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in medias res



Editorial Policy

In Medias Res is a student-run journal devoted to the liberal arts in light of the Christian intellectual tradition. Published twice per year by St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan, our title describes the experience of university life, in which we are always caught "in the middle of things". Living and working among many ideas within the university and in the wider world, we have the opportunity to reflect critically on society, culture, and ourselves. The journal aims to provide a forum for intelligent and meaningful community expression. We publish poetry, fiction, articles, essays, travelogues, photography, art, and more. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni of all disciplines and backgrounds are encouraged to contribute by submitting their work.

To submit your work or inquire about joining the editorial board, contact inmediasres@stmcollege.ca

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COVER ART: COLOGNE ON THE RHINE IN 1530 | WOODCUT BY ANTON WOENSAM OF WORMS

MIDDLE SPACE Dr. Donna Brockmeyer | Library Director, Shannon Library

In Medias Res, from the Latin, can be taken to mean "in the middle of things." Space is what exists in the middle of things. It is what occurs between one person and another, between the public self and the private self, and between humans and nature. To introduce this discussion about space—the indoors, the outdoors, and the space between us, where we engage as agents of social action—I will share a metaphorical anecdote.

I was at a leadership institute high in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. The institute aims to instill the values of self-worth, dignity, and high regard. In order to do that, the organizers hauled dining room tables, chairs, linen, and china to the top of an ungroomed, raw, and rather inaccessible mountain. There, they served us an elegant dinner. The result of this feat was a feeling of awe: they *did* that, they did that for *us*, and they did that for *me*. I have long forgotten what they told me there in 1993, but I certainly recall how they made me feel.

Space, which we create for ourselves and for each other, instills feeling. As a librarian and as a host, I aim to have students, faculty and guests feel the esteem in which they are held when they come to the Shannon Library at St. Thomas More College. I want them to know that *we created this space for you, we welcome you, and we hold you in high regard.* In fact, this is what God asks of us in Hebrews 13:1-2 and Romans 12:13, in which we are called to show hospitality to strangers, as thereby we may not only be entertaining angels but also extending the work of the saints.

Indeed, the Catholic Church has excelled at the creation of magnificent spaces that are welcoming and large enough for all. Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic styles have influenced the art and architecture of our churches and have evolved through the ages to grace all of Christendom. The Sistine Chapel, in lifting my eyes has lifted my spirits. The Benedictine monastery high in the mountains at Montserrat, home of the Black Madonna, has offered a vantage point from which to challenge myself to see the distance. Gaudi's Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, over one-hundred years in the making and not yet complete, has singularly moved me to tears at a mere glance of the exterior.

God's presence is also palpable in the spaces where the indoors and outdoors intersect, such as the Greek-cum-Christian site at Ephesus in Turkey, in the open-air stone theatre, in the marble streets brushed by Our Lady's skirts, at the Celsus Library—the only one of its kind still (somewhat) standing—and at the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of Antiquity. It is hard to imagine that God's handiwork was not present in the construction of these structures, as it is in the outdoors—which itself has been called God's canvas. In those spaces, too, the Divine welcomes and cradles us, offering renewal, rest, hope, and evidence for faith and belief.

The book of Genesis conjures a garden of paradise. For many of us living in Canada and particularly in Saskatchewan, paradise is more than a stone's throw away—or at least it feels that way in the middle of winter. Our province exemplifies the irony of having an abundance of space, yet a paucity of warm weather in which to enjoy it. For those of us who are long-term residents, it takes concerted effort to ensure we spend time outside in activities that soothe the soul.

My own quest to soothe the soul has taken my son, Zackary, and me on an excursion walking the

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Camino trail through Galicia in Northern Spain toward the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Traversing quiet paths through eucalyptus forests, resting among wild rose bushes, hiding in full height behind tall hydrangeas, and seeing orchids in nature hitherto only seen in florist shops, were experiences unlike any other we had known. We felt the peace and tranquility that pilgrimage brought, and found opportunity for reflection, contemplation, and renewed intention. It stirred a visceral knowledge that there are other worlds than those defined by our daily lives. Similarly, snorkeling reefs off the coast of Jamaica awoke in me an internalized unshakable understanding that there are worlds within worlds within worlds. Alongside seeing the Grand Canyon and the underground, cavernous, windand-water-sculpted Antelope Canyon, as well as Bryce and Zion national parks, these experiences confirmed for me that there is a God. There must be. The beauty and magic on this planet is not

others to visit.¹ This is reflective of Shakespeare's contention that "all the world's a stage, and we are but the players."² It is in this space between the personal and public selves that we work each day. This metaphysical space can align with real places in which we engage with others in the sacred activities of living, learning, and loving.

Our homes are highly personalized spaces where we spend a significant part of our lives—where we rest, engage with our family and friends, and construct and maintain our cultural values. Places of work and study are also spaces where we spend much of our time. They too have their own cultures, and like in our homes, those cultures are highly influenced by our physical surroundings.

David Kelley, CEO of IDEO, a global design company, puts it this way: "Space matters. We read our physical environment like we read a human face... Consciously or not, we feel and internalize what the space tells us about how to

an exploded mass of random, accidental cells, but an intricately designed web, and a patina of colour and beauty—greater

a patina colour and auty—greater

than all of our historic constructions and the buildings in which we live, work and study.

St. Thomas More College is part of the constructed buildings, and a constructed reality, in which many of us spend our daily lives. For students, professors, and staff, it is the space between our home—where we live, think, grow, and dream in private—and our place of work where we do the same in concert with others. It is somewhat like the world-renowned Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman's metaphor of the rooms in which we live: the back room, which is our private space where we can be our true selves, and the front room, into which we invite

We shape our buildings, and thereafter, they shape us.

do our work."³ IDEO created a new space at the centre of Stanford University campus in which they put couches in the classroom

and removed static furniture. They wanted learners, colleagues, teachers, and co-workers to come together to connect, reflect and debrief. Ultimately, they wanted to create a place where everyone felt safety for themselves and empathy for others. They knew that space develops culture and used design to elicit the emotions desired in their workplace.

