

Michal Aharony, Scholar of Political Philosophy and Holocaust Studies

I ask myself why have I been studying the Holocaust for so many years, the testimonies of Auschwitz survivors. In my book there is also one chapter dealing with the *Sonderkommando*, which is, one might say, the worst of the worst. Perhaps it's because I'm looking for an answer about the light, about the good . . . how could have people gone through this? How could they survive this experience? These are questions about preserving one's morality, humanity, and human dignity. Aharon Appelfeld wrote about the need to rescue humanity from the horrors: "I do not mean to simplify, to attenuate, or to sweeten the horror, but to attempt to make the events speak through the individual and in his language, to rescue the suffering from huge numbers, from dreadful anonymity, and to restore the person's given and family name, to give the tortured person back his human form, which was snatched away from him."⁴ In my research that focuses on Hannah Arendt's political theory and testimonies of Holocaust survivors, I attempt to examine whether Holocaust victims of the concentration and death camps were able to maintain their humanity, given the horrific conditions they were forced to endure. I'm very critical of Arendt who didn't really listen to the survivors. She didn't think that their testimony was philosophically important or interesting. What I could relate to the most in Appelfeld's text is addressing the person, the individual, the name, and thus bringing it down to reality, coming as close to it as possible. This issue of finding humanity in such a horrific situation may sound rather naïve, but for me it's a form of consolation.

4 Appelfeld, Aharon. (1988). "After the Holocaust." In Berel Lang (ed.). *Writing and the Holocaust*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 92.

Michal Aharony

Reflections on Hannah Arendt, Radical Evil and Holocaust Survivors' Testimonies

Introduction

This article deals with Hannah Arendt's attitude towards Holocaust survivors' testimonies, as reflected in her first book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) [hereafter: OT].¹ Although Arendt's analysis of life in the concentration camps and her reflections on "total domination" relied heavily on Holocaust survivors' testimonies, her attitude towards eyewitness accounts was ambivalent and even skeptical. The doubts that Arendt expressed in OT regarding the value of eyewitness accounts in explaining the events of the concentration camps are not exceptional in the general attitude of historians, who have traditionally treated them with great mistrust. The late Raul Hilberg, for example, one of the most prominent Holocaust scholars, was always suspicious toward testimony. He preferred to distance himself from testimony and ignore it altogether, as he believed that the nature of testimony and memory is in conflict with the main goal of the historical profession: the search for factual truth.

My main argument in this article is that Arendt's attitude towards testimony and her tendency to downgrade the importance of Holocaust survivors' experience should be reflected upon not only in the context of the general perception at the end of the 1940s, beginning of the 1950s, which could not cope with survivors' testimonies, but mainly in light of Arendt's broader theoretical stances regarding political judgment and other social mores that focus on suffering, pity and compassion, as reflected in her later writings.

Arendt was born in Hanover in 1906 and died in 1975. The emergence of totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s profoundly influenced her, impacting Arendt's life and political thought, from her first book until her last works. One might say that Arendt was herself a Holocaust survivor, even if she did not define herself as such. She was a German-Jewish refugee, who was forced to flee from her home-

1 Arendt, Hannah. (1979). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New ed. with added prefaces. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Note: This essay is based on parts from my book: Aharony, Michal. (2015). *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Total Domination: The Holocaust, Plurality and Resistance*. New York: Routledge. See especially: 17–22, 209–214, 223–224.

land, and became stateless for 18 years. When the Nazis seized power in 1933, she was arrested by the Gestapo for engaging in illegal Zionist activity and was released after a week. She succeeded in fleeing and reached Paris, where she spent eight years as a refugee. Following the occupation of France in 1940, Arendt was arrested and incarcerated in the Gurs camp in the country's southwest, but she managed to escape within a few weeks. In 1941, Arendt and her husband, Heinrich Bluecher, fled to the United States, for which they had refugee visas.² She became an American citizen in 1951 and lived in the country, pursuing a distinguished academic career, until her death. Arendt was active in the German-Jewish community in the United States and published articles in the Jewish-American press. Her Judaism and her approach to the Jewish question played an important part in her thought. Arendt espoused a strong affinity for Zionism, even though she was critical of Zionist ideology and was increasingly censorious in regard to Israel.

