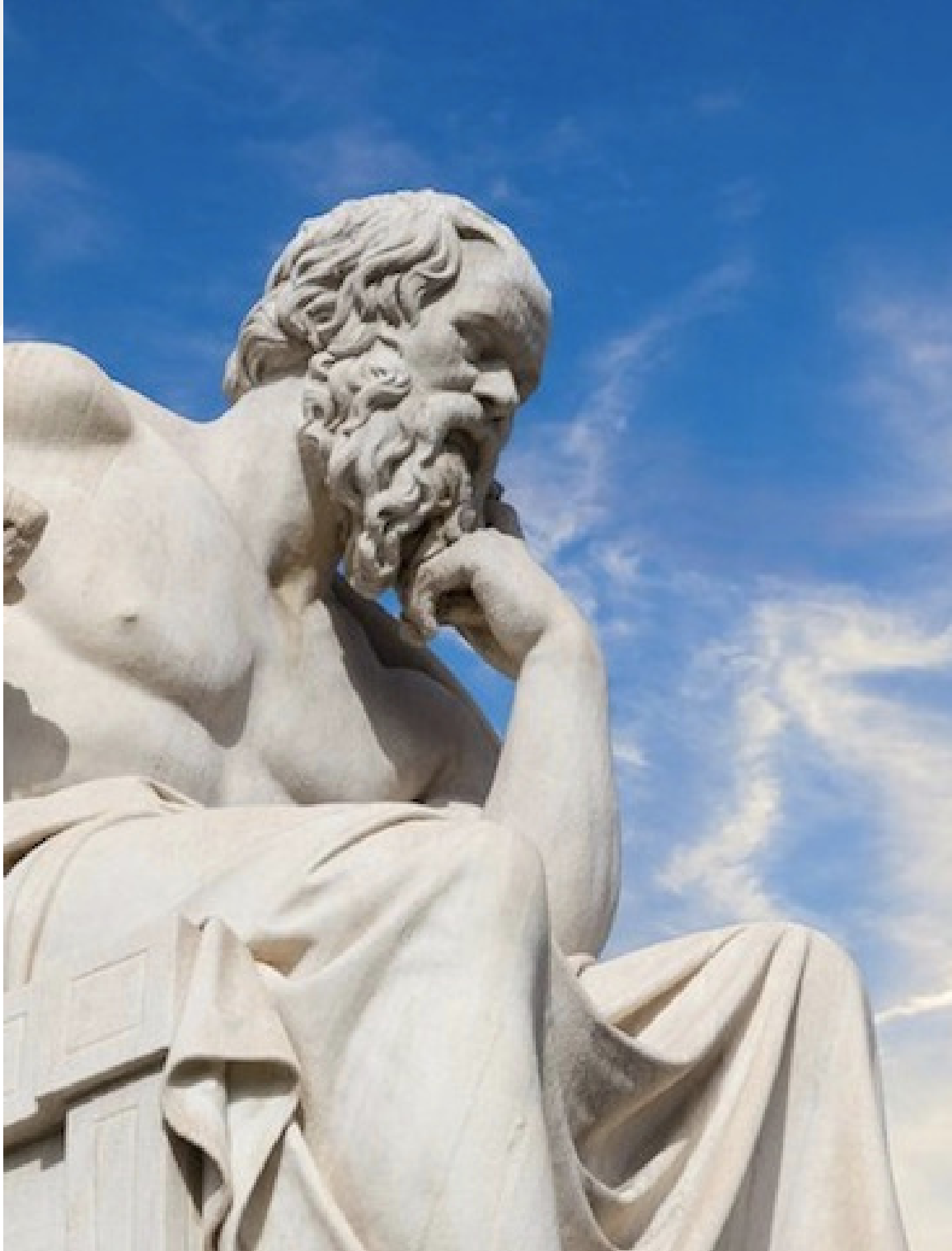


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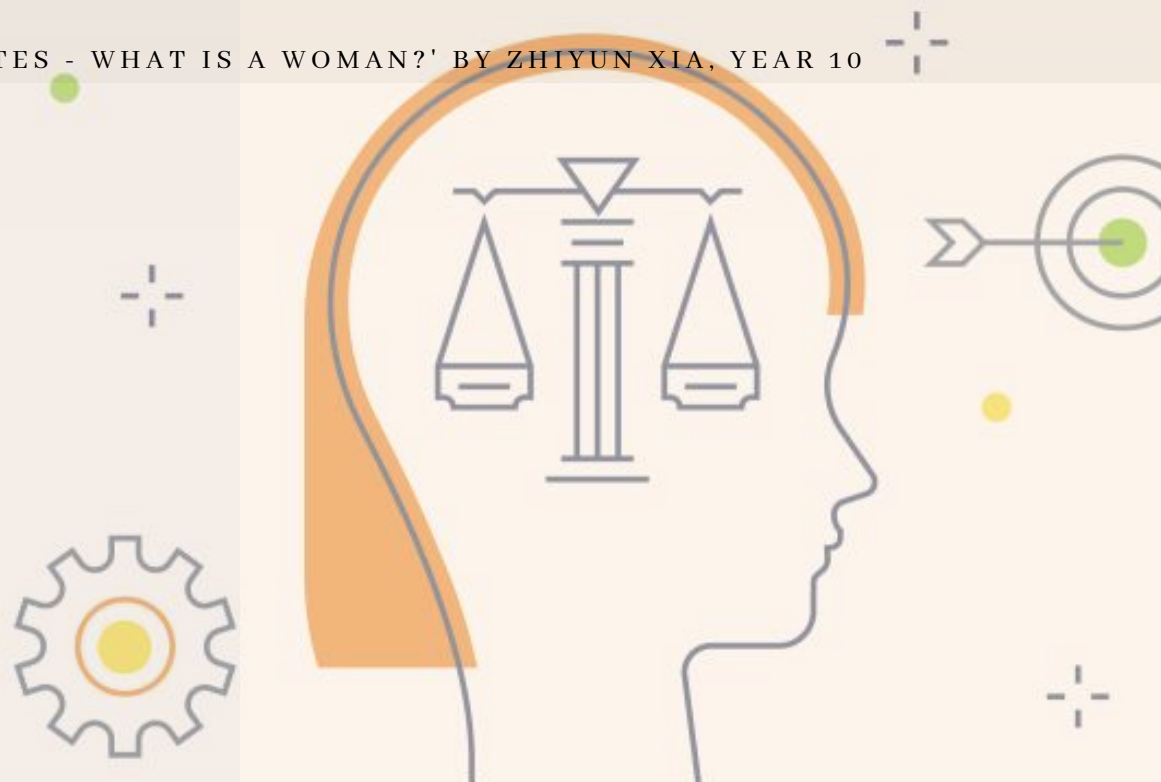
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VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA - WHY THE LAW GOES BEYOND ETHICS BY SHREYA MAHAT

THE ACT OF ENDING SOMEONE'S LIFE AT THEIR REQUEST TO SET THEM FREE OF INTOLERABLE SUFFERING SEEMS TO BE THE MOST POPULAR OPINION IN A UNIVERSAL DISCUSSION ON VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA (WHERE IN 2015, 82% OF THE UK SUPPORTED ASSISTED DYING) AND THIS IN TURN RAISES THE QUESTION: IF SO MANY PEOPLE ADVOCATE FOR IT, WHY IS IT STILL ILLEGAL? DOES ETHICS NOT HAVE A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ITS LAW?

