PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

Volume 18, Issue 1
April 2025

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Editor

Anthony J. Nocella II, Ph.D.

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ABOUT PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

The Peace Studies Journal (PSJ) is a leading and primer journal in the field of peace, justice, and conflict studies internationally. PSJ, founded in 2008 out of the initiative of the Central New York Peace Studies Consortium was established as an informal journal to publish the articles presented at the annual Peace Studies Conference, but in 2009 PSJ was developed into an international interdisciplinary free online peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The goal of PSJ is to promote critical scholarly work on the areas of identities politics, peace, nonviolence, social movements, conflict, crisis, ethnicity, culture, education, alternatives to violence, inclusion, repression and control, punishment and retribution, globalization, economics, ecology, security, activism, and social justice.

The Journal welcomes scholars, activists, and community organizers/leaders to submit. We hold to a caring, welcoming, and constructive process aiding in the publishing of your articles/review, rather than turning you away with delayed harsh and deconstructive review feedback. We encourage articles that interweave theory and practice and especially welcome articles on topics that have not yet been examined.

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Please read these guidelines and then send your article, essay, review, research notes, conference summary, etc., to the appropriate issue editor (see below).

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1. accept without revisions
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Book Review: *Space Criminology: Analysing Human Relationships with Outer Space*. **Lampkin, J., & White, R. (2023)**

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BOOK REVIEW
SPACE CRIMINOLOGY: ANALYSING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUTER SPACE

Nathan Poirier

Green Criminology is a field known to push the limits of "classical" criminology by highlighting harms against nonhuman animals and the environment. Green Criminologists classify such harms as crimes, whether legally recognized or not, and ethically take nonhumans seriously as beings in and of themselves. Having been around now for barely 30 years, green criminologists have succeeded in expanding the scope of criminology to include nonhuman animals, plants, ecosystems, and water (Brisman et al., 2018). The Peace Studies Journal has considered nonhumans as well (Wrenn, 2012) Space Criminology pushes Green Criminology further by considering celestial objects outside of Earth's atmosphere and even space itself to be entities worthy of ethical concern and protection from human-caused harm. This is the first book-length treatise on the subject, although several additional books are also recent or shortly forthcoming (Eski & Lampkin 2025; Sachdeva, 2023). Similar to what philosopher Michael Marder (2013) did for plants, in saying that animal liberationists must be consistent and not overlook human treatment of plants, Lampkin and White call out to green criminologists to not overlook entities beyond

Earth. This is a commendable and exciting intervention, as even the most ardent radical may overlook space as an ethical entity (which may partly be due to the relatively nascent space exploration industry). Admittedly, this applies to myself; even though I've been aware of and supported green criminology for several years, my imagination was limited to terrestrial matters. The thought of treating the protection of outer space seriously—as entities that intrinsically deserve to be protected and/or left alone, did not occur to me before this book.

The authors cover such topics as space mining, space junk (useless/discarded intentional or incidental debris floating in space), space pollution, living and working in space, and a couple final chapters on criminological challenges in conceptualizing and dealing with space crime. Importantly, the authors point out the messiness of dealing with space crime as it may occur in various ways: (1) people on Earth committing Earth-bound crimes that somehow deal with space (e.g., destroying international satellites), (2) crimes committed by people in space between others in space or on Earth (e.g., hacking from outer space or interpersonal crimes), or (3) harms against space itself (which could potentially include any human-related presence beyond Earth's atmosphere). Bringing attention to the notion that space can even be harmed makes this book's existence worthwhile. Lampkin and White speculate on how the fairly recent uptake in space interest and missions, mostly by rich private billionaires for various purposes (all relating to personal profit) might affect criminological investigations.

Similarly, and more closely related to the journal this review features in, this book makes me wonder how peace studies might also be concerned about human activity in space. As the authors mention, oppression must be eradicated on Earth before exploring outer space. Likewise, peace must be fostered on Earth before humans have a significant presence in outer space—indeed, if we should have a presence there at all. Since those who are at the forefront of current space exploration, colonization, travel, and extraction are primarily billionaires looking to make further profits, we should not expect the current space "regime," as we might call it, to foster peaceful relations in this new(er) real. In fact, it is likely that the capitalist and exploitative use of outer space will at best continue our current violent situations if not exacerbate them. These are unfortunately becoming pressing questions for peace advocates since billionaires are pressing on with their space conquests. Whether we want to or not we will have to wrestle with some rather novel questions. Like, how might space colonization affect peaceful relations on and off-Earth? Can (outer) space even be used in a peaceful way? What does peace with respect to outer space mean? These seem like interesting questions for radical geographers to consider. But as humans begin to directly interact with and in space more frequently, it would seem like the field of peace studies would want to have a presence in this space—both conceptual and perhaps literal—as well. Peace studies scholars have already well-covered most Earthly domains but is space a "space" they have tended to overlook? What sorts of conflicts are likely to be extended into outer space, or what new types of conflicts might arise? What might Peace Studies think about extending criminology to space (see Bowler et al., 2024 for a special issue of Peace Studies Journal that closely engages with penal abolition)? Space has already been used for war, as in former US president Ronald Regan's "Star Wars" program (a proposed but never developed missile defense system housed in outer space) and Donald Trump's creation of a Space Force as an official sixth branch of the US military. Peace-based initiatives should be created to resist such endeavors and strategies of how to counter their violent effects if/when already in place (Brown, 2020). It would seem that peace studies scholar-activists should be against the general current global space "program" as it sits.

While the subtitle of this book is "Analysing Human Relationships with Outer Space," relatively little actual analysis occurs. Partly this may be due to the general dearth of human interactions with outer space. The chapters are more oriented around describing different relationships humans have with/in space. As a general example, there is much description of what space junk is, how much of it there is, and where it is located in space. But there is little in the way of why space junk is, could be, or should be considered (at least potential) harm, and harm to whom? Yet, the authors are clear at various points in the book of their general ethical stance. For instance, "Our underlying philosophy is thus directed at maximising social and ecological justice here on Earth as well as off-planet" (p. 44), and "If we are to step out into space, then tread lightly" (p. 64). Thus, they approach the matter (rather appropriately, I might add) according to the precautionary principle, an ecocentric orientation, and with restraint. But there is a lack of development of why space and space objects should be considered ethical entities and protected or cared about—as well as fraught grounds with unknown potential for violence. Perhaps the issue of human restraint—what might be interpreted as resisting human supremacism—could be treated with more depth both in terms of space exploration (or the lack thereof) and here on Earth regarding consumption habits. A specific ethical frame is not included by the authors.

Overall, Lampkin and White are to be commended, as are others also working on this general topic. It is certainly one that should productively help stretch the mind of academics and intellectuals, including peace advocates. This book is intended to only lay out some parameters and contours of a space criminology. It is precisely this sort of novelty that I think should be pursued in academics across the disciplines. This is refreshing material. As the authors emphasize throughout the book, they are ahead of the curve regarding human relations with outer space. This is important because such speculative and technologically-mediated encounters should be thought out beforehand to try to minimize or eliminate negative unintended consequences. This book is continuing to set trends within green criminology and also leaves plenty of intellectual fodder for peace activists and scholars as well.

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Non-State Torture Victimization and Suicidal-Femicide Conditioning

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Abstract

This article highlights one woman's story—Sara's story—supported by other women, whose victimizations are of organized family and non-family non-State torture crimes. It shares how their drawings were vital in assisting their ability to explain the behaviours non-State torturers' inflicted onto them. A questionnaire illustrates the recording of victim-centered evidence of the non-State torturers' behaviours perpetrated against them. A focus explains reframing suicidality as suicide-femicide conditioning. Concluding, this article goes global with educational interventions presented during United Nations sessions in Vienna, Austria, aimed at raising awareness of the necessity to prevent and eliminate non-State torture crimes.

Non-State Torture Victimization and Suicidal-Femicide Conditioning

Jeanne Sarson and Linda MacDonald

Sara's story of naming she was tortured by family and non-family perpetrators began in August 1993 (Sarson & MacDonald, 2009), yet fifteen years would pass before the United Nations Committee against Torture released its General Comment No. 2, which validated that acts of torture are committed by individuals or groups who are non-State actors, listing acts of rape, human

trafficking, and domestic violence (2008). Asserting if States believed or knew that non-State torture (NST) victimizations were happening, and failed to take action consistent with the United Nations 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), the State is, in effect, consenting to NST crimes occurring. The United Nations Security Council had previously, in 2004, clarified that non-State actors refers to "any individual or entity not acting under the lawful authority of any State," which family or non-family perpetrators are. They perpetrate NST, a term coined to differentiate non-State torturers from State torturers, such as police or military personnel, who commit State torture (Sarson & MacDonald, 2021).

When Sara sought support she was in a life-threatening suicidal crisis. Although she was almost 30 years old, educated at a Master's degree level, and struggling to maintain her professional position, Sara could not explain the reasons for her suicidal crisis. She could however, draw images in her struggle to "get it out," to release the physical and emotional tension she said made her feel she would explode or alternatively Self-harm or die by suicide.

To comprehend and explain the meaning of what "it" was Sara began drawing; a collage is shown as Figure 1. Her drawings evidenced the multi-NST acts perpetrated against her as a child that were and are comparable to acts perpetrated by State torturers, water torture, for example. Surviving water torture is called non-fatal drowning in torture literature (Beynon, 2012). Sara shared two drawings of non-fatal water torture victimizations which she named "sink (washing hair) drowning" and "tub drowning" (Sarson & MacDonald, 2016). Sara told of suffering physical torture when her head was banged against the side of the sink and eventually explained that tub drowning began when forced into the tub by her father and raped as a toddler. As a toddler Sara understood her vaginal bleeding as "the water is turning red colour just like the crayons."
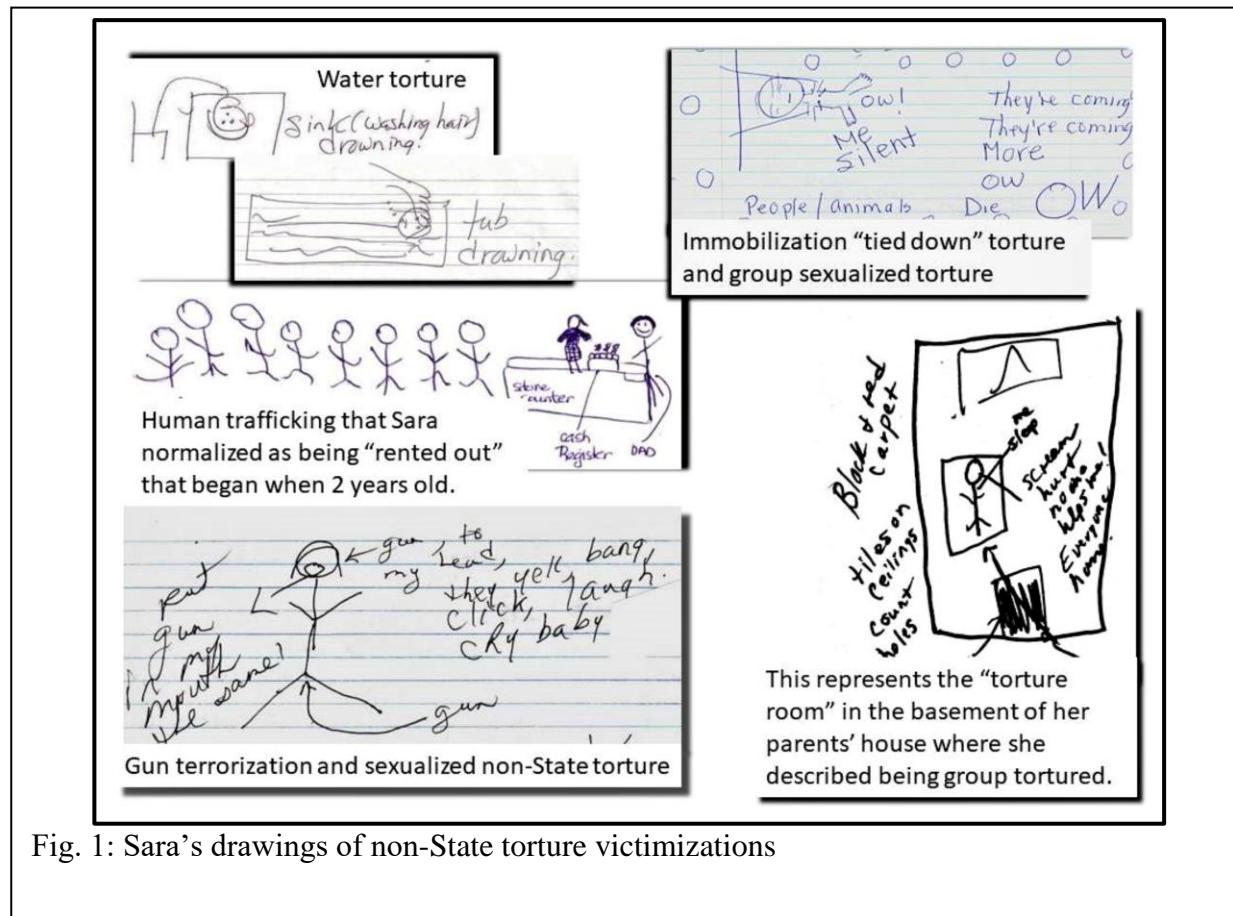
Fig. 1: Sara's drawings of non-State torture victimizations