Total Domination

Before I examine Arendt's attitude towards testimony, I shall briefly introduce the concept of total domination. In totalitarianism, a regime whose essence is terror and whose outcome is a most radical negation of freedom, Arendt saw the inversion of politics, an eradication of every sign of humanity. According to her, German totalitarianism was an unprecedented form of government, a phenomenon that could not be understood according to our traditional political concepts or by traditional standards of judgment.³ The central aim of the German totalitarian regime, Arendt argued, was not merely murdering millions of human beings, but achieving total domination, namely, the virtual eradication of human plurality, legality, morality, individuality, and the capacity for spontaneity. This goal, according to Arendt, "can be realized almost to perfection" only in the concentration and extermination camps, which were "the true central institution of totalitarian organizational power."⁴ They served as the major "laboratories" for the re-

2 Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. (1982). *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 113, 158–159.

3 Arendt, Hannah. (1994). "Mankind and Terror." In: *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 297–306, 302.

4 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 422, 438.

gime, a realm in which the basic assumption of totalitarianism that “everything is possible” was tested and proven.⁵

The organized attempt of totalitarian regime to achieve total domination over human beings, thus eradicating their humanity and human dignity, is carried out through a three-step process, as Arendt describes in OT: The first step involves destroying the juridical person; the second step is the murder of the moral person in man; and the third is annihilating human individuality and uniqueness.⁶

Killing the Juridical Person in Human Beings – The process of killing the juridical person in human beings is carried out through the arbitrary exclusion of certain categories of people from the protection of the law, thus rendering these individuals utterly “rightless.” Hence, the inmates of the concentration camps were living “outside the normal judicial procedure in which a definite crime entails a predictable penalty.”⁷ This process became possible through the arbitrary acts and regulations of the totalitarian regime that deprived people of the ability to act. Arendt points at a phenomenon she calls “statelessness” of millions of human beings whom the totalitarian regime rendered homeless, stateless, outlawed and thus superfluous. The Jews became paradigmatic of this state of “rightlessness.”⁸ It was a process that began with the first racist law passed in Nazi Germany, which deprived the Jews of their legal and civil rights and reached its extreme in the destruction of the Jews.

Killing the Moral Person in Human Beings – The second step toward total domination “is the murder of the moral person in man”; that is, the destruction of conscientious or moral agency. The destruction of the moral subject in the camps, according to Arendt, has three consequences: first, life in the camps deprived the inmates of any genuine moral choice and left no space for making conscientious protests. Second, the constant struggle for life eliminated human solidarity and led to complete isolation of the inmates. And third, the extreme conditions of life in the concentration camps led the victims to become complicit in the totalitarian crimes. Arendt maintains that in the Hobbesian world of the camps, where people constantly had to struggle for their lives, the Nazis were able to thwart any human solidarity among the inmates by intentionally turning the prisoners against each other. This achieved a dual purpose: the destruction of the inmates’ morality as well as their motivation to resist.⁹

5 Ibid., 437.

6 Ibid., 447, 451–453.

7 Ibid., 447.

8 Ibid., 296, 447.

9 Ibid., 451–452.

Destroying the Individuality of Human Beings – After killing the juridical person and the moral person, all that the totalitarian regime must do to realize total domination is, in Arendt's words, to destroy "the differentiation of the individual, his unique identity."¹⁰ The supreme goal of the totalitarian regime, according to Arendt, is to eliminate human *spontaneity* and to "organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all humanity were just one individual."¹¹ It should be stressed that this experiment of total domination is an attempt to transform human nature itself.¹² As already mentioned, this experiment, according to Arendt, was realized almost to perfection in the concentration and extermination camps through the permanence and institutionalization of terror and torture. In fact, the process of depriving the victims of their humanity began long before they arrived at the concentration camps; it began with the harsh conditions in the ghettos, through the long and difficult journey in sealed carriages, etc.