WHEN WE CONSIDER WHAT IS MORALLY RIGHT IN THIS INSTANCE, IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT ALLEVIATING ONE'S ENDLESS PAIN IS THE MOST VIRTUOUS AND APPROPRIATE DECISION TO MAKE BUT, LEGALLY SPEAKING, MORAL PHILOSOPHY IS NOT ENOUGH OF A MOTIVATION FOR REFORM. ALL IS WELL WHEN ONLY THE BENEFITS ARE CONSIDERED BUT NOT MANY REVIEW WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS WHEN WE OPEN UP OUR LAWS AND THE PROBLEMS COME RUSHING IN. IN AN IDEAL WORLD ALLOWING THE TERMINALLY ILL TO DIE WITH DIGNITY, AND FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH PATIENT AUTONOMY, APPEARS TO BE THE MOST REASONABLE JUDGMENT. HOWEVER, WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY WHERE THE PROBLEMS THAT COME WITH THE LEGALISATION OF EUTHANASIA OUTWEIGH ITS SOLUTIONS; WHICH IS WHY WE MUST NOT LET OUR SENTIMENTS GUIDE US BUT INSTEAD PUT LESS EMPHASIS ON ETHICS AND FORM OUR OPINIONS WITH A LEGALISTIC POINT OF VIEW.

ONE OF THE MOST PRESSING LEGAL MATTERS SURROUNDING THE POSSIBLE LEGALISATION OF VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA IS THAT OF SAFEGUARDS. WHEN THERE IS DANGER OF ESCALATION, THESE WOULD BE PUT IN PLACE IN ORDER TO PROTECT THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE TO SOCIAL PRESSURES. THE ELDERLY, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY FEEL A MORAL OBLIGATION TO LIFT A 'BURDEN' FROM THEIR FAMILIES EVEN THOUGH THEY DON'T SUFFER SO MUCH THEMSELVES OR EVEN WANT TO DIE IN THE FIRST PLACE. NOT ONLY DOES THIS FUNDAMENTALLY ALTER HOW WE VIEW SOCIETY, BY UNDERMINING THE VALUE OF LIFE AS A WHOLE; BUT IT ALSO CALLS INTO QUESTION: HOW CAN WE CREATE SUCH SAFETY NETS TO AVOID INEVITABLE ISSUES SUCH AS THESE? IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE TO DO SO. THERE IS NO INDEFINITE PROCEDURE THAT CAN STEER CLEAR OF THESE CONCERNS ESPECIALLY WHEN OUR COURTS ARE STILL FLOODED WITH CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ELDER ABUSE AND CHILD ABUSE THAT GET MISSED BY SAFETY NET SYSTEMS REGULARLY. THIS IS NOT A MINOR AFFAIR AND WE CANNOT RISK ITS POSSIBILITY AS IT IS TRULY A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

IT HAS ALSO BEEN NEGLECTED TO REALISE THAT WITH ITS LEGALISATION IT MAY SUBCONSCIOUSLY AFFECT THE PRACTICE OF DOCTORS. BECAUSE IT IS ILLEGAL, IT ENCOURAGES HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO TRY THEIR BEST TO RELIEVE PAIN AND OTHER ASPECTS OF A PERSON'S SUFFERING AND IT IS UNCERTAIN THAT THIS WOULD STILL TAKE A PHYSICIAN'S MAIN PRIORITY IF THE LAW IS CHANGED; THEY MAY PLACE THEIR EFFORTS ELSEWHERE . ALMOST LIKE IF A STUDENT IS STUDYING BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY HAVE EXAMS BUT THEN CIRCUMSTANCES ARISE CAUSING THEM NOT GO FORTH WITH THE EXAMINATIONS. IT WOULD MOST LIKELY CAUSE THEM TO STOP WORKING AS HARD BECAUSE THEY KNOW THERE IS ANOTHER END TO THEIR MEANS AND GIVING UP IS THE EASIER, MORE UNDERSTANDABLE OPTION. HERE, DEATH WOULD BE EASIER AND CHEAPER THAN CARE AND TREATMENT. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A RATHER CYNICAL APPROACH IT IS NOT TO SAY THAT IT'S UNREALISTIC, BECAUSE IT IS VERY MUCH MATTER OF FACT. WHETHER OR NOT THE DOCTOR REALISES, IT IS HUMAN NATURE TO BE UNKNOWINGLY INFLUENCED BY SUCH FACTORS. MOREOVER, IF EUTHANASIA WERE REGARDED AS AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO MEDICAL ISSUES THEN IT WOULD ULTIMATELY RESULT IN DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON MEDICAL PROGRESSION AND THAT ALONE IS TAKING A STEP BACK IN TIME WHEN THE AIM IS TO PUSH FORWARD.

