

A L E T H E I A

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Resilience

A L E T H E I A



Aletheia is the first ever peer-reviewed journal that exclusively features the innovative and interdisciplinary work of students from McMaster's Arts & Science program. Each year, two editions will be released, each revolving around a central theme and compiling research-based papers written during the previous semester. To make this possible, Aletheia has an incredible team of Arts & Science student Editors, Peer Reviewers and Graphic Designers.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Over the years, colleagues both here at McMaster and beyond have been surprised to learn that the Arts & Science Program does not have a research-based, peer-reviewed journal. While most then accept the fact, often with a sympathetic, resigned shrug of the shoulders—after all, you can’t do everything—at least twice it was proposed that such a publication be launched, and the idea was seriously entertained. When Dr. Bonny Ibhawoh, Senator William McMaster Chair in Global Human Rights, came to teach in Arts & Science several years ago, he was so impressed by the quality of the papers that he suggested that either a student-led journal or an essay award be considered as a means of recognizing exceptional student work. While the latter idea came to fruition, the former did not, though it certainly was considered, as it was in response to the contemporaneous external review of the Arts & Science Program. The review team’s positive and affirming report recommended the “creation of a student-led Arts & Science journal (modeled perhaps on *Millennium* as run by the London School of Economics) that could provide a forum to stake out a pioneering claim in the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries and also be integral to international reputation.” Although there was widespread agreement that this would be a wonderful thing, our records say that “after considerable discussion, it was decided not to pursue the idea of a student-run journal at this time.” Concerns included primarily the lack of resources—who would be responsible, how would quality be ensured [note that the LSE publication, “a highly ranked international journal,” is “one of the few peer-reviewed academic journals edited completely by postgraduate students”]—but also “the discomfort of students, in such a small and close-knit community, in selecting and editing the essays of their peers ... and the limiting of creativity, if students were to take these essays too strictly as models.”

Imagine my mixed emotions, then, when Rhea Murti and Anand Sergeant (now in Level IV) approached me this summer with the idea of a student-led Arts & Science journal. Been there, done that, not in the cards—but it’s such a good idea. Moreover, students Oishee Ghosh and Zahra Panju (now in Level II), had also just proposed a related idea. And Morghen Jael (now in Level III) had yet another kind of publication in mind. In August, the six of us met in a Zoom call—one of the most enjoyable and productive such meetings I’ve experienced in these pandemic times—and agreed that Rhea & Anand would take the lead on the journal (now named *Aletheia*); that Oishee and Zahra would join them, learn from them, and thus ensure the sustainability of the initiative; and that Morghen would take the lead on a monthly Artsci publication with a different focus (now named *The Melange*). I marvel at how both publications have taken shape; at the inter-year collaboration; and at how anxieties about resources have been laid to rest. To witness what Artsci students have accomplished here is both humbling and energizing. In a recent conversation with Rhea and Anand, it was gratifying to hear of the exemplary work of the *Aletheia* peer reviewers, all of whom demonstrated good judgement, sensitivity, critical acumen, and professionalism in editing the essays of their peers. As for the

fear of limiting creativity, I'd venture to say that the opposite is true. These essays are not inhibiting or limiting; they are inspiring. They exemplify the strong research, critical thinking, and writing skills the Arts & Science Program aims to develop, and they offer a wonderful glimpse of the creative interdisciplinary work in which Arts & Science students are engaged.

Congratulations to all *Aletheia* contributors, peer reviewers, graphic designers, and other members of the production team, and warmest thanks to founding editors Rhea Murti and Anand Sergeant, whose vision, energy, talent, and commitment have made all the difference.

Dr. Jean Wilson, Director
Arts & Science Program

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Arts & Science Journal: *Aletheia*. This is the first-ever peer-reviewed journal that compiles works from students in the Arts & Science program at McMaster University. In this journal, we invite you to enjoy some of the innovative and high-quality work produced by students in a range of Arts & Science courses from the 2019-2020 academic year.

The inspiration to start this journal came during a difficult summer of COVID-19, in which the two of us were feeling disconnected from the Arts & Science community and were looking ahead to a school year of remote learning. After three years in Arts & Science, reading our peers' impressive works, we believed that the program was missing a platform to showcase papers from its students. As both of us had experienced, submitting one's paper to an external journal is an intimidating and often complicated process. As we entered our final year in the program, we hoped to create a way to bring together Arts & Science work, while also fostering inter-year collaboration in the remote-learning school year.

With the help of our two 'Editors-in-training', who shared our vision for the journal, we brought together our amazing Staff team: 10 Peer Reviewers who provided detailed feedback and commentary on authors' submissions, and two Graphics Designers who created the journal's website and artwork. We then called for submissions for papers relating to our theme of *Resilience* and were excited by the diversity of courses and topics reflected in the papers we received. The peer review process is an arduous one, but we were incredibly impressed by the dedication and eye for detail of our Peer Reviewers as they immersed themselves in the papers, and of the Authors in incorporating all the feedback and edits they received. More information on the peer review process can be found on our website.

Although perhaps a little dense for a casual read, we envision that this publication, and subsequent editions, will serve to not only inform readers about important issues, but also provide examples of strong work from Arts & Science courses. For prospective Arts & Science students, we hope that these pieces will help you gain a sense of the critical thinking and writing skills fostered in the program. For current students, we hope it is helpful to have examples of work from classes you are taking or considering, to assist with your own writing and connect you to others with similar research interests. And for alumni, we hope *Aletheia* can help you to stay up to date with your alma mater. For everyone, perhaps this journal will come in handy when you are inevitably asked the question: "So, what is Arts & Science?"

Our theme for this edition is Resilience. In deciding on a theme for our inaugural edition, we were keen to capture the complexity and crises of our current time; a time in which communities have come together to question long-established practices and systems, and in

which a global pandemic has compelled us to cope with adversity in new ways. The papers in this edition discuss strength and adaptability in the face of hardship, taking up diverse topics such as the Holocaust, climate change, and women's rights. While almost all of the papers were written before COVID-19, we thought that they spoke well to the resilience needed to navigate our current world.

Thank you for taking the time to read *Aletheia*. We hope that you enjoy going through it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Sincerely,

Anand Sergeant & Rhea Murti
Editors-in-Chief

LITERATURE AND THE HOLOCAUST: INVESTIGATING THE VALUE OF A LITERARY HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Jessie Cartoon

Arts & Science 3X03: Individual Study

The Holocaust is one of the most researched and documented genocides in history, yet it remains an inconceivable tragedy. The mass killings, inhumane conditions, and sheer hatred that the European Jews faced during World War II are challenging to comprehend. History textbooks and documentaries inform audiences and readers about the facts and statistics of the genocide, but these media often lack a focus on human experience and struggle that can be provided through artistic forms. In contrast to history textbooks, literature allows readers to dive into the psyche of those persecuted. It adheres to the historical events, while permitting artistic exploration of personal narratives. Literature also creates a space where the unspeakable experiences and dehumanization that occurred during the Holocaust can be spoken, shared, and contended with. The literary reading process generates an inquiry-based education on the Shoah by fostering a dialogue between the reader and the narrative. Holocaust literature is sustained by survivors' stories of resilience. Often, these tales of resilience do not have traditionally happy endings, nor do they import idealistic worldviews on the reader. These works illuminate how people must live with their past suffering and creatively navigate unthinkable, unspeakable challenges. Most importantly, these stories can be a tool for education; they can transmit the testimonies of survivors in the hopes of

inspiring resilience in others. Through an exploration of the artistic forms and historical elements of selected works of Holocaust literature, I will demonstrate that literature is a valuable tool for Holocaust education and has merit as an integral part of school curricula.

Holocaust literature's verisimilitude is a vital component of the genre. In fact, much of Holocaust literature takes the form of a memoir or diary. A memoir is a mostly un-embellished, often first-person account of a personal story. The categorization of a work as a memoir implies that the account has truth value. Unlike other forms of literature, memoirs ensure that the reader considers an account to be anchored in truth. Memoirs are valuable for Holocaust education, for their narratives are rooted in historical reality. Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1956) details his father's experience in concentration camps during the war. While the book remains grounded in historical truth, it enables readers to grasp the dehumanization and hopelessness that victims experienced throughout the war. As an educational text, the story illuminates the extent of the atrocity. While textbooks inform readers that two thirds of European Jews perished during the Holocaust (Landeau 169), Wiesel's *Night* educates readers to the fact that prisoners often yearned for death as a better alternative to "slow agony in the flames" (42). In fact, every night, prisoners would recite the Mourner's Kaddish, a prayer that magnifies and blesses the name of a deceased

person, “over his parents, over his children, over his brothers, and over himself” (74). The fact that the Kaddish—a holy and significant Jewish prayer—was recited over oneself is a particularly jarring and telling piece of information about the experiences of Jews in concentration camps: “in the long history of the Jews, people have never recited the prayer for the dead for themselves” (42). Through Elie’s testimony, the reader is able to grasp the Jews’ hopelessness, for they welcomed death and abandoned their will to live. A memoir provides readers with an explicit learning experience. It clarifies that the account is grounded in truth while delivering a personal narrative that centres on human suffering.

Like Wiesel’s *Night*, Imre Kertész’s *Fatelessness* (1975) provides a personal narrative of the Holocaust. In contrast, Kertész urges readers to study his testimony as truth, communicated through his repetitive and formulaic sentence structure and removal of internal thoughts. For instance, Kertész meticulously recollects the ‘Selections’ at Auschwitz: “All this, the whole business, must have taken up roughly around three or four minutes, if I wish to be strictly accurate” (95). He removes his personal feelings on the “whole business,” while focusing on the fact and accuracy of the matter. Kertész’ memoir could be likened to a textbook. He continually highlights the accuracy of his testimony and dispenses it with dry statistics, but it is anchored in detail that is not commonly known or studied. Although he removes his personal thoughts from his memoir, he cannot escape dwelling on his most troubling and important memories, observed through his communication of specific and sometimes minor details:

“The three of them always

go about together, whenever possible, hand in hand. But then, after a while, I noticed that the father kept falling behind, and the two sons had to help him, tugging him along with them by the hand. After yet another while, the father was no longer between them. Soon after that, the bigger one had to tow the smaller one in the same manner. Later still he too vanished, with the bigger one merely dragging himself along, though recently I have not seen even him around anywhere” (153).

Here Kertész narrates the deconstruction of the family unit in the Lagers—a detail that is not thoroughly studied in textbooks. Further, from the beginning of the book, Kertész narrates his special bond with his father. Through this lengthy passage on the destruction of the family unit, readers can comprehend Kertész’s sense of loss about his father, who had perished during the Holocaust. He need not contribute immediate personal details of his experiences to convey his longing for his father in this passage. Moreover, *Fatelessness* merges elements of memoir and diary. While aligned with a memoir insofar as the text is written in past-tense and first person, Kertész’ experiences feel new and re-lived. Through jumping between tenses, Kertész exemplifies how his experiences have and will continue to linger in his memory: “I would only be able to start a new life, I ventured, if I were to be reborn or if some affliction, disease, or something of the sort were to affect my mind” (256). Kertész communicates that he does not have the luxury of moving on from the atrocities;

he must continue to live in a world where such an atrocity could have happened, and he must carry his past memories with him forever. Through Kertész' testimony, the tragedy is demystified as an isolated incident remote from today's world. Through the diary- and memoir-like aspects of the text, Kertész brings readers into the past by reviving his memories and reminding them that the Holocaust is not a closed chapter in history. Thus, memoirs are a useful educational tool in showcasing personal, living accounts of the Shoah.

A traditional diary contrasts with a memoir because the prospective lens permits the diarist to include minor details that might otherwise have been rendered irrelevant or discounted. Diaries also allow readers to follow the diarist's thought-process. *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition* was published in 1996, over 50 years after Anne Frank wrote her diary. Unlike a traditional memoir, this version of *Diary* is full-length, unfiltered, and fixates on minor details of her life, such as her favorite meals, activities in hiding, and her longing for love. From Anne's perspective, readers must grapple with Anne's hopes for the future which tragically never came to fruition, for she perished in Bergen-Belsen in 1945 at the age of 15. For instance, Anne states, "In the future I'm going to devote less time to sentimentality and more time to reality" (30). Anne is a well-articulated and educated young woman with large aspirations, and readers are forced to contend with the reality that her future was never realized. Like a memoir, a diary illuminates the truth value of the text. For instance, although Anne comments about enhancing her text and writing style, *Diary* is often considered non-fiction, for it details Anne's life and situation. As a piece of literature, though, *Diary* reveals a thoughtful writing style. It is valuable as a piece of artistic,

historical, and intellectual writing, exemplified when Anne paints a picture of her longing for and deprivation of humanity: "I long... to cry! I feel as if I were about to explode. I know crying would help, but I can't cry" (181). Anne yearns to cry—a simple yet defining human act. Anne's desire to be a free and educated woman is communicated in her *Diary*, and her frustration, often released on her family, is expressed through her words. Anne's *Diary* ends abruptly after she expresses her concern that the Annex will be raided. Anne's *Diary* thus leaves readers feeling hopeless in relation to the young life that was lost. *The Diary of a Young Girl* is a useful educational tool to expose readers to the reality of the Holocaust for many educated and hopeful youth like Anne. Like the other texts discussed, Anne's *Diary* illustrates that Anne or any of the children that were murdered during the Shoah were not mere statistics—each had a worthy and rich life with a detailed, personal story.

An aspect of Holocaust literature characteristic to memoirs is the maintenance of a truth-value. Art Spiegelman's *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* (1980) and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (1992) are graphic novels that resemble an untraditional memoir. These novels document Art's father's narrative before, during, and after the war. The text's self-reflective nature is exemplified in the plot: it depicts Art's interviews with his father, Vladek, about his Holocaust experiences to gather material for his graphic novel, *Maus*. The novel portrays Jews as mice, Germans as cats, and Poles as pigs. Before the Holocaust, animal comics were used as antisemitic propaganda targeting Jews (Klaehn 61-81). Art uses the trope of funny cartoon animals to illustrate the perverted relationship between Jews and antisemitic propaganda during the Holocaust. Although the novel has light-hearted moments,

such as Art and Vladek’s constant bickering, it does not feature the funny aspects of cartoon animals, and rather utilizes the stereotypical relationship between cat and mouse to exemplify the powerlessness of the Jews and predatory nature of the Nazis. In fact, during painful and traumatizing memories, the mice are shaded black to reflect the ominous nature of the Nazis’ crimes (*Maus I* 87). Cartoon animals are also utilized to communicate the incomprehensible tragedy of the Holocaust in a comprehensible way. For instance, readers can understand that when Vladek, portrayed as a mouse, is shielded with a pig mask, he is hiding his Jewish identity in order to survive. This example also shows how Art’s portrayal of races as animals is precarious. During the war, Vladek considered himself as both a Pole and a Jew, so the animal distinction between races and ethnicities is not necessarily definitive. The animal illustrations do not, however, suggest that the Nazis were acting like animals or the Jews were treated like animals (Wilson). Both of these deceptive and simplified narratives would suggest that animals have the ability to treat other animals as the Nazis treated the Jews, and that humans treat animals the way the Jews were treated by the Nazis. Ironically, the novels highlight that humans are capable of such crimes and humans were the victims of such crimes. For instance, in *Maus II*, Vladek exhibits casual racism toward an African American man, highlighting that despite his traumas, Vladek is a troubled and imperfect human being (99). In another instance, Vladek observes an SS guard at Auschwitz throw a Jewish man’s cap and force him to run after it. Subsequently, the guard shoots the man for trying to escape. Vladek offers Art an explanation for such monstrous behavior: the guard wanted to prevent someone from escaping in return for an extra day’s vacation (*Maus II* 35). Both these examples

demystify the tragedy, for they demonstrate that the Holocaust was a human-caused and effected crime. The perpetrators were not inherently evil, animalistic people, which is ironically communicated through the animal illustrations. However, the narrative does not, excuse or justify the monstrous acts carried out by the SS officers; rather, the narrative showcases that human beings are capable of unthinkable acts of violence. This message is particularly useful in Holocaust education because it demystifies the Holocaust as an isolated, singular incident.

Holocaust literature also makes educational processes present-focused by reviving individual experiences of the Holocaust. Through artistic exploration of personal narratives and human struggle, poetry has the ability to communicate such themes in a revived and relevant manner. Dan Pagis’ “Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car” (1981) takes readers into a moment’s monument—a Jewish person being transported in a cattle car to a concentration camp:

here in this carload
 i am eve
 with abel my son
 if you see my other son
 cain son of man
 tell him that i

From the title, readers feel a sense of desperation and impermanence. The speaker is in a sealed, inescapable car, and their testimony is written in pencil—an erasable form of communication. The title evokes the policy of the Final Solution, the complete elimination and erasure of the Jewish people. This theme is further communicated throughout the poem, which culminates in the line, “tell him that I” (6). The unfinished

final sentence demonstrates that the rest of the speaker's story was erased, either because of the pencil's impermanence or because of their inability to finish the sentence. It remains important to study the policy of the Final Solution, which is taught in traditional historical education; however, by using artistic expression to communicate the Final Solution and focusing on one individual, readers are able to understand and imagine how each person may have been affected by the Holocaust and the Final Solution. This poem urges readers to transmit testimony in order to prevent memories from being erased or forgotten. Additionally, by illustrating the perpetrators and victims as human beings, this poem serves to demystify the Holocaust as an isolated incident. For example, the poem contains an explicit biblical parallel to the story of Cain and Abel, wherein Cain murders his brother Abel. Cain and Abel are representative of an Aryan and Jewish person respectively, for Abel is described as being the railway-car with Eve while Cain is not in captivity. These men are brothers, challenging Nazi propaganda that there is an inherent difference between an Aryan and a Jew. Additionally, Pagis emphasizes that Cain is the "son of man" (5), placing the responsibility for the crimes on man rather than a monstrous perpetrator. By reinforcing human beings as both perpetrators and the victims of the Holocaust, the poem communicates the importance of studying the Holocaust while simultaneously demystifying it as an unimaginable event that could never reoccur. As is evident in Pagis' poem, poetry has merit as part of Holocaust education because of its ability to speak to historical events, artistically illustrate human struggle, and focus on individual narratives.

Theatre plunges the audience into

interpersonal relationships and human struggles, and thus, it is another form of Holocaust literature that can be a valuable educational device. In particular, documentary theatre places audiences in an active role and implicates the interconnectedness of events. Peter Weiss' *The Investigation* (1965) is a piece of documentary theatre, which is structured as a trial of SS officers. Although there is no specific reference to a historical concentration camp, the play delves into the selections, punishment, torture, executions, gas chambers, and crematoria that align with historical accounts of Auschwitz. Modelled after Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the play begins on the platforms of the camp and culminates in one of the darkest elements of the Shoah—the crematoria. Like Dante's witness of the she-wolf at the start of *Inferno*, near the beginning of the play, 3rd Witness expresses that upon seeing the "hundreds of ragged figures, many of them starved down to skeletons... [we] lost all hope" (43). As an educational tool, the play highlights bystanders' lack of questioning in occupied Europe, and thus places the blame on them as well as active perpetrators (Wilson). The relentless questioning of the witnesses by the defense urges the audience to consider the lack of questioning about the dehumanization and segregation of the Jews before and during the war. In particular, the play concentrates on victim blaming. For instance, after 9th Witness discloses that the victims were forced to perform some of the early killings, the defense responds, "So the prisoners were killed by their own people?" (226). Even after the Holocaust, victims were blamed for crimes they were forced to commit. The witnesses continue to be accused of falsifying their experiences, contributing to the crimes, and exaggerating their memories throughout the play with

little protest by the Judge and Prosecutor. The play ends with 1st Accused stating, “We ought to concern ourselves with other things than blame and reproaches that should be thought of long since atoned for” (313). The form of the play exposes the audience to the lack of sympathy towards the victims and the denial of facts, arousing a sense of frustration in the audience and compelling them to transmit the testimony of the Holocaust. Documentary theatre is a useful tool for Holocaust education because it provides the audience with an immersive experience that places the audience in an active role throughout the performance and urges them to continue their education and educate others.

For the purposes of education, it is important to abide by historical facts about the Holocaust with accuracy. Although literature encapsulates fictional accounts, there is value in investigating how Holocaust literature works to educate readers on particular historical elements of the Holocaust. Ka-Tzetnik 135633’s *House of Dolls* (1953) is a useful educational tool about the Lager system, and in particular, prisoner privilege within the camps. For instance, Harry becomes the camp physician at Niederwalden because of his background studying medicine. As the physician, Harry receives extra rations, exemption from hard labour, and the occasional cigarette. Nonetheless, even the physician “doesn’t belong to himself” (225), for he is a racial prisoner like the other Jews. Daniella, as a member of the Joy Division in the camp brothel, is exempt from hard labour and is given larger rations. However, she must attend weekly invasive medical examinations and if she receives three dissatisfied “reports” from guards, she would be “led out, usually with an arrival of a new transport, to the execution square”

(174). Similarly, Fella, one of the previous Joy Division labourers, negotiates a position as the Kalefactress’ maid, which spares her from hard labour, small rations, beatings, and rape. Being vital to the operation of the camps, Harry, Fella, and Daniella receive special treatment, aligning with historical narratives of privilege within the camps.