Sara's other drawings illustrate being "tied down" which is recognized as immobilization torture (Shrestha & Sharma, 1995). Three more drawings expose sexualized tortures of forced nakedness, being gun raped, and of organized group torture in the basement "torture room" of her parent's home, first explained in a 2009 *Peace Studies Journal* article (Sarson & MacDonald, 2009). Sara said her parents invited their like-minded non-State torturer friends to what other women mentioned was named a "party." Psychological tortures were of degradation and humiliation when verbally laughed at and called "cry baby." Sara's expression of "OW" is, she said, representative of terror and torture pain.

Just as the United Nations Committee against Torture stated that torture by non-State actors can be perpetrated by human traffickers, one of Sara's drawings showed her father trafficking her (Sarson & MacDonald, 2005). Sara relationally understood this as being "rented out" to "the family." Sara had been torture conditioned—taught—as a two-year-old child how, in her words, "to do good" when rented out in order to gain parental approval and love. This family system, she said, was superior to that of the "outsiders." As an adult Sara had maintained these beliefs, a consequence of decades of torture conditioning which contributed to her inability—to her powerlessness—to comprehend why she was in a suicidal crisis.

Sara's powerlessness is supported by the definition of powerlessness in relation to torture in a report by Manfred Nowak (2008), a former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture. He

explained that powerlessness needed to be added to the defining elements of torture when a person exerts total power over another in a manner the victimized person cannot escape. Such was Sara's reality. She was trapped in her parent's home—a 'prison' she was born into—with a "torture room" in their basement where they and other non-State torturers functioned, hidden from public view (Sarson & MacDonald, 2009), as occurs in State prisons. Maria Grazia

Fig. 2: Non-State torture universal questionnaire completed by Sara

Giammarinaro, the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, writes it was a "duty to denounce and condemn the practice of torture as a method used by traffickers to subjugate, control, and exploit victims of trafficking in all its forms" (2013, p. 5).

To further operationalize the meaning of NST victimization, a NST universal questionnaire was developed utilizing victim-centered language, illustrated as Figure 2 (Sarson & MacDonald, 2009, 2016, 2021). It lists 48 NST acts, with space for additional comments. It also shares Sara's response and exposes that she marked an "X" on all 48 NST behaviours listed, plus marked item 49 to indicate she had more victimizations than non-State torturers intentionally perpetrated against her

(Women Graduates - USA, 2021). Victim-centered language means utilizing the words Sara and other women voiced to describe the NST acts committed against them. For example, Sara spoke of being raped with a gun and other objects as listed in item 26. She did not explain this as sexualized torture. Nor did she describe being laughed at and called "cry baby" as psychological torture. She said she was called names and felt she was treated as non-human, listed as NST acts 46 to 48. A decision by women to do this questionnaire sends the message they are understood and offers validation, as one U.S. woman wrote, "Thank you…It is very difficult to find good information and a place where specific acts are defined as torture instead of just included and not talked about" (personal communication, 29 August 2018).

Sara, and other women, explained non-State torturers conditioned them to believe they had to die if they told on their families. Meaning, for example, they had to cut their wrists, jump off a bridge, or cause a fatal-to-them car accident, so these acts appeared to be Self-inflicted suicide. Alternatively, women say they were also encouraged to Self-cut or practice Self-harming survival strategies as a way of maintaining their silence. Alex, like Sara, was born into a family with a father who tortured and trafficked her. Like Sara, Alex shared her drawings as a way of explaining the severity of the NST pain and suffering NST victimizations cause, sharing her drawing of Self-cutting, tragically illustrated in Figure 3.

Until the modus operandi (MO) of non-State torturers is understood, their NST crime remains invisible and they maintain their impunity of never being held criminally accountable. This knowledge led to a re-think and naming of the perpetrators' MO as NST suicidal-femicide conditioning because it is a consequential response to the psychological NST conditioning to never tell that Sara, Alex, and other women had been subjected to (Sarson & MacDonald, 2018). The term femicide is used because non-State torturers' MO reflects the global reality that women and girls are intentionally killed predominately by someone in their own family (Research and Trend Analysis Branch, 2022), which is the destructive and intentional purpose of the non-State torturers' MO of suicidal-femicide conditioning.

Fig. 3: Alex's drawing of Self-cutting

The International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) (2015) says crimes need to describe the perpetrator's behaviours, intentionality, the characters of the person(s) victimized such as their sex, their relationship to the perpetrator, or identify belonging to a specific population or group. "Torture of a person" (p. 95) is how the ICCS describes the crime of torture. However, discrimination is present in the classification of torture crimes because it has been limited to State torturers as previously discussed, dismissing the descriptive behavioural sameness of the torture acts committed by non-State torturers. Sara was tortured as "a person" and the NST acts she described in her questionnaire response (Figure 2), and supported by other women's telling, is the same as the intentionally perpetrated acts of torture inflicted by State actors. Sara disclosed her relationship to the non-State torturers as family-based; their intentionality was evident as revealed in her responses listed in the NST universal questionnaire. Sara could classify that she belongs to the specific global group of women whose victimization descriptions do align

with the ICCS classification of torture if the discrimination is removed. Therefore, to uphold State's responsibilities to act when NST crimes are perpetrated, NST must be named a crime of torture and equally acknowledged to uphold the non-discriminatory human right not to be subjected to torture as explained in the United Nations Committee Against Torture 2008 General Comment.

Creating awareness that NST is a victimizing crime signals to the person they are "a victim of a crime" (Valente et al., 2019, p. 172), and a violation of their basic principles of rights to justice has occurred (United Nations General Assembly, 1985; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). During 2022, members of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Alliance) NST working group (https://crimealliance.org/what-we-do/nst/), based in Vienna, Austria, organized three educational presentations during events being held at the United Nations headquarters in Vienna, to raise global awareness to prevent and eliminate NST victimizations, predominately perpetrated against women and girls. Their presentations included:

1. A panel entitled "Gender-Based Violence as Torture Inflicted by Non-State Actors" during the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) session (The Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2022a).
2. The "Exhibition: Stop Non-State Torture – Enforce the Human Rights of Women and Girls" held in the Rotunda of the United Nations in Vienna during the 16 days of activism, along with a Walkthrough of the Exhibition (The Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2022b).
3. A panel presentation entitled "Stop Non-State Torture: Enforce Human Rights for Everyone" (The Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2022c).

Sara, Alex, and other women share interventions for the future that are victim-centered practices of Self-respect and human dignity. They ask people to:

- Hear me, acknowledge me when I say I was non-State tortured, believe me, and tell me you are sorry.
- Understand my victimization survival responses were essential, these were normal for my survival but sometimes still get in my way as I am healing.
- I'm not crazy; don't treat me as if I am.
- On my records write torture, do not write abuse or assault because torture represents my truth.
- If you have trouble saying torture or NST, practice saying these aloud, it will become easier and is truth affirming of me.
- I've felt socially like a freak and socially excluded forever. I just want to feel I fit. I want to be okay and know that others will accept me.
- I'm learning I'm a person – not a thing – and I have human rights. And that I'm here now, as Alex voiced in her drawing, Figure 4, titled, "I'm here."
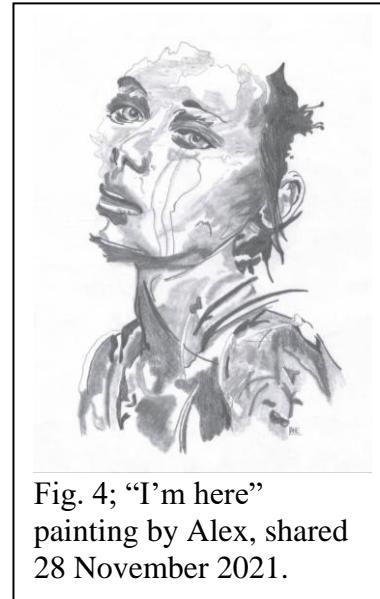
Fig. 4; "I'm here" painting by Alex, shared 28 November 2021.

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Resisting Carceralizing (S)Places Through the Prisoner Zines: The Signification, Index, and Shifting Through Adorno, Piepmeier, and Krauss

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Abstract

Zines are an amateur booklet of poetry, manifestoes, and prose incorporating anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic, anti-ableist, and anti-sexist discourse, through Xeroxed clippings, hand-drawn illustrations, and raw autobiographies. In this paper, prizines (combing zines and prisoner to create a nuanced conduit to explicitly system-impacted zines) will apply Adorno (1998), Krauss (2000), and Piepmeier (2009) for the critical aesthetic pedagogy of prizines through signification, shifting, and indices, regarding carceral (s)place. Most zines are rarely considered in academic research beyond their potential use in their overlooked significance of American prisoner-written zines as a form of self-expression, political manifesto, and resistance against various systems of oppression. This work emphasizes Piepmeier's (2009) research on zines for academic (s)placement, while also highlighting Krauss's (2000) concepts of signifiers, indices, and shifters to illustrate how traditional modes of representation serve as a powerful tool for political resistance and self-representation in the prisoner-written zine genre, as Adorno's (1998) promotion of autonomy through art through the content of vulnerability, randomity, and pedagogy. Using Krauss, signifiers are representing objects, shifters shape symbolic and semiotic representations from signifiers, and index are the collection of signifiers. Through this synthesis, the paper uses an example of zinester and abolitionist Rayson's (2013) collection of prizines and examples of prizines from True Leap Press (2020) to present the potential of these zines to challenge dominant cultural narratives and expand the boundaries of political and

aesthetic expression. The schematic of the paper will first introduce an introduction of zines and prizines, then the scholars and their unique semblance towards signification, indices,(s)place, and zines, and will give a brief introduction to prizines and the concept of (s)place. (S)place (a combination of space and place) acknowledges the fluidity between the physical and symbolic aspects of environments, encouraging a nuanced understanding of how meaning is given to system-impacted geographies (Dietsche & Kilmer, 2022, p. 422). While not taking account of all signifiers and indices of prizines, for system-registered-incarcerated-carceralized-person(SRIC), these prizines should be used in pedagogical as well as being analyzed as the signifiers and indices.

