

SCHOLAR'S SHOWCASE





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CONTRIBUTORS

NACIZA MASIKINI
GURLEEN CHAHAL
Senior Editors-In-Chief

REBECCA SMITH
Executive Producer

LAURA NAUS
JESSICA SEGAL
Publishers &
Design Consultants

DAVID FREEDMAN
NICK PINCOMBE
Managing Editors

MICHELLE BUNTON
Artistic Director

SAMA AL-ZANOON
EMMA COHEN
KEVIN FAN
DAVID FREEDMAN
NICK PINCOMBE
ALEXANDER PEARSON
Junior Editors

SAMA AL-ZANOON
NOOR BAKIR
EMMA COHEN
KATIE CHEN
KEVIN FAN
LINDA FEI
DAVID FREEDMAN
JASPER HO
LEVI HORD
NICOLA PAVIGLIANITI
ALEXANDER PEARSON
NICK PINCOMBE
Writers

MICHELLE BUNTON
GURLEEN CHAHAL
LAUREN CHAN
MARYAM GOLAFSHANI
NACIZA MASIKINI
ALEXIS NICOLE PRONOVOST
Artistic Contributors

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

NACIZA MASIKINI &
GURLEEN CHAHAL

With the end of the semester looming, the start of summer and for some graduation, our minds can't help but turn to the future. We linger on questions and try to answer the impossible, the unknowable. We often attempt to reason with the undetermined future by using our past and present. The knowns that anchor us in ourselves and tether us to the world. We hope this issue of the Showcase helps you, the reader, answer that seemingly impossible question, "Where do we go from here?", as you plan for the future or present.

We aimed to compile a collection of imagery and pieces that evoke feelings of pensiveness, curiosity and self-reflection, as we try to plan for the future. We hope that you enjoy this issue, dear reader, and hope it contributes to your journey in some way.



Photograph: "Good Game" by Michelle Bunton

TO THE FIRST YEAR CLASS OF 2020

DAVID FREEDMAN

Congratulations on joining the Scholar's Electives (SE) community!

Right now, you may be excited to discover your passions, but worry about balancing academics, a social life and high campus involvement. You may want to meet new people, but fear the changes in class size and teaching styles. You may feel unfazed by the academics, but scared by the prospect of living on your own.

To that, pause, take a breath and get excited to join a network of supportive, ambitious and driven students. Starting as nervous first-years, SE students have transformed into leading doctors, innovative CEOs and inquisitive professors. Rather than explain how your personal journey might unfold, meet Brittany, Pradeep and Larissa, three graduating SE students.



Sketch: "Just Breathe" by Alexis Pronovost

Brittany Chow

Honors Specialization in Physiology

Through the SE program, I have had the opportunity to learn and collaborate with professors, graduate students and peers in very unique environments. The support I have received from the SE coordinators and fellow SE students is unparalleled anywhere else.

Pradeep Venkatesh

Honors Specialization in Applied Mathematics

The ability to do one-on-one research with a professor was a valuable experience, and certainly gave me my interest in academics. As well, the SE program helped me develop skills in analysis that were useful in courses and in work

Larissa Romanow

Double Major in Health Sciences and Physiology

SE has been an absolutely vital part of my university experience and why I came to Western. Being able to explore viewpoints through the interdisciplinary first year class was eye opening and my research offered me experiences that few have in their undergrad. For that, I am eternally grateful. The SE community has become like a family to me.

So, welcome! The Scholar's Electives community is here for you and yes, we have noticed the strange apostrophe. It's unique, and we like that.



Photograph: "Istanbul Turkey" by Maryam Golafshani

UNTANGLING MY IDENTITY:

What Does Hair Have to Do With It?

NICOLA PAVIGLIANITI

When you look at me now, what do you see? You see white. You see privilege. You see power. Wealth. The ideal.

But I feel.

I experienced.

Hair. Who would have thought? At just how much it weighs. To be you. To shape you. To be a site of such joy, and so much guilt and suffering too. There is meaning rooted in your stylish do.

Hair's roots go deep. My own hair's meaning I struggled to comb through.

With my Kenyan hair I didn't fit. My hair didn't sit. I experienced assumptions, biases. Met new people. Lost old people.

