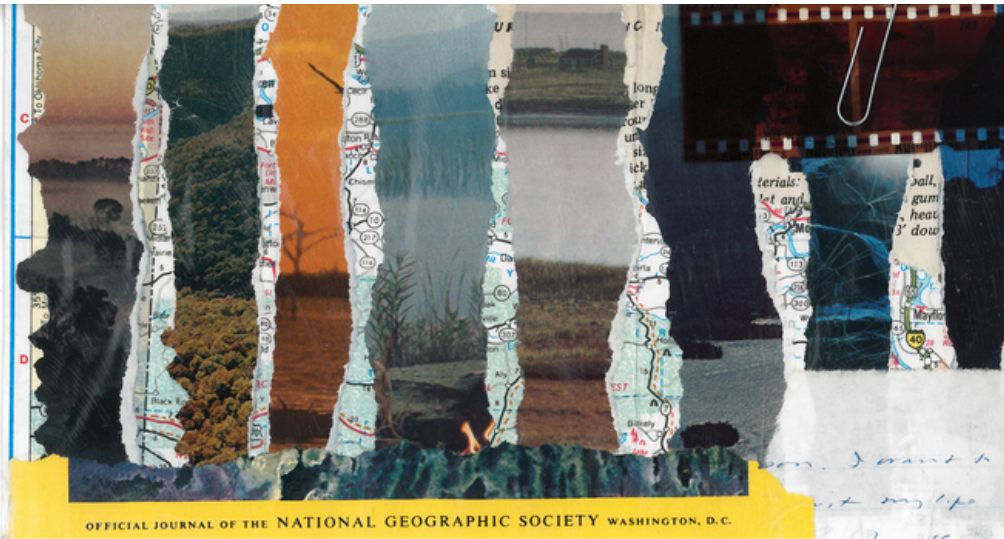


JOINING WORLDS, BREAKING BARRIERS



a collection of works from the
Philosophy for Humans Learning Community

Editor's Note

By Alaina

Welcome to the first issue of Philosophy for Humans magazine, a collaborative project created by and through the Philosophy for Humans Learning Community.

Philosophy for Humans (P4H) was founded in Autumn 2021. It is composed of incarcerated individuals from Southeastern Correctional Institution (SCI) in Lancaster, OH; Ohio State University (OSU) graduate and undergraduate students; and OSU faculty and staff members who want to support the Ohio Prison Education Exchange Project (OPEEP) programming by cultivating the skills and knowledge of community members through reading groups, discussions, guest presentations and workshops.

The mission of Philosophy for Humans is to develop leadership inside and outside Southeastern Correctional Institute (SCI) to support higher-education in prison on the OPEEP model, a prison-to-college pipeline, and life-long learning.

As members of this community, we have been working to create a space that celebrates our individuality and generates meaningful discussion. These spaces are rare, and they are beautiful. As creators, which we believe all members of P4H are, we decided to create this magazine as a way to extend our vision as a shareable piece of art. This magazine was designed to be openly shared – pass it on and help support our mission to support transformative education and resist dehumanization.



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I wanted to take the time to write about the space we share and how diverse our Learning Community is. Each individual is unique and special, and each individual brings so much appreciation to the people that are involved and incarcerated here at Southeastern Correctional Institute (SCI).

The time we have shared together and the conversations we have had have helped me learn and grow tremendously. Growing up, I was ostracized from mainstream school classrooms and was considered and labeled “Severely Behaviourally Handicapped.” I was convinced something was seriously wrong with me. Our Learning Community has helped me find a piece of myself that I felt was always missing. The people here have all helped me feel accepted and normal and really helped me on bettering my communication skills, including how to respect and value other people’s ideas and opinions. I truly believe that more learning communities and better educational programs in prison are a better way to help bridge the gap between the incarcerated and society.

Respectfully,
J.D.



