

STUDENT'S SHOWCASE

Western



WINTER 2020

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

2020 VISION

Each one of us responds differently to the clock ticking by in the corner. Some choose to celebrate the time that has passed and look ahead, hopeful of what the future holds. Some choose to reflect on the mistakes, lessons, and triumphs of their lives and the world around them. Some are indifferent and focus on other parts of their lives. When we share in the beginning of a new year and a new decade, we see this spectrum of responses and are able to appreciate the diversity of human experience.

To illustrate this spectrum of responses, we have gathered the perspectives of several talented and insightful Scholars from our community to share their visions for the future. We invite you, the reader, to turn these pages and see through the eyes of our writers and artists. Reflect on the turbulent issues and progressive moments of our past, consider the experiences of students in our community, and envision what the future could hold.

We are grateful to every person who contributed their time, creativity, and care in order to create this magazine. Your efforts and trust in this magazine have culminated in a beautiful collection of perspectives. Lastly, thank you to those who take the time to turn the pages of this magazine; we hope you enjoy our 2020 Vision.

Sincerely,
Erin and Amandi

A NEW DAWN
PHOTOGRAPH BY NATALIE LI

LOST

GRAPHIC ART BY MICHELLE ZHANG



INTERSECTIONALITY OF THE GENDER WAGE GAP

ESSAY BY MOLLY FRIESEN

As children we often dream of being astronauts and ballerinas. As we grow older, we want to pursue high paying careers. It would be logical to assume that wage depends on demand, difficulty, intensity, and hours of labour. In reality, gender is often a deciding factor. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines the gender wage gap as “...the systemic differences between the average wages or salaries of men and those of women” (Barnes, 2018). Statistically, men in Canada make more money than women with the same job title and level of education. The existence of the gender wage gap is undeniable. In order to close this gap, the unique experiences of marginalized women must be recognized. Women of low socio-economic class suffer more than their counterparts and black women earn wages that are generally much less than white women. These intersections are essential in closing the gender wage gap.

Women of low socioeconomic status are severely limited by the gender wage gap. Socioeconomic status is determined by educational achievements, yearly income, occupation, and level of accessibility to societal resources (Howard M. Fillit, 2010). Women of high socioeconomic status likely have higher educational achievements and earn above-average income. Women of low socioeconomic status likely work in minimum-wage positions or are unemployed due to the inaccessibility of resources. Georgetown University recently discovered that “a woman with a bachelor’s degree earns \$61 000 per year on average, roughly equivalent to that of a man with an associate degree” (Anthony P. Carnevale, 2018). If university-educated women are making less than men with inferior degrees, that puts women lacking a university degree at an even greater disadvantage. While women with university degrees are one step behind men in the workplace, women without university degrees are two steps behind.

Historically, black women have been at a greater disadvantage than both white women and black men. Kimberle Crenshaw, black feminist and activist, states “black women can experience discrimination in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and black men...yet often they experience double-discrimination” (Crenshaw, 1989). Black women have unique experiences independent of those of white women. Black women, on average, are paid less than white men, and are also paid less than white women (Hegewisch, 2019). Despite their efforts to make advancements in their careers, black women are often unsupported. Women in the Workplace reports that “35 percent of black women say that their managers promote their contributions to others, compared to 46 percent of white women...” (Alexis Krivkovich, 2018). If black women are not given equal support from management, they simply cannot excel.

The issue of the gender wage gap must be seen through an intersectional lens. Women of low socioeconomic class are at a greater disadvantage than women of high socioeconomic class and black women are paid less than both men and white women. Recognizing intersectionality validates the experience of all marginalized groups and aims to liberate them. When both black and underprivileged women are free, we are all free.

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THE WHITE ROSE

ARTICLE BY MANBIR GREWAL

In the face of an oppressive authoritarian presence and subject to indiscriminate violence, the power of language helped vacate a seldom resistance. In the summer of 1942, with the Second World War at its height, 3 medical students at the University of Munich founded the White Rose, a non-violent group denouncing Nazism and posing resistance to the Third Reich. Like most German teenagers in the 1930s, two of the founders – Hans and Sophie Scholl – enthusiastically joined the Hitler Youth. However, their parents held an opposing view, believing the Nazi party was a scourge on Germany. While on the Eastern Front, Hans witnessed the murder of Jewish civilians by SS troops; horrified, he swiftly detached himself from the regime upon returning to Munich. In the face of wartime experiences and growing Nazi terror, the pair's eyes opened to the reality of Germany's peril. This was further reinforced when Hans and Sophie attended anti-Hitler speeches by Dr. Kurt Huber – shaking free their delusions and embracing a role of principle through dissent.

