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Where Do Intersex Fit in Sports?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines reasons why sex segregation exists in sports competition and tries to find a place for an intersex individual to compete within the current categories. An intersexual typically has reproductive organs and genes that combine both a male and female sex. Their sex is brought into question during sports competition and leads to unwelcome evaluations and examinations. An intersexual is born as an intersexual, yet society, sports included has not yet made a place for them.

KEYWORDS

Intersex, Sports, Sex Testing, Segregation, Athletics

INTRODUCTION

From the intersex perspective, a group of people look forward to the day when signs on front lawns say, "It's a Baby!" instead of, "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" This idea from the film *InterSexion* perfectly represents a shift in attitude among some toward a different and more expansive view of sex and gender. Such a shift also needs to extend to sports so that an intersex individual can look forward to the day when sport categories are labeled by skill or ability instead of by gender. Unfortunately, as sports currently are practiced, some are accused of hiding their sex to compete unfairly as women, while others are subjected to humiliating genital examinations and hormone testing that may or may not be the basis for their advanced athletic abilities. Since intersex people have bodies within natural variations, they deserve a place in competitive sports and to achieve this, sports divisions by sex must change.

SEX SEGREGATION IN SPORTS

First, we look at why this space does not exist and the reasons for sex segregation in sports. We see sports divided into sex, age and skill level categories. This occurs for many reasons including safety, fairness and enjoyability. Some of these reasons are valuable. For example, in bodybuilding, athletes are separated into categories based on age. This is due to the body's natural aging process and to promote fairness within the competition. Athletes may also find sport more enjoyable to compete with others of similar skill levels as opposed to competing against someone who is a beginner. This enjoyability is also felt by spectators when watching a healthy competition. These categories also improve safety, for example, trainers "would not pair a heavyweight Olympic boxer with a novice lightweight because the situation creates the potential of significant injury" (Women's Sports Foundation 2018). However, sex segregation, also promotes inequality. Women are not permitted to compete against men due to stereotypes such as men are naturally stronger and faster than women. But this is not always true. Some women can compete in some sports equally with some men, such as running, swimming and skiing. However, most men have higher levels of natural testosterone which creates bigger, stronger muscles, but does not elevate skill level. Moreover, we also need to be mindful of the ways in which the winners of each category are viewed. This often involves an attitude that the men's winner

is the true, overall winner while the women's competition winner is somehow secondary.

Sex segregation in sports does have some benefits such as it, "allows many girls and women a real shot at play in sports in which they otherwise could not compete" (Dreger 2010, 22), but regardless, right or wrong, sports competition has separate categories which allows more women to play sports, earn scholarships, enjoy sport for itself and be role models for younger girls. The intersex person, however, does not fit neatly into either one of these biological sex categories.

Intersex

The term intersex has replaced the unpopular terms, hermaphrodite and Disorder of Sexual Development, or DSD. Intersexuals are not hermaphrodites in that they do not have both sets of genitalia and also an intersexual does not have a disorder as their body functions properly; they just sometimes look different from what we typically see through our binary sex and gender goggles. Intersexuals are distinct from transsexuals in that the variants in genitalia and chromosomes are what make them distinct. While a transsexual may also be an intersexual, I will concentrate on the intersex athlete who may or may not know they are intersexual, not the transgender athlete who is in pursuit of transitioning from one sex to another.

Our discussion will also be limited to athletic competition after puberty, as this is typically when hormone surges cause a greater distinction between someone who looks more feminine or more masculine, but this also varies according to perception. Unfortunately, for athletes who use their bodies as the tool for competition, sex identity is found in the body. Therefore, if we continue to keep sex segregated sports, some type of sex inspection will be the determining factor of where to place individual athletes (Davis 2017, 113), but why should anyone be subject to sex testing?

Sex Testing

Sex testing by the 1991 International Olympic Committee, IOC, "was only to ensure that men did not masquerade as women" (Gandert, et al. 2013, III D). In 1999, this compulsory testing ended and was only conducted if an athlete's sex was suspicious. This sex testing was recommended on looks alone, which feeds into gender stereotypes, but even the National Collegiate Athletic Association,

NCAA says, "there is a great deal of natural variation in physical size and ability among non-transgender women and men" (NCAA 2011, 7). Plus, this sex testing was only performed on females, not males, and the NCAA adds, "sex verification tests have been misused to humiliate and unfairly exclude women with intersex conditions" (NCAA 2011, 8). Some of these sex tests included nude parades, genitalia scrutiny, genetic testing from scraping cells off the inner cheek and the SRY blood test which was to detect testicles, (Gandert, et al. 2013, IV A-C) but, again this does not help an intersex athlete who is a woman with testicles. It would only prevent her from competition. In 2011, testosterone levels were verified to determine if a woman was really a woman, but we understand how this does not work for an intersex individual who is naturally producing high or low levels of testosterone and we still have not found a place for an intersex to compete.

Some sports organizations such as the International Association of Athletics Federation, IAAF, which governs the entire sport of track and field including the World University Games and the Olympics, said that once an intersex athlete has been identified, they should be disqualified completely from sports competition until their hormone levels have been regulated. One reason for this is doubt surrounding one's intentions for knowingly competing in sports with a hormonal advantage. In contrast, once a woman was verified to be a woman, she was given a certificate that stated her femininity which she was to bring to every sports competition to avoid gender questioning. This happened to Maria Martinez-Patino, a Spanish hurdler. Raised as a girl, complete with a vagina and stereotypically female breasts, Maria, her family and her community believed she was a girl. In 1985, at the World University Games, her gender was scrutinized, she failed to bring her certificate, and she was banned from competing. Later, Maria discovered she has an XY chromosome, which genetically makes her male (Gandert, et al. 2013, III, B, 1, c), and since it was determined she was not being fraudulent, she was reinstated to compete in the Olympics in 1988. Another woman, Caster Semenya, was banned by the IAAF in 2009 because her sex was also questioned (Mitra 2014, 387). Many women ask whether every female athlete's gender will be questioned if she does well in athletics, as if a woman could not possibly be born with a body that is strong, powerful, fast and flexible and is trying to get away with something. Payoshni Mitra, in the Routledge Handbook of Sport, Gender and Sexuality, points out this controversy when she says that most athletic organizations do not look at "the possible competitive advantage gained due to

height or longer upper body or limbs” (Mitra 2014, 385), or exclude women with height advantages from playing basketball, for example, but for some reason, the natural production of higher than average testosterone in someone considered by most to be a woman threatens overall athletic competition, and needs to be regulated.

Intersexual females have not asked for excess testosterone or hidden testicles, the same way in which men have not asked for their natural testosterone level to be what it is. However, when men try to inject additional testosterone, they are disqualified from competition too, like the cyclist Lance Armstrong. In addition, the IAAF and the IOC will allow women with high testosterone levels to compete as women once they have lowered their levels using medications (Mitra 2014, 390). The IAAF in April 2018 declared this to be below 5 nanomoles per liter for a minimum of six months (IAAF 2018). This policy seems to discriminate against women who are born with conditions such as congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) and androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS) which causes them to look like women but produce hormones like men. Plus, when one changes their hormone levels, whether increasing or decreasing testosterone, this change in levels also changes the way the athlete participates in sport and may either enhance or remove a competitive edge.

Self-Identify

If we do not disqualify female athletes who have a testosterone advantage, we may still be creating an uneven playing field. Other female athletes who have trained equally long and hard may feel unable to compete with these stronger women, but that is part of the nature of sport. Some athletes will naturally be stronger and faster than others and hormone levels do not determine the outcome. Many athletes accept natural advantages and disadvantages in the true spirit of competition. For instance, according to middle-distance runner and three-time Australian Olympian Sarah Jamieson, “if you’re born with more testosterone than the person next to you in the female category, in a way it’s good luck to you” (Dawson 2018). So, maybe this is where an intersexual fits: If she is born labeled female, raised female, and competes as a female, she should be allowed to stay in her sex-regulated category.

Hormone Levels

However, for females, intersex or not, competing as females, if their sex is questioned, they are subject to hormonal testing, according to the IOC's documents from their 2015 transgender and intersex meeting (IOC 2015). Although the IOC has also included a provision stating that if a woman is found unable to compete as a woman, she can compete as a man, this can create a lot of unwanted stigma and judgement for an athlete who just wants to compete in her favorite sport. In addition, we still have not found a place for the intersexual who may not identify as male or female. While most of the articles and information focus on female athletes who have added testosterone genetics, we can also consider an intersex male athlete who wants to compete but may not be able to hold his own against men due to his reduction in testosterone production. According to a study of six hundred and fifty Olympians, "six percent of the men have testosterone in the female range" (Mitra 2014, 391). We also see five percent of women who have higher testosterone levels within the male normal range.

Another possible solution to our intersex question is to have multiple competition categories that we do not fix on gender, but solely use testosterone levels. Similar to the way boxers and wrestlers are entered into a category based on weight, we may have men and women with high levels in one category and men and women in middle or lower levels of competition. Therefore, if an intersex male wanted to compete but found it a struggle to compete against natural testosterone producing men, he would also find a category in which competition would be based on skill, training and other genetic factors, not simply testosterone production. Co-ed categories are not farfetched, and we already have them in two sports: sailing and equestrian events. We also see men and women training together for sports such as martial arts, snowboarding, skiing and track and field and competing together in sports such as figure skating and tennis. However, the NCAA also has something to say about this idea. If a male competes on a female team, the team is labeled a "mixed team" and is only eligible for men's NCAA championship. If a woman competes on a male team, the team is also eligible for men's NCAA championship (NCAA 2011, 12). In other words, if a single male is added to any team, the entire team is only worthy of competing against men. Where would the acknowledgement of an intersex athlete fit in? Probably the same- the team could only compete against male teams. Plus, while testosterone

can provide strength advantages, it also should not be the end-all, be-all of where an athlete fits into sports categories. Also, since the testing is based off a male hormone, we continue to add to sex-segregation and inequality. There has to be a better way than genitalia examinations and testosterone testing to determine where an intersex athlete fits into competitions.

Chromosomes

A third solution is to create a category solely for the intersexual who does not believe themselves to be female or male, but an intersexual. This requires moving from differences in appearances and hormonal blood testing to testing at the chromosomal level. A woman may find she has an XY chromosome or a man may find he has an XXY chromosome. This knowledge does more than change a sports category. It can change the possibility of someone having biological children and many athletes are unprepared for the emotional results of this testing. Once identified, however, many intersexuals do not want to be seen as "different", and in addition, they want to compete with everyone else not just a limited group. Since one in two thousand people are born intersexual, the competition might be very slim making an intersexual's accomplishments feel smaller than they deserve to feel. Moreover, when an athlete has been labeled "intersex", they are subject to belittling and bullying. In the case of Santhi Soundarajan, who did not pass her sex test in 2006 at the Asian Games, the media and her country turned against her (Mitra 2014, 385). If this type of response happens with athletes who are hailed as leaders in their country, a high school or college athlete will not want to admit that they are an intersexual for fear of being bullied on and off the field.

Functional Ability

A fourth solution looks to the Paralympics for an example and this is the one I am leaning toward as it does not use appearance, hormones or genetic testing. The Paralympics uses functional ability to classify its athletes since competitors have various strengths and limitations. The Paralympics has developed, "The Athletics Classification Project" which is, "a multi-year project that was undertaken to establish a new system of classification entirely based on the functional capabilities of athletes" (Gandert, et al. 2013, V B). What the Paralympics understands, then, is that each person's unique abilities and limitations contribute to their performance. If we could shift our viewpoint and use functional ability, which could include

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looking at variations in height, muscle fiber type and oxygen conversion, we may be able to allow for a more inclusive arena for the intersex athlete. Unfortunately, as open as the Paralympics is to variations, it still uses sex-segregation, so may not be an ideal solution, but could provide a model for how to eliminate sex testing.

CONCLUSION

One of the values of sport is that it is fair. We may not always like the outcomes, but the rules try to keep the play fair. An intersexual is not being treated fairly in this arena. They are subjected to genitalia scrutiny, invasive testing and often public ridicule for the way they were born. Unfortunately, finding a fair solution as to where an intersex fits in competition is not easy. Some suggest self-identifying and that athletes should be able to compete in either category they like, but this does not open our binary society's eyes to a more inclusive view of the intersexual. Instead, we are forcing them to choose how they want to fit into our world. Hopefully, the more we discuss the intersexual and their specific issues the more we will all have good sportsmanship and accept people for their strengths and limitations, not their genitalia.

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The Pain-Suffering Dilemma

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BIOGRAPHY

Natalie Hardy is a junior at Augustana College majoring in neuroscience, biology, and philosophy. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in philosophy with a focus in ethics and hopes to become a medical ethicist. Much of her work is inspired by her Armenian roots and her involvement in the Armenian community.

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ABSTRACT

In a world offering inexhaustible opportunities and shared-decision making, individuals continue to face feelings of frustration, anxiety, and depression. Why, amidst so many choices, do countless people suffer? This paper examines the intricate relationship between pain and suffering through philosophical, medical, and cross-cultural lenses. Although suffering might seem inevitable when considering the span of one's life, I argue that it can be avoided. Examination of what I call the pain-suffering dilemma and "sufferer's trap" seek to show that suffering need not arise from pain. But if this finding is true, what follows? Intriguing questions arise regarding purpose as well as responsibility, and perhaps we gain the potential to live more fulfilling lives as a result.

KEYWORDS

Pain, Suffering, Life, Dilemma

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Man is not only that which he conceives himself to be, but that which he wills himself to be, and since he conceives of himself only after he exists, and wills himself to be after being thrown into existence, man is nothing other than what he makes of himself.

– Jean Paul Sartre

Overview

Imagine driving a car that is presented with three paths, each leading down a different road. With a firm grip of the wheel and a breath of confidence, you ride with the wind and drive down the first. Take a moment to consider this thought scenario in relation to the nature of human life; we are constantly presented with options that force us to become the “drivers” of our lives. As Sartre points out, existence precedes essence, but it is the decisions we make that make us. You have made decisions to pursue, abandon, or explore certain things, whether it was reaching for a toy that made you giggle as a child or leaving a company you despised working for as an adult. Whether or not we have free will in such decisions will be discussed later in greater detail. But the question at hand is why, in a world offering so many paths for us to explore, do countless people suffer? In this paper, I discuss a human’s relationship with, and perception of, suffering. This topic is important philosophically, cross-culturally, and medicinally because pain is everywhere, yet suffering is not. If we look at historical changes in medicine, humans once embraced a Covenantal Model (a Biblical approach where doctors were viewed as Gods) but are quickly moving towards a Samaritan Model (an approach where doctors and patients make decisions together). This is intriguing; if medicine is shifting towards shared decision making between doctor and patient, then why are more individuals suffering? Shouldn’t autonomy lead to higher life satisfaction? Understanding the implications of these historical changes might shed light on what it is like to be a “sufferer” and why so many people reach that point. From a very general perspective, this topic relates to the larger issues of depression, unhappiness, and frustration that cloud many people’s lives. If we can comprehend how suffering relates to our perception of the world, then maybe we can help those living in darkness.

