at all. Ever.

Joy can make anywhere beautiful. No matter how much pain and loneliness a building embodies, laughter and community can create something amazing. It doesn't matter where you are, as long as you are heard and valued.

These are the best things I've learned all year, and never before has any class taught me so much.

I'm thankful for each and every one of you and wish all of you the absolute best in everything you do!

Madeline, 2009

First Class

The excitement
Was thick
With dread

Nervous
Birdlike
Glances

You will talk first
No
I will

Her eyes
Are so
Brown

He seems
Very
Friendly

Her hands
Are
Ice cold

All right
This feels better

Some people
Speak
Right up

Others
Watch
And wait

Everyone
Though
Seems happy

This
Is going
To be fun

Ray, 2008

INTRODUCTION TO THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV BY FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

Ivan Fyodorovitch is a man to whom the senseless suffering of innocents and the inherently evil nature of man is cause to reject the possibility for a harmonious world where people can find happiness and even for the possibility of the hope for it.

In Ivan's poem "The Grand Inquisitor," which he tells to his brother Alyosha, God's plan for us is called into question and pronounced as flawed. It is part of God's plan for millions of mankind to fail because of them not being "strong enough to manage their freedom." (261) The grand inquisitor, in effect, says that free will is too powerful for humans to have possession of, and because of this we will never be happy. The only way we will even find happiness is to rid ourselves of it.

The Brothers Karamazov is a reply to the grand inquisitor. Dostoevsky tells us there is another way for us to obtain happiness. He argues, however, that this pathway to happiness is through a unity of mankind based on acceptance, by realizing that "verily each of us is guilty before everyone, for everyone, and everything..." (289) "And if they knew it, the world would at once become paradise." (298)

Dostoevsky agrees that man's nature is inherently flawed. However, he shows us that we should therefore be unified in our acceptance of each other. Markel, the brother of the young Elder Zosima, and the character who the "...guilty before everyone, for everyone and everything..." statement originates from, also asks, "Why do we quarrel, boast before each other, remember each other's offenses? Let us go to the garden, let us walk, and play and love and praise and kiss each other, and bless our life." (289)

We are all inherently flawed, we are all guilty of all and before all. Our unity must be built through our responsibility for each other: we are guilty on behalf of all. Upon realizing this, we can "walk and play and love" and find happiness.

Mike, 2008

The Bullet

The passage from *The Brothers Karamazov* that I've chosen to write about strikes me as eerily familiar, and on an incredibly personal level. In this selection, Dmitri Karamazov has just recovered his pistols from Pyotr Ilyich, and is methodically loading them. Dostoevsky writes:

"What are you looking at the bullet for?" Pyotr Ilyich watched him [Dmitri] with uneasy curiosity.

"Just a whim. Now, if you had decided to blow your brains out, would you look at the bullet before you loaded the pistol, or not?"

"Why look at it?"

"It will go into my brain, so it's interesting to see what it's like..." (402)

This particular passage strikes me in a brutally personal way as, when I was nearly seventeen years old and feeling quite wearisome with life, I too examined a bullet (my wide eyes nearly bursting with morbid fascination) that, at the time, I was seriously contemplating firing into my own head. I remember thinking about trajectory and velocity, and wondering if such factors might cause the bullet to bounce around in my skull before becoming permanently lodged inside my brain, or if it would simply shoot straight through and carve a niche in the wall behind my corpse.

I stared at it, dumbstruck, a simple .22 caliber bullet, utterly in awe of its devastating potential, utterly engrossed in my morbid fantasy. I couldn't help wondering if other "suicide-by-gunshot" fantasizers pondered the fundamental means of their potential suicide as deeply and peculiarly as was I (Dostoevsky perhaps?)

After reading this exquisite passage by the Russian master, I felt compelled to set the novel down and reflect on what I'd read. My mind explored the furthest reaches of my consciousness, and at one point I began comparing the tragic qualities that I embodied at seventeen to qualities that Dmitri Karamazov has evinced consistently throughout the novel. I concluded that I too was once shortsighted, impulsive, and passionate to the point of recklessness. I was living dangerously and consequently find myself where I believe Dmitri Karamazov is also headed (Siberia).

Dostoevsky has an amazing and uncanny ability to bring his characters to life in ways that allow his readers to relate to them on extremely intimate, personal terms. This passage is only one of many in which he's accomplished this feat for me. I look forward to making many more intimate connections with his characters, and am saddened by the prospect that the novel must inevitably draw to an end.

Caleb, 2008

This Elaborate Lie

"These are the moments when one contemplates the awful terror of the criminal who already knows that all is lost but is still struggling, still, intends to struggle with you. These are the moments when all the instincts of self-preservation rise up in him at once, and, trying to save himself, he looks at you with a piercing eye, questioning and suffering, he catches you and studies you, your face, your thoughts, waiting to see from which side you will strike, and instantly creates thousands of plans in his tremulous mind, but is still afraid to speak, afraid he will let something slip. These humiliating moments of the human soul, this journey through torments, this human thirst for self-salvation, are terrible and sometimes evoke trepidation and commiseration even in an investigator." (719)

It was almost the end of my trial. I could see that I was doomed. The D.A. had completely annihilated all my witnesses. I felt like I was going into shock. I told my attorney I needed a recess, that I was feeling sick. I kept looking at the D.A. His look was gleeful and triumphant. I went back to my cell and fabricated this elaborate lie, that the key witness against me had a motive to lie about me. That I had spurned her in love, and she was seeking justice. In my desperation for self-preservation, I could not see how pitiful and humiliating my last-ditch effort, my last try to save myself, appeared to the jury, and to the D.A. I could tell how eager he was though, to let me tell my story. He knew I was putting the last nail in my coffin. My story was so obviously a lie, though, that even he winced as I told it. It was one of my basest moments in my life. I can still remember several of the jurors shaking their heads, and looking down as they felt shame and probably disgust for me.

I relived that moment for many years, every time trying to come to terms with what I had done. Wishing I had just stood up, and admitted all, regained some of my integrity. That was my moment though, the one that changed me. I have been on a journey of truth and redemption since then. And I am a better man for it.

Ray, 2008



"Levinas in Color" by Alison K., 2009

Invisible Chains

When Kolya Krasotkin was talking to Smurov about Dmitri Karamazov he said, "I could have made his acquaintance long ago, but I like to be proud in certain cases. Besides, I've formed an opinion of him that still has to be verified and explained."⁽⁵²⁾ I would like to discuss and relate myself to this passage.

I noticed in my life that pride in most cases prevents me from being altruistic. I grew up in a circle of friends where pride is the #1 thing. I mean pride like "I'm better than you" or "You yield to me," etc. I believe that this mentality binds one with invisible chains. One will miss out on getting to know people, go places and helping others.

When Kolya said, "Oh, I've formed an opinion about him" I thought, "That happens a lot," and I caught myself doing it. One forms an opinion just by looking, or hearing about another person. He or she does not get the benefit of the doubt from others. It reminds me of what Levinas said about the face, how one should look beyond the features, not notice even the color of one's eyes. The way I understand this is to let the other show one who he or she is, and not to judge by appearance.

I believe that if everyone will agree to put their pride aside, it will bring people together and we will grow in all spheres. I also think if one starts to practice love and compassion towards others it will put one's pride in check. Ultimately, the world would be a better place to live.

Roman, 2008

An Encroaching Madness

“‘Do you know, Alexei Fyodor Tovich, just how one loses one’s mind?’ Ivan asked... ‘And can one observe oneself losing one’s mind?’” (599-600)

In Book XI, we find Ivan locked in a struggle against an encroaching madness, shaken to the core by the realization that he is being affected by forces he cannot rationalize or even comprehend. This struggle turns upon the question of his role in the death of his father, Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov. Ivan knows

he did not bring about his father’s death in the literal sense; his was not the hand that shattered Fyodor’s skull. The question that consumes Ivan is as follows: regardless of whose hand wielded the

murderous weapon, is his *mind* innocent of blood, and what does that imply for his responsibility towards his parent as a whole?

In contrast with his earlier studied self-sufficiency, Ivan suddenly finds himself unable to comprehend the nature and significance of his own thoughts and actions. Stopping Alyosha in the street over this as yet unarticulated torment, Ivan beseeches his brother to recall his impressions of several nights past. “Do you remember when Dmitri burst into the house after dinner and beat father, and I then said to you in the yard that I reserved

‘the right to wish’ for myself,” he asks. “Tell me, did you think then that I wished for father’s death?” (611) When Alyosha answers, full of dread, in the affirmative, Ivan hurries as if compelled towards the “lopsided little doghouse” of Smerdyakov. (612)

As we presently learn, it is Smerdyakov who has nurtured the seed of self-doubt in Ivan, who equates rational self-control with a state of sanctity. As Smerdyakov repeatedly assures him, Ivan is fully responsible for the death of his father in that he gave the “lackey” tacit consent to kill by removing himself from the scene. “You killed him, you are the main killer,” Smerdyakov proclaims, “... and I was just your minion... I performed the deed according to your word.” (623) Here, Ivan feels himself threatened by the demise of what his rational mind has held to be the natural, seemingly incontestable separation between the intellect and the physical body (a dichotomy which Dostoevsky reinforces by distinguishing between Ivan the intellectual and Dmitri the sensualist). “If it was not Dmitri but Smerdyakov who killed father, then, of course, I am solidary with him, because I put him up to it,” Ivan muses, following his second visit to the lackey’s cottage. “Whether I did put him up to it—I don’t know yet. But if it was he who killed him, and not Dmitri, then, of course, I am a murderer too.” (617)

Anonymous, 2008



Human Suffering

Dostoevsky: “And if the suffering of children goes to make up the sum of suffering needed to buy truth, then I assert beforehand that the whole of truth is not worth such a price.” (245)

I read parts of *The Brothers Karamazov* during my sophomore year in college, and until reading it again this year, I had forgotten the extent to which it informed and formed my understanding of the world. I cannot but agree with Ivan’s fundamental assertion: suffering is irrecoverable. True human suffering—that is, suffering which rightly bears the name (torture, death, a life of pain, etc)—cannot be justified. As Ivan himself intimates, *perhaps* this is an atheistic notion insofar as it disallows the possibility of any entity being able to “make up for” suffering. Furthermore, *perhaps* this is a prideful notion, for it marks human suffering as an endpoint which cannot be traversed; it disallows the possibility of placing any value higher than that of human suffering, be it human freedom itself. Ivan is smart enough to know that this argument accords with people in a much stronger way if children comprise the prime examples. Indeed, they have not bitten from the apple, so what possible basis could there be for the justification of their suffering? “None,” he confidently declares. The problem, of course, is that in refusing even human freedom above human suffering one thereby refuses humanness itself. For without “human freedom” the human is not merely not free, but not human—not an easy pill to swallow.

Yet, human suffering and human freedom cannot be discussed without speaking of human worth as well. Alyosha asks Ivan, “Can it be that any man has the right to decide about the rest of mankind, who is worthy to live and who is more unworthy?” He responds, “But why bring worth into it? The question is most often decided in the hearts of men not at all on the basis of worth, but for quite different reasons, much more natural ones.” (143)

The insight of this comment is rich, for if we look at the way the world works (especially today, but really at any time) the idea of the “worth” of the human plays, at best, an ideal role and at worst, hardly any role whatsoever. The way in which we treat other people (this applies to animals, the environment, etc.) is so often in terms of utility (means to an end) or in simple indifference. It, in my experience, is rarely based upon some ground of fundamental or intrinsic worth.

Imagine if that were the case? Could we allow the amazingly disparate economic inequalities to continue? Could we allow people to die of starvation when there is enough produce (and production capabilities) to feed everyone on earth? If we took the notion of human worth seriously, would not the world be far different than it is now? To connect this to the initial quotation, is not human suffering so atrocious precisely because, as humans, we recognize the intrinsic worth of human beings? Thus, the freedom with which humans are able to inflict cruel and unimaginable suffering is precisely the very freedom with which we can affirm and work to protect human worth: Human worth and human suffering are the opposing faces of human freedom.

In the end, Ivan is right: Whatever one makes of God, one must either deny “his” world (deny humans as they are in their freedom) and renounce the possibility of suffering or deny suffering and affirm the possibility of human worth. I, for one would rather *live—truly* live—and suffer, then not suffer and not live. Perhaps I should be warned though, for wasn’t it precisely the devil who said, “... suffering is life.”? (642)

Joel, 2008

I Am My Brother's Keeper

"We are guilty of all, before all, and on behalf of all."

Is that not a fantastical concept?! I mean "fantastical" as in the "imaginary, unreal" definition as defined by Merriam-Webster. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Markel's mother hits the nail on the head. In response to her son's ardent declaration that we are indeed guilty of all, she asks him, "How can you be more guilty than murderers and robbers?"

I'm not in here for murder, but I'm a murderer. True, no one died, but as Dmitri admits he was capable of murder, and is therefore responsible for it, I must be doubly responsible. The man almost died, and by a miracle he lived. I am also a robber. There are no extenuating circumstances. I robbed.

So from this standpoint, within these walls, the concept seems less fantastical. It is clear as day for me to see that I am guilty of all. What more would I need to be guilty of to be the guiltiest? I am also absolutely guilty before all. I plead "guilty" at my sentencing before a judge and jury of my peers, and am currently a resident of a state penitentiary. That last part, "on behalf of all,"

however, is still a bit fantastic. How can I be guilty for your sins? I have enough to atone for as it is.

It hurts me to compare myself to the lackey Smerdyakov (really, my throat constricts) but I do liken myself to him. Whether Ivan sincerely believes in his theory that everything is permitted, Smerdyakov, in his lesser intelligence, buys into it hook, line and sinker, as I buy into Dostoevsky's message, namely the "guilty of all, before all, and on behalf of all" bit.