This is what Sir Winston Churchill was expressing when he said: "We shape our buildings, and thereafter, they shape us." This happens through building design, choice of furnishings and texture, use of colour and light, arrangements of offices and seating, and the placement or elimination of walls.

Imagine being in a prison. How would that feel? How would it feel differently if you were inside the bars as opposed to being outside of them? How would it feel if you sat behind the warden's desk instead of in solitary confinement? The illustration enables us to feel the impact of our surroundings on our emotions.

Places of work and study have formal settings where organizational culture is created, such as offices and classrooms. Some of us have privacy in our offices, but most do not. In those situations, liminal spaces such as hallways, bathrooms, or private areas then take on extra importance. Harriet Shortt in her research shows that the liminal spaces are those where we can feel moments of privacy or informal interaction.⁴ Private spaces are those that are required to find momentary withdrawal in order to recalibrate and reconstruct our labour power. Those replenishing moments are necessary for effective work capacity and creativity. Shortt's research shows that sometimes managers want to "colonize" liminal space in order to meet other agendas, but those who use liminal spaces need them in order to remain productive. Modernity has required that we spend much of our waking lives in spaces that are not those where we are most comfortable, such as our homes. So we need to have such spaces at work or school-the front room-which somewhat, somehow, replicate the privacy of home-the back room-if we are to work at our best.

At St. Thomas More College, we are blessed that much attention, time and expense has been invested in creating spaces at our college that are not only well maintained, but provide places for study, reflection, and interaction. Not many buildings on campus are as well-appointed or have the illumination afforded by the art that we have at our college. The space we have leaves us with a feeling of pride, in that it is clean, cared for and invested in. When someone cares about our space, and invests in it, it helps us to feel that we too are care about and invested in. When we make decisions about how they are changed, altered, and adjusted, spaces should be created and recreated in collaboration with those who use them.

As a Catholic College, we want to create spaces that nurture feeling of peace, joy, contentment, creativity, where people feel safe to learn, to risk failing, spaces to be, to grow, and to dream. We want every student, professor, worker, leader, and follower to feel welcome and held in high regard. We want to create spaces that allow each of us to live within the beauty of possibilities inherent in the wonder of the human condition. We want to create democratic spaces that *allow for* the human condition. We want to create spaces that are an extension of open arms. Ultimately, we want to instill in our students and in each other that we can be, and that we are, a positive force of agency in the world.

I believe we are creating such spaces, at STM and beyond. It has not been easy, but we are working toward that laudable goal. Yet, there is still some distance to go. How do we navigate the possibilities? Perhaps, as Noah, we can "bring all the creatures, great and small," building together the spaces that will ultimately create the culture in which we all want to live, a space to which we all want to come, each of us, everyday – to learn, to live, and to love, in that *space in the middle*.

^{1.} Goffman, Erving. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* Edinburgh, Scotland: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre.

^{2.} Shakespeare, William (1623). (2009). *As you like it.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

^{3.} Kelly, David. (2012). Forward in Scott Doorley, et. al. *Make Space: How to Set the Stage for Creative Collaboration*. New Jersey, Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.

^{4.} Shortt, Harriet. (2015). "Liminality, space and the importance of transitory dwelling places at work. In *Human Relations*, vol. 68(4), p. 633-658.

DEPARTED Tania Alazawi

I was born amid a flustered escape—disguised as a vacation. I was born, without a tangible home but with intangible hope that encircled me stoic as the framework I reside in now.

Perhaps now I know the warmth of inclusion—but I was raised through the flickering ashes of division. These hands, these fists, these fists, these pulsing bones were torn from a home I have never visited to a home, that asks me where I'm from.

But these thoughts of belonging are scattered like windblown seeds across my past; leaving every place my fingers have stretched with a burning scar that spells my name in a language you can't read. Because my mind—not so concrete as my bodyis torn. My fraying ends each reaching for a picturesque tomorrow I've fabricated from all the textures of this earth I have dared to call mine.

So that is where I am going: a place I have faked so long it must be real. A place where my divided heart is king, and these tainted bloodcells currency. When I was born I was bare of coin, my empty pockets were high-blown tides that collected the breeze leaving me adrift between two tongues. But where I'm going—this dream I have dressed as reality will leave me in riches.

You see, I know this place—one that rewards my heart for being divided, my skin for being dark, and my words for being loud—does not exist. But I am gluttonous, and I shall devour this facade until it kills me, complimenting myself on just how much it tastes like truth.

What is a space that is significant to you?

For each journal issue, members of the In Medias Res editorial board assail the University of Saskatchewan's academic community with a quasi-philosophical question, after the fashion of Socrates.

"My family farm because it's just me and whatever task I'm doing, all stress is off. The scenery—the field, the trees, you might see an animal—puts me in an emotional state where everything's all right. Until something breaks." – Josh, Business

"The Reading Room in the Murray Library is a great study space. It's quiet, has windows to look out of, desks that are the perfect height, soft chairs, and it has a Starbucks nearby. It's a motivational space to learn and get school work done." – Mandy, Nutrition & Dietetics

"One of my favourite spaces in the world is a spot on the shore of Christopher Lake in front of cabins 13 and 14 at Camp Kadesh. There is an opening in the trees that allows for sunshine and a clear view of the 'Island'. This spot is of significance because it has been a place of solitude, prayer, and deep thought for many summers." – Tiffany, Kinesiology

"There's this hill in my neighbourhood park which is kind of like a vantage point and from the top you can see above all of the houses. I somehow often end up being there around sunset, but at any time of the day it's my

go-to spot for thinking and remembering the world is a lot bigger than myself. There's nothing nice about the hill... but it's the view!" – Lauren, Geography "I guess one of the most significant spaces for me would be my bedroom. It's comforting to retreat to a quiet place after long or stressful days. Having somewhere familiar to relax, study, or even just watch television or read a book, is really important to me."