Position

Let us begin by examining pain and suffering at the surface level. For the purposes of the presented argument, "pain" implies an uncomfortable physical feeling arising from bodily malfunctions and can also be psychological (consider chemical imbalances in the brain), whereas suffering is more complex and has differences in kind. It is important to note that suffering comes in many forms, but such differences will be discussed later in greater detail. For now, consider suffering as being grounded in phenomenological associations dependent on one's perception of pain. In some circumstances, it need not arise at all. So, if I break my leg, I will undoubtedly feel pain (unless I have congenital analgesia), but suffering? That is up to me. I determine what a painful fracture leads to. Understandably, looking at the span of life may make suffering seem inevitable; however, scientific studies and the subjective nature of cross-cultural experiences show us that unlike pain, it can be avoided. I will first begin by arguing specifically why suffering is not inevitable and will transition to a discussion of what follows if this argument is true. One important question arises: would our treatment of the sick change if we knew that their suffering could be avoided? It might, but I am not arguing that suffering is illegitimate or that we should look down on those with serious conditions. Rather, the intent is to show (through philosophical, cultural, and medicinal implications) that we need not doom ourselves as "sufferers" the moment discomfort hits--perhaps there are ways we can adapt and embrace more authentic ways of being. Examining the subjective nature of experience along with linguistic and ethnographic patterns will hopefully shed light onto this conversation.

Suffering is Not Inevitable

3.1. Degrees of Control

As mentioned, pain arises from bodily dysfunctions like a broken leg or an open wound. Suffering, on the other hand, comes from one's perception of pain and need not follow or arise at all. If suffering lies solely in our hands yet pain does not, we must address the degree of control that individuals have over each phenomenon. A person can be exceptionally careful when walking or running to avoid injuries, but what about diseases that are molecular in nature, such as cancer? The fields of biology, physiology, and genetics defend the notion that

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pain cannot be avoided even in the most cautious of individuals. We can thank what geneticists call mutations, or changes in our DNA nucleotide sequence, for surfacing this air of unpredictable mystery to the human body. Induced mutations are those in which an environmental factor (UV light, for example) lead to a change in DNA. Cellular abnormalities that arise a bit more unpredictably are known as spontaneous mutations. Although they are intriguing and beautifully complex, the specific mechanisms of these alterations are not important for the matter at hand. Rather, we should focus our attention more on their unavoidable essence. The following argument depicts how these random processes can lead to bodily pain that is out of our control:

(1) If certain pains are not capable of being controlled due largely in part to their spontaneous biological nature (ex: cancer), then certain pains are inevitable.

(2) Certain pains are not capable of being controlled due largely in part to their spontaneous biological nature (ex: cancer).

So, Certain pains are inevitable.

If certain pains are inevitable, then what follows? How does this relate to suffering? The following argument introduces the notion that suffering is in the hands (or brain, rather) of the afflicted individual:

(1) If suffering depends on how the afflicted person interprets pain, then suffering is not inevitable.

(2) Suffering depends on how the afflicted person interprets pain.

So, Suffering is not inevitable.

Thus, we can begin to acknowledge that pain is unavoidable, but suffering is not. Let us now examine the nature of interpretations and how they affect our perception of suffering.

3.2. The Importance of the Subjective Nature of Experience

To understand how perceptions of pain vary from person to person, imagine Sarilda, a middle-aged woman who lives a unique lifestyle. Sarilda is the “adventurer” type, constantly travelling, trying exotic foods, experiencing new cultures, and embracing failure along the way. Friedrich Nietzsche might call this person a “free spirit,” as she possesses, “...that superfluity which grants to the free spirit the dangerous privilege of living experimentally and of being allowed to offer itself to adventure...” (Oaklander 1996, 105). She sees life in a *sui generis* manner, that is, uniquely and aesthetically, and appreciates beauty in things that might seem strange to others. For example, picture Sarilda encountering a dead, bloody deer on the side of the road. She would smile and think, “Natural selection must be working beautifully in harmony with nature tonight,” instead of feeling disgusted and deeming the animal as roadkill. Michael Gazzaniga would agree that Sarilda is at an advantage. Her milieu of experiences creates options that lengthen the radius of her causally deterministic life. We can think of this neurophilosophical process like fishing from a pond; an ocean is to its robust wildlife as a brain is to its many mental states. The more fish (or mental states) there are, the harder it is to predict what might be caught (or chosen). This example is crafted to show that determinism can still hold true while being expanded by the subjective nature of experience. Even if actions A, B, and C are pre-determined, someone like Sarilda might have actions A, B, C, D, and E as options. She may not be the “driver” of these decisions but surely makes an important contribution by increasing the diversity of her mental states.

So, how does this free-spirited individual shed light on our discussion of the avoidable nature of suffering? We have already established that Sarilda will inevitably face some type of bodily discomfort during her lifetime. But having lived spontaneously, she would interpret the pain as just another twist in her life adventure, perhaps even finding it exhilarating. Whether she breaks a leg walking the Camino de Santiago or cuts her arm zip-lining, the pain does not become a nuisance but instead a memorable happening. The takeaway here is that opening ourselves to change, good or bad, helps us stop pain from progressing to suffering. I will refer to this procession from pain to suffering as the PSD (pain-suffering dilemma). It is like walking along a tightrope (pain) that sits above a sea of unhappiness (suffering), and our perceptions of pain determine how well we keep balanced. To give ourselves credit where credit is due, it is not easy to stay

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balanced. We must always be aware of our bodily sensations and perceptions of them. Thinking of the mind and body as dynamically interacting counterparts helps us to recognize that pain and suffering are interrelated; the body is not solely the “dealer of pain” and the mind is not solely the “interpreter.” If we let pain progress to suffering, the whole person is affected (both mind and body). In order to more clearly understand how perceptions of pain might lead to suffering, we will now transition to a discussion of the linguistic and ethnographical counterparts of subjective experiences. Investigating the role of language in the PSD will help defend the notion that suffering is not inevitable.

3.2.1. *Language*

A significant part of one’s phenomenological framework is language. You may have already heard the phrase “you are what you eat,” but it can also be argued that you are the language you speak. For example, children who are told that they can achieve anything will view society as an encouraging place with no bounds, whereas a child hearing, “You can never be a doctor” or “Women do not get PhDs” might think otherwise. The same ideology can be applied to suffering, especially here in America. When our friends, family members, and teachers speak of their aches and pains negatively, we begin to think similarly regarding our own nuisances. Interestingly enough, Americans have and use more words for pain than individuals in other countries, and we report the most pain. According to *The Atlantic*, 34.1% of Americans make such complaints, a shocking number in comparison to the Czech Republic’s mere 8.5% (Khazan 2017). What can we conclude about language based on these patterns? Well, it is evident that our environment plays an important role in shaping how we see the world. But the fact that language is so influential supports an objection to the presented argument. We might inherently be sufferers as we are submerged in a language of suffering. How can phenomenology and a posteriori implications be of any importance if *Befindlichkeit*, or, “...the state in which we are found...” is made of a language accentuating suffering (Heidegger 1962, 172)? How can we form our own opinions and manage the PSD if language is an intrinsic component to our thoughts? This objection is valid and should not be dismissed. Frantz Fanon provides valuable insight on this issue in his book *Black Skin White Masks*, stating, “A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language...Mastery of language affords remarkable power” (Fanon 1952, 9).

Suffering begins to seem inevitable if we must live, speak, and act in societies where certain languages are embedded.

Although it seems impossible to fight centuries of historical buildup, we should note that like a slab of iron, language is malleable. We are constantly learning new phrases, vocabulary, and semantics from surrounding stimuli. Mastery of language is no easy task, but try to remember Sarilda before losing hope in balancing pain and suffering. Remember, even though we live in a country where discomfort receives great attention, we can increase the diversity of our mental states by immersing ourselves in cultures that think otherwise. Travelling provides us with priceless opportunities to see society with a “fresh” pair of eyes; that is, ones that are not clouded by pain medications and doctor visits. Let us now transition to show how cross-cultural examples make suffering seem avoidable once more.

3.2.2. Ethnographic Implications

Ethnographic implications work hand in hand with language to form the subjective nature of experience. Although pain-management techniques around the world differ, we cannot blame America’s healthcare system for our woes. After all, we have, “the best-educated doctors, nurses, and medical technicians of any nation” according to T.R. Reid, who embarked on a mission to investigate differences in global medicine (Reid 2009, 28). What presents an interesting paradox is the fact that other countries utilize less than elite techniques yet suffer rarely. I believe that a phenomenological concept called humility is at stake here. It is important to clarify that for the purposes of this argument, humility does not mean demolishing one’s entire self-worth for others. Rather, it is recognizing that a humble attitude can help us manage the PSD and bring us closer to fruitful life. Many Americans find suffering to be inevitable because we are engrossed in a “me, myself, and I” culture--that is, the world is but a rat race. A heightened focus on ourselves makes it almost certain that the smallest of ailments turn into a soap opera. But cross-cultural examinations make realistic the notion of embracing a “we” culture in which we care about others just as much as ourselves (if not more). By becoming “other-focused,” our ailments start to seem minimal in relation to the lives of those around us. How might we shift towards this mentality, you ask? Countries like the Czech Republic have found the answer in an ethos calling for “a particular psychological positioning of oneself within the larger context of the universe...the understanding and experiencing of oneself...as a finite and

fallible being that is but a very small part of something much larger than oneself" (Caruso, Gregg, and Flanagan 2018, 273). This notion should bring hope to suffering individuals as we do not need to undergo major surgery or move to faraway places. Perhaps it takes nothing more than training the mind to think in terms of others which is a difficult yet achievable task.

To further demonstrate this point, imagine a person who has been trapped in a large, white box for 20 consecutive years. Margaret stares at the same white walls day in and day out, hears only the sound of her voice, and finds company in the shadows that fall from her body. Unlike Sarilda, Margaret naturally becomes an expert in recognizing her body's imperfections, noticing hairs that grow unevenly and even the rate at which they grow. The idea of suffering seems inevitable for someone like Margaret; she has nothing to focus her energy on except for her own grievances. She lives in a "me, myself, and I" world. Although this is a hypothetical example and you probably do not live in complete solidarity, it is meant to show that narrow-minded thinking makes the PSD tightrope walk unstable. The PSD becomes an overbearing struggle when we live with only ourselves as the nucleus of our thoughts, as every minute detail presents its own challenges. I do not believe this to be anyone's fate, though. Many people have nothing but bread for food and trees for shelter, yet by focusing on others, they live peacefully. In a cross-cultural examination, T.R. Reid states, "In rural regions of Africa, India, China, and S. America, hundreds of millions of people go their whole lives without ever seeing a doctor. They may have access, though, to a village healer who practices traditional medicine using home-brewed remedies that may or may not be effective against disease" (Reid 2009, 19). It is time for individuals to realize that suffering is not inevitable. If people living in extenuating circumstances can be content, we surely can work to "step outside the box."

3.2.3. *The "Sufferer's Trap"*

Let us now examine how our perception of suffering, as shaped by linguistic and ethnographic implications, can lead to what I call the "sufferer's trap." What image comes to mind when you think of someone being hospitalized? Perhaps you picture balloons, homemade cookies, and family members crowded around a neatly made bed. Having worked in a hospital for nearly two years, I assure you that this depiction is accurate. Many of my patients are flooded with gifts and visitors during their stay, and it is comforting to know that they are supported in times

of sickness. According to clinician Dr. Julia H. Rowland, "The presence of social support not only diminishes the physical distress of cancer, but may be important in modulating survival as well" (qtd. in Lerner 1996, 149). Feeling supported is undoubtedly important when facing unpredictable conditions or diseases.

In light of previous considerations, though, we must make distinctions between types of suffering. The suffering phenomenon is like a mosaic, and to be understood holistically, each piece (or kind of suffering) must be carefully analyzed. Let us call the first form of suffering S_1 and note that it is precisely the kind I deem avoidable. A person might begin with minor pain, become a sufferer, receive endless well-wishes, and enjoy the attention so much that a non-suffering version of him or herself becomes part of a distant past. The following diagram illustrates S_1 suffering in terms of the sufferer's trap:



Figure 1. The Sufferer's Trap

This feedback loop can be thought of like a well-oiled machine. Pain is the start button, suffering is the action performed, and reinforcements are the oil that

keep the cycle moving. Although friends and family are important in the healing process, a paradox naturally forms. On one hand, suffering is a phenomenon that seems to be truly undesirable, but on the other hand, the sympathy, gifts, and exceptions made for sufferers (consider school or work exemption notes) have such reinforcing effects that make suffering seem almost enticing. So, one objection to my argument might simply be, "So what? If suffering can be rewarding, what does it matter if it is not inevitable?"

This objection is valid but only for the purposes of the afflicted individual. Promoting suffering to increase pleasurable feelings and attention puts immense strain on the caretaker and creates a sort of "psychological disarray." In the absence of empirical evidence, we might rely on social conventions to shed light on this type of sufferer. Society disdains those with a reputation for S_1 suffering, especially when individuals with serious conditions require assistance. Consequently, caretakers might find themselves in a dilemma as shown through the doctrine of double effect. By showing compassion to the S_1 sufferer, we hope to alleviate their grievances and help in any way possible. But doing so unintentionally reinforces their behavior and entrenches them further in the sufferer's trap. A slippery slope thereby arises. Where do we draw the line and say, "Ok, this isn't suffering anymore...you are merely seeking attention?" It can be debated that no one but the sufferer can make such a statement. We can never know what it is like to be the afflicted person, so what right do we have in deeming their suffering as illegitimate and not inevitable? Individuals who give "tough love" and fail to condone suffering are viewed negatively in attempts to maintain their own PSD balance. These objections are certainly worth consideration, so I will proceed to address where we draw the line between different forms of suffering and what follows if suffering is not inevitable.

4. What Follows if Suffering is Not Inevitable?

Why should we care that suffering is not inevitable, and how might we use this knowledge to better the world? Specifically, how do implications differ for people who manage the PSD versus those who struggle a bit more? I hope to answer these imperative questions by examining how purpose and meaning relate to the PSD, while also suggesting realistic solutions for someone trying to overcome this dilemma.