So now I expose myself as a believer of the fantastical, and with this exposure I cannot help but expose myself also as a hypocrite. For hypocrisy is a risk you take in believing the fantastical. I believe that I am guilty on behalf of all, because I believe that I am responsible for all. As I am my brother's keeper, I am keeper of all, for I believe in the brotherhood of mankind.

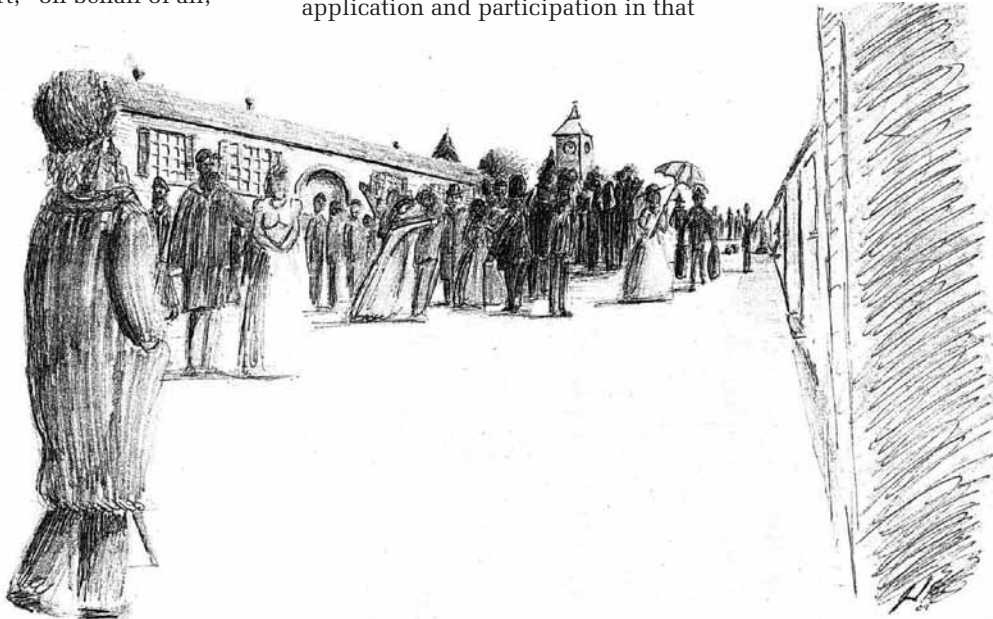
Yet, maybe from recognition of my own duplicity, another loud message of this book is that belief and application and participation in that

belief are leagues away from each other. I feel what I believe, but acting in accordance to it is... something I obviously need to sort out.

If one day, one of you, my "inside" classmates, hear me singing hymns to God, then rejoice for me, that at least I am no longer duplicitous, and I am living my own convictions.

This class, to me, was a miracle. That there would be a class on the in-depth study of my favorite book, *The Brothers Karamazov*, offered here was a miracle in itself. But the experience of this class, and what I took from it is the miracle I talk of. The enthusiasm and insight of everyone, both inside and out, was inspiring. Collectively, we created an environment most conducive to learning about this crazy, crazy book, and most importantly an environment conducive to learning about myself. I received from this class the miracle of reflection. Thank you.

Mike, 2008



"A Scene from Russia" by Joel, 2009

The Idea of God

A person's need to believe in something more or higher than himself has always made me curious. Since the beginning of time, many people have worshiped and believed in many gods. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky has insight into this when he writes, "And man has, indeed, invented God. And the strange thing, the wonder would not be that God really exists, the wonder is that such a notion—the notion of the necessity of God—could creep into the head of such a wild and wicked animal as man—so holy, so moving, so wise a notion, which does man such a great honor." (234-235)

I think it says a lot for humans as a whole that they create an idea of God. It says that we wanted more for ourselves in the way of morality, we wanted more than the life of here and now. Those who created this idea put forth all they thought to be good and just. But Dostoevsky also writes about the other side of man, the side that contradicts the idea of God. "People speak sometimes about the 'animal' cruelty of man, but this is terribly unjust and offensive to animals, no animal could ever be so cruel as a man, so artfully, so artistically cruel." (238)

You would think that if a good and just god did exist, he/she would not want his/her children killing each other in his or her name I believe that man is a being of excuses. When we want a piece of property, someone else's oil, or anything in between we will come up with reasons and excuses why we should take it. Maybe, what one day will redeem us with our larger-than-life egos is that we can conceive of something better and more than what we can ever be.

Amos, 2008

Wickedness in Like

"Gentlemen of the jury, we shall condemn him, and then he will say to himself: 'These people did nothing for my destiny, my upbringing, my education, nothing to make me better, to make a man of me. These people did not give me to eat, they did not give me to drink, I lay naked in prison and they did not visit me, and now they have exiled me to penal servitude. I am quits, I owe them nothing now, and I owe nothing to anyone unto ages of ages. They are wicked, and I shall be wicked. They are cruel, and I shall be cruel!'" (747)

This profound statement by Mitya's defense attorney spoke loudly to me. It is precisely the idea I've had of those responsible for imprisonment, my own as well as others', for quite some time. The fact that this idea and the consequences it alludes to are still alive and well today speaks to the entrenchment of punishment as the main purpose of any sentence imposed on a criminal. In nearly all aspects of life, if there is a problem, people work towards fixing it. If oil is disappearing, we work towards alternative forms of energy. If people can't afford food and health care, we develop forms of public welfare. If our pet dogs are disobedient, we do not cage them for a time and then just expect them to have changed when we release them... we show them the error of their ways, teach them better ways of acting and reward them for doing so.

We treat our dogs this way, but often we don't even award our fellow human beings this luxury. Therefore, how can we expect them to leave the kennel after their punishment is completed and not act wickedly, according to the way they've been treated?

I argue that this type of treatment is a major cause of the high recidivism rates we have today. That is why I am so thankful to have the opportunity to be in this Inside-Out program and be able to better myself and see others do the same. I hope the cycle is broken, finally, and that we are the very cogs in the machine of its demise.

Josh, 2008



James, 2007

Bringing Dostoevsky's Lessons to Life

"Remember especially that you cannot be the judge of anyone," Zosima tells those who gather around him during his final hours. "For there can be no judge of a criminal on earth until the judge knows that he, too, is a criminal, exactly the same as the one who stands before him, and that he is perhaps most guilty of all for the crime of the one standing before him. When he understands this, then he will be able to be a judge." (320-21)

Zosima's message that we cannot be the judge of others is woven throughout *The Brothers Karamazov*, and intimately connected to two other themes: responsibility for the Other, and the idea of punishment and redemption. Responsibility for the Other is important for both sides of judgment. First, in accepting responsibility for the criminal before us, we will be able to see the criminal's actions in a new light, especially in terms of our own connectedness to the crime. On the other side of the judgment, if the criminal realizes his responsibility for others as it relates to his crime, he will ultimately be more aware of his guilt and go through a deeper process of suffering, which the novel shows to be the best punishment and path to redemption. Thus, we also should not judge the other because the best thing for the criminal and society as a whole is for the criminal to accept his own guilt and responsibility. Rather than condemning criminals, we should show them mercy and love because through love, the criminal can be repentant. In showing him love, rather than judging him, we are fostering the best punishment and allowing him to find redemption. In this way, we are not only helping him to become a better person, we are also contributing to a better society as a whole.

In many ways, the experiences of this Inside-Out course have helped

to bring these messages of judgment, responsibility and punishment to life for me. I have realized that the stereotypes and prejudices about criminals and jail inmates that we have in this country often prevent us from seeing them as individuals and as humans. We tend to judge them based on their crime, rather than looking beyond to see who they really are as a person. Our criminal justice system does just what Dostoevsky implores people not to do: we condemn people and punish them with the exile of prison. However, according to the messages of *The Brothers Karamazov*, we should, instead, show them love and support because the punishment imposed by one's own conscience is far more powerful than that imposed by the state; and in showing love and support we will encourage reformation. In demonstrating love and support, we would be conveying that it is possible for society to be good, whereas currently, we simply use a criminal justice and punishment system that show a very negative side of society.

The men I have met in this class have shown me the power of the conscience. Every one of them has defied the system that seems designed to push them farther away from society; every one of them has made a commitment to make the most of every day, every year in prison and to come out a better man. This incredible process they have gone through is in no way a

testament to the effectiveness of our criminal justice system, but rather an exception. The current criminal justice system in the United States does not seem that different from the one seen in *The Brothers Karamazov*; it is still focused on the punishment—on condemning the criminal and pushing him away from society, rather than striving to foster reformation and redemption, rather than showing love and support. In this way, every one of us is also responsible for their crime, because we did not support them beforehand, and we are not supporting them afterwards in a way that will improve both the individual and society. For me, the personal strength and determination our inside classmates demonstrate should show us the potential of the conscience to reform. Rather than squashing this process of personal guilt, suffering, and redemption with our criminal justice system, we should foster it.

The men in this class have taught me more than I could have imagined. I will never be able to find the words to thank them enough.

Alison F., 2008



My favorite quote...

"You must know that there is nothing higher, or stronger, or sounder, or more useful afterwards in life, than some good memory... You hear a lot said about your education, yet some such beautiful, sacred, memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man stores up many such memories to take into life, then he is saved for his whole life. And even if only one good memory remains with us in our hearts, that alone may serve some day for our salvation." (774)

It goes without saying: Thank goodness for these memories. I hope never to forget.

Katy P., 2008

Letter to the 2008 Class

This class has shown me how similar I am to many of the Outside students. What we all share is life. Our lives take sharp turns, travel up and downhill, and take us through various highs and lows. I am a person, not unlike that of the U of O students.

All the Outside students were very open and non-judgmental. They perhaps learned how easily they could be in a similar situation as myself given certain situations. I think that is very important. Dostoevsky talked about how no one should judge another until they realize they too are just as "criminal." I agree with this to a certain extent, in that we all see people for who they are and try to see ourselves in others.

I really enjoy watching the transformation of the Outside students when they realize how similar we are, and that we are not so "criminal" as they may have previously assumed. Many Outside students encouraged me to pursue my academic goals. After all, we are all college students in this class.

The true learning that took place in this class was in the conversations we had about life. How I could see myself in the Outside students' shoes and how they could see themselves in mine. We are all caring, breathing, and feeling people. We all love. We all dream. We all have families and friends. We all want to be happy. We share so much and yet live in completely different atmospheres.

It is quite a compelling situation. I think what I got most out of this class was the common bond we all share. I only hope to have [imparted] the reality that there are indeed good people behind these walls.

Sam, 2008

by: Liz

To bring together a group of inmates & some students,
what's it take?

When you break down all the barriers for a while,
what's at stake?

When you encourage the cultivation of ideas,
what's it make?

And who really understands it when two
humans can relate?

When two souls get Face to Face and open up
to one another

Even if only to the extent that we recognize the
Same in Other

When we feel that spark which our buddhist friends
call namasté

to which we've been exposed by Levinas as
respons~~A~~bilité

But it's a feeling that we've truly understood for
all our lives

a deeper human connection, that soulful click
for which we strive

and we're surprised, like when we listen to the
speech of Myshkin

But in truth what he shows us is a truth for
which we're wishin'

We all come to this experience from different paths
& yet they cross

So whoever doesn't learn from one another
it's their loss

Because the bars become hypothetical when we all
sit down in this room

Recognizing that we're all just human, we all
ponder the same moon⁷⁹.

Dear Inside-Out class,

I wanted to write a letter for our class because I feel like I have so much to say, but of course I don't know where to begin. Rather than getting all mushy and telling you how amazing and wonderful you all are and how eye-opening and life-engaging this class has been (not that that isn't the truth), I thought I'd leave you on a more philosophical note—something that I've been thinking about a lot lately—that I'll pass on to you.

This has been an insanely crazy term for me. First, obviously, there is this class. My perspectives on people in general have changed entirely. I am now more aware than ever of the many labels like “prisoner” or “honors college students” I use to define people. These labels do describe a part of us, but they do not even begin to accurately describe who we are.

After this class, there is a part of me that just wants to throw myself entirely into working on the criminal justice system, human rights... just any sort of humanitarian work. I know that wasn't the goal of the class, but I think it's an obvious repercussion. I want to spread what I've learned to as many people as possible. I want to change how they think, in the same way that this experience has changed how I think.

I used to be an education major, so this pull towards social responsibility is not a new feeling for me. I've had a lot of classes that have opened my eyes to the enormous amount of need there is in the world, and so I studied to be a teacher in the hopes of making a difference, as cliché as that sounds, because I felt like it was my responsibility. As someone coming from a privileged position, I had to give something back.

I also performed in one of my first plays this term, as I know you all heard me stress about. A very stressful, but also amazing experience. For me, the adrenaline rush of being on stage is like none other, and I get an overwhelming sense of satisfaction. The theater is where my heart is, and where I always want to be. Where I am lost is in deciding what is most important. How will I

ever know that I am doing what's best? How will I ever escape the feeling that there is something more I could do to make a life, even my own life, somewhat better? And should I do what fulfills me, theater, even if I don't think it's providing as great of a service to others (all my Others, as Levinas would say) as I am capable of?

I am forced to remember a line from *The Brothers Karamazov*. I swear I didn't start out this letter intending to relate it to the text, but that darn book just applies to everything. (I guess it better if it's going to be nearly 800 pages long!) Dostoevsky writes: “... there can be no judge of a criminal on earth until the judge knows that he, too is a criminal, exactly the same as the one who stands before him, and that he is perhaps most guilty of all for the crime of the one standing before him... For if I myself were righteous, perhaps there would be no criminal standing before me now.” (320-321) See, the thing is, I just always have this overwhelming feeling that there is more that I could be doing. That's not meant egotistically, as if I could change the entire world, but small things matter too, and I am capable of doing more.

And yet, amidst such great confusion, I am happy. Even though these questions are constant sources of real confusion for me, this is where I'm meant to be. There is so much possibility. Thank you all for everything you've taught me this term, purposefully or unintentionally. I have learned so much.