Resisting Carceralizing (S)Places Through the Prisoner Zines: The Signification, Index, and Shifting Through Adorno, Piepmeier, and Krauss

Lucas Alan Dietsche

The idea of self-published, small-scale printed works can be traced back to early pamphlets, newsletters, and manifestos. In the 19th century, individuals and small groups would publish and distribute their own writings mainly poetry or manifestoes often with political, artistic, or social commentary. These works laid the groundwork for what would become zines (Robinson, 2018). The concept of the zine really began to take shape in the early 20th century. The science fiction fan community played a major role in their development (Michela, No Year). "Fanzines" were fan-created publications dedicated to science fiction, often including fan fiction, letters, and critical commentary (Duncombe, 1997). One of the first fanzines was "The Comet" (1930), published by science fiction writer Forrest J. Ackerman (Robinson,2018). These early fanzines were largely distributed by fans themselves and were central to creating a sense of connection and identity within the sci-fi community. After World War II, zines expanded beyond science fiction communities, for creation and reading (Watson & Bennett, 2021). These zines were highly connected to liberation and political movements.

In the 1950s and 1960s, underground movements and countercultures embraced zines as a way to express alternative views (Duncombe,1997). Political zines flourished, particularly among leftist groups, and the rise of punk rock in the late 1970s sparked a new wave of zine creation (Haworth, 2023). Punk culture adopted zines as a way to document the DIY ethos, critique mainstream culture, and provide a platform for marginalized voices (Liming, 2010). These zines covered music, politics, fashion, and the radical ideas associated with punk. Prominent examples from this time include "Sniffin' Glue" and "Punk". (Haworth, 2023). These ideas coincided with the many liberation movements of the time period, but were epitomized by the feminist and queer movements.

The feminist movement in the 1970s also contributed significantly to the zine world. Feminist zines like "Spare Rib" and "Riot Grrrl" offered a space for women to share their stories, thoughts, and critiques of society (Piepmeirer,2019). The Riot Grrrl movement, in particular, was built around DIY culture, where zines played an integral role in spreading feminist and punk ideologies (Chidgey,2016). Zines have always represented the countercultural and subcultural movements of their time. They have been vehicles for political change, self-expression, and creative freedom. Their accessibility and low-cost production allowed people from all walks of life to share their

voices, particularly those on the margins of society (Thomas, 2009). Going into the digital age, zines have become a sanctuary from the dismal hyperreality of social media.

As the internet began to take off in the late 1990s and early 2000s, some zines transitioned to online formats (known as e-zines), but the tactile, physical nature of zines still holds a special appeal for many creators (Herrada, 1995). The rise of social media and blogs has led to an evolution in the ways people publish their personal stories and ideas, but the zine world remains rooted in its DIY origins into the digital post-modern age (Hroch, 2020). Zines continue to thrive in niche communities today, with creators focusing on topics like identity, politics, art, mental health, and activism (Blake, 2020). The internet has expanded the zine world, but many zine makers continue to prefer the personal touch and tactile experience of producing physical zines (Belleville, 2014). Prisoner zines date back to the 1960s and 1970s when activists and incarcerated people began using zines as a tool for resistance. They were part of a broader movement to expose and challenge the conditions of the prison system (Wonder, 2022). Incarcerated individuals began creating their own publications as a way to express dissent, share experiences, and advocate for their rights in an environment where access to information was severely limited.

Prisoner zines are a contemporary form of samizdat. Samizdat, a Russian term meaning "self-publishing" or "self-published" (literally "self-publishing" or "self-penned"), refers to the practice of clandestinely copying and distributing literature that was censored or banned by the Soviet government (Oushakine, 2001). Many religious, revolutionary, and anarchist movements used this process to create their own identity and political movements (Saunders, 1974). This underground publishing movement started in the 1950s and reached its peak during the 1960s-1980s, when many intellectuals, writers, and dissidents turned to samizdat to circulate political writings, literary works, and cultural critiques that challenged the regime (Oushakine,2001). While samizdat originated in the context of Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe, it shares many characteristics with prisoner zines in terms of resistance, censorship, and self-expression (Daugavietis, 2020). Incarcerated individuals often use zines to tell their personal stories of life inside prison, including the emotional and psychological toll of incarceration, the challenges of navigating the prison system, and the impact of being separated from loved ones (Johnston, 1999). Samizdat, like zines deem to overcome and circumnavigate censorship (Goetz-Stankiewicz, 1992) But unlike samizdat, in the contemporary age zines continue to be a form of political activism and liberation amongst carceralized citizens.

Many prisoner zines (for this purpose I refer to them as "prizines") serve as a form of political activism, critiquing the prison-industrial complex, the criminal justice system, and issues of systemic racism, classism, and abuse. These prizines often include essays, poems, and manifestos calling for prison reform or abolition (Wonder, 2022). Like other zines, prizines often include art, poetry, and creative writing. These works provide a therapeutic outlet for prisoners and allow them to maintain a sense of cultural and artistic identity. (Wonder, 2022). Some zines are dedicated to providing practical resources for prisoners, such as legal advice, self-help tips, and ways to survive or resist within the harsh realities of the prison system. Prizines frequently emphasize solidarity among incarcerated individuals, providing a way for prisoners to connect with each other across institutions (Rayson, 2001). Some zines also aim to build bridges between the incarcerated and the broader public, raising awareness of prison conditions and advocating for broader societal change.

Prizines seek to undermine prison hegemony through their signification and index within zine movements and history.

Beginning with the introduction of like-minded collection of scholars to help analyze the signification and indexing of prizines. "Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism by Alison Piepmeier" (2009) explores the intersection of zines and feminism, particularly focusing on how young women have used zines as a form of self-expression, empowerment, and activism. Piepmeier's (2009) intense research examines the role of zines in creating alternative media challenges mainstream representations of gender, identity, and sexuality (p.45). This history and significance of girl zines, analyzing their content, style, and the personal and political agendas they reflect. The work highlights how zines offer a space for feminist expression, allowing young women to engage in the creation of knowledge, while also providing a counter-narrative to traditional, commercial media (Chidgey,2016). Through this analysis, Piepmeier (2009) argues girl zines are not only a powerful tool for individual identity formation but also for collective feminist action (p. 45). Unlike Piepmeier (2009), Krauss (2000) delivers theoretical examination on post-structuralism, but unlike Krauss (2000), Piepmeier (2009) specifically analyzes on zines through feminist and queer activism.

In "Notes on the Index, Part 1", Rosalind Krauss (2009) delves into the post-structuralist relationship between signifiers, indices, and shifters in the context of art theory, shifting representation, meaning, and the signifying process in visual culture. A signifier refers to the physical form carries meaning. In the context of prizine, the signifier would be the object (or visual form) represents (Krauss, 2000, p. 995). The index, in semiotic terms, is a specific type of sign linked to its referent through a causal or physical relationship. In this case, the index is the collection of zines or prizines. This process of relating to signifiers and index is through shifting. Shifters are visual elements much like their linguistic counterparts, take on different meanings depending on their context within a work of art (Krauss, 2000, p. 996). This can involve the way an object, symbol, or image within a piece of art transforms its significance based on where it appears and how it's arranged. Prizines are the signifiers and the collection of zines are the indices and their relation to each other depends on the shifting. Prizines no longer simply represents a fixed set of meanings but is seen as part of a dynamic system of signs and relations in or outside carceralized (s)places. Although Piepmeier (2009) doesn't typically focus directly on structuralism or post-structuralism like Adorno (1998) and Krauss (2000), the focus is more on the broader cultural implications of zines and how they can align with or critique the commercialization and institutionalization of art and culture, similar to Adorno's (1998) critiques. Adorno's (1998) work critiques societal structures shaping culture, while Krauss (2000) investigates the evolution of art forms in a rapidly changing world.

Theodor W. Adorno's Theory of Aesthetics (1998), offers a critical examination of the role of aesthetics in society, culture, and philosophy. Art's autonomy in its ability to resist direct instrumental use, allows it to critique the status quo, challenging dominant ideologies. However, Adorno also warns against the danger of art being co-opted by capitalist commodification, thus losing its critical potential (p. 57). Through a dialectical approach, between the aesthetic experience and societal constraints, emphasizing the importance of critical theory in understanding and analyzing art's role in modern life. Adorno (1998) presents an intricate view of the relationship between art, philosophy, and politics, underscoring the power of aesthetics as both a form of

resistance and a reflection of societal conditions (p. 45). Art and structuralism will delineate the concept of prizines and zines though self-agency of the prizine creator. Krauss (2000) and Adorno (1998) do not write on zines or priz
nes at all, leaving this research to Piepmeier (2009). Unlike the scholars previously engaged, Rayson (2012) writes from an non-scholarly approach regarding prizines confronting mainstream pedagogy and encouraging prizines overall anti-imperialist approaches.

Anthony Rayson, through his South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, has played a crucial role in distributing zines and other materials often contain political, anarchist, and social justice-oriented commentary and imagery. Because of the well-known and large collection of prizines, Rayson's work will focus on "Prisoner Zine Workshop" (2012). These works, serve as important outlets for resistance, providing incarcerated individuals with the opportunity to express their poetic auto-ethnographical experiences and viewpoints. "Prisoner Zine Workshop", in particular, focuses on issues pertinent to the prison industrial complex and often includes practical guides, creative expressions, and political discourse aimed at empowering prisoners (Fig.1). The cover and back of "Prisoner Zine Workshop" will be used to analysis the prizine as a signifier, shifter, and index, as well as promote its work through radical pedagogy (2012). Zines and prizines must be introduced so this signification and indexial work takes place.

Zines tend to break away from traditional publishing norms, embracing alternative or niche topics that may not be covered in conventional media. This unconventionality fosters a sense of rebellion and uniqueness, attracting readers who seek out something different from the mainstream (Piepmeier, 2009, p. 56). The physical nature of zines, whether they are handmade, photocopied, or printed on unconventional materials, contributes to a tactile, sensory experience. The choice of paper, binding, and format can make the zine feel more intimate and connected to the reader, reinforcing the sense of community (Piepmeier, 2009, p. 56). Zines often create a community through shared experiences, values, or identities, with a physical object (the zine itself) acting as a tangible medium connecting people. This is truer for priznes to be connectors for people on the other side of the many carceralized types of walls.