Action came in the form of a printing press and six leaflets. Obtaining a manual printing press, the students began writing texts breaking their apathetic attitudes. Peppering their calls to rebellion with poetry and historical references, they bent and wielded the German language in every facet it was capable of molding. The following is an excerpt of their first pamphlet:

Nothing is more shameful to a civilized nation than to allow itself to be “governed” by an irresponsible clique of sovereigns who have given themselves over to dark urges – and that without resisting. Isn't it true that every honest German is ashamed of his government these days? Who among us can imagine the degree of shame that will come upon us and upon our children when the veil falls from our faces and the awful crimes that infinitely exceed any human measure are exposed to the light of day? If the German nation is so corrupt and decadent in its innermost being that it is willing to surrender the greatest possession a man can own, a possession that elevates mankind above all other creatures, namely free will – if it is willing to surrender this without so much as raising a hand, rashly trusting a questionable lawful order of history; if it surrenders the freedom of mankind to intrude upon the wheel of history and subjugate it to his own rational decision; if Germans are so devoid of individuality that they have become an unthinking and cowardly mob – then, yes then they deserve their destruction.

Therefore, in this last hour every individual must arm himself as best he can, aware of his responsibility as a member of the Christian and western civilization. He must work against the hostage of humanity, against fascism and all similar systems of an absolute State. Offer passive resistance – resistance, wherever you may be, prevent the continuation of this atheistic war machine before it is too late, before the last of our cities lie in ruins like Cologne, and before the last of the youth of our people have been bled to death by the hubris of a subhuman. Do not forget that every nation deserves the government that it endures.

Despite the ever-present surveillance by the Gestapo, the group held firm in their resolution, distributing five more leaflets at the risk of their own lives. On February 18th, 1943, Hans and Sophie Scholl set off on their most daring expedition yet.

They planned to distribute copies of their sixth- as it would turn out, leaflets were left at the University of Munich where students would find them as they came out of lectures. The siblings left piles of leaflets around the central stairwell, but as they reached the top of the stairs, Sophie still had an abundance of leaflets left over - so she threw them over the balcony to float down to the students below. Luck having run out, a janitor had seen them, and informed the Gestapo. Arrested on February 22th, the pair and another member, Christoph Probst, were tried and executed the same day. Just before the blade fell from the guillotine above, Hans cried out “Long live freedom!”

Leaders come in unconventional forms, and this group of intellectuals exemplify an inexpressible amount of courage and the capacity to stand for something; their efforts were short-lived but pervaded all bouts of ignorance.



MIND STORM

DRAWING BY NATALIE LI



LOVE IS LOVE

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE SHI

"In the face of adversity, love does not discriminate. Love has no gender, no race, no religion, and no culture; it is limitless, powerful, and fearless. Love is what unifies us as one. Love is love."

THE POWER OF LITERATURE:

HOW LITERATURE SHAPED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE WORLD

ESSAY BY SHEHAN PERERA

“The pen is mightier than the sword” (Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1839) is an oft-quoted adage avowing the power of writing over violence in influencing a population. From the cultural and lifestyle defining *Analects* by Confucius to Charles Darwin’s though provoking and era defining *On the Origin of Species* to George Orwell’s iconic and semi-prophetic *1984*, all forms of literature have molded societies worldwide to a rather unfathomable extent and degree. Economics are an area where the influence of literature can be best seen. In the east, the *Analects* by Confucius is likely the most influential work on many aspects of eastern society, including economics. In the west, Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* is considered the foundational text of modern economic theory.

The *Analects* is one of the central texts of Confucianism. For the uninitiated, “Confucianism is not a religion but a set of pragmatic rules for daily life, derived from what Confucius saw as the lessons of Chinese history” (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). In their 1988 paper, Hofstede and Bond go into great depth on how the Confucian school of thought was, at least in part, the cause of the explosive economic growth experienced by multiple eastern countries in the 1960s and 70s that outpaced both the U.S.A. and Western Europe. The *Analects* are for this reason, among others, one of the most transformational and influential texts in history.