With love and gratitude,

Katy P., 2008

THE FREEDOM TO WITNESS DREAMS BEING ACHIEVED THROUGH EYES
WHICH SEE LITTLE FREEDOM—
YET UNSHACKLED IS MY SOUL AND MIND—SO I ALLOW YOUR DREAMS TO
BECOME MINE— AND I FIND— MY FREEDOM BEING DEFINED—
SEE, ALTHOUGH OUR PATHS ARE CONVERGING—
FINDING COMMON SPACE, THROUGH NOVELS OF DIVERSE TASTE,
MY MIND IS STILL SEARCHING—

FOR HIDDEN JEWELS— BENEATH THE SURFACE AND RULES
I FIND MY HEART ACHING—

TO SIFT THROUGH ROOTS STILL CONNECTED—
CONCRETE SLABS SKY-HIGH, YET FACES STILL REFLECTED—
MY HEARTS LIES NAKED AND STILL RESPECTED—

SO I SEE NO STRANGERS HERE
I SEE TREES THAT TOUCH THE MOONLIGHT THAT WE BOTH OBSERVE—
WHERE YOU AND I EXCEED EXPECTATION, MINGLING FREELY WITHOUT
SEPERATION, NEVER FORGETTING THE ABSENCE OF WORDS—

I SEE CHILDREN GROWN—
I SEE PAST MISTAKES FADING IN THE SHADE OF A NEW HOME—
I SEE OPEN ROAD, WHERE ARGENTINA BECKONES—
AND PEACE IS AN OPEN DOOR AVAILABLE TO ALL,
YET HEADING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS—

AM I THE IDIOT OR DOES MY FREEDOM REALLY EXIST?

AM I A MADMAN FOR HOLDING TOMMORROWS DAY AT THE RIVER
WITH WOMAN, AND NOVEL, AND DOG—
AS TODAYS REASONING FOR SMILES, AND LAUGHTER, AND GOD?

MAYBE SO... YET I ROLL THE DICE AND BELIEVE IN THIS FREEDOM
MADMAN I AM OR
IDIOT I MAY BE—

BUT NEVER WILL I SHATTER WITH FEAR AND LET THESE
WALLS BREAK ME— OR SHAPE ME—

MY FREEDOM STILL BREATHES ALTHOUGH CONTAINED—
CHAIN ME, ISOLATE ME, FORGET ME, AND STILL I CLIMB—

Classmates,

Thank you. This has certainly been a unique experience, and it will always stand out in my mind. I want to let you all know that you guys have been really instrumental in my recent decision to change my major in the hopes of becoming a teacher someday. This class has helped me realize how much I enjoy learning and discussing with others, but most especially, I've really appreciated the genuine person-to-person interaction that occurs on a weekly basis. I hope that I can pass on what I've learned about acceptance and kindness to my own classroom of kids someday.

Inside students: You guys have been so nice to all of us "outsiders." I tried coming into this class with no expectations, but I was still blown away by your hospitality, sense of humor and acceptance of us dorky kids. I really respect you all.

Outside students: I love our van-rides and attempts at group dinners. I appreciate our conversations and your great insights. You people remind me why I love the Honors College, and I wish you all luck on your upcoming adventures!

Michelle, 2008

To the 2008 Class

Since I've become involved with the Inside-Out class, I've been very inspired by the courage and dedication of the outside students. They have shown me that it's never too late to go back to school and learn. This class has given me a great sense of accomplishment within myself. Prisons are the fastest growing business in the United States while our schools languish for want of teachers, facilities, and resources that might, if given the chance, make the prisons unnecessary. I must examine carefully and regularly the things in life that I have chosen to be bound to, so that I can choose all of them again—with new purpose, new joy, new freedom.

When we get stuck in life, we lose the possibility of living it to the fullest. It's no disgrace to start all over. It is usually an opportunity.

Rich, 2008



Angst

I approach each meeting
with a light fluttery heart.
Thinking up to
the last minute,
that I will turn around.
But as I step through
the threshold,
and all I feel is welcoming,
accepting, warmth,
I am incredibly happy
and glad that I came,
eager for a new
experience with these
young fresh minds.

Ray, 2007



INTRODUCTION TO THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD BY FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

A Gulag journal written by Alexander Petrovitch, discovered after his death, entitled “Scenes From the House of the Dead,” is the inspiration for this novel by Dostoevsky. This work is both a product of that journal and the author’s personal experiences.

Dostoevsky was imprisoned in a Siberian gulag in 1850 for four years. Nicholas was Tsar. Fundamental changes were occurring in Europe and potentially in Russia. In 1848 revolution was changing Europe. Marx and Engels published their manifesto; the Tsar was considering emancipating the serfs. Russia maintained a standing army of one million men. However, the Chechens had twice badly beaten them in 1842 and again in 1844 in the Caucasus. Russia was in financial crisis and class tension was ubiquitous. City population was growing at the expense of crops due to migration. Gulags were the government’s repositories of those who could not keep pace with change as well as those who would not. A gulag convict could look out through chunks in his housing wall and see the wall, the sentries and a little strip of sky, not the sky that stood over the prison, but a free, far away sky. Dostoevsky characterizes his convicts as not much worse than the remainder who lived outside the prison. Man, outside and inside, however, is a creature that can become accustomed to anything.

Alexander Petrovitch: a gentleman, landowner, murdered his wife. He gave lessons to children, but owned no books. He was horrified at intimacy.

Strotskin: beautiful, wild, gentle, talked little, rarely laughed, always had money, lazy, untidy, and a failed soldier. He was an orphan among men.

Gazim: a horrible creature. Ferocious monster, huge Tatar, strong, ex-soldier, in for life, cruel. Always cunning. He invited abuse.

Akim Akimitch: tall and lean, dull-witted, illiterate, German, fault finder, honest, ex-soldier. While an officer in the Russian army, he murdered an enemy chief. He was a shoemaker, painter, guildler, locksmith. Although kind and friendly, he demonstrated no remorse.

Orloo: a runaway soldier, famous robber, murdered old people and

children. While weakly built, he had terrible strength and an iron will. An intelligent man, he was respected and open in this setting.

Sushilou: downtrodden, good looking, not stupid or clever, submissive and sensitive. He was compelled to serve others.

Convict “A”: revolting, no morals or repentance. Friendly, paid informant on the outside and rat on the inside. Afraid of nothing and not revolted by anything. Believed that once one is a convict, one may as well be one and do “nasty things” —without shame.

These individuals comprise a significant sample of Dostoevsky’s convicts, and concludes the following:

Prison has laws of its own.

Convicts are a people apart.

Remorse is not common—no repentance.

Man is adaptable.

Admission of lawlessness is rare.

Work partially mitigates the negatives of confinement.

There is a class system in prison.

There is no one to rely upon in prison.

The psychological effect of prison on convicts is not uniform.

Vanity and self assertion are convict characteristics.

Personality traits exhibited on the outside are exacerbated by prison confinement.

The free sky is mostly forgotten by convicts in prison. Men tend to create a life behind walls. They perform in ways that make tolerable living. They become accustomed.

Wil, 2007

On Entering Prison

"There are bad people everywhere, and good ones among the bad.' I hastened to console myself by reflecting: 'And who knows? These people are perhaps by no means so much worse than the remainder who have remained outside the prison.' Even as I thought this, I shook my head at the idea, and yet, my God, if I had only known at the time how true that thought was!" (72)

I have come to expect "good" people and "bad" people in many situations in my life. Regardless of social situation, there are difficult people—people who could be defined as "bad." There are people who believe differently than you, who act contrary to your opinions or expectations, and who are therefore, to you, "bad," or at least undesirable. Beyond that, I think every person is a mix of both the good and the bad.

So here we are, together in our imperfectness.

This passage stuck out to me particularly because it was the narrator's thought upon entering prison in Siberia. He expresses the hope that, in effect, his fellow prisoners will be similar to the people in ordinary society. He expresses disbelief that this hope will prove true, but, speaking in retrospect, confirms it as a powerful truth.

I am entering into a prison in a completely different set of circumstances than the narrator, but I come with a similar set of hopes and expectations. I recognize in myself elements of "badness" and expect in my classmates a similar element, whether they be inside or outside students. I also recognize that "badness" is an arbitrary judgment. Are we not all

the same in that we are all human beings, capable of making our own decisions, and capable of feeling the same emotions?

This passage, to me, reflects both fear and hope in people. I hope, in this class, that the hopeful attitude of this passage and our narrator will prove true in our group. I expect to find that we are all people, good mixed with bad, but hopefully all interesting and involved in this learning environment we've entered. The statement the narrator made from fear is one I make in hope: I hope that we find each other to be more similar than different. People are people. That seems to me to be the point of the passage, and a vital fact in living life.

Katie D., 2007

23

Life's Timing

On page 288 of *The House of the Dead*, Petrovitch reveals to the reader his penchant for counting time. He shares that "I reckoned off every day, and although a thousand remained, I took pleasure in ticking them off one by one. I saw the day off, I buried it, and I rejoiced at the coming of another day, because there was not a thousand left but nine hundred and ninety-nine." Later, on page 295, another prisoner interjects an argument to declare: "We are not alive though we are living and we are not in our graves though we are dead."

Though they are a chapter apart from each other, these two small passages struck me quite sharply. I feel I must admit at this point that I am guilty of counting down the days until nearly every "exciting" event of my life. It's what I do. Christmas, graduation, the next

Harry Potter book, the new Arcade Fire album, every single event I look forward to comes attached with a long and monotonous countdown, all of which inevitably leads me to the point of not enjoying my life for what it is one day at a time. By continually rushing forward and looking with great excitement toward the future, I'm never in the present.

Accordingly, at some distant point in time I'm going to realize that my entire life has never been as rich and meaningful as it could be. Instead, I'll have an empty shell of memories coated only by a few significant events, which will hardly amount to anything noteworthy in the long run. This tendency of mine is very worrisome, and I'm doing everything in my power to love and enjoy every day I'm given, but it's still difficult to not want the ninety-

two days between now and July 21 (Harry Potter #7) to melt away quickly. My family and friends chastise me constantly, saying that "living in the now" is necessary and my yearning for the future makes them anxious.

It makes me anxious, too, because nothing terrifies me more than old age, a distant horizon that I seem more than willing to reach as quickly as possible. I've got to live. Right now!

AJ, 2007

The Role of Gentlemen

"The convicts could laugh at me, seeing that I was poor hand at their work... But mixed with their persecution and ridicule, there was another element: we had once been gentlemen; we belonged to the same class as their former masters, of whom they could have no pleasant memories. But now at the theatricals they made way for me. They recognized that in this I was a better critic..." (155-156)

Two days ago, riding through Eugene on the bus, I was passing time reading Dostoevsky. What struck me in the middle of page 84 of *The House of the Dead* was the resonance of Dostoevsky's words throughout the bus. The bus system is a Petri dish of the like of gypsies and storytellers, the extreme personalities, as page 84 puts it.

Besides the eyebrow-pierced grandmother, the friendly man with the ice cream cone box and the elder with the misaligned face, what struck me the most was that no one would sit beside me. I was "the gentleman" in the hive of real folk, the folk who know a thing or two about life.

Each time a new throng of passengers boarded, my neighboring seat was skirted and scuttled around like a trap door. Was it the book that gave me away, or did I have an intellectual aura that disgusted them? I wasn't sure. Two seats ahead of me was the man with the misaligned face. His forehead was divided by a creased valley of skin and his eyes were hidden in distorted sockets that were, truth be told, hard to look straight into. But he had more willing neighbors than I.

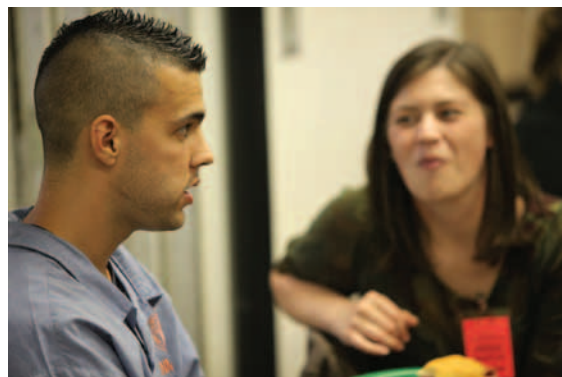
People stood up rather than accompany the brainy looking freak: me. I have not always had such an easy life, but suddenly I felt embarrassed to be reading about poverty on the bus; I felt like my guilty pleasure was reading about the intrigues of their lives. This must have shown. I had so quickly assumed that I'd be a better candidate for a bus-mate than the man in his own scarred mask, but obviously I was the more daunting of the two. I wondered whether they disliked me for my book. As Dostoevsky shows, no one cares for the "gentleman" of the crowd. Or, were they simply leaving me to study as Alexander Petrovitch was left to the theatrics?