Tadeusz Borowski’s “This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen” (1946) illuminates a historically accurate phenomenon that occurred within the camps: the Nazi’s maintenance of the illusion that there were no mass killings, even for those led to their death. The narrator, whose job is to facilitate leading people off the trains and into the gas chambers, states, “They do not know that in just a few moments they will die, that the gold, money, and diamonds which they have so prudently hidden in their clothing and on their bodies are now useless to them” (14). In fact, the SS prioritize keeping the victims unaware of their fate to minimize resistance: “Now we swiftly clean up the remaining dirt: there must be ‘no trace left of the *Schweinerei*’” (10). By removing all evidence from the platforms, the next victims could be swiftly ushered to their death. In another instance, a wounded and inquisitive elderly man is met with a soldier’s deceiving response: “In half an hour you’ll be talking with the top commandant! Only don’t forget to greet him with a Heil Hitler” (12). Historically, the Nazis were known for trying to deceive their victims. For instance, a sign stating “Arbeit Macht Frei,” translating to “Work Sets You Free,” was placed outside the main gate of Auschwitz, which contained the largest extermination camp. Further, outside the gas chambers, there were signs in several languages instructing people to prepare for a shower; inside the gas chambers,

there were false shower heads on the walls (Schulz and Soumerei 184). Borowski's story aligns with the historical record that the victims were deceived regarding their systematic execution, which provides a vital educational element to the story.

Another closely documented historical element of the Holocaust is the victims' starvation. Primo Levi's "Cerium" (1975) clarifies that hunger was the primary factor that led to mass cooperation of prisoners with their oppressors. Levi describes his hunger as "a need, a lack, a yearning that had accompanied us now for a year, had struck deep, permanent roots in us, lived in our cells, and conditioned our behavior" (140). Levi's account of the hunger he experienced, which conditioned his behaviour, helps explain why victims continued to work for their oppressors. Privileged positions in the camps often came with the promise of more rations; prisoners took on these positions in an attempt to satisfy their persistent hunger. In fact, Levi documents that while he was a chemist at IG-Farben during the Holocaust, he "forced himself to ingest and digest" (145) fatty acids, sanitary cotton, and glycerin, all of which had "extremely unpleasant side effects" (145). Through Levi's explanation of the hunger that he experienced at Monowitz, readers are able to grasp how the prisoners' actions were shaped by their hunger and survival instincts, and how their hunger prevented regular resistance or escape.

Lager and ghetto life are thoroughly researched and discussed in historical texts. However, there is less research and commentary on non-traditional narratives, like the experiences of individuals in hiding. Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965) focuses on a young, Jewish boy hiding in the Polish countryside during the Holocaust. The

boy experiences torture, sexual assault, forced labour, and is deemed a "Gypsy-Jew" (181) by the Polish villagers. The book highlights the extreme difficulty faced by Jews in hiding during the war. Although the Polish people were also persecuted by the Nazis, they willingly turned in hidden Jews because of antisemitic tropes, such as the Jews "mercilessly [kill] Christian babies and [drink] their blood" (181). The book not only displays the experiences of Jews in hiding, but also educates readers about the mental, physical, and emotional struggles of children during the Holocaust. For instance, the book emphasizes the boy's initial child-like innocence in the face of discrimination and torture. The novel contains a short, third-person introduction, followed by the boy's first-person narration for the duration of the text. By framing the book with a structure parallel to that of a fairy tale, the boy's innocence is communicated to the reader. As the boy's struggles escalate, his child-like innocence continues to guide his narration, observed when the boy ponders the difference between himself and the villagers: "I wondered what gave people of one color of eyes and hair such great power over other people" (172). The adults around the boy regard him as sub-human, while he observes that his eye and hair colour are their only differences, illuminating the cruelty of the genocide. Ironically, the only characters to show the boy sympathy or kindness are two Nazi guards, who do not send him to a concentration camp and aid him in escaping a German base. Perhaps most notably, the novel holds bystanders accountable as complicit in the genocide. For instance, in one of the Polish towns where the boy hides, he sees cattle cars shipping several hundred people to a concentration camp. Children are thrown out of the windows in an attempt to spare their lives, but the villagers abduct, rape, kill, and turn in the children.

Through the experiences of people on the cattle car—a small detail during the Holocaust and an underexamined historical accuracy—this novel successfully implicates the villagers as bystanders and complicit in the crimes.

As the subject of historical fiction, Holocaust literature has a responsibility to communicate truthfully about historical realities experienced during the Shoah. Misleading, unverified, and false information in Holocaust literature can be dangerous, for it opposes Holocaust literature's purpose as an educational tool. Despite the success of Heather Morris' wildly popular novel, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* (2018), it is riddled with historical inaccuracies. *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* centres Lale Sokolov's inspiring true story of his resilience during his imprisonment at Auschwitz. Wanda Witek-Malicka's article, "Fact-Checking *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*" (2018), uncovers some of the inaccuracies of the novel. For instance, she points to the section in the book where Lale observes people being murdered in busses with Zyklon B. Although moveable gas chambers were used in some concentration camps, "the murder of prisoners in a bus allegedly changed to a gas chamber does not find confirmation in any sources" (Witek-Malicka 9). In addition, Morris embellishes and romanticizes Lale's story. For instance, when Gita responds "I do" to Lale's inquiry if she trusts him, he responds, "One day you will say those two little words to me under different circumstances. In front of a rabbi, surrounded by our family and friends" (196). As a religious Slovakian Jew, Lale would not have made this reference nor expected Gita to understand it, because exchanging "I do's" is not a part of the Jewish wedding ritual. Despite the book's historical inaccuracies and embellished narrative, the novel presents itself as a historical document—devoid of human struggle and regard for personal narratives. The book treats

Lale's story as a series of events, reducing his inner thoughts to clichéd remarks. For instance, instead of describing what it felt like to care of oneself in Auschwitz, a line reads, "Lale prided himself on his appearance, and his living situation did not prevent him from looking his best" (185). This quotation is an obvious, simplified remark about the living conditions at Auschwitz that can be deduced from a history textbook. It does not venture to describe how Lale felt about struggling to upkeep his personal hygiene as a desperate attempt to grasp onto his humanity. The story is heavily based on Lale's remarkable story as the tattooist in Auschwitz. As an educational resource, however, the novel consistently falls short of communicating the historical realities of Auschwitz and Lale's internal narrative.

While Holocaust literature highlights historical elements, including the Lager system, covering up the mass killings, the hunger-driven conditioned behaviour, and narratives of people in hiding, it also provides a platform to meaningfully communicate personal narratives, which demystifies the tragedy as an isolated incident, educates readers on the historical realities of the Holocaust, and places responsibility on readers to resist indifference. However, it is the responsibility of the educator to ensure that the literature taught is historically valid. It is important to be cautious of Holocaust literature such as Heather Morris' *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, which do not fulfill this educational role to accurately portray the historical realities nor dive into crucial personal narratives of the Shoah. Nevertheless, none of this literature is indifferent to the genocide, for it brings readers into a dialogue with narratives of the Holocaust. A literary education stimulates and even begs readers to continue investigating the Holocaust because the educational

experience invites them into personal narratives, preventing the learning experience from ending in the classroom. By engaging with Holocaust literature, readers enter into positions of care with the narrative (Wilson), and thus, the educational experience can serve as a jarring awakening that compels readers to contend with and further investigate the Shoah.

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EXAMINING THE IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS OF NEW URBANISM

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Arts & Science 3CU3: Alumni Experience Inquiry

New Urbanism (NU) is an urban planning movement that emerged in the 1980s in response to American suburban sprawl. It originated amongst architects and planners that agreed upon common values in city design and it was formalized in 1993 with the founding of a non-profit organization called the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) (Poticha, “Foreword” xiii). The CNU poses its principles in a twenty-seven rule charter that aims to make cities “walkable, mixed in use, socially diverse, and transit-served” (Talen, “Why” 1). Urban planners face a dilemma that has become particularly evident with NU—given both the clear link between physical design and social outcomes, and the inevitable limit of physical design in advancing social goals, to what extent should planners aim to create social change in their work (Lee 109)? New Urbanists acknowledge that “physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems” (Talen, “Social Goals” 166). Nonetheless, they interweave social objectives and values into their design principles and thus affirm their awareness of the multidimensional influence of physical environments. For example, diversity is meant to be a key characteristic of NU communities that is supported by features benefitting underprivileged populations like well-connected transit systems and mixed housing options.

NU’s social awareness and proactivity

are its primary appeal. The Congress’s interdisciplinary membership demonstrates how the movement has expanded beyond physical design; it has grown from architects and planners to an array of professionals, ranging from academics to sociologists to economists (Poticha, “Foreword” xiv). While there is no official NU certification, its guidelines have shaped hundreds of neighbourhoods, cities, and public housing projects since its inception two decades ago (Trudeau, “Typology” 114). Many scholars have evaluated the neighbourhoods shaped by NU and the literature indicates some consistent issues in these communities. New Urbanist principles can have negative impacts on social conditions: when these principles lack complements like political regulations or social programs, the produced outcomes may be out of line with NU’s normative vision of just, equitable, and diverse communities. Despite this, New Urbanists and the CNU are unwilling to expand their principles beyond design prescriptions or pursue political changes that would ensure the social goals they claim to address become more attainable. In this essay, I will argue that NU’s tendency to frame itself as a neutral design movement and avoid pursuing social justice through public advocacy is the root of systemic issues in New Urbanist neighbourhoods and stems from an underlying, pernicious ideal of “community”. Their current approach to ideology and politics precludes the possibility

of achieving diverse and socially just cities and must be reoriented in order to realize their vision of widespread good urbanism.

To begin, I will outline two persistent issues that scholars have identified in NU developments, the first being affordability. NU calls for evenly distributed affordable housing to avoid concentrations of poverty (Congress for the New Urbanism). For low-income households, housing that integrates households of varying income levels improves access to high-quality services, employment, and school opportunities that are often exclusively available in wealthy neighbourhoods. Improved access reduces exposure to crime, poverty, environmental hazards, and other challenges faced in concentrated low-income areas (“Seven” 74-5; Talen, “Design” 77). NU principles rely on design strategies to create affordability, such as providing small, dense housing options and amenities within walking distance to reduce the need for a car (Talen, “Affordability” 491). However, research has shown the insufficiency of design as a tool to regulate housing prices in NU communities. A survey of private NU developments found that, when measured by the median income in an area, only 15% of private NU developments were affordable: “the vast majority ... are not within reach of middle and low-income families” (Talen, “Affordability” 495). The study also reinforced arguments that NU developments tend to be more expensive than conventional neighbourhoods—coveted features like walkability and transit access drive up prices, especially given the scarcity of well-designed urban environments (Talen, “Culture of Criticism” 329); essentially “affordable housing in desirable locations ... goes against the basic principles of land economics in the United States” (Talen,

“Affordability” 493; Tu and Eppli 498). As a result, even if living costs are reduced by transit access and nearby amenities, low-income families who would benefit most from these features cannot afford the entry costs of the neighbourhoods (Markley 1128). The consequence is that public intervention such as government subsidies and regulations is necessary to achieve mixed-income housing; as Ethan Goffman writes, “If one cares about the plight of low-income people, there is no solution that relies entirely on the free market” (135). Indeed, studies that find income diversity across NU communities at an aggregate level consistently attribute it to concentrated, publicly supported housing developments (Trudeau, “Tracing” 28; Johnson and Talen 597; Trudeau and Kaplan 470). Case studies show the same link: in Florida, a publicly-assisted neighbourhood had a high proportion of low-income housing, while a comparable privately-developed one was completely inaccessible to low-income households (Kim and Larsen 3856). Overall, the NU strategy of designing affordability into a neighbourhood falls short—and may even work against the goal of affordability—without government intervention.

Another persistent problem relates to social diversity. New Urbanists argue that their design principles will create diverse communities and facilitate social interaction across divisions like race and class. This expectation is clear in several principles, most explicitly in number thirteen:

“Within neighbourhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal

and civic bonds essential to an authentic community” (Congress for the New Urbanism)

However, given the historic discrimination against minority communities, the high expense of NU developments hinders racial diversity. For example: the development of NU projects in Atlanta’s suburbs caused the displacement of Hispanic residents by White residents, supporting “a relationship between new urbanism in practice and the whitening of space” (Markley 1128). Furthermore, even when racial and income diversity are achieved, interaction and cooperation across group divisions do not naturally occur—a finding contrary to NU thought. For example, Arizona residents of diverse NU communities seldom interacted with one another (Cabrera and Najarian 438). In Minneapolis and St. Paul, some homeowners in NU communities felt “an acute sense of unease and discomfort with social diversity present in their neighbourhoods” and communities with more income diversity had less social interaction (Trudeau, “Tracing” 35). In Chicago, mixed-income projects exacerbated race conflicts, which further marginalized low-income Black renters (Khare et al. 496). These cases commonly suggest that explicit attention to inter-group relations—perhaps through community programming or mediation services—is essential to the possibility of positive interaction in diverse neighbourhoods (Trudeau, “Tracing” 35; Cabrera and Najarian 438).

New Urbanists may have overlooked this need because in the early stages of NU, the principles were largely applied to newly built communities, such as resort-style suburban developments and public housing projects (Day 84). As NU guidelines are

increasingly used to reform neighbourhoods like inner city areas and declining suburbs, the need for targeted programming and attention to social difference has grown stronger, including *before* new designs are implemented. Designs and consultation processes must accommodate people who vary in their wants and needs according to race, income, age, and other demographic and social factors. This was illustrated in Kristen Day’s study of neighbourhood revitalization in Costa Mesa, California, where the proposed design and consultation methods of NU standards benefitted white residents while neglecting Latino residents, who required separate programming and outreach to be included (89, 91). Similar results occurred with the redevelopment of a public housing site in Seattle, where assistance from non-profit organizations and community building services were crucial to meet the needs of an ethnically diverse population (Jackson 96). Some researchers directly investigated the idea that intentional, socially-conscious planning is important for NU communities using a comparative study. A Texas NU community was found to use targeted policies and programs, like neighbourhood support groups, to develop and sustain diversity in race and income. In contrast, an Indiana community lacked diversity support and made ignorant decisions—including subsidizing homeowners rather than renters and providing amenities catering to wealthy tastes—that led to the displacement of Black residents and the preferential treatment of white residents (Trudeau and Kaplan, 473-476). Thus, in a similar fashion to the issue of affordability, creating and sustaining social diversity in NU developments requires more than a well-designed environment.

The lack of affordability and social

diversity suggest that New Urbanism needs to go further than design recommendations. When NU principles are implemented without further guidelines or more substantive action, they backfire by pricing out low-income people, causing discomfort amongst diverse populations, and inequitably serving different communities. New Urbanists often clarify that their principles cannot solve social problems, but instead consciously address social goals. This clarification is used to distinguish NU from historical urban planning theories, which failed by ignoring the social effects of physical planning (Talen, “Social Goals” 166-7). However, these enduring issues suggest that there are cases where awareness does not make a difference—in fact, exclusively operating through physical design may harm social goals. Further, proponents of NU may have made themselves vulnerable to dismissing genuine critique and ongoing reflection because of NU’s overtly normative approach to planning: if the normative principles are agreed upon as good and just, it may seem unlikely that they cause issues in the same way that more traditionally non-normative theories of city design have throughout history. Talen has emphasized that, in evaluating NU theory, critics “must be careful to assess whether the impact is the result of the ideal itself or a flawed application of that ideal”, rather than shooting down a good theory for idiosyncratic shortcomings (“Culture of Criticism” 321). But if the ideal is sound, yet flawed applications are inevitable given the conditions of the practical environment, should not New Urbanists then respond by pursuing changes in those conditions?

NU is a normative theory that makes claims about how the world ought to be in terms of city development. This was a

consistent point of criticism in NU’s early phases, as opponents argued that normative idealizing had no place in urban theory; planning ideals could not be evaluated apart from their implementation; and no fixed set of planning ideals could work for all people (Talen, “Culture of Criticism 321). New Urbanists stood firm and repeatedly defended their movement, arguing that urban planning is strengthened with a concrete theory of good urban form rather than relativistic attitudes to ideals, as urban planners need strong guidance to make critical decisions and ward off the assertive and unjust interests of less publicly-minded actors (Talen and Ellis 39). Emily Talen makes the cogent point that rejection of normative theory by planners “boils down to a trivializing of local urban experiences” (“Culture of Criticism” 322). Because so many of their aspirational design goals were incompatible with the policy environment of the 90s (and continue to be today), New Urbanists have pushed hard for reforms in federal guidelines, municipal codes, zoning regulations, and other institutional hurdles. In an article on the movement’s transportation achievements, Wes Marshall explains how the CNU partnered with multiple federal agencies to produce design manuals like the *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities*; partnered with councils to create a neighbourhood certification system based on NU transportation features; and fought a long battle with local Fire Marshals before managing to amend local fire codes through the International Code Council (Marshall 51-52). Another advocacy achievement has been popularizing form-based codes. Municipal zoning is typically organized around types of land use, such as industrial or residential areas, which encourages the segregated

design of suburbs and prohibits the mixed-use design advocated by NU. However, New Urbanists have persuaded many cities to adopt form-based codes instead, which focus more on the physical aspects like the distance between buildings and streets or architectural styles (Steuteville, “Great Idea: Form-based codes”). As of 2016, 600 of these codes had been prepared for American cities—362 were adopted (Perez, “Top 10 misconceptions”). Thus, New Urbanists have been willing to form partnerships with a variety of organizations, lobby decision-makers, and engage politically to procure changes in the status quo that prevented the realization of the *design* aspects of their vision.

This kind of rigorous advocacy, especially by the CNU, has not been employed to improve the social and political conditions for achieving NU’s social ideals. The issue is not a lack of strategies—academics have made valuable, concrete suggestions to the CNU about the kinds of changes required to better address social goals. There are many potential techniques for improving housing affordability in NU developments. For example, advocates could push for more regions to adopt progressive policies like in Montgomery County, Maryland, where 12% of all newly developed housing units must be moderately priced (Goffman 134). Emily Talen proposed that the CNU partner with the Community Land Trust Network, a national organization composed of “private, non-profit organization[s] that own[] land for the purpose of providing affordable housing” (Talen, “The Community Land Trust” 78). Since much of the added expense of NU developments comes from their desirable location, removing the land cost significantly improves affordability. The CLTN seems like a welcoming alternative to more restrictive,

top-down government subsidy programs, yet the CNU has no relationship with their organization (Talen, “The Community Land Trust” 80). Clear options have also been offered to improve accommodation for social diversity: April Jackson suggests that the CNU provide cultural competence training to planners and create accountability systems such as regulations to ensure developments claiming to be New Urbanist provide a range of housing options and support for diverse social groups (102). The CNU has been offered a menu of advocacy options pertaining to its social goals, but has not shown interest in this kind of political work—their action does not seem to extend beyond featuring speakers and articles focussed on affordable housing and anti-racism on their platforms. The lack of substantive action has cast doubt on the authenticity of NU’s social awareness, and, as Talen has observed, led the movement to a position where it “strains credibility to continue pushing design-only strategies” (508).

The New Urbanists have a well-known example of urban theory that takes up social justice. Jane Jacobs, the iconic theorist whose writing is widely credited and referenced in NU texts, did not skirt around social issues in her work. For example, in her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs took a strong stance against inadequate government-run public housing. Jacobs proposed a scheme called a guaranteed-rent method where low-income tenants live in privately-developed mixed-income buildings and a government agency pays the proportion of the rent that the tenant cannot afford (326). She outlined value-laden guidelines like ensuring the privacy and dignity of tenants, and making buildings attractive and livable such that, even if households start earning

a higher income, they may choose to stay for the sake of preserving their social ties and community (Jacobs 332). While Jacobs was also critical of attempts to solve social problems with good design, she was not afraid to explore the necessary political and programmatic complements to her design proposals (113). A fundamental difference in Jacobs' and the New Urbanists' approach seems to be their ideology. Jacobs took overt ideological stances—even when they strayed from strictly 'planning' objectives, such as condemning racial discrimination or supporting private sector and market-oriented solutions—, but the NU movement is intent on being ideologically neutral. Cliff Ellis questions whether this is an honest characterization:

Is New Urbanism ... a progressive movement with a commitment to social justice, strong democracy, and the renewal of civic culture? Or does New Urbanism have more profound connections with traditional conservatism and its appreciation of tradition, incremental change, and timeless values? ... Some have argued that New Urbanism has no strong connections with political philosophy at all, and is essentially a pragmatic design theory available for adoption by individuals from all points of the political compass. Is this, in fact, possible? (Ellis 9)

Prominent New Urbanists boast about their neutrality, as demonstrated in the Charter where founder and figurehead Andrés Dua-

ny writes, "We have no ideological prerequisites" (13). Some observers have chalked up the CNU's reluctance for ideological stances to a compromise for the sake of productivity and results, as they intend to see their principles applied "no matter what" and need to minimize conflict with collaborators (Pyatok 807). However, it is misleading to present planning decisions as ideologically neutral: planners influence our social and political lives in innumerable ways, including, "social and political forms of organization through the design of public spaces, social equity through the spatial arrangement of public facilities, and social encounters through the design of sidewalks" (Talen, "Social Goals" 165). A movement that intends to create good urban form undeniably makes decisions about which ideals and formations are desirable, regardless of how technical and objective those decisions and resulting principles may appear. David Brain emphasizes this point: "In the context of the urban landscape, every design and planning decision is a value proposition, and a proposition that has to do with social and political relationships" (233). So, rather than accept the claim that NU can and should avoid ideological commitments, we should critically examine the ideology inevitably implicit in their behaviour and prescriptions.

