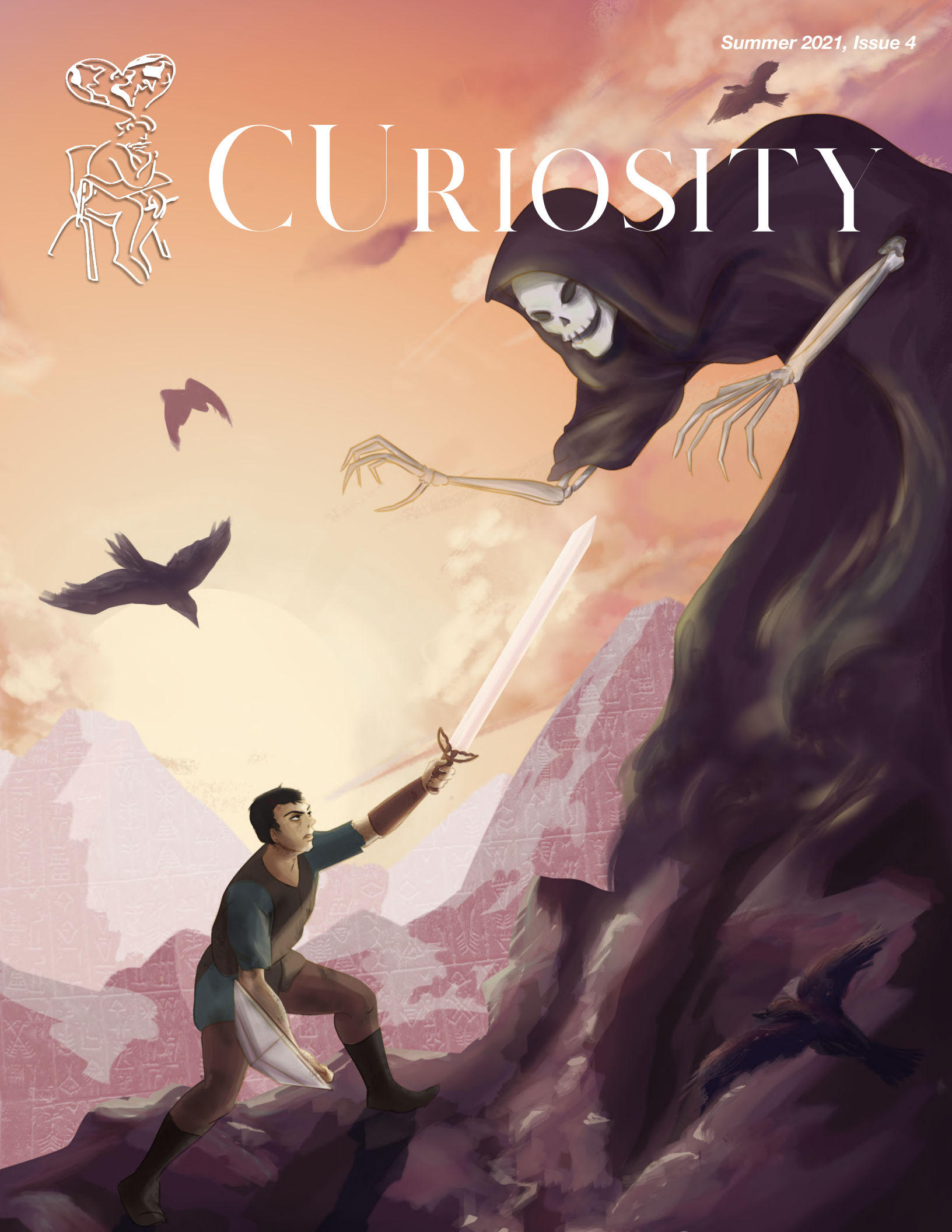


Summer 2021, Issue 4



CURIOSITY





What will happen to the warrior?

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Intimidating as death may sound, it is one inescapable episode of life. Dauntlessly, we dive right in and see what our contemplation could offer.

Detachment – We shall dissect the beliefs and perspectives people have on death. Are our impressions of death fictional or fated? Should it be just as neutral as life should be?

Inspection – We will then explore the notion of death linguistically, legally, and socially – an insight into the non-transferability of meanings of words from language to language, a controversial case study of necessary cannibalism, and a reflection on how modern digitalization is involved in emotional experiences in response to deaths.

Reawakening – In this last section, the example of African-Americans illustrates how the deaths of previous generations inspire future generations to cultivate their cultures and embrace their identities. Following, an examination of the more recent philosophical theories opens up new perspectives to view death. It is unlikely that we will soon reach a definite answer to what happens after death. During our lives, how should we confront death?

Upon the mentioning of death, what instantly comes to our minds are separation, grief, and eternal darkness... but there is so much more to that. Indeed, no one can be certain about what happens after the moment we stop breathing, our hearts stop beating, and our blood stops flowing. How are we almost so sure that it is bad? How have our beliefs developed that we almost always associate death with the concepts of heaven and hell, transmigration and soul detachment?

Extending from individual deaths, we must not overlook deaths in larger contexts. On one hand, we have deaths of non-living, but important things – that of languages, cultures and civilizations; on the other, we have extinction of species, including human species. We believe that just as we are constantly in search of the meaning of life, the journey in search of the meaning of death is just as intriguing. In this issue, we invite you to ponder over death with us.

Yours truly,



Editor in Chief



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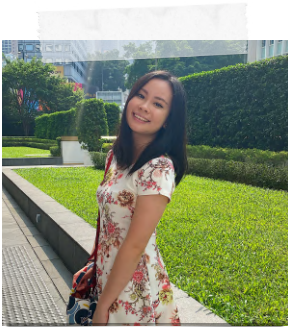
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Don't judge me by what I wrote.



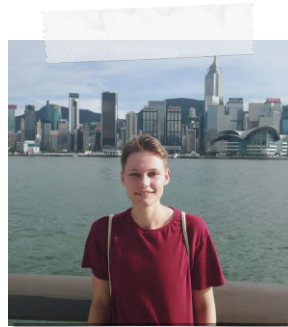
ANNA IP
Guest Writer

A dreamer wandering between two worlds. Of what life is, and of what life could be.



BIANCA REYES
Guest Writer

My name is Bianca Reyes, and I am a 3rd-year law student at CUHK. I am from the Philippines, but I grew up in Hong Kong. For my article, I decided to write about a text I had studied in my legal jurisprudence course. I found the piece intriguing, as five different judgments were able to be put forward to answer one single issue - which I believe speaks to the subjective nature of the law and judiciary.



MARTA GRAMATYKA
Guest Writer

Marta Gramatyka is a year 2 student majoring in Chinese Studies. Originally from Poland, she is passionate about foreign cultures and languages, trying to find connections between them and appreciate their uniqueness. She's been writing for a long time for different magazines, and she finds her inspiration in everyday life and historical events she loves to read about.



CHARLOTTE IP
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If our minds were a tree, thoughts and memories would be its leaves – each similar but different, collectively a wondrous scene. Those we failed to cling to will fall, languish and be lost in the forgetful reds. The trees strip naked, our soul wanders, but so long as our yearn for knowledge burns, the lush green always returns.

Yet writers like us are greedy, we see all leaves their own legacy. So we fashion ourselves as gardeners, we paint them gold while the green lingers, lest they fall in nature’s course, they shall live on as mystical folklores.



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A human. Being. Lost in the vortex of nothingness, found in the harmonies of nature. An introvert who enjoys bird-watching and painting in her free time. Blessed with ignorance.



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'Live the moment. Cherish the present. Anticipate the future. Frame the yesteryear.' I live by these words; I can't agree more. An ordinary student who loves sports, photography, laughing and drinking! And always, always, always open to try new things.

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Dr. Isabel Hwang
Supervisor



Dr. Klaus Colanero
Supervisor

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to contemplate death after years of evolution. Looking into the future, it will not be surprising if our species go extinct one day, and maybe then our imaginations on death will also vanish along with us; if the development of a new civilization has no connection with ours, there may be novel visions on death composed and propagated.

To what, then, is our intelligence valuable? Beyond humanity, our stories could be just illusions.

Zooming in, life and death seems no more than the results of biological processes that are completely out of our control. Our body is doing every-

thing to keep us alive – maybe even more than you would like, but it never figured out a way to combat ageing. You squeeze your nose and hold your breath, and you stare at the stopwatch: “10, 20...50, 54, 56, 57, huh... phoo... huh... phoo...” You could not resist the urge to breathe in and replenish your lung with air of a higher oxygen concentration than that in your body. It is not possible to voluntarily hold your breath till death as your conscious attempt to not to breathe can easily be overcome by your body’s mechanism to keep you alive. However, like a machine, it can only take in so much damage from the environment – the radiation from the

surrounding, the toxic chemicals we ingested through our mouth or absorbed through our skin, the invasion by bacteria and viruses... The damages start to accumulate in our genetic information (DNA) and are reflected in the malfunctioning of the biomolecules synthesized from it, leading to the breakdown of our body and eventually, death.

But how one reacts to reality, in turn accelerating or decelerating his life towards death could be very much dependent on his inherent temperament, which acts as his guide since the very beginning of his life, with environmental and cultural factors as only add-ons. One can become so determined that he willingly conducts experiments that expose himself to radioactive chemicals with the aspiration to contribute to scientific discovery; one can become so fastidious that he adopts a lifestyle that minimizes his contact with synthetic or natural harmful substances.

Does the design of our creature decide how we are to view death and thus how we are to live our lives? Is our interpretation of different theories of death predestined?



In face of the death of her little hamster, whom she lived with for two years, she buried the dead body under a tree. She never shed a tear. She took good care of him and was in control of his diet; he had lived longer than expected. It was time to let him go; she was prepared.

One day, when she comes to confront the death of the dearer ones, can she still remain composed as she sees death and humans’ sentiments towards it so infinitesimal? Will she cry and remind herself that our emotions may even be evolutionarily developed for our survival?



THERE IS NO LIFE, WITHOUT DEATH

By: Ip Anna Tin Wai



Life and death are generally thought to be polar opposites. In this article, however, the author puts the meaning of death into perspective. Contrary to common beliefs that death is the inevitable outcome of life – in many ways, death creates life.

“Nah, I don’t really care for happiness”, I said.

Shocked, my first-year roommate, with her eyes wide-open and brows knitted together, frantically asked,

“What do you want in life, then?”