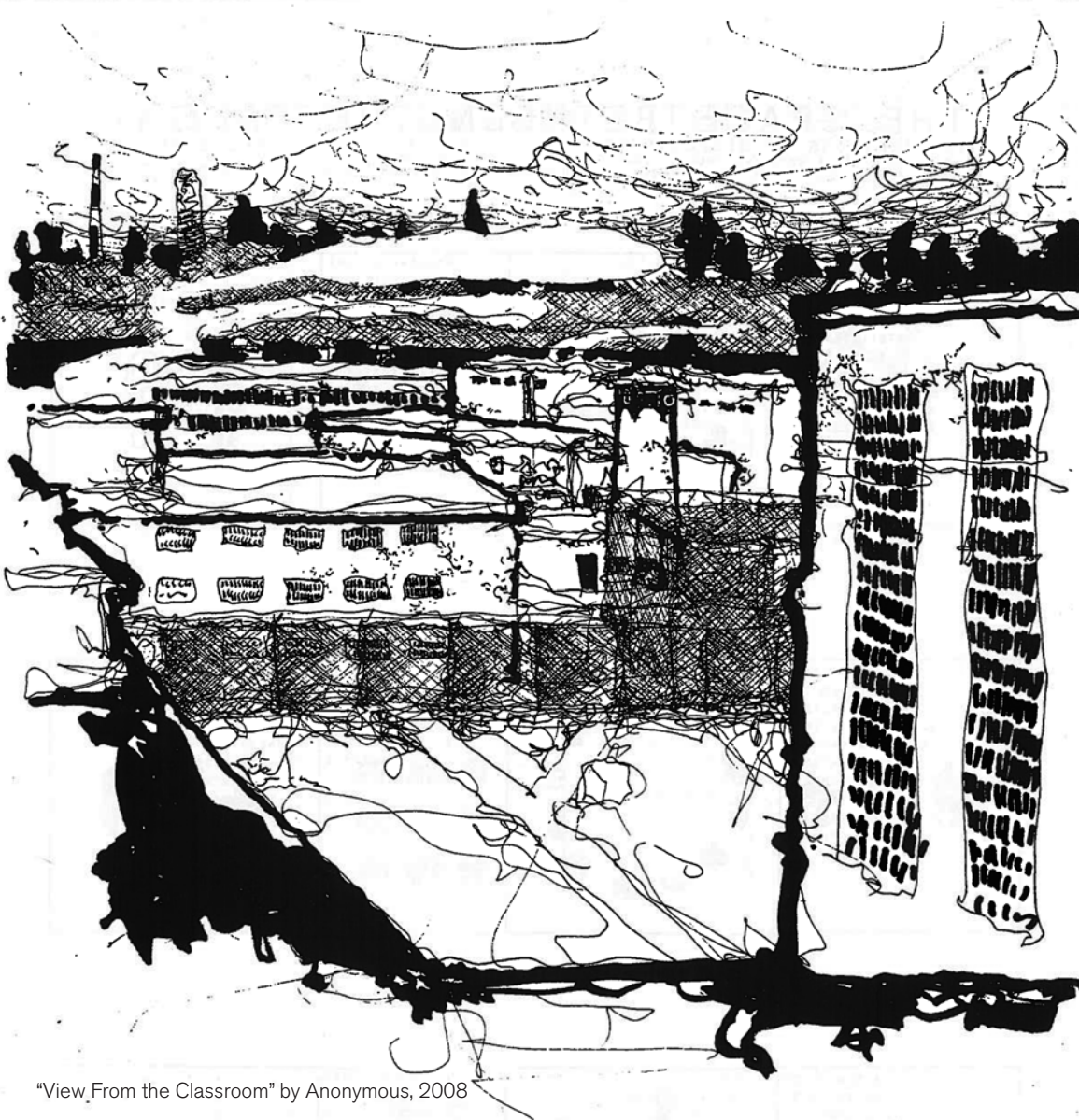
Jenny, 2007

Response to *The House of the Dead*

Dostoevsky makes numerous observations about prison life and prisoner conduct in late 1800s Siberia. I have found that a surprising number of his references are descriptive of modern day prisons, even here at OSP. One such similarity is the idea that prison makes criminals more antisocial and likely to commit future crimes. In one passage, Dostoevsky says, "Of course, the criminal, prison... only developed hatred, lust for forbidden pleasures, and a fearful levity... Of course, the criminal who revolts against society hates it, and almost always considers himself in the right and society in the wrong. Moreover, he has already endured punishment at its hands, and for that reason almost considers himself purged and quits with society." (19-20)

While in my experience this attitude is not so blatantly displayed, the recidivism rates speak volumes about the "reformation" of inmates by prison. I have personally seen many men released and return multiple times. Almost all feel that society





"View From the Classroom" by Anonymous, 2008

was against them because they were ex-cons. "I couldn't get a job because of my criminal record. My parole officer was out to get me from the start." While these beliefs may or may not be the reality, they are real to the believers. Therefore, they justify their return to crime because they feel that society has shunned them and, if nothing else, prison has made them better criminals.

Moreover, how many lives are affected by the beliefs of these "social misfits"? Will they not pass on these ideals to their children, who will potentially then rebel against society and become prisoners themselves?

Should the victims of crime not be included in any discussion of criminals? These people are probably, for the most part, upstanding citizens, who may well become embittered and consequently push for more crimes to be punishable by imprisonment as well as longer sentences. I understand the desire for retribution, the need for punishment and consequences for one's actions. However, would society not be better served by rehabilitating the criminal with education, support, work skills training and programs that work towards true reform, both as alternatives to incarceration as well as to supplement the

inmate's prison term? It is my belief that the convicted individual would return to society far less antisocial if he was taught how to succeed rather than being discarded, warehoused, and forsaken as a failure.

"Of course, prisons and penal servitude do not reform the criminal; they only punish him and protect society from further attack on its security." (19) How can we possibly be protecting anyone if we send our prisoners back into society in far worse shape than before their captivity?

Josh, 2007



26



"Cover of the 2008 Anthology" by French Fry, 2008

The Troupe

We came together
not knowing how wonderful
it was going to be.
New faces from
different places
all eager for a
new experience
But what happened
was more wonderful
than we could know
We were all old friends
having met many times before
our faces and the times had changed
but our hearts had stayed the same
Besides, we were all just humans
meeting time and again through the ages
our love and compassion growing each time
Awaken old friends
see me for who I am
what I am is your friend again

Ray, 2007

Dear fellow Inside-Outsiders,

This class has been the best of my college career, but I am still trying to make sense of this surreal occurrence where every Wednesday for 3 hours I go inside to a world very different from my own. I appreciate everyone in this class for being part of this experience where we laugh about personal stories, decipher Levinas like some sort of hieroglyphics, and live literature together.

*When I started my piece for the anthology, I thought I would write a short story that would combine different memories and discussion from a number of classes into a cohesive story, but it just doesn't seem right to reduce this rich experience into a story. One thing I took away from reading *The Idiot* is that it is very difficult to express and reduce complex human emotions and individuals to characters in a narrative. For this reason, I don't feel like I can draw a set conclusion from our class because we are all real people that operate in real time. I feel a Levinasian responsibility to you all, and I think "thematizing" our experience detracts from my face-to-face relationship with everyone in the class. One thing I have noticed in this class, though, is that this experience has dealt more with practical matters than many of my other classes. For this reason, I would like to tell a brief anecdote of my experience in this class. In my college experience, I have noticed that my peers and I often operate in a philosophical realm that often neglects the practical application of our hypothetical theories and discussion. However, this class has been awakening for me because I have been able to discuss dense philosophy and literature in a pretty unlikely setting, the Oregon State Penitentiary. That said, I present to you my anecdote.*

The Handshake

At the university we are creatures of habit; students sit in their same seats in the classroom. In Inside-Out I don't think I've sat next to the same person twice. I always have something to talk about with my neighbor.

I was afraid going into this class that we wouldn't have much in common, but steel bars are clearly permeable because we have more to discuss than I could have ever imagined. I feel naive now because in university life there is no sense of immediacy and brevity where the desire to get to know classmates in ten weeks is absent; ashamedly, I usually just don't have an incentive to get to converse with my fellow classmates.

Class begins. Levinas comes to life. We talk about holding doors for others, debate if the word god can exist, and figure out why we do good. In other words, Levinas' words become personal. The literature is what we do, subconsciously and consciously, and I feel a responsibility for my Other. The discussions gain life because we bring real-life experiences to the reading. In typical literature classes I am usually responsible for discussing character relations or themes in a six-page essay. In this class, we discuss how responsibility for the Other translates to Sancho and Don Quixote and what that says about our own realities and relationships. This reading has become a part of my everyday life because I think about my own actions and my relationship to those around me—my own ethics.

With time cut short at 8:30 we get our last words in, say our goodbyes, and go our separate ways. The ride home for me is always reflective: thinking about my new friends on the Inside, the literature, the prison setting, my responsibility for the Other, and trying to piece all these different elements swirling in my head into something that makes sense.

Interrupted from my meditation, the van pulls up to campus and I walk home.

I close myself in my room trying to focus my thoughts on Inside-Out. I think to myself how this class has been so surreal because I've been placed into such a foreign setting that is normalized because the Inside students live it, and for three hours a week we Outside students get to live it too—to an extent. The literature allows us to have the connection. I have learned through the literature some real applications of Levinas, Don Quixote, and Dostoevsky. For me, that is summed up in the handshake. I feel legitimately welcomed into your worlds when we shake hands and class begins, and I feel a responsibility for you all—my Others. The handshake helps snap me out of my philosophizing and confusion and into reality where we live the literature together. Then again, maybe it's just a manners thing, and I'm just glad that you offer me your hands.

Thank you all for a great class,

Peter, 2009

Living

Integrating these passions
 I have discovered
 within myself
 into a unified
 mode of living
 shall indeed
 prove to be
 a both formidable
 and awesomely
 thrilling adventure.
 This is a belief
 I have found
 striving to grow
 upon the rocky
 coastal edges of
 my waking contemplations.
 Striving against
 the dragging tides
 of forgetfulness
 and the buffeting,
 tearing winds
 of fear.
 A fear
 as transparent
 and empty as
 the wind itself,
 and forgetfulness that
 inland holds no sway.
 An ease of mind
 I find it gives
 me to uproot
 and transfer
 this belief
 into the garden
 of my heart,
 where it can be unceasingly tended
 by the light
 and living water
 of love.
 A love
 forever to be
 found here.

Matthew, 2007

If There Are Answers

If there are answers
 they are supposed to be here
 residing in text books,
 field trips,
 faculty.
 There are billions of answers
 in millions of books
 at the library.
 There are answers hidden
 around corners
 and in the free papers.
 Answers are shouted
 in classes
 in fliers
 on street corners
 in club meetings.
 The first thing learned
 is that not all answers
 are true.
 If there are answers,
 I can only assume they would be here,
 at an institution devoted
 to higher learning.
 One can only hope they are here.
 If there are answers.
 Perhaps we are all simply
 dancing toward some great
 capital T Truth
 forever beyond the reach
 of human minds.
 Searching only for answers
 and the small t truths
 of our own small lives.
 Searching for answers.
 If there are answers,
 I hope to find them here.
 But who,
 I wonder,
 ever promised me
 answers?

Katie D., 2007

A Twist of Fate

a twist of fate
 a turn for the worst
 the victim of hate
 i never thought i'd see me here
 guilty until innocence is disproven
 society's justice is rarely fair
 my incarceration a crime
 far more severe than the sum of my every wrong
 a reward for my wasted life
 i wish to seek
 yet what price could ever repay time lost
 thus bitterness is bred
 and confusion is replaced by anger
 this place the school where little good is taught
 and many are the apt pupils
 so the fragile mind is corrupted and defiled
 while politicians label it rehabilitation
 kidnapped by a faulty system
 a teen turned inmate
 my future fading fast
 the boy that was loved
 is the man that is feared

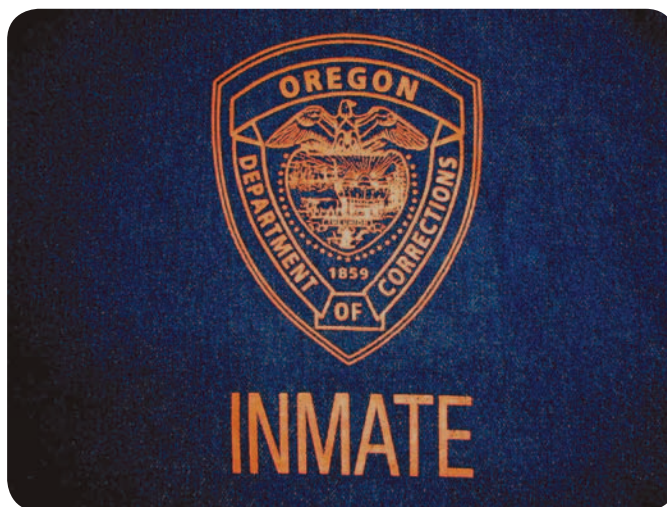
Josh, 2007

The Path I Laid

So often as the days go by
 you regret the choices made
 life then grabs you by the hands
 and pulls you down the path you laid.
 Who on earth can shoulder the burden
 when you see your decisions were wrong
 what on earth can ease the pain
 when you realize your dreams are gone.
 All your life there's been one thing
 just one thing in which you sought
 and now it forever escapes you
 it's possible, it is, but it's not.
 Your dream is now your history
 a family of your own you may never know
 and the only pain you feel is loneliness
 knowing your dream will never grow.
 And even though you now may know
 that trouble again you'd never find
 so quickly life just speeds away
 and leaves you so far behind.
 I'll always watch as the days go by
 and regret the choices made
 life has grabbed me by the hands
 and pushed me down the path I laid.

James, 2007

29



INTRODUCTION TO **THE IDIOT** BY FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

Prince Lev Nikolayevich Myshkin is a good young man and a descendent of one of the oldest Russian lines of nobility. He has spent the last four years in a Swiss sanitarium for treatment of his idiocy and epilepsy. After the death of his doctor he travels to St. Petersburg in search of his distant relative.

Because of his child-like naiveté, he is ridiculed by many, but also confided in by many. He becomes involved in a plot in which a woman, Nastasya, is being pursued by two men, Ganya and Rogozhin. Myshkin also proposes, but she leaves with Rogozhin.

The woman runs back and forth between the two men until Rogozhin makes a failed attempt on Myshkin's life. Myshkin then becomes interested in another woman named Aglaya. To be sure of their relationship, Aglaya sets up a meeting with Nastasya and makes the Prince choose between them. Because of the pity he feels, he cannot deny Nastasya. The two get engaged, but never get married. Nastasya runs away and a murder ends up taking place.

Tending to troubled people's needs was the Prince's priority in life. Though faced with all different kinds of pressure, he never swayed from his self-assigned duty. In the end it left him insane.

Paul, 2009



All quotations from the following essays are citations from this edition: Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Idiot*. Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage Classics, 2001.