If my hair has a kink, does that make me a skank? If my hair is like wool suddenly I'm not beautiful. Black hair makes me scare, a smoker, drugs—beware.

I gained insight and awareness to others who do not look like we like. But also to the site of how what I did might not be right. I was making fun. It was fashion. There was backlash with a passion. Despite my intentions of only compassion.

I became stranded by the many strands of my new identity. I questioned myself and questioned the world. Who is this new Nicola girl?

No matter your hair, I hope you critically think. Your biases, assumptions, and prejudices based on appearance must lessen. Who we are is what is inside. So next time you see someone go beyond your eyes.

Context, time, place are thick, and when interacting with others we must be cognoscente. You can cut my hair, but you can't cut out culture, race, gender, history, and all the intersectionality.

I am still brushing out who I am and who I'll become. What hair is me? What is my identity?

But through all these tangles and knots I have learned to walk my walk and talk my talk.

Regardless of how people like you may choose to gawk.



Photograph: "Mouth Guard Soap" by Michelle Bunton

GENDER SORCERY AND ANDROGYNOUS CYBORGS:

Trans Bodies as Simulacra

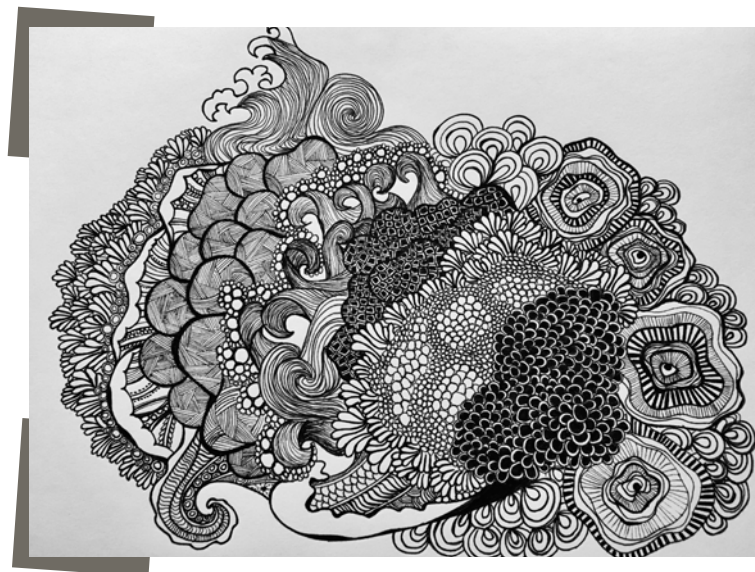
An Excerpt

LEVI HORD

Beauty ideals and gender performances have been a hotly contested topic within the transgender community since it gained its place in the public consciousness. Because of the discrimination that transgender people face, there has long been the pervasive opinion that the goal of every transgender experience should be to cross over fully to the identity of man or woman, and to embrace all of the stereotypical trappings of those roles. By performing “man” or “woman” believably, transgender people are able to “pass” as cisgender people, erasing the fact that they are transgender and gaining the safety, acceptance, and privilege that comes with being perceived as a normatively gendered person. [...] This singular conception of transgender beauty and body ideals dominates trans representation in mainstream media, sending the message that to be culturally acceptable and intelligible as a trans body, one must conform to gendered binary standards and simulate the image of an “original,” thereby creating and sustaining “a static, heteronormative view of the dyadic structure of gender in which only masculine and feminine identities achieve mainstream acknowledgement and, thus, intelligibility” (Sichler 46). This entails the continued validation of cisgender bodies as real, an ideal naturally awarded to most people that takes effort, time and money for transgender people to reach. It also allows opportunity for discrimination and policing of gender and aesthetic ideals from within and without the transgender community. [...] The terms agender, non-binary, and genderqueer have begun to gain ground in transgender circles as labels for those who embrace gender deviance and transgenderism, but do not necessarily want to surgically or socially transition to men or women. Largely a youth-driven movement, transgender communities have begun

to see the value in moving past binary systems of signification, and allowing space for deviant genders that fall outside of the predetermined categories. [...] In fact, many genderqueer people, who often mix traditionally masculine and feminine elements in their gender presentations, serve to subvert and challenge the authority of the binary gender system by undermining the myth of originality (as in Butler) and divorcing coded behaviors from the genders they often correspond to (as in Halberstam). An understanding of the precession of simulacra, even if not in Baudrillard’s philosophical terms, has helped this movement thrive, as it loosens the grip that holds together gender identity, gender performance, and sex in a causal relationship.