Slightly perturbed, I rolled over to my left. Darkness didn’t consume the pale white wall lying right next to me. Instead, the wall appeared exceptionally luminous, as light permeated and diffused through the microscopic gaps in between the curtains. Staring at the walls was oddly calming. Slowly and firmly, I said,

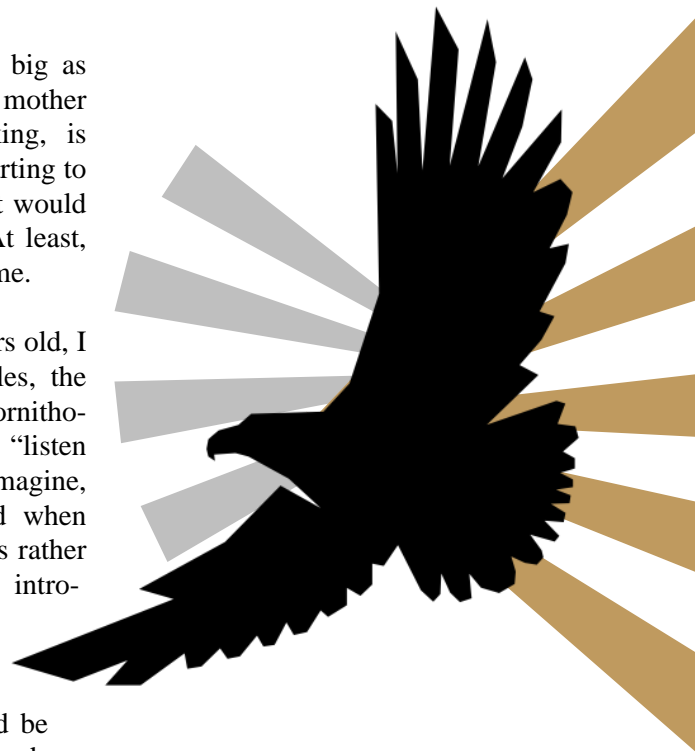
“Pain, because I know there is no life, without death.”

Science has always been my weakest link. I don’t like it, nor do I do well in it. My younger self, who had long been impatiently thirsting for answers to probing mysteries of life and death, was most dissatisfied with the dull and impersonal narrations science had to offer. As I grew older, however, I started noticing the inherent beauty of mother nature – perhaps, just perhaps, there is more to science than the dreary jargons I was unwillingly fed with. From as little

as how plants grow, to as big as how the ecosystem works, mother nature, through her working, is gently whispering and imparting to us, ancient-old wisdom that would forever change our lives. At least, this was what happened to me.

When I was around ten years old, I was told the story of eagles, the symbol of fierceness in ornithology. My teacher then said, “listen and learn”. As you could imagine, my 10-year-old-self sulked when my teacher threw at me this rather tedious and unappetizing introduction. Hang in there, though, for you will, just like I did, be so engrossed in the story that you would be left in contemplation at the end.

Let the truth speak for itself. The Reptile Gardens, on its website, notes: as eagles celebrate their 40th birthday, they quietly fly to hills and mountains, to find themselves a spot for the next 150 days. No, it isn’t a mid-life crisis. The eagles have a far more important crisis at stake. A bird reaching its 40 years old mark, by any standard, is extraordinary. As the Reptile Gardens describes in great detail, the inconvenient truth, however, is that their old age is accompanied with inevitable flaws, an imminent threat to their survival. In the words of the Reptile Garden, middle-aged birds are forced to coexist with increasingly “bent beaks”, and growingly “long and flexible talons”. As the Reptile Garden says, such deterioration in



their features seriously compromises their ability to prey. As if the situation isn’t bad enough, their feathers, at this age, tend to have become, as the website describes, “old, aged and heavy, making it difficult to fly”. They will die, should the situation persist, as highlighted by the website.

In great determination then, eagles, during their retreat at their chosen spots, as vividly recalled by the Reptile Gardens, “knock their beaks against rocks until they are plucked out”, then “pluck their talons”, and as a final trial of their remaining dwindling faith, “pluck their feathers”. Imagine, having to single-handedly snap a usually inflexible nose bone of yours, then pull, not cut your hair until every piece of hair is completely detach-



ed from your scalp, and finally, peel your skin away from your blood and flesh ... Ah, now you cringe and scream in fear.

This is far from a suicidal attempt by the eagles. In the exact opposite, they are scrambling, struggling, and fighting for life, through death. It is precisely through the death of their beaks, talons and feathers, that their bodies are severed, that a stream of healing may flow through, until each cell now may be rejuvenated and features rebuilt. A once-faltering eagle, now revived – with evermore vitality to live, to thrive, to excel.

And yes, they were broken, but now renewed. For there is no renewal, without death.

Now intensely satisfied with the happy ending Nature compassionately grants eagles, I, for the first time in hours, put down my pen, and look out the window, only to find a flock of eagles indifferently gliding high above the sky of Tsim Sha Tsui. I'd like to think that this is eagles echoing to my narration of their story and rejoicing in their renewed strength. In great comfort, I, while renewing myself with a sip of coffee, watch the birds flap their wings from one place to another, finally landing at the world-renowned St. Andrew's Church. Oh, and they are smart. They brought me to the church, one that is positioned in between skyscrapers and fluorescent lights, making it the very embodiment of peace. Most of all, the symbol of power of life, through death.

December 1941. It was Hong Kong's Winter, of terror, and of bloodshed. Encapsulated by roars of the Japanese soldiers, blasts projected from bombs, and grief of the locals for the lives lost, St.

“Death opens a door out of a little, dark room (that's all the life we have known before it) into a great, real place where the true sun shines and we shall meet.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold*

Andrews Church was not immune to the atrocity – in the words of the Antiquities and Monuments Office, the church was, forcefully “converted into a Shino Shrine during the Japanese Occupation”. Yet, the symbolic red bricks of the landmark, in the midst of helplessness, afflictions and calamities, seemed to have stuck and stood closer with each other more than they ever did. In unison, the bricks sang a serene hymn to its passerby, and in solidarity, reached for their hands and wiped their tears – as if nothing else mattered. Peace, and hope – the Church sustained Hong Kong through its darkest hours.

As age crept up on the building, red bricks aged, significance faded. Technology consumed the society, and the building no longer felt as inviting. Architects, back in 2016, must devise a “restoration plan”, as mentioned by the Antiquities and Monuments Office. How do they retain the very red essence, while elevating and modernizing the building – that was the question they must untangle. With hours of brain juice (and some



St Andrews Church / Wikimedia

fairy dust), they, as the Commissioner for Heritage's Office mentioned, delicately removed the tired bricks from the building, resuscitated them, and using the very bricks, as the UNESCO award citation says, "restored the exterior brick facades". If you ask me, the new architecture is strikingly different from the old, but in so many ways, a splitting image resembling the old.

Church, now fused, does not only embody the past, but projects the present, and foretells the future – glittering, radiating and shining more than it ever did.

And this is a story of the death of the old, and the reimagination and reinvention of the new. This is the marrying of history and modernity. It is precisely through the death of the old structure, that the spirit of innovation is sparked, that room for change is made possible, that the new can make its way in. The once-irrelevant building, now re-

vamped – with evermore faith, hope, and love to build its legacy.

And why yes, they were demolished, and now reinvented. For there is no rewriting the future, without death.

Striving for every opportunity towards death (please, this is figurative). Isn't this what we are doing precisely every day? We try and question – we live to learn, not to hold onto what we know, but to actively challenge our preconceived notions, or even well established knowledge. We adventure – we go on roller coaster rides and travel to every corner of the world, just to scream our lungs out, to breath and to explore. We love – we enter, boldly into friendships and relationships presented to us, amid the heartbreaks we might have been through. We do all these, not in the spirit of living, but

in the spirit of dying. We would rather put on a good fight, to challenge, to grow, and to mature. We die, to transition and move forward from our flaws, incompleteness and imperfections, to become a better version of ourselves.

How pathetic, stagnant and rigid our lives would be, if we only lived to live. The eagles would witness themselves wither, day by day – eventually die in desolation. The Church would see itself increasingly isolated and distanced from the society, losing its ability to effect change in lives – the worst thing that could happen to an evangelical institution. We would despise ourselves, for we, having lived for living, don't even know what life is like.

Our life stories are our personal and unique experiences in living, through dying. For there is no rebirth, without death.

So believe Winston Churchill when he says, "if you're going through hell, keep going". Keep going.



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The Unsung Legacy: Born and Perpetuated in Death

By Charlotte Ip

“What legacy will I leave behind?”

A question we ceaselessly ask ourselves, because we covet immortality, hoping that even if our body ceases to live, our spirit will. We hope to distinguish ourselves amongst the gradually homogenized human race, threatened by the shadow of globalization. We hope to impart our wisdom into memories of our successors. Yet most times we feel lost in the crowd, ignorant that we ourselves are bearers of an ancient wisdom that inherently defines us – language.

Source: Pexels

The World Through our Looking Glass

Indeed, language is not only a communication tool, but a vision, built collectively by experiences of one's civilization. As British linguist Frank Palmer says, “The words of a language often reflect not so much the reality of the world, but the interests of the people who speak it.” In other words, our native linguistic system crafts our reality, meaning it imparts us a world vision. Thus, when different language communities interact, there arises inevitably a gap of communication which even translation experts fail to bridge. This phenomenon is called “untranslatability”, meaning no equivalence of the other language is found. While some take a more obvious shape, some are so fundamental that the language speaker acknowledges

it as a universal truth. Therefore, to achieve mutual understanding through translation, the vision of one language community metaphorically dies to achieve the other.

Has it crossed your mind that hu-

mans have been attempting to use language to shape abstract concepts like time? How we visualize time is in fact how our language system taught us to visualize time. In 2001, American cognitive scientist Lera Boroditsky conducted a priming test



Source: Unsplash

on various Mandarin and English speakers to determine their way of conceptualizing time. It was revealed that Mandarin speakers conceptualize time vertically while English horizontally, meaning Mandarin speakers are more receptive to the statement “March comes earlier than April” while the English “March comes before April.” The vast difference in time perception might be traced back to the ancient Chinese practice of writing vertically while the English horizontally, reflecting how our experience shape reality. Therefore, in an attempt to convey time in these two languages, one vision dies as the only choice to fit in the other.

Metamorphosis: Farewell Larva, Hello Butterfly

Just as a larva, when morphed into a butterfly, kills its past life, a word, when morphed into the closest equivalent of another language, kills its vision. Many times, form comes into play when it directly conveys meaning to express a literary function like puns or humor. As the form changes,

the fight of retaining either the literal meaning or literary device continues and the former usually dies to keep the latter alive.