4.1. Purpose: Hedonism vs. Eudaimonia

If suffering is truly avoidable, and I have argued that it is, then we must not see life as a free for all. Perhaps for some, "escaping" suffering means carousing around without social responsibility. Such individuals might frolic hedonistically and believe, "If I am not a sufferer, I might as well enjoy myself!" This thinking sounds fanciful, but if anything, people who have mastered the PSD are more obligated to live with purpose. Why not invest available energy in worthwhile pursuits? Let us once again refer to the free-spirited individual, Sarilda, that we have come to know so well. Imagine that Sarilda1 travels and lives spontaneously (as described earlier), however her intention in such adventures is not "other-focused." Rather, she seeks personal enjoyment and stories to boast about. She attends luxury resorts, spas, and restaurants during these expenditures and is specifically focused on indulgence. Now consider Sarilda2, a version of the same person who travels an identical number of miles as Sarilda1 but has vastly different aims. She still enjoys being abroad but volunteers in underprivileged African schools and homeless shelters in Sri Lanka. Sarilda2 adopts what ancient Greeks called Eudaimonia, a state of prosperity that can be described as pure yet purposeful happiness. This phenomenon is essential when considering the implications of living a life free of S_1 suffering. Not only does a Eudaimonistic life rejuvenate the mind and body, but it also helps individuals become increasingly aware of the world. The following argument accentuates the importance of this historically supported concept:

(1) If Eudaimonism betters society by making each individual person more focused on something outside of themselves, then individuals should live with Eudaimonia,

(2) Eudaimonism betters society by making each individual person more focused on something outside of themselves.

So, individuals should live with Eudaimonia.

Eudaimonia can be thought of like a complex puzzle; each piece (or person) is unique but belongs to a working whole. It is important to clarify that living a Eudaimonistic life does not mean living a life completely free of pleasure or self-serving intentions. Remember, if we fail to care for ourselves, we might lose footing

in the PSD. So, to clarify, this argument is intended to show that it is possible to live selflessly, happily, and purposefully. You might be wondering, "How is such a life possible?" Let us introspect this question as Martin Heidegger would, through the concept of one's authentic da-sein.

In a world filled with hedonistic living, we must strive to rekindle our instinctual search for authenticity. Da-sein, or one's being-in-the-world, depends on such instincts and is "driven to discover and disclose its embodied and embedded being due to some form of uncanniness" (Storl 2008, 311). Our bodies might be worldly objects thrown into existence, but the interplay between one's flesh and its being gives rise to truth. By keeping an open mind (like Sarilda), authenticity can prosper. We might think of this notion like a growing flower; a beautiful orchid (truth) grows simply from water and sunlight (our perceptions and instincts). A plant (or person) living in darkness (suffering) cannot discover the nature of his or her true da-sein. They will forever be clouded by a present-at-hand mentality, and so enters the importance of the PSD. One's decision to embark on the challenge means that they have broadened their state of mind, or *Befindlichkeit*, to encompass "what it means to be in a world at all" (Wheeler 2018). Sure, we can simply "be," but the nature of one's being is not inherently authentic. We must work to uncover our deeply-rooted instincts, and the universe will help us blossom in return.

4.2. Meaning & Practicality

If suffering is not inevitable, does it follow that all suffering must be avoided? I do not see this ideology to be true, as many people find meaning through hardship. We shall name redemptive suffering " S_2 " and note that it does not need to be avoided. Religion's sedative effect on the PSD is like an ocean's wave lapping onto shore—there may be external stimuli like pelicans (or beeping IV poles), but a ribbon of tranquility falls from believing in perplexing phenomenological concepts such as Christ. The validity of this notion is apparent in individuals who feel passionately connected to a higher power during tough times. Christians, for example, might believe, "At least my horrible suffering is bringing me closer to God. I will stay strong in my faith." We must remember that for many, "The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart" (Oaklander 1996, 369). Although S_2 suffering accounts for the faithful among us, I believe that two additional categories of "non-avoidable" suffering can be formed: one that

accounts for trauma (S_3) and another for guilt (S_4). Let us begin by addressing the former: people who have endured serious physical, emotional, or psychological traumas might be called S_3 sufferers. Note that this kind, like S_2 , need not be avoided. Consider the mindset of someone being brutally beaten: is it realistic to think that he or she will carry on without suffering? In this case, suffering serves as a natural response that no amount of will power can deflect. It is applicable to survivors of war, victims of rape, and even children being verbally or physically abused. The important thing to note is that S_3 differs from S_1 because it functions more like a platform, gently nurturing hope and meaning for those who need it most. There is still a need for a final category, though, as we have not yet addressed the concept of guilt (S_4). Individuals feeling blameworthy for committing a crime, speaking untruthfully, or even indulging in sweets are S_4 sufferers. Think back to a time you felt guilty—what thoughts ran through your head? Perhaps you reflected by thinking, “I should not have done ‘X’...” and forecasted to the future by saying, “I will not do ‘X’ again.” Unless a person is psychopathic and fails to have such contemplations, the interplay between past actions and future choices is crucial. S_4 suffering lets us feel the consequences of our choices, meaning wiser and more informed judgements are to come.

I have personally seen how suffering can bring meaning to people facing hardship. Several years ago, I worked with poverty-stricken children in Armenia, many of whom had no family. What is interesting, though, is that I do not remember seeing many sad faces. If anything, I was surprised by the uplifting energy that vibrated through the lavender mountains surrounding us. The kids’ lives were by no means perfect, yet their happiness was contagious, a dichotomy that nicely demonstrates Nietzsche’s *amor fati*, or the embrace of one’s fate. Understandably, the children begged to call their parents but quickly wiped their tears when friends called to play. If such young kids can live joyfully amidst serious challenges, then why can we not do the same as adults? Well, one objection to this question concerns practicality. You may be thinking that it is unreasonable to expect positivity in people with significant diseases like stage IV cancer, for example. And you are right. The key to *amor fati* is embracing one’s fate, not necessarily being content with it. So, a person who receives this diagnosis might decide to seize each day despite their unfortunate situation, a difficult yet admirable response Nietzsche would certainly applaud.

5. Overall Importance and Takeaways

In bringing my argument to a close, I find it important to broaden this discussion of practicality: Are we being down-to-earth in arguing that suffering is avoidable? After all, some people (monks, for example) dedicate their entire lives to finding inner peace, a sort of peace that emerges from a feather drifting down a stream: untouchable, independent, and glowing. How can we, as ordinary people, be successful in finding such genuine tranquility from the PSD? More importantly, how can the PSD make way for living both virtuously and teleologically? Let me respond by saying that we must first acknowledge the difficult nature of the tightrope walk. By arguing that the PSD is reasonable, I by no means intend to imply that it is easy. We may spend our whole lives trying to decipher its mysteries and cannot ask others for guidance, since the dilemma is phenomenologically unique per person. But should we simply give up because the task itself is not simplistic? Aristotle would agree that the answer lies not in surrendering but rather finding the means to live virtuously, for “what constitutes the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best, and the exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life” (Macintyre 2007, 149). We can differentiate such Aristotelian ideology from that of an athlete: whereas a runner might train for the sole purpose of improving speed and agility, a person embodying practical wisdom in the PSD does not have a specific “end” in mind. Rather, focus is geared towards the means that inherently produce what is good and necessary for the agent. So, a person who courageously faces the PSD will “run into” a brighter future in the limelight, arising much like a spandrel. Taking small steps is crucial in this process, though. We need not jump from living narrow-mindedly to non-compos mentis. “Small steps” include watching a new movie or trying a different food—these actions certainly count and are largely applicable, even for hospitalized patients. Thinking little by little is pragmatic and exactly what we should aim for in finding our true telos.

With the discovery that suffering is not inevitable comes immense responsibility. We must always be careful to treat sick individuals with dignity and provide the best of care. However, that is not to say that a line cannot be drawn between S_1 and $S_2/S_3/S_4$ suffering. If a person purposefully entrenches themselves in the sufferer’s trap, enjoys every minute of attention, and reaps endless rewards, we can surely note this, as mentioned, as a sort of “psychological disarray.” If we do not make this distinction, then the serious nature of suffering in victims or impoverished

people becomes unjustly disregarded. But, if we scoff at attention-seekers and say, "Wow, they must not be able to control their 'suffering,'" we once again find ourselves caught in the doctrine of double effect. In attempts to discern between "true" sufferers and attention seekers, we unintentionally form a shameful stigma that might lodge people further in the sufferer's trap. So, what should be done and what attitude should we, as the observer, hold? I argue that despite their inauthenticity, we should not look down S_1 sufferers. Doing so forms stereotypes (a spandrel in themselves) that are nearly impossible for a person to overpower. Such stigmas act like a rain cloud--no matter an individual's actions, behaviors, or attitudes, others' judgements trail closely behind. So, we must notice differences in suffering and help S_1 sufferers instead of placing ourselves on a pedestal above them. Let us not forget that a human life is to be cherished and respected, even if societal expectations clash with the mindset of the afflicted individual.

In light of such contemplations, you have probably realized that the PSD is no simple task. And you are right; its complexity helps sculpt authentic individuals who "recognize the incompleteness of their being, their freedom to determine what they are by selecting this or that kind of future and in doing so are aware of themselves as existing individuals" (Oaklander 1996, 156). We might be continuously faced with injustice, inequality, and unfairness, but the world starts to breed opportunity with an increased sense of self-understanding. The nature of one's authenticity comes in realizing intrinsic freedom; despite situations we are thrown into, their impact on our lives need not be unchangeable. Sisyphus is a leading example in such thinking, as he is "stronger than his rock" and encourages us to embark in the PSD challenge (Oaklander 1996, 368). Despite such complexities, this discussion is by no means geared solely for the eyes of philosophers, geneticists, or pain-management experts, as understanding the PSD will help every person who comes across it. Let us embrace resoluteness by realizing that this challenge is entirely in our hands: no book, man, or set of laws can be our end-all-be-all guide. The beauty of the struggle arises precisely out of this notion of resolve, though, that "we are free to choose a way of Being in the future that differs from what we were in the past" (Oaklander 1996, 158). I cannot help but wonder if a better feeling exists than one of empowerment in a world whose people have simply stopped trying. Perhaps we are looking far too much into complex theories when the solution to unhappiness lies in something close

compos mentis

to home. Once we realize that we are our own greatest resource in conquering the PSD, we can create a society whose people live authentically...and happily.

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The Harm of Existence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to defend the position of "antinatalism" which tries to show that coming into existence is always a serious harm for the person who is brought into existence, and that even what we might call the best lives are not worth starting. This is shown by an asymmetry proposed by David Benatar in which he compares pains and pleasures to their absence. I will refer to pains and pleasures as, "the good things in life," and "the bad things in life." By looking at this asymmetry we can come to the conclusion that there are no lives worth starting, and even the very best lives are plagued with an immeasurable amount of the "bad things in life." I will explore just how much badness existence contains and the positive illusions and biological safeguards we use to defend ourselves which prevent us from consciously recognizing this. I will object to the fact that we have any sort of obligation to produce happy people but we do have an obligation not to produce unhappy people, or put people into a potentially harmful and dangerous situation without their knowledge or consent. All these things lead me to the conclusion that bringing someone into existence is a terrible form of malevolence and an action that should not be taken by a moral person.

KEYWORDS

Antinatalism, Polyanna Principle, Existence, Utilitarianism

In this paper I will be supporting the position of anti-natalism, the belief that it is wrong to bring new sentient beings into existence. We ought not to be creating new sentient beings. I will be attempting to show that coming into existence is always a serious harm for the person who is brought into existence, and that even what we might call the best lives are not worth starting. By coming into existence, I am not talking about fetal viability, or moment of conception, what I mean by, "coming into existence" is when a being has an interest in continuing to exist, even if these interests might be considered small or primitive. Because of the serious harm that comes from bringing people into existence we should conclude that reproduction is immoral.

This argument goes against most people's deepest intuitions concerning life as a whole for three main reasons. One, that coming into existence does not constitute a harm at all, that it is always a good thing for the person who is being brought into existence. Some people might not share this intuition, though I suspect many people do. Even if people do not agree with this statement, I find that there are two other common intuitions people use to justify existence. The second is that coming into existence can be a harm, but the harm that accompanies existence is not of a high enough degree so that we would wish we never would have come into existence in the first place. Running parallel with this claim is a belief which I believe the majority of people share; that their lives are on average good, and that they are glad for having been brought into existence. Stemming from these deep-seated intuitions, those who believe in them will have strong reasons to deny the view that bringing people into existence is a morally culpable act.

First it must be shown that coming into existence can be a harm at all. David Benatar proposes an axiological asymmetry to show this (Benatar 1997). Imagine two possible states, state A in which a person exists and another, state B, which says that person never came into existence. By coming into existence, that person probably will experience pleasure, which by itself is a good thing. That person will also experience pain, which by itself is a bad thing. In short, the presence of pleasures is good, and the presence of pains are bad. How we would like to define these terms is unimportant. I am talking about pains and pleasures in the intrinsic sense and am unconcerned with the byproducts that each might create after the initial experience. The point of highlighting pains and pleasures in the asymmetry is helpful because these are tangible experiences and less likely to be

mischaracterized. However, pains and pleasures are not the only metric available for showing that coming into existence is a harm. We could easily replace pains and pleasures with satisfactions and disappointments, happiness and sadness, or knowledge and ignorance. It might be helpful for pains and pleasure to be used synonymously with “the good things in life” and “the bad things in life.” Regardless, it does not matter what binary we plug into the asymmetry, the conclusion will remain the same in all cases.

Now, compare this to another counterfactual state of the world where that person does not exist at all. Because of the absence of a specific person we must look at what the absence of pains and pleasures looks like. The absence of pain is good even if it is not good for a specific person, and the absence of pleasure is not bad unless that absence is a deprivation. Because there is no one who exists that could be deprived of any pleasures, the absence of pleasures is not bad. By comparing these two states we can see that the asymmetry favors state B, that of not having come into existence. There are no pains, and there are no deprived pleasures. By coming into existence, you most assuredly will encounter pains, or, “the bad things in life,” and most likely a very significant amount. On the other hand, you will likely experience certain pleasures, but these pleasures are paid for at the cost of a vast amount of harm. By not bringing people into existence we avoid all harms that would befall that possible person. Again, it is true that they will experience no pleasures, but that cannot be a mark against non-existence because there is no one to be deprived of these absent pleasures.

There might be some resistance to the idea that something could be good even if there is no one for whom it is good or that there is no one around who might be able to experience or recognize that good. It seems to me, however, that the property, or status, of something being “good” does not necessarily have to involve a person being there or recognizing that good. Many good things in life are not recognized, or not judged to be good by people. An error in judgement or an unrecognition of a certain good does not seem to negate the fact that it indeed might still be good.