For full essay, visit: http://success.uwo.ca/scholars/scholars_showcase_magazine.html



Sketch: “Abstract Print” by Lauren Chan

BOY ODDITY

A work of fiction

EMMA COHEN

The record ends while Jack is lying on the corduroy couch staring at the speckled ceiling. He is playing the game where he picks out images in the plaster like constellations. He slides off the couch to pick out another record. Fingering through them carefully, he considers each familiar surface with seriousness. Let's Dance? Diamond Dogs? Heroes? The choice of album is important, but the artist is non-negotiable: David Bowie. Always Bowie.

The walls of this room, crawling up from shag carpeting and swallowing dim, cramped windows, have heard these records many times. The lulls, riffs, swings and jumps, the notes catapulting in the air, swerving and spitting magic. Jack has heard

“ I thought it would be easier this way...I thought he could have someone to look up to. He needed a father, of some kind. ”

them in the same way, his brain lined with the lyrics just like his notebooks. Jack mutters Bowie songs in his sleep. Sometimes it comes out smoothly, like cereal milk, and sometimes

it comes out jagged, like side-eyeing seventh graders who don't understand why Jack always says he hates the music at school dances.

The floor is littered with remnants of Jack's boyhood. His skateboard, once-white sneakers and his cherry red guitar, a birthday gift from his Mom. On the floor in the corner is Jack's Ziggy Stardust wig from last Halloween. In sixth grade they were supposed to dress up for class.

Jack couldn't wait, and brazenly entered the classroom with a red lightning bolt proudly painted on his face, his wig, his boots, his



Painting: "Purpose" by Naciza Masikini

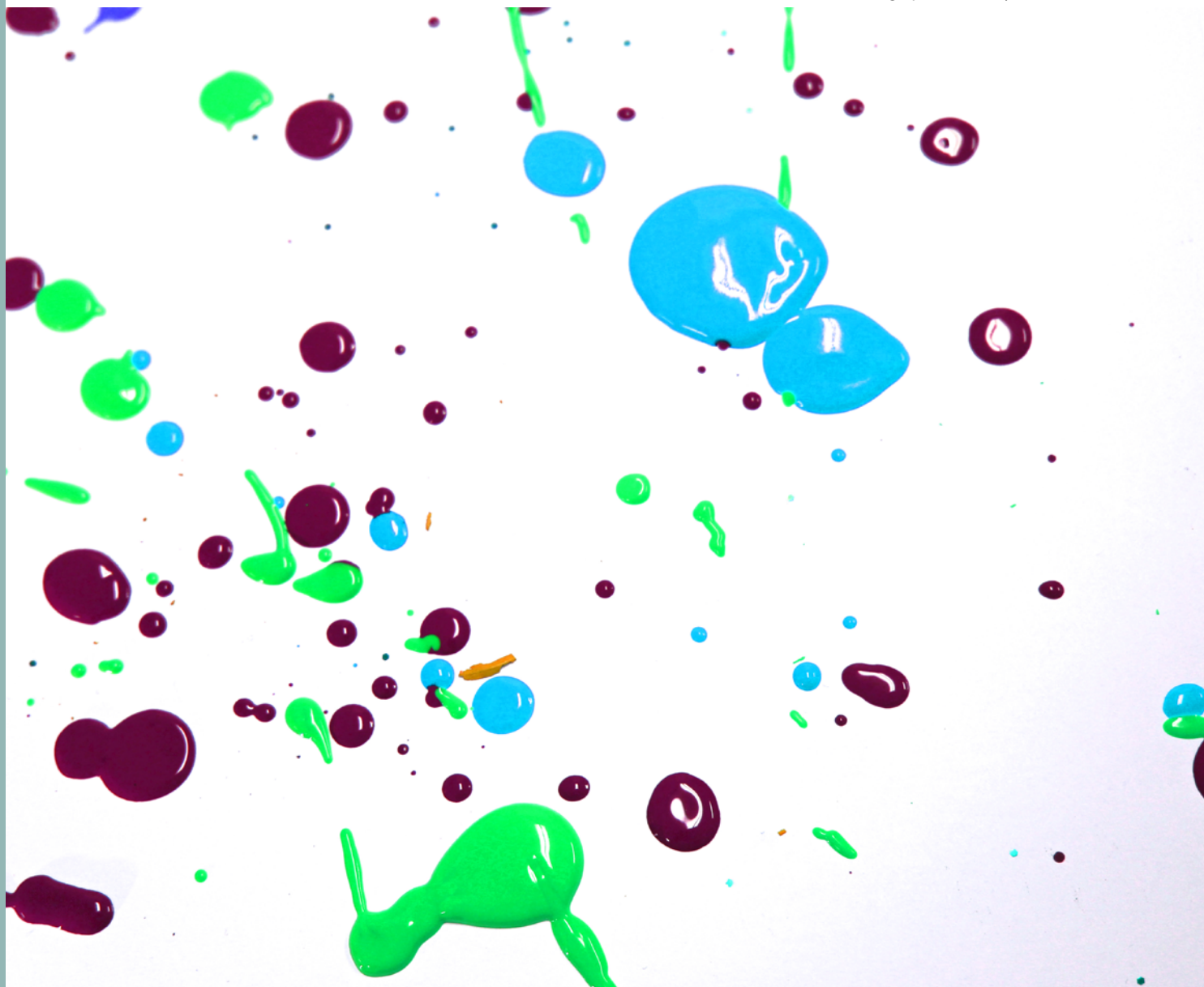
costume like a proclamation. He adored it. The sixth grade classroom, though, can be a hostile place. At lunchtime the porcelain white sink of the boy's washroom was filled up with red sparkles that dripped like blood, spiraling down the drain with salty tears.