While translating the pun in Mao Dun’s “Vacillation” to English, which the character mistook “委員” (weiyuan) and “桂圓” (guiyuan) to insert humor, Mr. Qian Gechuan displayed ultimate creativity by morphing them into “committee” and “common tea”. The literal meaning of “桂圓” (longan) dies, to carry the humor across readers’ heart.

The Sense Lost in Translation

One of the more obvious deaths through translation’s knife is the lack of cultural concepts in the language concerned. While some can be resolved by coining a new equivalent, like the addition of Western ideologies like “rights” (權利), “democracy” (民主), “privacy” (私隱) into the Chinese dictionary, some trace back to the deep-seated connotations a language community shares towards certain words. In other words,

the imagery evoked from words again forms the reality for language groups. For example, the famous Chinese poem “Golden Thread (金縷衣)” is brutally pierced through to reveal the underlying meaning “Riches” in English. This is because the concept of “affluence” Golden Thread symbolizes was not shared in English, and with no similar equivalents, the metaphor dies to bring forth the meaning.

Some cultural concepts found their bridge, but it is one not sturdy enough to hold it all. Contrary to popular opinion, David Hawkes translated one of the Four Great Classical Novels in China, “Dream of the Red Chamber” (紅樓夢) into “Dream of the Golden Days”. This is because the connotations of red in Chinese – spring, youth, fortune, prosperity is retained only partially in English, with rosy cheeks symbolizing youth. “Red” thus, is slain as “gold” is born, which embodies youth, fortune and prosperity. Yet, no color could fully embody the life of red, even in her “golden days” she was halfdead.



Source: Dreamstime

Death for Diversity - But Why?

According to the Global Language Monitor in 2016, a whopping 5400 words are being incorporated into our language log every day. While some vocabulary are harmlessly coined in one's language to address the need of expressing a universal concept, like "privacy", formerly absent in Chinese, or as a cultural introduction like "qi" to the English community, there are always occasions where one language must sacrifice, whether the literal meaning, literary device, or their reality to actualize the others' visions. In a world where Western science is advocated, we are seeking for the one and only reality. We return to the perennial question whether languages should be standardized and thus our realities: where "gold" entails everything "red", and our associations to various colors will be identical; where time will always move horizontally, and everyone can collectively laugh about "committee" and "common tea". However, by what grounds do we judge which reality is more accurate? Language is, after all, a vision, dictating how we structure our thoughts and present it to others. Therefore, subjectivity inevitably plays a role.

Languages are just like trees. They differ not in the skeleton like the naming of objects, but the wood, scent, flowers, fruits, nuts, creatures that takes shelter – the nuanced descriptions and perceptions of these objects. These are what radiate the beauty and uniqueness of the species. Decapitating the tree, would after all, be decapitating a form of beauty, worse, an identity, honored by the very group who speaks it. And just as trees eventually wither if tended the same way, the soul of languages die because it would become



Source: Noun Project

too stilted and foreign to be mastered by natives.

Yes, languages do change, new barks grow while old barks detached. It is inevitable that certain expressions are replaced or forgotten with the introduction of new coinages. Yet, these will always be near and dear to natives, who participated in their very creation, thus evoking resonance that reaffirms their identity.



The World Through Our Lens
Source: Unsplash

So, how can we achieve mutual understanding in texts which manipulates the unique beauty of languages? We have, in fact, always apprehended, through our own language lenses, because as different as our expressions may be, we manipulate them to describe similar ob-

jects. Therefore, they, when translated, are never completely dead. What dies, may be its vision, the expression itself, but its soul, the underlying meaning, the expressive means lives on.

Our Legacy

"What legacy will I leave behind?" You ask. Indeed, one does not always have to perform lifechanging deeds, or pursue absolute uniqueness to be remembered. As simple as feeling the gravity of every vibration in your vocal cords while articulating your mother tongue(s), you are contributing to breathing full life into what defines you – your reality, vision, culture. In so, however, we risk sacrificing the likes of other languages, which despite not hampering comprehension, perpetuates a gap that is entrenched in our thought system.

Yet, we all know, it is all but a necessary death.



Source: Pexels

A case of the Speluncean Explorers

IS **KILLING** TO SURVIVE EVER **JUSTIFIED?**

Written by: Bianca Reyes

When the consequences of taking a life for a life are placed in the hands of the judiciary.



While the year 2020 has been quite an eventful one for Hong Kong with the coronavirus and the protests, it just goes to show how resilient and adaptable Hong Kong people are. However, for the students stuck at home with an abundance of time, it is hard not to let the mind wander to what Hong Kong might be like in the future.

While it can be very exciting to think about future technological milestones and how the world will advance, as a law student, there are some issues that are particularly of my concern regarding Hong Kong's future. Most of the city might know the year 2047 as a turning point for Hong Kong, with the handover and its implications. Though I am sitting here writing this article with a long list of video-recorded lectures to catch up on, I can't help but wonder what our city would be like if the Chinese legal system was implemented in Hong Kong. Particularly, what would happen if the death penalty was imposed?

Regardless of the death penalty being moral or immoral, I can't help but imagine what it would be like if my right to live were to be decided in the hands of the judiciary, which is the reality for most countries.

In this little thought bubble, the prospect of a legal yet morally conflicting criminal case came to mind. What does happen if an action, which technically is a crime, has been committed but is seemingly morally justified? My thoughts on this came about when I was reading a text for my legal jurisprudence course named: *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers* by Lon Fuller.

When you first read the title, you might think 'what is a "Speluncean"?' Well, spelunking is the act or hobby

of exploring caves, thus a spelunker is a person who participates in the act of spelunking. Fuller wrote this fictional piece in order to explore the different ways a judicial system can react to a morally conflicting criminal case. The text is based on a real criminal case *R v Dudley and Stephens*, where a group of men were stranded at sea and had to eat their crewmates in order to survive. In that case, the English courts decided that the necessity of staying alive did not provide a defence to the act of murder.

Similarly, but not any less grim, Fuller explores how a judicial system operates and handles a difficult yet delicate subject regarding the legal consequences of men acting on their fundamental primal urge to stay alive.

The Case of the Speluncean Explorers

The story follows a fictional scenario set in the year 4300, whereby a group of spelunkers were trapped in a cave with no food. Luckily, they were able to communicate to the outside world through a radio transmitter. Later, they learned that they would probably die before the rescue team ever reaches them. With dim prospects of survival, the men asked a physician through the radio whether they would survive if they engage in cannibalism. The physician reluctantly replied "yes".

After learning this, one of the trapped men – Roger Whetmore, used the radio to ask whether or not the men should draw lots to see who should be eaten. Neither a doctor, a judge or a minister chose to reply.

32 days had passed and it had been discovered, much to the dismay of the

rescue team, that Whetmore had been eaten. It turned out that the men did in fact decide to draw lots but Whetmore had withdrawn in the moment before the lots were cast. The other men grew angry at Whetmore and decided to draw his lot for him. Before the men did so, they asked Whetmore whether he believed the drawing of his lot would be unfair. Whetmore did not object, and his lot went against him. He was promptly put to death and eaten.

When the men were rescued, they were charged with murder under a law that stated:

"Whoever shall willfully take the life of another should be punished by death."

In the first trial, the men were sentenced to death since the courts simply followed the rule by its plain meaning. However, after the verdict, the jury asked the Chief Executive to commute the sentence from the death penalty to imprisonment. The main exercise of the article, however, is to explore various ways that different jurisprudence would deal with the situation. Each different school of thought is represented by a judge.

Chief Justice Truepenny

"...Justice will be accomplished without impairing either the letter or spirit of our statutes and without offering any encouragement for the disregard of law."

First, we meet Chief Justice Truepenny. The Chief Justice agreed with the outcome of the first trial, emphasizing that there is no exception applicable to this case. However, Truepenny mentioned that the case could

be appealed to the Chief Executive and the men could ask to be excused. This means that the justice system could save the men from the death penalty while staying faithful to the law.

Although this judgement might seem like a good way to have your cake and eat it too, it still faced a fair share of criticism from the other judges. This was mainly because the judiciary should not be concerned with the functions of other government branches. In my opinion, if the Chief Justice did end up relying on the Chief Executive to ‘bail’ the men out of their predicament, it would set a precedent in undermining the purpose of the justice system, which is to assess the situation fairly and impart the appropriate sentence for those who are deemed guilty. It begs the question that if another situation like this were to happen, would we need to ask the Chief Executive to pardon the case again? There would be no end to cop out and would inevitably compromise the justice system.



Source: Pexels

Justice Foster

“I believe something more is on trial in this case than the fate of these unfortunate explorers; that is the law of our Commonwealth.”

The second judgement comes from Justice Foster. He stated that the men were not guilty and based his judgement on the following two arguments. The first argument, Foster explained, is that the writ-ten law of the nation could not be applicable to the men in that situation. This is because the writ-ten law is only able to function in a society where men can coexist with each other. Foster argued that because the men were trapped in a life or death situation, the written law was no longer applicable. The binding force of the law loses its

power once men are no longer able to coexist. Therefore, the men did not violate any laws because there were not any laws to violate in the first place. Foster argued that the ability to coexist went out the window because first, they were geographically outside the borders of the nation and second, they were no longer living by the rules of civil man but by the rules of a survivalist.

Foster also put forward that even if the criminal law did apply, the men would still be innocent. This is because written law must be interpreted reasonably in light of its purpose. He brought up the idea of self-defence. If we interpret the law literally, self-defence resulting in death would be a crime. Yet, this is not the case in real life. Foster basically argued that the original law-makers could not have

possibly meant for any men in life or death situations to be deemed guilty.

Justice Tatting

“As I analyze the opinion just rendered by my brother Foster, I find that it is shot through with contradictions and fallacies.”

After first reading Foster’s judgment, it seemed convenient that there were so many loopholes within his judgment, but I could not quite put my finger on why. That was until I read Justice Tatting’s judgment, my favourite of the judges, in which Tatting proceeded to completely scrutinize Foster’s judgment.

Tatting attacks Foster’s opinion, ask-

ing when exactly had the men transition from a civil society to a state of nature? Was it when they were first trapped? When they drew lots? When they started to feel hungry? Tatting points out these uncertainties and ambiguities in Foster's argument and criticizes them.

The most amusing part is that after all this deliberation, Tatting ends up withdrawing and not putting forward a statement on whether or not the men should be charged guilty. I believe the reason for his withdrawal is to illustrate that while judges might be portrayed as all-knowing or all-just, the reality is that they are still human.