A mistake people make when interpreting this argument is the distinction between a life worth starting and a life worth continuing. People will look at this argument and think I’m dismissing the power of pleasures too quickly, but the possibility of pleasures does not mean that we should bring people into existence just so they can experience those pleasures. If I say, “Jill would be better off

never having been born," people will quickly point out all the good things that her life contains and say that these are adequate reasons that her existing is a good thing. I admit that a life filled with the "good things in life" is the preferable scenario for someone who already exists and has a continued interest in existing, but that does not mean that Jill's life was worth starting just because she can take advantage of these pleasures. There are no lives that are worth starting, which is what the asymmetry attests to.

Some argue that we cannot compare the two states because we are comparing the life of someone who exists to non-existence, we are comparing the existence of A to nothing. In order for B to be preferable to A, A must make someone worse off than they otherwise would have been. But this does not seem to be necessarily true. A is simply bad, where B is not, as the asymmetry shows. A is bad for the person coming into existence when compared to the possible alternative of B.

Certainly, life cannot be reduced and compartmentalized to only pains and pleasures, as some might wish to argue. Life could contain a great deal of pain and still be rewarding or worthwhile in some way, and that perhaps this model of judgement is to hedonistic and misconstruing the bigger picture of existence. One might argue that pains and pleasures are too simplistic when we are making judgements about how bad existence is, there are things like knowledge, love, longevity, satisfaction, and communal contribution. These things are commonly thought of as good and might help swing the scales to the obverse conclusion that bringing someone into existence is a good, or at the very least is not immoral. I do not deny that once someone has come into existence these things can give us a sense of purpose, a reason to continue living, and give us a powerful impetus to resist the notion that existence is very bad. But, in all these categories I would argue that people are faring much worse than they actually believe. If we look at knowledge and imagine a spectrum where on one end of the spectrum is knowing everything, or being omniscient, and on the other end of that spectrum is knowing nothing, I would argue that we fall very close to the knowing nothing side of the spectrum. Similarly, we can also look at love. On one side of the love spectrum is being loved by everyone and opposite of that is being loved by no one. Again, we fall much closer to the side of being loved by no one. That is not to discredit the amount of love or knowledge that a person might have in their life, but it is important to recognize how little of these goods we have.

Many people might grant the conclusion that life does contain more pain, or bad things, and still hold to the belief that, though life does contain harm, it is not of a high enough magnitude to accept the conclusion that we should never reproduce. They will claim that, all things being equal, the good things far outweigh the bad things, or that the presence of the good things are enough to make the bad things worth it. I believe this is a miscalculation of how bad our lives really are, and this is partially due to certain biological safeguards that manifest themselves in the form of positive illusions, or self-serving biases which greatly cloud our judgements when we try to make accurate evaluations of our lives. M.W Matlin and D.J Stang have found that humans have a "Pollyanna principle," an optimistic bias that acts on the subconscious level which distorts the views we have about our own lives (Matlin, M.W; Stang, D.J 1978). It allows us to recall pleasant memories easier than unpleasant ones when thinking about past events, and this subconscious process produces a rosier picture than what was initially experienced.

There are numerous everyday examples of this principle in action, and some of them on a massive societal scale. How many times has one heard, when referencing ones college or high school years, that they were the "good old days." For such a widely spoken statement, it's one that does not seem entirely objectively accurate. College students are often poor, their diet suffers as a result and they lack the money to pursue meaningful or engaging hobbies. There is constant stress placed on them to succeed academically as well as socially. There is the constant fear of failure and "throwing away" one's future. The majority of students suffer these consequences while being aware that they are burying themselves in debt which will affect them psychologically and financially. Assuredly the monotony of stress, anxiety, and depression are broken by the occasional "good things" in life, but I do believe that they are the exception and not the rule. Obviously, this is not the case for everyone during those times and experiences. Some people's times may be worse than others, but overall, I believe it to be just various shades of "bad." The Pollyanna Principle and other biases allow us to easily recall the positives of those "good old days," and ignore the negatives.

We are not only affected by these delusions when looking backward, but also forward. When we think about the future, we tend to exaggerate on how good our lives will be. For instance, we think that we will achieve the goals we currently have set, find a partner, become rich or famous. Most of these things

will not happen, and people hardly ever consider the inevitabilities that the future brings; death of a family member or friend, old age and the failing physical and mental capacity that comes with it, possible debilitating sickness, dissatisfaction and disappointments. These things are hardly ever considered when people are making a judgement about their future. Also, our self-assessments concerning our current well-being is often extremely optimistic. We choose to think of the good things about our lives and ignore the bad. To help support this view we have a tendency to compare our lives with other lives that are objectively worse, which in doing so unfairly tips the judgment scales in favor of our lives; think of statements like, "well at least I'm not starving," or "I could have cancer like Bill!" And even if our objective wellbeing takes a turn for the worst, we are quick to adapt to our new discomfort and normalize it. The average human being consents to the badness of life without a second thought and is easily carried towards sedation through biologically created and self-induced optimistic illusions. It should be noted that the Pollyana Principle is severely lacking or non-existent in depressives.

These harmful inevitabilities are often never taken into consideration when people are thinking about having children. It is the case that, when you have a child that child is going to suffer a very large amount during their lifetime, but also eventually that child will experience the gradual process of dying, culminating in its obliteration. Knowingly bringing a person into an existence where the outcome will always be obliteration seems like it would be difficult to ignore, but it is one that seems to be shrugged off with ease, or without ever being contemplated at all. Many parents seem unconcerned with this fact. They might feel consoled that if the natural order of things goes as planned their obliteration will precede that of their child's, so there is a sort of "out of sight, out of mind" mentality. I do not think this natural telos of annihilation is one that should be dismissed so quickly when people are considering having a child, and if people thought carefully and compassionately about this certitude it would give them good reasons to desist from procreation.

People usually do not like to be told that their quality of life is much lower than they've estimated and that they have been hoodwinked into believing a falsity. It is not uncommon for people to become fairly defensive over such claims. If people conclude that after looking at all the facts and analyzing them that their lives are good, why should they be told otherwise? This logic is very rarely applied when people who are depressed or suicidal talk about the badness of life. Often

times these people are viewed as “sick,” or that their subjective assessment about their life is simply mistaken. If the quality of life can be underestimated than it can certainly be overestimated, which is usually the case given the Pollyana principle and other similar biological processes. I believe that being deluded by these biases is a benefit to those that believe they are true, but I do not believe that they should be the exemplar we should be using when we are talking about the objective quality of existence.

We quickly forget about day-to-day unpleasanties and annoyances which constitute a significant amount of our time: hunger, thirst, bowel discomfort, minor aches and pains, anxiety, boredom, and many other common place negative experiences. Imagine having the capability to remember every single instance of these common place experiences with the same vivacity as we could a very charming memory. We might be hard pressed to keep ourselves alive. Add on top of these major life events that nearly everyone who lives long enough will experience: bereavement over the death of a loved one, serious sickness or injury, depression, dissatisfaction, disappointment, aging, and eventually the process of our own death. These are institutional ailments to the human condition, but even the most extreme conditions are exceedingly prevalent throughout all times and places. Think about the billions of people who live in poverty, who starve to death, who are killed in cruel and inhumane ways, who are stifled by dictatorship or authoritarianism, who are born with a disability, and many other extreme cases that are easy to find amongst the human race. We should not only focus on ourselves when considering our relation to these evils, but also recognize that these inflictions permeate into all human lives in some form or another. By focusing on the here and now we are severely limiting our scope to the monumental amount of human suffering that has been experienced throughout all of history. All of which was unnecessary and based on the miscalculation that existence is always a good thing.

Furthermore, all these negative experiences and sensations come far more naturally than experiences like happiness, achievement, and satisfaction. Hunger will come unless it is satiated, boredom will set in when we are stagnant, sickness and disease are for more likely to come unless we are taking careful consideration over what we put into our bodies. There is also something to be said about the length and frequency of these negative experiences. A sense of achievement is often overcome very quickly by a new desire or a new goal. Achievement requires

constant striving and is short lived. Injuries happen in an instant but could take months or even years to heal, if they ever fully do. A lifetime of knowledge could be wiped out in minutes from a stroke or head injury, decades of love and intimacy can end in a day if the feeling is unreciprocated from another.

Some people will argue that I have neglected to recognize the positive experiences that life can provide, and that perhaps I have rigged the scales in order to favor my conclusion. I do not think I have done this. I do not believe pleasures and pains are equal in scale, this is because the vivacious nature of the ways we can be harmed. Their duration, their resilience, their forcefulness, and a number of other factors. We do not need to subscribe pains and pleasures a numerical value and through some calculus see if this is the case, but instead we can simply look at the world and people's reaction to pains and pleasures. It seems to me that the most terrible pains are worse than the greatest pleasures are good, and we have strong empirical reasons to believe that this is the case. For example, if we grant that pleasures and pains are on the same scale, then it seems most people would take a half an hour of the most extreme and brutal pains for an hour of the most sublime pleasures. However, I do not think that most people would accept that deal, and that is due to the nature of pains and the nature of pleasures. Another example, millions of people live with some sort of chronic pain, but there is no such thing as chronic pleasure.

This argument, as many people might point out, is contingent on there being pain, or "bad things" in the world, so that if these bad things were eliminated or greatly reduced to almost the point of nothing, then it would be permissible to bring new people into existence. This is not the case. The argument is certainly contingent on "bad things" being in the world, but this is a very deep contingency that is so firmly rooted in human existence that it is nearly impossible to imagine a world without it. I do not think it is possible for human beings to create a world totally immune from all the bad things in life. Let us say we were able to build this perfect world and the only pain a person would feel would be the prick from a needle, say, from a "bad things in life" immunity shot. This tiny instance of pain is still enough to refer back to the asymmetry and see that it would have been better for that person to have never felt that pin prick in the first place, even though the rest of their life will be uninterrupted pleasure. By not coming into existence that person never feels that pain and is not deprived of any pleasures.

Some will wish to push further and ask us to imagine a world with absolutely no pains or “bad things” in life. I believe this is an impossibility, but so as not to dismiss the point too quickly, even if this perfect world were somehow to come into fruition it would just make bringing someone into existence a matter of indifference. We could bring someone into existence, but they are not deprived of anything if we do not. It seems to me that we have no obligation to create happy people, and we do not regret not bringing happy people into the world for their sake. We can imagine a beautiful planet empty of sentient life in some distant galaxy which is similar to Earth. We are not filled with pity or sadness that there are no happy people living there, though we might be glad that there is no suffering on the planet. We might feel some form of happiness that there are no people on that planet, and are thus spared from things like wars, famines, murders and rapes. But for most, it would be a matter of indifference that there are no happy people on the planet. There are other reasons for rejecting this “perfect world argument.” One of them being the generations leading up to this perfectionist utopia that will suffer greatly, perhaps billions and billions of people, who just play the role of stepping stone towards a better world for future people.

This idea of obligations might resonate with certain ethical theories such as Utilitarianism. If the greatest possible good is to do things which promote the most happiness for the most amount of people, and most people feel that they are happy with their lives as opposed to unhappy, then a Utilitarian might conclude that we do have an obligation to bring people into existence in order to bring about more happiness for more people, even though a perceived smaller amount might feel consistently unhappy throughout their lives. It seems to me, however, that the Utilitarianism principle cannot be applied to the cases of potential people. This is because it rests on an assumption that the majority of future people will be happy with their lives, and also that these people will help promote the happiness and wellbeing of others. It is possible that, for instance, all people born after the year 2020 will grow up with depressive mindsets. That they will overwhelmingly believe that their lives are not worth continuing, and that they will have regretted the fact that they were brought into existence in the first place. This seems unlikely, but it is just as unlikely as the assumption that the majority of people born after the year 2020 will be happy with their lives and be grateful that they were brought into existence. The point of these two hypothetical possibilities is to show that an assumption of this kind is not worth

the negative repercussions of what could happen if our assumption turns out to be false. Therefore, the Utilitarianism argument fails when it is applied to the cases of possible, or future, people.

Up until this point I have been focused on giving philanthropic arguments for why we should abstain from procreation. However, these are not the only form of arguments available. The other form could be considered misanthropic arguments; arguments revolving around interactions between people. Let us draw from the previous hypothetical example and grant that people born after the year 2020 will all be extremely happy with their lives. From this it does not mean that those happy people will amplify or promote the happiness of others. The happy people born after 2020 could grow up to do horrendous acts of cruelty and violence. They could become mass murderers, rapists, pedophiles, tyrants, or a number of other things which would only reduce the level of universal happiness instead of supplementing it. No one likes to think this way when they are considering having a child, and that is for the simple reason that it isn't a very pleasant thing to think about. When people are considering having a child, they never think about the immeasurable harm it might inflict on other people or the damage it may cause to the environment, but this is the risk that every parent takes when they decide to bring a child into existence.

These are extreme cases, (although I believe they happen frequently enough to act as a further deterrent to bringing people into existence) and it could be easy to shrug off this argument by saying that the majority of people will not do these things. That they are abnormalities; an exception and not the rule. However, even if we choose to ignore these more serious cases of human savagery, we still can look at a multitude of other examples which reveal just how harmful human beings are to each other on a day-to-day basis. Consider small instances of lies or deceit, what we might call "white lies." We might justify these things by saying that we are trying to avoid hurting the feelings of the other person, or that we're trying to sidestep an unnecessary argument of some sort. These are reasonable excuses, but not morally excusable ones. Lies are revealed. We often hurt the person in our effort to make them feel better or console them, and though this type of harm might seem miniscule at the time, throughout the course of a lifetime I believe it adds up to a substantial amount of harm that we have caused other people. Similarly, acts of exclusion often make people feel unwanted, unappreciated, or

lacking in some substantial way. Children often do this but acts of exclusion follow us way into adulthood.

Again, each individual instance of these acts might seem negligible, but over the course of a lifetime these acts add up to what I believe is a substantial amount of harm. Small acts such as these are bound to happen countless of times every day around the planet. Add to these other seemingly insignificant (not for the person who is affected by the act, however) accounts of human malevolence such as petty theft, fights which induce physical harm, adulterous cheating, rude behavior, inconsiderate remarks, and an abundance of other acts which are not just constricted to the fringe of the human race but instead permeate to nearly everyone who has ever lived or is currently living on the planet. The nasty truth is we are generally not very nice to each other on a regular basis. We only dismiss these “petty” forms of malevolence because they seem so natural to the majority of us.