For prisoner zines or prizines serve as vital tools for incarcerated individuals to create Knowledge, assert their identities, and push for the abolition of prisons. These zines often reflect the complexities of the prison environment (s)place, yet they remain critical (s)places for prisoners to articulate their experiences and political belief (Dietsche & Kilmer, 2023, p. 423). To Adorno (1998), "[a]rt is the social anti-thesis of society "(p. 79). Like prizines of which the function is inherently anti-imperialist, art serves as a form of resistance against the structures and values that define capitalist consumer society. Prizines are a (s)pace for challenging norms, questioning power, and presenting new visions of the world. Art's role as an anti-thesis is to expose capitalist societal flaws, inspire dialogue, and open the door for new possibilities and transformations. Like prizines it fulfills the need for the lumpenproletariat-a Marxists term for systems-impacted persons desire to create beauty within their carceralized (s)places:

…lumpenproletariat. The repressed who sides with the revolution is, according to the standards of the beautiful life in an ugly society, uncouth and distorted by resentment, and he bears all the stigmas of degradation under the burden of unfree-moreover, manual-labor. Among the human rights of those who foot the bill for culture is one that is polemically directed against the

affirmative, ideological totality: That the stigmas of degradation be dedicated to Mnemosyne in the form of an image (Adorno, 1998, p. 73).

System-impacted persons in this case called the "lumpenproletariat", are perceived in capitalist society. Their suffering and labor are stigmatized, and they are seen as "uncouth" or "distorted." However, these stigmas, instead of being discarded or ignored, should be elevated, and memorialized as a form of resistance. The repressed and oppressed are called to contribute to culture, not in a way that conforms to the dominant, ideological norms, but by reclaiming their suffering and transforming it into a powerful image of resistance, one that challenges the very ideologies that oppress them (Adorno, 1998, p. 73). Prizines are this vehicle of which this reclaiming can be potential of occurring through revolutionary movements through signification.

Prizines remain a key notion of post-structuralist concept of signifying. By being dynamic and open-ended, art maintains its critical potential and its capacity to foster change and reflection. The materiality of the prizine enhances this connection, as readers may pass them around, trade them, or attend events (such as zine fairs), which solidify the shifting bond between the signifier creators and the audience-indices like True Leap Press does (Fig. 2). The signifier is the material form that makes up parts of content of an artwork being perceived at the time of being shifted. Krauss (2000) continues of "which is filled with signification' only because it is empty" (p. 995). Meaning signifying can only empty on blankness. Modern representation is in a process of transcending spatial and conceptual boundaries, on blankness, the possibilities of liberation are embracing a diverse and fragmented array of experiences that define the postmodern condition (Ramdarshan,2017). The significance of prizines, it is essential to explore a broader range of them, particularly those with anti-imperialist messages, as they represent materials in transition, reflecting the current epoch and the evolving struggles for justice and liberation.

Because of prizines, liberation happens through individualistic post-structuralist concept delineating a structuralist society through their inherent anti-authoritarian concepts. As per Piepmeier (2009) "[z]ines are perfect for this because you can create them quickly, can focus totally on those you are in specific collaboration with and are not beholden to a board of directors, advertisers, those in "authority" some thick dogma or some hidden agenda " (p. 46). Zines are free from the constraints of boards, advertisers, authorities, dogmas, or hidden agendas, giving creators complete independence and flexibility. Like Adorno's (1998) concept of overturning metaphorical cultural prisons, these zines challenge mainstream media and provide a unique, auto-ethnographic lens into the lived experiences of prisoners, ultimately pushing for the transformation of not only prison systems but societal structures as a whole. Through the community of aesthetics and human connection, zines deem to promote modelled and visual medias. Piepmeier (2009) suggests that "[z]ines as visual and sculptural media. We cannot understand zines or the zine medium—cannot understand the community they create or why they continue to be created—without examining the physical form, the materiality, of zines " (p. 133). To truly understand zines, their purpose, and the community they foster, it's essential to consider their physical form and materiality. To do this, randomity, is the most significant way that prizines shift their signification within the index.

Figure 1 Cover of "Prisoner Zines Workshop"
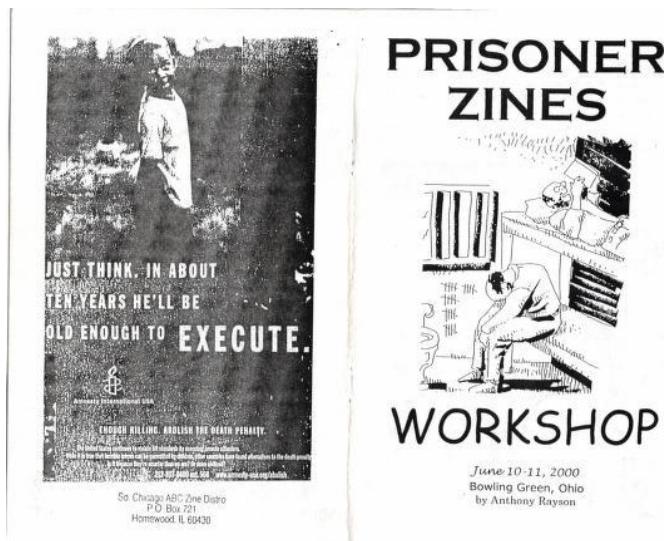
The cover of the "Prisoner Zines Workshop" pages of these zines may appear amateurish, but they effectively reflect the significance of this specific prizines (Fig. 1). For this example, the cover image of one such zine features two men in prison, their expressions morose and solemn. These stark visuals captures the emotional weight of incarceration. On the back cover, a picture of a young Black child juxtaposes the school-to-prison pipeline, visually linking the systemic issues of racial inequality and the criminal justice system (Fig.1). This juxtaposition, through its simplicity and stark contrast, reflects the zine's broader critique of societal structures, highlighting the intersectionality of race, education, and imprisonment. These images, though crude in presentation, powerfully serve as political statements, emphasizing the zine's role as a tool for resistance and social commentary, but must be looked at as shifting signifiers.

Through this particular signifier, randomity can be ascertained through the analog modernist style of being the epitome for physical information. The prizines are not considered art, only in context if the art will be added upon their first objectivation (Krauss, 2000. p. 997). Prizines have the modernist realist aesthetic of literally signifying what the content delivers and address as well as collectively an index of prizines. As "Prison Zines Workshop" prizines reflect randomity, this exemplifies post-structuralist conception of a random yet symbolic signs (Fig. 1). Like prizines which foster a Kraussian "random assortment of pictures" pulled from various sources such as newsprint and articles that resembles a form of visual anthropology, mirrors the fragmented and non-linear nature of how these zines represent the world (Krauss, 2000, p. 995). Prizines can be seen as a means of breaking away from traditional narrative structures and embracing the chaos and multiplicity of experience. Each image, pulled from various sources—newsprint, advertisements, or articles creates a layered, multifaceted portrayal of the world, where meanings are fragmented and the connections between them are not always immediately clear. Like Krauss (2000), Adorno's (1998) thoughts on randomity are a reflection of sameness which perpetuates existing carceral structure through random shifting but through structuralism. Adorno (1998) states that"[m]elancholy is the shadow of what in all form heterogeneous, which form strives to banish:

mere existence " (p. 35). Melancholy is the shadow of mere existence, which all form, diverse, and varied strive to eliminate. Forms of thought, culture, and social systems attempt to suppress this melancholic awareness of existence. These carceralized systems aim to "banish" the discomfort that comes with the acknowledgment of life's inherent contradictions and uncertainties through being.

Like prizines, of which reflect the emotional weight of simply being, something that forms attempt to transcend from. The Xeroxed copied images, often black and white, serve a practical purpose of being inexpensive and easy to photocopy for wide distribution, while also contributing to the raw, direct aesthetic that makes these zines compelling and impactful. Furthermore, like Adorno (1998) regarding randomity as "art is no fixed set " reinforces that art must remain open, dynamic, and free from the constraints of societal expectations, commodification, and mass production (p. 300). Art that is not a "fixed set" is more capable of serving as a vehicle for critique, transformation, and reflection on the contradictions of society. Prizines engages the viewer in complex and dialectical thought, preventing art from becoming a passive, predictable reflection of the world. Being not a fixed set and randomity as a signifier not only relates to itself but also to other zines as an index. The index presents another realm of randomity through its shifting through its individual self as art to contain and engage with other zines.

Figure 2
True Leap Press Presents Two New Zines from Recent Abolitionist Actions
By Anonymous
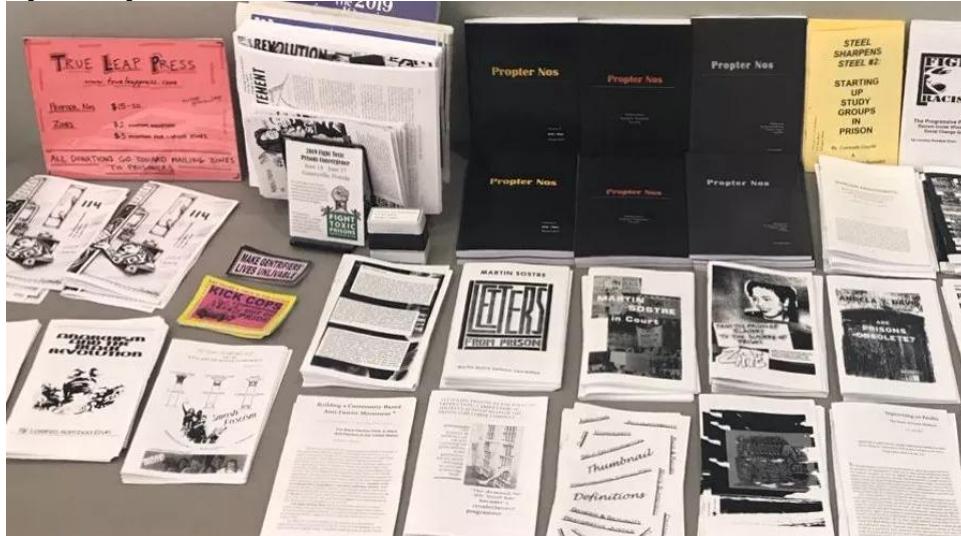
In an article by True Leap Press by an Anonymous (2020) writer presents on a table assorted zine, all in different font, colors, and specific aims and manifestos created for or within carceral (s)places. These assortments, randomity reflexes an example of the index. These index or indices are the collections of signifiers that relate to each other, forming a network of meanings through their interconnections (Krauss, 2000, p. 995). Through this interconnectedness, the prizine represents a singular representing state of a particular, the index is in particular in a set of representation through shifting as Rayson's (2012) prizine is amongst other zines (Fig. 1). This approach challenges purely for formalist interpretations and highlights the significance of context and process in the creation and reception of art.

This significant process is not shifted similarly in a fixed form and not a replicated signifier or index. Adorno (1998) regards that that there should not be replicated world as it is, nor should it be reduced to a fixed, predictable form. Adorno (1998) writes that "[a]rt is not a replica" (p. 285). Art's power lies in its ability to critique society, expose contradictions, and remain autonomous from the forces that seek to commodify. As prizines are not replicas, nor are they similar when they shift as signifiers, prizines by very aesthetic and form are "local, individualized, and eccentric"(?)Zines 'materiality produces embodied community " (Piepmeier, 2009,p. 256). Prizines' locality for a specific prizinester and carceralized (s)place can make readers feel more connected to the content and the people who create it. Unlike mainstream publications, zines are typically produced by individuals or small groups, giving them a unique, personal touch, especially through their easy-to-read language.