Smith’s seminal 1776 work detailed three basic principles underlying the economic progression of a nation; pursuit of self-interest, division of labor, and freedom of trade. Of particular note is the principle regarding the pursuit of self-interest. The pursuit of self interest is characteristic of modern-day capitalism and is an economic principle that is specific to western societies. P. J. O’Rourke’s *On The Wealth of Nations* does a wonderful job of summarizing the economic and political impacts of Smith’s work in more detail than can be covered here. O’Rourke also puts it best when describing the impact of Smith’s foundational work: “Smith illuminated the mystery of economics in one flash: “Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production.” There is no mystery. Smith took the *meta* out of the *physics*. Economics is our livelihood and just that” (O’Rourke, 2007).

A key difference between Confucian thought and Adam Smith’s work is the emphasis on the good of the collective versus the individual, respectively. Most western societies are capitalist, with individual success valued more than the collective’s whereas the opposite is true in the east.

Throughout history, literature and philosophy have been among the most powerful forces to move and influence societies. Unfortunate as it is, the scope of this short essay does not allow me to demonstrate the full power of literature on shaping societies. The influence of literature is certainly not limited to economics. Many moral values we hold dear, such as free speech and democracy, were first argued for in great literary works like *On Liberty: Bold-faced Thoughts on Free Will, Free Speech, and the Importance of Individuality* by John Stuart Mill. Some works have even defined generations across the world, from Osamu Dazai’s *No Longer Human* in Japan to Orwell’s *1984* in the west. I hope that I have at least instilled a curiosity to learn more about how literature has shaped society.

DIFFERENT SHADES OF RED

POEM BY JASMINE WU

What I've read from recent news articles
Boils red anger and shame within me:
A deep red,
Dripping from the skin
Of Hong Kong protesters and Uyghur camp inmates.
Red from the flag
Of the very country responsible for this doing.

I appreciate receiving red envelopes—laced with gold—from
my relatives in China
But my life's purpose is not to be rich.
Instead, I want to be free. I want to chase happiness.
They say: "pursue your dreams or settle for financial stability.
You should prioritize not your career, but your family."
Why do I struggle to choose?

A forking path where both roads lead to inevitable regrets.
Fear seizes me—I am terrified, but I must not show it.
Be tough. Be stoic. Be perfect.
A praise or hug: unheard of. Only
Cold expectations
Exit the mouth of those who raised me.
But my humanity caves in; I crave touch and emotion.
I lose face more often than I should.
Does that make me not Chinese?

I am not Chinese, but—
yet *I am*.
My skin is the shade of the lotus seed paste found in
mooncakes
My eyes and hair dark like the night sky
That washes over both the snowy Canadian lawn
On which my spacious house is situated, and
The endless rows of cramped apartment buildings,
Standing tall and proud,
In my parents' hometown.

Proud like when my parents made a new life here, in this
new country:
The fear in their eyes slowly fading, replaced by
The feeling that their decision of emigrating was right.
A step towards democracy,
A step towards a community of other Chinese immigrants
with shared political values.

And I too gravitate towards other Chinese people.
We joke together, study together, eat together.
Bowls of rice, chopsticks, communal meals.
The taste of our mothers' spiciest dishes awaken our
senses
In a way that screams: "I love you."

I realize: my people's love is shown through actions not
words—
Silently but strongly,
Filling the room with the aroma
Of Sichuan water braised fish.
And the Chinese in me exists vibrantly,
But is coloured a different shade of red:
Interwoven with the many-hued tolerance of Western
culture.
That is my war paint.