The New Urbanists' ideology could perhaps be judged from their aspiration to foster a sense of community through their designs. NU rhetoric is littered with descriptions of bringing people together, strengthening bonds amongst neighbours, and cultivating shared feelings of appreciation for their neighbourhood amongst residents. Referencing 'community' in this way is the closest the New Urbanists get to describing an ideology, as it might imply a set of values like equality, civic engagement, and interest

in the common good. However, it is crucial to consider how the “community” ideal is actually perceived by people external to the movement, like residents in an NU community or planners using the principles. When described in general terms, the ideal of community can be quite ambiguous: it can be interpreted in many different ways, from social interactions and relationships to a more affective, psychological sense of belonging or group identity (Talen, “Social Goals” 168). The vagueness of the ideal is apparent in the NU Charter principles: none provide substantive measures for achieving community, but instead draw on the language of community as descriptive material surrounding more tangible, design-based aims (Talen, “Social Goals” 178). Those descriptions of community often appear alongside references to social goals of NU, such as in principle thirteen where mixed housing and social diversity are linked with strengthening personal and civil bonds (Congress for the New Urbanism). The consequence of the ambiguity of community as an ideal, and its subsequent link with the social goals of NU, is that the associated social objectives of the movement are undermined. For example, if community is interpreted to refer to high sociability and a sense of belonging, those can be achieved—and are in fact easier to achieve—without social diversity. So, the linkage may make the social goals appear *less necessary*, since community values can be achieved without them, or more *inconvenient* or *limiting*, if the achievement of goals like mixed-income housing does not produce the implied community values. Either way, the ambiguity of the community ideal in the NU principles weakens the social ideals of the movement for those trying to use the NU standards to develop or evaluate their

neighbourhood.

Furthermore, while the community ideal is ambiguous to those external to the NU movement, the attitude of the CNU and core movement organizers described above may reveal their specific interpretation of the ideal and its underlying implications. To understand how NU members interpret community, it helps to review scholarly critiques of the term. Community based on shared location has become a dubious concept in social science literature; social demographic traits such as race, age, and class seem to be more influential for community formation (Talen, “The Problem” 175; Brain 222). This may explain past cases where the ideal of community was used for exclusive and elitist ends, like promoting socially homogenous neighbourhoods or NIMBYism, a phenomenon where residents oppose new developments that change the character of their neighbourhoods (Talen, “The Problem” 178). Historical examples of the pernicious use of the community ideal justify the connection Kristen Day makes between NU and the “myth of community” as proposed by the American theorist Iris Marion Young. Young argues that community is a political ideal that necessitates features like shared interests, heritage, culture, and values for membership—community thus “expresses a desire for the fusion of subjects with one another that, in practise, operates to exclude those with whom the group does not identify” (Day 87). By predicating mutual respect on common traits, the ideal of community does the opposite of encouraging civility and public-mindedness: it instead encourages conditional respect for people we are similar to and connected with (Brain 222). As such, NU’s weak commitment to its social goals may be explained by the members’ subscription

to the ideology of community described in Young's theory, as valuing social justice and diversity requires a compassion and interest in people different from oneself.

Besides a disinterest in social justice, the ideal of community also dissuades political action and public advocacy. Jane Jacobs foreshadowed this possibility when denouncing a similar value she termed "togetherness". She described a middle-class neighbourhood where design relied on community ties, personal contact, and shared resources; these conditions created a homogenous population that was hostile to people of different races and classes (63). Children from this area had trouble in middle school because they had to interact with new people from different neighbourhoods and backgrounds—they lacked the skills and trust needed for engagement with strangers in public (Jacobs 64). Jacobs diagnosed the problem as a lack of public life, replaced by "differing degrees of extended private life" (64). She was on to something: when meaningful public engagement is replaced by the friendly, familiar interactions of community life, people fail to develop valuable skills and qualities that are essential for public-minded thinking. Other scholars have made similar observations in regard to NU and its focus on community. Michael Brill distinguishes public life as sociability with strangers, and community life as sociability with known people, and notes that NU's objectives match community life (48, 50). Brill speculates that most people find public life unappealing: "It's too troublesome, too fractious, not always safe or comfortable ... too possible to have in-your-face difference to make everybody happy" (52), and he mourns consequences like the loss of learning tolerance and civility toward

diversity (54). In connecting sociological theory to NU, Brain makes parallel arguments with the terms "community" and "civility": while community breeds an inward-looking, narrow self-interest and distrust of strangers that result in "a kind of trained incapacity for public life" (224), civility fosters respect for social difference, trust in impersonal relationships, and alignment with democratic politics (223). A common theme amongst these conceptions is that the community ideal fails to develop the capacities needed for meaningful engagement in the public realm and the empathy for strangers that is crucial to politics. Thus, rather than viewing NU's reluctance to fiercely pursue social goals as a disinterest in the goals themselves, their evasiveness may signal a fundamental disinterest in politics and the public realm.

The pitfalls of the community ideal are not devastating for NU, as the principles themselves are still positive and socially conscious. Instead, what needs to change is the New Urbanist approach to advocacy and politics in pursuit of social goals, which has been stifled by their interest in community as proven by the enduring issues with affordability and social diversity in NU developments. Admitting the necessity of an ideological agenda is crucial; New Urbanists' claims of neutrality only serve to prevent recognition of the problematic ideology of community that currently underlies their actions. As Emily Talen has suggested, a more tangible and firm value—like increased accessibility of public services and spaces—would better serve the social objectives tied up in NU theory (Talen, "The Problem" 180). NU can also draw from theories of urban resilience to develop values informed by political and social conditions; resilience scholars have argued that social equity is

an essential feature for contemporary cities given the shocks and crises common to economies structured by neoliberal policy (Eraydin and Taşan-Kok, 4). Minority and low-income communities lack the resources and privilege to overcome these disruptions, and market-friendly municipal planning serves to exacerbate those inequalities—cities should instead prioritize equity in their policymaking to create more sustainable and resilient communities (Meerow et al, 794).

Committing to accessibility or social equity would bring NU closer to progressive politics, but this is not something to fear, because the act of planning human spaces is inevitably political. Rather than deny this fact, NU should embrace the fight for political and regulatory changes needed to achieve their social objectives and celebrate the possibility to turn their idealistic vision of a just city into a widespread reality.

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“YOU KANT DO THAT!”: AN ARGUMENT THAT KANT’S PRINCIPLES FOR PEACE MANDATE A FULLY SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

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Arts & Science 2A06: Social and Political Thought

An Introduction Note on Resilience:

To maintain resilience in an ever-changing world, we must frequently reassess our political principles and apply lessons from our past to new challenges. Contemporary issues such as climate change, technological surveillance, and COVID-19 have forced us to evaluate and amend our understanding of sustainability, privacy, and liberty. Our challenges are new, but the principles associated with those challenges have pervaded human history. It is in learning to apply the lessons and scholarship from our past to new conflicts that we find our resilience. As the complexity of a challenge increases, so must our creativity.

Kant’s “Toward Perpetual Peace” has long stood as an exemplar for the nations of the world on how to operate peacefully with respect to traditional conflicts, such as war and tyranny. Over time, the principles outlined in this famous treatise have been applied to the modern fields of international law (Kleingeld, 304-325) and bioethics (Messelken, 293-321), among others. I now posit that this historical text can and should be creatively reinterpreted to address the modern challenge of human-made climate change. In this way, I seek to contribute to the academic tradition that fosters our resilience to new challenges.

In publishing his treatise “Toward Perpetual Peace”, Immanuel Kant provided society with a philosophical set of principles that should be adhered to in order to promote long-lasting peace between both individuals and nations. In his nine principles, rather than providing concrete rules, Kant suggested the values that all just and peace-loving societies should embrace. Traditionally, Kant’s principles are applied on a geographical axis, providing lessons on how to “tolerate one another as neighbours”, being confined to the finite space of a spherical planet (Kant 82). However, today humanity finds itself faced with a challenge unique in its magnitude and complexity: that of our planet’s swiftly changing climate. If left unchecked, this global crisis has the potential to threaten peace between all nations, with a critical new dimension. Namely, it is now understood that the decisions made by the societies of today will indubitably have an impact on the nations of the future. In light of the potential trans-generational consequences of current decisions, this essay will shift the traditional geographical axis of Kant’s principles of coexistence to examine their applications along a temporal axis. Through this method, this essay will assert that there is a moral imperative to act to mitigate climate change, on the grounds that humanity’s current unsustainable practices violate Kant’s principles of peaceable conduct insofar as

future persons are concerned.

In supporting this thesis, this essay will explore three of Kant's principles for peaceful conduct, evaluating their relevance in the relationship between contemporary society and the nations of the future. First, this essay will demonstrate how a failure to respond to the present-day climate emergency violates Kant's principle that "no independent state shall be acquired by another state" (Kant 68), insofar as present-day inaction necessarily limits the freedoms of future persons. This paper will then argue that in neglecting the responsibility to mitigate climate change, modern society is compromising the true spirit of republicanism, as presented by Kant. Finally, this paper will address Kant's concept of universal hospitality, positing that in light of the known consequences of unmitigated climate change for future persons, inaction is analogous to acting with hostility towards a foreign nation.

Kant's second preliminary article for perpetual peace amongst states declares that "No independently existing state (irrespective of whether it is large or small) shall be able to be acquired by another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift" (Kant 68). Kant asserts this on the grounds that every nation is composed of moral, human constituents who have a natural right to self-govern without outside interference (Kant 68). In applying this principle along a temporal axis, it is helpful to first consider that, according to Kant, and in light of humanity's history, "states can be judged as individual human beings who, when in the state of nature... bring harm to each other already through their proximity to one another" (Kant 78). In saying this, Kant was articulating a truth that is salient to the human experience: people can and will

harm each other indirectly, simply through their mutual coexistence, when sharing finite resources. In the context of a temporal axis, a nation of the future may come under the dominion of the nations of the present not through direct military aggression, but through the hoarding and destruction of finite resources, which necessarily depletes the resources available to future persons.

The nations of the future can be thought of as states with inherent disadvantages, due to their utter lack of negotiating power and inability to oppose the decisions made in the present. In Kant's traditional geographical application, this perspective is analogous to a tiny country whose interests oppose those of a mighty empire. Kant would argue that even though this power discrepancy exists, it does not give the mightier nation the right to unilaterally seize resources (such as land) from a smaller state. So too should the societies of the present act civilly towards the powerless states of the future, who also deserve to be granted the resources that they require to self-govern as autonomous moral beings.

It is predicted that society has approximately twelve years to take substantial climate action before the consequences of current lifestyles set off an irreversible chain-reaction of events which will lead to catastrophic challenges for future persons (Irfan, *Vox.com*). The future challenge that is perhaps most indicative of modern society's domination over future persons will be that of climate-based migration. The decisions made today have the potential to radically change the natural environments of the future, through phenomena such as ocean acidification, rising sea levels, wildfires, intense weather events, and shoreline erosion (*NASA.gov*). Each of these natural phenomena are predicted to displace huge

numbers of people, potentially leading to the largest refugee crisis in history (Brown, 11). Thus, it is clear that through the abuse of the natural world, current states are indirectly dictating the physical environments of the future, effectively ‘seizing lands’ (along with a myriad of other resources) from the nations yet to come. In making future persons’ environments unable to support their own lifestyles, modern societies are holding dominion over future persons, contrary to Kant’s principle of respecting the rights of all nations’ constituents.

Kant’s first definitive article of perpetual peace requires that “the civil constitution of every state shall be republican” (Kant 76). Kant defines a republic as a form of government in which “the executive power (the government) of a state is separated from the legislative power” (Kant 76). However, Kant goes on to insist that such a system must be representative, in which those who make the decisions act in the interest of the constituents of the state (Kant 77-78). Kant’s support of this republican model was based on the understanding that a nation will be far more conservative and cautious when choosing to engage in war if such conflict is voted on by the members of society who will have to bear its costs. Kant argues that this system is far more conducive to peaceful relations between nations than an autocracy, in which an individual who can only benefit from waging war is responsible for a nation’s decisions.

Today, most of the western world prides itself on its republican structure of government, in which decisions are made by democratically elected representatives of the people of a given nation. However, Kant warns his readers that “the violation of right at any one place on earth, is felt in all

places” (Kant 84). In saying this, Kant was acknowledging that the consequences of decisions can and will ripple across time and space to affect the rights of multitudes. This understanding is especially pertinent when considering a population that is making decisions that will affect its descendants. When considering the potential for future conflict, the principles of republicanism must be reconsidered, as the current voting population will not bear the costs of their own decisions. Obviously, persons of the future are not able to participate in the democratic processes of today, even though current decisions will profoundly affect them. To preserve peace in this temporal context, republicanism must exist not only as a concrete structure, but also as a set of philosophical values that preclude individuals from electing to engage in conflicts whose burden will be borne by others. Thus, a contemporary society that truly embraces the Kantian values of republicanism would not even consider it within their rights to make choices that necessitate a future war, as they could not possibly personally accept the consequences of such a decision.

Today, it is widely acknowledged that future generations will be thrust into unprecedented interpersonal and transnational conflict if climate change goes unchecked (Ryan, *Stanford.edu*). Potential future wars will likely be fought over water and other essential resources, due to the scarcity that inevitably follows environmental collapse (Ratner, *Weforum.org*). Experts predict that current geopolitical epicenters of poverty and violence will find these issues amplified, with a virtually guaranteed increase in human suffering and mortality (Mares, 768). Policy makers and voting citizens of the present, whose actions will prevent or

ensure such future outcomes, will likely not be alive to experience these consequences of climate inaction. Instead, people of the future will bear this burden. Present societies seem indifferent to the conflicts that they are legislating into existence to support their current lifestyles, precisely because they will not be the ones who suffer the consequences. Thus, in choosing not to address climate change, current societies act as Kant's selfish ruler who, "because [he] is not a fellow citizen... forfeits nothing of his feasts, hunts, summer residences, and such things due to the war" (Kant 75). Just like this archetypal "ruler", people of today have nothing to lose and everything to gain from consenting to conflict on others' behalf and find themselves grappling for reasons to justify their selfishness and hostility (Kant 75). Therefore, if societies of today do not take action to mitigate climate change, despite having the outer trimmings of republican states, they are nonetheless compromising the true Kantian spirit of republicanism, which was meant to ensure that decisions are made by those who bear their consequences.

Finally, Kant's third definitive article for perpetual peace states that "cosmopolitan rights shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality" (Kant 82). The law of universal hospitality is ultimately concerned with the necessity of peaceable interactions between visitors and hosts. On the basis of his primary concern for the welfare of all human beings, Kant asserts that if an individual enters another nation's geographical territory peaceably, he is not to be treated with hostility. New human beings, who by their temporal distance from current persons and initial infancy are necessarily peaceable, should not be treated with hostility. In applying Kant's principle along a temporal

axis, one concludes that future human beings are not to be subjected to abuse simply for existing in a particular time and place. As previously touched upon, Kant asserts that persons can be judged to have harmed one another even if these harms are the unintended consequences of an elsewhere-aimed, self-interested action. However, Kant goes on to explain that nations must aim to curb these unintentionally harmful, selfish behaviours, in order to protect the rights of all those who subscribe to the social contract (Kant 78). As future persons have the potential to fall within this category, peace-loving societies will aim to mitigate harmful acts that threaten the well-being of future nations, in order to act in accordance with the law of universal hospitality.

The concept of acting peacefully towards foreign persons who have done oneself no harm sounds obvious in theory, but unfortunately is not self-evident in modern-day practices and decisions. Indeed, the actions of present-day people condemn future human beings to great predicted harm. The WHO predicts that future people on this planet will be met with dangerous air pollution to infect their lungs ("*How Air Pollution is Destroying our Health*"), and damaging UV rays to harm their skin ("*Climate Change and Human Health - Risks and Responses. Summary.*"), along with the aforementioned elevated levels of violence. These future consequences of current actions have been widely predicted by experts in many fields; modern societies can no longer plead ignorance. In his third definitive article, Kant counter-culturally condemns European nations, who inflict great suffering upon others in the name of economic growth and personal profit. He outlines the evils of the British Empire

who, in conquering peaceable Hindustan, violated the laws of hospitality by denying the personhood of those who were foreign to them, and as a byproduct of their commercial interests imposed “expansive wars, famine, unrest, faithlessness, and the whole litany of evils that weigh upon the human species” upon another nation (Kant 83). Today’s policy makers have been told that their current methods of pursuing economic prosperity will compromise the wellbeing of others. In ignoring these warnings, and thus valuing their own economic success over the protection of future “foreign” persons, modern societies are comparable to Kant’s British villain, who immorally infringes upon the rights of others as a byproduct of their commercial pursuits. It is in this indirect way that modern-day societies who fail to address climate change violate the law of universal hospitality, when considering the repercussions of their decisions along a temporal axis.

The work of Immanuel Kant has for centuries been extremely influential in Western political philosophy, providing a framework of values to facilitate peaceful relations between nations. This essay sought to demonstrate that Kantian principles for peaceableness can and should be applied along a temporal axis, in order to facilitate peaceful relations between and across generations. Specifically, this essay was concerned with the application of these principles along a temporal axis in light of the unprecedented global threat of climate change, whose trajectory will be determined by the nations of today, but whose burdens will be borne by the nations of tomorrow. This essay first demonstrated how nations of today can indirectly “rule over” nations that will exist in the future, by destroying

shared resources to necessarily limit those available to future persons. It then elaborated on how climate inaction will lead to a mass displacement of future people, effectively seizing their lands through the destruction of their natural environment. Secondly, this essay asserted that to truly adhere to Kantian republicanism is to adopt not only a republican structure of government, but a republican spirit of decision making, in which those who choose to engage in conflict are those who will bear its costs. It then outlined how contemporary society, effectively voting for future conflict through its climate inaction, is not in line with the true spirit of republicanism, as such inaction is commensurate with consenting to war on another’s behalf. Finally, this essay described how, as eventual members of the social contract, persons of the future should not be subjected to undue hostilities, as is dictated by the law of universal hospitality. It then described the ways in which current climate inaction is a violation of the law of universal hospitality, insofar as those belonging to the “foreign” nations of the future will be met with hostile conditions indirectly inflicted upon them by the nations of today.

In reviewing this evidence, it is utterly apparent that contemporary societies have a responsibility to mitigate climate change, as failing to do so will necessarily inflict undue harm on the nations of the future. In the face of looming environmental collapse, humanity is now confronted with one of the greatest threats to global peace that the world has ever seen. This generation has had thrust upon it a monumental burden of responsibility. But with this responsibility comes the opportunity to embody Kant’s principles for peace in their fullest sense, as we strive towards a future in which we can “flatter

ourselves to be continually progressing towards perpetual peace” (Kant 85).

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CUBAN URBAN AGRICULTURE AND THE CHALLENGE TO ORTHODOX WESTERN ECONOMIC DISCOURSE

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Arts & Science 1C03: Global Challenges

Looking around the world today, very few disciplines seem so near to the everyday lives of people as that of economics, yet at the same time there are few disciplines as distant from the actuality of the context, the time, and the place that we are living in. Orthodox economics, that which most students study in their textbooks, attempts to explain economic behaviour *universally*, regardless of time and place (Sweezy 229). Not only does this discipline attempt to explain economic behaviour universally, but since it also is key to the formation of economic policies by states all around the world, it is applied universally (Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela 2). However, these ideas stem from the intellectual traditions of a specific context: that of Europe (Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela 2). The issue is that, in being applied universally, this universal form of theorizing *makes itself true*, in the sense of bringing about its own conditions even if they were not previously present (Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela 2). Therefore, there has recently been a growing critique, in post-colonial and post-development studies, of the hegemonic imposition of orthodox economics in contexts outside of that from which it first sprung (Chakrabarty 4). Thus it is important to search for alternative economies and alternative theories of economics, specifically those that are resilient to the universalizing of orthodox economic theory. These should

pay heed to the specific contexts which bring about various different forms of economic behaviour, resisting the ambitiously universal notions of economic behaviour that orthodox economic theory applies everywhere.