Jack changes the record, placing the needle on the vinyl with accuracy and ritual. His eyes close and the music seeps into the air, softly then with a ruckus that unleashes and protects him. He sinks back onto the couch.

A floor above the room where Jack listens to his records, his Mother is on the phone. She is perched on a barstool, speaking in hushes into a cordless handheld. She has just seen a program on TV eulogizing David Bowie. This is the first time she has heard the news, plastered impersonally through pixels on a flat screen.

I'm not sure what to do, she says into the receiver. I never really thought this far ahead I guess. When David left me I didn't know what to tell Jack, he was hardly old enough to understand. Her neck becomes weak and her heavy head drops to her hands. Her fingers wear no rings. I thought it would be easier this way, she says softly, I thought he could have someone to look up to. He needed a father, of some kind. The other end of the line tries to console, offer advice. There is not much they can say. After he left, it was just as likely that Bowie would walk through that front door as my David. I just wanted his father to be a hero. What difference did it make which David he saw as his dad? But what do I tell him now? What is there to say? Jack's mother stares at her hands, dry, cracked and bare. There is no response from the other end of the line.

Photograph: "Intent" by Naciza Masikini



GENETIC ENHANCEMENT:

Are we Discontent with Being Human?

ALEXANDER PEARSON

Humans have long dreamed of genetic enhancement, and thanks to recent advances in molecular biology, it may soon become a reality. Three years ago, researchers developed a new gene editing technique, called CRISPR-Cas9. Analogous to cutting and pasting on the computer, this method allows scientists to manipulate DNA sequences with great ease. In the future, this gene editing technique may enable scientists to customize the human genome, potentially making the next generation stronger, smarter, and more resistant to disease. We are heading towards a world of 'designer humans.'