CIRRUS AT DAWN

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAYA SCOTT

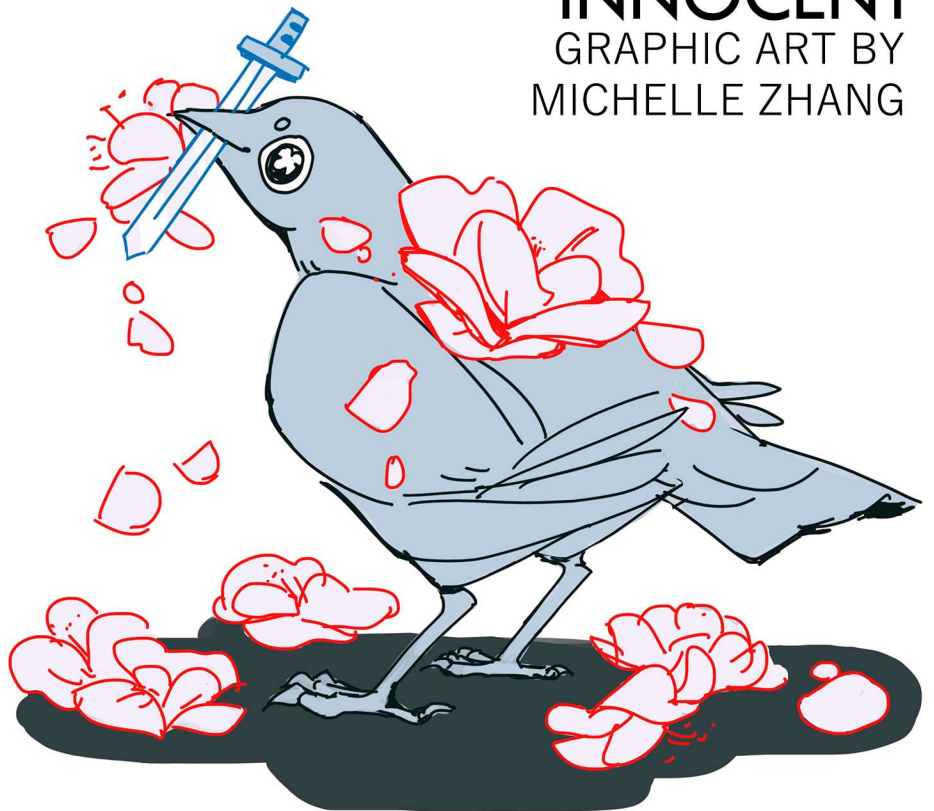
A SYMPHONY OF LIFE

POEM BY VANESSA ORELLANA

A symphony of life
that has beauty everywhere you look
strong yet fragile
calming yet concerning
it hangs in the balance
at the hands of an ever so carefree race
What we see is also what is lacking
being destroyed with self-interest and greed
We say that the pen is mightier than the sword
Yet the sword is what obliterates our beautiful surroundings
And the pen is screaming for attention
yet fades into the background
We forget to thank the land that has given us life for so long

We forget our ancestors
We forget their way of life
and instead, betray our kind ally
and get rid of its rolling hills and singing birds
to replace it with high rise buildings and smog
Our perspective of beauty has changed
In a way that we should not be proud of
We must remember the feeling of sun rays on our faces
and the way it feels to be swept up by the wind
We must be constantly reminded
and reeducated
Because every time we see something so beautiful
we must be renewed with self-commitment to making a change
and only then
will this beautiful symphony of life
be in harmony as it once was again.

INNOCENT
GRAPHIC ART BY
MICHELLE ZHANG







LOOKING FORWARD

GRAPHIC ART BY MICHELLE SADORSKY

“Like the Eiffel Tower was a symbol of the coming of the Age of Industrialization, there are buildings under construction today that reflect how our technological advancements allow us to achieve monumental feats not previously believed to have been possible.”

NOT YOUR TYPE

POEM BY JACK BRADLEY

He was told that the most impressive thing a person could do,
was grow.

“To overcome one’s edges, one’s past weaknesses,
for it is powerful for one to improve and transform
into a brighter, kinder figure of the person
they were yesterday.”

With growth, he thought one could become anything.
Yet, regardless of the leaps he makes, the mountains
in his mind that he moves, he cannot help but fear that
n e v e r
can he grow to become enough for you.

No matter how deeply he looks into your eyes,
his will never become the blues of *their* ocean
which so longingly you ache to swim in.

His eyes, despite perfect vision, remain brown.
Brown as the earth you walk over while you stare
straight up into the hues of the sky overhead.

No matter how harshly he cleans his skin,
it remains an unremarkable beige, not their
soft ivory you wish to feel against your body.

Regardless of the times he says his own name,
it does naught to change the one that echoes
in your head during the moments of quiet.

That boy can try and change his hair, he can
conform in your whitewashed clothes.
When he speaks, he can twist his words
like a script to fit the ones he imagines
they might have said to you at night.

Despite his efforts, he will never
become enough for you.
Parts of him are too different from *them*,
for him to be able to mimic.

His eyes, his skin, the bridge of his nose,
they do not fit your convention.
The only compliment they receive,
“exotic.”

How *fortunate* it is for him, really.
It is fortunate for him,
that he is “not your type.”