ANOTHER CRUCIAL FACTOR THAT EXCEEDS PEOPLES THOUGHTS IS THAT EUTHANASIA OBLIQUELY SENDS THE MESSAGE THAT LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING. IF IT BECOMES LEGAL, IT CREATES A PRECEDENT THAT WILL EXTEND TO THOSE WHO DO NOT SUFFER FROM TERMINAL ILLNESS BUT FROM OTHER DISABILITIES AND ILLNESSES, ESPECIALLY MENTAL CONDITIONS, THAT DO NOT TAKE THEM TO THE END STAGE OF THEIR LIVES. THIS IS A RARE CASE WHERE THE LAW AND MORALITY CAN WORK HAND IN HAND AS IT IS CLEAR TO EVEN THE MOST SIMPLE PEOPLE THAT THIS IS WRONG; IT PUTS FORTH THE IDEA THAT 'SUICIDE IS ACCEPTABLE' WHICH RISKS SENDING A MIXED MESSAGE ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE TRAGEDY OF YOUTH SUICIDE AND IN TURN CREATES A CONFUSING DOUBLE STANDARD ABOUT ENDING ONE'S LIFE. THIS IDEA ALSO TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THOSE WHO ARE AT THEIR MOST FRAGILE STATE OF MIND AND LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT WHICH VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA DANGEROUSLY PROVIDES. IT GIVES THEM AN OPTION TO NOT SEEK HELP WHICH IS THE WORST THING A SOCIETY CAN DO FOR A STRUGGLING MEMBER. HELP MUST BE THE DEFAULT AND DYING WITHOUT CONSULTATION SHOULD NEVER BE AN ALTERNATIVE.



IS IT ETHICAL TO USE ANIMALS FOR TESTING?

BY SONALI PRASAD

THE USE OF ANIMALS IN TESTING FOR BEAUTY PRODUCTS, MEDICINE, AND MUCH MORE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ETHICALLY DEBATABLE TOPIC. IN SOME WAYS, ANIMAL TESTING HAS HAD A HUGE VITAL ROLE IN THE ADVANCEMENTS OF MEDICINE, AND PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD REAP THE BENEFITS OF THIS. HOWEVER, WE ARE THINKING FROM OUR SIDE. ANIMAL-RIGHTS ACTIVISTS BELIEVE THAT DESPITE THE BENEFIT IT MAY GIVE US, THAT SHOULD NOT JUSTIFY WHY WE UNNECESSARILY BRING ANIMALS INTO THESE PROBLEMS OF OUR OWN.

ONE WAY IN WHICH IT MAY BE ETHICALLY MORAL IS DUE TO HOW IT BENEFITS HUMANKIND AND PROTECTS THE SAFETY OF US. THE RDS - RESEARCH DEFENCE SOCIETY - SAID THAT IF WE WERE TO BAN ANIMAL TESTING, THERE WOULD BE SEVERE CONSEQUENCES FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH. AS WELL AS THIS, PUBLIC HEALTH WOULD BE PUT MORE AT RISK AS WE TEST NEW DRUGS ON OUR OWN PEOPLE. WITHOUT THE ANIMALS USED FOR TESTING, OUR SCIENTISTS DEVELOPING NEW DRUGS AND MAKEUP WOULD RESORT TO USING HUMANS FOR TESTING AND THEREFORE MAY INCREASE THE DEATH RATE OF HUMANS BEING TESTED EVEN HIGHER THAN IT ALREADY IS. SURELY OUR LIVES ARE MORE PRECIOUS THAN THOSE OF ANIMALS, RIGHT? SO, THE PROCESS OF TESTING ANIMALS MUST BE ETHICALLY RIGHT.