Cuba's urban agricultural system provides a candidate for the analysis of an alternative economy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, Cuba entered the "Special Period in Times of Peace" (Perez 304), being thrown into crisis due to the loss of its most important trading partner (Perez 304, Dominguez 146). Thus, Cuba lost its main source of trade and energy: Soviet oil and petroleum, which "accounted for an estimated 90% of Cuban energy needs" (Perez 304). Moreover, since the Soviet Union was Cuba's main export market, its collapse led to a shrinking of the Cuban economy (Perez 305). In addition, the USA had been continuously isolating Cuba from other avenues of trade by punishing those who attempted to do so through the imposition of various trade sanctions since the 1960s (Perez 310-320, Dominguez 141). Though the USA did ease up on some of these sanctions in the 1970s and 1980s, Cuba nonetheless remained isolated from many avenues of trade (Dominguez 144). Thus, Cuba had to distance itself from its industrial agricultural system due to a lack of energy resources (Koont 12). This reality, along with the predominantly urban population of Cuba (Gurcan 132), led to the development of the

organic urban agricultural system (Premat, *Sowing Change* 27-28). In this system, unused land within urban areas is re-appropriated and used to grow a variety of crops for the local community (Companioni et al. 223). The system is meant to be locally autonomous and participatory and is split into different types of agricultural units (Cederlof 773). These units are broken up into three categories. First, cooperative owned *organoponicos* which use *canteros* (walled cultivation beds filled with soil and other organic materials) (Koont 34-36). Second, *parcelas*: unused pieces of land granted to individuals in usufruct as long as they maintain an acceptable level of production (Koont 34-36). Third, *patios*: individually owned home gardens (Koont 34-36). The Cuban urban agricultural system was born out of being forced out of the global economic order, but in what ways does it represent an alternative economic system?

In this paper, the extent to which Cuban urban agriculture challenges orthodox western economics will be examined by looking at how Cuba's system views its participants as both simple and rational profit maximizing actors and complex human subjects; how a uniform and abstracted mode of production is imposed all over Cuba, while still allowing for difference within its boundaries; and how culture is incorporated as a key element of the economic system. While the Cuban urban agricultural system challenges orthodox economic theory, it nonetheless accepts some of its presumptions, producing a hybrid system which both challenges and adheres to orthodox economic theory.

By viewing workers as simple, rational profit maximizing agents and complex human subjects driven by often contradictory desires and social connection, the Cuban urban agricultural system both follows and

challenges orthodox economic theory. In orthodox economic theory, the economic 'subject' is "a conscious optimising economic agent, who forever is in pursuit of self-interest" (Kayatekin 1191). This 'subject' has a stable and singular desire for profit maximization (Kaul 184). The 'subject' is usually referred to as 'homo economicus' (Tsakalotos 141, Yamagishi et al. 1699). Homo economicus, in being singular in his pursuit for profit maximization, also disregards the welfare of others and operates in a 'social vacuum', his rationality being separate from social norms (Tsakalotos 141, Yamagishi et al. 1699). Thus, orthodox economic theory posits an asocial and amoral economic 'subject', truly singular in his drive for profit maximization. During the revolutionary period (before the collapse of the Soviet Union), the Cuban state applied a system of centrally decided, fixed pay scales, not providing incentives for individual worker productivity (Koont 99). However, this changed in the Special Period, and the state began adopting a system based on "*pago por resultados* (pay according to achieved results)" (Koont 100). In terms of urban agriculture, workers began receiving up to 50% of the profits made as income; agricultural products were increasingly sold in public markets governed by supply and demand, where the cooperatives could make greater profits (Koont 100-101). If workers could generate a greater profit by producing more products that people want to buy, they could also increase their incomes. Thus, this system of material incentives perceives workers as simple profit maximizing: the incentives are structured *only* around the workers' desire for greater profit. By using material incentives, Cuba's system conforms to orthodox economic theory by viewing its workers as simple profit-maximizers and

implementing a policy based on this view.

By using moral incentives that provide recognition to workers with exemplary urban gardens, the Cuban urban agricultural system identifies a desire beyond that of simple profit maximization found in a social vacuum: recognition and pride. The *Referencia* system, run by the Cuban state, is the most significant award scheme present within the urban agricultural system (Koont 110). In this system, agricultural units seek designations of municipal, provincial, or national reference, to be referenced as exemplary model units for others to work towards and replicate (Koont 110). To achieve these designations, agricultural units must fill out a variety of criteria, such as: making full use of arable area, using adequate organic material in beds and substratum, and providing at least 10 varieties of vegetables for sale (Koont 111). To achieve the highest designation, the units must have fruit trees, vegetables and fresh condiments, rabbit raising, chicken raising, vermiculture, composting, and ornamental plants and flowers (Koont 112). An example of such an agricultural unit would be the UBPC Organopónico Vivero Alamar which achieved the highest designation of *excelencia* (Koont 147). Not only does this unit produce over 15 different fruits and vegetables alongside eggs, but it also produces most of its own seedlings (Koont 148-149). Agricultural units which are given these designations then become places where others can learn and where the state introduces new technologies and practices (Koont 83). Cuban gardeners sought these awards because of attachment to their gardens, the pride they took in them, and their desire to have their accomplishments recognized (“Havana’s Urban Agriculture” 18-19). Perhaps rational agents only want superior access to new technologies and

practices provided by the government, so as to produce more efficiently and further maximize profits. However, gardeners focus on state recognition over help from non-state actors such as NGOs which offer little recognition, but greater material benefit through the implementation of more efficient technologies and practices (“Havana’s Urban Agriculture” 20). Hence, Cuba’s system acknowledges that workers don’t operate in a social vacuum but desire recognition for and take pride in their accomplishments. Thus, the system recognizes desires beyond self-interest and profit maximization, ultimately challenging the orthodox view of the economic ‘subject’.

Furthermore, by providing moral incentives in structures of sharing and learning from one another, the Cuban urban agricultural system not only recognizes that its workers do not make decisions in a ‘social vacuum’, but also do care for the welfare of others, unlike the *homo economicus*. The Cuban state promotes Che Guevara’s ideal of the socialist man, or *hombre nuevo* who, “would become a stranger to the mercantile side of things, working for society, and not for profit” (Premat, “Small-scale Urban Agriculture” 94). The *Hombre nuevo* ideal is reflected in both garden clubs, where workers share and learn techniques from their peers and friends and in Premat’s account of gardeners giving away some of their produce rather than selling it because doing so, “does not work against anyone. On the contrary, it helps” (Gurcon 137, “Small-scale Urban Agriculture” 94). Workers are driven by connections with their peers and co-workers, along with a desire to “be humane” (Premat, “Small-scale Urban Agriculture” 94) and thus rise above self-interest in helping their community. Cuba’s system actively promotes and creates spaces and opportunities for

sharing through garden clubs and programs where model workers teach and help workers across their municipalities and provinces (Gurcon 139). Cuba's system acknowledges that its workers are driven not just by self-interest, but also by their social connections to peers and friends, caring about the welfare of themselves and their friends. In this way, Cuba's system doesn't see workers in terms of the *homo economicus*, functioning in a social vacuum and only caring for their own welfare, but challenges this assumption found in orthodox economic theory. However, these two systems of moral incentives, one focussing on recognition over and against others and the other focussing on caring for the welfare of others, seem almost contradictory in their emphasis on both competition and sharing.

Homi Bhabha's use of the idea of 'ambivalence' (Kayetakin 1195) explains the Cuban agricultural system's contradictory incentives, and how this demonstrates a further break from treating economic actors as simple profit maximizers as found in orthodox economic theory. Ambivalence explains how human subjectivity is contradictory; people often desire the same thing that they deride and want to move away from (Kayetakin 1194). This push and pull leads to a 'splitting', so that the subject in question does not identify with either process of desiring and moving away from (Kayetakin 1195). Furthermore, Bhabha emphasizes how history and culture produce this human subjectivity (Kayetakin 1195). Bhabha's ambivalence can be found in the Cuban worker in the contradiction between competition and social consciousness. Though workers wish to be designated as a reference over and against other workers, conflict arises between the desire for recognition and the ethos of sharing and equality, which stems from an empathic connection to their

peers. This conflict of moral incentives is situated in the context of the *hombre nuevo* and revolutionary ideals of the socialist man, as it is these Cuban ideals that contradict the desire to be recognized over their fellow person. Hence, the system, most likely unintentionally, recognizes the contradictions found in human subjectivity through the interplay of these seemingly opposed moral incentives. Rather than viewing workers as simple, stable agents (Kayatekin 1191), the Cuban system recognizes how subjects tend to have contradictory desires that are shaped by their specific contexts, in this case the ideal of the *hombre nuevo*. In doing so, the Cuban urban agricultural system, while still implementing material incentives which view workers as profit maximizers, accounts for the human complexity within the workers through award schemes, the ideal of the *hombre nuevo*, and the interplay of these contradictory moral incentives.

However, the Cuban agricultural system still follows the method of orthodox economic theory in some ways, such as by applying a broad criterion for success in agricultural production that does not take local contexts and conditions into account. As mentioned before, an issue with orthodox economic theory is its tendency to apply universals (which actually arise out of a specific context) throughout time and place, thus applying ideas that often don't fit with the contexts and conditions of the places in question (Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela 2). Chakrabarty discusses this in terms of real and abstract labour, where real or 'living' labour refers to the social component of labour, involving all the various historical, social, and political conditions of the labourers and their labour (92). Abstract labour refers to the reduction of this real labour into something

that can easily be quantified and measured; erasing many of the varied historical, social, and political conditions in the process (Chakrabarty 92). Gibson-Graham's work sheds light on how orthodox economic theory renders economies and economic practices that don't conform to the norms of economic rationality and productivity as 'non-existent' (Gibson-Graham 5). This means that practices such as indigenous exchange, neighbourhood work, and communal labour are not recognized as credible economic practices, thus being unseen and defined as 'non-existent' according to orthodox economic theory (Gibson-Graham 5, 12). In this way, orthodox economic theory not only erases and leaves unseen many of the conditions that are key to labour so as to make it quantifiable, but also does away with practices that don't conform to its narrow view of credible economic practices. Thus, orthodox economic theories involve abstraction away from specific economic contexts and conditions, especially those that don't agree with its definition of economic practices.

The inspection policy of Cuba's National Group for Urban Agriculture (GNAU) uses 'Abstraction'. The GNAU oversees the 28 subprograms of the agricultural system (Koont 29). It publishes nationally homogeneous production goals, along with quantitative and qualitative lists to measure achievement for all 28 agricultural subprograms (Koont 42). In the vegetable and fresh condiments subprogram, a 'good' rating can be achieved by meeting these criteria:

- There is no weed infestation.
- There are no unutilized planting beds or canteros.
- At least 10 different crops are being grown (applies to organopónicos,

huertas intensivas with micro-aspersion irrigation, and patios larger than 100 m²).

- The level of intercropping is acceptable (at least 50%).
- More than one variety per crop is dominant at the level of the municipality.
- Plant pests and diseases are adequately controlled.
- There are no irregularities in the new units of production of the Special Plan.
- Compensation for the agricultural workers is accurately connected to the final yield produced.
- More than 90% of the available space in the unit (including the periphery) is being utilized.
- Sufficient quantities of green beans, cucumbers, and tomatoes are being grown.
- The unit has fulfilled all its commitments to supply MINED and MINSAP facilities (such as schools and hospitals). (Koont 46)

Applying uniform criteria across Cuba represents an abstracting technique similar to that of orthodox economics. These criteria abstract and reduce the varying *organopónicos*, *parcelas*, and *patios*, pushing urban agriculture towards homogenous production. Thus, GNAU curtails and controls differences within the Cuban urban agricultural system by prohibiting experimentation beyond its boundaries and criteria. However, the criteria allow for some difference within their boundaries. Criteria such as "Plant pests and diseases are adequately controlled" (Koont 46) don't restrict how these pests and diseases are controlled

and provide the opportunity for farmers to vary their approaches based on local contexts and conditions. Nonetheless, GNAU defines those practices that fall outside of its criteria as not being credible practices, emulating orthodox economic theory. Thus, while still allowing for some difference within its bounds, the inspection system works as an abstracting force, replicating the abstracting tendencies of orthodox economic theory.

However, Cuba's focus on local initiatives and indigenous knowledge in inventing new agricultural techniques and practices opens the system up to real labour and to those practices not considered credible in orthodox economic theory. The promotion of real labour, arising out of local contexts, can be seen in the *De Campesino a Campesino* (Farmer to Farmer) program (Koont 79). The program facilitates the horizontal communication of farming techniques and practices by empowering "promoters" who engage with farming techniques based on their personal experience and local history; recognizing local and indigenous knowledge (Koont 80, Gurcon 141). By promoting the local production of knowledge coming from experiments and indigenous history and experience, agricultural techniques from outside the sphere of those imposed by the GNAU are promoted. In doing so, the GNAU promotes a living or real form of production, based on different local contexts in opposition to the abstract form of production imposed by the inspection method. Moreover, greater voice and recognition is given to the farmers who come up with techniques for agricultural production based on their

experience and indigenous knowledge. Cuba's use of locality-specific knowledge for the development of new agricultural techniques includes Cuban tradition in the urban agricultural system. By accounting for indigenous knowledge in the agricultural system, practices that are considered not credible in orthodox economic theory are given a greater importance. While the Cuban agricultural system emphasizes local differences, it puts greater emphasis on abstracted production by putting boundaries on what forms of production are considered credible. In this regard, Cuba's system only partially challenges the precedent set by orthodox western economic discourse.

Finally, the Cuban urban agricultural system can be analyzed based on its integration of culture and economics. Orthodox economics divides culture and economics, as pointed out by Zein-Elabdin. Her analysis shows how the economy leads to the erasure of cultures which don't conform to western understandings of what a developed economy looks like, and to the erasure (in hiding from sight) of the specifically European roots of orthodox economic theory (Zein-Elabdin 1157). This means that orthodox economic theory not only disavows cultures which don't correspond to that of 'developed' countries, but also forgets that it was first grounded in a European culture (Zein-Elabdin 1156). What this ultimately does is present economics and culture as two separate and distinct categories, when they are in fact deeply embedded in one another (Zein-Elabdin 1156). According to this analytic framework, the Cuban urban agricultural system challenges

the split between economics and culture found in orthodox economic theory.

By placing its motivations in social principles and thus directly linking itself to the culture it is based in, the Cuban urban agricultural system rejects the split between economics and culture. Cuban system draws motivation from social principles such as “community development, job creation, reduction of working hours, development of social services for cooperative members, and increased sustainability and agricultural diversity” (Gurcon 137). Official representations of the urban agricultural system promote the idea of locality, even replacing “the people” in the slogan “of the people, by the people, and for the people” with “the neighbourhood” (Premat, “Havana’s Urban Agriculture” 7). The motivation for the Cuban system lies in its cultural and social embeddedness. Thus, it does not make the same split between economics and culture that is found in orthodox economic theory; instead, it embraces the relation between the two.

Moreover, by including alternative and non-market transactions, Cuba’s system affirms those interactions that orthodox economic theory views as not economically credible, further resisting its universalized ideas. In the San Cristobal Municipality, around 30% of the urban agricultural output goes to self-provisioning and social services such as schools, hospitals, and maternity homes at lower than market prices (Koont 135). Cristobal exemplifies alternative market transactions—transactions are negotiated by cultural understandings rather than competition (Gibson-Graham 15). Farmers sell produce at a reduced price

because the Cuban culture values sharing (Premat, “Small-scale Urban Agriculture” 94). Furthermore, agricultural units connect directly with the community through circles of interest, where primary schools form ties with local agricultural units and children happily visit the units (Koont 85). Children learn how to grow seeds, how to respect the environment, and how to treat each other with respect by building social skills (Koont 162). Furthermore, various community building activities are offered within the urban agricultural units. For example: coworkers can enjoy English classes and cultural programs with recreational sport or theatre performances (Koont 148-150). Cuba’s agricultural program does not abide by the rule of competition, but instead values social and cultural connection (Gibson-Graham 15). There is no profit to be found in these community building activities or circles of interest. Instead, this represents the inclusion of those interactions deemed not economically credible by orthodox economic theory because they don’t accord to the norms of economic rationality and profit maximization (Gibson-Graham 5). Thus, by incorporating alternative and non-market transactions into its economic system, the Cuban urban agricultural system resists the assumptions made by orthodox economic theory, further showing itself as an alternative thereto.

The Cuban urban agricultural system breaks with many of the ideas and assumptions present in orthodox economic theory, offering an alternative model for economies. While it partially views workers as simple profit-maximizers as seen in its engagement with material incentives, it also acknowledges the

importance of social connection and the ability to care for the welfare of others. Furthermore, while it provides a set of goals for the agricultural units which are abstracted from their local conditions, it also affirms the importance of indigenous knowledge and other such interactions deemed not economically credible by orthodox economic discourse. Finally, instead of viewing economics as separate from culture, Cuba's system involves both as necessary and interrelated parts

of agriculture. Cuba's urban agricultural system isn't a complete and radical departure from the ideas and assumptions of orthodox economic theory. However, when an idea or theory posits itself as universal, challenging and resisting even some parts of it shows that alternatives are possible, that different economies are possible. This is precisely what the Cuban urban agricultural system shows in its resilience to the doctrines of orthodox economic theory: that other economies are possible.

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A HAND TO THE DROWNING: ETHICAL LONELINESS, DEPERSONALIZATION, AND *THE DROWNED AND THE SAVED*

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Arts & Science 2A06: Social and Political Thought

[The philosopher's] gaze is directed on high and rarely lingers on the vulgar populace of the Lager, or on its typical character, the "Muslim," the worn out man, whose intellect is dead or dying. – *The Drowned and the Saved*

Introduction

It might seem indecent to discuss such an abstract concept as "depersonalization"¹ while faced with the cold, concrete torture of the Nazi concentration camps. Personhood sounds suspiciously philosophical, an abstract musing ill-suited to history's ultimate tragedy. What does personhood have to do with splintered shoulders and murdered babies? Those who played target practice with children did not care about the phenomenology of their targets ("Should We Pardon Them?"² 556). What relevance could this question have?

I believe that an analysis restricted to numerical, quantifiable facts about the Shoah³ does not honour the experience of those who suffered in the death camps. In *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986)⁴, famed chemist and Shoah survivor Primo Levi often writes about his experience of depersonalization, meaning the loss of the mind. Considering the emphasis that he and other Shoah survivors like Jean Améry place on this experience, it

seems foolish not to explore the topic. Further, by hearing their accounts we become better equipped to understand the causes of depersonalization and thus how we might prevent it in the future. With that in mind, this essay explores how Levi's experiences trouble common philosophical assumptions about personhood and the loss thereof.

Outline

I will first present the difficulties in defining personhood, instead giving a "cluster definition" for personhood. I will then begin to explore and analyze *The Drowned and the Saved*. First, I analyze Levi's experience with deprivation and introduce William James' concept of a "misery threshold" to argue that physical deprivation causes a loss of personhood. Second, I will use Levi's analysis of animalization, drawing on Jill Stauffer's book *Ethical Loneliness* (2015),⁵ to trouble a purely internal, autonomous conception of the self. Finally, I will bring together the insights of the first two sections to analyze loneliness, which complicates James' understanding of misery.⁶

1 "Personhood" and "Depersonalization" will be defined in the next section since they resist simple essentialization.

2 Hereafter cited as (PT)

3 This essay uses the term Shoah to refer to the destruction of the Jewish people during the Nazi regime, more commonly known as the Holocaust. I chose to use this term both to avoid Holocaust's unfortunate etymology as "burnt animal sacrifice" and Shoah's specificity as a Jewish term about a Jewish event.

4 Hereafter cited as (DS)

5 Hereafter cited (EL)

6 Of course, these three themes are blurry abstractions arising from an already abstracted experience and are not measurably distinct forces: each theme always bleeds into its neighbor. They are explanatory tools, which we must discard once and where they are not useful.

A Cluster of Persons

For such a clear and logically minded person as Primo Levi to resort to a messy and loaded concept as depersonalization shows both the importance and the inherent difficulty of discussing such experiences. As this essay explores, depersonalization is hard to pin down since its definition requires a rigorous definition of personhood. Yet as shown by Martin Buber, such a clear definition is both impossible and impractical, since definition requires abstraction while personhood is irreducibly experiential (*I and Thou*, 73-75). Furthermore, as Jean Améry writes in *At the Mind's Limit* (1966),⁷ the intellectual's obsession with definition cannot survive in the absurd horror of Auschwitz, where violence reduces an abstract mind into a broken body (ML 8-9).

Since a rigorous definition is impossible, I will give instead a “homeostatic cluster definition” (hereafter HCD). Pioneered by philosopher Richard Boyd, a HCD does not attempt to define what a concept is in itself, but rather points towards the cluster of related traits surrounding it (“How to be a Moral Realist” 322-325).⁸ For example, a cluster definition of “health” would include things like a beating heart, a lack of pain, an ability to move freely, having all one's organs, and a will to live. Notice two important attributes of this style of definition. First, one can have all these traits and still be unhealthy and vice versa; there are healthy people missing a kidney and unhealthy people with all their organs. In other words, a HCD is

not reducible to any given list of clustered concepts. Second, the presence of each trait encourages the presence of other traits. For example, doing exercise improves one's mental health, and improving one's mental health improves one's physical health. This is the “homeostatic” part of HCD (MR 322).