Regarding language, the simplistic and plainness of prizines add the unique authenticness. Rayson (2012) regards the carceralized language of the oppressed perspective in regards to zines that "...got a unique clarity and plainness of language. Whatever phoniness is, it's not there. These people can't spell their way out of a paper bag but they have a lot of important things to say " (Rayson 2013 paragraph 12). Zines have a unique clarity and simplicity in their language, free from any pretension or phoniness. While the creators may not have perfect spelling, their message is direct and meaningful, with important ideas to share despite their lack of conventional polish. This is apparent in the randomity is connected to their creation. "This zine is to…. typewritten , mechanical, or electric, or handwritten. with drawings, amerikkka, in vernacular (Rayson, 2011, paragraph 23)."The randomness of zines, often achieved through various types of typewritten, mechanical, electric, or handwritten elements, alongside spontaneous drawings or images, reflects a deeper critique of the highly controlled, polished forms of mass media. This randomness in zines connects directly to the process of creation, where the act of assembling images, texts, and drawings in a non-linear way speaks to the fragmented, disjointed nature of contemporary experience. The fragmented and sometimes chaotic nature of zines mirrors the idea that meaning is not fixed or linear but shifts depending on context, medium, and interpretation (Krauss, 2000, p. 995). The randomness of content and production method in zines is a form of resistance to the controlled, uniform nature of mass media, embracing instead the immediacy and multiplicity of perspectives. The images and texts in zines also act as indices, connecting directly to personal experiences, political stances, and cultural moments, while also allowing for the randomness of expression to shape the overall meaning of the work. Contrary to Adorno (1998), the prizines and zines through their random shifting present problematic standardization and commodification of art in the culture industry, zines represent a form of artistic rebellion (Adorno, 1998,p 68). Prizine randomness, imperfection, and non-linear qualities create a space for alternative expressions that do not conform to the ideological structures of mass culture. Prizines create a (s)place where imperfections, quirks, and personal expressions are not only allowed but celebrated, positioning zines as a form of rebellion against the forces of commercialization and ideological control in mass culture. Prizines through their individual autonomy are direct opposition to the "culture industry" that Adorno (1998) describes, offering an alternative to the homogenized art that pervades mainstream society.

The individuality of zines, through language and randomness, is in the form of personal narratives, artwork, or specific topics, resonates with readers who appreciate the authenticity and personal expression. Like randomity, prizines and zines shift from randomity to presenting vulnerability

through individual self-agency and pedagogy. As Piepmeier(2009) say "[z]ines conveys a sense of vulnerability, and therefore a sense of openness and availability for human contact that create" (p. 57). Prizines transport vulnerability, which in turn fosters a sense of openness and availability for human connection. This openness shifts and encourages interaction and engagement within the larger indexical community. Piepmeier (2009) writes zines create revolution and optimism through these individual tracts:

…are an inherently hopeful medium. They counter the cultural imperative "to keep distant and distrustful, alienated, lonely and safe" and make visible the desire for community and human connection. More importantly, they offer a model for how individuals might form relationships— not simply imagined ones, but relationships rooted in quirky, physical realities (Piepmeier, 2009, p. 78).

Zines counter a culture that encourages isolation and emotional distance, offering an alternative where human connection and community can thrive. By showcasing personal, raw expressions, zines invite people to engage in relationships that are authentic and based on real-world experiences. Prizines create (s)place where individuals can connect through shared vulnerabilities and physical forms, breaking down barriers and offering a sense of belonging that is not bound by conventional norms. In this way, zines become more than just a medium for expressions, they embody a model for genuine, grassroots connection and solidarity. In a more structuralist outlook Adorno (1998) contends "the subordination of autonomous artworks to the element of social function buried within each work and from which art originated in the course of a protracted struggle, wounds art at its most vulnerable point " (p. 278). The social implications and functions that art inevitably carries can compromise its autonomy. Like prizines, art, in its most liberated form, should be free from social instrumentalization. When art's social function is emphasized, it distorts art's true potential and violates its inherent, self-determined essence. Furthermore, Adorno (1998) suggests that society's "linear" progression unveils this vulnerability and that "progress of civilization, however, easily deceives human beings as to how vulnerable they remain even now " (p. 49). Despite the outward appearance of control and advancement, humans remain as vulnerable as they ever were, but through prizines it's a exemplification of that carceral (s)placement. Unlike Adorno (1998) and Piepmeier (2009) Krauss (2000) does not discuss vulnerability or mentions it but discusses breakdowns of shifting agency. In this case, carceral (s)places between prizine-creator and reader and that " breakdown in the use of the shifter to locate the self in relation to its world "(p. 995). The breakdown in using shifters points to a difficulty in establishing or maintaining a coherent sense of self in relation to the world like the notorious prison walls (s)places and the non-prisoned world. Like this breakthrough as per Krauss (2000), Adorno (1998) suggests, the prizine writer will dissuade mental imprisonment as their possible labeled primary identity. "Only the autonomous self is able to turn critically against itself and break through its illusory imprisonment" (p. 117). The autonomous self has courage and capacity to break free from these constraints through reflection, education, and self-transformation through their own created and controlled prizines. True autonomy is not merely the ability to act independently in the world, but the ability to critically examine and transcend one's own limitations, often cultivated through education, introspection, and a commitment to transformation through prizine creators vulnerability.

As vulnerability breaks down, education liberates. Rayson (2011) says in "Prisoners Speak!#6" the prizines are great therapeutically as well as pedagogically liberatory. "Y'all cats running

around here talking about your bling bling, pick up of these South Side zines. This shit is real mean, it will help you blow of all your steam. Get educated through this zine " (Rayson, 2011, para 4). This reflects a critique of capitalist culture and promotes prizines as a tool for empowerment, self-expression, and education. It implies that these zines, rooted in a particular community provide valuable knowledge and a means to release frustration or energy. The call to "get educated" is a reminder to seek alternative ways of understanding the world, ways that aren't controlled by mainstream, materialistic values. To be educated, is to educate academia.

From randomity to vulnerability to education prizines are IRB-less geographies' that can be used as nuanced variables for radical abolitionist and transformative pedagogy. Piepmeier (2009) suggests that zines can be exemplification of new theoretical producing variables and the "idea of zines as sites of theory production may be somewhat surprising, as theory is generally associated with elitist academic practices, and zines occupy the opposite end of the spectrum, so intentionally lowbrow as to be able to be mistaken for trash " (p. 23). The concept of zines as (s)places for producing theory may seem surprising, as theory is typically linked to elitist academic practices. In contrast, zines are intentionally lowbrow, so much so that they could be mistaken for trash, positioning them at the opposite end of the intellectual spectrum (Piepmeier, 2009,p. 45). Knowledge produced they are connected with thesis was prevalent against media produced mass knowledge. Zines are one of the public attempts to create community outside the prison walls. Fight for the right to make, control, and how their voice is resonated and where it can be heard also identified zines as a kind of public pedagogy.

These prizines are public pedagogy and as seen as collective art. Adorno (1998) writes that "[c]ollective labor is conceivable in art; the extinguishing of its imminent subjectivity is not. Any change in this would depend on the total social progressive consciousness, which today is exclusively that of the individual " (p. 354). Artworks should reflect the relationship between living labor and its transformation into a thing or commodity. Art, as a product, should acknowledge and represent the labor that goes into its creation, emphasizing the social conditions and collective efforts involved. However, the notion of collective labor in art remains difficult to achieve, as art today is largely shaped by individual subjectivity. Unlike Adorno (1998), Krauss (2000) disregards collective labor but the potential for change in this dynamic would depend on a shift in the broader social consciousness toward a more collective and progressive mindset, which currently remains centered on individual experience (p. 995). Adorno's hidden support for prizines connects to conflict with schools and the "genuine relation between art and consciousness's experience of it would consist in education, which schools opposition to art as a consumer product as much as it allows the recipient a substantial idea of what an artwork is. Art today, even among those who produce it, is largely cut off from such education "(Adorno, 1998, p. 245). In this manner, like prizines, art's true purpose lies in education, where people can come to understand art in a deep, reflective way, moving beyond its status as a consumer product. It laments art is increasingly disconnected from this educational function, even among its creators.

Prizines embrace spontaneity and fragmentation as a means of critiquing and resisting dominant power structures, reflecting the multiplicity and chaos of contemporary life through activism against mainstream culture. Piepmeier (2009) contends this through the fluid meanings of activist pedagogy as "one may conceive literacies as a form of activism in that they are both concerned with gaining competencies on how to access, read, analyze, and interpret the discourses that

constitute and position us as subjects, and, involved in the production of new meanings that shape our culture and society " (34). Literacies can be viewed as a form of activism because they involve not only acquiring the skills to access, read, analyze, and interpret the discourses that define and position us in society, but also participating in the creation of new meanings. By engaging in these processes, individuals contribute to shaping culture and society, challenging existing norms, and fostering transformative change (Fig. 1). This active role in producing and reshaping meaning makes literacies a powerful tool for social and political engagement. Since, incarcerated folks can receive info directly from publisher, zines are shared and even "placed between the books in thriller and Harlequin-bloated prison libraries (where libraries exist at all) " (Rayson, 2013, para.11). Incarcerated individuals can receive information directly from zine publishers, allowing zines to circulate within prisons. They are often shared or even hidden within books in overcrowded, under-resourced prison libraries. This circulation of zines provides a way for prisoners to access alternative perspectives and knowledge, even in the face of limited resources.

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated the overlooked significance of American prisoner-written zines as a profound form of self-expression, political resistance, and cultural critique. Through their incorporation of firsthand accounts, anti-oppression discourses, and creative visuals, these zines defy the oppressive structures surrounding them, paralleling the samizdat tradition of dissent. By applying the theories of Adorno (1998), Krauss (2000), and Piepmeier (2009), they have recognized how these zines leverage traditional modes of representation as potent tools for political resistance and self-representation, offering a unique lens to challenge mainstream cultural (s)place narratives through vulnerability, randomness, and radical pedagogy.

This perspective highlights the power of zines in articulating lived experiences and fostering solidarity in (s)places where institutionalized silencing is rampant. In the prisoner-written zine genre, the intersection of personal struggle and political critique allows for the formation of alternative narratives to resonate far beyond prison walls. In conclusion, reflections highlight the importance of synthesizing realism and modernism in aesthetics., This approach advocates for moving beyond rigid categorizations to adopt more fluid and complex modes of representation engages the signifier.

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PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

Cancer, Garbage, and Mutation: Controlled Artistic Disruptions in Late Capitalism

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Cancer, Garbage, and Mutation: Controlled Artistic Disruptions in Late Capitalism

Justin Gallant

In the pervasive landscape of late capitalism, art often becomes entangled within the very systems it seeks to critique. Capitalism's relentless pursuit of profit leads to unchecked growth and overproduction, resembling the uncontrolled proliferation of cancer cells—a phenomenon I term the "art-cancer" of capitalism. This paper argues that art can, but does not necessarily, function as a "malfunction bug" within this system, employing species-being controlled bursts to disrupt and challenge the inculcation of art as a reified commodity.