Cells

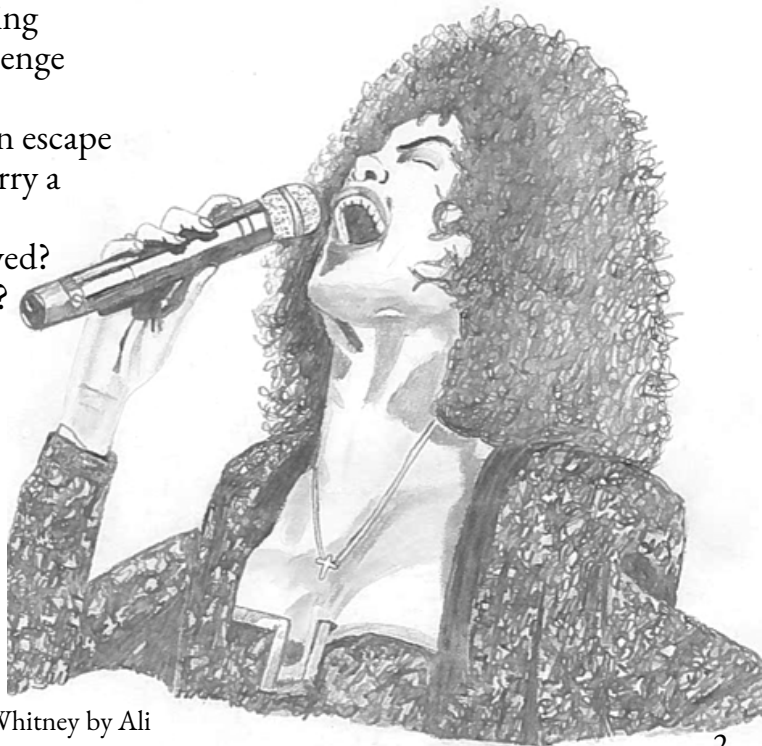
By Ali

This earth is a prison
My soul's incarcerated
My body is a cell
My spirit's evaporating

My mind's in trouble
My heart's on double
My anxiety bubbles
Why do I always stumble

I'm losing my balance
Am I paranoid or is that
malice
This life is suffering
This life is a challenge

I'm looking for an escape
Don't want to carry a
heart full of hate
Could you be loved?
Could we escape?



Whitney by Ali

Fridge

by Ali

Concrete clouds

Bulbs filled with a thousand suns

Winds that whisper of a slow death

We wake up just to realize that we're dying

Setting our own selves aflame

But not all phoenixes rise

Most are too heavy to fly

Ignorance can be fatal

There's only darkness in here

The Sun only shines on the outside of these fences

Good People

By Robert

If life has taught me one thing, it is that there are good people everywhere. No matter what language you speak or where you travel, small rural towns or bustling cities of millions, you can always find an incredible human being. When I say everywhere, I mean everywhere. Even in places that are perceived to hold the antithesis of a good person: a prison.

With Hollywood, news, and modern media portraying every person incarcerated as violent, cold hearted, and maniacal “convicts,” it is no wonder why the stereotype for all prisoners is grim. This portrayal, fueled by sensationalized crime stories and movies depicting criminals as twisted villains, makes it difficult for those unfamiliar with the prison experience to believe in the existence of redeemable individuals behind bars. While some of these stories are true and do portray real events, they only focus on the worst action in that person’s life instead of their entire lived experience. With these stories creating the stereotype, most of society is left with a false perception on what kind of people can be incarcerated and overlook the fact that the words “convict” and “good” can coexist.

I too believed the mainstream stereotype of prisoners growing up and never challenged it. That is, until two years ago when I had the opportunity to volunteer at the Southeastern Correctional Institution (SCI), and it has certainly changed my perception on who is incarcerated.

Through the men I have met at SCI, I have learned that labels like “inmate,” “ex-felon,” and “criminal” don’t define who they are. These are just labels at the end of the day. Sure, every label has a story, but these labels don’t encompass the entire individual. Even with these unglamorous titles, I still would consider the men I have met at SCI to be among the greatest I have ever spoken to. They are wise, they are bright, they are thinkers, they are leaders, they are inspiring, and above all, they are simply good people.

Even though the public status quo would tell you otherwise, there ARE remarkable people in prisons. So don’t let a label or a place define who an individual is. Challenge your beliefs and thoughts about where you can find good people, because you just might be surprised.

Society's Chance

By Tim

Once a slave to the system, now free to interact with society. Social media posts try to determine who we are entirely, but it doesn't work! You cannot judge a person by preset societal standards. Who are you? Who am I? Who are we to not stand for what we believe in? Look at the facts! In this short amount of time,

someone else has been delivered to prison.

Somebody's son,
somebody's sister,
somebody's father,
somebody's mother,
somebody's friend.

That somebody may have lost more than the one they sent.

By no means am I saying that breaking the law is ok. I'm just saying that there has got to be a better way to bring change to our society.

No. 101
by Elizabeth



Our Struggle

By Sergio

America! It's time for a change
Change from the racial injustice, and racial systemic
Change from the poison mindset of division
Change! Change from the racist men and women that sit on the
senate, that allowed the guilty twice to be acquitted
Hold on let me pivot, let's be attentive to the impact of the
negative message America has been sending
Society, driven by hatred that we target elder Asian citizens, or
that we find it okay for the police to kill the innocent
Our struggle, for humanity we protest for remembrance, plus for
the indifference
Thank you President Biden for having taken the initiative, with
dignity, compassion and love to
fight for the immigrants
America! It's time for a change
A time to bridge the gap, between the police and our
communities
A time to advocate for freedom and equal opportunity
A time! A time we've witnessed our first female vice president
A time that has shown our transition of power, unprecedented
It's relevant, the provision for our country is evident
That if we do not stand united, we will fall divided
Our struggle, as Americans!!!



Marilyn by Ali

Tel ·A· Vision (Triumph)

By Breez The Poet

Repetition,

It's like practice, it's supposed to perfect the senses,
like television.

Let me tell you my vision.