For this tentative “definition” of personhood I point to the following, non-exhaustive list of related traits drawn from *The Drowned and the Saved* and *At the Mind's Limit*: the ability to reason, to understand morality, to experience emotion, to empathize, to reflect, to create, and to love. These traits do not constitute personhood. However, “persons” generally have most or all of these traits (clustered) and Levi and Améry associate the loss of these traits with loss of other traits and loss of personhood generally, i.e. depersonalization (homeostatic). By tracking the loss of these traits in Levi and Améry, this essay can thus explore the nature of personhood without restricting it through definition.

Thesis

Having established this rough “definition” of personhood, this essay now analyzes how *The Drowned and the Saved* portrays the loss of personhood. From that analysis, I argue that if personhood is conceived as an intrinsic, untouchable, and eternal fact (i.e. intrinsic personhood), then it fails to honour Levi's account of depersonalization. Instead, a conception of personhood that is vulnerable to the world and particularly to our relationships (i.e. relational personhood) better reflects his experiences.

Deprivation

The tortured person never ceases to be amazed that all

⁷ Hereafter cited (ML)
⁸ Hereafter cited (MR)

This is a slight distortion of Boyd's actual theory. He would argue that the meaning of a term is in fact identical to this cluster of related concepts, or rather to the nomological relationship between them. His project was to show that morality exists as a “real” thing that we can make true/false propositions with. That argument breaks down in this case since everyone experiences personhood as such and not only as a cluster of related concepts. However, when discussing the experience of depersonalization, we need a clearer idea to point towards while retaining the conceptual flexibility which personhood requires. A HCD provides that.

those things one may, according to inclination, call his soul, or his mind, or his consciousness, or his identity, are destroyed when there is that cracking and splintering in the shoulder joints. – Jean Amery, “Torture”

The Nazis planned to kill every Jew. They designed the death camps around this goal, often going to impractical extremes to create the most-deadly possible environment for their prisoners (DS 105). For example, the Nazis encouraged companies to work their prisoners to death despite the obvious economic inefficiencies of this strategy: don’t worry, they said, we can always get you more Jews (DS 106)! If the Nazis were looking for slave labour, a practical goal, the malnourishment, beatings, and so forth would have been obviously counterproductive. The starved are not efficient workers: “to send the undernourished to dig up turf or cut stone served only a terroristic purpose” (DS 106). Furthermore, as Levi points out, the early camps had “purely persecutory” work with no productive purpose (DS 106). For example, the women of Ravensbrück were forced to shovel piles of sand onto their right neighbour’s pile in an interminable circle (DS 106). This is an example of what Levi terms “useless violence,” violence for its own sake.⁹ This kind of purposeless violence was evident throughout the camps, from serious acts to petty ones. Levi describes these choices as emerging from Nazi “theory”:

In the Third Reich, the best choice, the choice imposed from on above, was the one that entailed the greatest affliction, the greatest waste, the greatest physical and moral suffering.

The “enemy” must not only die, he must die in torment. (DS 105)

Thus, the Shoah goes beyond exterminations conceived as “culling a herd.” There is a perverse humaneness to a culling – the life of an animal is worthless and useless, but it is not evil; it does not inspire hatred. The animal dies swiftly and efficiently, a mere means to an end. On the other hand, the useless violence imposed on the Jews (the tattooing, the trains, the tortures...) were so excessive that Levi can only understand them as violence for violence’s sake: Jewish suffering was the end, not the means. Vladamir Jankélévitch also connected this useless violence to anti-Semitic doctrine, writing:

A Jew must always justify himself, excuse himself for living and breathing. His pretentiousness in fighting for subsistence and survival is in itself an incomprehensible scandal, an exorbitance. The idea that these “subhumans” may defend themselves fills the superhumans with indignant astonishment. A Jew does not have the right to be; his sin is to exist. (PT 555)

Considering this theoretical¹⁰ basis for Nazi cruelty, it should be no surprise that the Jews’ deprivation was by design as complete as possible. As Levi writes, “our days had been encumbered from dawn to dusk by hunger, fatigue, cold, and fear” (DS 62). Levi acknowledges that this deprivation was also practical: exhausted and starving people cannot resist oppression effectively (DS 106). Physical deprivation helped

⁹ This concept is similar to Améry’s concept of the “logic of destruction” practiced by the SS (*ML* 10)

¹⁰ Theoretical is perhaps the wrong word. That implies some logical, understandable system. However, the camps were not rationally discernable and neither was Nazi theory, which was often contradictory.

break the prisoners' spirits. Because of this deprivation, Levi writes, "any space for reflection, reasoning, experiencing emotions were wiped out" (DS 62). The prisoners even forgot their homes and their families, so confined to the "presentness" of their needs (DS 62). In other words, deprivation causes depersonalization, the loss of the self. Levi may have been surviving, but he was not living.

Levi shows this starkly in his discussion of suicide. Suicide during imprisonment was incredibly rare (DS 62). This seems odd – the prisoners lived a hellish life with no hope of escape; why not end it? Levi offers three explanations: first, that "suicide is an act of man and not of the animal"; second, that there were other things to think about; and third, that they lacked a sense of guilt (DS 62-63). The first two reasons show how physical trauma can lead to depersonalization.¹¹ Suicide is a planned, non-instinctive choice. Since deprivation reduced the prisoners' ability to choose, suicide was rare; they might let themselves die like an exhausted animal, but never kill themselves (DS 62-63). In Levi's words, they had lost their personhood and been reduced to animals (which will be expanded on in the next section). Furthermore, the "constant imminence of death" made it impossible to focus on anything but survival, including the concept of death (DS 63). The body is too busy breathing to consider whether it still should. This inability to do anything but survive, to fulfill one's needs, created prisoners functionally indistinguishable from robots: they had functions to fulfill and did what they had to fill them. There was no space left for the human to appear.

I am hyperbolizing only slightly. Of course, despite the Nazi's best efforts, the prisoners' deprivation was not total; the fact Levi survived to write his account proves

¹¹ The later reason is outside the scope of this essay.

this. There were moments of respite from which the person could rise again. Yet Levi describes these as painful moments that "gave us the opportunity to measure our diminishment from the outside" (DS 62). Jean Améry, who also survived Auschwitz,¹² also attests to the desire for intellectual and cultural engagement, as well as the devastation when it proves empty (ML 6-10). Despite being at no fault, the moments of respite only served to accentuate their diminishment from "human" to "animal" (DS 62). However, Levi's account here is only partial; elsewhere, he writes that these quiet moments of humanity, where he found culture and relationship, were all that kept him from becoming a "Muselmann," the camp term for someone extremely depersonalized (DS 127).

The Muselmann was the "worn out" person "whose intellect was dying or dead" (DS 85). These walking corpses were the camp's "typical character," people depersonalized to an inescapable extent (DS 127). This reveals a disturbing fact: succumbing to simple survival meant a swift death. While it seems to be an adaptive mechanism, conserving energy by losing the person and retaining the animal, losing one's personhood is such a fundamental harm to a human being that it signalled imminent death. Hence Améry and Levi's observation that people who believed in something (religious, political, ideological...) fared much better in the camps. According to Levi, their faith allowed them to comprehend the camps outside of mere survival (DS 131).

Peg O'Connor's essay "The Light

¹² Survived might be a bit strong. As he writes, "Whoever was tortured, stays tortured." To say that he survived is partially incorrect, since "survived implies an experience that has ended. His personal torture certainly never ended; Améry killed himself in 1978. This suicide haunts the pages of Levi and DS. While outside of the scope of this essay, it is clear that depersonalization is not confined to the experience itself. As Améry continually stresses, the loss of faith in the world does not heal with time. The implications of these are brilliantly examined in Stauffer's *Ethical Loneliness*.

at the End of Suffering”¹³ explores similar ideas by drawing on the work of William James, a late 19th-century psychologist. James pioneered a concept known as the “misery threshold”: the maximum amount of misery, or emotional pain, that one can suffer before descending into despair. James postulated that this threshold is an intrinsic characteristic that varies between people, like how some people are more pain resistant than others (LES).¹⁴ People who usually live past their misery threshold James described as “sick souls” with “divided selves,” governed by fear, anxiety, and melancholy (LES). If they remained in this state, they would eventually hit “rock bottom,” the “point where misery can no longer be tolerated” (LES). At this point, James saw the end of soul-sickness in surrender towards a higher power, such as religion, ideology, or fellowship. The unmentioned alternative: despair, the complete loss of self to misery, in other words, becoming a Muselmann.

O’Connor’s account separates the mind and the body in ways Levi’s experience falsifies – physical turmoil and depersonalization are always connected.¹⁵ However, allowing for that gap, James’ model helps explain the protective power of faith in the camps. As O’Connor writes, sick souls who embrace faith unify their divided selves on a new, firm foundation from which they can approach and encounter the world. This process recovers the “comprehensibility,” to use Levi’s term, of the world and of one’s place within it. Faith reveals logic in an “illogical and immoral reality” (DS 128). Notice, however, that James places the loss of personhood on the individual level; misery is external, but one’s threshold and reactions to it are primarily internal.

¹³ Hereafter cited (LES). Page numbers are not included in the e-book, which I referenced, so I excluded them.

¹⁴ Levi troubles this idea of a pain threshold in *If this is a man*.

¹⁵ Considering both her and James’ focus on addicts, it seems unlikely that this is an insight missing from their work.

You overcome misery by surrender, not by removing its causes or by turning to others for help. This internalization of a misery threshold is well-reflected linguistically: for two examples, “rock bottom” imagines a predefined, static location, and “resilience” is thought of as an internal attribute. The next two sections trouble this assumption of static interiority by analyzing the loss of personhood by being removed from social norms (what I term animalization) and from social groups (what I term loneliness).¹⁶

Animalization

While deprivation destroys the mind and body of the prisoners, this does not explain the guards’ willingness to murder them. A broken person still produces an ethical call, perhaps more powerful because of their weakness.¹⁷ Levi himself describes the power of the weak companion’s passive presence; he hounds “you with his demands for help or with his simple presence, itself an entreaty” (DS 65).¹⁸ One would think that seeing the broken prisoners ought to have inspired pity in their guards and not violence.

The Nazis removed this barrier to oppression by degradation, both theoretical and practical. These prevented the Nazis from understanding the Jews as moral persons. Levi quotes an interview with Stangl, ex-commander of Treblinka, showing consciousness of this principle:

¹⁶ James’ understanding of misery as a tool to achieve a greater end is deeply problematic, and every shoah survivor’s account I have encountered disagrees with this understanding – to paraphrase Levi, it is deluded to expect a diabolical system to sanctify its victims. However, this error isn’t directly relevant to this essay, so I’ll leave that argument to its own paper.

¹⁷ While an analysis of ethical calls is outside of the scope of this essay, this insight is drawn from the work of Emmanuel Levinas, who will be discussed later. C.f. “The Face” in *Ethics and Infinity* for an introduction to this topic.

¹⁸ One could hardly find a better expression of the Levinasian encounter, wherein the naked and defenseless Other claims our care through their vulnerability (c.f. *Ethics and Infinity* 89)

“What was the point of the humiliations, the cruelties?”
“To condition those who were to be the material executors of the operations. To make it possible for them to do what they were doing.” – Stangl

In a further application of Nazi theory, by degrading the prisoners the Nazis minimized them from equal human beings to, using Levi’s language, beasts (DS 111). This theme of animalization occurs throughout *The Drowned and the Saved*. However, this term might seem odd; as argued in the first section, the Nazis considered Jews less than animals.¹⁹ To the Nazis, animals were neutral, tools to be used, while Jews were ontologically bad.

Levi always directly contrasts “animal” with “human beings” in his writing, suggesting that these concepts are not essentially about animals, but rather symbolize two modes of being. Levi uses the term “animal” in two contexts: either when experiencing depersonalization or when being excluded from social norms. An example of the first use is found in Levi’s discussion on shame:

We had lived for months and years at an animal level: our days had been encumbered from dawn to dusk by hunger, fatigue, cold, and fear, and any space for reflection, reasoning, experiencing emotions was wiped out. (DS 62)

Here the “animal level” is referring to depersonalization, losing the faculty of the mind. The first section

analyzed this type of depersonalization extensively. Compare this example of Levi’s second use of the term “animal”:

Nevertheless, within a few weeks, the discomfort [of public defecation] became attenuated, and then vanished; in its place came (not for everyone) assuefaction, which is a charitable way of saying that the transformation from human beings into animals was well on its way. (DS 97-98)

This second type of animalization is created by removing a person from social norms, in this case the norm around privacy. These norms range from the mundane, like eating with spoons, to the extreme, like trusting humanity. For but a few examples, Levi points to forced nudity, public defecation, tattooing, and the lack of eating utensils as instances of this animalizing attack (DS 93-105). The choice to have the prisoners “lap up their food as dogs do” was a deliberate attempt to humiliate, not a matter of thrift – upon the liberation of Auschwitz the allies found an entire warehouse of spoons (DS 99-100). Levi’s use of the term “animal” in both contexts suggests a connection between the two: both deprivation and being outside social norms cause depersonalization.

Levi stresses their effects much more than physical torment in *The Drowned and the Saved*. For example, Levi spends five pages on “excremental coercion” and the “coercion of nudity” (DS 96-101). Levi claims the lack of a latrine “gave rise to a much worse affliction than thirst or cold” on the train to Auschwitz – the social deprivation had a greater impact than the physical one

¹⁹ In fact, the Nazis significantly expanded animal rights in Germany.

(DS 96). Levi describes public defecation as, a person, but why would social norms?

A trauma for which civilization does not prepare us, a deep wound inflicted on human dignity, an aggression which is obscene and ominous, but also the sign of deliberate and gratuitous viciousness. ... [Later, we] improvised a screen, which was substantially symbolic: we are not animals, we will not be animals as long as we try to resist. (DS 97)

As we read before, Levi claims that when the prisoners grew accustomed to public defecation, the “transformation from human beings into animals was well on its way” (DS 97-98). Being removed from the social fabric affects a deep internal harm. Levi argues that while this depersonalization was mostly unintentional (the Nazis were, as a rule, unsubtle), it logically and inevitably followed from the structure of the camps: “an inhumane regime spreads and extends its inhumanity in all directions, also and especially downward; unless it meets with resistance and exceptionally strong characters, it corrupts its victims and its opponents as well” (DS 98). While the humiliations were meant, according to Strangl, to encourage the guards to commit inhumane atrocities, they also corrupted the humanity of the prisoners.

Notice the importance Levi places on their symbolic, improvised screen. Levi writes that the screen symbolized a resistance to animalization (DS 97). That statement raises its own question: if, as philosophers and jurists often assume, people are autonomous, independent beings, how could they be made into animals? True, torture might break

This implies that one’s humanness is not internally sustained. This might seem odd – isn’t one’s humanity intrinsic? – but Levi clearly testifies that these events did damage his personhood. In her book *Ethical Loneliness*, Jill Stauffer claims that we should see autonomy, our ability to create ourselves, as only “one outcome of the relation between human beings rather than as a predetermined boundary” (EL 4). The concept that one’s autonomy is innate might be tenable to people whose autonomy has always been respected, but if our autonomy is breached, say by torture, it reveals our self’s vulnerability. Stauffer’s conclusion is based on the phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas, another Shoah survivor. Contrary to conceptions of the self which describe an “I” going out into the world, Levinas argued that there is no “I” before the encounter with the “Other” (EL 23-24). We undergo “self-formation,” the creation of our conceptual “I,” through these encounters (EL 23). This process necessarily means our self-formation is vulnerable to others’ influence, which is traumatizing if our new experiences contradict our self-perception. For example, if people treat us as lesser, this attacks our conception that we are valuable.

Levinas’ theories came in part from his experiences. In his short and brilliant essay “The Name of a Dog,”²⁰ a reflection on Exodus 22:31 and his experience as a Nazi prisoner of war, Levinas shows the feeling of dehumanization (ND, 151-153). Though physically protected from violence due to being a prisoner-of-war, he writes, “the other men, called free, who had dealings with us or gave us work or orders or even

²⁰ Hereafter cited (ND)

a smile ... stripped us of our human skin. We were subhuman, a gang of apes.” (ND, 153). The division between the free people and the trapped, those within the world and those without, struck the prisoners to their core. Racism, he writes, “shuts people away in a class” (ND, 153). Racism replaced their individuality by their race – they were now merely examples of a type, not unique persons. Levi’s account supports this theory: the SS would not address the prisoners by their names, but by their numbers, tattooed onto their bodies. This tattooing was deeply traumatic for the prisoners: it symbolized that they had become “cattle sent to the slaughter,” beings without a name, an instance and not an individual (DS 104).

Loneliness

The previous sections discussed the role of deprivation and animalization in breaking the prisoners’ spirits. A key aspect of both forms of torture is that prevent community. Deprivation reduces human beings into bodies, impeding their capacity to exist outside of merely fulfilling their bodily needs (DS 62). Animalization, on the other hand, directly removes one from the world’s social and moral framework. Since our self-perception is vulnerable to the perception of others, this weakens our sense of self. Combining these earlier insights, this section argues that social forces affect one’s resilience, the ability to avoid and escape despair.

Animalization removes you from the ethical community of the oppressor. While harmful, this is not shocking – you were hardly expecting allies in your murderers. The world remains comprehensible. However, while incoming prisoners expected a terrible world of blows and tortures, what came as a shock was that their first blows often came

from fellow prisoners (DS 26-27). Levi claims this was often lethal for the psyche:

One entered hoping at least for the solidarity of one’s companions in misfortune, but the hoped for allies, except in special cases, were not there; there were instead a thousand sealed off monads, and between them a desperate covert and continuous struggle. This brusque revelation, which became manifest from the very first hours of imprisonment, often in the instant form of a concentric aggression on the part of those in whom one hoped to find future allies, was so harsh as to cause the immediate collapse of one’s capacity to resist. For many it was lethal, indirectly or even directly: it is difficult to defend oneself against a blow for which one is not prepared.
(DS 27)

Instead of encountering a community with an enemy, the prisoners entered a Hobbesian state of war, “a war of all against all” (DS 120, *The Leviathan* 186). The Nazis designed this purposefully - if the prisoners banded together, they might present a real threat to their captors. Thus, they implemented structures such as the *kapo* (prisoner-functionary) system, which gave some prisoners privileges in return for overseeing their fellow prisoners. This blurred the lines between oppressor and oppressed, making it difficult for prisoners to band together in confidence – someone might rat the others out to ingratiate themselves with guards. This practical, systemic decision had an

unintended consequence: ethical loneliness.

As described in Jill Stauffer's titular book, ethical loneliness is "the experience of having been abandoned by humanity compounded by the experience of not being heard" (EL 1). One is not only injured but ignored when one reaches out for help: where one expects to find a hand helping them out of the water, one finds a hand holding them under. This describes exactly Levi's experience with the first blows upon entering Auschwitz. Since our selves are vulnerable to others, we must rely on others to reach out and help us, to restore what Améry calls "trust in the world" (EL 26-30; ML 27-28). If the other person helps us or even just listens, they validate our pain – our self-formation is successful. If not, the comprehensibility of the world falls away. This often proved fatal (DS 131-132). Unfortunately, newcomers rarely received a positive welcome (DS 27-29). The other prisoners envied and resented them, since the newcomer was a litmus test for how far the camp had degraded them (DS 27). Levi presents himself as following this rule, often turning away from the newcomers' irritating questions (DS 65). For many prisoners, ethical loneliness marked the beginning of their camp experience: for many, it would also be their last.

Since Stauffer published *Ethical Loneliness* in 2015, Levi was obviously not aware of the concept. However, its spirit haunts the pages of Levi's writing. In his discussion on shame, Levi claims that "almost everybody feels guilty of having omitted to offer help" (DS 64). This shame makes clear how important maintaining some form of community was to the prisoners, even in these intolerable conditions. Relationships held a potent protective force: Levi credits

his covert exchanges of a few letters with his family as a reason he survived Auschwitz (DS 90). Conversely, those without strong relationships did not last long. Levi writes that most non-German speakers died in the first 10-15 days from "insufficient information" (DS 80). Those who could not speak German, or did not have a friend to translate, were unable to interpret the meanings of their beatings, to learn the rules of survival (DS 82). This made language and communication of extreme importance, communication being the precondition of community.