Drawing on Karl Marx's critique of ideology, he states, "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx, 2000, p. 192). However, art has the unique potential to introduce intentional disruptions—controlled bursts—that act against the art-cancer of capitalism. In speculative medicine, studies on cancer have led to theoretical uses of cancer cell properties, specifically the rapid replication process, to introduce controlled bursts of therapeutic medicines or cell regeneration. Similarly, in evolutionary biology, mutations—often seen as malfunctions—are aberrations that can ultimately change the gene pool. These mutations are not morally bound; they can be both advantageous and detrimental (and sometimes even ambiguous), but they play a

crucial role in driving evolution within a species. In this context, the "malfunction bug" serves as an allegory for art's potential to act as an aberration within the capitalist system—working from within but introducing changes that can fundamentally alter the system. Just as genetic mutations can lead to significant evolutionary shifts, these artistic interventions can help halt the unchecked spread of capitalist ideology, even if often in contradictory ways.

Building upon Marx's ideas, theorists like Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, Allan Kaprow, and Jean Baudrillard explore how art can repurpose cultural "garbage" and disrupt the spectacle of capitalist society. Benjamin examines the impact of mechanical reproduction on art's "aura," Debord critiques the passive consumption promoted by the spectacle, Kaprow's "Happenings" blur the lines between art and life to provoke critical reflection, and Baudrillard highlights the challenge of creating meaning within a hyperreal environment saturated with overproduced signs.

To illustrate these concepts contemporary art examples such as "The Institute for Infinitely Small Things" and "The Window Smashing Job Creators" are crucial to understanding this art-life divide, and the power of art against commodification. These artists employ subtle, controlled interventions—small-scale disruptions that act against the art-cancer by encouraging participants to reconsider their interactions with the capitalist environment. Their projects utilize overlooked elements—societal cultural "garbage"—to create art that interrupts the norm, embodying controlled bursts that reveal systemic contradictions.

This paper argues that art, through intentional and controlled interventions, functions as a malfunction bug within capitalism, allowing for an internally induced disruption of the unchecked growth of the art-cancer. By leveraging the allegories of cancer, evolutionary malfunction bugs, and garbage, art introduces controlled bursts that expose systemic flaws, challenge dominant ideologies, and stimulate transformative evolution within society, even while exposing and being exposed to the contradictions that lay within. While this analogy of evolutionary biology suggests that capitalism is a natural outcome of human development, viewing this through the lens of epigenetics (environmental effects on genetic expression) reveals that external factors—the environment in which the "malfunction-bug" effects—significantly influence our evolutionary path. In this perspective, humanity's species-being is actively, but not entirely, steered towards capital. Thus, capital is not our natural or inherent evolutionary destiny, but it is the dominant force shaping our current trajectory.

Karl Marx's extensive critique of capitalism goes beyond the realm of ideology, delving into the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. One of his central concepts is commodity fetishism, described in *Capital*, where he explains how social relationships between people assume the "fantastic form of a relation between things" (Marx, 2000, p. 473). In capitalism, commodities are imbued with value that obscures the labor and social relations that produce them. This fetishism leads to a distorted perception of reality, where the true source of value—human labor—is hidden.

Art, when commodified, becomes subject to this fetishism. It is traded, collected, and valued not for its intrinsic qualities or the labor invested but for its market value and status symbol. However, art also holds the potential to demystify these commodity relations. By exposing the labor behind the artwork (or rather any externalities not typically associated with economic costs) or challenging

its commodity status, art can reveal the underlying social relations obscured by commodity fetishism.

Alienation is another key concept in Marx's critique. Workers under capitalism are alienated from the products of their labor, the labor process, their own humanity, and from other workers (Marx, 2000, p. 90). "It's a built-in function of commodity production/Turning the work that you have to do into something alien from you" (The Window Smashing Job Creators, 2023). This alienation touches all productive forces, and as such seemly closes the avenue of art as liberator; when art incorporates participatory elements or focuses on process over product, it challenges the alienation perpetuated by capitalist production. The labor theory of value posits that the value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary labor time required for its production. Art disrupts this theory when its market value vastly exceeds the labor invested, highlighting the irrationality of capitalist valuation systems. By creating works that question or subvert traditional notions of value, artists can draw attention to these contradictions.

Art can metaphorically adopt the properties of cancer cells—specifically, their rapid and uncontrolled growth—to introduce controlled bursts that disrupt capitalist systems. In capitalist culture, art has already taken on these properties for the prevailing order. These bursts take the form of art projects or movements (or "Happenings") that rapidly gain attention and challenge prevailing norms. By harnessing the mechanisms of mass production and distribution, artists begin to spread critical messages widely and swiftly. This mirrors the way cancer cells proliferate but reorients that growth towards unveiling capitalist contradictions. Moreover, art then exposes the fetishism of commodities by highlighting the labor and processes behind creation. Projects that involve audience participation in the creation of art break down the barrier between producer and consumer, countering alienation. This participatory approach approaches Marx's vision of a society where individuals are not estranged from their labor. In this view, art is not alienation, but inclusion.

In speculative medicine, researchers explore utilizing cancer's properties for therapeutic benefits, such as targeting cancer cells to deliver drugs more effectively. This approach involves redirecting harmful mechanisms towards healing purposes. Similarly, art stands to redirect the mechanisms of capitalism—mass production, rapid dissemination, and pervasive media—towards critiquing and transforming the system. Repurposing the overabundance of commodities—capitalism's "garbage"—into artworks.

In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin investigates how technological advancements in reproduction impact the nature and perception of art. Benjamin provides that mechanical reproduction strips art of its "aura," the unique presence tied to a work's authenticity and tradition. He simplifies this with, "That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art" (Benjamin, 2003, p. 521). This loss results in art becoming more accessible but also more susceptible to commodification within capitalist society.

The mass reproduction of artworks contributes to an accumulation of cultural "garbage." As copies proliferate, individual pieces risk losing their significance, blending into a saturated visual environment. This overabundance mirrors capitalism's tendency toward overproduction, leading

to both material and cultural waste. Artworks, once carriers of profound meaning, become disposable commodities consumed rapidly and discarded in favor of current trends.

However, Benjamin also identifies a revolutionary potential in mechanical reproduction. He suggests that reproduction can "emancipate the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual... The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation" in democratizing art by making it available to everyone (Benjamin, 2003, pp. 522, 525). This democratization opens avenues for artists to repurpose this cultural "garbage," transforming mass-produced and discarded ideas and materials into artworks that critique and subvert capitalist ideologies. By reclaiming these discarded elements, artists engage in practices that align with the concept of art functioning as a "malfunction bug." These interventions act as controlled bursts, disrupting the capitalist system by repurposing its byproducts—the cultural waste generated through overproduction and commodification.

The act of transforming waste into art is the praxis of Marx's critique of capitalism's inherent contradictions. Capitalism, far from being the natural way of life, is the reification of the ruling ideology. By utilizing discarded materials—symbols, to be sure, but the realities of overproduction and excess—artists expose the unsustainable nature of relentless consumption. This potentiates a challenge to the fetishism of commodities, where the social relations involved in production are obscured by the perceived value of commodities (Marx, 2000, pp. 472–473).

Art that repurposes garbage disrupts conventional notions of value and ownership. By elevating waste to the status of art, art questions what society deems valuable and why. This disruption acts as a "malfunction bug" within the capitalist system, using its byproducts to undermine its own logic. This approach fosters a dialogue about environmental responsibility and sustainability. Creating a web of ecological ties to the life-art bridge. It prompts viewers to reflect on the consequences of overconsumption and the accumulation of waste. By confronting audiences with the tangible remnants of capitalist excess, artists encourage a reconsideration of personal and collective practices. They embody the cancer allegory by utilizing elements contributing to systemic decay—waste and overproduction—as tools for critique and potential healing.

In his writings from the Situationist International (1957-1961), Guy Debord presents a critique of modern capitalist society, which he conceptualizes as the "spectacle." Debord asserts that in societies where modern conditions of production prevail, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. He writes, "...all forms of expression are losing grip on reality and being reduced to self-parody" (Debord, 2003, p. 705). This spectacle represents the pervasive influence of mass media and consumer culture, where authentic social interactions are replaced by representations that promote passive consumption and reinforce capitalist ideologies.

The spectacle perpetuates itself through the relentless proliferation of images and commodities, leading to a society where, "Having from the workshop to the laboratory emptied productive activity of all meaning itself... real life must be found in consumption... the world of consumption is in reality the world of the mutual spectacularization of everyone" (Debord, 2003, p. 706). This unbridled expansion mirrors the uncontrolled growth of cancer cells, contributing to the metaphorical "cancer" of capitalist overproduction. The spectacle generates cultural "garbage"— an excess of meaningless images and messages that inundate society and obscure genuine human experiences. Debord emphasizes the potential of détournement, the reuse of pre-existing artistic

elements in new contexts to subvert their original meaning (Debord, 2003, p. 704). Employing détournement, artists expose the constructed nature of the spectacle, the lie behind its dominance, prompting viewers to question the reality presented to them. "The spectacle/spectator relation is in itself a staunch bearer of the capitalist order... Revolutionary artists are those who call for intervention; and who have themselves intervened in the spectacle to disrupt and destroy it" (Debord, 2003, p. 706). Debord sees this as a necessary function of the artist, and a potential way out.

In the essay "The Hyper-realism of Simulation" (1976), Jean Baudrillard fleshes out how contemporary society has transitioned into a realm of simulations and hyperreality. Baudrillard argues that in the postmodern era, the distinction between reality and representation has collapsed due to the prevalence of simulations that no longer refer to any concrete reality. He states, "Unreality... resides... in the *real's hallucinatory resemblance to itself*. To escape the crisis of representation, reality loops around itself in pure repetition" (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 1018). This hyperreal condition leads to a world where individuals interact with simulations that mask the absence of a fundamental reality. The hyperreal environment contributes to the accumulation of cultural "garbage," as the incessant production of signs and simulations results in an overload of meaningless content like "...scattered fragments" (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 1019). This mirrors capitalism's tendency toward overproduction and waste, aligning with the allegory of garbage as both a byproduct and a potential tool for disruption. Cultural refuse is just as potent as solid waste.

Debord's and Baudrillard's theories provide critical frameworks for understanding how art can disrupt the spectacle and hyperreality. By exposing the mechanisms through which capitalist societies manipulate images and simulations to maintain control, they highlight the necessity of artistic interventions that can awaken individuals from passivity. Just as cancer cells grow uncontrollably, the spectacle and hyperreality expand without restraint, consuming authentic experiences. This relentless expansion creates a hyperreal environment where distinctions between reality and representation blur. "...the spectacle is the dominant mode through which people relate to each other," Debord reminds us (Debord, 2003, p. 706). The spectacle generates cultural "garbage"—an excess of meaningless images and messages that inundate society and obscure genuine human interaction and critical thought.

This is capitalist art-cancer, a toxic overgrowth of commodified imagery and experiences. Just as a targeted medical intervention can redirect cancer's properties, art can serve as a deliberate disruption—an attempt to divert harmful cultural growth before it metastasizes. Cancer is not morally bound, it has potential, and like genes, through epigenetics, either get expressed or not depending on environmental stimuli. What we label as 'garbage' emerges from specific social contexts rather than from any inherent worthlessness. Similarly, the negative signifiers associated with cancer, waste, and genetic 'determinism' stem from dominant modes of being, not universal truths. The excess of images and simulations under capitalism generates cultural debris, but by reclaiming and repurposing this so-called 'garbage,' artists lay bare the hollowness of hyperreal constructs.