In short, it seems that we have no justification from the Utilitarian point of view, or any other obligatory view to create new people, as we have no way of guaranteeing that these people will be happy or that they will add a sort of net-benefit to the people who already currently exist. However, it seems that we do have an obligation to avoid sending a potential human being (and an already existing human being) into a painful or dangerous situation without their knowledge of the situation or their consent. For example, someone is lost wandering the streets of Flint, they approach you and ask for directions to the nearest gas station where they might be able to make a phone call to ask a friend to come and pick them up. You know where the nearest gas station is, and you know that it is in a safe neighborhood only a couple blocks away. But, instead of giving them directions to that gas station you direct them towards a gas station two miles away located in a very dangerous neighborhood. You do not inform the person of all the possible pains and dangers that person is risking by walking there alone. I think most people would find that you’ve done something morally wrong. You’ve put a human being in a potentially very dangerous situation. A situation in which had you directed them to the safe gas station a couple blocks away, they could have avoided entirely. If harm befalls that person, then it seems that you are partly responsible for that harm, because you knowingly have helped orchestrate the dangerous situation in which that person found themselves. By choosing to bring someone into existence you do something similar to the case of the lost

person. By bringing people into existence we are knowingly and willingly placing them into a situation where dangers and pains are abundantly present. Bringing someone into existence is even worse than the lost person scenario because the degrees of possible pains and dangers are greatly amplified due to the sheer amount and higher degree of pains and dangers which are possible throughout a lifetime.

There are certain steps I believe we could take which might make the lost person scenario morally acceptable. Say when approached by the stranger you only know about the gas station located in the dangerous neighborhood two miles away, and you are completely unaware that another gas station exists only a couple of blocks away that is very safe to walk to. You direct the person to the gas station two miles away but explain to them that it is a very dangerous part of town, and that they take a great risk walking all the way there alone. The difference between this scenario and the scenario above is that a.) you are unaware of the other gas station which would have been safer to walk to, and b.) you informed the person of the great possibility of potential harm that could befall that person should they choose to walk there. If they choose to walk there, then they have done it with the full knowledge of the potentially dangerous situation and have taken it upon themselves to ignore that potential harm and walk there anyways. Now compare this to bringing someone into existence. The possible person has no knowledge of all the potential bad things that could befall them should they be brought into existence. And, we have the full knowledge that by not bringing that person into existence we could altogether avoid sending that possible person into a painful or dangerous situation. We have done something wrong when we bring someone into existence. That person was never informed and could never be informed, about the risks of coming into existence, yet we have chosen for them and forced them into this potentially painful or dangerous situation.

A contention to this line of thinking could be that there is no way we could ever communicate the risks of existence with potential people, so that cannot be a moral strike against bringing someone into existence. Because we could never know what a potential person would choose, it seems unfair to think that all of them would choose non-existence over existence. Furthermore, a person who is brought into existence might never experience these possible pains or dangers (which, things being as they are, seems to me to be an impossibility). Even if we grant these claims we are still making the decision for them and forcing that

person into a potentially painful or dangerous situation without their consent. It seems to me that consent is an essential part of morality and our interactions with one another. Knowingly putting someone into a situation where the potential for serious harm is likely, even if it could possibly benefit that person or give them pleasure, should still require the consent of that person. Say you go in for a minor surgery that you have consented to undergo. The anesthesiologist puts you to sleep and begins to operate on you. The doctor performing the procedure successfully completes your surgery with no complications, but she is aware of a brand-new procedure which if done correctly could greatly enhance the good things in your life, and how well you live your life. However, because the surgery is very difficult, there is also a chance where she makes a mistake and puts you at a severe disadvantage for the rest of your life and substantially lowers its quality. There is a 50/50 chance that she either succeeds or fails. She performs the surgery while you are unconscious and without your consent but is ultimately successful. Even though because of the procedure she has given you more of the "good things in life," it seems completely fair to say that she was immoral for having done the procedure in the first place. The doctor opened up the possibility of a great amount of harm befalling you without your consent, and we should regard that as immoral. Due to the considerable amount of the "bad things" that life contains, we should not subject someone to the risks of existence because we do not have consent to do so.

An argument often leveled against the anti-natalist position is one that often takes the brutish form of, "If life is so bad, why don't you just kill yourself?" It is true that I believe life contains more good than it does bad, but that does not mean that the bad is more prevalent at all times in a person's life. The totality, or the whole of life, is I believe bad, but that whole is comprised of different parts, some of which might be good. Also, the suicide rebuttal is a mistake of people commonly equating anti-natalism with some form of pro-mortalism. This rests on the assumption that death is not bad for us, something like the Epicurean view of "death is nothing to us." I do believe that death is a harm to us because it means the cessation of our goals and desires into which we have placed value. It means that we are deprived of the good things which we otherwise could have had, and it means a complete obliteration of the self. It certainly could be the case that there might come a time in someone's life where death becomes the lesser of two evils, but it is still an evil, nonetheless. If I am wrong about the view that death

is bad for the person who dies than the comparison to pro-mortalism might be warranted, but I do not think my view of death is wrong or counter intuitive.

Nothing in the arguments I have presented has forced me to accept the conclusion that I, or anyone else, should kill themselves in an attempt to escape from the condition we exist in. People who propose this question are missing the very important distinction between a life worth starting and a life worth continuing. Again, there are no lives that are worth starting, but once a life has been started it is worth continuing if that person has an interest in continuing to exist. Nowhere do I propose that someone should give up their interest in continuing to exist, although sometimes someone may deem it better for them to abandon their interest in continuing to exist, or that interest might evaporate seemingly on its own due to the amount of badness a life contains. There might come a time in a person's life where they no longer have an interest in continuing to exist, something which is common of people during the end of their lives. Their interest in living is thwarted by too much pain, boredom, or exhaustion. After a cost-benefit analysis of some sort, a person might conclude that these factors, or the "bad things in life" that they are experiencing, overpower their interest in continuing to live for a couple more months or years. The feasibility of obtaining possible pleasures are overpowered by the certainty of pains. In cases such as these, where a person's interest in living ceases to become important to them, or is far overshadowed by other factors, then it seems that we should find it morally admissible for them to take their own lives. In cases such as these I believe suicide is warranted, but just because life contains an immense amount of badness does not mean everyone who experiences this badness should take their own lives. Nowhere in the anti-natalist argument is someone forced to this conclusion, and it is an argument purely based on a misunderstanding of the anti-natalist position.

Forfeiting our intuitions, we should be able to realize two things. The first is that all our lives are very bad, and probably much worse than we realize. Because of this comes the second, due to the vast amount of badness that each life contains we should refrain from bringing new people into existence. I do not believe that this argument or way of thinking will spread to the masses or be talked about in universities or popular culture, but still I hope it is one of applicable ethics and not just shrugged off as a philosopher's puzzle or a strictly metaphysical argument. I hope that when people are thinking of having a child, they are thinking about the inherent harm that comes with existence, and the amount of badness which will

befall that child that simply does not need to. All suffering is unnecessary, and the more we continue to reproduce the more we choose to prolong it.

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Ethical and Historical Analysis of the Holodomor

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ABSTRACT

The word genocide is not one that many people want to be well acquainted with. However, what is the international community supposed to do when a nation believes a genocide has occurred on its soil and is not being acknowledged internationally? Validating the fact that genocide occurred raises the issue of an ethical response with its acknowledgment. Between 1931 and 1933 approximately three to five million Ukrainians died in the Holodomor, the famine manufactured by Joseph Stalin. As a society we are faced with the ethical implication of acknowledging the Holodomor as a genocide and promoting education about the topic to the same level as other genocides. The point of conflict occurs when the international community is faced with the ethical dilemma of what side to take while deciding on who is in the wrong. Within the lens of Kantian ethics, if one nation does not acknowledge the Holodomor as a genocide, it is saying that it feels comfortable with other nations not acknowledging the Holodomor. Not only does this affect the victims of the Holodomor, the people of Ukraine but there is also the need to consider the victims of other genocides, by not acknowledging one genocide is society willing to overlook the others?

KEYWORDS

Eastern European Studies, Ethics, Genocide, International Ethics

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS

When people hear the word Holodomor, they do not connect it to a genocide. Even when referred to as the Ukrainian Genocide or the Ukrainian Famine there is confusion and lack of knowledge. On the fourth Saturday of every November, the Ukrainian people remember the lives of those lost under the repressive regime of Stalin by lighting memorial candles at 4:00 pm. It is hard to comprehend that there would be a question of genocide when seven to 10 million people were strategically starved to death. Currently 17 nations openly consider the Holodomor as a genocide, those nations being, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Ukraine, the United States and Vatican City (Miloscia 2018). Out of all these nations only one of them, the United States, is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and they only began acknowledging the Holodomor as a genocide in 2018. The question once again arises, does the international community not owe something to the victims in memory and the Ukraine as a nation?

The cause of the lack of acknowledgment is the United Nations Security Council. The security council is composed of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. There is spilt ideology among seat holders; the United States and United Kingdom are more pro-Ukraine and China and the Russian Federation are pro-Russia, while France can be seen as the swing vote. However, humanity is ultimately faced with the ethical decision and responsibility of making the decision of whether it will acknowledge the Holodomor. It should be looked at with a deontological lens that focuses on the duty of the individual. It is important to emphasize that "An action done from duty has its moral worth" according to Kantian ethics (Donaldson 1992).

Slaughter bench of history

It could be argued from a Hegelian stand point that, "History was a 'slaughter bench, upon which the happiness of nations the wisdom of states, and the virtues of individuals were sacrificed," arguing that in history there will always be losers and those who get the shorter end of the stick (Woessner 2011). This is true and there will always be a lamb who is at the gates of the slaughter house, but by understanding the actions which brought the lamb so close to the gates, society

should be able to spare the next one. It poses the rhetorical question of should society keep uncovering its history if there is the potentiality to find atrocity?

The answer is very clear that society should be more willing to discover their past. By maintaining a veil of ignorance and being unwilling to acknowledge the past or continue uncovering the past, society is losing a level of humanity. The suffering of a people is eternalized by those who remember it. At a certain degree there is a disappearance of survivor and perpetrators, who can recount what happened. Society bares the responsible of maintaining these accounts for future generations to learn from and not repeat the same mistakes and crimes. There will nearly always be a lamb on the slaughter bench since society is a carnivore. Even as a lamb is being put to slaughter, the herd as a whole has a sense of agency to acknowledge the slaughter. By doing so there is the potentiality to reduce the amount of blood that pools at the feet of society. While it would be ideal to end all bloodshed, it is too idealistic, as man has a somewhat carnal drive for dominance and power. However, as history has shown, it is better when a society grows from peaceful unions rather than violent bloodshed.

As a society we are indebted to those that came before us, as they have laid down the ground work for us. It could be said that since the early 1900's the world has seen well over a century of genocide. The eastern side of Europe has simply become a bathtub filled with the blood of the innocent; the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1923, the Holodomor, 1931–1934, the Holocaust 1939-1945, and more recently Srebrenica in 1995. Seemingly each time society grew in awareness but did not create a way to prevent it from repeating. Society should be striving to prevent its mutually created destruction because a strong society must maintain an "idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose," that allows society to grow from its mistakes while considering the greater good of humanity at the same time (Kant 1784).

The idea of creating a 'cosmopolitan purpose' and society centers itself around the idea that as human beings we cannot live isolation. Borders are one of the validating factors for a nation and its government, but humanity must not allow itself to become a heartless slave to those who suffer outside of the bounds of their respective nation. The argument that "patriotism is morally dangerous" should be rephrased and changed to 'nationalism,' which finds its roots in ethnocentrism and xenophobia (Nussbaum 1994). It was best said by M. Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic at the Commemoration of the Centenary of

the Armistice, "patriotism is the exact opposite of nationalism: nationalism is a betrayal of it," because it is the rejection of a globalizing world; the rejection of others (Macron 2018). By understanding and accepting the struggles of others as valuable or in need of assistance it is not a rejection of one's culture but rather an enhancement of the understanding of one's own culture and humanity. The goal of cosmopolitanism is to develop understanding for others and provide aid when it is needed, with hope of reciprocation if needed.

As a global society we must be able to understand and honor those who have suffered at the hands of others and know that the acknowledgement of their suffering disables their oppressors. Genocide is a concept that not only turns humans into monsters but "need not be part of a larger war," because war is not always needed to fuel hatred (Card 2003). When the USSR began its campaign against the Ukraine it was not waging war but rather imposing a sense of imperialism upon the country. Unlike in other genocides in which people were being gunned down in the streets or sent to death camps, the people of the Ukraine were being starved to death. This is not to say that society is more sympathetic to death from a violent cause but rather there is a higher level of awareness and education when violence is involved. While there was some news coverage about the Holodomor like the stories written by Rhea Clyman, the majority of journalists focused on exposing the evils of the USSR (Masis 2017). Sensationalism aside, there is still an overarching problem that society has a moral obligation to the victims to educate the world about their suffering. When we approach the lack of media coverage of the Holodomor from a utilitarian stand point, it is easy to see that society has failed in the execution of ensuring awareness. Utilitarianism is centered around producing the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people. As a leading super power on the global stage does the United States not have the obligation to approach Holodomor awareness and education from not only a cosmopolitan approach but also a utilitarian one? Providing educational awareness of the Holodomor like it is does for other genocides would aid in the creation of human rights awareness and genocide prevention.

Russia: Modern and historical influence

By looking at Leszek Kołakowski's philosophy of history on genocide, we can see the fragile structure of a society that centers around the idea of being all encompassing. Socialism as it was practiced in the USSR and its satellite nations

ultimately turned out to be oppressive rather than liberating. When Holodomor happened, the Ukraine was under communist rule that ultimately subjected the majority of its citizens to oppression. Kołakowski argues that “no ideology with all-embracing claims is immune to the danger of being used as an instrument of oppression and slavery,” this argument is supported by simply looking at nations that strived for the all-encompassing ideology like the former USSR under Joseph Stalin, or North Korea presently under the Kim dynasty (Woessner 2011). From the surface level the nations listed share an overarching commonality: the leaders were influenced by those before them.

In 2008, the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor, the Moscow Kremlin argued against the acknowledgment of the Holodomor as a genocide saying, “genocide is the killing of a population based on their ethnicity, whereas Stalin’s regime annihilated all kinds of people indiscriminately, regardless of their ethnicity” (Bovt 2008). This argument could be supported with the Hegelian idea of the slaughter bench of history, essentially saying that not all people in history count because it is inevitable certain historical events will occur, and people will be forgotten. It would not be morally acceptable to not acknowledge the Holodomor as a genocide that is rooted in famine when similar events have happened and are happening globally that do not receive the right recognition for their suffering and are placed on the slaughter bench.

Under the pressure of the current geo-political climate it is not hard to see that Russia doesn’t need any more skeletons falling out of its closet. They are trying to strengthen their international relationships with nations like the United States, while developing strength domestically. It is like a bear preparing for hibernation, eating as much as it can and trying to make sure that once it sleeps it will not be attacked by others.