Both Levi and Levinas share an interest in language. As Levinas argued in *Nine Talmudic Readings*, language is intrinsically based on trust; I say something and trust you understand me. Conversation requires symmetry. Thus, to speak to someone is to recognize them as someone who can understand, a person like you. For the racist, the sub-human's address becomes a presumption, a reminder that they are not in their place (PT 555). For this reason, the Nazis were never supposed to talk to the prisoners but to talk at them, commanding them like a man commands a mule (DS 78). Stauffer writes similarly in her analysis of Améry: "Wajs [a Nazi collaborator beating Améry to get him to work faster] did not think of his action in moral terms" (EL 21). To Wajs, Améry was an animal to control. One does not communicate to animals: one directs, with screams or riding crops (DS 78-79). In addition to the practical dangers of failed communication, Levi emphasizes its psychological danger:

This "not being talked to" had rapid and devastating effects. To those who do not talk to you, or address you in screams that seem inarticulate to you,

you dare not speak. If you are fortunate enough to have next to you someone with whom you have a language in common, good for you, you'll be able to exchange your impressions, seek counsel, let off steam, confide in him; if you don't find anyone, your tongue dries up in a few days, and your thought with it.
(DS 79)

Here, Levi clearly connects depersonalization with lack of community, through an inability to communicate. This connection counters an understanding of resilience based solely on internal factors. James postulated that the "misery threshold" was an intrinsic trait, but Levi clearly experienced the opposite: one's capacity to resist despair was largely determined by one's relationships, both positive and negative. In "At the Mind's Limit," Améry makes this explicit, writing that intellectuals rarely survived the camps due to an inability to form relationships with others effectively. Since our selves are vulnerable to others, both positively and negatively, this implies that our relationships strongly affect our ability to resist depersonalization. While James' prescription of faith, a personal response, might be helpful, it will not succeed alone: a friend is just as necessary as an idol.

Conclusion

Conclusions risk gratuitous repetition. I will thus briefly summarize and then offer some closing remarks on the practical extensions of this analysis.

Throughout this essay, I have argued that Primo Levi's experience in the Shoah shows that one's ability to resist trauma is not merely a matter of personal character traits but

is instead determined by social factors, both positive and negative. I first analyzed the effect of physical deprivation in Levi, showing that it led to a loss of mental faculties, introducing William James' psychology as an explanatory tool. I then analyzed Levi's use of the word 'animal', showing how he connects the loss of social norms with depersonalization. Jill Stauffer's theory of *Ethical Loneliness* helped explain this connection, drawing on Levinas' phenomenology. This showed that the self was vulnerable to the perceptions of others and is not unproblematically independent. Finally, I analyzed relationship and language in Levi, showing that community and the loss thereof was just as, if not more, important than animalization in the experience of depersonalization. This refutes James' framework that resilience is an intrinsic trait and that one overcomes misery through giving into faith: in Levi's experience, what is most important is a helping hand to keep your head above the water.

This essay focussed on depersonalization in history's most extreme environment. However, these three elements (deprivation, animalization, loneliness) exist everywhere, as do conceptions of misery as a purely internal issue. For example, it is a common narrative that depression is a purely biological, internal result of genetics and chemical imbalances in the brain. This is not untrue; depression does have a strong genetic component and brains are composed of chemicals. Yet this narrative often implies that depression is an intrinsic, unavoidable condition. It is no one's fault that someone is depressed; it is just bad luck or poor genetics.²¹ However, as this essay makes abundantly clear, this is only true for those with an uncomplicated autonomy. To claim the depression of those in positions of deprivation, animalization, or loneliness is an intrinsic fact is to substitute observable

²¹ Under the surface, one can read some certainly unintentional shades of eugenics in these narratives.

reality for a comforting lie: that we are not responsible. Because if social forces create depression, anxiety, or depersonalization then it is our collective responsibility not only to help their victims but also to change the systems creating these conditions.²²

Let me be more explicit. Poverty directly causes these three elements. So does police brutality. So do sexism and LGBTQ+ discrimination. So do mental health systems. So

does homelessness. These are but a sample; less extreme than the camps but still depersonalizing. These systems assault the personhood of our siblings. To realize reconciliation or justice, they must change. If before we could plead ignorance, this privilege has now disappeared.

From now on, silence is complicity.

²² On the other hand, this truth also provides us with hope.

We can make the world better, both personally and socially. Our chemical imbalances are not something untouchable by anything less than modern medicine -we can improve our life and the lives of those we love by actively improving our human conditions.

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HOW TO NOT BE A GOOD SPORT: SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES OF TRANSITIONING OUT OF AN ATHLETIC CAREER

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Arts & Science 3CU3: Alumni Experience Inquiry

There is a saying in sports that athletes die twice: once when they pass away and once when they retire. The inevitability of a relatively short career and early retirement, whether forced or unforced, creates a challenging situation for athletes at the end of their careers. As sports and pop culture tend to focus on current athletes or comeback stories (e.g., award-winning movie *Cinderella Man* and Roger Clemens' multiple returns from retirement to play Major League Baseball), our society neglects the often-depressing reality of retirement from athletics. Consequently, athletes are not often prepared for, or even made aware of, the disruption that retirement can cause (Marthinus, 2007). In contrast with the oft-touted benefits of a successful athletic career, there is a distinctive struggle of athletes to reconcile the part of their identity that is so deeply intertwined with sports with a non-athletic post-retirement life (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999). The most recent statistics on this matter, taken from a BBC (2018) "State of Sport" survey, reveal that a majority of athletes formerly belonging to the Rugby Players' Association, the Professional Cricketers' Association, and the Professional Footballers' Association struggled with financial, mental, and/or emotional wellbeing after retirement, citing a loss of identity and purpose in their post-retirement life. These athletes have little guidance and support for their problems,

and few seek help when they are struggling (BBC, 2018). This finding alludes to a feeling of helplessness or hopelessness, an ignorance of available resources and possible next steps, and a lack of self-knowledge held by these athletes. However, despite this hopelessness, athletes can and should be optimistic, as there are many examples of individuals who do adjust well after retirement (Grove, Lavalle, Gordon, & Harvey, 1998).

Unfortunately, given the small number of competitive athletes, research and public and private social support have not ordinarily been directed towards them at the stage of their life when they transition out of sports (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Marthinus, 2007). Nonetheless, research has found different factors, such as feelings of accomplishment, choice in retirement, level of athlete commitment, social support, finances, and non-athletic interests to be related in varying degrees to the distress resulting from retirement from sports (Wheeler, Malone, VanVlack, Nelson, and Steadward, 1996). Analyzing these dimensions can reveal paths for constructive action.

This essay will explore the related research, first by focusing on when and why athletic identity confers risk beyond identification with other professions. Relatedly, I will then discuss how athletes cope with the trauma of retirement and the role of society in increasing the likelihood of a traumatic experience. I will also consider

the intersectional experiences of athletes playing parasports, as well as the implications for any athlete who strictly adheres to their sport. Subsequently, I will consider these issues within the framework of idealistic and pragmatic thinking on the part of the athletes. The impact of an athlete's retirement on their social network will also be briefly discussed. Building off this research, I will suggest potential solutions to a traumatic retirement, which include constructing a positive personal narrative, having a supportive social network, and considering post-sports life early. Overall, this essay will seek to demonstrate how the common struggle of an athlete to reconcile a strong and exclusive athletic identity with the intrinsically short-term nature of their athletic career stems largely from an overreliance on idealistic thinking and consequently impacts their retirement. Crucially, I will also argue for and against several potential remedies to this problem.

In relation to typical retirements, Lavalle, Gordon, and Grove (1997) point to several reasons for the particular difficulties of retiring from an athletic career. While retirement from any occupation is often associated with lower self-efficacy, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, athletes are prone to experience these negative consequences more often and intensely. Part of this heightened risk is due to the high level of athletic identity in these individuals. Other occupations are not integrated into one's identity as intensely as that of athletes, who often do not have a self-concept that extends beyond their athleticism (Lavalle, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). In essence, these researchers assert that retirement from sports can be a traumatic event that inherently exacerbates the pre-existing distress of a conflicted identity.

Exploring the role of athletic identity,

defined in the sports psychology literature as "the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role," is critical in understanding individual differences in the transition away from sports (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993, p. 237). Identity crises are often at the root of a difficult adjustment for retired athletes—if one's athletic identity is both *strong* and *exclusive*, it is more likely that they will face extreme difficulties in the process of retirement (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). Furthermore, problematic retirement is not normally due to financial or occupational adjustment, but rather social and emotional adjustment. This finding indicates a problem more innate than finding a job or having money, and rather one tied to identity, relationships, and a sense of self (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997).

The most popular methods of coping with this athletic identity loss include denial, mental disengagement, behavioral disengagement, and venting of emotions. These strategies may be effective in dealing with stress in the short-term but interfere with more adaptive long-term strategies in their avoidance orientation (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997). In support of this theory, a study by Yao, Laurencelle, and Trudeau (2018) suggests that while former athletes had higher athletic identity than non-athletes, they had poorer nutrition and physical activity habits, indicating the paralyzing effect of athletic identity on post-retirement life. Further evidence shows that a strong athletic identity not only leads to emotional and social difficulties, but can actually predict anxiety and depressive symptomatology, as well as increased body dissatisfaction shortly after retirement (Giannone, Haney,

Kealy, & Ogrodniczuk, 2017; Stirling, Cruz, & Kerr, 2012). Whether these symptoms eventually reach a point at which they can be classified as a disorder is not yet known, but they reflect a dearth in the coping ability of former athletes with a changing identity.

In the terminology used in the literature on this topic, it is clear how intrinsic athleticism is to the identity of these individuals. The labelling of these individuals as “athletes,” a title that constructs a constricting identity, paves the way for the idea that many retired athletes themselves hold: their entire identity of being an athlete is now retired, former, and lost, with no replacement identity. Thus, the very naming of an individual as an “athlete,” which usually occurs very early on in one’s career, can become a major obstacle at that career’s end, as it builds one’s identity upon their participation in sport (Baillie & Danish, 1992). Furthermore, the greater the level of fame an individual receives, the more tied their public image and consequently their self-understanding is to athletics (Baillie & Danish, 1992). The reinforcing role of society on identity throughout an athlete’s career pushes them to base their self-esteem on athletic performance, as this is what brings an athlete prestige (McPherson, 1980). Once this self-esteem is fixated on athleticism, it is unlikely that the athlete will engage in exploring alternate identities or consider what will occur when they can no longer participate in sports (McPherson, 1980). Therefore, the causes of the often-distressing transition from sports may be rooted deeper and earlier in the development of identity than in other professions. Consequently, since being an athlete has such fundamental and socially reinforced ties to one’s identity, there may be increased risk for that identity to be devastated by retirement.

In line with this reasoning, empirical evidence indicates that, when an athlete retires from sports, the degree to which they face psychological difficulties and distress in retirement is highly related to their degree of athletic identity (Giannone et al., 2017). Giannone and colleagues (2017) theorized that this distress is due to a lack of experience occupying other roles in society. As an athlete, one is pressured by coaches, parents, and others to make sport a primary, and often only, priority. This expectation makes being an athlete not only integral to most professional sportspeople’s identities, but also potentially the sole component. This “constricted identity,” Giannone et al. (2017, p. 598) explain, is limited in its adaptability to transitions between life stages; the tension retirement creates within this identity leads to emotional distress. When one’s identity is exclusively and strongly intertwined with such a short-lived career, and one identifies almost solely as an athlete, there comes a breaking point where, when the career inevitably changes, so must the identity.

A study of individuals with disabilities by Wheeler et al. (1996) provides fascinating insight into the transition process at play in all athletes. Individuals with disabilities are often very marginalized by society. Thus, becoming an athlete in disabled sports provides a supportive community that combats the feeling of being marginalized. These athletes in disabled sports described “being and feeling normal” as a result of their athletic involvement (Wheeler et al., 1996, p. 394). Therefore, an athletic identity can be even more important to them in feeling accepted by society, and it is likely to be held strongly and perhaps exclusively. Unfortunately, the same negative influences of intense commitment to this athletic identity occur as

are found in the general athletic population (Wheeler et al., 1996). On top of the regular influences, however, these individuals had the unique challenge of trying to avoid a “secondary disability” in the future, such as losing physical strength, gaining weight, or chronically injuring one’s body due to overuse (a commonality for individuals in wheelchair sports, which put considerable stress on one’s shoulders) (Wheeler et al., 1996, p. 396). Giving credence to this research, Danielle Brown, a former Paralympian archer said, “Having the plan [of playing sports] that has come crashing to a halt, you’re devastated. You have no idea what you are or who you are, what you want to do, where you want to go” (BBC, 2018). Athletes playing disabled sports are thus influenced by their disability and the societal implications of having a disability in their conceptualisation of retirement. Nonetheless, they have fears and struggles similar to other athletes in a way that causes added stress and avoidant fears, demonstrating the universality of the dangers of holding a one-dimensional identity with too much strength and exclusivity.

One of these dangers is poor psychosocial maturity, which athletes attain by selectively optimising their sports skill set while neglecting other activities (Good, Brewer, Petitpas, Van Raalte, & Mahar, 1993). The demands required in competitive athletics and their restrictive, sheltered nature may actually preclude athletes from exploring alternate identities (Good et al., 1993). Furthermore, the material and symbolic rewards that sports provide for athletes can allow for a comfortable way of earning a living and contributing to society, which in turn allows athletes to not need to seek out other opportunities, making the loss of these rewards a considerable detriment

to athletes during retirement (Good et al., 1993; Grove et al., 1998). In this light, it is no surprise that male varsity student-athletes in revenue-producing sports have the worst career decision-making skills, as they gain the most secure rewards from their sport (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996).

This lack of maturity and specific concentration increases the susceptibility of athletes to *identity foreclosure*, a term that describes an idealistic adherence to one lifepath without first exploring the possibility of an alternative (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996). This phenomenon, essential to understanding the tribulations of retirement from sports, is common amongst athletes, who rarely explore alternate career paths, leading to an exclusively athletically-oriented identity that makes it difficult to adjust to post-retirement living (Giannone et al., 2017). Identity foreclosure is specifically related to athletic identity, as high levels of both can reduce one’s ability to make career decisions (Good et al., 1993). Furthermore, the more an athlete is involved in their sport, and the stronger and more exclusive an individual’s athletic identity is, the more they tend to engage in identity foreclosure (Good et al., 1993).

Identity foreclosure and other idealistic thought patterns, wherein a path towards a professional career in sports is seen as automatic without the pragmatic exploration of alternate career paths, are related to a dependent decision-making style. This style describes an athlete who relies on those around them to make important decisions for them (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996). By the very intensive and institutional nature of athletics, individuals are closed off from exploring opportunities and building support systems outside of sports. Thus, once they leave that social sphere, they are utterly

alone; indeed, one retired athlete recalled that their contacts “assumed that [their] life had become much easier to cope with” during retirement and “couldn’t understand that it was a difficult transition to make” (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996; Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997, p. 139). Clearly, a retired athlete who does not have anybody to rely on, who feels lost in opportunity, and who is reliant on others to make decisions for them due to the previously noted inhibited tendencies is incredibly prone to a distressing transition to post-retirement life (Good et al., 1993). Identity foreclosure and maladaptive idealism are thus products of being an athlete. Furthermore, in the association of these side-effects to inhibited and reliant career decision-making along with a lack of social support, they serve as a direct hindrance to post-retirement adjustments (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996).

Moreover, the social support that remains with athletes, particularly their parents and partners, have their own struggles with identity and are also impacted by the retirement (Brown, Webb, Robinson, & Cotgreave, 2019). As parents and partners are often the most important social support athletes have, their lack of capacity and willingness to support due to their own internal troubles can exacerbate the devastation of retirement (Brown et al., 2019). These struggles may be a result of changes in relationships and daily routines, as is most likely for partners. However, it may also be due to the burden of helping the retiree through their struggles or a feeling of bereavement, with the latter being especially likely in the case of parents (Brown et al., 2019). Additionally, partners and parents often do not feel prepared to help the retired athlete, either due to their own identity crises and uncertainties or to

simply not being able to relate to the feelings of the athlete. While the retiring athlete’s parents and partners were found to have an overall positive impact on the athlete’s transition, it is important to understand that a social support system that is often taken for granted is not always present during this major life transition (Brown et al., 2019).

The struggle of athletes to maintain their own careers while overcoming identity foreclosure and preparing for an alternate career path post-retirement mirrors a predicament often experienced in a liquid, uncertain postmodern culture. Zygmunt Bauman (2008), in *The Art of Life*, expands on an allegory conceived by Paul Ricoeur that artistically brings life to this duality. He describes modern career aspirations as reaching for one of the countless stars in a nebula. Bauman (2008) writes that no matter how bright the nebula might be, there is absolutely nothing protecting one against being forced or wanting to start anew. When put into this athletic context, despite how enticing a career in sports may appear, and how sufficiently it provides in the short-term, an athlete is extremely vulnerable to no longer enjoying or being able to enjoy sports, and thus needing to or wanting to begin a new, different career. Escaping certainty to follow a star, Bauman (2008) explains, brings its own array of risks. Similarly, after an athlete fixates on the star of professional sports, despite the certainty it may provide in the short term, they are often left with little in the way of skills outside of that field and knowledge of what to do with these skills when that athlete’s idealistic aspirations of playing professional sports become unattainable.

Interestingly, Grove, Lavalley, and Gordon (1997) provide research echoing this damaging effect of the nebula and lack of a

pragmatic approach to an athletic career. They demonstrate that those with strong athletic identities, who thus adjust relatively poorly after retiring, have more anxiety towards life after retirement and tend not to plan their long-term career beforehand. Even with a retirement plan in place, Lavalley, Gordon, and Grove (1997) corroborate the finding that athletes, in particular, struggle with a loss of identity after retirement. One participant in their study, who planned their retirement two years prior to actually transitioning from sports, still described their retirement as “beginning all over again, with a new job, new lifestyle, and new circle of friends,” a challenge that made them feel “as though [they] lost [their] self-identity”; this reset clearly exemplifies a star that has burned out, forcing them to start anew (Lavalley, Gordon, and Grove, 1997, p. 139). The overwhelming nature of having to reinvent one’s identity to achieve a meaningful existence may be a major cause of post-retirement stress.

As of 2012, the average career length in the four major North American professional sports leagues were 3.5 years for the National Football League, 4.8 years for the National Basketball Association, 5.5 years for the National Hockey League, and 5.6 years for Major League Baseball, all of which are relatively short (Sandler, 2012). With this in mind, the balance between a dream of a long career in sports and the repercussions of failing to consider the short-term nature of many sports careers is a necessity for athletes; they must learn to plan their future with a mixture of idealism and pragmatism. When thinking ideally, it is often merely getting to “the big leagues” that is important to young athletes, which provides the motivation to compete at an elite level. However, if pragmatic thinking is not indulged to some

extent, the athlete will not recognize that they have to switch life paths after their short-lived career is over. Consequently, as steps will not be taken to ensure a sense of continued identity and purpose, retirement may be devastating (Webb, Nasco, Riley, and Headrick, 1998). Indeed, Webb et al. (1998) discovered that the greater one’s athletic identity is, the vaguer their future became, providing evidence of athletes’ inhibition of pragmatic thought, and overindulgence of the ideal life that they may currently be living.

Pragmatic thinking may be most helpful during forced retirement, when the situation is far from ideal. More often than not, athletes are forced to retire, which makes them more vulnerable to the hardships of lacking a reasoned and probable plan, in addition to the associated torment of an uncertain identity (Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). Undoubtedly, those who retire voluntarily are not immune to the distress of the transition; however, in a sample of Australian elite-amateur athletes, it was found that involuntary retirement and lack of personal control over reasons for retirement were related to the highest emotional and social adjustment (Kerr and Dacyshyn, 2000; Lavalley, Grove, & Gordon, 1997). More importantly, involuntary retirement in this group was associated with the greatest difficulty dealing with this emotional and social adjustment (Kerr and Dacyshyn, 2000). This study again points to a lack of ability to think pragmatically as a major predictor of post-retirement stress.

Individuals who are forced to retire are also extremely likely to have a loss of identity, low perceived control, financial issues, and poor social support, due to the suddenness, shock, and bitterness of losing one’s athletic status so quickly (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999). Furthermore, the clubs that

the athletes were playing with did not support their athletes adequately through retirement, leaving the former athletes with little external help (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999). Even when the retirement was forced by a career-ending injury, the athlete received less support than if they were expected to return to the club (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999). This neglect emphasises the commodification of athletes by their clubs and the lack of support given once the athletes were no longer of use. However, the tragedy that is forced retirement may only be relevant to athletes who have a strong and exclusive athletic identity. For example, only athletes invested in playing professional sports had decreased self-esteem and life satisfaction after a career-ending injury (Kleiber & Brock, 1992). If an athlete's ideal life extends beyond sports and encompasses other meaningful activities, then their life beyond a forced retirement will still be ideal, without the need for much pragmatic thinking.

Webb et al. (1998) expand on this research, describing how pragmatism and idealism relate to the athletic identity component of transitioning from a career as discussed earlier in the article by Giannone et al. (2017). Injury is one of the most unexpected ways for a career to end, and thus individuals with career-ending injuries are often the most unprepared for the future, especially as athletes generally do not think pragmatically about the future during their career (Webb et al., 1998). Athletes who retire due to injury-related reasons are also initially prone to wishful or idealistic thinking, as career-ending injuries are often initially thought to be surmountable (Webb et al., 1998). However, this hope of playing again may not only hinder a pragmatic preparation for other career paths but may actually necessitate the strengthening of one's athletic identity throughout a painful

rehabilitation. This intensified identity becomes even more problematic if the injury is, in fact, career-ending. In light of the previous literature, it appears that when unplanned circumstances force one to deviate from a fixed identity, one has difficulty realigning to a different star in the nebula. By holding fast to the idealist mentality of identity foreclosure, and not engaging in any pragmatic thinking, one may, theoretically, have a limited ability to transition and seek help both within and outside of themselves.