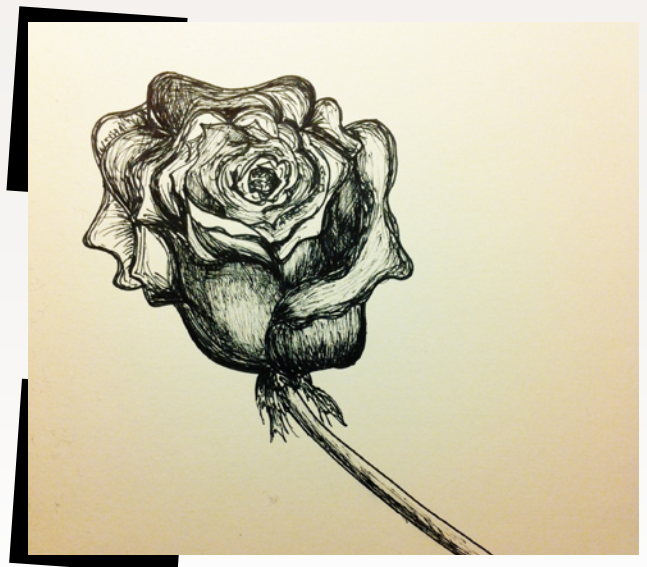
However, does this compulsive drive to 'better' ourselves through technology reflect a fundamental dissatisfaction with being human? People are already obsessed with looking good and being fit. For example, many of us regularly hit the gym and keep track of what we eat. Corporations make billions of dollars selling dietary supplements and devices that help us measure our biological parameters throughout the day (e.g. Fitbit). Perhaps the reason why we are so drawn towards genetic enhancement is because we desire a shortcut to making ourselves better. A healthy lifestyle can only do so much.

Editing our genome would make us innately better, and produce improvements faster than currently possible through exercise and dieting.

We could also use this technology to make ourselves less susceptible to disease by removing genetic predispositions for disease and inserting genes that protect our health. On the other hand, having people live longer and healthier lives would only exacerbate the problem of overpopulation. Unless we find a way to keep our numbers in check, we will exhaust the resources of our planet, and that will eventually lead to our demise.

Another question is whether we will be able to use this technology fairly and responsibly to benefit the entire species. Or will it lead to a world of genetic haves and have-nots, further increasing the gap between social classes?

“ We are heading towards a world of ‘designer humans.’ ”



Sketch: "Rose" by Lauren Chan



Photograph: "Good Game" by Michelle Bunton

THE GOLDEN BUNS

NOOR BAKIR

With every glowing seed, my love lasts longer,
As I feel the freckles on your cheeks wash away my sorrows,
The need for you to cradle the cattle grows stronger,
Because without robust beef, my brows will furrow.

As the pure tears of joy drizzle down the crisp lettuce, singing the crunchiest noise,
As the ripe, blood red tomatoes are enjoyed as a gift from the skies,
I watch them stack themselves majestically with poise,
Since nothing else matters but the delicate art before my eyes.

The end of the beginning screams with its revolutionary tastes,
For although the death of your presence leaves me at a deficit of words.
Your love remains protected by my internal abdomen and not by my waist,
This everlasting ecstasy as beautiful as the most delicate songbird.

I feel the heat rise as you lick the flames of the grill,
The sentimentality experienced as the cheese melts narrates the thrill.



Photograph: "Fife Coastal Path" by Maryam Golafshani

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. ROBERT HEGELE

KEVIN FAN & LINDA FEI

Dr. Hegele's unique career journey bridges the frontiers of medicine and research.

A native Torontonian, Dr. Hegele obtained his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1981, and completed his specialty training in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology. At that point, he wanted to go into teaching in a faculty position, but was advised to first gain research experience. He explains that "Teaching is conveying known knowledge, while research is creating new knowledge; both are related to knowledge." As a result, he completed a research fellowship in heart disease and cholesterol at Rockefeller University, New York City.

His interest in research grew, and rather than returning to Canada to teach, he decided to pursue another research fellowship in human genetics at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Salt Lake City. During the early 1990s, genetic technology was migrating from gel-based sequencing to next-generation sequencing, and this laid the foundation for initiating the Human Genome Project. Salt Lake City was at the heart of technological innovation, and Dr. Hegele explains that "Research is about a good idea, but if you do not have good technology, you cannot realize the idea".

In 1998, Dr. Hegele arrived at Western University, as the city of London provided a good environment to raise a family, and the university provided him with the opportunity to pioneer new research directions in genetics, as well as combine clinical practise with genetics. He is currently the director of the Blackburn Cardiovascular Genetics Lab and the London Regional Genomics Centre, which is a core sequencing facility for over 300 labs, and cares for over 1,800 patients as an endocrinologist in the Lipid Genetics Clinic at LHSC. He studies the genetic basis of diabetes and heart disease, and has discovered the molecular genetic basis of 20 human diseases. As listed by the ISI Web of Knowledge, Dr. Hegele is among the top one per cent of highly cited scientists in the world.