This unprecedented phenomenon of a systematic, calculated attempt to annihilate human dignity is what Arendt called "radical evil," a term first coined by Immanuel Kant. For Arendt, radical evil was a will that "could no longer be understood and explained by the evil motives of self-interest, greed, covetousness, resentment, lust for power, and cowardice."¹³ By "radical evil" Arendt did not mean diabolical evil but rather a systematic (human) program of producing evil, behind which stood reason. Radical evil was unknown to us prior to the emergence of totalitarian regimes; it is beyond the evil we knew and thus requires new knowledge and understanding. As Arendt emphasizes, it "has emerged in connection with a system in which all men have become equally superfluous."¹⁴ Whereas murder is a limited evil because the murderer leaves a body behind, radical evil destroys not only a life; it destroys "the fact of existence itself." It erases the identity of the victim and the ability to remember and mourn him. Arendt indeed believes that the victims of the concentration camps disappeared into "holes of oblivion."¹⁵

After the war, accounts of both the Nazi and Soviet concentration and slave-labor camps began to appear in survivors' memoirs, novels, and diaries, as well as in official documents. Arendt read many of these works, and for the writing of her theory of total domination in OT she especially relied on the books of David

¹⁰ Ibid., 453.

¹¹ Ibid., 438.

¹² Ibid., 458.

¹³ Ibid., 459.

¹⁴ Ibid., See also 443.

¹⁵ Ibid., 442–443, 452.

Rousset, Eugen Kogon and Bruno Bettelheim. All three were survivors of Buchenwald and Dachau, early Nazi concentration camps established on German soil. As she read such works, Arendt reached the conclusion that the concentration camps were the fundamental apparatus that distinguished the totalitarian regime from other types of governments.¹⁶

Dwelling on Horrors

The concentration and extermination camps haunted Arendt's thought since she first realized that the rumors about them were true; their existence lay behind her preoccupation with the problem of evil, from OT, through *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), and up until her later works. In OT Arendt argued that only people "who have not actually been smitten in their own flesh" in the concentration camps and are consequently "free from the bestial, desperate terror [. . .] can afford to keep thinking about horrors."¹⁷ The survivors of the concentration camps, according to Arendt, are not capable of reflecting on their experience in any meaningful way. An eyewitness account by a survivor is problematic for Arendt because it is given by a person who, in her understanding, was reduced to "a bundle of reactions [that] separates him as radically as mental disease from everything within him that is personality or character."¹⁸ Any effort of survivors to describe their *experiences* remains unintelligible, unimaginable, and incredible, as Arendt writes: "the experiences themselves can communicate no more than nihilistic banalities."¹⁹ Testimonies of survivors are "banal" because while they convey "a series of remembered occurrences" they lack any *thought*; and they are nihilistic in the sense that they tell a story about an absence of reality, suffering, and loss. The experiences of the survivors cannot provide us with the proper solution to the problem that they raise; they can only serve as a yard-

16 Bettelheim, Bruno. (1943). "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 38, no. 4, 417–452; Kogon, Eugen. (1947). *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager*. Berlin: Tempelhof; Rousset, David. (1946). *L'univers concentrationnaire*. Paris: Editions du Pavois.

17 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 441.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 442. In retrospect, "nihilistic banalities" echoes the notion of "the banality of evil," coined by Arendt years later.

stick for judging what sort of conditions we should fight against, how people ought *not* to live.²⁰

The experiences of the survivors in and of themselves cannot teach us about the camps, according to Arendt, because they lack positive content and, therefore, they are not unique. In her view, firsthand accounts are inherently unintelligible, since they try to communicate things that evade human understanding and human experience. “Anyone speaking and writing about concentration camps is still regarded as suspect,” Arendt writes. Even the survivor himself “is often assailed by doubts with regard to his own truthfulness, as though he had mistaken a nightmare for reality.”²¹ Not only do testimonies lack thought, there is also no common language that can bridge “the terrible abyss that separates the world of the living from that of the living dead.”²²