Looking at the frame of international recognition of the Holodomor would be to bring it in front of the United Nations. If brought to the United Nations, there would be few problems at hand. First, the composition of the Security and Peace Council; permanent members: China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. The permanent members have power to veto anything that could be voted on. Looking at the divide between those in support of the Holodomor (United States) and those opposed (Russia Federation), these two nations are very prominent leaders on the global stage, and each with

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their own ally; United Kingdom with the United States and China with Russia, leaving France in the middle.

This is a situation in which silence is kept by all parties to maintain peace.

Philosophy of food and famine

Does man have a right to food? Or it is simply the right to be free of wanting? Societies across history have yo-yo between these concepts but have never come to a sound conclusion. However, there is a significant difference between the two concepts, as one strives to ensure that people do not go without food while the other speaks of people being free of wanting. But what does free of wanting mean? It can be seen as a life in which a person does not struggle to gain the basic means they require to survive. This is not up to the interpretation of the individual but rather their government that could say any number of things. In a highly collectivist society, the freedom from wanting could be seen as the motivator to ensure that the group as a whole is not wanting, causing the individual to place the group before themselves. A leader who is concerned with the progression of the state as opposed to the wellbeing of their people and is willing to sacrifice one for the other. This might lead to the death of the masses, but it can also create a dependency on the aid of other nations and normalize the actions of the state generation to generation.

An example of this style is what happened in North Korea. It is known as the Arduous March in 1994 to 1998. Which can really be seen as the normalization of famine within the country (Kang 2011), meaning that due to the famine in North Korea in 1994-1998, the country received foreign aid in the form of food aid. With the country being supplied food aid during the course of the famine and then post-famine due to the lack of their own agricultural production, the idea of starvation has been normalized within their society. Even with foreign aid provided for an extensive amount of time post famine, North Korea proves that it is unable to care for itself or the needs of its people. In relation to the Holodomor and the international community as a whole what responsibility do we have in regards to providing acknowledgement as a form of justice?

Defining Genocide

What the United Nations deems as a genocide reads as follows: "Genocide is defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the

Crime of Genocide (1948) as 'any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group'" (General Assembly of the United Nations 1948). While this list of qualifications seems straightforward, nations are commonly faced with the issue that acknowledgement comes with responsibility. Within this primary draft of the paper only two will be covered until further research is conducted. For instance if we look at President Bill Clinton's statement to the survivors of the Rwandan Genocide in 1998, "[w]e did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide," even though there was evidence that people were being slaughtered by the thousands (Clinton 1998). There was a hesitation in acknowledging it formally as a genocide because it would mean that the United States would be responsible for providing aid. This would mean aid for all people in Rwanda, not just expats of the United States. When looking at this set list, it should not just be applied for an event that we are presently witnessing but applied to the events of the past, so all victims are remembered and honored, not left to rot on histories slaughter bench. This extermination of people is typically coupled with war; the two are not mutually exclusive. Genocide comes from lack of justice for a group of people specifically. Society must ask itself, when we do not constitute something as a crime against humanity when it happens in the past, how will it affect our future judgement?

Since the early medieval period the people of the Ukraine have fought to gain independence from whichever governing party was in control. Whether it was the Golden Horde or the Kingdom of Poland with the Lithuanian Duchy or the USSR, the Ukraine has sought autonomy and independence for a large part of its existence. This did not stop the people of the Ukraine from developing their own culture, language, and system of beliefs which are different from the surrounding Slavic nations.

When looking at the concept of genocide, it does not only apply to killing the Ukrainian people themselves but also the eradication of their culture and language as a whole. While some scholars would consider this an ethnocide, within this paper it will be integrated as a cultural genocide.

KILLING OF MEMBERS

With regard to killing people, the direct cause of death was starvation caused by the withholding of grain by the USSR. It is important to note that it has been hard to pinpoint the number of victims of the Holodomor. While there are numbers that provide percentages of the amount of the population that perished within a given region of the country, it is still difficult to provide a definitive number of deaths. Scholars believe that in certain regions there was a 20-percent decrease in population, such as in the western side of the country where the death toll is speculated to be as high as one million people (Applebaum 2017).

The attack on the Ukrainian people is rooted in the question of peasantry, as a peasant rebellion was something that was a contested topic. Even within the peasant community there was a divide between poor peasants and the wealthier peasants, the kulaks. The kulak farmers were seen as a threat that Stalin and his predecessor Vladimir Lenin wanted to abolish before an uprising could happen even referring to them as “bloodsuckers, vampires, plunderers of the people and profiteers, who fatten on famine” (Lenin 1925). Peasant farmers who had as many as two cows and two horses could be considered kulaks and could become victims of raids, arrest or exile by the government if they were not willing to submit to the collectivist farms of the USSR. In the Ukraine 15,000 kulaks, the most active were to be arrested and an additional 30,000 were cast into exile. This cause was intended to send all 50,000 kulak families to the northern region of Russia, Northern Krai (Viola, et al. 2005). It is important to note the Ukraine had a higher number of peasants than other countries under USSR control.

The attack on the peasantry would ultimately lead to the collection of grain and other resources from the people on the countryside. Additionally, by the summer of 1931, the amount of livestock that had been bred had decreased significantly (People’s Democrats Demchenko 1931). This can be seen as one of the direct products and failures of collectivization event though it had not even reached 100-percent of the peasant population. Regardless, the failures of collectivization and Stalin’s Five-Year plan would act as the spring board for the Holodomor. Additionally, it could be said that the act of collectivization took away all the farmers’ motivation to work and produce grain because there was not a market economy or a sense of market competition, therefore eliminating the desire to produce goods. In 1932, groups of men and women were sent out into the countryside to look for grain to collect, and later other means of food.

Testimonies have even stated those who were collecting grain would go to great lengths to collect grain. They “searched in stoves, broke floors and tore away walls,” and “took a bead necklace...assuming it contained something edible” (Applebaum 2017). The measures which were taken allowed the famine to occur at the capacity it did in the given time frame.

Death by starvation might be one of the most inhumane ways for a person to die. Yet it can also be seen as one of the most preventable. According to the World Health Organization, between starvation and death there is nearly always disease. When people don’t have enough food to eat, acute malnutrition sets in and weakens the immune system, meaning that those who were suffering during the Holodomor were most likely suffering not only from hunger but other illnesses (World Health Organization 2017). In a historical context, being sentenced to death by starvation was designed to be long and painful, as in the case of Maximilian Kolbe during the Holocaust who was subjected to death by starvation at Auschwitz in 1941. We see that this style of death was not only extremely painful and unethical but, in some cases, needs to be finished with a final action like a lethal injection (Craig n.d.).

In the Ukraine between the winter of 1931 and 1932, the citizens of the rural sectors of the Ukraine were starving because of the collection of their food in the year prior and the blockade that stopped the importation of food. Between the years of 1932 to 1933, it is estimated that between three to seven million people died. It is important to note that it was not just the kulaks who were dying, but it was many people all across the Ukraine. There were people dying in the streets of major cities like Kharkiv and there are the rural horror stories of children dying and being cannibalized by their own mothers.

KILLING OF CULTURE

Stalin’s regime executed its genocide strategically against the Ukrainian people and also against their culture and language. The term “little Russia” is a name used for the Ukraine that was commonly used during the twentieth century and still exists in certain social circles. There is a significant amount of negative connotation with this term, because the Ukraine is not a smaller version of Russia.

One of the first points of attack was the Ukrainian language. When looking at language under a philosophical lens it should be view with constructivist epistemological principles, meaning that humans construct the meaning of their

world from what their mind knows; “I think there for I am” (Descartes 1644). Linguistic relativism supports the idea that language and linguistic limits that an individual understands and processes aid in their determination of the world around them. When language is placed under attack it can be determinantal to the culture of those who speak it and have a society and culture built around it. There are linguistic similarities between Russian and Ukrainian, such as use of the Cyrillic alphabet. Both languages fall into the subset of Eastern Slavic languages, but the level of shared vocabulary is not as high as other Slavic languages such as Polish. Modern Ukrainian speakers might have a higher probability understanding Russian due to the increased level of exposure to the language in the media.

Ukraine under the control of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, the founder of the Hetman dynasty after the Russian Revolution in 1917, created a sense of hope for maintaining Ukrainian autonomy. Under Skoropadskyi the first national library and Ukrainian Academy of Science were founded, in addition to the establishment of Ukrainian as the country’s official language for business (Applebaum 2017). Even with this there was still a push for a more pro-Ukrainian government: Ukraine for Ukrainians. In 1918 there was even the removal of all Russian language-signs in the city of Kyiv, replacing them with Ukrainian ones. Within the years of 1923 to 1929 the movement of Ukrainization grew rapidly (Applebaum 2017). This included the push for the creation of Ukrainian language schools and the push for Ukrainian literature of all sorts, including books, poems and plays; these nearly doubled within the six-year time frame (Pauly 2014).

In 1925 there was even a push to unify Ukrainian speakers beyond the borders of the Ukraine; specifically, those who lived in Russia on the eastern border of the two nations and those in Poland on the western border. While nothing significant came to fruition, there was a splinter in the woodwork of the Ukraine. Those living in the rural countryside on the eastern border were opposed to the push for Ukrainization and the acceptance of Ukrainian, not necessarily due to outstanding Russian loyalty. Teachers would claim that they did not have the time or resources to teach students Ukrainian and often would not even be fluent themselves (Applebaum 2017). This was one of the passive ways that the language was attacked. Later there would be a harsher front of re-Russification that strived to make Ukrainian “a second-rate, subordinate language that people, “intending to live [in the Ukraine] had to abandon” (Graziosi 2015). This can be seen as Russian implementing cultural imperialism onto the Ukraine that acted as a precursor to

genocide. Stalin was creating a system that would continue to chip away at the pride and culture of the Ukraine until striking heavier blows that aimed to destroy national identity. Stalin's push to hegemonize the Ukraine to Russian ideology could also be seen in other USSR satellite states.

Stalin would deliver another detrimental blow to the Ukrainian people by attempting to terminate religion. In modern day Ukraine, religion is a very important part of life, with 71.7 percent of the population declaring themselves believers in God (Razumkov Center 2018). A total of 67.3 percent of the population of the Ukraine identifies as a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church (Razumkov Center 2018). Judging by the numbers from modern-day Ukraine it is clear to see that Stalin did not succeed in his attempt to remove religion. The assault on religions was one of the significant attacks on the Ukrainian people. There are stories of "people bursting into tears" as bells from church bell towers were cut down and fell to their deaths, symbolizing the death of religion for many Ukrainians under the rule of Stalin (Applebaum 2017).

IMPOSING MEASURES INTENDING TO PREVENT BIRTHS WITHIN THE GROUP

Starvation is a process that fully takes over an individual's body. A normal body with fully functioning metabolism depends on blood glucose as its primary source of energy. When a body starts to undergo starvation or fasting for 48-72 hours the liver starts synthesizing ketone bodies which are three water-soluble molecules to obtain fatty acids that can be used as fuel for the body and brain. As this process continues the brain and body slowly drain themselves pulling and more from its fat reserves until they are diminished. A body that is going through the starvation process will additionally suffer with infertility because the body has low levels of body fat which affects a woman's endocrine system, ultimately resulting in the lack of an ovulation cycle. The women who were starving in the Ukraine were mostly likely suffering from the same conditions.

According to a study conducted by Vallin et al. looking at how birth rates were affected by the Holodomor and World War II, they found drops in life expectancy of infants. In the Ukraine in 1933 the life expectancy for a female infant was 10.8 years and 7.3 for males (Vallin, et al. 2002). Due to the prevention of births and short infant life expectancy via famine induced starvation, Stalin eliminated part of a generation of Ukrainians.

CONCLUSION

If we look at the what is considered to be a genocide, there is a direct cognitive connection to atrocities such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide. The education and public awareness efforts for the Holocaust alone are commendable, as they not only spread educational awareness about the Holocaust but also encourage the message of 'Never Again,' and education about human rights. Even though the word 'genocide' itself did not appear until approximately 1944 in Raphael Lemkin's book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, the act itself is as old as civilization (Lemkin 1944). Jean-Paul Sartre stated in his 1967 essay that "the thing itself is as old as humanity and there has never been a society whose structure has preserved it from committing this crime." Looking at history it would be easy to see that societies of the past have not been able to avoid committing this crime. History has held the Nazis responsible for the extermination of many ethnic and religious groups across Europe, but it has also allowed Joseph Stalin and his cronies to get away with crimes against humanity. As a society that is constantly globalizing, it is important to think about the ethics of not acknowledging the crimes that were committed as a genocide if they fit the needed qualifications. It is something that humanity owes to the victims of the past and the information deserves and needs to be known by future generations.

In John Rawls' *Law of People* he puts forth eight principles which are designed to help society grow and accept one another, within this context the most important being number six: "Peoples are to honor human rights" (Rawls 1993). Meaning that as an ever-globalizing society we need to be accepting of the suffering of others and acknowledge those events that are in the past. As society does not acknowledge the Holodomor as a genocide it is slowly tearing away at the cloth of humanity.

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compos mentis

The Death of a Gadfly: Civil Disobedience and the Trial of Socrates

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on examples from the last days of Socrates, this essay reevaluates justice and civil disobedience as they relate to ethics. Even though Socrates was innocent, he accepted the death penalty in order to uphold the justice of Athens. However, Athens was not practicing justice during the trial of Socrates, and therefore there was nothing of value for Socrates to uphold. I argue for his escape for prison, and against his idea of upholding the sentence against him as outlined in the Crito.

KEYWORDS

Socrates, Justice, Civil disobedience, Crito, History of Philosophy

In a prison in Athens in 399 BC, the great philosopher Socrates was facing death. He was found guilty, despite his efforts to refute his accusations, of corrupting the youth, denying the gods, and making the weaker argument the stronger. However, these accusations were not valid and served only to deprive the world of one of its greatest philosophers. Despite what the formal causes were, the focus of his trial was his role as a political nuisance. Socrates became a political prisoner following the trial for his civil disobedience, and a few days after he was found guilty, he was executed.

During his brief stay in prison, Crito, one of his students, visited him to help him escape. He refused however, claiming that it was more important that he stand by his values and uphold his social contract with Athens. He had committed a crime, and therefore had to accept the punishment. If civil disobedience was the underlying reason he was imprisoned, Socrates should have escaped with Crito. Civil disobedience in the face of morally unjust laws is not only acceptable, but often the best course of action. Socrates practiced a very benign role as a gadfly, stirring the city of Athens to deeper thought and actions. Socrates was innocent of the crimes he was accused of, and therefore should not have been imprisoned. When Crito offered him an escape free of consequences, it would've been morally acceptable to escape.