- Anonymous

"My favourite place in this city is on top of the train bridge. I used to go there all the time with my old friends during happy and sad times. Standing up

there looking down at the river made me feel as though I was up high, on top of the world. Looking down as the cars drove by, and people walked the edge or rode their boats in the river, it made me feel as though even my biggest problems were small and insignificant to the world. That gave me comfort that even the hardest times would become easier. The best part was when the train rode by and we were so close to the train we could reach out and touch it. The old wooden planks that made up the floor and railings of the bridge would shake and it would be the biggest adrenaline rush. And just as fast as the train came, it would be gone and the bridge would become peaceful again... just like life itself. From going by so fast you can hardly keep up, to peaceful again

and a feeling of relief and happiness." – Steph, Undergraduate

The Gadyly



BECOMING MRS. DALLOWAY

Kayla Penteliuk

Virginia Woolf Sylvia Plath Charlotte Perkins Gilman Anne Sexton

Sometimes, my English degree is a study in suicide.

I write their names and feel the weight of their loss in ink.

I swiftly decide that I will not be another name.

I will refuse to remember them for the way that they left us. I will remember them for the way that they were known to us. Because I am Lily Briscoe and Esther Greenwood maybe I am even The Woman in the Wallpaper

and I know that mighty words and unforgettable worlds can come out of this pain.

Ending my life is not an option because I wish these women would've kept their hands on the literary pulse for just a little bit longer

but perhaps they had to die for women like me to keep living.



BOGORIA Quinnton Weiman

A few weeks after starting a teaching job in Krakow this past summer, I took a long walk in Kazimierz on a day off. Historically a Jewish district and presently at the centre of Krakow's slow gentrification, Kazimierz's alleys and dark arcades are full of temples turned nightclubs, twenty-four hour bodegas, and cheap zapiekanka stands in the crumbling Plac Nowy market.

When lit up at night, these pretty and petrified alleys and shells of old synagogues in Kazimierz had their own tang of ancient smoke, like the burning amber my friend Anusza showed me smells like million-year-old trees. The Jewish community here was once robust, and its traces too could very nearly be smelled. In the excitement of candlelit nightclubs and dusty little squares where tourists enjoy ice cream, it was easy to ignore the horrific reality of that community's fate, until you saw the plundered menorahs for sale at the market, or the neglected frescos of the Promised Land peeling away from the synagogue walls. These traces of smoke set my imagination in motion. More than ever, I felt obliged to connect to the roots with which my family had lost contact.

At the Jewish cultural centre, I inquired about geneological services and was put in touch with their resident genealogist, Jakub Czuprynski. With the names of only a few of my mother's relatives, Jakub was quickly able to determine that the Sniderman family (Polonized as Sznajderman) originated from a small town north-east of Krakow called Bogoria.

While my connection to Bogoria is tenuous at best (the Sznajdermans who emigrated to Canada did so shortly after the turn of the twentieth century), I figured that a trip there would be significant, at the very least to satisfy my vain curiosity. On the last Monday before my departure back to Canada, I bought a bus ticket to Bogoria and was on my way, with nothing but an empty pesto jar that Anusza had given me with which to scoop some dirt.

Bogoria is an ordinary Polish town. Like most ordinary Polish towns, it was nearly completely razed during the Second World War. From my research, I already knew that its wooden synagogue was one of the first buildings burned to the ground, so I wasn't optimistic about my trip to begin with. But what I found in Bogoria was absolutely nothing.

"Czy jest tutaj cmentarz zydowski?" Or, in English: "Is there a Jewish cemetery here?" "Nie, nie ma." The locals were indifferent to the question at best. The reality was that nobody had any memory at all of the Jewish community that had once occupied the town. There were no memorials, no signifiers of any kind. Not even a weedy headstone to look at and wonder about. The town had faced the totality of genocide, and so my search had come to an abrupt and sobering end. I posed the question to an elderly woman keeping a quiet shop on the main square, and she smilingly shook her head, apologetic. Then, looking up, she pointed over my shoulder, "Sandomierska". She opened her arms wide: "Field". I bought a devotional candle, thanked her, and left.

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The synagogue and Jewish cemetery at Bogoria were said to have stood to the east of the main square, which was now occupied by townhouses and other private properties. What I hadn't realized is that beyond it, on the outskirts of the town on Sandomierska street, was a wide-open field. I have no proof that this is where the cemetery was, but the quiet and remote place felt prayerful. A lone young birch stood in the field, and it's there I honoured my roots, as the first survivor to return to Bogoria. While it was difficult to face the totality of my roots' extinction, I was sitting there, alive, with a future ahead of me in Canada. We had survived, like so many others who continue to arrive in Canada every day. There in the field I resolved to do better for those who, like us, have left everything behind and can only smell smoke.

Ruined Jewish cemetery at the former site of the Kraków-Płaszów concentration camp. Photo provided by author.



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A Self-Talk Manifesto

Kayla Penteliuk

1. I will never be able to love someone with my complete self.

> You will love in fragments with an irreplaceable sense of caution and passion and the people who love you will give what you are not able to

You will wake up someday soon with the sun on your face and a stretch in your limbs and the realization that it is no longer necessary to live so close to the end

You are capable of creating incredible fictions but this will transform into incredible conviction and your pain will be your poetry

> You will realize that none of this is your fault and you are not responsible for the understanding you are responsible for the healing

You will be on the cusp of giving up when you will feel the universe touch the nape of your neck with a life-giving love You will suddenly know that you are always enough and the road to recovery will no longer be too much

2. for another day.

3. I will die from this panic attack.

My loved ones will never understand. *4*.

5. There is no hope for recovery. I am stuck here forever. This is it.

I cannot possibly deal with this

SEPARATE Siarra Riehl

Cheerful. The day it happened I was cheerful. My demeanour was pleasant. Happy. Gay. I knew what it felt like to be light, to wrap lips 'round teeth and let them breathe.

She spoke my name and brought her hands to my face. I let her scent waft to my nostrils. In the mere seconds between my name and her next word I took note of her pieces. I ignored her hands. Her lips were two halves of a strawberry cut lengthwise—her eyes a reflection, irides tinted blue. Water. I was a fish on land, eager for a single sip of that wetness. Long ebony waves framed her face with sun-kissed strands. My eyes fell to her collarbone, then rose to her throat, chin, mouth. The spotted bones of her cheeks lifted as she spoke, her teeth soft pearls against the darkness.