Seeing the Other

"And finally, it seems to me that we're such different people, by the look of it... in many ways, that we perhaps cannot have many points in common, only, you know, I personally don't believe in that last notion, because it often only seems that there are not points in common, when there are a lot... it comes from people's laziness, that they sort themselves out by looks and can't find anything." (27)

This is my favorite line from the reading thus far, spoken by the Prince Myshkin to General Epanchin upon their first meeting. The line articulates the importance of searching for the human similarities between people that have barriers set between them. These barriers may be physical, social or personal. This theme was evoked several times in the reading.

The prince is faced with the humanity of his company when Ganya comes to apologize to him. "Earlier I took you altogether for a villain, and suddenly you overjoyed me so—it's a real lesson: not to judge without experience." (22) Here the prince rediscovers what he previously stated. He finds himself

judging Ganya, setting Ganya apart from himself. It takes a deeper search to find that Ganya, while often rude and selfish, is none the less a feeling human being. The prince finds he can relate to Ganya's emotions when he asks for his forgiveness and offers to kiss his hands. Through this interaction the prince is enabled to look beyond their obvious differences to see they share a human solidarity.

The prince also sees the humanity in his company during Nastasya's visit to the Ivanova household. Everyone else judges Nastasya by the cruelty of her outward speech and fail to see her humanity. The prince knows there must be more,

that she can't possibly be the way she is acting. When he speaks up and refers to her humanity, this humanity quickly emerges in her embarrassment.

This theme is striking to me because it pertains to our classroom experience and can be taken to apply to all of life. The classroom allows each person to overcome the laziness of looking at "the Other's" differences, to truly experience the human solidarity we share. This very valuable experience is an important awakening into exactly what Prince Myshkin so eloquently stated.

Leslie, 2009

31

Empathy

It's been said that there is no surer way to the dislike of men than to behave well where they have behaved badly. I'm considering this when reading the exchange between Rogozhin and the Prince in the third chapter of the second part. Jealousy is an element of Rogozhin's discomfort but it runs much deeper than that alone.

Rogozhin has so far, and in most ways in his life, seemingly prevailed. He gets the girl, has the fun, collects both the experience and the things he desires. But he does so by a system of similar material respect. Rogozhin, finding what works for a time—the immediate allure of money,

the seemingly sophisticated feel to calling things as he sees them—"What, she's not like that, or something? There's no point, brother, in saying she's not like that. It's pure nonsense." (*The Idiot*, Dostoevsky). He has come to rely on that system, becoming complacent in character. And then Prince Myshkin comes along and is his exact opposite, in that he has either settled into or is conscious of the power of appealing to our hopes of how he'd like to be—regardless of how we really are at present.

Rogozhin loves in every way except empathetically. His idea of love is a kind of purchase, literally and

emotionally. Whereas for Myshkin, to love is to appeal to our better selves... giving the benefit of the doubt. He allows for our flaws and shortcomings and without saying it directly, forgives the other for being human.

If you are not of the same mind it can be troubling, because you have not allowed for what might be. And because you have not allowed for it you cannot see it in yourself... how you might be better. However, you can instantly recognize when someone else is behaving better than yourself and this is instinctively perceived as a threat. Socially, it very much is.

Nastasya Filippovna, too, is rattled by the Prince's magnanimity in judgment. She's not used to it, of course, and it nearly blinds her like a light suddenly switched on in a dark room. She can't yet look at it. This sort of empathy, which is necessarily made up of both emotion and reason, whether it is correct or not, will illuminate those in and around it and we might after all change for the better... or be so consumed by jealousy and hate that we'd rather see the light go out than have to take a closer look at ourselves.

Joel, 2009

Hopefully Coherent Babbling Concerning This Experience

Many times existence appears solemn and weighs heavy on the conscious inquiring mind. Other times it seems that this life we find ourselves tossed into appears before us with the sheer beauty of the most staggering and gorgeous piece of artwork. Yet more commonly, we find ourselves subtly existing somewhere between these two seemingly opposing conscious states. The mundane many times fades into the background behind the more strikingly powerful instances and fleeting moments that characterize the two extreme conscious states mentioned in the beginning. Although I feel there is much to be examined in these usually overlooked “normal” moments of our life, I wish to express how this non-traditional “classroom” experience has launched me past the daunting normality of academia into a bliss-like state of mental beauty. From the first moment I met all the students in this class I have felt a sort of indescribable emotion that can only make itself known in certain instances. When I silently sit, listening to the numerous diverse conversations occurring around me between the students of this class, the emotion makes itself most evident, although not in language. I let all the conversations between the unique minds in the room serve as a true apparently unbreakable bond that has the power to give meaning to existence.

My responsibility to the Other, as we speak of so frequently in this class, appears to me not as some sort of moral or ethical bond toward the individual, but as the inescapable conscious fact that I am confronted by other human beings and must recognize them in some manner. This can be by sitting in silence in the presence of an individual while contemplating entirely different thoughts, or it could manifest itself as I am immersed in deeply intriguing conversation with another individual. I feel as though an infinite amount of harmful social structures and social stigmas that blindly perpetuate the status quo disintegrate before my very eyes with the handshake of one class member. While I sit in deep conversation in small groups or the class as a whole, the tiny room seems to swell to a massive open forum where the most silent and inexpressible ideas can take shape. Free flowing diverse thought and human consciousness stretch

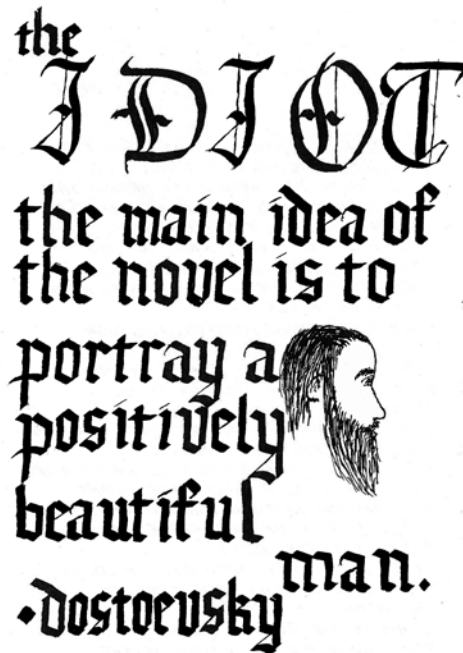
time and space to a place where the most ignorant and uninterested mind can find a concept to attach on to, no matter how absurd.

I feel as though the more I continue my life on this miniscule planet stashed away in the infinite meaningless universe, I come to confront my own ignorance. I find that many times I walk around and

I feel as though I can truly feel society’s demise and become disgusted with my own continued life as a human being. Every time I step into the room with all of you I immediately begin to swell up with the exact opposite feeling I just described. I accept the meaninglessness of my own human existence, but reconcile myself within each of your spoken words, glances, and questions. A real feeling of ecstasy overtakes me and any pain, tiredness, or disinterestedness exits my body in one rush where I feel the unification of our minds together. If life is truly meaningless and all the suffering has no purpose then it seems to me that any number of the interactions I have had with the members of this class will stand as pure meaning, in defiance of that idea.

In the end, we will all confront death in our own illogical way as the only true tie between all living things. What place we occupied in society, the job we had, the money we made, and the relationships we forged will fade into insignificance. But, until that point, I will strive to put myself into situations that bring me toward the indescribable feeling that this class presses upon me. Although I cannot explain it (even though this whole thing was supposed to try) I hope that maybe some of you will understand what I am trying to convey. It is not a feeling, nor an emotion, it is not now or in the future, it makes itself known, while at the same time masking itself from any true understanding. I know it exists within me and will never dissipate and I think it is out of respect for it that I will not attempt to put it into words and will let each of you attempt to define it yourself. I can’t thank each of you enough for this experience and I hope each of your lives remains unexplainable to you until the day we all confront our own finitude. Peace.

Daniel, 2009



"The Idiot" by Anonymous, 2009

Freedom

These days
I've got a lot to lose
Six strings
and two running shoes
When the
sun comes up tomorrow
And I
don't steal or borrow
The bars
and the walls disappear
And I
I am simply ... Here

Anonymous, 2007

Scribbles in the Dark

Sometimes
all that holds life
and sanity
together
are the desperate
half-legible
scribbles
late at night
on the edge of sleep
the last gasps
of the waking mind
quick, urgent
scribbles
in the dark.

Katie D., 2007

Thought

Bars everywhere
Familiar, only ten times thicker
Fences all around
Familiar, only ten times higher
Coiled Barbed Wire
Familiar, only ten times longer
Denims:
I have some,
But without an orange stamp
Blue clothes:
I've got them
But I cannot wear them here
Freedom!
I thought I didn't have it
When I couldn't walk alone
I thought I didn't have it
When I wasn't allowed to go dancing downtown at night
I thought I didn't have it
When I had to sit in class, seven hours a day, everyday
But Freedom! What's freedom? How is freedom?
To some it's just a dream
A privilege once had, now lost
Why?
No, it does not seem fair, but maybe it is
injustice or justice ... a double sided coin
Guilt, responsibility, the Other
And Change, possible
Appreciation, probable
Alliance, perhaps
And Freedom, questionable.

Jodi, 2008



YET THIS QUESTION HAUNTS ME ONCE A WEEK.
 THIS IS A FOREVER QUESTION.
 WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY 24 HRS A DAY?
 DO I VISIT THE WHOLE WORLD IN BREADTH?
 OR DO I EXPLORE ONE SPOT IN DEPTH?
 FOR YOU SEE ~~WE~~ WE WILL BE THE VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE.
 AND THERE WILL BE SADNESS BUT NOT REGRETS.

"The Question" by David, 2009

34

Mandala

A Mandala is a circular piece of geometric art. Mandalas are most commonly seen in Hinduism and Buddhism, but can also be found in many faiths, secular settings and nature. They are traditionally used as a tool for focusing one's attention to support meditation.

I enjoy the unfolding processes of creating a Mandala, which is meditative in itself. I find many similarities between my experience of the mandala and my experience of our class.

The Mandala is said to create a sacred space, a place away from the quick-paced world. That has been this class for me.

The mandala is circular, having both center and circumference. It is thought to simultaneously embody looking outward and looking inward. That has been this class for me.

In many traditions, the mandala is created out of sand. On its completion it is brushed into a moving body of water, spreading the blessing of the mandala. This symbolizes the impermanence of life. Part of the beauty of the sand mandala is its temporary nature. More than an image, the mandala is a moment in time. That has been this class for me.

It must be heartbreaking for these artists to put so much time into such a beautiful design and watch it slip into the river. It is certainly heartbreaking feeling a friendship start to evolve and knowing that it can only remain in my heart. I have created this mandala as a reminder of this moment in time, this circle that we have created together.

Leslie, 2009



Dear Inside Students,

I am writing a letter to tell you what thoughts have come to me from our many weeks together. I come back from each of our meetings and reflect on the great opportunity that the Inside-Out program is, and how much I learn just from hanging out inside OSP. I had never really even thought about a prison before this class, and now I am sure I know so much more than most people on the “outside.” But more than that, I got to learn about the people who are at OSP.

The amazing part about Inside-Out is that two very different groups of people can come together and get along really well. Inside students and outside students have such different backgrounds. But we all get along so well that Professor Shankman has trouble making us all be quiet when he wants to start class. Very few of my (outside) classes are like that—mostly, students just sit in silence. The fact that we get along so well means that no

matter how different people’s backgrounds are, it’s not too big of a difference to be overcome. It also means that by the end of the term, we’re all good friends. And unlike my outside classes, we probably won’t have another class [together] again. That makes our class more special.

I am impressed by the commitment of the inside students to take this class. On our tour of OSP, I got a glimpse of what it might be like to live there. It didn’t look like a positive experience. I am impressed with the fortitude and strength of you all who volunteered to take this class (and other classes) while at OSP. I don’t know if I would do that; I might just watch a lot of TV and never do anything.

I can say this, from seeing the students of the University of Oregon and seeing the students of OSP: you guys have what it takes to succeed in college—there are a lot of students at UO who think less about education than you do. So if you want to get an education while you’re inside or outside, don’t think that you can’t.

I got quite the education about prisons and the Oregon Criminal Justice system. I was really impressed about how much the inside students knew about Oregon’s laws. For example, I understand what Mandatory Minimum sentencing is now, and how unfair and unnecessarily expensive it is. It has a face for me; many faces, actually. I did not know that Oregon is considered a “tough on crime” state and that it spent such a high amount of money on the state prison system—more than on the state school system! The cost of keeping one person in jail for a year is about the same as hiring an elementary school teacher. If I were king, there would be some changes around here.

Thanks for the great education, and the fun times.

Tom, 2008



INTRODUCTION TO CRIME AND PUNISHMENT BY FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

I hate everyone who reminds me of myself!

So the things I loathe in the protagonist, Raskolnikov, in *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, are the exact things I hate about myself.

At its most basic level, *Crime and Punishment* is the story of an educated young man, Raskolnikov, whose theoretical beliefs and desperate financial situation lead him to the edge of madness and to murder. Although he only intends to kill a vicious old pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna, he also kills her innocent sister, Lizaveta. Raskolnikov's inner struggles drive the plot, as do his interactions with his sister Dunya and the religious and self-sacrificing woman, Sonya, with whom he falls in love.

I believe the basic reader of this novel will tend to lean towards sympathizing more or less with Raskolnikov's constant struggle of conscience after he has committed two crimes of murder. Yet I'm not willing to let him off that easy. Nosireebob, because through most every word and twist in this story I couldn't help but relate as if I was looking in a mirror... as much as I hate to admit it.

Raskolnikov and myself are people who are based in fear. We have a fear of fear, a contemptuousness toward such fears. We use these fears to make excuses for our behavior to facilitate our selfishness. Raskolnikov is an expert at pointing out others' apprehensions, and then exploiting those fears to tear them down. Still, when these fears occur in ourselves it's considered a severe deprecation, [as if to say] that we are nothing but weak and vulnerable. These are not healthy misgivings, these fears cause others, like Raskolnikov, and others like myself, to destroy people's lives [and] loves, their hopes and expectations.