CHANGING TIDES

PAINTING BY
NATALIE LI

10 YEARS

PERSONAL ESSAY BY JASMINE KANG

Elementary school was a time of carefree bliss. We younger kids would spend our recesses chasing each other in manhunt, playing four square, or trading Pokémon cards. At times, I would pause and glance over to where the older students – the *teenagers* – were hanging out in the shadow of the school building. They represented a distant, nebulous future I knew I'd reach but could never imagine. Sometimes I'd try, often after an adult planted the thought in my head with the question "Where do you think you'll be in 10 years?" I would reply indifferently, "Probably in university, studying" with a noncommittal shrug. I figured it was my most likely path, given that my family had come to Canada precisely for the educational opportunities it held. But *learning*? *Responsibility*? That was the boring part of growing up. I had other aspirations for my nineteen-year-old future self.

For one, I wanted to grow my own pineapple plant. An edible houseplant seemed to be more so of practical use than simply having a flowering plant for aesthetic purposes. Pineapples could be grown from their stalk, which meant that all I needed to acquire was a pineapple, soil, and a large pot. What I failed to consider, however, was the potential impact that the chilly, dark winters of Canada may have on a tropical fruit. I also didn't know that pineapple plants took months to root and years to bear fruit. As a child, I didn't have the patience. In the present, I neither have the time nor car to lug several kilograms of soil from London's Canadian Tire to my apartment. I do, however, take great pleasure in annual visits to my family friend's house to pick enough cherries off of their tree to feed my family for weeks.

Learning to cook was also one of my goals. I grew up surrounded by the tantalizing aromas of Chinese dishes – everything from spicy pork belly to fluffy pork buns to Mapo tofu. Unfortunately, cooking remained just that: a goal. While my younger self imagined a put-together young adult dextrously cooking a variety of foods, the reality ended up being a heavy dependence on residence cafeteria food, despite living at Western's Elgin Hall with a fully furnished kitchen. The closest I got to cooking was boiling frozen dumplings, which was a resounding success if not just to break the monotony of caf food. Now, as a second-year student, I have had to fend for myself: buying groceries, planning meals, and doing my best not to destroy the kitchen in my culinary efforts. While I still have an aversion to any recipe requiring more than five ingredients, I think I've made considerable progress having not touched a ramen package in months.

As I kid, I dabbled in many sports, from javelin to soccer to dodgeball. However, it was in basketball where I found my passion. At home, I faithfully followed NBA games – particularly those of the New York Knicks, where Jeremy Lin, the first American of Chinese descent to play in the NBA, was rising as a superstar. I admired his tenacity, the way that others could count on him on the court. I wanted to be just like him – someone who my teammates could rely on. I steadily improved my basketball skills throughout middle school, earning the position of starting forward on my eighth-grade basketball team. But this was not to last. Within a few years, my peers came to tower over me and I faced skilled players who could blow past me in seconds. In high school, I lost the rush that I had once felt during games. But I don't look back at this with any resentment. While I still enjoyed playing basketball later in my childhood, I think I simply grew out of the sport. In university, I discovered a sport that reignited my passion – judo. I get fired up for every class, whether we are learning a new throw, pin, or just sparring. While there is still frustration when I can't get a technique right, it's an important part of the learning process and makes the hard work worth it when I finally succeed.

Looking back, my childhood was an amalgamation of experimentation and unfinished endeavors. While chaotic, it helped establish my current identity and set the foundation for the changes to come. Will I ever overcome my inertia to get a pineapple plant started? Will I ever learn to cook anything more complex than stir fry? Will I ever become strong enough in judo to compete?

Ten years is an eternity that can pass in the blink of an eye. I can't say my childhood predictions were accurate, but the unpredictability of life makes it all the more interesting.

THE PARADOX OF GLOBALIZATION

FEATURE ESSAY BY AKASH JAIN

In today's day and age, with the proliferation of transnational flows, globalization is an important topic of discussion. I argue that globalization incites cultural homogeneity and financial inequality, which commonly catalyzes division, a seemingly negative consequence. I then raise a potential objection: globalization provides the only mechanism for necessary foreign influence, which revitalizes nations in need. Finally, I reply to this objection by acknowledging that globalization may erode one's cultural distinctiveness, and thus personal identity, rendering progress, the very goal of globalization, a hopeless pursuit. This essay draws on the examples of two countries: India and Somalia.