Swallow, if you love me.

She smiled as the words escaped her. I took the small sweet from her hands, lightly brushing her fingertips. I placed it in my mouth and fumbled it around with my tongue, letting it soften and slide down my throat. Its peculiarities slipped into my body, my blood. I thought to say I do love you, then I fell to the floor.

Now, I am consumed. I feel it twitching behind my eyes, creaking in my knees, festering in my lungs. It's there. Unbearable. If I'm shaking, my mind doesn't know it. My teeth don't breathe anymore. I am separate from myself.

The bathroom floor is a mess. A man slouches over the toilet, clawing at his face with bitten nails. He's been here for what seems like hours, peeling away at chunks of his flesh. He takes both hands away from his face roughly, resting them at the nape of his neck. Massaging his spine, he presses each knot, playing hopscotch with his fingers. Laughter bellows deep within his stomach, rising to the surface and escaping his throat. When his outburst finishes, a silence fills the room. His legs wobble as he lifts himself up, slowly, pressing his hands on the porcelain of the toilet seat. Staring at his feet, he stumbles toward the sink. Blood splatters the mirror and crusts the counter top. A handkerchief lies neatly beside the faucet, folded in a perfect square. Deliberately, he grabs it and gently begins unfolding, eyes blank, focused on his reflection.

My reflection.

He remembers that morning, waking up early, sleep sticking to his eyelashes. In the bathroom, he had splashed cool water on his face. His routine had been ordinary, unaltered, the same. The man had a habit of sneezing every morning immediately after brushing his teeth.

His eyes regain focus as he stares at the open handkerchief. Inside lies a small metal square, a blood clot stuck to its corner. He picks up the square and places it on his tongue. Shaking, he grasps a cup, fills it with water, and bringing it to his lips, hastily swallows the metal. A tear slides down his cheek and lands on his shoulder, his throat burning. He looks once more at his face in the mirror, at the scabs he's scraped raw, then reaches for a towel and begins to clean the sink.

You left me. An uneaten butterscotch in the pocket of your skirt. My heart beats loudly under the stitches that hold me together. I am the rind of a lemon. A pansy in the winter.



The Miracle of a Mitten Found in the Snow

Andrew Wiebe

He stands now—alone Against the cold wind that bites His face under the rampart Where feeble flakes of snow Fall in meaningless places Around where he stands. Now—

Against all odds, the world Seems different, even hell Seems different, while time Stagnates, dilates, repeats And retreats. which he cannot Stand. Now-the loneliness. As time attempts to wash him away, he cries out to the Heavens that those angels Are ignorant and remain Fixed against all odds— Fixed—even when this Bitter cold calls to them. As he begins to freeze— he sees a star begin to fall in the distance and wonders what forsaken

miracle

awaits.

And this is where it was discovered.

Sing, O' Persephone the providence Of this proud protector of the phalanx— The guardian of the distant, Middle, and proximal. No longer forgotten. He held you close, Even on this night of corrupt Miracles, which threaten them both Where they stand—or was it where They stood?—perhaps they have forgotten the distance of their journey thus far.

O' lost one, buried in The snow without your pair; He rescued you, the mighty defender Out of this mid-winter hell, And with it, he saved himself, Your other half.

HOW I IMAGINE YOU WOULD FEEL Ky Mason Lapointe

Oh God, hold me.

Don't get me wrong, that isn't directed at a person, especially not the person who is actually holding me right now, no—

It is directed straight upstairs, to God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit, or whoever's listening—could You do me a favour?

I have never felt so alone in someone else's arms, and they are the one person I never thought I would feel alone with but, if I'm honest, I'm not entirely with them right now and I'm not entirely with myself either, so oh God, just hold me.

If anyone can pull my wandering soul back into my carcass of a body, I'm sure it's You, or whoever's kicking around up there, whoever held these two pieces when they were first made and managed to fit them together in the first place, I am sure You could put them back as one now, so oh God, I'm asking You to hold me. While my soul goes out to play and I am left alone, held by someone who my body does not know, teach me their story and why my body should trust them, if only to make my body comfortable enough for my soul to want to return, if only because I am failing to feel really held right now, so oh God, hold me just in case it helps.

I want to be able to feel their arms around me. I want to be able to feel the warmth of how much they care about me on my skin, so even if You have to force my spirit back to me, even if it hurts, even if it is just for a second, if my soul was here, I could make it a home and maybe it would stay this time, so oh God, hold me, give me and my soul a chance.

God, just for a moment, can you hold me?

Pro et

PRO Jared Green | Editor, *THE DIRT*

Is urban revitalization without gentrification possible? Cities are the place to be these days, which means big changes for the historic communities that have populated urban cores. While much of the urban renewal experiments of the 1940s through the 1960s have been deemed disasters, word is still out on the new wave of "urban revitalization" that began in the 1990s and continues through to today in most of America's cities. The supporters of revitalization say rising tides lift all boats. As wealth has come back to cities, everyone benefits. But critics of revitalization simply call it gentrification, and, as one speaker at the EcoDistricts Summit in Washington, D.C. said, "gentrification is a crime." Furthermore, new discussions of turning existing urban neighborhoods into "ecodistricts" may just be gentrification in a green dress. How can cities encourage growth but also provide a sense of continuity? How can over-taxed city planning departments accommodate the forces of change while also respecting local communities and cultures?

According to Charles Hostovsky, a professor of urban planning at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., the speed of revitalization in D.C. has been extraordinarily rapid. Every neighborhood has cranes, signifying new development. There has been a corresponding shift in the demographics of the city. In 1970, the city was 77 percent African American. Today, it's just 49 percent. "The number of people who have been displaced equals a small town." Indeed: in the past decade, approximately 50,000 young, white Millennials have moved into the city while 35,000 African Americans have left.

Reyna Alorro, who works for the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning, said revitalization has even spread east of the Anacostia River, perhaps the last hold out to gentrification. There, the city is supporting the redevelopment of Barry Farm, 25 acres of public housing, into a new mixed-income, mixed-use development that they hope will be an example of equitable revitalization. As HUD Hope IV funds have diminished since 2005, the District has started its own program of revamping public housing. "We want to target the areas with blight, crime, high unemployment and turn them into mixed income communities." The theory is that reducing the concentration of the poor in communities, and relieving their isolation, will improve their conditions.