However, not all retirees go through this intense hardship after retirement (Grove, Lavalley, & Gordon, 1997). What separates these athletes from those described above? As social beings, we confide in our social circle to relieve emotional and cognitive overload, which is especially helpful following a major loss, such as a death or loss of employment (Lavalle, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). Additionally, we construct and evaluate our identities in comparison to our companions and peers (Stets & Burke, 2000). Unfortunately, when athletes retire, an event that could be classified as a major loss, they often lose both their identity and the social support of their companions. This dual loss makes it difficult to exercise a potentially preferable method of coping, such as confiding, that is reliant on the help of others.

Consistent with this finding that retired athletes struggle with a decimated network of social support in which they can confide, Lavalley, Gordon, and Grove (1997) discovered that account-making and confiding of a traumatic experience are associated with a retirement free of major distress. Account-making is defined as "the process of making a story-like construction containing emotional expressions, trait inferences, descriptions, and related material regarding the self and

the outside world,” which is then refined by confiding in others (Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997, p. 131; Grove et al., 1998). This activity especially helped individuals coping with athletic retirement when their confidant was helpful and empathetic (Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). To summarize, a supportive social network is crucial for a smooth adjustment from an athletic career, as it helps to ground the athlete in a constructive narrative that allows for pragmatic steps to be taken towards an ideal post-retirement living situation, working them through the process of denial and despair (Grove et al., 1998).

Furthermore, in terms of social support, having relationships with parents or partners that are built on trust, open communication, and working through problems collectively is optimal during a retired individual’s transition from sports (Brown et al., 2019). Having strong mentors or supportive coaches throughout one’s career can not only increase athletes’ abilities in sport but can also provide necessary guidance throughout retirement (Ungerleider, 1997). On the contrary, a poor relationship with one’s coach can make an athlete’s transition from sport more difficult (Fortunato & Marchant, 1999).

In line with the narrative emphasis of account-making, Cavallerio, Wadey, and Wagstaff (2017) suggest three narrative typologies that are expressed by retired athletes: entangled narratives, going-forward narratives, and making-sense narratives. Constructing a making-sense narrative is unique in its emergent quality: being open to the possibility of a future that is different from their athletic past, despite not having a firm understanding of what that future holds. This narrative is hopeful, productive, and focuses on the present. Going-forward narratives are held by former athletes who are now

flourishing after transitioning from sports due to their ability to cultivate multiple identities and roles during their careers. While the two narratives described both lead to a smooth adjustment away from sports, it is important to avoid and combat the third typology, an entangled narrative, which occurs when an individual has a strong and exclusive athletic identity, and thus cannot move beyond that identity to develop a new one—these retired athletes simply long for their past career (Cavallerio, Wadey, & Wagstaff, 2017). How to transition from an entangled narrative to a making-sense or going-forward narrative is not yet known, but this shift should be the goal for struggling retirees.

Furthermore, the sooner individuals can change their athletic identity to one that has ties beyond sports, the quicker they can successfully adjust to a life without sport (Lavallee, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). An identity that is balanced and has ties beyond that of being an athlete may also allow an individual to be relatively immune to the distress caused by retirement from sports (Giannone et al., 2017). To combat identity foreclosure and prevent a collapse of identity at retirement, athletes should actually redefine their identities to encompass areas beyond sport long before their career ends (Lally, 2007). In fact, holding a dual career is preferable for a smooth retirement process, although this may be unrealistic in many elite sports (Torregrosa, Ramis, Pallarés, Azócar, & Selva, 2015). If one does only hold sport as a career, it is still important for them to have a clear view of their retirement, in order to think pragmatically about what steps must be taken to facilitate the transition (Torregrosa et al., 2015). Having other interests to channel one’s energy into after a career in sports is perhaps the most important

and valuable coping strategy for athletes in all sports, disabled and non-disabled (Wheeler et al., 1996). Martin, Fogarty, and Albion (2014) found that as an athlete began to consider retirement, they showed a decrease in athletic identity, and if they actually retired on their own accord, they reported increased life satisfaction.

Torregrosa, Boixadós, Valiente, and Cruz (2004) assert that retirement should be increasingly considered as one's sporting career progresses, as this act reduces the negative consequences of uncertainty about the future. If an effort is made to prepare for retirement early in an athlete's career, the transition will be easier, as it is more likely that pragmatic steps will be taken to construct a reasonable and realistic post-retirement plan (Ungerleider, 1997). In a similar way, if retirement is conceptualised by athletes as a process rather than a moment, and if they have steps planned to facilitate their transition, it is more manageable for them (Torregrosa et al., 2004). Thus, having autonomy over one's career and identity, planning one's retirement as a process of manageable steps, and being able to change one's identity before or during retirement may be important steps towards a smooth retirement from sport (Martin, Fogarty, & Albion, 2014).

Another intuitive suggestion may be that simply continuing with life in sports as a coach, manager, or any other non-player capacity would eradicate the need for a change in identity, pragmatic thinking, and the distress these may cause. Proponents of this strategy may believe that it would act as a beneficial transition period that would keep the athlete's social support system within their sport relatively intact. However, Lavalley, Gordon, and Grove (1997) suggest that this transition prolongs the inevitable distressing retirement that will occur when they eventually retire from

their non-player athletic occupation. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that individuals who stay involved in their sport through coaching may have higher levels of body dissatisfaction and unhealthy weight control behaviours (Stirling, Cruz, & Kerr, 2012). These negative effects may result in part from the harmful body standards of sports culture, as well as the reinforcement of these standards by being around athletes (Stirling, Cruz, & Kerr, 2012). As many athletes do remain in non-player positions within their sport, it is important to make retired athletes aware of the evidence suggesting that this is a maladaptive strategy.

Evidently, there are myriad causes of difficult transitions from careers in sports. The regular and regimented schedules make it difficult for athletes to think pragmatically for themselves, and without the social support network they are used to, many become very distressed. The status and rewards of being an athlete, which were once attainable ideals, are no longer present. Living beyond the label of being a "former athlete" and finding a new identity as a "current something" seems impossible to many who lived happily in an ideal life of identity foreclosure. However, the pattern of impairing athletic retirements can be reversed through the development of more involved and supported post-career support systems for athletes. Athletes can be hopeful if we enable and push them to explore other career options, both pragmatically and ideally, while in sport. The challenges of retirement can be overcome if we help athletes to construct positive narratives and if they can confide in others to aid in this account making. By effectively applying these solutions, athletes will become well-equipped to retire and can begin a new career and lifestyle with excitement.

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ENOVID: AMERICA'S FIRST ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE

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Arts & Science 4FC3: How Science Speaks to Power

This paper aims to highlight the importance of involving the extended peer community in risk assessments of the applied sciences. To do this, the paper will discuss the history of the first oral contraceptive (OC) in America; specifically, the Nelson Pill Hearings, which were a highly publicised trial intended to evaluate the safety of the OC Enovid. During the trial, it became clear that excluding women's perspectives resulted in a large distrust of scientific authorities. This distrust of the scientific community led to professional opinions being ignored and damaged the relationships between women and their doctors, thereby putting women's health at risk. Many of these issues could have been avoided if post-normal science ideals had been implemented sooner. It was not until feminist activists protested their concerns that a post-normal science framework was implemented. For context, post-normal science refers to a potential approach for how to analyse and apply scientific knowledge in risk assessment.¹ It is intended for use when uncertainty and risk are high.¹ This approach suggests that in order to successfully apply scientific knowledge in policy decisions, both the scientific and extended peer community (the groups affected by the issue at hand) need to be consulted.¹ In the case of Enovid, failing to recognise the importance of involving women in this scientific breakthrough

created a barrier for women to benefit from said breakthrough. The issues discussed in this paper (specifically, a drop in Enovid sales and OC use) could have been avoided had women's perspectives been included in the process of Enovid's risk assessment.

America's first oral contraceptive (OC) was trademarked as Enovid and available for sale in 1960.² Prior to Enovid, other contraceptive methods were seen as messy and cumbersome.³ The public applauded Enovid as a convenient and effective measure for pregnancy prevention, and hailed it as a possible solution to the growing concerns of overpopulation.^{2,3} Unfortunately, Enovid had a significantly higher concentration of hormones than was necessary for efficacy. With this higher concentration came an increased intensity and likelihood of negative side effects including bloating, nausea, headaches, and more.³ However, out of all the side effects, it was the pill's blood-clotting effects that turned out to be life-threatening.² Despite this danger, the first formulations of the pill remained on the market for years.² When the negative side effects of the pill garnered public attention, there was an uproar against the paternalistic nature of medicine and a significant drop in OC use and sales.^{2,4}

While initially approved for the treatment of menstrual disorders in 1957, Enovid's contraceptive properties were researched beginning in the early 1950s.² In

1959, researchers submitted a supplementary application to allow Enovid to be used for contraception.² The drug review process was hindered by low staffing and was pressured to review drugs quickly; as a result, drug approval applications were rushed.² Within this limitation, the FDA had to rely heavily on external sources for review and approval of NDAs (New Drug Application).^{2,5} G.D. Searle, the producer of Enovid, provided the FDA with a comprehensive twenty-volume collection of clinical research data, the largest NDA given to the FDA up to that point.² The NDA largely referenced the work of George Pincus and his colleagues.² The research clearly outlined that the side effects were significant enough to stop some participants from continuing the trials.² However, Pincus's research also suggested that women who stopped taking the pill could still have successful pregnancies.² The FDA willingly accepted the risk in part because the side effects were physiologically understood.² Enovid was approved as an OC in 1960, around seven months after the application's submission.²

The subsequent scientific and medical responses to Enovid were contradictory, to say the least. One 1962 Los Angeles Times headline proclaimed: "Birth Control Pill Probed in Death of 6." The next day, the headline would read: "Birth Control Pills Cleared in Six Deaths".^{5(p. 295)} *Science* referred to the issue in its 1963 headline as a "... Continued Medical Dispute".^{5(p. 295)} Different studies drew different conclusions regarding the safety of OCs; many called for more research to be done.⁵ In 1962, Searle released a review which concluded that Enovid posed no serious threat.⁵ Within the year, the FDA reported an increased risk for women older than 35, but quickly withdrew the report after uncovering mistakes in their calculations.⁵

Physicians also disagreed about the level of risk they were willing to accept for their patients. Some argued against OCs like Enovid because they believed the risk outweighed the benefit.⁵ Meanwhile, other clinicians argued that the health risks associated with unplanned pregnancy, along with the need for family planning, outweighed the risk posed by Enovid.⁵ It was not until the late 1960s that a consensus on the correlation between OCs and thrombosis began to form.⁵ By 1970, a close relationship between estrogen and thromboembolic disease was established.⁵

While the scientific and medical community debated the ethics and safety of Enovid, women taking the pill started to doubt scientific and medical authorities. From 1961 to 1962, the tragedy of Thalidomide garnered global attention.² Thalidomide had been recommended to alleviate the effects of morning sickness during pregnancy.² It was considered to be very safe, so much so that it was a non-prescription drug in Germany. Thalidomide was immediately pulled from shelves when the medical community discovered that it had caused a significant number of serious birth defects.² While the drug was never approved in the United States, the Thalidomide controversy heightened mistrust in epistemic communities and increased concern over putting women of child-bearing age at risk.² An additional provocation was the frequently cited sample size of only 132 women for the clinical research done on Enovid as an OC.² The small sample size enraged many women and further put into question the safety of Enovid.² In reality, many more than 132 women took the pill before it was approved as an OC.² However, this information eluded the public because of the FDA's legal obligation to keep certain commercial information confidential.²

It seems that the commonly reported sample size of 132 came from a memo written by the FDA's Drug Division based on research data, so it may have just been the easiest information to publicise legally.² The FDA's lack of transparency resulted in an intense distrust of the organisation. This distrust heightened with the publication of Barbara Seaman's *The Doctor's Case Against the Pill* in 1969.³ Seaman's book included testimonies from doctors, medical researchers, and women, all of which completely denounced the pill.³ The book caught the attention of Senator Gaylord Nelson, who, at the time was holding hearings on the pharmaceutical industry, the abuse of antibiotics, barbiturates, and tranquilizers; he decided to take on the pill as well.⁶

The Nelson Pill Hearings were held from January 14th to March 1970.² The purpose of the trial was to assess: (1) the safety of the pill and (2) whether women had access to enough information to make informed decisions.² The trials were sensationalist, volatile, and gathered much publicity; at the time, public discussions about sex or birth control were rare.⁶ The hearings aired on all three of the national television networks.⁵ Many women were horrified when they learned the full extent of the potential side effects associated with the medication they were taking.⁶ Since many women were ill-informed about the level of risk associated with the pill, they felt that decisions about the level of risk they were accepting were out of their control.⁶ Somewhere along the way, what some physicians defined as 'acceptable risk' for contraception differed from how women defined it. The trial started making headlines, however, after several feminists expressed outrage.⁷ During the trial, members of the D.C. Women's Liberation Group (such as Alice Wolfson), would often loudly interject to

express their opposition to the lack of female representation during the trials.^{6,7} Many of the women attending the trials were upset to see that not a single woman was asked to testify.⁷ Women did not see themselves being represented in the trial. In the end, the level of uncertainty associated with the safety of the pill angered many women and the trials raised serious concerns about patient autonomy.

During the trial, there were many contradictory accounts about the safety of Enovid.⁸ Epidemiological modelling was hindered since there were so many variables for every woman on the pill.² When the dosage, time on the pill, and physical differences between patients were so variable, it was difficult to find a clear connection between one factor and the safety risks associated with the pill.² Additionally, the scientists and regulators behind Enovid seemingly shifted their assessment of Enovid from safety to efficacy.² Early scientists such as Gregory Pincus have been criticized for seemingly prioritising the effectiveness of Enovid while downplaying the seriousness of the side-effects.³ Throughout the trial, the pill was openly defended by explaining it posed less risk than pregnancy.² This argument was problematic considering the reality that a significant portion of women did not know the risk associated with the drug they were taking.⁹ Many women were not warned of potential side-effects and as a result they were less informed about their options and less likely to consider (potentially safer) alternatives. The focus on efficacy over safety shifted the focus from whether Enovid was safe to arguing that it was safer than an unplanned pregnancy.² Despite other contraceptive methods being available at the time, if a physician wanted to make the case that Enovid was dangerous they would not only

need to prove the pill was unsafe, but also that it was worse than an unplanned pregnancy.¹

The trial produced several significant outcomes. Many women wrote letters to the FDA, demanding that manufacturers advertise information about the potential side effects of their medication.³ During the trial, the FDA announced that every pill package would include an insert with information about the pill's side effects.³ Opposition by the American Medical Association delayed the official insert requirement until 1978.³ This change was pushed in part by the National Women's Health Network (NWHN) which led a series of protests against the FDA in 1975.⁹ The NWHN was founded by Barbara Seaman and Alice Wolfson, who met at the Pill Hearings.⁷ However, there was also a drawback to the hearings. It seems likely that the trial caused unplanned pregnancies.² A 1970 Newsweek-Gallup poll showed that two-thirds of women on the pill were never warned by their physicians about potential health hazards.¹⁰ The sudden awareness regarding the negative side effects of the pill resulted in many women being hesitant to take the pill. After the trials, another Gallup Poll of 8.5 million American women said that 18% had stopped taking the pill, and 23% had seriously considered discontinuing use.¹¹

Throughout Enovid's history, the perspective of the people who were most affected by use of this medication was excluded. There was little to no transparency in the drug approval process, many women were not aware of the risks they were taking, and women were excluded from testifying at the trials. The lack of women's involvement resulted in a distrust of any study or regulation. As stated by Betz: "...participation is an effective means to foster the citizens' trust in their government"¹² (p. 251). Instead of allowing participation, the factors discussed resulted in women seeing the government and scientific authorities as untrustworthy and illegitimate. Had the uncertainties and risks been expressed to women, we would not have had the sudden drop in sales and usage of Enovid that followed the trials. The level of risk that is acceptable depends on the person, and as we have seen with the development of the hearings, women were not included in these conversations. The forced interjection of women's perspectives was the pushback stakeholders needed to act accordingly with the importance of including all relevant perspectives. The policy changes brought on by women's groups resulted in post-normal science ideals such as conveying risk and uncertainty to the extended peer community (via package inserts included with medication). Ultimately, the pill was only effective when women chose to take it.

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REWRITING THE HISTORY OF 'COMFORT WOMEN'

Catherine Hu

Arts & Science 2A06: Social and Political Thought

Introduction

Judith Butler, in *Precarious Life*, makes a poignant statement that “the body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well” (26). The body makes it possible to grieve, makes it possible to love, and makes it possible to recognize our interconnectedness. However, the body is also vulnerable to corruption, deceit, and the selfish nature of other beings. War is a prime example of the way vulnerable bodies can be exploited, as it is precisely those that are most vulnerable that suffer the most violence.

Following the WWII Nanjing Massacre where up to 300 000 citizens were murdered and tens of thousands of women were brutally raped, the Japanese government kidnapped and coerced 200 000 Chinese and Korean women into servicing Japanese soldiers in ‘comfort stations’ (Blakemore). For Butler, governing who is grievable is “circumscribed” and can be used to “serve the derealizing aims of military violence” (37). It is precisely the circumscribed measures of grievability that made it possible for the Japanese government to derealize the so-called ‘comfort women’ and the trauma they endured. The derealisation of the ‘comfort women’ is horrifying, and multi-layered. The process that was initiated

during their violent kidnapping and assault not only resulted in thousands of deaths but also led to a historical narrative that wrote them out of existence as ‘casualties of war’. However, it is important to remember that those same subjects eventually fought back and took control of the stories of their lives. In the case of the ‘comfort women’, that process of *realization* primarily happened in two ways. In recent years, the remaining survivors have begun to come forward with testimonies of their experiences, in hopes of undoing their derealization by controlling their narratives and reclaiming their lives as grievable. Moreover, the advancement of media and widespread coverage of these testimonies has increased the awareness of this horrific event and has called for the proper retribution to be made by the perpetrators, thus putting political pressure on the Japanese Government to issue a full apology.

The Derealization Process

The mass rapes that occurred during the Nanjing Massacre initiated the dehumanization process of Asian women at the hands of the Japanese military and government. Butler explains that “dehumanization emerges at the limits of discursive life” (36). “Discursive life” can be understood as an undefined, unsolidified life, where the boundaries of life are no longer clear. For example, during times of war, it was easier to dehumanize individuals,

because what it means to live and the value of life became indiscernible. The military officers, who had already been exposed to the limits of discursive life during the massacre had already begun dehumanizing women by perceiving them as mere trophies of war and objects of pleasure. Similarly, in Emperor Hirohito's perspective, he "was [more] concerned with [the massacre's] impact on Japan's image" than the thousands of women brutally raped and murdered, he had already derealized the lives of the women killed and taken (Blakemore). Consequently, Hirohito ordered the military to expand 'comfort stations' and recruit thousands of women, abhorrently justifying that "a steady and isolated group of prostitutes" would satisfy the "sexual appetites" of Japanese soldiers (Blakemore). Hirohito's mindset allowed him to develop a framework that derealized the lives of the Chinese and Korean women murdered and captured, enabling the infliction of unlimited violence to the women captured. By derealizing 'comfort women', they became "neither dead or alive, just interminably spectral" (33-34) according to Butler. The violence they endured did not leave a visible mark on society, and thus allowed them to become subjects of perpetual violence.

'Comfort women' were "convinced to travel to what they thought were nursing units or jobs, or [were] purchased from their parents as indentured servants" (Blakemore). These falsities deepened their derealization, as the women's families and loved ones were oblivious to the real intentions of their capture. From society's point of view, these women were lost to the war in a completely non-violent context. As the outside world was deceived, these women suddenly became an isolated entity, making them incredibly vulnerable to violence and dehumanization.

These women could not be "mourned because they were already lost" (Butler 33), and so their suffering and the women themselves suddenly became ungrievable. Judith Butler notes that "the norm of governing who will be a grievable human is circumscribed and produced in these acts of permissible and celebrated public grieving, [and] how they sometimes operate in tandem with a prohibition on the public grieving of others' lives" (37). At the end of WWII Japan publicly mourned those lost in battle, as well as the citizens killed by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Okuda). The public grieving of these individuals occurred in tandem with the prohibition to publicly grieve for the 'comfort women' who suffered and died at the hands of the Japanese military. Not only were these women robbed of a public grieving, but most of society had no knowledge of their circumstances and the horrors they had experienced. As fallen soldiers were being mourned by the country for their bravery, Japan's secrets involving 'comfort women' were simultaneously laid to rest. The government was able to differentially allocate who the public grieved for, and in doing so, served "the derealizing aims of [their] military violence" in the process (Butler 37). Documentation of 'comfort stations', 'comfort women' and any remnants of wrongdoings or inhumane treatment were completely destroyed, and as Japan rebuilt after the war, the story of its enslavement of women was "downplayed as a distasteful remnant of a past people would rather forget" and the women became social outcasts (Blakemore).