Source: Pexels

He also moved on to attack Foster's second argument. While we may prioritize the purpose of the law over the words itself, what do we do when the law has multiple purposes?

He attacks the idea of self-defence by explaining the fallacy of allowing exceptions and the resulting inability to draw a line?

Tatting pokes more holes into Foster's judgment, bringing up further examples of situations where Foster's argument would result in ambiguous conclusions. What if Whetmore had refused to participate from the beginning, would his lot still have counted? What if Whetmore was the only religious man? If he was then he would believe in an afterlife, while the other men didn't, which should justify why Whetmore should die since he would go to heaven? These gaps in his logic would serve to prove the unreliability of Foster's argument.

It makes sense to me that while one person may see the flaws in another's argument, it does not necessarily mean that they have the solution themselves. Tatting's withdrawal serves as a reflection on certain realities in a justice system sometimes people just don't really know what to do.

Justice Keen

“A hard decision is never a popular decision”.

The next judgment is from Justice Keen. To sum up, he asked what does the law say and what does it mean? It means anyone who willfully takes the life of another should be put to death. Did the men do that? Yes. Therefore, they should be put to death. Book closed. End of story. Keen brings to light the fact that the other judges are morally conflicted with this decision

but affirms that guilty is the right verdict. Keen also states that a clear-cut decision is best in the long run because if we resort to any purpose-based interpretation of the law, the justice system would have troubles deciding the next morally conflicting case. To me, this is one of the classic and most traditional ways of interpreting the situation. It is a very by-the-book ruling, which introduces a sense of stability and certainty into any justice system. Just imagine what the legal system would look like should every judge try to find loopholes and create imaginative principles in order to arrive at a result that they see as just - our legal system would collapse.

Justice Handy

“When the case is approached in this light, it becomes, I think, one of the easiest to decide that has ever been argued before this Court”.

Lastly, Justice Handy expressed amazement towards his fellow judges' in their tormented analysis of the case. Handy simply puts forward the argument that the people should decide what happens to the men. This is because public interest plays an important role in places such as the jury and the election of men. Handy emphasises the importance of giving the common people what they want or risking the credibility of the government. People are ruled by people. A good ruler listens and understands the will of the people. I believe that Handy's judgment is one that reflects a true democratic society. It is one where we can put trust in the public and their opinions in tricky situations such as this one. However, this does give rise to the possibility of discrimination against the minority. It gives rise to the question of how we can listen to the people if the majority thinks one way, while the minority



thinks in another way? It would be hard to see this implemented in a realistic society, such as one as diverse as Hong Kong, with many people coming from different backgrounds and beliefs.

Handy's verdict: not guilty.

What Now?

The Case of the Speluncean Explorers showcases the different methods and schools of thought that many legal philosophers follow. Whilst a situation like this may not pop up in real life anytime soon, we must not forget that it had and that it might.

As indicated from the text, legal philosophy is widely subjective. Most of the responses from the judges, while fictional, is based on each individual's personal beliefs and values. With one

hand - strictly upholding the letter of the law to the prioritization of justice to the other - the human predisposition to empathy, it is hard to determine which of judgments and its implications are objectively correct. *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers* strives, and might I say succeeds, to showcase the intricacies and inferences a single judgment may have.

This text, to many of my classmates, may just be final exam material. However, to me, it reminded me that while judges might be presented as decisive and impartial, in reality, they are just humans. Should our legal system adopt China's in 2047, this seemingly fanciful situation may possibly come to light. The delicate relationship between the death penalty and treading the line of morality and legality is put under the spotlight through Lon Fuller's *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers*. Personally speaking, I am quite fond of Justice

Handy's argument. The government and the nation are built on people. From elections to court juries, the common person is the building block of our civic society. Having said that, the feasibility of implementing this judiciary ideal in Hong Kong is questionable, given that democracy is the cornerstone of this type of society and due to the fact that Hong Kong is filled with people from many different backgrounds who may have conflicting opinions.

Now I would like to pose a question to you. If you were a judge, how would you decide?

Citations:

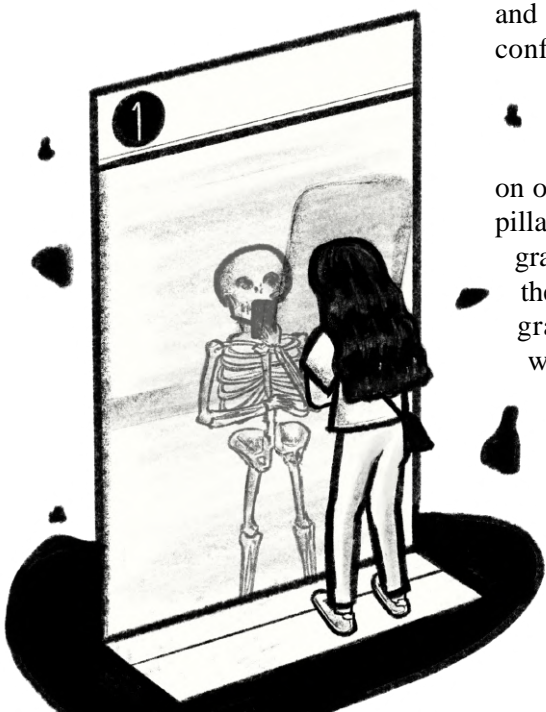
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Crossing the Water: A Gen Z's Look on Life and Death

As our lives grow to be increasingly digitalised, we should take care to reflect on our physically and emotionally authentic experiences, and the footprints we leave behind.

By Clarissa Lui



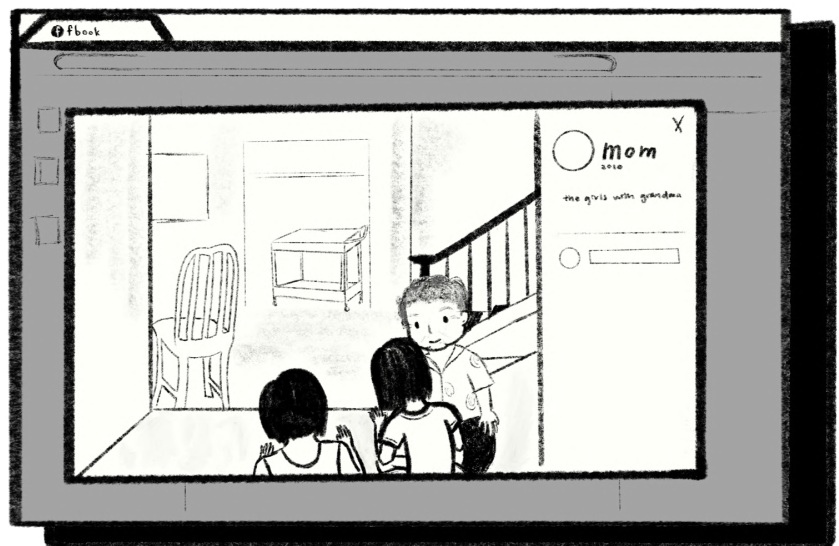
and stared at me with eyes full of confusion. My grandfather passed away very suddenly when I was young, and all that is left are two blurry images of him pushing me on our swing and showing me a caterpillar on a nearby bush. When my grandmother was first admitted into the home, she would ask where my grandfather was, and when he would visit her. In her own sickness, her brain had forgone the memories of loss and given her the simpler times. For me, someone still young and capable, the heartache is mine to bear.

My generation was born towards the end of the Dot Com

Boom, the era of digitalisation where industries grew exponentially online, and our homes and workplaces became increasingly connected to the internet. As a result, much of our lives are recorded virtually. My mother's social media contains a plethora of photos from me and my sister's childhood. The other day, I came across a photo of us and our grandmother sitting on the floor of our old house, taking solace from the cold marble during the exhausting heat. It was a comforting thought to me. Even though my grandmother has lost her memory of me, these moments of our lives remain frozen in bountiful 1s and 0s, existing as a flawless recreation of that instance. As we part ways

I am not afraid of dying — not right now, at least. That does not mean that I am not scared of death. I am terrified, in fact. I am terrified of loss, grief, and emptiness. Much like many others, I have experienced them, I do live with them, and I desperately want to feel better about them.

I have a grandmother that I love dearly. She is in a care home, opposite to a train station, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. My last visit must have been more than a year ago before the pandemic, and as she has been for years, she remained motionless on her bed



“As we part ways with this physical world, these moments that we have lived continue to exist, immortalising our experiences, becoming an inevitable part of our legacy.”

with this physical world, these moments that we have lived continue to exist, immortalising our experiences, becoming an inevitable part of our legacy.

“Beyond ourselves, this virtual connectivity gives us a chance to expand our horizons, reach more people around the world, and encourage important conversations, thereby enriching our ideals and values, creating a unique impact with our existence.”



Cold Worlds

I understand that the internet is merely a constructed representation of us; it is not the entire truth, and not always a direct reflection. However, there is no denying that these materials behind a glass screen remain connected to me. When I look at those photos on my mother’s account, I am reminded of happier times in my life. Times when my grandmother was still able to drive us to the mall, walk with me hand in hand, or simply remember me. It allows a small break from the ongoing heaviness of reality on my heart. These photos are mementoes from my childhood and evident of the bond between my grandmother and me.