Barry Farm, a historic African American community founded by freed slaves, currently has some 400 units, with 1,200 people. The population of the housing development is 93 percent single mothers; some 86 percent are unemployed. "This is not a friendly, welcoming site." There is only one over-priced corner store, with a bullet-proof glass wall separating the store owners from customers.

The \$550 million redevelopment plan, said Kelly Smyser, DC Housing Authority, will create 1,400 public and affordable apartments at the same site. New apartments will face each other, creating open public thoroughfares that enable "eyes on the street." There will also be a recreation center, with an indoor pool, basketball courts, and computer labs, as well as a charter school. The nearby Anacostia Metro station will get a full upgrade, with improved access to the station from the development. "We want to bring opportunity to residents. We will make the connection to Metro easier and safer."

The District government calls this project "revitalization without gentrification," as all current residents will be allowed to come back to the new development. "There will be zero displacement." The city also promises it will undertake a program of "build first before demolition." To increase the diversity of the development, some 300 of the new units will be affordable housing, rentals, or for sale. The city also wants to encourage small businesses to locate in Barry Farms. They are creating "live-work" sites that will enable people to live above their stores. "We need to get rid of the bullet proof glass."

The neighborhood is rightly concerned about how they can preserve the best of the local culture with all the change. One example of this is the Goodman League, a basketball tournament that happens in the neighborhood every year. "People have a good time, barbequing, sitting in lawn chairs. There are no beefs on the court." The basketball courts where this happen will remain untouched.

While Smyser was convinced this upgrade will benefit the community, one conference attendee seemed equally as convinced that with the District's multimillion dollar investment, the city will simply be opening the neighborhood to opportunistic developers and further gentrification. Word is still out on how this urban redevelopment story will play out.

Is urban renewa

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CONTRA

l gentrification?

Avi Akkerman | Department of Geography and Planning

Local government politicians sometimes use loaded language, that is, terms to predispose the listener to a certain political stance. Two such terms are "urban renewal" and "gentrification." Both seem to allude, or have alluded at some point in time, to an affirmative intervention in the built environment of a local jurisdiction. As it happens, "urban renewal" now has an extremely negative connotation, whereas "gentrification" comes to suggest a positive progress within the built environment of a community. Geographically, both of these terms have often referred to the inner city, and both have aimed at areas that were at some point in the recent past observed as low-income, and rife with social problems, not the least of them, crime.

So what was "urban renewal" in the past, and what is "gentrification" at present; and why are they different? Urban renewal of the mid-twentieth century addressed largely slum clearance in larger cities. More often than not, at the time, this involved the dislocation of local communities and their dispersal to housing projects, usually high rise residential towers. The gargantuan failure of this attempt at urban rejuvenation has been famously illustrated by the urban housing project Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, MO, completed at great cost in 1956, only to be demolished in April 1972.

Two major oversights involve urban renewal, at least the way we know it from the mid-twentieth century. The one problem is inherent in the dislocation of people, families and entire neighbourhoods from their communal places of abode. Geographical uprooting of a community from a place of its shared communal experience and history does not bid good news even if its place of origin is a poor and crime-infested neighbourhood.

The second problems is the superscale of highrise residential towers. Unlike the horizontal space of a neighbourhood where people spontaneously encounter each other at street corners, the high-rise tower has turned the elevator-shaft onto a vertical street, to use the wording of Le Corbusier, a leading personality in twentieth century urbanism. Such conversion of horizontal communal space of a street onto vertical space does not work, and certainly not on a superscale. Human beings were created to walk, talk and communicate, not to ride elevators. The end result of these two mistakes was alienation among people, more crime and more poverty.

Perhaps the first time that the term 'urban renewal' received a bad rep was by Jane Jacobs, another leading urbanist of the twentieth century, on the opposite end from: Le Corbusier. In her 1961 book, *Death and Life of Great* *American Cities*, Jacobs condemned urban renewal the way it had been pursued by municipal governments and U.S. state agencies, quite correctly predicting what was to happen a decade later at Pruitt-Igoe and other urban renewal projects.

The word "gentrification" was never mentioned in Jacobs' book. "Gentrification" as an urbanist term was introduced by the British urban sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964, three years after *Death and Life* was published. As opposed to urban renewal, gentrification, as Ruth Glass saw it, was the improvement of neighbourhoods from within, by the community itself. There is no dislocation of incumbent communities intended in gentrification, and there is no superscale construction intended to replace older homes.

A sad example of urban renewal in Saskatoon was the demolishing of our Chinatown. During the early years of the twentieth century the Chinatown, in Saskatoon just as most everywhere in North America, was a poor neighbourhood where crime and disease were rife. Of course, many cities like San Francisco or Calgary, had the foresight to keep their Chinatown as a unique ethnic niche within a growing metropolis, and to deal with poverty and crime through neighborhood improvement. Saskatoon had followed a different course. Ostensibly to make place for the planned Idylwyld Freeway, by the 1960s the Chinatown in our city was gone, and we irreversibly lost a unique urban neighbourhood.

Urban renewal and gentrification are not the same, but the loaded language of local politics seems to slowly turn the word "gentrification" into a loaded term, although not in the same way as "urban renewal" was made half a century ago. Invasive development of urban superscale into formerly small-scale urban neighbourhoods comes today under the label "gentrification" even though it has little to do with its original meaning given to it by Ruth Glass. The ultimate lesson from the language and actions of local governments ought to be that only a critical reception by the community can lead to a careful communication of local governments with the public, and to an accountable decision-making on behalf of the public.

CAPPUCCINO Allison McFarland

An old lady, crumpled over her walker hobbles to the counter. I've seen her before. Every few days she's in with a younger woman; well, a woman in her late fifties. Mother and daughter alike will go off on whoever's working the till. The old lady always asks for the foam stuff.

I'm officially certified as a barista, meaning I can make coffee unsupervised and usually manage to avoid exploding anything. I think she wants a dry cappuccino.