What Arendt reveals here is an accurate perception of the contemporary atmosphere regarding survivors of the camps. Although numerous testimonies of camp survivors were already available in the late 1940s, they fell on deaf ears. Psychologically speaking, the inability and unwillingness of the survivors to share their experiences—which in their own eyes looked incredible—with others went hand-in-hand with the reluctance of the audience to listen to these tales of horror. This was the case in Europe, in the United States, and in Israel. It took three decades until the survivors stopped being “suspect” and became instead privileged witnesses in the eyes of society.

But Arendt went further than most of her contemporaries by refusing to give meaning to suffering. Although Arendt is by no means indifferent to it, she emphatically argues that the suffering inflicted on the victims in the camps—intense as it was—is not the distinguishing characteristic of totalitarianism. “Suffering, of which there has been always too much on earth, is not the issue, nor is the number of victims. Human nature as such is at stake,” she wrote.²³ Furthermore, the immense suffering of the victims portrayed in testimonies not only distracts us from the main issue at hand, it might also affect us in a negative way by provoking the emotion of pity.

Arendt’s wish to avoid being carried away by suffering can be traced from OT, through *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and on to her later writings. Following Nietz-

²⁰ Ibid., 441–442. Cf. Howes, Ells, Dustin (2008). “‘Consider If This Is a Person’: Primo Levi, Hannah Arendt, and the Political Significant of Auschwitz.” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 22 (2): 266–292, 270.

²¹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 439.

²² Ibid., 441.

²³ Ibid., 458–459.

sche, Arendt vigorously criticized “the politics of pity,” epitomized in Jean Jacques Rousseau’s work. In her analysis of Rousseau and the French Revolution in her work *On Revolution*, Arendt ties Rousseau’s emphasis on compassion and pity in his political theory and the “Pity and Terror” of Robespierre.²⁴ For Rousseau, pity “is a natural sentiment which, moderating in each individual the activity of love of oneself, contributes to the mutual preservation of the entire species.”²⁵ According to Arendt, both compassion (the capacity for suffering with others) and pity (a sentiment which is the “perversion” of compassion) are located in the human heart and hence should play no role in the public sphere.²⁶ Arendt’s alternative to compassion is *solidarity*, which is a principle that “partakes of reason, and hence of generality” and, therefore, “is able to comprehend . . . all mankind.”²⁷ Solidarity is not guided by suffering and, in contrast to pity, “keeps its sentimental distance” between people. Whereas pity “can be enjoyed for its own sake,”²⁸ and thus remains passive, solidarity can lead to action, which is, for Arendt, political by its nature.

Reading OT in light of Arendt’s crystallized ideas in *On Revolution* regarding suffering and compassion can help us better grasp her attitude toward the survivors. When writing a political theory on totalitarianism, Arendt—the impartial observer who is “free from the bestial, desperate terror”—does not allow the suffering of the camps’ victims to arouse any passions in her that will lead her astray from reason.²⁹ This distance, according to Arendt, is the fundamental condition for historical understanding and judging.

In Arendt’s contention that the victims who survived the camps cannot truly reflect on what had happened to them, we find the seed of her understanding of judgment.³⁰ Only in the more general context of Arendt’s theory of judgment, which prioritizes the spectator’s disinterested reflective point of view over that of the engaged actor, can we understand her stance regarding who can or cannot

24 Arendt, Hannah. (1977). *On Revolution*. New York: Penguin Books, 81.

25 Rousseau, Jean Jacques. (1964). “Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality.” In Roger D. Masters (ed.). Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*. Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 132–133.