It's first important to note that the charges against Socrates were completely fabricated. He was accused of at least three crimes: devil worship or denying the gods, corrupting the youth, and making weak arguments the stronger. The first accusation was completely unfounded, and he refuted it easily. In Greek theology, the demons are children of the gods, so in order to believe in demons, he would first have had to believe in the gods. As for corrupting the youth, if all it takes to be guilty of this is to teach, then every schoolteacher in Athens should have been force-fed hemlock. As for making weak arguments stronger, he was technically guilty of that. Socrates used a method of discussion known as *elenchos*. This method involves proving something false by making the person who originally proposed the idea admit that they believe the opposite. This is demonstrated in the Republic when Socrates and Thrasymachus discuss justice. However, just because Socrates did in fact make weaker arguments stronger, it was not a crime for which he should've been put to death. Meletus, as he tried to prove that Socrates was guilty, also made arguments that were weak, and by supplying evidence, made them stronger. Socrates was not guilty of any of the crimes he

was accused of, and that which he was guilty of was not a malicious enough crime to be worthy of death.

If there was anything Socrates was guilty of, it was civil disobedience. He admitted to being guilty in the Apology when he said, "For, even if it seems ridiculous to say so, I've literally been attached to the city, as if to a large thoroughbred horse that was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be awakened by some sort of gadfly... one that awakens, cajoles, and reproaches each and every one of you and never stops alighting everywhere on you the whole day" (Apology 30e).

But then is anyone ever guilty of civil disobedience? Is civil disobedience a crime, or is it merely a clash occurring from a lack of overlap in legal morality and objective morality? I have no doubt that there is a difference between what is legal and what is ethical. If there wasn't, ethics wouldn't be such a profound branch of philosophy. St. Thomas Aquinas specified the difference, saying "an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law" (qtd. King 1963, 12). John Locke too wrote about the purpose government has in deciding what is moral, and how it can sometimes differ from what common opinion might believe is moral. "For though men uniting in politic societies, have resigned up to the public the disposing of all their force... yet they retain still the power of thinking well or ill, approving or disapproving of the actions of those whom they live amongst and converse with: and this approbation and dislike they establish amongst themselves, what they will call virtue and vice" (Locke 1996, 152). Here Locke said that although government has its purpose in deciding what is legal, what is virtue and vice is not decided by governments, but by society. He claimed that those who are outside the government, interacting with the common man daily, are the ones who decide what is virtuous.

Both Aquinas and Locke, among other moral philosophers, have distinguished a difference between what is legal and what is moral. Whether ethics are determined by God or by society, it is clear that the legality of an action tells you nothing about its morality. Civil disobedience is a way to contest the difference and try to bring the two definitions closer together. This has been a common theme for political and social movements throughout history and continues to be today.

One philosopher and political activist who encouraged civil disobedience was Henry David Thoreau. He was so much an advocate of civil disobedience that his

1849 essay on the unethical practice of slavery is titled Civil Disobedience. He had strong opinions about the devices of governments and the standards to which they should be held. He said, "If injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go..." (Thoreau 2016, 45). The friction of his time was slavery, an issue which was becoming increasingly harder to ignore. If men remained complacent to the diabolical, but completely legal practice of slavery, then there was no road by which it would ever be abolished. It is by this logic that Thoreau argued we must speak out and act out against unjust practices of government. He proposed this rhetorical question, for which he clearly believed there is an answer: "Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once?" (Thoreau 2016, 44).

One modern philosopher who was very familiar with civil disobedience is Martin Luther King Jr. In his famous Letter from the Birmingham Jail, King compared his condition to that of Socrates. He paid tribute to him saying, "To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience" (King 1963, 15). This letter, as the name suggests, was written while King was imprisoned for parading without a permit in protest of the laws which kept the South segregated. It was written for people who were largely complacent, or passively rejected the civil rights movement. Many preachers in Birmingham disagreed with King, prompting him to write this letter to them. The letter is very bold, politically profound, and even poetic at times. King wrote in a time when the law said it was okay to discriminate based on the color of a person's skin. He and others practiced many acts of civil disobedience. These acts ranged from sit-ins to boycotts and marches. This is because they were being affected by a law that was clearly unethical. Discrimination is horrible on principle, and it leads to hate crimes including murder. So wherever you draw the line, discrimination was a law that was unethical by all accounts.

This era of American history was ended (legally, at least) after King and his peers were civilly disobedient to the point that they couldn't be ignored. King did this because he believed "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (King 1963, 2). Contemporaries of King told him that if they waited long enough, then they would be given equal rights. King, refusing to wait, responded by saying "We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be co-

workers with God, and without the hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation" (King 1963, 18-19).

Similar to Thoreau, King believed unjust laws must be let go. If you wait for change, it won't come. Time will serve to help the oppressor. Change only comes when provoked by an outside force persistently. Abolitionists knew this, as did participants in the civil rights movement. These standards should be timeless. Ethics can sometimes be subjective, but some things are always true. It is true to Antebellum America, contemporary society, and ancient Athens. If an institution exists as a means of propagating injustice, then it should be disbanded swiftly and relentlessly. The political system in Athens was ahead of its time, but in the trial of Socrates, it actively worked to take the life of one of the greatest philosophers in the Western tradition.

The crimes Socrates was accused of amounted to little more than the fact that he was a nuisance. Those in power, like Anytus and Meletus, were irritated by Socrates's philosophies and by the way he was always trying to agitate the sleeping thoroughbred horse that was Athens. As summarized in the Apology, "Socrates commits injustice and is a busybody, in that he investigates the things beneath the earth and in the heavens, makes the weaker argument the stronger, and teaches these things to others" (Apology 19b). This charge, along with the others, is the fabrication of men who were fed up with Socrates sticking his nose where it didn't belong. The charges against Socrates simply do not hold up. Callias, who according to Socrates "spent more money on Sophists than everyone else put together" was not on trial for educating his children, nor was their teacher, Evenus (Apology 20a). Clearly education was not the problem, and clearly there was something special about Socrates.

His death is something that was advantageous for the politically stronger. What did Socrates have to say about this kind of justice? In book one of Plato's Republic, he and a man named Thrasymachus debate the meaning of justice. It also happens to be one of the finest instances of Socrates practicing elenchos. Initially, he asks Thrasymachus to define justice. The definition he settles on is a cynical one: whatever is best for those in power. They have the following exchange:

"Socrates: 'And a law is correct if it prescribes what is advantageous for the rulers themselves, and incorrect if it prescribes what is disadvantageous for them? Is that what you mean?'

Thrasymachus: 'It is'" (Republic 339c).

In true Socratic form, Socrates later had Thrasymachus admit that just the opposite is true. Though they never definitively come to a conclusion on the definition of justice, they both agree that what he originally said is not it.

The trial was a case of a stronger political force squashing a weaker one. Because Socrates had to be such a nuisance, people such as Anytus and Meletus found it advantageous to kill him. There is even evidence of a personal conflict between Anytus and Socrates which is described in the *Meno*, in which Socrates belittled Anytus while insulting his profession and his son. I'm sure this was not forgotten during the trial.

This leads me to believe that the trial of Socrates was much more about political and societal anxieties than any particular crime, and perhaps was influenced by the accusers' own intensions. "If many had followed his critical example, questioning the traditional values and behavior of their fathers and challenging their wisdom, one can understand why Socrates would be perceived as a threat to the established order. The future of the city depended upon its youth" (Colaiaco 2001, 107).

To be fair, this is an understandable concern. Maybe Socrates didn't always have a right to teach the young. Maybe that was a role better left for Athenian teachers and parents. However, Socrates wasn't teaching anything immoral, as his accusers might have thought. With the benefit of hindsight, we would consider it a privilege to be taught by Socrates. From the records we have, it seems that Socrates's students were moral and intellectual people. To be taught by Socrates would put you in the company of Crito, Xenophon, and of course, Plato. These men are revered as some of the greatest thinkers not just of the ancient world, but of all time. Beyond philosophy, they show great devotion and generosity. If the teachings of Socrates were so corrosive, it seems odd that they would offer to pay a bail of thirty minas to save their teacher.

So once again, there seems to be no justification for the punishment Socrates received. And yet, when given the chance, Socrates defends the decisions of Athens and his accusers. When Crito visits Socrates with a plan to help him escape, Socrates denies him.

Crito evidently went to Socrates's prison prepared. He had three arguments for why Socrates should escape. The first was that it would shame his friends if he did not. It would make the Athenians believe that his followers valued money

more than their friend, when in reality, money wouldn't have helped Socrates escape. In response, Socrates tells Crito "But my dear Crito, why should we care so much about what the majority think?" (Crito 44c.) This was a very admirable and bold stance for Socrates to take. Perhaps his life had been put into perspective somewhat by his impending death. Truly he remained profoundly dedicated to his philosophies to the end. Unfortunately, that's exactly what killed him.

Crito next decided to use a very human argument, reminding Socrates of his family. He reminded Socrates of his children, and angrily told him "Either one shouldn't have children at all, or one ought to see their upbringing and education through to the end" (Crito 45d). This argument seems much more emotionally based, as Crito's words are much angrier now than they were during his first argument. He accused Socrates of "choosing the easiest way out," saying he should instead have chosen "whatever a good and brave man would choose—particularly when one claims to have cared about virtue throughout one's life" (Crito 45d). These arguments verge on ad hominem fallacies, but the heart of the argument was sincere. By accepting his fate, Socrates did in a sense abandon his family. However even if he escaped with Crito, it was unlikely he would've been able to see his family in exile.

Finally, Crito appeals to Socrates' sense of duty. Socrates and many of his followers believed that they had a responsibility to teach philosophy. Much of this responsibility comes from the Oracle of Delphi, who when asked by Chaerephon said that "'no one is wiser' than Socrates!" (Colaico 2001, 58). This could have been seen as a divine assignment and continuing this assignment would have been very important to Socrates. The other duty is less divine, but just as important. Simply the responsibility Socrates had to teach philosophy would've been an attractive argument as well.

Socrates was not especially impressed with any of these arguments. He employed his elenchos on Crito from the prison and deconstructed each of Crito's arguments. The opinions of others shouldn't matter, especially when his true followers know just how hard they had tried to release Socrates. He wouldn't see his family again regardless of his escape, so that was not a reasonable argument. And finally, his duty to the city that had condemned him was such that he decided he had to stay and face his consequences.

The most important thing to Socrates was that he maintained the morality he had lived by his entire life even when faced with death. He returned to this idea

multiple times while talking with Crito. This was the center of his argument. From this stance, he then argued that he had a duty to stay and face his punishment. He argued in response to Crito that "one should never do injustice in return for injustice" (Crito 49b). Although an injustice had been done to him, Socrates thought it more important that he remained ethical and did not practice injustice in return. He believed that to do so would be unfair to the city. He personified the city in much of the Crito, calling it the fatherland several times. He believed that because he had been raised in the city and spent his adult life in the city, that he had entered into a social contract with Athens. In return for a place to live, Socrates promised to obey its laws, and if he violated the laws, he would accept their punishment. Speaking on behalf of the city and its laws, Socrates said:

"Do you intend anything else by this act you're attempting than to destroy us Laws, and the city as a whole, to the extent that you can? Or do you think that a city can continue to exist and not be overthrown if the legal judgments rendered in it have no force, but are deprived of authority and undermined by the actions of private individuals?" (Crito, 50a)

This passage outlines Socrates's position well. By proposing an escape, Crito was proposing to offset justice, threatening the very society they were raised in. Socrates saw not his imprisonment as betrayal, but his escape. If he was allowed to escape, clearly that meant justice had no authority, and crimes could go unpunished. He thought Athens would then be a lawless city. "So if the destruction of the city is a foreseeable result of escape, then the destruction is intentional also" (Brickhouse & Smith 2004, 213).

In a perfectly just society, Socrates's argument is noble and selfless. He would rather die than damage the justice of the city. He promised to keep the laws of his fatherland, and when he broke them, it was appropriate he should be punished. That is true, but only if Athens were a perfectly just society. But clearly, the trial of Socrates was not justice, but murder. Anytus, Meletus, and the jurors condemned an innocent man to death shortly before he would have died naturally. Even though punishments such as retribution and exile were arguably more viable, the sentence Socrates was given was death.

This is not a justice system that is worth upholding. This is a justice system that operates under Thrasymachus's first definition of justice: that which is advantageous for the stronger. Socrates was no threat, but he was put to death anyway. He had committed no crime from an ethical standing. He was certainly

annoying, but not a real villain. This is the kind of justice that Socrates defended with his life.

Just like Thoreau and King, Socrates was a practitioner of civil disobedience, except he gave up on his criticism of the law in his final days. When given an escape, he chose to believe the very definition of justice that he opposed in the Apology. The only people who benefited from Socrates's decision were the same people who condemned him and the same people who thought executing Socrates qualified as justice. By accepting this, no matter the reason, Socrates too accepted this definition.

At the end of his arguments, Crito says: "Besides Socrates, I think that what you're doing isn't just: throwing away your life, when you could save it, and hastening the very sort of fate for yourself that your enemies would hasten—and indeed have hastened—in their wish to destroy you" (Crito 45c). Socrates hastened the mission of his enemies by accepting his sentence. Any institution that could execute an innocent man like Socrates does not understand justice. And if that institution pretends to distribute justice but fails, then that institution must be disbanded. Socrates remained true to his values until the end, except for one: he betrayed his definition of justice. Crito offered Socrates an escape and a way to defy an unjust system, but he refused. He did what he thought was best, but as a lifelong philosopher and defender of civil disobedience, he should've known that justice was not the primary force in his trial, but malignance. He meant to defend Athens, but instead defended injustice.

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compos mentis

The Value of Withholding Forgiveness: An Intermediary between Violence and Forgiveness

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ABSTRACT

While Frantz Fanon argues that violence is the best way to overcome victimization, the more popular view seems to be that of Charles Griswold. Charles Griswold argues that forgiveness is a virtue that requires a mutual relationship between the victim and their antagonist. In this paper, I will argue for a moral alternative that falls in the middle of the spectrum between Fanon and Griswold. I argue for withholding forgiveness as a moral alternative to either forgiveness or violence.