Today the old lady came in alone. She waits at the till, skin around her eyes pulling down and mouth parted enough for me to see coral lipstick on her front teeth.

The girls on the front ignore her. Except Trish, who cups a hand around her ear and leans over the counter.

"I can't hear you!" she says, as if the old lady is deaf and mute.

"The foam! The one with foam, you stupid girl. Is there anyone around here who knows how to make coffee?"

"Dacy, you're up."

I look at the lady as I approach. She has thick, grey-white hair set by rollers and a floral t-shirt exposing flabby triceps like limp wings.

"Hi, what can I get for you today?" I smile, maybe too wide.

"You're going to make me repeat myself again? Idiot girl. I asked you to find someone who can get me the foam stuff."

"Okay, so a dry cappuccino? What size?"

"No, none of this fancy shit, just a small mug of the foam."

"Okay, I'll get that for you. Want to find a seat and I'll bring it to you?"

"Wait, wait, I have to pay first." She holds out a handful of loose change. Mostly nickels and pennies, but a loonie too. "Is this enough?"

I've already rung her order through as one of my free drinks for the day

"Yes, that's perfect." I take her \$1.43 and deposit it in the tip jar.

Everyone's fled to the backroom except George, who's on drive, so I go to make the drink.

Put the espresso grounds in the machine. Push the button, pour the shot into the mug. I give her one of our ceramic to-stay mugs because she likes to sit on the patio with her drink. Steam the milk into the shot six seconds after the espresso. Any longer than ten and the shot goes dead: tastes burnt, like coffee left in a pot too long and made without a filter so the grounds get stuck in your molars. I had to drink dead shots as part of my training—had to learn never to serve them.

When the cappuccino is done most of the cup is filled with foam and light to pick up. I wish I could make a fancy design on the top for her, a leaf or heart, like I've seen George and Priss make, but I'm not that good.

Instead of setting the mug on the counter and hollering out the order I walk it to the old lady.

"Here you are, one mug of the foam."

She looks at me, eyes wide and a bit watery, as if she can't control her body anymore. Both hands on the mug as she takes a sip. I start to turn away, but she stops me.

"What's your name?"

"Dacy."

"Dacy." She repeats, foam caught on her upper lip hair. "Thank you. I'm Gwen. This is perfect."

I move to leave again, to go back behind the counter. Gwen reaches out and touches my wrist.

"Will you sit with me?"

"Where's your daughter?"

"Daughter? She left years ago. Called me a miserable witch and left because I didn't like her fiancé."

"But the woman who comes in with you?" I sit across the table from her because she still holds my wrist.

"Her, I pay her to be with me. I'm in the home just down the street. It's Linda's day off."

"Oh."

"She takes care of me, but she can be downright nasty. Always talking over me—clarifying, she says. Like people don't understand what I say. But you do."

Gwen takes another sip. I should get back to making drinks, but then this little old lady would be alone.

"Dacy, you're a sweet girl."

"I'm trying, I really am."

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Gwen finishes her foam drink in silence and leaves, patting me on the shoulder with one hand, the other still clutching the ceramic mug.

"I've never seen her so pleasant," George remarks.

I grab a cloth and start wiping the counter.

"Did you tell Dacy what the old hag wanted?" asks Trish, hands on hips.

"You knew what she was asking for?" I bristle.

"Everyone does, she's in here all the time."

"Then why didn't you take her order?"

"She's a bitch. Calls me stupid every time she's in here. Calls everyone stupid. You get what you give."

"She's lonely."

"Doesn't mean she can yell at me."

"Have you ever tried to be nice?"

"Why?"

I throw my cloth beside the bucket of sanitizer. Untie my apron and toss it in the bin with the other dirty ones. Leave.



Stand Still | Photo by Kathlyn Joy Zales

BLUE Natasha Hubbard Murdoch

...breathe... I'm sorry your wife is sick Comfortable, yet not, in this our second home. Are you here teaching? Nurse, doctor, nurse, dentist, social worker... ohh. See us. Patient, husband, daughter, son, son... We can help ...can't breathe... can't... talk... Sits on your bed, reaches for your hand. Work with us. Definitely, we're thinking that too. We'll order that. ...a raised hand gestures... with all that is left... "I'm not going to make it." AYE AYE! Masked, tubed, humidified, smokey, high flowing... Leviathan. I just came to say hi. No, I don't stay. The other team member is most responsible. ...mesmerizing breath.... Head peaks around the curtain. Shoulder leaning on wall. ...and another... tell me what I have... I won't get through this again. Furtive eyes, fidgety hands, questioning tilt of the head.

What judgment on this monstrosity?



Simplified Stages

Cleo Nguyen

ANGER

He says I dare you, I triple doggy dare you— There's a hunger in his eyes, starving and livid— I'll eat you right up, he promises— I'll make the earth bleed red for you for all that it's done.

Perhaps then you might feel something.

GUILT

There's not really a choice here. It's inevitable that he swallows you whole; hatred has an appetite that never seems to end depravity promised as some sort of sick divinity.

It's not your fault, you tell yourself.

The words burn you like a cast iron. He hands you a pair of pliers: *It's best not to think too hard about it,* he advises. He pries your mouth open. It takes less than five seconds to surrender to your vices.

DESPAIR

You string your teeth along like pearls, pushing around the idea of forgiving yourself with your tongue it's hard to swallow without being chewed.

You try so hard to be a saint, he laughs, are you really just going to ignore all your sins? What right do you have to forgive yourself?

The monster always dies at the end of the story, you know. You know exactly who you are, and you did this to yourself.

HEALING

It takes months for you to recover from the violence of it all. Your body bears those witness marks for years to come, tender flesh weathered and worn by time and grief. What are you to do with your hands now?

FORGIVENESS

Here's an answer for you. You hold onto this, you hold onto the kindness that remains despite everything being so cruel.

There's no need to undergo punishment to receive salvation, not for a sin that never originated with you.

It's alright to place your faith in that. It's not your fault. And damn well, nobody can tell you about no hallelujah.