Certainly, the impact of digital artefacts is not unique to me. There are countless other examples showing that the popularisation of social media has allowed a chance of rebirth, regrowth, or reintegration of different people and cultures into our lives. In 2013, Carlson wrote about the daily use of Facebook among certain Aboriginal groups in Australia. Such a habit allowed them to introduce and re-incorporate their identities and cul-



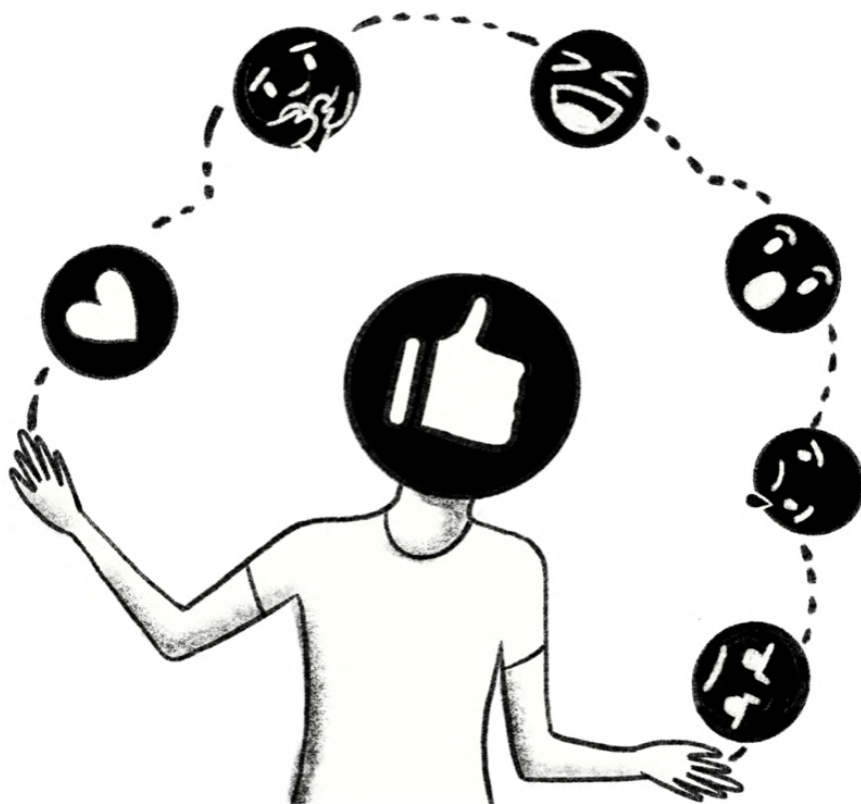
“Cohabiting the digital, we all require a greater degree of sensitivity in understanding how technology intensifies these experiences.”

tures after their displacement, providing them a new-found standing among our digitalised society. Other community-based groups on social media such as Subtle Asian Traits are other examples of digital communities where healing and reconnection can take place through mutual experiences and transform into something personal and alive. As such, it shows a unique form of mobilized power which stems from both individual and collective experiences. Beyond ourselves, this virtual connectivity gives us a chance to expand our horizons, reach more people around the world, and en-

courage important conversations, thereby enriching our ideals and values, creating a unique impact with our existence.

In the sense of remembrance, these digital tracks offer us alternate ways of celebration and commemoration. Often in funerals, close members of the deceased show praise and appreciation to the person that was through a eulogy. I think of the eulogy as a version of the deceased presented by those who love and respect them, different versions seen by different people. With current technology, the digital footprints we leave behind can become a self-authored form of such. In recent years, the idea of a digital executor (someone in charge of organising your digital assets eg. social media accounts) has become more and more popular. According to your will, the digital executor can either terminate your online accounts in your passing, discontinuing the use of your information, or they may help you transform your online presence into a memorial site. The latter choice mirrors the physical reality which acknowledges the loss of life in dedicating a certain site and time for the memorial. Besides the increasing awareness brought to digital assets, death in this digitalised society has also prompted the development of memorial technology. In 2019, The





Guardian reported on artificial intelligence systems which collect digital footprints in preserving a “digital ghost”: one which could imitate speech patterns and recall relevant information, posing as an image of the deceased to the family. This reflects on the creativity and imagination that comes with the digital, and the new ideas to help combat difficult experiences in the new age. These innovations also challenge us to be more open-minded by posing social and cultural controversies with the continued reinvention of practices over time.

A Valedictory Snag

Of course, like everything else, digital footprints have their downside, especially when mixed with complex experiences like grief. While grief is usually lived in private and enclosed among social circles, the digital indiscriminately broadcasts it. Everyone can contribute and lament on the life

before its loss, be it true or fabricated. Even commercial companies can profit on the sorrow, revealing an intricate web of monitoring that had once followed the individual across the digital.

Early into 2020, the passing of Kobe Bryant, beloved father and celebrated NBA player, became the inevitable headline across all platforms. Fans, friends, and other celebrities took to the internet in expressing their condolences. However good their intentions were, it proved to be very difficult for the family. Across the internet, they were overwhelmed with images and stories reporting the tragic accident, which caused an impediment to their grieving and healing. On the flip side, as all things on the internet are, the tragedy also brought about a crowd of antagonistic voices. Some took to

the comments in expressing their views on past allegations and made merry of the situation. Cohabiting the digital, we all require a greater degree of sensitivity in understanding how technology intensifies these experiences. While these digital legacies may serve for the living to remember and assert sentiments on those lost, it could also create more obstacles in their loved ones’ healing process. This prompts further consideration of digital footprints and its treatment in someone’s passing. As such, discussions should be conducted regarding the ethics of handling digital footprints, lest it continues to be commercialised or infringed upon in this age of surveillance.

Besides grief, virtual reality alters other emotional experiences in life. The given ability to access news from all over the world can groom us to be desensitised. Even with countless tragedies slathered across our digital feeds, our emotions and responses

“It takes awareness and comprehension for users to consciously separate the values of the digital and reality, and understand that these numbers do not reflect their person.”



maybe filtered and disconnected. They are represented by a mere press of a button, empathy practiced from afar, sometimes without full comprehension or understanding. However, in my opinion, the falsified positivity plastered on virtual personas is far more damaging. As Garsd writes for the NPR (2018), it is a common process for those who may be going through a tough spot in life to curate a happier persona online. These decisions may change our digital presence to a performance, a dance between self-presentation and identity negotiation aided by props ie. text, photographs, etc. (Papacharissi, 2013). Instead of authentic and spontaneous displays of ourselves, we play into digital images of ourselves, aiming to please and placing the spotlight on “public displays of social connections”. Our lives shift focus onto “likeability”, rendering individual perception into vague statistics of “likes” or “followers”, numbers which are often used by companies as commercial currency in this day and age. It takes awareness and comprehension for users to consciously separate the values of the digital and reality, and understand that these numbers do not reflect their person. For someone who may have difficulty in acknowledging this, the continual exposure to these happy facades may result in more discontent and struggles in real life.

Emotions, whether good or bad, are unique and impactful to our lives. It is the firsthand experience of living and offers us deep and genuine connections with those who feel the same. If we allow our emotions to be fully mediated or fabricated, we risk losing the privilege of what makes us human. It takes courage and determination for us to reject these standards, to let go and live freely as we

are. Especially in today’s digitised world, we must put effort into considering these questions: who do we really want to be? Who do we want to be known as?

“Emotions, whether good or bad, are unique and impactful to our lives.”

Stars in the Lilies

The internet has allowed my generation and many others to live life very differently. In our lifetime, we

get to immortalise certain moments and share them with others regardless of time and geography. We are able to expand our circles and connect with the world within a few swift clicks. We are able to take part in our own legacies and generate the impact we wish for. Yet, with these new opportunities, we must take care with the new responsibilities brought by and consider what it costs to share ourselves online. We should also learn to respect others’ space and emotions. We should be aware of the distinctions between our virtual and real presence. We should be prudent in editing what we share and divulge, especially without strict regulations on virtual monitoring and surveillance.

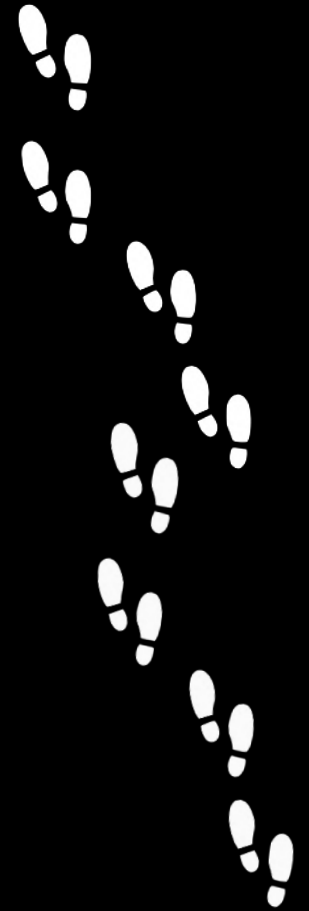
Yes, the internet consists of an indubitably real part of our lives (and death), but it is not all there is to us. There are aspects of our lives that are simply unique to life offline. The picture of me and my sister with our grandmother is online whenever I need it, and that’s all there is to it. The emotions I feel from it are all in my heart. The memories are with me, and will remain with me for as long as possible. I have my grandparents inked onto my skin: a caterpillar and flower, smiling hand in hand. I hope everyday that I can visit her soon and show it to her.

“If we allow our emotions to be fully mediated or fabricated, we risk losing the privilege of what make us human.”

Illustrations by: Clarissa Lui



FROM EUPHRATES TO HARLEM



a privilege of having a culture - a global journey in search of black identity.

By Marta Gramatyka

*“So we stand here, on the edge of hell in Harlem
And look out on the world and wonder
What we're gonna do in the face of what we remember.”*

- Langston Hughes “Harlem”



Harlem Tenement in Summer, 1935
Source: Unsplash

The legacy of a culture is seen in how much impact it can make in the world. As a result of the recent Black Lives Matter Movement, the culture of African-Americans has begun to shine in the spotlight, accumulating worldwide attention. In order to understand the meaning behind the revolutions initiated by the death of George Floyd, it is important to go back to the beginnings of the African-American history in the United States. It had its Renaissance from around 1918 to mid-1930, particularly in the Harlem District of New York City.

To understand why the unique culture began in this city, it is necessary to trace the trails of African-Americans. Many of them fled the rural, conservative South, where the draconian Jim Crow laws, mandating racial segregation, were enforced, to even-

tually settle down in the urbanized North obtaining opportunities they've never seen before. The North had also given them relief from the racial-based violence encountered daily in the South. Harlem, once a white, upper class neighborhood, was developed very rapidly, so the developers were desperately looking for new inhabitants - and since the incoming Blacks had no particular place to stay, they began to settle in Harlem. Eventually it had become nearly an "all-black" neighborhood, called also "the Mecca of African-Americans".

The development of arts and crafts was a natural process among people who could be free for the first time in their history. The new customs had emerged rapidly, becoming one of the most interesting and well-known minority cultures in New York City. It provided the formerly oppressed

slaves with a sense of unity and belonging to the new, black culture, which could be celebrated along with the mainstream, white culture. From music to literature, African-Americans had created a community, which arose from racially exclusive to global, as many non-blacks were drawn to Harlem's clubs and cabarets. The district was referred to as "oasis of permissibility", as it allowed people to act and create in new, creative ways and share new perspectives, previously unknown to the white-American public.

One of the most well-known "inventions" of the African-American community is Jazz Music, which is also considered as the only quintessentially American music genre. Jazz was at first considered as unsophisticated, but eventually found its enthusiasts and became an integral part

of any Harlem event. Along with Jazz, movies became a medium which allowed people to tell their stories. New Black filmmakers had a chance to show how life looks from their perspective and what are the narratives that they have to live with. A controversial, young director named Oscar Micheaux, touched upon important topics, such as rape, violence and prejudice, the unspoken truths which initiated many discussions in the society. In his movies, he casted African-American actors and portrayed them as intelligent and cultured characters, which had never happened before. The young black people could see themselves as main characters in movies, which inspired them to leave the past and the subservient attitude behind and become active citizens and scholars, represented in the nation as equals.