We are living in a revolutionary era of genetics—the completion of the Human Genome Project and the lower costs of high throughput sequencing gave rise to a growing field known as Personalized Medicine. How can understanding the genetic basis of disease improve patient treatment options?

Many medical conditions arise due to internal metabolic problems, such as lacking an enzyme or a receptor. Dr. Hegele explains that understanding the genetic factors that affect each patient is crucial in determining the discrepancies between lifestyle habits and disease outcome: "A patient who is thin, has a good diet, and doesn't smoke, can still get a heart attack at 40. Outside, they look thin, but on the inside, their cholesterol builds up like wax inside their plumbing, due to genetic reasons. If we can identify the genetic change [...] then we can develop new treatments."

Would you recommend students to pursue a career as a clinician-scientist?

Dr. Hegele explains that this really depends on one's personality. Personally, he says that "I felt for myself that I like variety. I like the fact that I'm not always dealing with patients, and that I can also be involved in the world of research and teaching. I've always felt that I needed research to keep me on an edge. Being a doctor makes me a better researcher, and being a researcher makes me a better doctor". Meanwhile Dr. Hegele recognizes that "other people may like their routine and find gratification purely in seeing patients."

What advice would you have for undergraduates looking to pursue a career in both research and medicine?

1. "Examine your motivations. Make sure you are doing it for yourself, not for anyone else. The results are always better if you are personally driven, rather than externally driven."
2. "Pick a field that you are interested in."
3. "Work hard, play hard."



Photograph and description by:
ALEXIS PRONOVOST



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This photo was taken after an intense rainstorm in Holguín, Cuba on the first day of my six week Spanish study abroad program from May–June 2015. I wanted to capture the whimsical nature of the house's architecture and the aesthetic and texture that appeared in the city after the rain.

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DEATH OF A DANDELION

SAMA AL-ZANOON

She sits in silence holding the stem of a white dandelion, its roots screaming with tension against the dirt they sprout from. Knees tucked underneath her thighs, the girl kneels, hands clasped together, before the lion's tooth. A weed. A weed that blooms at the first sight of light and slowly blinks shut when the sky is no longer a sky but a blanket under which we sleep. With all its siblings, the dandelion snores with the sounds of the wind, completely comfortable with the girl's hands gripped around its neck. The girl is surrounded by a chaotic mess of yellow lion heads and their white counterparts, yet she does not see them. Her eyes tightly locked, she wonders what it would feel like to sit in true silence. How it would feel to only hear the violent silence of nothingness. How it would feel if her eyes bloomed and instead of seeing a colorful field of weeds, only shades of black and white...or perhaps only black. Her fingers trace the stem of this dandelion and it feels loud. When the girl lets go, she is caught in a frenzy of hearing the colours green and brown and of smelling the wrinkled earth. Her yellow hair tumbles in every direction and she sits with her mind pointing to the sky. She tenses at the sight of the white fuzzy weed that she now grips: a weed no longer mistaken for a shining yellow daisy. The air flows through her body and remains static inside of her, as if her lungs had forgotten to exhale.

She sighs and the weed's white hair flies off its head and rests on the ground, soon to be consumed by the earth. Its lion head lies dead; perhaps, she will soon follow after.



Photograph: "Orange Blossoms in Iran" by Maryam Golafshani

FREE BASICS: CONNECTING THE WORLD?

JASPER HO

The increase in globalization and connectivity has been at the heart of innovation and modernization in the 21st century. Yet, large populations of people still remain disconnected from today's digital world, either limited by cost or poor local data infrastructures.

To address this issue, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg launched the Free Basics initiative (formerly Internet.org) in 2013 to provide low-barrier access to select basic Internet services such as Facebook, BBC, Wikipedia, and weather services, in unconnected countries.