It's better to cause pain than to be pained. Fears tell us we don't measure up, that we are "less than."

In *Crime and Punishment*, the months prior to the murders are the beginning of a deterioration. His inability to continue on at the university is, in fact, seed to a poor self-esteem that leads to lashing out and manipulation to keep others away from knowing his weaknesses. Raskolnikov uses anger against all those who he [sees] as threats. Anger is a way to control a world that is spinning out of control. He is pretentious to a fault, even when others assume him to be innocent. In the end, he admits his crime and accepts his punishment in prison in Siberia.

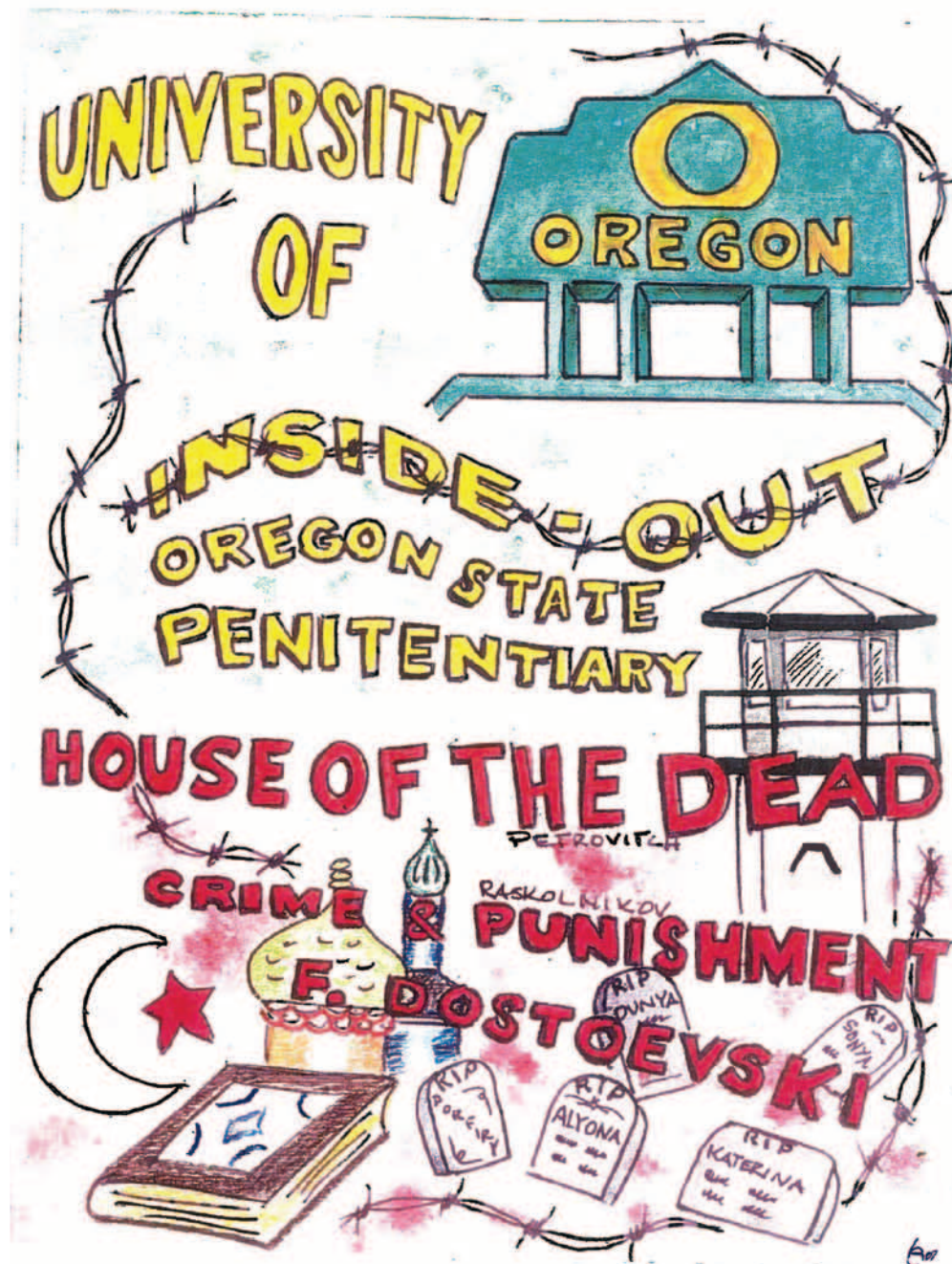
In the end we are accountable for all that we do in life.

Chuck, 2007



James, 2007

All quotations from the following essays are citations from this edition: Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage Classics, 1992.



"Cover of 2007 Inside-Out Anthology" by Les, 2007

That Spark

"Enough!" he said resolutely and solemnly. "Away with mirages, away with false fears, away with specters! ... There is life! Was I not alive just now?" (188)

Raskolnikov, I believe here is feeling a tremor of hope. Raskolnikov is no doubt stressed to the fullest. Emotionally beat down, because of what he knows his life was, what it could have been, and now what it has become. I am sure this has caused a struggle within him and the reality of it has been too much to deal with and pull out of. He has been living in a hopeless state of mind. When that happens you just go over and over in your mind how dark and worthless you have become. You become lonely and your soul starts to feel dead. When that occurs, nothing really matters and you give up and it's like you have tunnel vision and you can only focus on the darkest of things. Paranoid delusions take over, fear is ruling you now and everything in your life becomes desperate

Believe me, doing time with a sentence with no light at the end, you begin to experience almost everything Raskolnikov goes through. You immediately recognize his emotions and his desperations. You feel that shit like the hot sun on your face, blinding you in the eyes, leaving you unable to see anything. Your soul becomes so wrecked that everything, even the most joyful of things, are painful, but sometimes you get touched in a way that is so powerful that it's able to reach through all that darkness and spark a flame to give you life, to give you hope. And that's what happens to Raskolnikov. It gives you a burst of energy that just might give you enough strength to help you pull out of it and make it.

Just as Raskolnikov says, "Strength, what's needed is strength; without strength, you get nowhere; and strength is acquired by strength—that's something they don't know!"

At that moment Raskolnikov is overwhelmed by life. He begins to realize what it's going to take to make it, because without some form of strength your soul begins to wither like a dying flower, with all your energy draining out of you. You cannot stop the wilting, but with just a little spark

your drive can become so powerful nothing will be able to stop you when your heart really feels it.

I have come to know that feeling quite well. I can say that there was a time when I was on the run, I'd been shot in the chest, and I knew when the police caught up to me I was gonna either die, or go to prison for life, but that little spark lit up in me when I thought of the eyes of my little girl, and at that moment all hopelessness left me and it gave me the drive to make it where I am today. That is also what happened to Raskolnikov when a little girl says to him, "I'll pray for you the rest of my life." (188)

Just the thought of human companionship can change you in an instant and give you all you need to make it to the next day. You come to realize in your life that it's not the things you see or the things you think you have to have, but it's the things that are already deep inside you that one day you will come to feel and come to understand, and then you will say just as Raskolnikov has said: "Enough!" he said resolutely and solemnly. "Away with mirages, away with false fears, away with specters! ... There is life! Was I not alive just now?"

Marc, 2007

38





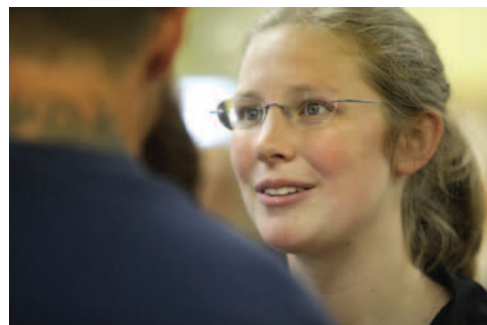
Strange Juxtapositions? I Think Not...

The class of Inside-Out is, to say the least, ironic: convicts and co-eds learning together through Russian Literature. Simultaneously, it makes perfect sense for us to learn together as we all benefit from state funding! On a slightly more serious note, Dostoevsky presents a similar situation in *Crime and Punishment*, one of potentially laughable circumstances and yet understanding: “The candle-end had long been burning out in the bent candlestick, casting a dim light in this destitute room upon the murderer and the harlot strangely come together over the reading of the eternal book.” (328) For two people who have broken the law to be indulging in the Bible, considered by some to be of the highest morality, presents an eye-catching image. It does, however, make perfect sense that they are doing so together, and arguably benefiting from a book that has obviously offered Dostoevsky himself some eternal truths and comfort.

The merit of great literature is its capacity to bring people together, and motivate understanding between them. Regardless of whether the text is the Bible for Sonya and Rodian in nineteenth-century Russia, or *Crime and Punishment* for convicted men and college students in the twenty-first century, each work has proven its ability to unite disparate people. Sharing this new understanding of a classic work together helps all of us to better understand life and its intricacies as we move through a transitional period in our lives, and on to greater endeavors. For the outside students, college is a chance to figure out what we want to do with the rest of our lives, and to prepare for that occupation or calling. For our inside classmates, prison is hopefully a chance to process and come to terms with crime and get ready to start over when (and if) each man is released.

In the spirit of transition, it's important that we can share this educational opportunity, and share experiences that will better our future lives. It makes perfect sense for the state to fund such an experience, and with luck, it will begin to fund more education for both inside and outside students as we continue our academic experiences. The goal of our class is to provide a learning environment that forgets status, class, and educational background, one that I feel it meets well.

Katie H., 2007





Dear Class of 2009,

I've written so many different things for the end of this class. How can somebody say goodbye when their heart is rebelling against the very idea?

I find myself in a bit of a paradox because I really hate to see this end but I'm happy to get to say a goodbye. Doesn't it seem odd to think that so many of our social relationships end without closure? A lifetime of never saying goodbye is the product of the fast-paced lives we lead. When a moment comes and we get the chance, we all should cherish a perfect goodbye because closure oftentimes gives us meaning to the task that we've just completed and a chance to redefine who we are.

I will sit back now and allow fate to run its course. I wish you all the best in whatever it is you do in life and hopefully us convicts could instill a bit of wisdom that cannot be found in a text book in all of you wonderfully smart people.

Be good,

Andrew, 2009

Dear Class,

In God, Death, and Time, Emanuel Levinas speaks of being overthrown and wholly captivated by the Other. You all have done this to me. I cannot help but wonder at the consequences of this captivity, and I deliberate with Ippolit as to whether the dumb beast of nature will nullify its lessons, as there are many of you I will not see again. At the end of the day, though, there is something in me that screams a passionate "No!" I cannot help but think that the final words for us will not be as tragic as those of Cervantes and Dostoevsky. All of our interactions have been so meaningful to me that I cannot see them fading. I wrote this poem in response to our class, and I hope it expresses some of that meaning.

"The eyes that are looking at you and love you"

*Bland walls imprison sacred space
Blunderers and idiots, saints*

"The eyes that are looking at you and love you"

*Bewitch you, Obsess you
Resurrect your broken vase*

Matt, 2009

Final Reflection

This Literature 421 class is the fourth Inside-Out class I've had the pleasure to be a part of, and I have to say that each one is better than the last. The feeling that comes with sharing something as fulfilling as the mutual desire for knowledge with a class full of hungry minds is indescribable. And honestly it's all the better for the fact that some of us can experience this as inmates who are classmates with college students and vice-versa.

A friend of mine told me the other day that she looked forward to the day I was able to get out and live the life I was supposed to live. I told her that life is life, whether it's lived in part as an inmate or a leader of a country. This life, in all its glory and strife, is what we have. There is no such thing as making up for lost time or turning back the clock. There is only forward momentum. It's a choice for each of us to make whether we allow life's experiences to embitter us, or add them to our knapsack full of lessons and keep marching forward with our chins up.

I've enjoyed every minute I've gotten to share with all of my friends in this class. You are all great people with unlimited potential... Keep on marching!

Josh, 2008





Back of the Circle

Dear Class of 2008,

It's not the bars on the windows, the poor ventilation, the fluorescent lights that make my eyes itch, but the ride home that leaves me clawing at my lids, burying my face into my sweatshirt, pretending to nod off against the window as the Salem street lights turn to trees and idle conversations veer away from OSP.

And I can't say why it matters so much, why it matters at all, when in fact all I do is sit in class, stare at my feet, doodle on my notebook, yaaaawn during breaks, and respond to any and all questions with an excess of nervous laughter. I am my own least favorite here, content to stay glued to my chair, to develop bonds with polypropylene and plastic polymers rather than my classmates.

But ten weeks? Eight three-hour meetings to conclude with Costco pizza and goodbye forever? My plan was to forgo impermanence, avoid temporary friendships, to sit and to listen and to learn and that's all. I was set to stay a shadow, to disappear, to embrace silence, yet every attempt to stay guarded, to remain unattached and aloof has been thwarted by laughter, by anecdotes, by my denim counterparts with their clean shoes and fast food tattoos, their canteen peppermints and neatly printed papers.

And I know that it sounds weird, that I should have found a better way to word this, but (in all my corny, cheeseball glory) I wanted to say thank you. Because I couldn't help but be changed by you. Despite my best efforts to avoid any sort of deep connection, each one of you has had a profound impact on the way I will live the rest of my life. So thank you. For everything—the candy, the insight, the awkward rides home—I've loved it all.

Darcie, 2008



INTRODUCTION TO DON QUIXOTE BY MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Don Quixote is a piece of classic literature that everyone should read. This novel takes you on a journey through the eyes of Don Quixote, who is obsessed with chivalrous novels and sets out on a quest to be the true errant knight he proclaims to be.