The days we living,

Awakening in a cage with dreams of living,
listening to the hopeless screaming senseless,
with supervision from those who barely listen,
are barely legal,

and like most of these souls,
grew up underprivileged,

yet,

I smile,

cause my heart's still skipping,
and my feet still thump the pavement as the days transition
as I blaze my path through the stress,

God willing,

I can show you a vision of success,
you can't rob me of my wilderness, so I reflect
dissecting my flaws,
digesting each loss,

and like pressure, I direct my words raw,
diamonds, reset,

Repetitiously we ask,
what's next,

but the mind is still lost in this loop with no reset,

I communicate with a vest,
and greet with a muzzle,

yet even with this metaphor, most can't pain my struggle,
insanity is giving up.

but my practice will perfect with repetition,
then you'll watch me,

tell you a vision.

What's important to me? (Incarcerated U.S. citizen)

By Jason

Do you know what's important to me? Fairness. I didn't say equality or justice because being equal doesn't show separation and sometimes a winner must be declared; and we all know that justice can mean doing the wrong thing to accomplish a greater good (as in using the Death Chamber for certain court cases). The taking of a life we aren't eating or using to survive is wrong to most sensible citizens, but some crimes are thought to deserve DEATH and so are an exception. I believe this is in the case of the Oklahoma City bombing! Applying the death penalty was more humane than what he did to all those children, I'm just saying.

I said "fairness" is important to me. I saw an online news feed that featured the recently released WNBA star Brittany Griner on a fun day out at an amusement park celebrating her freedom, with a false declaration of victory over Russian injustice. Sports are to entertain, and politics should not. When she was arrested, charged and convicted by Russian authorities for having CBD oil in their country, it became a political issue that caused many to react with disgust over her incarceration. Why? Because she didn't know that it was illegal in Russia? Because it was such a small amount? CBD oil is indeed illegal in many countries—including Russia and it's been that way for YEARS before Brittany caught a case! Nothing unfair took place. Was it ridiculous to us in America? Yes! But not to them, and she broke the law to the degree of 9 years in a Russian prison. Nowhere in the U.S. is the excuse for breaking the law to say "I don't know!" a valid defense in court.

Most of the citizens here [in prison] “didn’t know” the amount of time they’d face for their violations of the law and, in fairness, no one in the political arena (especially the President of the United States) decides to step in and save anyone from an unjust sentence without political attachments because they “didn’t know.” I swear I didn’t know I was facing this amount of time when I caught my case 29 years ago. Can I speak to a politician please? And have you considered the exchange of prisoners to any degree? A nuclear arms dealer and a professional basketball player are not equal in substance: unless he can dunk a basketball and she can procure and negotiate the sale of a missile, they are not equal. That exchange was not fair. But I’m just an angry inmate and glad to get that off my chest. Thank you for your time. Do you know what is important to me? Time. But we’ll get into why some other time...later.



No. 102 by Elizabeth

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW



Portrait of Leonardo da Vinci,
c. 1600. Uffizi, Florence

“If you find from your own experience that some thing is a fact and it contradicts what some authority has written down, then you must abandon the authority and base your reasoning on your own findings.”

-Leonardo Da Vinci

The ideas in the mind above should be the blue print for the work being performed below, and the work being performed below should be a similitude of the blueprint above. The headline is the fundamental principle of Correspondence, which is a hermetic axiom. I sense that Da Vinci was practicing this principle in the quotation from him.

by IS

Philosophy for Humans Learning Community

OUR MISSION

BUILDING COMMUNITY
TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMATIVE
EDUCATION
AND RESIST DEHUMANIZATION

(THIS IS WHAT WE ARE SEEKING
TO ACHIEVE THROUGH OUR WORK
TOGETHER)

OUR VISION

LIBERATING HUMANITY,
TRANSCENDING INCARCERATION

(THIS IS AN INSPIRING IMAGE OF
AN IDEAL STATE WE WANT
TO ACHIEVE)

We welcome your feedback on what you learned or what lifted you up after reading our 'zine!

Please contact us at **philosophy4humans@osu.edu**

Acknowledgments

We are grateful for support from the Ohio Prison Education Exchange Project (OPEEP), the Department of Philosophy and the Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) chapter at Ohio State University who funded the printing of this 'zine.

OPEEP works to increase access to quality higher education for incarcerated and justice-involved individuals in Ohio through collaborative and transformative educational experiences. To learn more about OPEEP and get involved, visit <http://opeep.osu.edu>.

MAP is an international organization comprised of students in English-speaking philosophy departments that aim to examine and address issues of minority participation in academic philosophy. Since its establishment in Fall 2016, the Ohio State chapter meets regularly to discuss topics relevant to the goals of MAP, organizes guest speakers, hosts an annual graduate student conference, co-sponsors the Philosophy & Critical Thinking (PACT) Summer Camp for high school students, and participates in Philosophy for Humans LC. To get involved with MAP, contact mapforthe-gap@osu.edu.

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