Oscar Micheaux

Some of Micheaux’s most important movies, such as “Within our gates” from 1920 were a social commentary on the typical struggles of young black women. In the movie, a black girl was violently raped by an older white man. When the man ripped off the girl’s shirt and saw her birthmark, he realized that she’s a daughter of another woman he had raped in the past. Situations like this were very common in the community, but it was the first time when artists were

speaking out against it. After some time of being a purely black entertainment, the movies made it to white-owned theatres, reclaiming a spot in the mainstream media and in people’s consciousness.



Scene from “Within Our Gates”
Source: Picryl

The main focus for the majority of the artists was showing the journey they undertook in order to reach freedom. The intellectual fight for equality, racial and social, was becoming a cultural movement, led by artists from all walks of life. Maya Angelou, a poet and a civil rights activist, was one of the people who wanted to depict the saddening truth

the black Americans had to encounter every day and aimed to give hope for a better future. In her poem, “Still I rise”, she elaborates on how she, both as a woman and an African American, will overcome the memory of the tra-

gic history and by “bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave”, she will be “the dream and the hope of the slave”, and eventually she will rise, cultivating and creating her unique culture.

Another prominent poet from this period, Langston Hughes, shows the struggle of immigration and the vast history of black people in his most popular poem “A Negro speaks of rivers”. The poem talks about black people leaving trails all over the world, and how at first they were “bathing in Euphrates, building huts in Congo, raising pyramids upon the Nile” to finally reach the Mississippi and see the golden sunset – a metaphor for the freedom of expression, which was given to the Negroes by Abraham Lincoln, the president who officially ended slavery. Eventually, he admits: “I’ve known rivers: An-



Maya Angelou

cient, dusky rivers. My soul has grown deep like the rivers". This shows that the heritage of African Americans is much deeper and more complex than most people realize. At the end, he reflects how being able to cultivate a culture is an acquired privilege, especially in the perspective of long-lasting oppression.

The legacy of slavery and black culture is still vivid, and recently, due to the Black Lives Matter movements across the United States, it has been rediscovered and many people began to appreciate it once again.

In the times of chaos, it is the culture and the common identity which unites people and gives them a sense of stability. Just as in Harlem in the early 20th century or now, in the cities across the world, it can inspire social change, as one feels that there



Langston Hughes

are thousands of people believing in the same virtues.

However, being able to cultivate a culture and identify with a group of people or ideas, is an ultimate privilege for which some have fought and died for generations. The struggle for

freedom of belonging hasn't yet ended. To this day, many people around the world still have no right to simply say:

"I have a dream."

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Black Lives Matter Protest
Source: Pexels



FINDING YOUR PURPOSE

MY STORY ON THE MEANING OF LIFE AND WORK

If the 'Why' is powerful, the 'How' is easy

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY DHVANII CHAWLA

How does it help to have a deep purpose behind something? What potential does it have and how do we find it?

The human mind has an eternal tendency of finding the purpose behind everything. The death of the purpose behind something could mean the death of the thing itself. We look for purpose in life, in death, in joy and in suffering. We look for purpose in education, in skills, in ideas and in work.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR PURPOSE

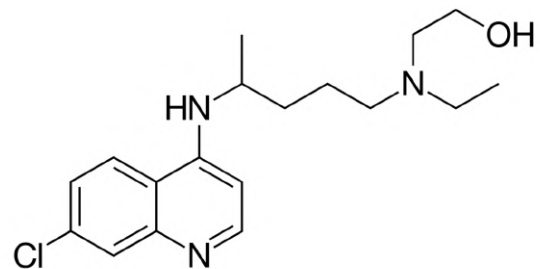
Research shows that deep purposeful goals help accomplish big tasks which require combined efforts of many individuals. They also help people commit themselves to meaningful causes, have better mental health and feel more empowered. Having a deep common purpose enhances the determination and performance of the individuals, unites them, improves their productivity and chances to excel.

So sure enough, as students, getting ready to start the journey of our independent lives, we all ask ourselves the purpose of our life goals, career and the work we would choose to do in the future.

In order to do something meaningful with our careers and achieve our goals, we need to consistently work hard. Having clarity and being focused can be very difficult if one does not have the drive, the motivation and the constant need to work towards it. Having a deeper purpose and cause behind our goals not only gives a direction to our life but also fuels our determination and makes us feel fulfilled. Whether it is earning money, finding the cure for a disease, teaching children or launching a company, the purpose of a task is derived from the need it fulfills.

HOW DID I FIND MY PURPOSE

Hydroxychloroquine



- A word that so many of us have heard recently in light of the coronavirus pandemic.
- A drug that scientists have researched on and doctors prescribed while treating the patients of COVID-19.
- An immunosuppressant that I have also been using for my own autoimmune condition for quite some time.

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), an autoimmune disease, affecting about 1% of the people in the world. A disorder that has no known cause, no cure and slow treatment that only works to suppress the symptoms. During my undergraduate study, I once suffered from a severe flare which left me in a lot of pain and truly made me realise the value of all the time I had in life. Once I recovered from the flare and came to terms with the gravity of my condition, I was motivated to learn about the curious mechanisms of the human immune system. I did some research about the ongoing treatments and clinical trials for RA and gradually developed an interest in knowing more about the related therapeutic treatment options. Whenever I visited my rheumatologist with my blood work, I discussed with him the different advancements in the clinical field. Dealing with the consequences of my condition every day, further motivated me to keep going.

I have been studying cell and molecular biology for the last three years in post-secondary education. Now more than ever, I have realised the importance of biosciences research on a global level. Before the coronavirus pandemic struck most of the globalised world, I saw biology as a subject of my interest and as a tool for helping me find the answers I wanted in life. But then came a pandemic like nothing our generation had ever seen before, and just like that, scientists, doctors, virologists, paramedics, immunologists and many others, turning the wheels of science were suddenly thrust to the forefront of managing the health of the world.

Suddenly, the medicine I had been using for my treatment, is being used to treat millions of other people around the world. I realised that my field of study was not just another subject, but the basis of sustenance of life. It does not just concern the laboratories and hospitals, rather it affects the security of every business, the safety of every profession, the health of every nation and the principles of every policy in the world. There are others, suffering, just like me, and I could do something about it. If not now, then in the near future. I was studying at home, just like any other undergraduate student, except that I did not feel like just any other student. I felt someone special in the making. Someone just like all the other scientists working hard out there to help the world. Someone who could one day make an impact just as important as this.

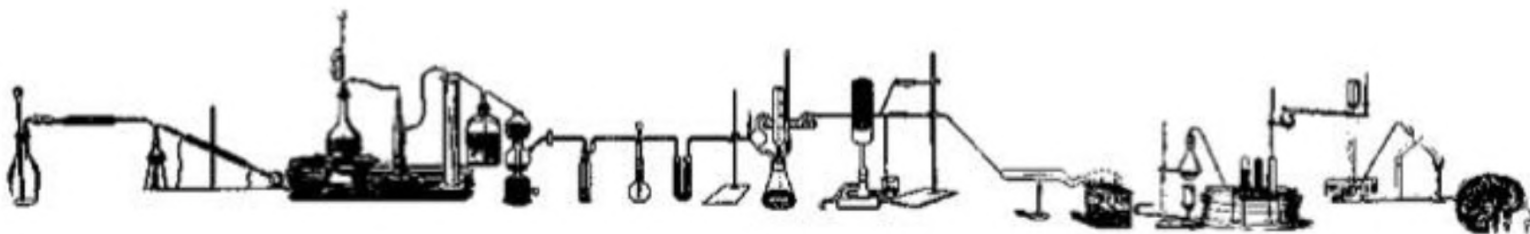
My introduction to science was through my paediatrician whom I had visited since infancy. The brief interactions I had with him inspired me to choose biology. I was overwhelmed by the significance of pathology and puzzled by many physiological phenomena. I truly realised the importance of medicine when I accompanied my mother to the hospital while my grandfather was undergoing treatments for his heart condition and paralysis. At the time, the stem cell therapies and other regenerative treatments were not advanced enough to reverse the damage. Since my mother and I were very close to him, seeing him snap from a healthy happy human into a static condition was a big, setback for us. His loss was deep for the whole fa-



Source: Pixabay

mily. I also learned more about the medical profession when my grandmother survived breast cancer, getting chemo, herceptin and surgeries done, hence the role that science and medicine played in my childhood, had a lasting impression on me. Furthermore, my mother, herself a science graduate, motivated me to pursue science and biomedicine. She once explained to me the chain, connecting a doctor to a chemist, a pharma company and ultimately to the laboratories where the inventors and researchers experimented. It dawned on me that it was these thinkers and scientists who were at the very foundations of the newly built monument of the medical revolution. They were the ones who built what we used, and it was then that I was inspired to pursue research and development in the field of science.

I believe that the experience I can gain as a researcher of autoimmunity, inflammation and immunotherapy will help me build a foundation for working as a scientist for the institutions laboring to develop better treatments and perhaps even a cure for such diseases of the immune system. That would give me the real meaning and a fulfilling purpose in my choice of education and career in the field of science. During the time that I suffered through one of the most severe attacks of RA, I realised how lucky I was to have a healthy, successful and fulfilled life, I truly felt grateful for the things I had and



Science - The foundation of medical revolutions | Source: Pixabay

came to terms with the fact that as long as one does what makes them happy without harming anyone else, we should do what we want and have no regrets.

Our lives are too fragile and unpredictable to be certain enough about things and our time is far too valuable to waste waiting for something to happen. I have realised that one should preserve life, live it and nourish it before time runs out. We must invest in ourselves and our loved ones, say the things we want to say, do the things we want to do and enjoy every bit of life fully. We must live in the present and squeeze every ounce of fulfillment from every moment of our life, because there just might not be a tomorrow. Life snaps in a matter of seconds, and we don't even get the time to regret all the things we did or didn't do.

As students in university, we have endless questions about choosing our career and direction in life, whether the work we do will satisfy us, fulfil our needs and add meaning to our life.