26 Arendt, *On Revolution*. 81, 88, 95–96.

27 Ibid., 88.

28 Ibid., 89.

29 Ibid., 95.

30 Cf. Wellmer, Albrecht. (1996). “Hannah Arendt on Judgment: The Unwritten Doctrine of Reason.” In: May, Larry & Kohn, Jerome (eds.). *Hannah Arendt: Twenty Years Later*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 33–52, 35.

afford to “keep thinking on horrors.”³¹ In her writings, Arendt presents two distinct models of judgments, one based on the standpoint of the actor and the second (which will be focused on here) on the standpoint of the spectator. Arendt defines judgment as “one, if not the most important activity in which [the] sharing-the-world-with-others comes to pass.” The human capacity to judge, for Arendt, is “a specifically political ability.”³² On the other hand, in her later writings she characterized judgment as a mental activity which she attributes to the non-participating spectator, e.g., poets or historians.³³

Arendt’s understanding of political and moral judgment as the faculty of the spectator draws on Kant’s theory of aesthetic judgment. According to Kant, reflective judgment is related to what he calls “enlarged mentality” (*eine erweiterte Denkungsart*), namely, the ability to think “from the perspective of everyone else” or to “reflect upon one’s judgment from a universal point of view.”³⁴ That is, only the disinterested observer is in the position to see “the whole that gives meaning to the particulars.”³⁵ Following Kant, Arendt argues that only the spectators, those “who are not engaged in the game themselves” can truly reflect on and judge the spectacle.³⁶ The capacity of the disinterested spectator to think “representatively,” that is, from the perspective of everyone else, is exercised through the faculty of imagination, which is closely related to historical understanding (*Verstehen*). It

31 Though Arendt did not have a written “theory of judgment,” we can learn about her views on this subject from several of her works, such as: *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, *The Life of the Mind*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and *Between Past and Future*. Arendt meant to dedicate the third volume of her work *The Life of the Mind* to the subject of judgment but did not accomplish this due to her sudden death in 1975. See Beiner, Ronald (1982). “Hannah Arendt on Judging.” In: Arendt, Hannah, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*. Ed. and with an interpretive essay: Ronald Beiner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 89–90; D’entrèves, Maurizio Passerin (2000). “Arendt’s Theory of Judgment.” In: Dana Villa (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 245–256.

32 Arendt, Hannah. (1993). “The Crisis in Culture.” In: *Between Past and Future*. New York: Penguin Books. 197–226, 221.

33 Several commentators have dealt with the contradiction between Arendt’s two different views on judgments. See Bernstein, Richard, J. (1990). “Hannah Arendt: Judging—The Actor and the Spectator.” In: Reuben Garner (ed.), *The Realm of Humanitas: Responses to the Writings of Hannah Arendt*. New York: Peter Lang. 234–254.

34 Kant, Immanuel. (1952). *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 151. See also Wellmer, “Hannah Arendt on Judgment,” 33, 40; Benhabib, Seyla. 1988. “Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Hannah Arendt’s Thought.” *Political Theory* 16 (February): 37, 44.

35 Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, 68.

36 Ibid., 15.

should be stressed, however, that the ability to think from the perspective of everyone else is not *empathy*. The notion of empathy contradicts Arendt's understanding of critical thinking and her basic idea of plurality.³⁷

Arendt's writing, undeniably, did not reveal great empathy for those who actually experienced the terror of the camps. Was she trying, however, to represent or imagine their standpoint? Some commentators have argued that Arendt was more successful in representing the perpetrator than the victim, better able to recapture the mind of the anti-Semite than the Jew, that of the white Boer settlers than the blacks in South Africa.³⁸

Conclusion

Although Arendt uses testimonies of camp survivors as a base to her studies—a fact that may seem a bit paradoxical in light of her low appraisal of their value—in OT, as in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, her attitude toward testimonies is instrumental. They are means, raw material, but not the central factor. Arendt is not philosophically interested in the victims' human experiences as such for reasons that have been outlined previously: her criticism of pity, her avoidance of compassion, and her belief that a spectator can exercise political judgment in a way that a participant cannot. As mentioned, Arendt dismissed the significance and relevance of testimonies and eyewitness accounts for the understanding of the phenomenon of the concentration camps. She held that in dealing with an "unimaginable" phenomenon such as Auschwitz, the point of view of the survivors, who cannot distance themselves from their experience, could not be relied upon to build an accurate analysis of the event. All seem part of an effort to distance herself from anything that hampers her liberty to formulate political concepts.