KEYWORDS

Forgiveness, Virtue, Morality, Violence

INTRODUCTION

Resentment is an issue well known to each of us. We have all been consumed by a feeling of bitterness or anger towards someone at sometime who has done us wrong. However, the way we ought to respond to this wrongdoing is still widely up for debate. For the purposes of this paper, moral transgression will be defined as an unjust action against another person. Within this definition, there will be two actors: the wrongdoer and the wronged. The wrongdoer is the person(s) who committed the moral transgression against another person, thus harming them in some way. The wronged is the person(s) who was injured by the moral transgression. In this paper, I aim to explore two opposing viewpoints on how victims should respond to moral transgressions. I will first explore the ideas of Frantz Fanon in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Here I will offer an interpretation of his ideas on violence and decolonization as a tool to overcome resentment and subjugation. I will then explore the more recent ideas of Charles Griswold on forgiveness as a virtuous way to let go of resentment. Finally, after exploring issues within these two theories, I will articulate my own view of overcoming the injuries caused by a moral transgression through withholding forgiveness.

ON VIOLENCE AND POWER

In the first chapter of his book, Frantz Fanon argues that it is necessary for subjugated people to use violence in order for them to fully recover and allow decolonization. His main idea in this chapter can be best encapsulated in the following quote:

At the individual level, violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them, and restores their self-confidence. Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic, and even if they have been demobilized by rapid decolonization, the people have time to realize that liberation was the achievement of each and everyone and no special merit should go to the leader. Violence hoists the people up to the level of the leader. (Fanon 1963, 51).

For Fanon, the relationship between the wrongdoers and the wronged is one where the moral transgression has shifted the equity of power and moral worth

in favor of the wrongdoers, leaving the wronged in a place of subjugation and resentment. Although Fanon's focus is on decolonization and the subjugation of groups of people, I think his ideas can also be applied to moral transgressions in general.

In his theory, Fanon is advocating fighting violence with violence. This idea can be applied in other ways too. If you break Fanon's theory down, it is essentially the idea that to restore equity of power after a moral transgression has occurred, the response must work to counterbalance the transgression. So for example, if someone harms you and thus takes away some of your power and value as a person we could quantify that by saying that they hurt you in the amount of negative m ($-m$). Well, if you just forgive them or forget about the transgression, that does not remove $-m$. Fanon is saying that in order to remove $-m$, the victim must respond with a force of $+m$. Thus, in order for the equity of power and moral value to be restored, you must have $+m$ to counterbalance $-m$ and leave the balance back at zero so power has not been lost or gained by any person(s). This power balance seems to function as a way to restore status that was lost. When a moral transgression occurs, the victim's status is injured and they are subjected to the victim status and lose power. So rectifying this power imbalance is about restoring the lost status and power of the victim. For Fanon, this is the only way for the wronged to ever be able to be cleansed and move on from the moral transgression.

For example, consider three daughters with a narcissistic father who has emotionally abused them for his own gain. Their father committed actions against them that harmed their overall well-being for the rest of their life. He constantly manipulated them for his own selfish good. By doing this, the father subjugated his daughters to the victim position. This moral transgression shows the power balance discussed by Fanon. Now Fanon's "fight fire with fire" theory would mean that in this situation the daughters would need to react to their father's moral transgressions with forcefulness. They must in some way subjugate their father in order to restore the power balance and cleanse themselves of resentment for him. Without some kind of equal power against the father, the daughters will remain in the subjugated victim position, and the moral transgression will not be resolved. This eye for an eye justice mentality differs greatly from the forgiveness discussed by Charles Griswold.

ON THE VIRTUE OF FORGIVENESS

In his book, Charles Griswold offers up a response to moral transgressions that is completely opposite that of Fanon. Griswold argues that forgiveness is a virtue that requires the wronged to let go of resentment completely. Griswold says:

“The transformations that the offender and victim undergo are mutually dependent, in our paradigm case of dyadic forgiveness, and they are asymmetrical. Both of these features lend forgiveness highly unusual, if not unique, characteristics as a virtue” (Griswold 2007, 47).

To unpack this, Griswold is laying out the basics of his requirements for forgiveness. Griswold’s idea of forgiveness requires a communicative relationship between the wrongdoer and the wronged after the moral transgression that occurred. In this relationship, both the wrongdoer and the wronged must meet certain prerequisites before forgiveness can be achieved. For the wrongdoer, these prerequisites are as follows:

the wrongdoer must take responsibility for the action,

the wrongdoer must admit the action was wrong,

the wrongdoer must feel and show regret for the action,

the wrongdoer must commit to change through action and word,

the wrongdoer must show an understanding of the injury done to the victim from their perspective,

and finally, the wrongdoer must give a reasonable story as to how the moral transgression came to occur and why they are now worthy of forgiveness (Griswold 2007, 49-51).

Once these requirements have been accomplished by the wrongdoer, then forgiveness is possible.

However, in Griswold's theory, forgiveness also has certain requirements for the wronged to complete. These requirements for the wronged are as follows:

the wronged must indefinitely refuse to seek revenge,

the wronged must abate their resentment for the wrongdoer,

the wronged must commit to eradicating resentment completely,

the wronged must change their view that the wrongdoer is a villain,

the wronged must change their view that they are morally superior to the wrongdoer and acknowledge their equal value as human beings,

and finally, the wronged must declare to the wrongdoer that they are forgiven (Griswold 2007, 54-58).

These rules can also be applied to the daughter example in the previous section. In this case, each daughter would have an individual relationship of forgiveness with the father. For forgiveness to then occur, the father would have to acknowledge the feelings of each daughter, take responsibility for wronging each daughter, commit to change, and ask for forgiveness. Then each daughter would individually need to let go of resentment, acknowledge that their father is not a villain, and then offer forgiveness. This kind of forgiveness is a team effort, that emphasizes letting go of resentment as an important part of the response to a moral transgression.

SIMILAR GOALS AND PROBLEMS

Despite their major differences, Griswold and Fanon's theories have some similar goals. Griswold's theory requires that the wrongdoer must apologize and take responsibility for the harm done, and at the same time the wronged must acknowledge that they are not morally superior to the wrongdoer. In this way, Griswold is also displaying the role of a power struggle in moral transgressions. These requirements seem to be an attempt to make the wrongdoer and wronged

equal in their standing as moral agents. In this way, Griswold makes an attempt to restore the power balance back to zero in the same way that Fanon's theory does.

In addition to these two theories having the common goal of returning the power balance between wrongdoer and wronged back to neutral, both theories have the goal of ending lasting negative emotions after a moral transgression. In Fanon's theory, his aim is to propose a way that colonized peoples can break free and cleanse themselves of subjugation and inferiority. For Griswold, his aim is to eliminate resentment. While these are noble and important goals, these theories fall short of perfection in a few areas.

One big issue with Fanon's theory is its potential to make the wronged act immorally. By fighting violence with violence, the wronged put themselves on the same level as the wrongdoer. Responding to a moral transgression with violence or other harmful means only allows the negativity to spread. There is the old saying that "with an eye for an eye the whole world goes blind", meaning that if everyone responds to wrong by doing more wrong, eventually everyone will be a wrongdoer. So Fanon's theory doesn't seem to have enough moral boundaries to ensure positive change through moral action. Griswold, on the other hand, has too harsh of boundaries. By calling forgiveness a virtue, Griswold implies that victims ought to forgive. Griswold then creates all kinds of requirements that must be met for forgiveness occur. It is problematic to morally obligate a victim to forgive, but then make it such a daunting task for the person who has been harmed. Justice seems to be lacking here because the wrongdoer is not receiving a real punishment for the wrong they committed. In this dyadic forgiveness, the wronged has to put in as much work as the wrongdoer, which makes it seem as though the wrongdoer is getting away without any real punishment for the moral transgression they committed. While these two theories have similar goals, they fall on opposite ends of the spectrum and are problematic in their own ways.

AN INTERMEDIARY

Based on these two theories, there are two main ways to respond to a moral transgression. A person can either respond with violence or anger in order to wipe the slate clean, or the wronged and wrongdoer can work together to restore their equal standing and move on from the transgression. At the base of the problem here is the fact that a moral transgression has occurred that in some way harmed the power or standing of the wronged as a human being. This power

has been taken from the victim and transferred to the wrongdoer, making them have a superior standing. Therefore, a good moral theory in response to this problem must both acknowledge the victimization of the wronged while also aiming to restore the power balance in an ethical way. Griswold's theory fails to meet the first criterion because it does not fairly makeup for the victimization of the wronged, while Fanon's theory does not fulfill the second criterion because it fails to restore the balance in a morally acceptable way. That is why I propose an intermediary between the two that will achieve the goals of both while also avoiding the problems of both.

My intermediary solution is the option to withhold forgiveness. Griswold would most definitely disagree with this idea because he says:

We justly blame a person who is unable to forgive, when forgiveness is warranted, and judge that person as hard-hearted. The person who finds all wrongs unforgivable seems imprisoned by the past, unable to grow, confined by the harsh bonds of resentment. He or she might also strike us as rather too proud, even arrogant, and as frozen in an uncompromising attitude. (Griswold 2007, xiv)

This quote from Griswold represents the common conception about people who choose not to forgive. Contemporary cultures often elevate forgiveness to a moral pedestal as a virtue, especially Christian cultures whose religion is based on the radical forgiveness exhibited by Jesus Christ. However, I will argue that withholding forgiveness, under certain conditions, can occur without all of these negative misconceptions such as anger, arrogance, and resentment. When withholding forgiveness is used without negative misconceptions, it can restore the balance to zero in a just way.

In order to illustrate this point, I am going return to the example of the three daughters. In this scenario, the father is on his deathbed. He repents and asks for forgiveness from his daughters so he can die in peace. Daughter 1 harbors bitterness and resentment against her father, and she chooses not to forgive him. Daughter 2 also chooses to not forgive her father. She has grown to understand the underlying causes of his wrongdoings, and has moved on from bitterness and resentment, no longer feeling like a powerless victim. She believes forgiveness would not help her and would only be helping her father. Daughter 3, does choose

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to forgive her father. She tried to let go of the anger but was unable to until she forgave her father on his deathbed and found closure.

From this example, several important things can be gleaned. First, it is important to note that all three daughters had their own response and relationship with the wrongdoer. In the example, both Daughter 2 and Daughter 3 were able to move on and set the power balance back to zero, thus accomplishing the goals of the theories studied in this paper. Daughter 1 is the only daughter who seems to be acting immorally. She is the definition of Griswold's bitter victim who denies forgiveness out of rage. By doing so, she does not solve the problem of the moral transgression. She continues to be subjugated by her father indirectly because of her feelings of anger and resentment.

Using this example, I would like to outline my premises on how to morally respond to a moral transgression by withholding forgiveness. They are as follows:

- (1) the choice to forgive is individual; it never requires all victims to collectively grant or withhold forgiveness,

- (2) the decision to forgive is completely autonomous of the antagonist and is a decision that can be made by the victim regardless of repentance,

- (3) both forgiveness and withholding forgiveness are right if and only if they are done without resentment and equalize the power shift caused by a moral transgression.

My theory focuses on keeping the wronged in mind. Because they were the ones who were victimized, they should be thought of first when it comes to responding to moral transgressions. The goal of my theory is to provide the victim with options. The goal is to solve the problem of the power balance caused by moral transgressions without further victimizing the wronged. By giving the wronged complete autonomy over the choice to forgive or not forgive, some power is restored back to them.

Withholding forgiveness is often seen in a negative light. However, forgiveness being withheld in this case can be a mechanism for justice. Using the example above, the father was repenting only because he is dying. He may be genuine in his apology and fulfill all of Griswold's six requirements, but that doesn't

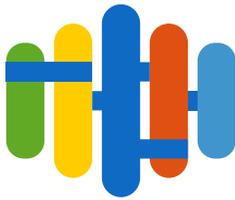
change the fact that he tormented his daughters throughout their whole life. In a situation like this, Griswold's theory of forgiveness would be continuing to give the wrongdoer power. Morally obligating the victim to work with their antagonist benefits the wrongdoer more than it benefits the wronged. It does not bring the power balance back to zero because it sympathizes more with the wrongdoer and does not account for histories of injustice. By withholding forgiveness in this example, Daughter 2 has not allowed her father to subjugate her one last time. She has given him a just punishment for the moral transgressions he has committed, and she has done so without malice or resentment. Withholding forgiveness needs to be seen as a valid moral alternative to forgiveness because it is the best healing mechanism for a lot of victims. Forgiveness and withholding forgiveness are not mutually exclusive either. A wronged person could choose to withhold forgiveness, but at a later point decide forgiveness is a better option for them. Either option works as long as the wronged had found a way to end resentment and feel empowered again. Based on this explanation, withholding forgiveness can be defined as a temporary or permanent refusal to grant forgiveness as a way to maintain independence and prevent further subjugation from a wrongdoer. Withholding forgiveness requires the wronged to not harbor resentment, and to use the withholding of forgiveness as a way to gain empowerment and end their own subjugation as a victim. This does not require the victim to have empathy or understanding for the wrongdoer. In the example above, Daughter 2 has come to understand the causes of her father's behavior. But there could be some cases of withholding forgiveness that lack this understanding element and manifest more as detaching oneself from the wrongdoer as a form of self-preservation. The main point of withholding forgiveness is to give the victim options and not give the wrongdoer any more power over them. That is why the only real requirement for withholding forgiveness is that it empowers the victim by helping them let go of resentment. Additionally, it is important to note that the thoughts and opinions of people other than the victim should not play a role in the victim's choice to forgive or not to forgive. Some might object to withholding forgiveness because they may view it as a form of revenge. But withholding forgiveness, as defined here, is not a form of vengeance or anger. Rather, it is a moral way for victims to stand up for themselves and feel empowered. It is not an attack against the wrongdoer; it is a redemption for the victim that allows them to be free of the tyranny and subjugation caused by the wrongdoer.

CONCLUSION

By arguing for withholding forgiveness, I am by no means conceding that forgiveness is an invalid option. I argue that what is best for the victims and solves the power balance is the best option. This can vary on a case by case basis, as shown by the comparison of Daughter 2 and Daughter 3. The goal of my intermediary is simply to give the wronged a second option other than obligatory forgiveness. For some wronged, forgiveness does not set the power balance back to zero. For some wronged, forgiveness is a continuance of subjugation and giving in to their wrongdoer. For others, forgiveness gives them the power and closure needed. Because of this difference in the disposition of the wronged, our opinion of withholding forgiveness needs to change. It should be viewed as a valid means of restoring power to those who have been victimized. Withholding forgiveness is not violent, it does not harm anyone. Rather, it is a way for victims to accept what happened to them and take a stance they feel comfortable with. If forgiveness is a virtue, then withholding forgiveness should be too because it is courageous. By withholding forgiveness, a victim stands up for themselves in a positive and impactful way. Allowing forgiveness and withholding of forgiveness accomplishes all the things Fanon and Griswold are aiming for. It helps solve the power imbalance Fanon worries about while also providing a morally acceptable response to wrongdoing that Griswold is seeking. For this reason, it is a perfect intermediary between the two theories.

REFERENCES

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