Life is animate and it is built to be metamorphosed, so

one must try to be happy and zealous through every changing moment of it. The meaning of life is to accept it, to live it and cope with it. Everybody faces hurdles and challenges that we cannot imagine, but to carve your way out of such situations, to find the strength to allow yourself the happiness and determination to achieve your goals and be at peace with what you gain is what makes life meaningful.

SO HOW CAN YOU RETHINK YOUR PURPOSE IN WORK AND LIFE

With the drastic change in everybody's life due to the pandemic, we all have been forced to rethink our goals, priorities and quite essentially, our purpose. Cities are redesigning, jobs are becoming flexible, policies are becoming more environmentally cautious and people are becoming more mindful of their activities. The pandemic has a constant association with disease and death all around the world, and so there cannot be a better time for the world to find its purpose and meaning.

Everyone can give something good to this world. Be it love, wisdom, education, utilities or service. However, ensuring good ethics in all your actions, requires you to think deeply and intellectually about the purpose behind every action you perform. Of course, goals that are more inclusive and have a greater good are more desirable and meaningful in the long term.

When it comes to finding my purpose, there are a few things I like to keep in mind, which help me get prepared and make a better judgement:

1. Is it practical, feasible and tangible
2. Does it align with my temperament, lifestyle choice and abilities
3. What is the timeline of the results I want and what prerequisites need to be fulfilled
4. Am I mindful about the consequences of my activities and how do I entertain feedback
5. Lastly, taking time out for myself, my health and family. Being ethical, but treating work like work.



HAVING SAID THAT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT, INTELLIGENCE IS THE ABILITY TO ADAPT

Your purpose is not irreversible. There is always room for flexibility. You can detour, as long as it drives you passionately.

For me, I know that I need to do multiple activities to fulfill my different desires. I paint to be creative. I meditate and practice yoga to stay in shape and be mindful, I do some gardening and play with my dog to be in nature and I wish to pursue a career in science to contribute to society and earn a living.

Yet I am open to change, because there is very little we can predict in life. Earlier, I chose science out of pure interest. I wanted to explore genetics. Now I am more inclined towards immunology and regenerative biology. One thing that I have also learned from meeting more people, is that people change careers, relocate or even start a business late in life. ‘Slash careers’ where people have multiple jobs are particularly popular now. You can have a PhD, work in industry or academia, be a writer or blogger and sell paintings, all at the same time!

Think of a purpose independent of others expectations. Something that you are self-motivated for.

Suffering through the consequences of my condition, I know that only I can understand my situation, and it is only up to me to make the people around me aware of this, to spread the word and to do something to make life easier for others like me. This is the core of what drives me everyday, to get up in the morning, despite the pain,

and go ahead with the day, irrespective of my circumstances.

You don't have to accidentally come across a purpose overnight. You can create it, build it, and realise it, gradually.

You don't have to suddenly find it one day. You can envision, test and try, fail and try again and again and when you pursue it hard enough, you will succeed, and you will know that this is what you want. What you cannot do is lose that confidence in yourself and your abilities. When something matters to you deeply enough, you will find a way to keep it in your life.

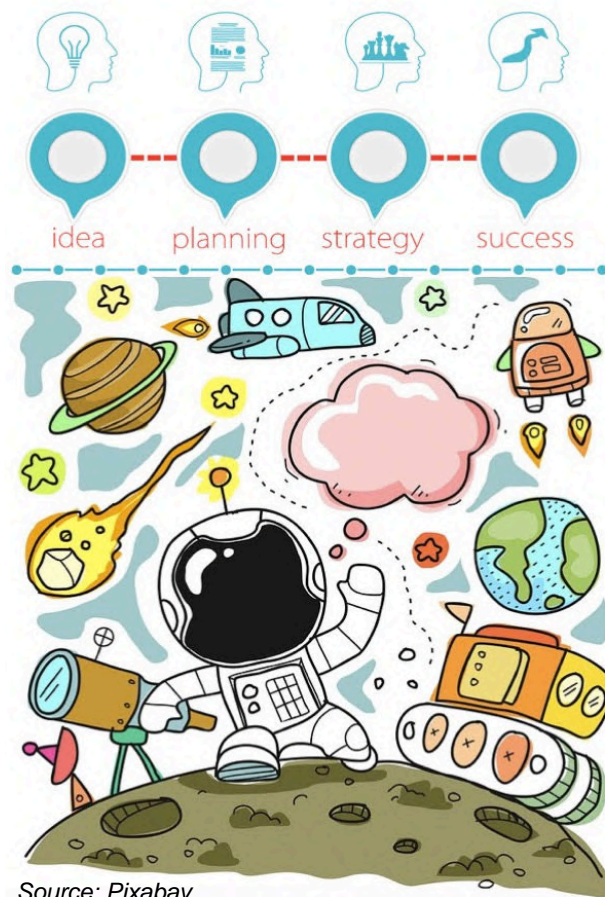
Sure enough, fate brought me to my interests, goals and purpose in life, but it was up to me, what I chose to study, when I chose to come out of the vicious circle of depression and self pity and to make a constructive choice to train myself in this field, to open up and talk to people about it and resolve to contribute to this field.

Finding a purpose is not the end of the journey. It actually starts there. It is up to you, how you navigate that path and accomplish your goals.

Your purpose is the engine of the car that you start everyday to drive to your destination.

Meaning of life and work is not one simple answer. It is ever evolving and being re-discovered in every generation by every person in their own way. Life waits for no one. There are many things

that make it meaningful, such as wealth, health, success or love. How one measures meaningful work and life is different for everyone. What matters at the end of the day is that it stems from a deep cause, a fulfilling purpose, leads to harmony, peace and righteous satisfaction to our souls and that we learn the skills to ensure an understanding of our strengths, weaknesses and expectations from ourselves and others in our personal as well as our professional life.



Source: Pixabay



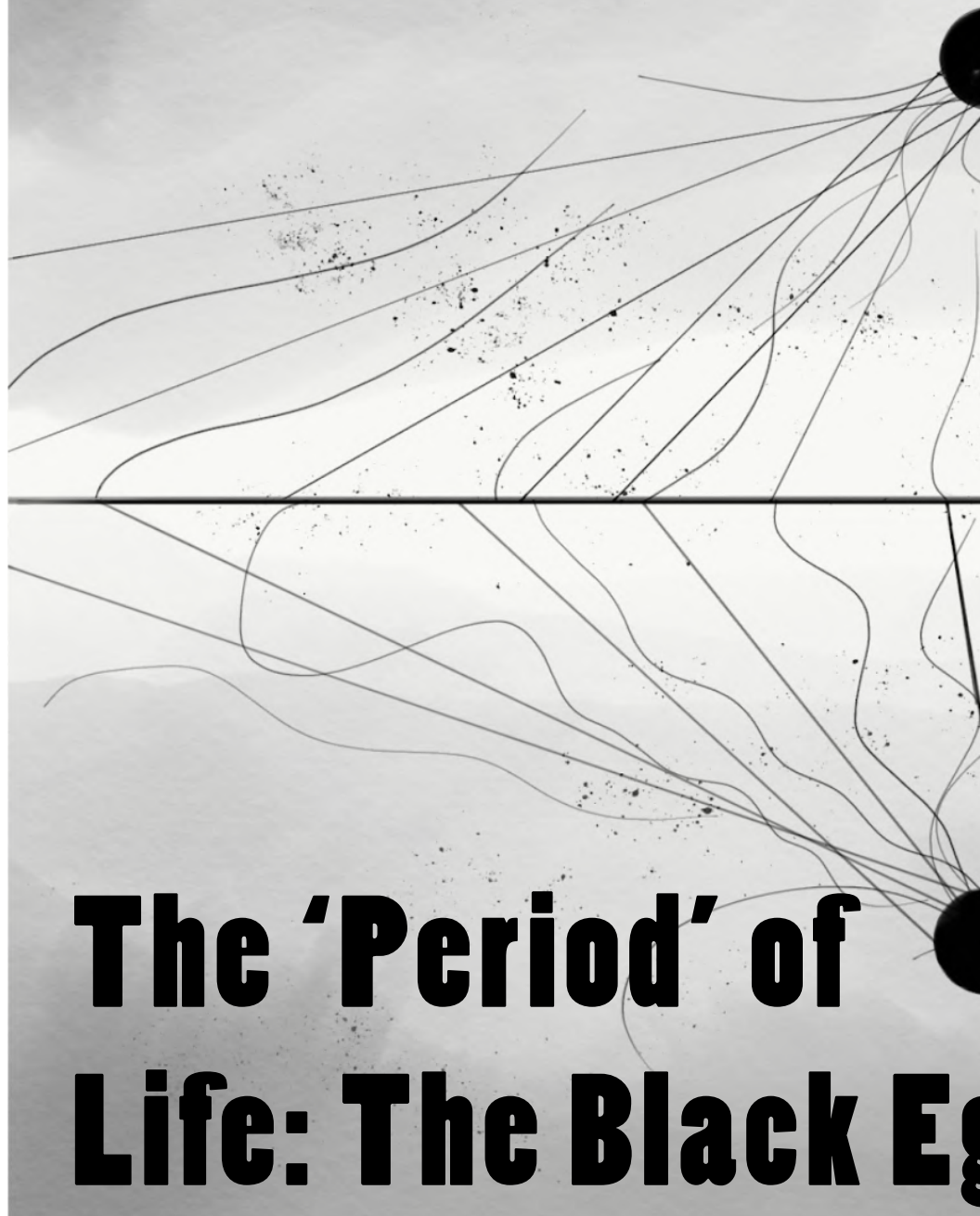
the
journey
starts
here

“What is the meaning of life?” – we often ask, but we have all asked the wrong one.

Closed Individualism: All Ends with A Period

At the very least, this should not be the first question to tackle. After all, we are asking the meaning of ‘something’. We cannot answer that without knowing that ‘something’.

Now I may reply, my life is obviously the period of experience starting from the moment I left my mother’s body to inhale the first breath of this physical world, up to the moment I lose my consciousness, probably when lying on a bed surrounded by my beloved family and friends in a hospital – until I face the eternal darkness under earth. It all ends with a single empty death. Shakespeare once wrote, ‘Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more.’ This is called Closed Individualism. It is as if we are a runner on the track, running in one direction to the future, with an absolute mark of destination, a solid dark full-stop of a sentence. We once came to this world in a sudden and will detach from it one day.



The ‘Period’ of Life: The Black Egg That Sinks and Le

But some religions will give us a different story, a story of the afterlife: where there are hell and heaven and your destinations will depend on what you have done with your life. But even in either of them, you are still holding the same old experiencing entity, your previous ‘you’, throughout the torture or the blessings that await. Does it mean all we do in our lifetime is just for a safe place to stay afterwards?