His cheap tricks and shit comforts have grown old,

Depravity is such a boring God, so you abandon these shrines, and cease kneeling before the altar it's your turn to make promises.

The difference between his and yours, is that they are far from empty.

As glorious as a hymn a prophecy delivered and to be fulfilled, the kindness that remains says this,

Witness me.

Cultural Event: rRemai mModern

In October, Saskatoon saw the grand opening of the Remai Modern Art Gallery of Saskatchewan. The *In Medias Res* editorial board took the opportunity to explore this long-awaited addition to our city's skyline.

The building

The gallery itself makes use of its multi-level floorplan to interesting effect. The building looks from the outside like a stack of old books; Bruce Kuwabara's design is meant to reflect the horizontal visual lines of the prairie landscape dotted with old buildings.¹ Inside, high ceilings, crisp design, and prime views of the river feel bright and fresh. There is little distinction between exhibits and décor: light fixtures, room dividers, and seating for guests all work to make the gallery one interactive experience.

The exhibits

A selection of drawings and paintings represented our ideas of "traditional art". These included works by the Group of Seven and almost 150 pieces by Pablo Picasso that we were excited to see. However, we were more intrigued by experimental and exploratory pieces, such as a painting that used physical props to continue outside its frame, or an entire room within a room that had been preserved as a piece unto itself.

We noticed there was a trend in using film in experimental ways. A stack of running flatscreen televisions at the foot of a staircase and a recording of a television being smashed brought attention to the strange protection our culture affords uniform screens. One partitioned room screened Anton Vidokle's film "The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun", while Stan Douglas's film "The Secret Agent" was presented with multiple visual perspectives playing simultaneously on six screens—including one perspective on the audience. We couldn't look at only one place to understand the story, but had to turn and immerse ourselves in our surroundings.

The experience

We found some of the "traditional" works to be underwhelming. Many of the experimental pieces explored the idea of image and perspective, which made us wonder if drawings and paintings alone have lost some of their power to affect in an image-saturated society. Do artists have to try harder to speak to us when we can see hundreds of examples and comparisons on our phones in a minute?

Remai Modern's inaugural exhibitions Field Guide and Faces of Picasso will remain on display until February 25.

1. "Remai Modern / KPMB Architects + Architecture49" 14 Nov 2017. ArchDaily. Accessed 13 Feb 2018. https://www.archdaily.com/883539/ remai-modern-kpmb-architects-plus-architecture49/



3



NOT WITH A BANG BUT A WHIMPER Jenine Gail Urquhart

"Good god," he says as another blast of thunder shakes the walls. "It sounds like cannons, doesn't it?" His eyes are shining bright from the candles we've lit around us. There's no couch in Hunter's apartment, so we're sitting on the floor. There are also no wine glasses, so we're drinking our cheap wine out of mugs he bought secondhand. Mine is white and chipped with a picture of a grain elevator on it.

"Keep going!" I say. He smiles. Even in the dim candlelight I can see the red stains on his teeth. Every sip he takes they get darker. Tonight he is reading me T.S. Eliot. He always recites poetry when he's wine drunk.

He barely reads from the page. He's read this poem thousands of times and thinks it was written for him. I smile wide as I listen to him and pretend that I'm not fully aware of why he invited me over tonight—that I'm not aware he chickened out and got drunk instead.

Lightning strikes outside and illuminates the bare, white walls around us. I wait for the roll of thunder and count the seconds in between.

There is no art on these walls. There's hardly any furniture, either, and Hunter's bed is an old mattress lying on the floor in the back room. This place is like an old battleground, a memorial of Hunter's guilt. The art, the couch, the wineglasses, the bed. They all left with her after the war. Everything moved on and left the wounded behind.

I remember visiting a battlefield one weekend when I studied art in France. I went with my easel and paints to build a landscape that wasn't the same boring lakes and mountains that my classmates produced. There was nothing there but dead grass and worn, white rocks under a yearning blue sky. The air was empty and sad, as if it missed the slaughter that it once surrounded. But I didn't know how to paint that.

I can't paint Hunter's apartment, either. Everything here exists in the negative space and I'm unable find the colour for it. There is an absence like a scab over a deep wound that he keeps picking with his dwelling mind until it scars. I met him a month and a half ago at a party for the gallery where I work. We snuck out back and drank cans of stolen PBR beside the dumpsters. He was wearing a denim shirt and jeans to a formal event and I had on a brand new white dress that he said made me look like a swan. He rolled up the sleeve on his left arm. There was a skinny, three inch scar running towards his inner elbow.

"See this," he said. "I got it when I was biking home drunk one night and accidently ran into a glass door." Scars are all over his body and they all have a story attached. Regardless of mundanity, he remembers every single one.

He says the way I look at him makes him uncomfortable. I'm sure it's the reason I'm here tonight. It was last Sunday when he caught me. We were sitting on this floor with steaming cups of milky tea between us. I was painting with oil on paper. Bright, red poppies. For remembering. He sat close to me and softly played the guitar. The light was perfect that day. Not glaringly bright, but not dim either. It illuminated the room with a pale softness that I always find so hard to recreate. It hit Hunter's golden hair and lit it like gentle embers at the end of a warm fire. It pooled down his face, softening the creases by his eyes, taking a moment to graze over his lips, then falling down to his large, rough hands that lightly danced over the vibrating strings. My heart was still.

He looked up and saw me staring. He saw the tenderness in my gaze and stopped short. I know that my presence in Hunter's life is only to fill the gaps that she left. To keep him company at the grocery store or to be a second soul in an apartment used to two. But I like to come here, anyway. I like to sit in the trenches with him, drink cheap wine out of garage sale mugs, and stupidly tell myself that he'll love me as much as her one day. Maybe I'll fall conveniently into the space between wounds and healing and the grass will grow green again.

Hunter stops reciting and looks at me. "Sweet Flora," he says, drunkenly, with slurred words and glassy eyes. "What have I done to you?" It's beginning now.

I've always felt a bit like an unwelcome stranger in this apartment. Like the moronic vulture who wanders onto the field when all of the killing is over. When the air smells like blood and madness. I look at him, the wounded remains of a soldier, with my big, vulture eyes. "Take me home" they beg. He lifts his gun and shoots me point-blank in the face.