The traditional attitude of historians to ignore or be suspicious towards Holocaust survivors' testimony, that Arendt expresses in OT, has changed over the course of the last years. In the last two decades we have witnessed more and more historians who utilize survivors' testimonies in their studies; Saul Friedländer and Christopher Browning are two important examples. I follow their foot-

37 Ibid., 43; Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture." 221. Cf. also Benhabib, "Judgment and the Moral Foundations," 43–44; Benhabib, Seyla (1990). "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative." *Social Research*. 57 (1): 182–184.

38 Kateb, George. (1984). *Hannah Arendt, Politics, Conscience, Evil*. New Jersey, Rowman & Allanheld: Totowa. 61–63; cf. Benhabib, Seyla. (1990). "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative." *Social Research* 57, no. 1, 167–196. 184.

steps. I am convinced, in contrast to Arendt, that as scholars who “dwell on horrors,” our responsibility as thinkers, not least political thinkers, is to *listen* very attentively and thoroughly to survivors’ testimonies, which have undeniably taught us a great deal since Arendt’s time. The literature of Holocaust survivor testimonies is fertile ground for thought, especially with regard to Arendt and her emphasis on the human condition and plurality.

I believe that Holocaust survivors’ testimony and the *insights*³⁹ of people who experienced the camps “in their own flesh,” are invaluable sources of historical understanding. Indeed, precisely because these accounts aspire to describe a reality in which *common sense* is absent—precisely because of that, we *need* to listen. Arendt was clearly right when she called the camps a “phantom world,” noting that the survivor himself is “often assailed by doubts with regards to his own truthfulness, as though he had mistaken a nightmare for reality.”⁴⁰ I personally heard such a claim from many survivors whom I interviewed.

The paradoxical condition of survivors who attempt to convey an experience that is incredible in their own eyes is succinctly expressed by Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo in her memoir: “Today, I am no longer sure that what I have written is true, but I am sure that it happened.”⁴¹ Clearly, there are unreliable written and oral testimonies and sometimes memory plays tricks on survivors; all of these limitations, however, do not make the testimonies less valuable. The insights of survivors are an essential contribution to our knowledge on the Holocaust in general, and on the concentration and extermination camps in particular, without which it could never be complete. Notwithstanding, I do not wish to argue that survivors are the exclusive authorities in interpreting life in the camps. Indeed, we need to also draw on analyses by political theorists, historians, sociologists, and psychoanalysts.

Furthermore, I find Arendt’s clear-cut distinction between the categories of the “actor” and the “spectator” dubious, even more so given her contention that genuine philosophical reflection is the exclusive asset of the latter and a priori denied to the former. This is a strange argument that seems to owe more to the idealistic tradition of German philosophy, and its unbounded self-confidence, than to a careful consideration of the intrinsic value of testimonies. Arendt’s stance completely ignores the spectator’s responsibility and his or her emotional

³⁹ As Arendt explains, the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* or insight designates the judging capacity of the actor and it is exercised through the faculty of common sense. Arendt, “The Crisis in Culture.” 221.

⁴⁰ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 439.

⁴¹ Delbo, Charlotte (1995). “None of us Will Return.” In: *Auschwitz and After*. Trans: Rosette C. Lamont. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1–114, 128.

reactions; helplessness, a feeling of complicity, a sense of guilt (or its repression) often color the interpretation of the events by such a spectator. Even if one is willing to go along with Arendt's claim that testimonies are imperfect since they are necessarily removed from the event they aim to reflect, there is little reason to assume that the spectator is somehow better equipped to surmount this difficulty, as if the actual experience of the horror is an irremediable obstacle to understanding. The fact that some of the most prominent Holocaust historians, such as Yisrael Gutman, Saul Friedländer, and Dov Kulka, are survivors themselves, only reinforces my argument.