

Code response



“Persons, and Others” Sartre’s “As We Are Now,” opens one’s eyes towards some of the realities of life, which we as the young generation, do not really pay heed to in our day-to-day lives. Similarly, Loraine Code’s analysis of “As We Are Now,” seems like an account from someone who has vast knowledge in the field of human relations and psychology. She has quoted the theories of renowned theorists which gives a lot more value to her point of view, because she has not just stated facts rather she has aligned them with theoretical evidence. In the beginning of the article, Code explains Spencer’s predicament in the nursing home in the phrase “systematically degrading character of her treatment,” I thought this phrase summed up the emotions and the treatment of the patients in the nursing home extremely well. She could simply have said the treatment with the patients of the attending staff was harsh, but she chose to use words that were more powerful and conveyed the gravity of the situation with a lot more feeling. The writer talks about the points of view of Nagel, Kant, Bloom and others to amalgamate them with her own opinions and thus presents a very concrete take on Sartre’s “As We Are Now.” I have myself in the past studied the Kantian formulations and I feel Code has made very apt use of these theories. The treatment of Spencer in the nursing home certainly shows that those who take care of her there do not give any value to those in the nursing home. The staff of the nursing home treats its subjects as liabilities who can also be categorized as non-living things for them. The staff feels that those who are at their mercy in the nursing home are either insane or mentally handicapped in some way, which results in their treating them as ends rather than a means to an end. The stress which code places on the stereotypes we make and the value we give to them also made me actually

think about this notion. I wondered that truly, how often we misjudge people because of the stereotypes we fit them in and yet we fail to realize this mistake of ours. Similarly, those in the nursing home have stereotyped their subjects as people who need to be told what to do and devoid of all feelings and emotions. For this reason, they keep asserting to their subjects that they are incapable of making the right choices for themselves because they are nothing but “poor things”. This assertion is re-iterated to them so many times in a day that they end up doubting their own realities, which is what Spencer was on the verge of. Her journal, as code described was the only thing that kept her from losing her sanity, the only thing that kept reminding her of whom she was and that she could still make sense of her surroundings. Another strong element which I felt Code highlighted was that of absolute power and what it can do to the people who possess it. Code mentions that the nursing home staff exercised absolute power over its subjects. This made them even more insensitive to the plight of those who reluctantly had to live on their mercy. In “Knowing Persons,” Code talked about the fluctuating identity. It took me a while to understand what that meant, but when I understood the meaning, I could not help but relate to what she had written. She said that once we get to know someone, we develop an affiliation for that person if we like him/ her. However, if ever the situation or circumstances change that person (fluctuation), we tend to change our feelings for that person as well. So, in effect, we do not really like a person, rather we like his/ her personality traits, which if taken away from him/ her result in a reciprocated effect in our affiliation with the person.