On this quest, he travels with his best bud Sancho. Sancho is more in touch with reality than his friend but continues to support him. The two encounter enemy armies, serious offenders, and even giants that only exist in Quixote's mind. All along, Don Quixote professes his love for the beautiful Dulcinea whose beauty and virtue is all a figment of Quixote's imagination. She doesn't even know he exists. You'll get lots of laughs and thrills as you read, but through Don Quixote, Cervantes does bring attention to issues of society, religion, and realities by putting contradicting ideals right against one another.

While Quixote is on his quest, he sets out to perform acts of goodness, but his chivalrous acts of goodness are acts of havoc to those around him. Quixote's reality is quite different from the society around him, but some catch on and play into Quixote's chivalrous ways, but it is those who don't conform that add to the entertainment of this novel.

Tareq, 2009



All quotations from the following essays are citations from this edition: Cervantes, Miguel. *Don Quixote*. Trans. Edith Grossman. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.

THE KNIGHT, DON Q

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to sit down with you and share a little about a man known as Don Q. Don Q is an older man who found his bliss and escape from reality in the many knighthood, gentlemanly, adventurous books that eventually became Don Q's reality. Surely this is understandable. Once you become acquainted with Don Q, you'll find your reality slipping away and being embraced in Don Q's fantasy/reality.

Don Q starts you on a comical journey through many small towns and villages. From fighting dangerous monsters (which turns out to be a dilapidated windmill) [to] escorting a young, beautiful country girl who manipulates Don Q into believing she is the princess of an opulent king.

Accompanying Don Q on his journey of defending the honor of many ladies he meets, protecting the weak, is his obese, cowardly friend and somewhat reasonable apologetic sidekick, Sancho. Sancho's loyalty is based on greed [for] all the riches Don Q promises and dangles in front of Sancho, that says they'll receive from the king once they reach the king's kingdom.

Every brave shining knight must have a big, strong, courageous horse to ride on, and Don Q wouldn't have it any other way. But in reality, he rides on a slow witted, scary, lazy, old donkey, who would rather spend his last days with a full belly, well rested, and in a green pasture full of female donkeys.

It's amazing how these three get into so much mischief and receive enough defeats and beatings to last two lifetimes. But yet, they stay loyal to each other and to the cause. If you're looking to escape from reality, I advise you to acquaint yourself with Don Q and walk in his shoes for a little while.

Terrence, 2009





Escape

Intently, the knight clutches the bounds of his literary confinement, staring at vivid visions of skulking thieves, towering giants, and roaring armies set to clash.

Unaware of his challenging gaze, silent windmills slowly whirl over bleating sheep and plodding priests; the sedate landscape of reality.

Though confined, the knight has already escaped.

Justin, 2009

"Don Quixote" by Bobby, 2009

LIFE

Candles do not unburn;
Tea does not unpour;
Man does not become child;
Diamonds do not become carbon dust;
Transient mind fully.

Wil

Wil, 2008

The Face

Why is the face of the knight errant Don Quixote so sad? What the story of *Don Quixote* may tell us about how the obsessive romance with ideals and ideologies inhibits the immediacy of ethical responsibility in human relationships ... and other amusing notions.

Miguel de Cervantes lived in a place and period in history in which it was dangerous to be outspoken as a writer—or for that matter any other way. The monarchy of Spain had formed an unholy alliance with religious clerics for the purpose of “purifying” the country of what they considered heretical thought and practices and ensuring primacy of the Holy Church. This resulted in the Spanish Inquisition and a nation oppressed by fear and distrust, and fixated on appearances of religious virtue.

Cervantes, being a clever man (if a mite foolish), dressed himself up in the guise of a story about a mad knight and, with sharp wit and parody as his weapons, charged forward to challenge the status quo. The legacy of his courage and vision is *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*.

Our fascination with abstract constructs that divide, separate and insulate human beings from one another is the dragon Don Quixote has come to slay. It has forever been the role of the fool to reflect our foibles so that we may recognize our own folly, and in this Don Quixote succeeds in his knight's mission to serve humanity. His example is much like what we in western culture have become, but not what we are truly.

How like us that he wills what he imagines to be the true thing, and when confronted by a reality that refuses to conform to his imagination, he charges that supernatural forces are manipulating appearances. How not like us are these god things we've invented to represent the better part of our natures, and which fail, utterly, to do so. How we need a Don Quixote to point out to us, by his example, that a deluded self-image steeped in dogmatic contrivances is hurtful to ourselves and to other people we may encounter, in spite of—or perhaps because of—an absolute intention to do good works.

The institutions of our ideologies frequently make a mockery of what we intend them to represent. The characteristics of the enchantment are such that we are inclined to forget that it is the living being who is their source and maker—that they are artifacts of human intellect and not edicts handed down from on high. Our idealistic constructs sometimes fool us into believing that we are meant to be in service to them, and become a kind of self-imposed tyranny. When this occurs the systems we have invented with our good intentions fail, and we suffer.

It is not the tablets of Moses that make us moral beings. Rather, it is the intrinsic nature of being at its very core that is morality itself. It is not a legal system that makes us just but the innate awareness of justice we know within ourselves that must inform any system of laws we may devise. When the horse pushes the cart—that is, when we become overly invested in the form of our ideals and forget that we are their source and not meant to be subordinate to them—we become stalled, disoriented, unable to respond with a presence of being that permits our innate goodness to be naturally expressed.

Our heads in the clouds, we may overlook the homeless woman freezing on the street at our feet. Tilting at windmills we believe to be giants, we may fail to reach out a hand to our brother who has fallen. Only by shattering the egocentric preoccupations with ideals that tend to keep us insane and out of touch with one another may we regain complete awareness that one-and-another form a unity, a Oneself that is informed by conscious empathy and compassion—a relationship rooted in mutual trust and wellbeing.

Don Quixote is magnificent, the most noble of all knights. He offers us the opportunity to recognize within the mirror-reflection of his lustrous armor what it is to be at the mercy of an enchantment fixed in ideology. In this he does what knight errants do so well, slaying the dragons that bind us—enabling us, if we choose, to connect fully with the imperative of genuine nobility within our being.

So smile for the camera, Don Quixote. You are immortal after all.

(And by the way, old soldier, we need you now more than ever.)

Bobby, 2009

Ideology and Experience

Midterm essay, Question 2:
Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is a relentless critique of the follies of idealism, of the destructive consequences that result from our thinking that the world as we would like it to be is equivalent to the world that in fact is. Do you agree?

Too many of us live in a world created solely within our minds, in a world composed of more than a simple sum of our experiences on this earth; we live in individual realities fed also by our ideals. By "live" I mean act because of or in response to either ideology or true experience. While this is inevitable it is also dangerous, as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* shows us through his madness. The key to a stable life for every individual is to act according to a comfortable equilibrium between personal experience and hopeful idealism.

This class is an example of how detrimental it is to live according to a prescribed ideal instead of personal experience of the world. We, the outside students, are led to believe that all those who live within the walls of prison are to be regarded in a certain way, essentially negative in nature. We are meant to believe, before we interact with a single person from that world, that the experience of this program will fundamentally change us and how we view the world. If a student were to enter OSP, *Don Quixote* in hand, believing wholeheartedly that they will encounter only criminals with vicious backgrounds and ill intent, that is indeed what that student would find, and we the observers may accurately equate the student with the Knight whom everyone understands to be ridiculous. If the student holds dear an idea that all the power-hungry guards are unjustly holding captive people meant to be free, he or she will find this as well. It is the fault of the fictitious ideology imposed on us by institutions which we call "society" or the "media" that this is the way of things. It is not ourselves that change through this experience, but our perceptions of reality. We are given the opportunity to break apart some of the ideology we are dealt as children in this culture and more freely live according to that which we have experienced, which I have found fits in neither category described above.

It is only after interacting with the class and absorbing its discussions to a deeper level than simply as a mutual digestion of the classroom



material that such a student can make judgments of any sort about the individuals in the prison system, both the incarcerated and the officials. There are multiple truths to be found in any experience, and entering a situation assuming one or another of these truths to be the primary focus of the experience necessarily alters the reality of it, usually to the detriment of both the experiences and the others. The Knight assumes all experiences to contain an aspect relevant to chivalry, and consequently endures many hardships as well as imposing hardships on his squire and others. We, the outside students, must not assume the experience of this class to be *anything* until we understand *something* about what it *actually* is.

We must rely first on our personal experiences, and while those may, and should, be informed by ideology, they are primary to what we create for ourselves to believe, and they must in turn lead to reformulation of our ideals. That is why I refuse to be afraid or mistrustful of any experience before it has begun, because that fear can only come from the experience of an outsider and I hope to live according to my own experiences before those of others. Of course, this is generally deemed naive by those who wish to impose their beliefs because they esteem them more accurate than I wish to accept, but I think this is the only way to live. Both the Knight and the inside students have strengthened this belief in me, for very different reasons. *Don Quixote's* misadventures prove that ideology before experience is a dangerous reality. The inside students are also living proof that no ideology should be accepted before one can discern for oneself its validity, since I have found a wealth of positivity and compassion both in them and in the guards, thus eradicating both of the mutually exclusive ideas I had been told to believe before embarking on the class.

Liz, 2009

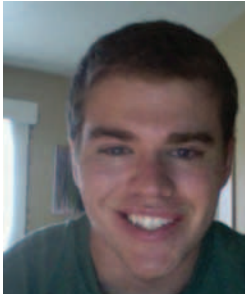
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I WALK THROUGH THE DOORS
AND INTO CLASS, I AM STILL AMAZED BY HOW EASILY
EVERYTHING ELSE DISAPPEARS. ITS A DIFFERENT WORLD IN
OUR CLASS AND THE ISSUES. THOUGHTS. AND DRAMA THAT EXISTED
BEFORE GOES WITH THE HANDSHAKES AND SMILES ON EVERYONES
FACES! 😊

EACH MINUTE BRINGS A NEW ADVENTURE, WHETHER ITS CHARGING
AT WINDMILLS OR DISCUSSING THE JERRY SPRINGER ACTION
SURROUNDING THE IDIOT, THE TWIST AND TURNS BRING NEW
QUESTIONS AND A HOPE THAT IT WILL NEVER END. . .

GOODBYES COME TO QUICKLY AND NOW WERE DOWN TO OUR
LAST ONE. NO MORE "HAVE A GOOD WEEK" OR "SEE YA' NEXT
WEDNESDAY." ITS NOT A GOOD THING, GOODBYE. BUT IM THANKFUL
THAT I HAD THE CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE TO SO MANY
PERFECTLY BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE.

THANK YOU AND I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR ADVENTURES.

FRENCH FRY! 🍟

**AJ (Outside, 2007)**

Inside-Out was the most unique, engaging college experience I've had at the UO. My memories of the stark hallways, iron bars and the group of dedicated, intelligent prisoners are vivid. I still struggle to make sense of the U.S. justice system, but I'm positive that there are at least a handful of humane individuals locked away with a sincere passion for education and a desire to better themselves.

**Alison K. (Outside, 2009)**

The Inside-Out program has been the most enlightening experience of my college education. It is so rare in modern life that we converse with those who have taken opposite paths and done very different things in life. In discussing ethics with those whom society deems the most unethical. I came to a deeper realization of the universality of humanity. I will never forget the lessons I learned in Inside-Out.

**Andrew (Inside, 2009)**

I've experienced a lot of highs and lows during my years of incarceration, but as it is coming to an end I've been reflecting back over the seven years covered in complete darkness like thick black storm clouds that block out the sun. Inside-Out was a beautiful spring day that followed a malignant winter. Inside-Out has filled my mind with wonderful, complex ideas and memories to cherish.

**Caleb (Inside, 2009)**

Professor Shankman's literature class meant the world to me. It improved my life in fundamental ways that I am still discovering. The intense class discussions and philosophical analysis changed me forever. It was a wonderful escape from the dreary prison setting in which I've been immersed, and an escape from my own selfishness and egoism. It opened my eyes to compassion for the Other.

**Alison F. (Outside, 2008)**

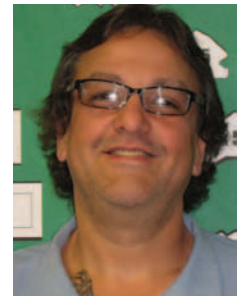
Inside-Out was one of the most valuable experiences I have ever had. It exposed me to realities that are largely ignored in this country and forced me to develop a stronger sense of self. It was a rare opportunity to interact on a deep level with people in completely different situations than my own. If everyone would interact directly with the "Other" this country would be a very different place.

**Amos (Inside, 2007, 2008)**

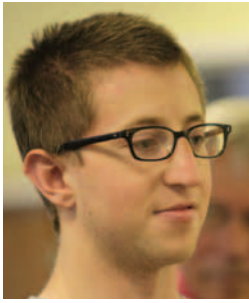
I was one of the fortunate guys who had the privilege of being part of two classes. While the first literature class I was in was my more memorable and favorite, the second wasn't far off. I was amazed and moved by how excited the outside students were to be able to come into a prison and learn with us. The experience is one I hope to never forget.

**Bobby (Inside, 2009)**

My Inside-Out experience far exceeded my expectations after many years of imprisonment. The challenging material, Professor Shankman's guidance, and the interactions with my fiercely intelligent fellow students, both Inside and Outside, enriched my understanding beyond measure. At no other time in my life had I encountered such an intense concentration of compassion and empathy in a gathering of people. Nothing could be of greater value.

**Chuck (Inside, 2007)**

In the nearly 10 years that I've been locked up at OSP, I have never experienced anything like Inside-Out. The professor and the students from the University of Oregon were reminders that you were still a human being capable of doing something, being a part of something positive. I'm so grateful that I could participate and meet these students that will always stand out in my memory.



Daniel (Outside, 2009)

It is hard to describe what this meant to me but, it was an experience that you cannot really describe. As a class it was the most memorable and meaningful I have had all of college. The unique and personal human interaction and dialogue that is exchanged is beyond any classroom setting and it was eye opening to say the least.