Art can function as a "malfunction bug" within the spectacle by introducing controlled bursts that disrupt passive consumption and encourage active engagement. By creating works that subvert or interrupt the flow of commodified images, artists expose the constructed nature of the spectacle and challenge its dominance. This aligns with Debord's concept of détournement, which involves

rerouting prevailing media and cultural elements to produce new, subversive meanings (Debord, 2003, p. 1034). In this sense, détournement of cultural garbage does not necessarily (but can mean) that artists employ actual litter in their art, but that the *scraps of society's cultural refuse are the weapons and tools of the artist today.*

Building upon Debord's theories, contemporary artists such as The Institute for Infinitely Small Things employ subtle interventions to disrupt the spectacle's hold on society. Their projects involve minimalistic actions within urban spaces that encourage passersby to question their environment and the underlying systems governing it. By focusing on the "infinitely small," they draw attention to overlooked aspects of daily life, acting as controlled bursts that momentarily interrupt the spectacle's continuous flow.

For instance, their project "The City Formerly Known as Cambridge" involves temporarily renaming public spaces and landmarks within Cambridge, Massachusetts. By installing alternative street signs and plaques with new, community-generated names, they challenge the authoritative imposition of official nomenclature. The Institute organizes participatory walks where participants navigate the city using maps featuring these new names, fostering discussions about the power dynamics of naming and the influence of language on perception (Kanarinka, n.d.). This collaborative exploration encourages critical situational awareness and empowers individuals to recognize and question the subtle forms of control embedded in their environment. By doing so, they reveal how the spectacle perpetuates itself through unexamined acceptance of imposed structures, inviting participants to reclaim agency over their shared spaces and disrupt the passive consumption of capitalist narratives. It is a clear form of cultural detournement as well, taking the scraps of society and redirecting them to both have the effect of the old signifier, and the new one in tandem.

By employing strategies like détournement, artists subvert existing images and signs to create new, critical meanings. This approach undermines the spectacle's intended messages and reveals the artificiality of hyperreality, aligning with Baudrillard's critique of the substitution of the real with simulations. "Now the whole of everyday political, social, historical, economic reality is incorporated into the simulative dimension of hyperrealism; we already live out the 'aesthetic' hallucination of reality" (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 1019). Integrating Debord's and Baudrillard's concepts into artistic practice involves creating works that actively engage with and challenge the mechanisms of capitalist control. Artists such as the Institute for Infinitely Small Things reclaim agency by appropriating and altering images from mass media and advertising to reveal their manipulative intent. This art, then needs to expose the artificial—the constructed nature of reality within hyperreality to encourage individuals to question and seek authenticity. By functioning as malfunction bugs, these artistic interventions introduce necessary aberrations into the capitalist system, potentially leading to shifts in perception and paving the way for societal transformation. Allan Kaprow, theorist in the development of performance art, introduced the concept of "Happenings" in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In his essay "Assemblages, Environments and Happenings (1959-1961)", Kaprow argues for the dissolution of boundaries between art and life, stating that "the line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible" (Kaprow, 2003, p. 720). He believed that art should move beyond traditional mediums and galleries to engage directly with participants in everyday environments. Kaprow's Happenings are participatory events that rely on audience involvement and improvisation, emphasizing the process and experience over a final product. He sees these events as a way to challenge the

commodification of art and disrupt conventional expectations. By involving participants in the creation of the artwork, Kaprow aims to "release the artist from conventional notions of a detached, closed arrangement," fostering a sense of community and shared experience that contrasted with the passive consumption and modes of being promoted by capitalist culture (Kaprow, 2003, p. 721).

By involving the public directly in their actions or prompting public discourse, these artists create malfunction bugs within the capitalist system. Participatory art, such as "Happenings," serves as an effective medium for introducing controlled disruptions within societal systems, much like a malfunction bug introduces an aberration that can lead to significant change. By engaging participants directly, artists attempt to bypass traditional modes of passive consumption and foster active involvement. As Kaprow notes, "...that audiences should be eliminated entirely... people, space... the environment, time—can in this way be integrated" (Kaprow, 2003, p. 722). Debord echos a similar sentiment, "The role played by a passive or merely bit-part playing 'public' must constantly diminish, while that played by those who cannot be called actors but rather, in a new sense of the term, 'livers,' must steadily increase" (Debord, 2003, p. 703). Kaprow notes that this is not always successful, some events are repeated (explicitly not warranted under his nebulous rules for Happenings), allowing for a sense of continuity, and the opening of avenues for commodification (ticket sales, video recordings, etc.). While reproduction is not part of the rules, reproducing essential successful elements of these, such as a redirection of energy flow, must be explored to repeat, in essence, functions that lead to change.

Participatory art positions itself with the speculative medical approach of utilizing malfunctions for positive outcomes. Just as controlled bursts in medicine harness potentially harmful processes for healing, participatory art uses disruptions within social norms to promote transformation, and situational change. These interventions are not inherently moral or immoral; their impact depends on how they are received and the changes they catalyze within the social fabric. By functioning as malfunction bugs, participatory art projects introduce new variables into the capitalist system, challenging its stability and prompting evolution.

The Window Smashing Job Creators, an art collective from the Pacific Northwest, presents a paradoxical approach to critiquing capitalist structures. The song "Utopian Spiel" speaks to the attempt at bridging the art (or work) and life divide, "In the town of Utopia, work and play has been intertwined, everyday there is a new adventure that every person has designed" (The Window Smashing Job Creators, 2023). Their name itself encapsulates the contradiction inherent in their work: the act of smashing windows—a form of political catharsis and direct action—ultimately stimulates economic activity by creating jobs for repairs. Breaking windows of corporate buildings, physically disrupting the seamless façade of capitalism, forcing both the public and corporate entities to confront the underlying contradictions of a system that profits from both creation and destruction. The cost of repairs generates revenue for businesses and labor opportunities for workers, thus feeding back into the very economic engine they critique. The absorption of even the most radical acts into capital's clutches can be awe inspiring, requiring an equally responsive revolutionary movement.

This paradox reveals itself through Marx's analysis of capitalism's self-perpetuating nature. In *Capital*, Marx discusses how crises in capitalism are not anomalies but essential components of its functioning, leading to periods of destruction that pave the way for renewed cycles of accumulation

(Marx, 2000, p. 518). The Window Smashing Job Creators embody this concept by demonstrating how acts of dissent can be commodified and absorbed back into the capitalist cycle, in their "Looting Song" they lay it out well:

> ...everything that matters to me is being turned into dust... This world treats property like a prophecy handed down from heaven... it will turn our good intentions into weapons that are used against you/then it will try and buy and sell everything (The Window Smashing Job Creators, 2023).

Their live performances are a collective endeavor—over ten performers on stage using every instrument imaginable. Their lyrics speak to the power of community over alienation, the urgent need for radical politics, and deep philosophical prose. Captain ACAB, on their newest album, grunts out:

> Our whole planet is dead/the market stole our daily bread... every hierarchy is a disaster... treating people like they don't matter... turning forests into tombs... we will gather at the town square/bring a helmet I will see you there (The Window Smashing Job Creators, 2023).

Their performances compel observers to question the efficacy of traditional forms of protest within a capitalist society. By exposing how resistance can be co-opted for profit, they bemoan the complexities of enacting change within entrenched systems. This aligns with the allegory of cancer, where the very mechanisms intended to disrupt harmful growth can, if not carefully controlled, contribute to the system's resilience. Stinging lyrics condense this concept:

> The embers of freedom will not bloom, if we do not plant any seeds/From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs/The greatest cause of violence that have ever existed will not cure its own disease... until we kill god with the power of friendship and overthrow our destiny (The Window Smashing Job Creators, 2023).

This diagnoses systemic violence as a deep-seated societal pathology, emphasizing that only through collective action and radical intervention can we disrupt the entrenched hierarchies perpetuating this disease—paralleling the Institute for Infinitely Small Things' method of introducing controlled aberrations to expose and reorient capitalist norms.

The Institute for Infinitely Small Things focuses on participatory interventions that reveal the often-overlooked influences of capitalist ideology on daily life. One of their notable projects, "Corporate Commands," involves mapping and interacting with implicit directives found in public signage and advertisements (Kanarinka, n.d.). Participants engage in walks where they identify and reinterpret these commands, uncovering how language and symbols shape behavior in ways that perpetuate capitalist norms. This collaborative process embodies the malfunction bug by introducing aberrations into routine experiences.

Their approach is shared with Walter Benjamin's ideas on mechanical reproduction and the potential for art to challenge traditional power structures. By repurposing and recontextualizing existing media, the Institute exposes the pervasive reach of capitalist ideology and encourages individuals to reclaim agency over their environments, aligning with Debord. Through participatory art, the Institute demonstrates how small-scale interventions can accumulate to effect

meaningful change. Their work embodies Marx's concept of praxis—the unity of theory and action—by not only critiquing capitalist structures but actively engaging individuals in the process of transformation. Their practices demonstrate the dual nature of art as both a product of and a response to capitalist society. By operating within the system yet seeking to alter it, they navigate the complexities and paradoxes inherent in using art as a vehicle for critique and change. This continues the allegories of cancer and garbage, where elements typically seen as harmful or wasteful are harnessed for regenerative purposes.

In the superstructure of late capitalism, art stands as both a product and a potential saboteur of the very system that seeks to commodify it. This paper has unveiled art's capacity to function as a "malfunction bug"—a deliberate glitch in the matrix of capitalism, harnessing the chaotic energy of cancer and the transformative potential of garbage. By injecting controlled bursts of disruption, art does not just challenge the status quo; it detonates the comfortable illusions, and simulations, that keep the capitalist machine humming. Under Marx's critique of capitalism's pervasive influence and its alienation of individuals, I examined how art can both reinforce and subvert existing power structures by revealing the hidden labor and social relations behind commodities. Art mirrors capitalism's uncontrolled growth—like cancer—it can either succumb to systemic flaws or weaponize that trait. The theories of Benjamin, Debord, Baudrillard, and Kaprow illustrate how art disrupts passive consumption and mediated social relations by repurposing cultural "garbage," exposing constructed realities, and fostering participatory experiences that counter alienation. The Institute for Infinitely Small Things and The Window Smashing Job Creators exemplify these concepts through interventions that disrupt everyday perceptions and expose capitalism's contradictions.

Art's role as a malfunction bug is not sanitized or born of homeostasis; like a gene-editing technique applied to a diseased cell, it intervenes directly in the DNA of capitalist culture, introducing mutations that can halt or redirect harmful replication. It may even serve, for the most part, as a stabilizing force for ideology. As we face the systemic pathologies of our time—environmental degeneration, social stratification, and the erosion of authentic human connection—the urgency grows for art that does not merely decorate the surface but probes deep into the societal bloodstream, agitating dormant capacities for regeneration. Capitalism, adept at developing ideological antibodies, frequently co-opts and neutralizes creative insurrections. Yet, in the ensuing chaos lies the potential for genuine remission: a chance for cultural cells to reorganize and for social tissues to rebuild in healthier configurations. Within this evolving cultural body, the refashioned art-cancer, the genetic aberration turned controlled intervention, and the détourned externalities function as regenerative therapies. By harnessing the very mechanisms of capitalism—mass production, media saturation, and commodity circulation—art deploys its scalpel and sutures from within, not only diagnosing the malignant conditions of our world but also rewiring its genetic codes, nurturing fresh possibilities for growth that transcend the limits of the present order and cultivate the struggle itself as a catalyst for cultural healing, allowing cells to reorganize, tissues to rebuild, and healthier cultural evolutions to emerge.