"I'm bad. I'm a bad, bad person," he whimpers. I frantically shake my headand push the poetry book

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into his hands. "I am. You know what I did to her, Flora. You know why she left."

"Please keep reading," I beg, as tears start to well up in my eyes. "I really like this poem, please keep going."

There's so much sadness in his face. All of it facing inward. "Okay." He says. "I'll skip to the last part."

"This is the way the world ends."

I want to fill the trenches. I want to feel the love that started a war.

"This is the way the world ends."

I want him to take the gun away from my brow and let me come home.

"This is the way the world ends."

Three times. He pauses. We both know how the poem finishes. He takes my hands in his. Frail little bird hands in a cavern of calluses and scars. Under his skin are broken bones as sharp as shards of glass. The image of him as a whole man is only an illusion.

"Will it hurt?" I ask.

He sighs and drops his head. I kiss his forehead and pull him closer, letting my tears fall into his messy blonde hair. He clasps my hands tightly. I can feel the brokenness beneath his skin shredding away at my palms. Making them bleed, causing them to scar. Now I have a story to tell, just like him.

"Will it hurt?" I ask again.

His voice is a soft moan. "Like hell," he says.

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UNTITLED Jay Wildeman

The true lover dost In passion requite, And in such burning Revealeth the night.



BOOK REVIEW: The Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded by Molly McCully Brown (Persea Books 2017) Reviewed by Patrick Malone

Molly McCully Brown's *The Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded* is an astounding and timely collection of poems reflecting on the relationship between community and the body, representing a variety of perspectives of patients at an institution housing the mentally and physically disabled in the 1930s. Throughout the collection, Brown juxtaposes the patients' profound disabilities with the physical space they occupy. The dormitory in which they sleep, for example, is broken. Not being accepted as fully human, the patients are not allowed a fully functional home which keeps the weather out. Similarly, their physical and mental needs mean the patients are vulnerable to other persons, and must often accept their intervention. However, it is the fact of their bodies, not simply their disabilities, which means they cannot isolate themselves from others, in a manner clearly informed by John Paul II's Theology of the Body. To have a body, any sort of body, according to Brown, implies relationship, and her question is whether that relationship will be one of communion or dominion, and these patients' especially extreme needs put them at a special risk for being dominated.

The connection between bodies and physical space is most prominent, however, in the series of poems set in the blindroom, the solitary confinement area of the institution, where the patients are deprived of light and, abandoned to darkness, almost seem to lose their bodies. This section is reminiscent of the negative theology of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets, in which the unmaking of the person brings about the potential for the encounter with God. Brown embraces the paradox that while bodies are fundamental to personhood, dying to self is the path to beatific vision.

In a time when the physically and mentally disabled seem to have a target on their backs for, if not elimination, being hidden away (take the attitudes towards Down Syndrome in France and Iceland, not to mention North America), Brown's collection is an important reminder that prejudice against the disabled—and, indeed, eugenic attitudes—are not a relic of the past. They are the result of fear in the face of the difficulty of loving those not accepted as fully human because of their disabilities. Brown does not romanticize disability, making it seem easier than it is, but neither does she present discrimination against the disabled and the failure to love them without requiring that they be "normalized" as anything but a rejection of both humanity and God, and of a difficult but necessary calling.

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PAIN | PHOTO SERIES BY SARA SESTAK

In this work I intend to address the fact that while most of us now have no problem viewing anger, violence, and gore to the degree that media depictions of these emotions and actions have become almost ubiquitous in our society—we continue to feel extreme discomfort in viewing sadness, especially in watching someone cry. I believe that this is related to our perception of depression and anxiety. We are uncomfortable looking a crying person in the face just as we are uncomfortable discussing emotional and mental pain. We are uncomfortable even looking at images that depict these emotions. If we have not experienced this pain ourselves, and often even if we have, we continue to stigmatize it as being less severe, less important, and less valid than physical pain. We see ourselves and others as weak if they are affected by it. In fact, all pain is physiologically equal—even if it's invisible to others, even if it's not as immediate, even if we learn to cry out in solitude rather than around other people.

In viewing this work, the observer is forced to look me in the face while I cry and thus to engage with my emotional state. It is meant to make the viewer uncomfortable and to think about how they perceive emotional pain. I wanted to create this work to encourage progress in society's perception that emotional and mental pain is equally as valid as physical pain. Everyone faces these emotions at some point. Some of us face this pain every moment of every day: pain that greatly affects our choices and how we are able to conduct our lives. People need to understand and face these emotions in order to understand mental illness, or even just life. It would greatly benefit both our individual and group psyches to be more open about pain. I believe that we have the ability within us to be empathetic toward emotional and mental pain regardless of our own experiences.



ECHO | CHALK PASTEL BY EMILIE NEUDORF

POSTCARD STORY

"A postcard story is a condensed piece of storytelling in no more than 250 words. Use drama, poetry, humour, and dialogue to write one. Anything goes. There are no restrictions except the word limit. Stretch yourself by writing short." *Guy Vanderhague*

The Weather in October

I've heard people say that cloudy days tend to sap you of your energy, but for me, sunny days reflect an unwarranted optimism. The sun looks like a plate of Eggs Benedict and the sky looks like a jug of blue Kool-Aid. It's beautiful, if not a little gaudy, but still, a profound void of meaning remains.

I've been outside today but I don't know what to make of it. I only notice the weather when the clouds are a tempest. Most of my life has been lived in such ignorance. I never thought about the weather like this until four years ago-maybe it's not worth thinking about at all? The only meaning I have gained thus far is that the wind is an archetype for the Spirit of God, or that the wind itself is God's spirit.

All I can say about the weather this month is that it's draped in nostalgia. I see it in the vulnerable trees, the old haunts, the vermilion and flaxen leaves. I walk among the leaves without fear of imbruement. How honestly they die along the sidewalks. They're detached from their maker, yet somehow remain saints. The weather this month can do no wrong -though I certainly can. I am stuck in a slough of memories, while the scenery around me goes forward. How does anything move on?



ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN By Graham Wall