Open Individualism: We Are All Saints

Imagine a little child facing a lot of glasses of solutions. Colourful, with diverse odours. This curious little kid can’t help but take one of them in a big sip. He faints and he wakes up finding himself as a little girl in a little town in Skopje, the present-day capi-

CUriosity, learning about something absurd yet fascinating.

Yes, you are Teresa, so am I, so is your mom, your teacher in kindergarten and the waiter at the café you just spent your afternoon in. We all belong to the same entity. We are all in this together. I am You. This is called Open Individualism. It is open in the sense that we are not eternally ‘trapped’ inside each physical body but are connected metaphysically. I, as someone writing this piece of article, am simply one of the glasses that little kid has tried out. This is another form of reincarnation. You are Teresa who helped a lot of people back then. You are one of the many thousands savaged by her team. Open individualism invites everyone to have a strong sense of empathy by theorising that the others will experience exactly the same pain as the victim at some point on the timeline.

When you see someone in need of help, it would be as if you were calling for help to yourself.

By Buji Wong

gg evitates

tal of North Macedonia. In her early years, she is amazed by the stories of the lives of missionaries and their service in Bengal. Baptized at her early age, she decides to commit herself to religious life. She then joins the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland and then moves to India to help a lot of people. She runs soup kitchens, schools, clinics and so many more. Her name was Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu -- also well known as Mother Teresa. People called

her a saint because of her achievements and compassion.

When Teresa died in 1997, the little child woke up again, in front of the colourful solutions, puzzled about the sudden attainment of a 87-year living experience from nowhere. The same thing happens as he tries the other glasses. For once, he was a Jew who got killed and tormented by the Nazis, spending his whole life in pain and horror. Another time he was a famous scientist who helped build up the theory of relativity, immersed in the infatuation of science and the pursuit of truth. And now he is the one studying at a university in a tiny city called Hong Kong, reading the magazine

The Egg, by British novelist Andy Weir, interprets this perspective in a literary way. Andy refers to the baby as the foetus of God – “Once you’ve lived every human life throughout all time, you will have grown enough to be born.” We are inside a giant egg in which we repeatedly become every person ever existed, learning from each story to become mature.

Now, I am not going to explicate the philosophical arguments about why or why not Open Individualism is true, since it would be grossly complicated for a magazine article. But take a look at this concept and you will get a fundamental sense of global morality, that treats all humans as one single unified humanity. Death is seen as a transition, not a destination. We should



Source: Pexels

perspective which will be over once death knocks on my door. Why do we want the baby to grow instead of simply focusing on our own self? After all, it still feels absurd to go through 'life' when it means nothing to 'me' in this current life. There seems no point in living in 'this' life if I don't know exactly how my actions can remain in this world. This is what we call an existential crisis.

Event Realism: Eternity Lies in Instants

Let us look at the existential crisis. As we normally view life, all the achievements and relationships in our lifetime will go away since we 'have to' die at some point. It seems to be our destiny to experience them all and return everything to this world like we haven't contributed anything. If they are going to fade away, what is the point of doing them at all? But now with Open Individualism, we are empowered to claim a strong sense of immortality.

Let's say I have established a company which had once made a million-dollar profit per month but then ended up in bankruptcy. As its founder, I should be sad and think, 'if I knew it would end up like this, I might not have done this again'. But there is something immortal hidden here – the establishment of the once-successful company.

not feel lonely about this world, since every time when we are born into this world again, the previous 'me' has settled a lot already for the future 'me' to experience. Even if we are still contained in one single human body, the feeling of facing the whole world as unified humanity gives us strength and stability.

But still, what is the point here? Even if we agreed that we keep becoming another person after death, the current 'I' still sees this world from only this

All objects fade away, but events are indestructible. They are immortal.

Nobody, not even God, can change the fact that I DID establish such a company. Even if I die or I get amnesia, this event is still true. In fact, everything I have done, all the amazing things that I have achieved, stays true for eternity! A philosopher, Lee Tien Ming, called this Event Realism – the concept that claims the permanent existence of our actions. Every event, every second, every instant of my experience remains eternally indestructible. My existence may be forgotten, but the fact that I existed resides in the untouchable vicinity of time.

Now with the idea of Open Individualism, the Event Realism is even stronger. It is like writing the biography of your current life, as a founder of a successful company, for



the ‘you’ in the future life to refer to. You are the one affecting yourself in the future. You may become a business student and find yourself inspired by such a company. Remember the movie that moved you, the scientist that inspired you and the art pieces that struck you? They are all in you. Every time you were born, it would be like reading the storybook you once created, and edited millions of times before. What you achieved not only stays here but also acts as references and impacts on yourself. We all learn from stories, and we are the stories.

The unbearable Lightness: This Can't Happen Again!

This combination of Open Individualism and Event Realism seems good for us, at least in the sense that this shows life is not all for nothing. But at



Source: Pexels

the same time, it confirms the existence of our misbehaviours, in every lie we told, every damage we imposed and every harm we caused to others.

They will all come back to us; and we, ourselves, are the ones who judge these wrongdoings.

Imagine a tyrant committed massacres in the past, but this does not just stop here. Becoming a victim in the concentration camps after his death, he would suffer from his behaviours. Later on, he becomes the historians and students who study his history and place moral judgements on his acts. He reviews it millions of times ‘himself’. So do we. We revisit our wrongdoings again and again, with different perspectives. If this intense picture is true, this is akin to a form of eternal recurrence.

Is this eternal return in our favour? Open Individualism surely gives us some confidence in our existence, but in the meantime, it also adds a lot of weight to our lives, as every decision matters to a significant extent. Should we abandon Open Individualism then? After all, maybe we should think of our life as a one-time existence and imagine that our achievements and actions are insignificant so that we do not have to worry about our acts that much, no? A Czech novelist Milan Kundera once wrote in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, ‘it will become a solid mass, permanently protuberant, its inanity irreparable.’

We all will do wrong things, on purpose or not. If eternal recurrence is true, the countless reviews of these tragedies would only amplify the sadness and the damage. It is as though we cannot handle the heaviness of our moves, that we would rather go for a light life. If this heaviness is due to the recurrence of lives, the lightness would mean life is nothing but a one-

time event. If so, then no weight rests on us and we are then free – we can do anything without any worries, as there is no future ‘me’s to suffer from my wrongdoings. I can always die without consequences.

But there is no meaning in this version of life either. Milan told us, ‘the absolute absence of burden causes man to be lighter than air, to soar into heights, take leave of the earth and his earthly being, and become only half real, his movements as free as they are insignificant’. Life may be heavy, but at least it pins us down to the earth – it feels real. We only know the values of things after we try them out.

We can determine if a life is good or bad only after that life has been lived.

How can we know the meaning of life if it only happens once? There is no basis for comparison. We live as things come to us, and we react to unexpected events, like how we respond in a conversation. There is no script. Our life is like a sketch – but it can only be a sketch of nothing if there is nothing after this life. If everything happens only once, it might as well not have happened at all – there is no meaning in it. That’s what makes this unbearable.

The ‘Period’ of Life

It seems that in either case, whether we wish life to be heavy or light, suffering remains throughout this mysterious experience. However we view life, it can be heavy or light, as though it is the essence of life. Life can be seen as the period from birth to death and that’s all; while we can expand this view to a series of experiencing entities, towards the questionable mature end. We are all look-



- Source: Pexels

ing for meanings without understanding what we are experiencing, as if it is something more than the process of waiting for death to come. But what if there is no particular meaning of life and it is simply a process of waiting for the end, and that we need to experience and reason to fight the boredom of waiting? As you would have expected, there is no conclusion here. But there seems to be a way out, at least for our experiencing perspectives. When I cannot answer a hard question of life, I always go to literature and arts. Each piece of fine arts is a crystal of thoughts, a condensation of reflections and emotions and even a temporary conclusion. When I am confused or beaten up by life, they

can cheer me up, sometimes even leading to epiphanies. This piece of article wishes to serve that purpose.

Perhaps this 'period' is placed at the end of our biographies. It can be a heavy solid rigid dot that sinks into the dirt, engulfed by the limitless darkness as if no one can bear its embracement of gravity but only the darkness can accommodate. It can also be a black balloon filled with hydrogen, steadily levitating from the ground, zooming outward, dwindling until beyond the catch of our vision, becoming part of the mysterious starry night. Or, it can be a giant black egg embracing the whole world with a baby experimenting with glasses of

juice, learning and progressing endlessly with countless possibilities. If Open Individualism is true, we don't need to worry about our lifetime achievements and relationships. Our existence will be confirmed by all the events we live through, and we can review them ourselves. We don't need to be jealous of others, since, on the general timeline, we will experience from their perspectives at some point. We don't need to be concerned about the 'period' of life, since there is always more to come.

Maybe in this case, death also means starting a new adventure.



The consciousness of the heroic man flows back to a huge spiritual entity. Since the beginning of everything, the scatter of the entity distributed over the timeline, gathering stories of tragedies, romance, stories of births and the valor against death. The entity has never got a unique story of a hero fighting death, until now.

Immortality



The warrior's valiance does not save him from death, but earns him a new life. His selfless and unyielding spirit as a human being proves him enlightened enough to progress into a heavenly being. Congratulations on propelling closer to Nirvana, where desires extinct and reincarnation ceases to continue.

Reincarnation



Also known as non-existence or nothingness. It is the eternal cessation of consciousness upon one's brain death. He has "plunged into darkness", for when he no longer has consciousness, he is no longer aware of time and space, let alone "experiencing" the sense of darkness. It is the eternal cessation of consciousness upon one's brain death.

Oblivion



What is your fiction of afterlife?

Recursion



The pain from the battle triggered the scream, "Waa... waa...". The cry brings him back to the embrace of his mother on his very birthday. Like a play, the script is run from the top again. Everything is recaptured until you meet the same hero again, reminiscing the hundreds times of experience.

Limbo



He is stuck in limbo. Whilst his upstanding nature led him away from hell, his faith failed to open the heavenly doors, for he did not receive baptism in time. The ghost of original sin still haunts him, barring you from eternal life and happiness in Heaven.

Heaven



He ascends to this transcendent, holy "upper" place in his afterlife based on his goodness and faith, or simply the will of God. This paradise place found the fundamental belief in religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism etc. Eastern religions do not share the notion of heaven. The closest equivalences, Moksha (in Hinduism) and Nirvana (in Buddhism), depict a place where one can be delivered from the desires, delusion and suffering in the present world.



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