At the outset, globalization can lead to cultural homogenization. Over the past decades, globalization, particularly by heightened media intensity, has spurred the creation of "New India", which has transformed the country's culture. Consequently, India's experience of national life and the importance of their historical origins have been uprooted (Goel, 5). Instead of upholding important ritualistic ideals, the media explosion generated by globalization has accelerated the commodification of culture, breeding a consumeristic society. For instance, YouTube has become a harbinger of cultural change (Goel, 27). YouTube has created an illustration of India's past involving a dominant Hindu culture, forming a narrative that supports homogenic discourses of the political elite, marginalizing minority groups (Goel, 23). Overall, globalization in India has "ruthlessly perpetuated homogenization of regional cultures" (Goel, 6).

From an economic standpoint, globalization can engender financial inequality. Especially in developing countries, globalization has increased the chasm between distinct socioeconomic classes (Osland, 139). Moreover, economies that have become further liberalized, as a result of globalization, have often seen elevated levels of job loss in local industries with formerly protected markets. Smaller companies find it difficult to compete with large foreign multinationals that exploit their sale avenues. The sheer size of multinational corporations enables them to mass produce, order in bulk, negotiate lower wage rates with labour federations, and even override local laws (Osland, 143). Ahmed Tall, finance lecturer at SIMAD University, believes Turkish investment in Somalia may be a threat to local businesses: Turkish companies are engaging in a pre-existing "primary market", rather than erecting a separate one, which diminishes domestic opportunities and exacerbates financial variance (Nor, n. pag.).

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KITES

PHOTOGRAPH BY NATALIE LI

While globalization seems to instigate notions of social division, it provides the only avenue for foreign influence in dependent nations. To start, the increased porosity of borders resulting from globalization allows for cross-cultural integration, whereby social groups engage in learning experiences with one another. For instance, during the UN intervention in Somalia from 1992 to 1995, an influx of foreigners entered the country with a divergent value system and new way of life (Marchal et al., n. pag.). Although the introduction of such radical ideals can typically provoke cultural homogenization, discussed previously as a negative product of globalization, these foreign values actually helped teach Somalis important and tangible skills. When Westerners entered Somalia during the UN intervention, "Somalis who had cultivated contempt for the Western languages suddenly found them useful in acquiring well-paying jobs" (Marchal et al., n. pag.). The UN intervention illustrated how globalization can unite people and their respective differences, to such extremes that individuals began embracing certain aspects of different cultures. Furthermore, during the UN intervention, foreign products including computers, which had been "prohibitively expensive," entered Somali culture, allowing civilians to indulge in things that were once not accessible (Marchal et al., n. pag.). Somalis were able to learn basic computer navigation from Westerners and implement these skills in the labour market, increasing efficiencies in their jobs. Computers have helped make work processes faster and reduce human error factors, a feat made possible through globalization. Moreover, inter-clan rivalries became less frequent in Somalia as civilians realized that different ways of life existed and were achievable (Marchal et al., n. pag.). Instead of creating negative cultural homogeneity, foreign influence, through globalization, amalgamated Somalis, advanced primitive aspects of their culture, and gave them hope for a prosperous future.

Lastly, I reply to the objection above by illustrating that globalization leads to a lack of personal identity. Foreign influence, a common manifestation of globalization, can erode cultural distinctiveness. It has been identified that "a clear cultural identity has specific functions for personal identity clarity" (Usborne and Sablonnière, 444). If this is true, and personal identity presupposes this notion of cultural distinctiveness, it seems that globalization impairs individualism. Without individualism, people can often become demotivated and disengaged, making progress a difficult endeavour. If globalization restricts personal identity, in turn hampering progress, the process seems contradictory. After all, the very goal of globalization is advancement.

In conclusion, I argue that, on balance, globalization's impact has been negative as it both initiates and catalyzes division within societies. While some argue that globalization provides necessary foreign influence, the eradication of personal identity renders progress unlikely. The debate regarding globalization will continue to permeate modern social discourse. It is therefore important to understand all perspectives of this process, without disregarding ones that are underrepresented.

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WISH UPON THE WORLD

GRAPHIC ART BY MICHELLE ZHANG

UNFORTUNATE

SHORT FICTION BY ERIN ANDERSON

The tiny slip of paper, two inches wide by half an inch tall, was recognizable to her immediately. She bent down to pick it up with one blue-gloved hand, desperate to know which words would be printed along it. It was soggy from the early November snow, which had mostly melted, and it was torn almost in half.

Time makes one wise. Ask advice from someone older than you.