David (Inside, 2009)

Inside-Out is an unforgettable experience. Class discussions are genuine and alive; the people are the real heart of the experience. I would leave with my face hurting from smiling. Everyone is so open, honest, and willing to share ideas and beliefs—to give a little piece of themselves. Everyone should take advantage, both inside and out. It's like pebbles in a pond, reaching further than any one pebble ever could.



James (Inside, 2007)

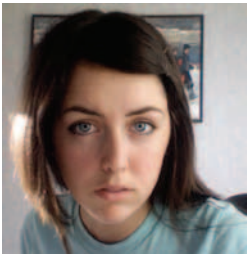
Inside-Out profoundly affected my life, and drastically altered how I do time in prison, among other things. I've dedicated myself to furthering my studies and I'm proud to say that I've almost earned two degrees from our local community college. Inside-Out instilled a sense of worth and understanding that all avenues in life are open when you apply yourself. Thank you to everyone involved, you've changed a life. Mine.



Jodi (Outside, 2008)

I learned that I can have compassion for everyone. These eleven men taught me to listen, to open my mind, to question intellectually. They have inspired me. It is so difficult to come to terms with the fact that I will never, NEVER see the Inside students again. If only all my classes could be this meaningful, then college would really be worthwhile.

49



Darcie (Outside, 2008)

I didn't sign up for Inside-Out expecting anything but to read and study Dostoyevsky. Honestly, I just wanted to discuss literature and say I was taking a class in prison, not change my whole perspective. But that's exactly what it did. The term "inmate" means something completely different to me now. I've replaced images of orange jumpsuits with memories of some of the most profound insights I've heard from anyone. Ever.



French Fry (Inside, 2008, 2009)

In attempting to explain the Inside-Out class, I realize how few words I truly know. "Awesome, life-changing, hope-inspiring," cover just a part of the experience. I learned from the books we studied, and from my fellow classmates. I wasn't judged for where I lived or my past. I was given the opportunity to be me, to learn, to grow, and gain friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.



Jenny (Outside, 2007)

Though I took this class several years ago, I still think about my fellow students on the inside on a daily basis. The Inside students have undoubtedly changed the way I influence the outside. I now can offer my own voice and a view that few people can offer. I will always think of these men as some of my favorite peers, and also as some of my favorite teachers.



Joel (Inside, 2008, 2009)

From the inside looking out, I saw a free world moving ever faster. In Inside-Out I felt like I was doing something to move my life forward. The intellectual challenge was one of the most satisfying and rewarding things I've experienced. I learned about literature and ethics, as well as about myself and how I might hold up in the free world. It gave me the confidence to see it through.



Josh (Inside, 2007, 2008)

Inside-Out was my inspiration to restart my college education after a ten-year hiatus. I was so inspired by the Inside-Out Program because everybody chose to be there and wanted to learn—about the material and each other. This program opens eyes and ends prejudices. I am a changed man for having experienced this class and I am thankful to Professor Shankman, as well as each and every classmate. Thank you.



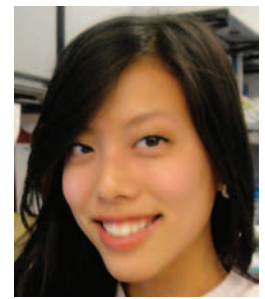
Justin (Outside, 2009)

I signed up for this class for the opportunity to gain a wider perspective, but I gained even more than I set out to. Looking back, the most important thing I carry with me from this experience, deeper than the philosophy we studied, more valuable than even the perspective I have gained, are my simple, genuine memories of the people.



Katie H. (Outside, 2007)

Inside-Out showed me how lucky I am, and convinced me I didn't end up where I am today based purely on my own effort, rather through the support of my community and circumstances. I realized how influential and important education is. As a result, I will teach bilingually with Teach For America, in an effort to make immediate positive change in the lives of high school students.



Kelly (Outside, 2008)

"From now on I shall keep you all in my heart, and I ask you to keep me in yours, too." (Alyosha, The Brothers Karamazov, Fyodor Dostoevsky) Two years on, and I still think about each of you often, both inside and outside students alike.



Joyce (Outside, 2007)

It would have been impossible to learn more about literature in any other setting. Inside-Out was an extremely eye-opening experience for me. Becoming acquainted with the inside students made me realize how difficult it is to create a system that deals justly with the wide range of people who are in prison. I'm certain that classes like this can only have a positive impact.



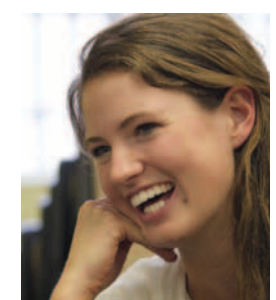
Katie D. (Outside, 2007, 2009)

My first Inside-Out experience was meeting Inside student (and Turned coeditor) James, and he had selected the exact same passage for his response paper. What a profound affirmation of our ability to communicate and connect! Inside-Out completely changed my view of myself and the world. I will spend the rest of my life pursuing these ideals, open to each experience, moment, and new person I encounter.



Katy P. (Outside, 2008)

Even though it's been two years since I took the Inside-Out class, everything about it remains vivid for me. This, I think, speaks most clearly to the poignancy of the Inside-Out experience. I am still affected by, think about, and reflect upon what I learned, and to this day, my awe of the class and of the experience has not diminished. Here's hoping my classmates are doing well.



Leslie (Outside, 2009)

This wasn't a religion class, it was a spiritual sanctuary for me. This class transformed my personal spirituality. I felt God, the spirit, the humbling force, or some higher power within human interaction. I no longer doubt a higher being because one was evoked in conversations in class. I continued to strive for these genuine and powerful interactions, finding the Self in the Other. Thank you for this transformative gift.



Liz (Outside, 2009)

It's always inspiring to pour over good novels with like-minded people as intricate expressions of the human experience. Inside-Out has taught me that we're ALL like-minded people, and the lessons that we took away from that class extend far beyond the literature. People from all walks of life foster brilliance, and I'm lucky to count some of my classmates as some of my greatest teachers. Thank you to you all.



Marc (Inside, 2007)

This class and studying the literature made me realize that what I see around me in my life and the things I think I have are not truly important. Instead, what is important is what is deep inside of me. Dostoevsky talks about the feeling of living. This class made me feel like that—that even a long, long sentence does not mean that I am less alive now.



Matthew (Inside, 2007)

I felt encouraged and inspired by the other students. The Inside students were treated as human beings, rather than as unwanted and disposable. The Outside students displayed such enthusiasm, sense of purpose, and openness and warm regard for us, that I feel encouraged to rejoin society. I feel inspired to be the best person and citizen I am capable of being, both before and after I am released.



Mike (Inside, 2008)

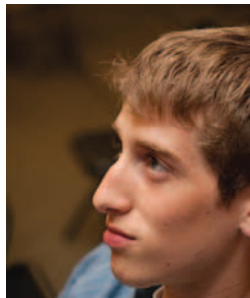
Inside-Out brought together two completely different parts of society. Initially, the anxiety and wariness was palpable. We read The Brothers Karamazov, which spoke of brotherhood of mankind, universal guilt, and that we are all each others' keepers, a fantastical concept indeed. We learned from each other and the message of the book left an indelible imprint. It enabled us to look past stereotypes to see each other as human beings.

51



Madeline (Outside, 2009)

Inside-Out changed my life. I witnessed a beautifully profound interaction across a great divide, and the divide has been rendered irrelevant. My classmates pushed me to "live" literature, challenge constructed separation, and to never take an educational opportunity for granted. I will take this experience with me always. What we learned together begins once we step outside our classroom, and back into our daily lives. Our memories will continue always.



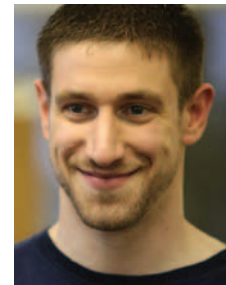
Matt (Outside, 2009)

Inside-Out was one of the most formative and life-changing experiences of my academic career. The extent to which interactions in this program shattered stereotypes and brought me face-to-face with the reality of other human beings is unbelievable. I came away from the class deeply changed, indescribably affected, and my life goals have since shifted substantially.



Michelle (Outside, 2008)

I took the class over two years ago, and I still think about it many times a week. This alone speaks to the power of the experience. The setting for our classes heightened the subject matter, but isn't the reason why my mind frequently wanders back to OSP. The transformative quality of my experience is explained by Dostoevsky and the simple question: What is my responsibility to the Other?



Paul (Inside, 2009)

Inside-Out means a lot to me. By hearing and sharing ideas with university students, I gained confidence in being able to learn and share ideas of my own. It was a temporary escape from the hardened prison society to a world of hope and challenged thought. I gained a new way of thinking about our world and opened my mind to deducing the meanings behind each aspect of my life.



Peter (Outside, 2009)

Inside-Out was the most important and best class of college. It transformed the way I approach relationships and conversation with others, and my understanding of the penal system. It also taught me the importance of education and the possibilities and opportunities it provides; my conversations drove home the importance of education, and I will remember that as an educator in how I approach teaching, discussion, and learning in my future classroom.



Ray (Inside, 2007, 2008)

I loved the class. It was so exciting meeting and getting to know the students and to share my thoughts and feelings with people outside of prison and from around the country. I learned that I could take a college class and do well. Besides my marriage, the Inside-Out classes were the best and most rewarding part of my whole prison sentence. I will never forget my class or classmates.



Sam (Inside, 2009)

Inside-Out opened my horizons to see past labels and recognize people for who they are. The most important thing I'll take from this class is to cherish those around us while always being available to people and circumstances outside our understanding. You can never know someone based on what you've seen or heard. If we see people with an open heart, we may realize how similar we all are.



Ted (Outside, 2007)

Inside-Out taught me an important lesson about how complicated it is to create a just society. People who commit crimes remain human and retain their dignity, intellect, and ability to relate to others. They are not qualitatively different from me. This is a dangerous fact. We cannot give up our responsibility for those who stray, inflict pain, do wrong. We must share their struggle towards reconciliation, healing, and new life.



Rich (Inside, 2007, 2008)

You can learn from both good and poor choices alike. The good fill you with positive memories for the rest of your life and the poor ones provide lessons to change. This class taught me that its never too late to teach and learn, that I can change a negative choice into a positive one. I'd like to thank the Inside-Out Program, and the Department of Corrections for this opportunity.



Roman (Inside, 2008):

The Inside-Out literature class meant a lot to me. It was an experience of studying the ethics of regard for the Other, while being incarcerated in a place where it seems like people shun the Others around them. This class was a serendipity for me. Thank you for the opportunity.



Tareq (Inside, 2009)

The Inside-Out experience has had, and continues to have, a profound affect on my relationship with literature. When you take time to really ponder and digest the reading, it makes a world of difference. Hands down this is one of the best classes I've taken. It's amazing to have a college class where all of the students walk away from the experience truly touched in some way, shape, or fashion!



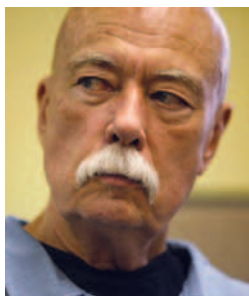
Terrence (Inside, 2009)

The life lessons I learned from Inside-Out were many. Prison makes a man's voice, his thoughts, and presence walk this earth in darkness. But my classmates, one in particular, would greet me, asking my thoughts, and wanting to talk about the week's reading. Someone listening to my caged thoughts made me realize that if you take time to listen to another, they will take time to listen to you.



Tom (Outside, 2008)

Inside-Out was one of the few college experiences that will remain with me forever: it altered my moral approach and greatly increased the respect and responsibility I feel for other human beings. I credit equally the amazing Inside students and Professor Shankman, about whom enough good things cannot be said. Beyond its deep personal impact, the Inside-out program sparked an interest in criminal justice that now drives my professional pursuits.



Wil (Inside, 2007, 2008, 2009)

Discovery is frequently unplanned. When students engage in the process of discovery they presume a positive outcome. What presumption accompanies a University of Oregon student when confronted with walls, bars, convicts and armed guards? Discovery occurs for students of this program when they engage other students and become unaware of both the setting and the status of the other students. This is discovery—this is a positive outcome.

"All changed, changed utterly:

A terrible beauty is born."

(W.B. Yeats)

I have loved these words for decades. They bespeak the mystery and majesty of the human heart. And they convey, with quiet power, the experience of being turned inside-out. It is a quiet thing, something that happens in the deep places within, sometimes when we least expect. And it is a thing of power, a tectonic shift that realigns what we thought we knew—about ourselves, about one another, about the world, sometimes about life itself. It is this kind of experience that is described in the pages of this volume.

What is this thing called "Inside-Out"? On one level, it is a class—though not an ordinary one. In this class, roles are intermingled: everyone is the teacher, everyone is the learner. The process of investigation and discovery is a communal enterprise. We explore together, we grapple together, we create new knowledge together—and we challenge one another to go deeper, always deeper.

But there is more. In a most unlikely setting, Inside-Out provides a space of liberation, a place in which each person is recognized and celebrated for the unique contribution that he or she brings to the whole. In the face of the many forms of imprisonment that we bear in our lives—some internal, some external—this experience offers an intimation of freedom. In this shared space, we can be who we are, say what we know, and call forth the best in one another.

And in our wider social reality, Inside-Out is about walls—some of our own making, some made by others. Some walls are made of bricks—but all are held in place by the mortar of fear and ignorance. We fear what we don't know—in others, in the world, in ourselves. We build walls, thinking we can keep ourselves safe from whatever we imagine is threatening us. But in this construction is our destruction.

Inside-Out moves through the walls—it is an exchange, an engagement—between and among people who live on both sides of the prison wall. It is through this exchange, realized through the crucible of dialogue, that the walls around us and within us begin to crumble. We are then brought closer to our truest nature. The words of Robert Frost are writ large: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall, that wants it down!" The hope is that, in time, through this exchange, these walls will become increasingly permeable and, eventually, extinct—one idea, one person, one brick at a time.

Lori Pompa

Founder and National Director

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program



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