However, the project has received vocal criticism from numerous organizations around the world, including the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, which recently suspended Free Basics in India, and the Egyptian government, which shut down Free Basics in December 2015. Critics protest violations of net neutrality—the equal treatment of all Internet services by telecommunications providers—and the unfair

competitive advantages Facebook would gain by collaborating with local providers to subsidize costs. If Free Basics were to continue to operate in its current form, it may set dangerous precedents for Internet operations and markets across the world.

Despite this, it is important to realize that any form of Internet service would be a large step forward for connecting people around the world to essential information and services. Increasingly, Internet access is becoming less of a luxury and more of a basic human necessity.

“ Internet access is becoming less of a luxury and more of a basic human necessity. ”

Ultimately, the question faced by the 34 other countries in which Free Basics is offered is whether Internet access for the people who truly need it is worth the potential loss of net neutrality and market domination by an international corporate entity. With the potential to affect billions of people across the globe, this issue transcends borders and local markets, and affects the future of how we as a people think about the Internet as a commodity and human need.

Photograph: “Bom Dia” by Naciza Masikini





ABSURDITY,
HEROES, &
ASSISTED
SUICIDE

KATIE CHEN

Painting: "Florist Floor" by Alexis Pronovost

Assisted suicide is a widely debated topic with growing support, but numerous governments across the world are still hesitant towards its legalization¹. In Oregon, one of only two American states where assisted suicide is legal, an unexpected phenomenon known as the Oregon Paradox occurs². When offered the possibility of legally hastening death, individuals with terminal illness surprisingly express a desire to live longer³. The Oregon Paradox occurs because assisted suicide allows terminally-ill patients to overcome the absurdity of their suffering through the freedom of choice, creation of personal meaning in life, and increased optimism towards the future. Assisted suicide can alleviate emotional suffering by helping patients realize the value of their life, thus transforming them into absurd heroes.

In Oregon, terminally-ill patients report feeling victimized by meaningless suffering,⁴ so the choice of assisted suicide can empower patients to become willing survivors with a sense of freedom and control over their own lives.

The feeling of victimization arises from the absurdity of life, a concept introduced by French philosopher Albert Camus. Camus believes that absurdity arises from man's constant attempts to find meaning in a meaningless universe.⁵ For patients, the meaninglessness of their current suffering due to the bleakness of survival in face of a terminal disease creates absurdity. Suicide may be seen as an escape from meaninglessness, and although Camus argues against this route, it is desirable to patients who feel victimized by unnecessary and persistent suffering.

Terminally-ill individuals seek out methods to commit suicide, but as proven by the Oregon Paradox, the freedom to choose death changes their perspective. From 1997 to 2003, only 171 Oregon patients, representing less than half of those who requested death by lethal

prescription, carried through with assisted suicide⁶. Richard Holmes, a terminal cancer patient who filed the first Oregon lawsuit claiming his right to fatal medication, passed away in 2002 without using the prescription he campaigned for⁷. His daughter later stated, "He was comforted just knowing he had the drugs... He knew that he had power over his life again."⁸ With the freedom to choose death at any given time, terminally-ill patients possess a greater sense of control over their life, thus finding life more enjoyable and desiring to live longer.

Charles, another terminally-ill patient from Oregon, consciously "decided to live until [he] died."⁹ Charles demonstrated an awareness of the imminent approach of death and therefore the absurdity of his suffering, but he chose

to live regardless. For patients, the option of assisted suicide transforms each living day from a painful circumstance inflicted upon a victim to the choice of a willing survivor. Despite the knowledge that suffering accomplishes nothing, patients make a conscious choice to live. This transforms them into absurd heroes, who, as defined by Camus, are individuals that have overcome

absurdity through recognizing meaninglessness and generating self-originating value to life.¹⁰

Much like Sisyphus, the epitome of absurd heroes,¹¹ individuals with terminal illness create their own meaning in life to rescue themselves from the absurd state. Patients feel a personal sense of accountability for their actions since they have made an active decision to live. This is exemplified the life of Anna, a woman with ovarian cancer, who claimed that obtaining the fatal medicine helped her live in the present and enjoy life.¹² By being aware of the current moment and expressing satisfaction, Anna took responsibility for her actions, emotions, and overall existence, therefore becoming a heroine of absurdity through the personal creation of meaning in her life.