Deepening Butler's notion that "the differential allocation of grief serves the derealizing aims of military violence" (37) is the 2007 report by the Associated Press

stating that US authorities had actually allowed ‘comfort stations’ to continue to operate. These operations lasted for a year after the end of the war and “tens of thousands of women in the brothels” were forced to continue serving as sex slaves for American men (Blakemore). In this case, the remnants of war on the battlefield were ignored and the derealization of ‘comfort women’ was reinforced. American soldiers continued to subject ‘comfort women’ to violence whilst leaving no historical mark for them to be publicly grieved, thus raising questions regarding the dangers of derealization and the conditions that make life universally ungrievable. These women had already been deemed ungrievable by the Japanese, so the United States military and government did not need to differentially allocate the public’s grief to avoid mourning these women.

A Shift from Derealization to Realization

The derealization process begins when human suffering cannot be empathized with or understood. In these moments, the human condition can be exploited through different forms of oppression. Judith Butler introduces this notion by stating “it would be difficult if not impossible to understand how humans suffer from oppression without seeing how this primary condition is exploited and exploitable, thwarted and denied” (31). When individuals or society can not recognize the wrongs perpetrated against a certain social group or individual, these conditions of wrongdoing will continue, and be further exploited. This step is crucial in the derealization process because it facilitates the conditions for those that are exploited to either never be seen or to be forgotten by society.

The conditions of war made it possible for ‘comfort women’ to be oppressed by

the Japanese government. Kim Bok-dong recalled the day she was taken away by soldiers at fourteen years young believing that “she was needed to work in a factory. If she did not come, they warned her mother, the family would suffer” (Drury). As Kim’s parents were under the impression that she would be working in a factory, they were oblivious to the trauma she would suffer when transported to ‘comfort stations’. Kim reveals that whilst at the station, she and a few other women tried to attempt suicide but failed. After waking up from a suicide attempt, she decided that she needed to live so that she would be able to tell her version of the history (Drury). The only way society can begin to understand what Kim and the other survivors had experienced is by listening to the testimonies of the survivors. In doing so, by retelling and recounting their exploited experiences through the lens of oppression it allowed for their realization process to begin. Butler suggests that the condition that allows for the undoing of the derealization process is when human suffering is understood and empathized with. This is only possible when humans who have suffered from oppression reveal to society how the “primary condition is exploited” (Butler 31). Subsequently, their adversity and trauma can then transform into the necessary fuel to ignite an entire movement.

The Realization Process: A New Era

The realization of ‘comfort women’ ties to the idea of conditions, particularly what conditions made it possible for survivors to speak out. In the late 1980s, South Korea became a democratic state which “enabled more critical media discussion of the Japanese colonial era and feminist campaigns for women’s rights” (O’dwyer). This shift in power and government structure created an

environment that allowed survivors to come forward and testify about their experiences. These testimonies sparked public interest and led many feminist and human rights activists to campaign and bring their experiences onto the global stage, such as Kim Bok-dong's story now being told on multiple news outlets (O'dwyer). During this moment in time, 'comfort women' were still struggling for rights to their own bodies as they continued to process the trauma they faced. However, as Butler mentions "the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own" (26), and the democratization of South Korea provided the conditions for these women to safely share their trauma. By speaking out, these women forced the world to recognize their vulnerability. In doing so, their vulnerability was no longer in the hands of their exploiter but rather their own, shifting power and truth in favour of these women. This shift of power allowed the world to see them as survivors and provided them with a platform to speak their truth, thereby amending the wrongs in history (Butler 43).

In China, when the 70th anniversary commemorating the end of the conflict took place, 'comfort women' were amongst the "war's unsettled ghosts" (Hornby). The Chinese press portrayed these women as fragile victims and the movement to ensure that their stories were heard "in an atmosphere of official neglect" (Hornby). However, neglect fueled the desire for survivors to speak out and allow the world to acknowledge their vulnerability. With each survivor that spoke out, their power and presence compounded, generating momentum to begin shifting the historical narrative. This momentum put increasing pressure on the Japanese government to investigate and "eventually spark[ed] backlash [even]

from Japanese nationalists" (O'dwyer). As such, vulnerability gave 'comfort women' the power to shape and take control of their narrative – undoing their derealization.

The movement to ensure that the experiences of 'comfort women' are never forgotten was facilitated by the media and modern technology. Butler's notion that obituaries function as an instrument that publicly distributes grief (34) demonstrates how news outlets are instruments that allowed grievability to be publicly distributed. BBC eventually published an obituary for Kim Bok-dong, the 'comfort woman' who vowed to live to tell the tale of her experience. This obituary exposed the double victimization that 'comfort women' who returned home had to suffer, as "there was not space in this society for the women to go public" with their stories (Drury). Paradoxically, by exposing this notion of double victimization, the function of an obituary is deepened, because it also acts as a means to undo derealization. The obituary provides a platform to overcome the double victimization faced by 'comfort women' by giving them a space to have their experiences shared, providing the public with an opportunity to deem their lives as grievable. Media became another mechanism that enabled the realization process of 'comfort women' and also attributed to the surmounting pressure put on the Japanese government to acknowledge the violence inflicted on these women.

However, it is important to recognize that these methods of manipulation can also be used for the purpose of censorship. Censorship can transcend all forms of media including obituaries which unfortunately have also been cited as a means to silence and exclude stories that do not positively reflect a nation or government's image (Butler 34).

In 2015, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his apologies, and agreed to provide a \$1 billion-yen compensation for the affected women (“S Korea’s Moon Demands Official Apology over ‘Comfort Women’”). However, despite this apology, Japan continues to block or remove ‘comfort women’ memorials and has redacted this piece of history from Japanese textbooks (Constante). As such, it is evident that steps are still being taken to sustain the derealization of ‘comfort women’ by methods of indoctrination, therefore complicating the aforementioned use of media and technology in the realization process. So long as technology is being used and controlled by the perpetrators of violence, the opportunities for the public to learn the whole truth about ‘comfort women’ will be limited in order to subdue their grievability.

The importance of “being grievable” plays a role in the realization process because grief uncovers the condition “in which our relations with others hold us” (Butler 23). Butler argues that this form interconnectedness can create a political community which can serve as the foundation that enables the altering of historical narratives. Rewriting the ‘comfort women’ back into history can end the perpetual violence ‘comfort women’ continue to face. This political community, based on shared vulnerability, also seeks to hold the Japanese government accountable, and demand for a full apology. A full apology is significant because it enables the undoing of the derealization of ‘comfort women’ by exposing the vulnerability of their perpetrators. Butler argues that the denial of

vulnerability “can fuel the instruments of war” (29), and so by exposing the vulnerability of the Japanese government through a full apology, their fuel is rendered inutile. When a full apology is given, power and agency will be handed back to ‘comfort women’. This is the very condition in which ‘comfort women’ will no longer be subject to perpetual violence and their lives will become grievable.

The realization process for ‘comfort women’ is still ongoing. Conditions such as the democratizing of South Korea, as well as the advancement in technology and increased media coverage has enabled the creation of a political community as signified by Butler. However, this interconnectedness does not transcend all nation-states nor borders, complicating Butler’s notion. Discussions about ‘comfort women’ may bring forward ties implicating the ethical responsibility to acknowledge the history of ‘comfort women’, but this responsibility is not universally accepted or acknowledged. The Japanese government continues to avoid and dismiss the topic, highlighting the complexities attached to the process of realization and becoming grievable. Likewise, the government’s actions suggest that universal grievability and realization are difficult to achieve, which raises the question of whether those that have been derealized and deemed un-grievable can ever be fully re-realized. The full realization of ‘comfort women’ might only begin once the Japanese government can give a full apology, initiating a new process – healing.

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ENHANCING GLOBAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE THROUGH REFLECTING ON CONCEPTS OF SECURITY AND CARE IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Arts & Science 3A06: Literature

Authors' Note: This essay was initially prepared on April 09, 2020, and reflects the emotions and knowledge of that time period. Though our understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic and its actual effects on society have since advanced significantly, this essay has not been updated in order to preserve the integrity of the initial reflection and offer an opportunity to revisit these thoughts and ideas.

In March of 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has brought the world to its knees. What was mistaken for a 'bad flu season' in early January soon became an unprecedented global crisis. In times like these, people display a diverse array of reactions. Some show the egocentric side of humanity, hoarding essential supplies like toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and masks while vulnerable populations and health care workers are left to deal with shortages (Katawazi; Robinson). Others produce heartwarming stories by starting "caremongering" trends and banding together to "Conquer COVID-19," demonstrating the resilience of humanity in the face of a crisis (Moore; The Canadian Press, "Ryan Reynolds Supplies"). Both responses are entirely understandable and reflect profound societal concepts of security and care; these concepts are deeply nuanced and resist simplistic, prescriptive definitions.

To further interrogate ideas of security and care, we need only look to literature, which has long served as a helpful mirror to reflect upon human behaviour and society. Barbara Gowdy's "Disneyland" from her book *Falling Angels*, displays the false sense of security that comes with protecting an individual while the community remains at risk; Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" demonstrates that an individual's needs extend beyond receiving physical care to encompass social connectivity; and *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison show the power of community-based models of care. In this essay, we will use these texts to examine societal notions of security and care in sequence while focusing on the relationship between the individual and the community. Interspersed through this examination will be a discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic as a model for society's relationship with these concepts. Finally, we will comment on the ways in which our response to emergencies might be enriched by an emphasis on community security and care going forward.

The story of "Disneyland" showcases a Cold War era nuclear family in suburban Ontario dealing with circumstances far out of their control. Faced with the imagined threat of an impending Russian nuclear bombing, the family in "Disneyland" immediately jumps to secure themselves. The father sends for a pamphlet titled "Pioneers of

Self-Defence” and gets to work “as soon as the ground [is] soft enough” (Gowdy 53). The apparent solution to the nuclear threat is a fallout bunker, stocked with two weeks’ worth of supplies. It is built to the exact instructions of the pamphlet, including canary yellow walls intended to “add a note of cheerfulness” (54), and a now-obsolete hopscotch court. Even the supplies they buy include items—like a bow and arrow—that are likely entirely useless to their survival. The blind faith with which the family acts is telling of their insecurity, as the “notoriety and security of being the safest...in the subdivision” (54) is only achieved through their mechanical and unquestioning belief in the pamphlet. Yet, this supposed security is a façade. The family’s safety is neither guaranteed by the underground bunker nor the canary yellow walls, and the remainder of the story is a testament to that fact. Following the father’s inane regime, the family quickly deteriorates. Prior to the lockdown, the girls are terrorized by their father’s drills. Once in the shelter, they spend the entire period “drunk” (64), sick, and constantly at odds with each other. The psychological trauma clearly persists long after the two weeks they spend in the bunker, given that they rename their stay there as the time “[they] almost died” (64). By buying into the Cold War ideology, the family creates such an extreme threat in their minds that it justifies any measures to protect themselves. What began as a well-intentioned effort to remain safe ends up becoming an entrapment that is more threatening to their lives than the Cold War itself. The family’s actions also provoke broader questions about what constitutes security at all. The family in “Disneyland” has been led to believe that the militarized security of individuals is the only solution;

since the bunker has limited space and is separated from the rest of the community, the family must “leave [their] friends to die” (54) and focus on protecting themselves. However, the fallout shelter could only ever provide temporary safety in the event of nuclear winter. If the rest of the community were to be destroyed by a nuclear attack, there would be little for the family to return to. Survival in a decimated, dystopian world would prove challenging, if not impossible, without the support and strength of a united community. Ultimately, the family lacks a sense of shared security, not realizing that larger efforts to stop the war are necessary to yield lasting safety. In such circumstances, no individual is safe until their community is safe.

Contemporary events as recent as March 2020 were not so different from those portrayed in “Disneyland.” When federal Health Minister Patty Hadju first announced that people should consider stocking up on food and medicine “in case” of a COVID-19 outbreak, pandemonium ensued (The Canadian Press, “Stockpiling for COVID”). Grocery stores and Costcos were overrun by panicked shoppers buying as much food and toilet paper as they could carry. As the Canadian case count grew and provinces closed schools and non-essential businesses, anxious citizens and profiteers stockpiled surgical masks, N95s, gloves, and hand sanitizer against recommendations (Robinson). While most of these people were not acting out of malice—they were simply acting in the best interests of their families’ safety—others saw the pandemic as an opportunity for personal enrichment. Regardless of intent, the cumulative effect of self-interested thinking was the deprivation of the greater community. In the end, much like the family’s actions in “Disneyland,”

these individualistic bids for security brought neither families nor profiteers any closer to achieving true security. In the process of enriching themselves, they had pillaged and depleted their communities' resources. As a result of the rush to stock up, vulnerable groups (e.g. those with underlying conditions) stayed away from grocery stores for fear of interacting with crowds, and in many cases left empty-handed when essentials were sold out (Katawazi). The hoarding of medical supplies had far more insidious effects. As stores sold out of masks, healthcare workers faced a sudden shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) (Robinson). Hence, hoarders made it even more difficult for the healthcare system to care for COVID-19 patients as these workers now faced a greater risk of contracting the disease and spreading it to patients and colleagues. As of early April, many hospitals were tragically running short-staffed as health care workers account for almost 10% of Ontario's total cases (Goodfield). These events show striking parallels to those of "Disneyland," particularly the misunderstanding that personal safety can be achieved without community safety. This is especially dangerous in the context of a pandemic, as lockdown and physical distancing measures can only be loosened once transmission among the population has slowed: individual safety is achieved by securing the community. Consequently, we must adjust our understanding of security to move past the individual. This and future crises will require humanity to come together to find a solution, and a sense of shared security will move us in that direction.

Reevaluating notions of security also requires further examination of how we care for individuals, and for each other. "The Metamorphosis," for example, reveals that

individual care must extend far beyond one's physical needs. When salesman Gregor Samsa wakes up one day to find himself mysteriously transformed into a "gigantic insect" (Kafka, 1), his family is shocked and horrified. To their credit, however, the Samsa family never stops trying to fulfill Gregor's basic needs as they try to help him become comfortable with his new living conditions. His sister, Grete, even goes so far as to bring him a "selection of food" (20) from which he can choose what he likes. Yet as the story progresses, Grete loses her patience and "no longer [thinks]" to bring him what he prefers. While she still pushes "any food that [is] available" (39) into his room, her indifference presents a far cry from her previous empathy for Gregor's plight. His family increasingly ignores him, even using his room for storage (41). Conversely, Gregor shows the "utmost consideration" (20) for his family, but constantly seeks their attention. Desperate to escape his isolation, he "press[es] his whole body against [the door]" (22) just to hear his family converse in adjoining rooms; he yearns to "thank [Grete]" (26) for her ministrations and wants to "see his mother" (28). Yet, these desires are often met with disgust and violence, thereby contributing to Gregor's despondence. Faced with isolation, Gregor becomes depressed and is "eating hardly anything" by the end. Eventually, he dies of starvation and neglect (41). While Gregor's physical needs are 'cared' for, the dereliction of his social and familial needs ultimately causes his demise.

It is clear that caring for an individual involves more than just physical care. This is also true of the COVID-19 pandemic. While measures like physical distancing can guard against infection, they can also have

harmful consequences on mental health and wellbeing. As we settle into this extended period of self-isolation, many individuals may develop feelings of anxiety and depression, experience substance abuse relapses, or struggle with exacerbations of underlying health conditions (Fiorillo and Gorwood 2). The elderly are particularly at risk, and in the early stages of the pandemic, were advised to stay home at all costs due to their increased susceptibility to the disease (Miller). Even after the virus has been subdued, it will be crucial for psychiatrists and mental health professionals to assist in treating the many conditions that may arise secondary to the trauma of experiencing this pandemic (Fiorillo and Gorwood 3). Evidently, COVID-19 is not simply a direct physiologic threat, and physical distancing alone is not a complete solution. People have social and familial needs that need to be attended to lest they succumb, as Gregor did, to negligent care.

While *The Metamorphosis* serves as a counter-example of compassionate individual care, both *Obasan* and *Beloved* offer excellent models of community-based care that we can learn from and adapt to our current circumstances. *Obasan* is a story chronicling the experiences of Naomi Nakane and her family as they live through the Japanese-Canadian internment camps of World War II. Throughout the novel, Naomi's family is able to survive the internment period in part because they are resolved to "stay together wherever [they] go" (Kogawa 92). When they are sent to live in the town of Slocan in rural British Columbia, the pastor Nakayama-sensei attempts to rally Naomi's family, saying "by helping each other... they might survive" (105). From offering a "white flannel undershirt" (98) as a diaper

to caring for the "invalid" (107) Nomura-obasan, members of the Japanese-Canadian community understand that they must support each other through hardship. As a result, Slocan "flourishes" (142) as the old ghost town is brought to life by its new inhabitants. For Naomi and her family, community is the "essence of life" that keeps them going, and its destruction means the "destruction of life" (166). In isolation, these individual actions offer but a moment's respite from the challenges the Japanese-Canadians face; however, once strung together, these moments help tie the community together and offer support to each other when it is needed. *Beloved* tells the story of a freed slave, Sethe, and her daughter, Denver, who are haunted by the disruptive spirit of Sethe's dead baby girl, Beloved. When Sethe and Beloved become "locked in a love that wore everybody out" (Morrison 286), Denver is forced to step outside of their home and ask the community for help (288). When Denver asks her neighbours if they "[have] a little extra" (292), the community comes together to provide food and support to Sethe's family. Unlike Gregor's case, the food is provided electively, with instructions to return the vessels. Not only does this reciprocal exchange provide nourishment, but it also allows Denver to step into the community, interact with the others, and grow into her own as she provides a soft "thank you" (294) for their kindness.

COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders posed a similar problem: many individuals were separated from their communities and became isolated without an in-person space for social interaction. Nevertheless, humans are also remarkably resilient and resourceful, and many have found ways to remain connected in spite of the physical distance.

Technology like virtual conferencing has allowed families to organize worldwide calls to check-in with each other and connect from a distance (Miller). Across the world, communities have also come together to support each other. Canadians in particular have gone out of their way to help others, and stories of ‘caremongering’ are common in every province. For example, students have stepped forward to help healthcare workers with childcare, volunteers have started grocery delivery services, and celebrities have backed grassroots campaigns to donate medical supplies (Moore; The Canadian Press, “Ryan Reynolds Supplies”). Overall, it is vital that our definition of care adapts to involve social needs and community support going forward, as each of these factors is essential to overcoming the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gregor’s story demonstrates the worst-case scenario of what could happen if we choose to ignore this truth.

The necessity for communal cooperation with respect to our capacity to care for others is a final lesson that can be learned from *Beloved*. At the end of the novel, members of the Cincinnati black community feel that they must get together in order to free Sethe from the ghost of Beloved. They realize that Beloved is an “invasion into [their] world” (302) and represents the lingering collective trauma of slavery that continues to haunt the community. The women of the community gather to raise their voices and lay Beloved to rest. When they join together in a “wave of sound” (308), Sethe is “[baptized] in its wash” (308) and Beloved “[disappears]” (310) shortly after. Together, the women “[forget] her like a bad dream” (323), and only in confronting their collective past do they heal as a community. This scene can be interpreted as a metaphor

that represents the global response to COVID-19. When COVID-19 first appeared and began to spread in China, the world remained largely immobile. It was only when it continued to spread outwards from China that many nations suddenly sprang into action and began creating COVID-19 policies and sending supplies where they were needed (Yeung et al.). However, it is widely recognized that if the world had worked together to create a quick and coordinated effort in the early weeks of this crisis, the ensuing catastrophic events could have been avoided. Like the women in *Beloved*, the world could have benefited from realizing that COVID-19, much like *Beloved*, is not simply a problem for China or Sethe to deal with. By having empathy for the plight of others and coming together swiftly to tackle the issue, we have the power to solve it quickly and alleviate unnecessary pain and suffering.

Literary works often provide an excellent lens through which we can reflect upon the world, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. In times of emergency, we often fall back on instinctual values that drive behavioral patterns and decision-making. As such, it is vital that these values, which include concepts of security and care, motivate actions that protect the interests of the community at large. The textual examples from “Disneyland,” *The Metamorphosis*, *Obasan*, and *Beloved* provide a wealth of knowledge from which we can adapt and expand our definitions of security and care. In particular, true security and care integrate the social needs of both individuals and communities while guaranteeing personal wellbeing through the safety of the community. The global response to COVID-19 has not been perfect by any means, but as time goes on, we are reflecting

upon our mistakes and correcting course for the future. It is our hope that as we continue to deal with the subsequent waves of infection and the aftermath, we keep these lessons in mind and let them guide our policies and actions to best protect our community.

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