Roberta was not quite sure of the meaning yet, but she knew they were words of great importance. She pulled her glove off with her teeth and slipped the sentiment into the pocket of her camel-coloured wool jacket. She bounded for the collegiate gothic building that housed most of her classes. Her discovery had almost made her late.

The day passed quickly and uneventfully. Roberta continued to pat the pocket of her jacket, which hung on the back of the chair she was sitting in, just to make sure it was still there. A few times, Roberta actually thought she might've felt it buzzing like a smartphone inside the dark socket of fibres, as if the fortune were alive. She pulled it out to check, careful not to rip it any more, and she noticed for the first time a line of tiny print that she had to squint to read: Fortune #4274 Printed in Toronto, ON.

Roberta imagined the factory where the messages were printed and stuffed into delicately folded cookies. She imagined them being packed into boxes and loaded onto trucks, clear packages crinkling with every bump in the road, en route to their final destinations. She imagined a handful being plunked down on a table beside the bill wallet, hands reaching out to grab one. She imagined the faces of people reading their fortunes, and the way the words briefly changed their facial expressions.

How many trees had to be cut down to fulfill their fate of offering generic insights to North Americans, stomachs bulging from overdoing it on egg rolls? A ten-second destiny before being discarded along with the paper placemats. Roberta had always loved fortune cookies, but this time, she just felt sad.

When class ended, Roberta walked out the double doors, and headed for the forested area behind her school. She carefully pulled out the second-hand fortune and lay it near the base of her favourite tree, careful to bury it halfway with fallen leaves so it wouldn't blow away.

A COLLECTION OF MANY DISORGANIZED THOUGHTS: ON THE IMPROVISATORY LIFE OF A UNICORN

SHORT FICTION BY RASA ESKANDARI

PRELUDE

Dust and fog; death and misfortune.

The gloomy crows fly through the land of darkness and seat themselves next to an intellectual isolated from the world.

Facial obstruction has resulted from this wearisome solitude, and her identity has thus been lost.

You fool, your life resides at one station.

No change; no growth; no motion.

No distractions; no interactions; no emotion.

No obstacles; no suffering; no waves in this ocean.

Death to you, intellectualism, and isolation.

Now, she is dead and ready to be born again. And this time, infatuations will not destroy her mind; they will strengthen it. Her life will be improvised: pathed by distractions; motivated by the arts; and understood by knowledge.

When man began to fly, some piloted, but most became passengers; when man began to practice music, some composed, but most became performers; when man began to do, some did, but most became dreamers.

He faces a great danger as a master prepares to enslave him—a master by the name of Dogma. Did evolution deny him? How does he label himself as an advanced primate when he is a mere monkey imitating a master?

His greatest flaw is what he considers to be his greatest strength: thoughts. Thinking is a process in which he recollects the events of his past and further refers to the evolutionary baggage common to all men. He is therefore sacrificing originality; he is sacrificing creativity; he is sacrificing art. When he serves the future, he is but a slave of the past.

All of his thoughts about the future are prejudiced. When he thinks and sets long-term goals, his plans—which are truly foolish dreams—reflect on experiences he or others have had already. His growth is limited, and change is inhibited. He thinks there to be static goodness, and his life is thereby similar to the dogmatic (or indoctrinated) idiots he so passionately despises.

He endeavours to reach the top of a mountain. But if he surrenders his compass and abandons the pilgrimage, he can reach the top of the heavens. The direction of each step is to be chosen as he lifts his foot to take it, and the path must otherwise be improvised. He needs to remember that things do not go wrong; they simply follow unexpected directions which can in fact impregnate the imaginative mind with genius. And during his journey, when he is despaired and in pain, a demon may whisper into his ears and offer him a chance to go back in time; to leave behind that which he regrets the most; to correct his wrongs. He should wrestle this fiend to the ground and refuse to ever look back. He must use the arts as his inspiration for improvisation; he must solely pursue his individualization; he must be the wildest crawler amongst the wild things and live the good life of a unicorn.



WAITING

GRAPHIC ART BY MICHELLE ZHANG

PERSPECTIVE

PHOTOGRAPH BY FARAH KAMAR



STORIES

POEM BY AMANDI PERERA

They exist as rows upon rows of
Books that blend into the shelf
Strangers living side by side

Absorbed in their stories
As you are in yours
Why do we all hide

Behind our covers,
Stories await

For you

Must reach out,
Turn their first pages,
Read their lives.