Anna's actions can be further explained through the loss-aversion theory of behavioural economics, which postulates that humans prefer avoiding losses over acquiring gains.¹³ The psychological impact of a loss is twice as powerful as that of a gain,¹⁴ so rational individuals will consistently endeavour to select the outcome with minimal loss. When Anna makes a conscious decision to live despite having the option to die, every additional day becomes an open opportunity. As such, she strives to generate maximum value from each day in order to avoid a potential loss. The loss-averse nature of mankind suggests that terminally-ill patients such as Anna will make the most out of every

“Anna took responsibility for her actions, emotions, and overall existence, therefore becoming a heroine of absurdity through the personal creation of meaning in her life. ”

living moment, thus combating the absurdity of suffering by personally creating meaning to life. According to the Oregon Paradox, terminally-ill patients who receive the option of assisted suicide are also more optimistic about the future, which enables them to look forward to creating meaning in subsequent events. Jim Romney, an avid fisherman suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, said the legalization of assisted suicide made him “so liberated today that [he] may go out and catch a Chinook salmon... tomorrow.”¹⁵ Romney, along with many other patients that exhibit the Oregon Paradox phenomenon, demonstrates a greater surge in well-being and optimism towards the future within the rational context of his terminal illness.¹⁶ Through the juxtaposition



Photograph: “The North Sea” by Maryam Golafshani

of optimism and rationality, patients understand and accept that the absurdity of their suffering will perpetuate without the personal assignation of meaning, and according to Camus, this acceptance is critical in overcoming absurdism.¹⁷ By understanding the necessity of creating meaning and choosing actively, patients can eliminate the conflict of absurdity and reduce their sense of victimization. The abatement of these two potential causes of emotional anguish amongst terminally-ill patients allows them to have a more peaceful and pleasant experience in their limited time on Earth.

When considering the moral implications of assisted suicide, society can easily overlook the alleviation of emotional suffering that is made possible by the legal termination of life. Terminally-ill patients may feel trapped in a life of needless suffering, but with the possibility of assisted suicide, they may consciously choose to live and find meaning in their deeds. Regardless of attempts to communicate the importance of life through legislation or social sentiment, terminally-ill patients may only appreciate the value of their life through a personal realization. As the Oregon Paradox demonstrates, the option of assisted suicide can help patients understand that as long as they actively choose to live, create their own meaning, and remain optimistic, they may overcome the meaninglessness of their suffering and survive as absurd heroes.

References available here:
www.success.uwo.ca/scholars/scholars_showcase_magazine.html



Photograph: "Tours" by Naciza Masikini



Photograph: "St. Andrew, Scotland" by Maryam Golafshani

THE DESPAIR OF INFINITE POSSIBILITY

NICK PINCOMBE

I started to work my first part-time job at Remark Fresh Markets in 2009. As a front-end clerk, one of my tasks was to return the items that customers chose not to purchase. Benjamin, a man in his mid-thirties, worked in the grocery department, and he would show me around the store. He posted Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata" poem to Facebook, I thought that he had written it, and thereby, he acquired a unique significance in my imagination as a tragic, poetical figure.

I started to conceive of him as the Benjamin, this particular Benjamin: the Shams to my Rumi, the Sri Krishna to my Arjuna, and the John Galt to my Eddie Willers. I drove myself to despair by trying to answer the question, "What is the Benjamin?" I was searching for the essence of humanity, and I could not find it. I was looking for some essential feature of humanity, and I found nothing but accidents. I lost track of what is necessary for my

development in life, such as relating to my family and friends, because I cared too much about my desire for the utmost possibility, i.e. some sort of spiritual transcendence.

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory of development maintains that people mature by moving on from a series of crises. The adolescent identity crisis arises from the tension between role confusion and ego identity. Role confusion follows from being troubled by the inauthenticity of societal roles, i.e. public life's tendency to resemble an elaborate performance. Ego identity, on the other hand, follows from being confident about one's own identity, from willing to be oneself. The adolescent identity crisis underlies my compulsion to think about the Benjamin because I thought that this idea was the key to transforming myself into someone special; however, I was falling prey to role confusion—I am not the Benjamin.



Photograph: "Cold Alleys" by Alexis Pronovost

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SUCCESS.UWO.CA



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The Student Success Centre
careers leadership experience