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Si Vis Pacem, Para Pacem: Rethinking Global Peace Strategies

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Abstract

The long-standing belief that military preparedness leads to peace has shaped global security policies for centuries. However, historical evidence suggests that war preparation often leads to escalated conflicts rather than resolution. This paper argues that sustainable peace is best achieved through wisdom-driven governance, diplomacy, and economic stability rather than military dominance. Examining case studies such as the Cold War arms race, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the article highlights the failures of war-based peace strategies and the effectiveness of alternative approaches. Drawing from global peace indexes and economic reports, it proposes a policy framework focused on conflict prevention, equitable economic policies, and post-war trauma healing. By replacing the doctrine of "Si vis pacem, para bellum" with "Si vis pacem, para pacem," the paper calls for a fundamental shift in global security thinking to ensure lasting peace.

Si Vis Pacem, Para Pacem: Rethinking Global Peace Strategies

Collins Nduka Ineneji

1. Introduction: The Failure of War as a Peace Strategy

The phrase "Si vis pacem, para bellum" ("If you want peace, prepare for war") has shaped global security policies for centuries. Nations have built vast military arsenals under the assumption that strength deters conflict. However, history repeatedly demonstrates that military preparedness often leads to escalation rather than resolution. The Cold War's arms race, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, and the rising global defense budgets reflect a world trapped in cycles of tension rather than achieving lasting peace.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military spending reached $2.24 trillion in 2022, an all-time high, yet conflicts persist across multiple regions (Tian et al., 2023). The Global Peace Index (GPI, 2023) ranks Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria among the least peaceful nations despite significant military investments. If war preparation were truly effective, then nations that have spent the most on military efforts should be the most stable. Instead, they remain locked in cycles of rebellion and political instability.

Beyond battlefield consequences, war affects economic and social structures in profound ways. Governments allocate substantial budgets toward defense rather than critical infrastructure, education, or healthcare. Post-war nations struggle to recover, leaving deep-rooted economic disparities that often fuel future conflicts (World Bank, 2018). War does not merely end with the signing of peace treaties or ceasefires. It leaves lasting scars that extend across generations. Children who grow up in war zones often inherit the trauma, fear, and resentment of their parents. They witness the destruction of their homes, the loss of loved ones, and the injustices that remain unresolved. These experiences shape their worldviews, making them more susceptible to radicalization and further violence. This cycle continues unless deliberate efforts are made to break it.

The question then arises: If war does not lead to peace, why does the world continue to prepare for it? The answer often lies in historical narratives that glorify military strength while downplaying the role of diplomacy and cooperation. Societies are conditioned to equate power with force, believing that dominance ensures security. However, true security is not found in stockpiling weapons but in building a world where conflicts do not arise in the first place. This paper argues that lasting peace is achieved through wisdom-driven policies rather than military dominance, emphasizing diplomatic engagement, economic stability, and inclusive governance as long-term solutions.

2. Historical and Contemporary Analysis

2.1 The Arms Race Paradox

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union (1947–1991) exemplifies the failure of war preparation as a peace strategy. The doctrine of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) prevented direct warfare but led to global instability, proxy wars, and nuclear proliferation. Even after the Cold War, military conflicts continued in regions like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, illustrating that arms build-ups often heighten tensions rather than resolve disputes (Gaddis, 2005). Despite the colossal defense budgets and stockpiling of weapons, these conflicts did not lead to lasting stability. Instead, they fueled more violence, collapsed governments, and left entire regions destabilized for decades.

2.2 Lessons from Peaceful Leadership

Historically, wisdom-driven leadership has proven to be more effective in securing long-term peace than military dominance. One notable example is King Solomon's reign (970–931 BCE), which was characterized by economic growth, diplomatic alliances, and internal stability without engaging in war. Instead of conquest, Solomon used negotiation, trade, and governance reforms to unify his kingdom and establish lasting peace (Walton, 2001). His leadership exemplifies the power of diplomacy over force, proving that strength is not defined by military might alone but by the ability to resolve conflicts without bloodshed.

In modern times, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 1995–1998) played a crucial role in preventing civil war post-apartheid. Instead of retaliatory justice, South Africa prioritized national healing, reducing the likelihood of long-term conflict. According to Harvard's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy (2020), countries that pursue transitional justice through truth commissions are 40% less likely to relapse into civil war. The success of the TRC demonstrates that reconciliation and accountability can coexist, ensuring that past injustices are acknowledged without resorting to violent reprisals.

Another critical aspect often overlooked in post-war recovery is the psychological and emotional impact on survivors. The aftermath of war leaves people homeless, impoverished, and deeply angry. Many have witnessed the destruction of their homes, the brutal killing of their families, and the loss of their entire way of life. This kind of generational trauma creates a breeding ground for further conflict, as grievances are carried forward by those who feel unheard and abandoned by society (Staub, 2006). Without mechanisms to process trauma and rebuild trust, peace remains fragile.

3. The Role of Policy in Peacebuilding

A shift in global security strategy requires prioritizing policies that address the root causes of violence. Nations must transition from military dominance to a system that actively prevents conflict through diplomatic, economic, and psychological interventions. Three primary areas emerge as critical to this transformation:

3.1 Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution

Investment in diplomatic negotiations has consistently proven more effective than military intervention. History provides numerous examples of conflicts that were resolved through negotiation rather than prolonged violence. The Oslo Accords (1993–1995), which sought peace between Israel and Palestine, demonstrated that structured dialogue can reduce hostilities, even amid deep-seated conflicts. Similarly, the Good Friday Agreement (1998) ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland through political compromise rather than military force (Mitchell, 2000).

Diplomacy does not erase all disputes, but it provides a framework for engagement, preventing minor disagreements from escalating into full-blown wars. Preventive diplomacy—intervening before conflicts arise—should be a core strategy for global security efforts. Regional organizations like the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) have successfully mediated disputes across Africa, proving that structured dialogue, rather than militarization, can create long-term stability.

For diplomacy to be effective, nations must strengthen international legal frameworks that hold aggressors accountable. Agreements like the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Charter set standards for conflict resolution, but enforcement mechanisms remain weak. Strengthening international arbitration courts and ensuring that violations of peace agreements result in tangible consequences will make diplomacy a more viable alternative to war.

Furthermore, diplomatic efforts should extend beyond governments. Civil society organizations, religious leaders, and grassroots movements have historically played vital roles in peace negotiations. Engaging local communities in peace talks ensures that agreements are not just political transactions but reflect the needs of the people most affected by conflict.

3.2 Economic and Social Stability

The World Bank's "Pathways for Peace" (2018) report finds that economic disparity is one of the leading causes of violent uprisings. Countries with high youth unemployment rates (above 30%) experience a threefold increase in the likelihood of armed conflict. Without economic opportunity, frustration builds, and extremist ideologies find a foothold. Policy efforts must shift military spending toward sustainable economic programs that address the root causes of unrest.

Key economic strategies that contribute to peace include:

- Job creation and vocational training: Providing youth with employment opportunities reduces the likelihood of them being drawn into violence.
- Community-based security initiatives: Programs that give local communities a stake in their own security build trust and reduce reliance on government crackdowns.
- Economic inclusion strategies for marginalized groups: Economic exclusion is a key driver of resentment. Policies that provide access to financial services, land, and entrepreneurship programs for underprivileged communities can help prevent conflict.

- Investment in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): Local businesses create jobs and increase stability by ensuring economic prosperity is distributed rather than concentrated in elite circles.

War-torn nations often struggle with economic collapse, making them vulnerable to further conflict. Foreign aid and investment should be structured around rebuilding economic stability rather than military reinforcement. Instead of funneling billions into arms deals, wealthier nations should fund microfinance programs, infrastructure development, and educational reforms in conflict-prone regions.

3.3 Addressing Post-War Trauma and Anger

One of the most overlooked consequences of war is the emotional and psychological devastation it leaves behind. Survivors of war carry deep-seated anger, resentment, and trauma that, if left unaddressed, often manifests in future conflicts. Studies show that children exposed to violence are more likely to grow up with aggression and hostility toward perceived enemies (Staub, 2006). Without structured efforts to heal past wounds, peace remains fragile.

Key policy actions to address post-war trauma include:

- Implementing national trauma healing programs: Post-war nations should prioritize mental health support for survivors through counseling centers and community dialogue programs.
- Expanding mental health services in conflict zones: Therapy and psychological aid should be as accessible as food and shelter in humanitarian aid efforts.
- Creating grievance resolution mechanisms: Governments should establish legal frameworks that allow war victims to seek justice without resorting to violence.
- Promoting reconciliation programs: Structured truth and reconciliation commissions, such as the one in South Africa, can help prevent cycles of revenge.
- Training local leaders in mediation techniques: Community leaders should be equipped with skills to de-escalate tensions before they spiral into larger conflicts.

When anger and trauma are ignored, they become the fuel for future wars. History has repeatedly shown that post-war reconstruction is not just about rebuilding cities but also about rebuilding trust and healing the people who have suffered. Nations must invest in long-term reconciliation strategies to prevent old wounds from reigniting violence.

4. Conclusion: Preparing for Peace, Not War

The belief that peace can be secured through war preparation has repeatedly led to cycles of violence and instability. History has demonstrated that conflicts do not truly end when the last bullet is fired or when a treaty is signed. The aftermath of war lingers in the minds of those who have lost everything—their homes, their families, their sense of security. Without addressing the underlying causes of conflict, violence merely pauses, waiting for the next opportunity to erupt.

The global community must transition from a reactionary approach to war—where nations prepare for battle in the name of defense—to a proactive model of peacebuilding. Instead of pouring

trillions into military budgets, governments must invest in diplomacy, economic reform, social justice, and post-war trauma recovery. True security does not come from weapons stockpiles or military alliances; it comes from ensuring that the conditions for war do not exist in the first place.

A nation that prioritizes education over arms will produce future generations of problem-solvers rather than warriors. A society that ensures economic stability will leave fewer people desperate enough to take up arms. A world that acknowledges and heals past wounds will prevent the cycle of revenge that keeps conflicts alive for decades. Military power alone cannot achieve these things—only wisdom, governance, and the courage to seek peaceful solutions can.

The evidence supporting this shift is undeniable. Countries that prioritize peacebuilding policies experience higher levels of economic prosperity, lower crime rates, and greater political stability (World Bank, 2018). Nations that rely solely on military dominance, however, often remain trapped in instability, with armed conflicts continuing to resurface due to unresolved grievances (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023).

This shift requires political will, international cooperation, and a fundamental change in how nations perceive security. Leaders must recognize that investing in people—through education, employment, social inclusion, and justice—creates a far more secure world than any military defense strategy ever could.

If the world continues to believe that peace can only be achieved through war, then war will never end. The time has come to rewrite this flawed doctrine. Instead of preparing for war, nations must prepare for peace by addressing the core issues that lead to conflict. Rather than "Si vis pacem, para bellum" (If you want peace, prepare for war), the world must adopt a new paradigm: "Si vis pacem, para pacem"—If you want peace, prepare for peace.

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