Read their tear-stained tales,
Crumpled ages,
Twists and thorns,

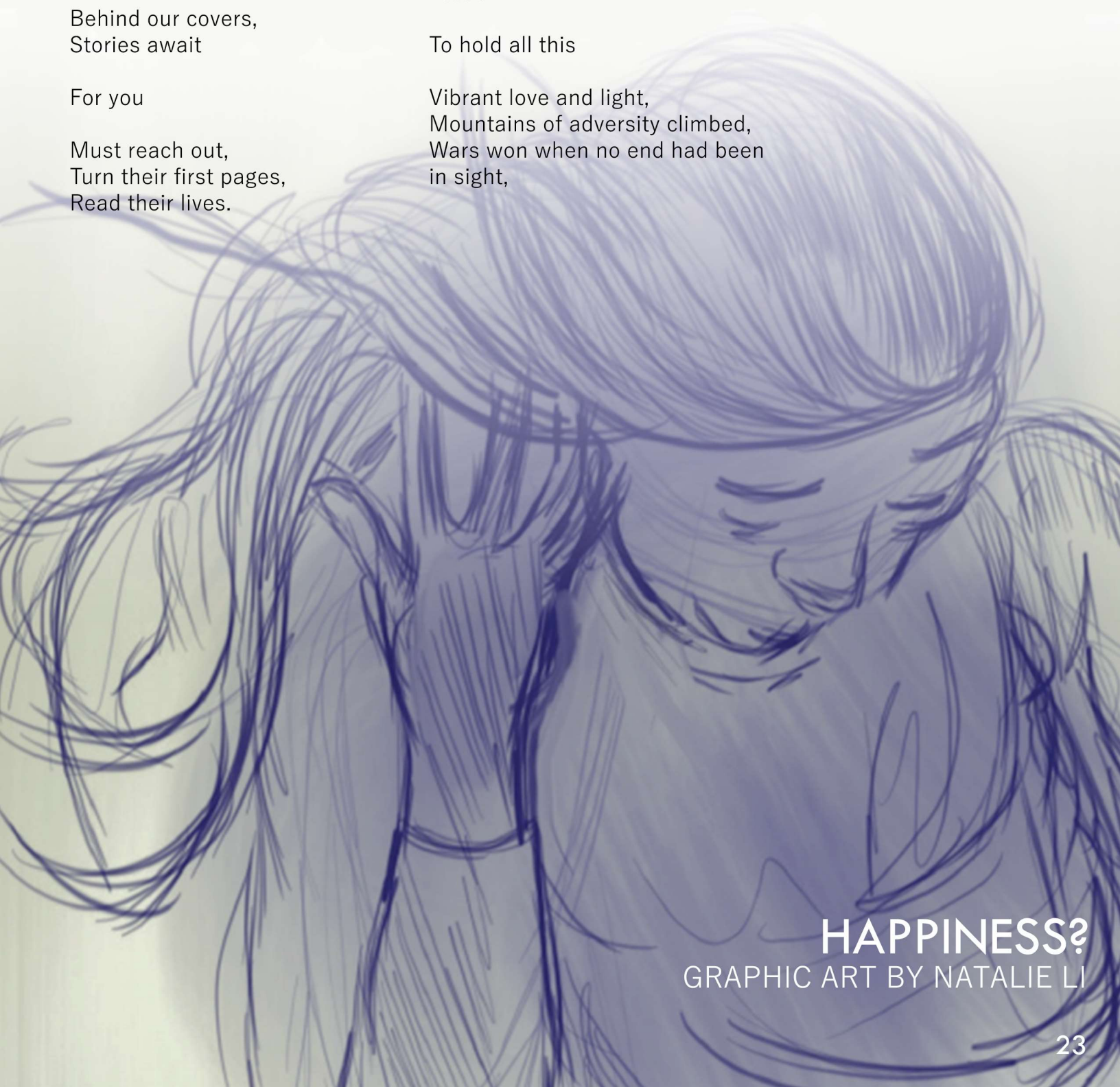
Captives and cages,
Collapsing paper-thin castles,
That cover must've been quite the
vessel

To hold all this

Vibrant love and light,
Mountains of adversity climbed,
Wars won when no end had been
in sight,

People living side by side,
Stories,

From a page turn.



HAPPINESS?
GRAPHIC ART BY NATALIE LI

Cover Photo

EGO AND SOUL

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE SHI

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