HOWEVER, THIS SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE AS TO EXPLAIN WHY WE KILL MILLIONS OF ANIMALS EACH YEAR. 3.52 MILLION MICE, DOGS, MONKEYS, RABBITS SUFFERED AND DIED IN UK LABS IN 2018 ALONE. ON TOP OF THIS, DID YOU KNOW ONLY 3% OF ANIMALS SURVIVE LAB TESTING? NOW CONSIDER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE RACE THE WORLD HAD FOR THE VACCINE. IMAGINE HOW MANY ANIMALS WERE PUT THROUGH TESTING. WE SHOULD NOT BE FORCING ANIMALS TO GO THROUGH ALL THIS PAIN JUST FOR US TO FIND A SOLUTION TO OUR OWN PROBLEMS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ANIMAL TESTING FURTHERS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF BIOLOGICAL STRUCTURES. FIGHTING DISEASE DEPENDS ON UNDERSTANDING BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES. LARGE PARTS OF ANIMAL AND HUMAN BIOLOGY WORK IN REMARKABLY SIMILAR WAYS, NOT JUST IN VITAL FUNCTIONS SUCH AS BREATHING, DIGESTION, MOVEMENT, SIGHT, HEARING, AND REPRODUCTION BUT AT THE LEVEL OF BASIC CELL PROCESSES TOO.

WE CAN STUDY HOW OUR BODIES WORK BY USING ANIMALS IN EXPERIMENTS- IN WHICH NO HUMAN WOULD AGREE TO. STUDYING HOW HEALTHY BODIES FUNCTION OFTEN HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING WHEN THINGS DO GO WRONG. FOR EXAMPLE, MICROSCOPIC NEMATODE WORMS HAVE HELPED IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF BRAIN DISEASES SUCH AS ALZHEIMER'S WHICH CAUSES DEMENTIA.

DESPITE THE BENEFITS BEING CLEAR, THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER WAYS IN WHICH THESE OUTCOMES COULD ALSO BE PRODUCED. ONE EXAMPLE IS 'ORGANS ON A CHIP' DEVELOPED BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY. 'MICROFLUIDIC DEVICES LINED WITH LIVING HUMAN CELLS FOR DRUG DEVELOPMENT, DISEASE MODELLING, AND PERSONALIZED MEDICINE' IS WHAT THEY ARE DESCRIBED AS. THESE CHIPS ACT LIKE HUMAN ORGANS AND HAVE SO MUCH POTENTIAL IN THE FIELD OF TESTING OF NEW DRUGS AS WELL AS CHEMICALS. RATHER THAN PUTTING THE LIVES OF ANIMALS AT RISK, WE CAN USE THESE MICROCHIPS AS AN ALTERNATIVE AND MODEL HUMAN DISEASES TO GAIN MORE EFFECTIVE RESULTS. THIS IS JUST ONE OF THE ALTERNATIVES TO USING ANIMAL TESTING; THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS WE CAN GAIN KNOWLEDGE ON HOW MEDICINES REACT TO BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS; WE DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE TO CONTINUE HURTING ANIMALS FOREVER.

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION ALL THESE IMPORTANT POINTS, I BELIEVE THAT USING ANIMALS FOR TESTING IS NOT ETHICALLY MORAL. DESPITE THE BENEFITS OF NOT PUTTING THE SAFETY AND PRECIOUSNESS OF HUMAN LIVES AT RISK, NOTHING SHOULD JUSTIFY HARMING OTHER LIVING BEINGS. NO ONE IS SAYING THAT WE MUST TEST HUMANS INSTEAD, THERE ARE PLENTY OF ALTERNATIVES THAT GIVE THE SAME- IF NOT BETTER- RESULTS THAN THOSE WE GET FROM ANIMAL TESTING. HOWEVER, WE MUST NOT LIVE WITH THE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF DEATHS EACH YEAR OF ANIMALS BECAUSE OF US ON OUR CONSCIENCE.



WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF AI ON MODERN SOCIETY?

BY NIAMH O'CONNOR-RILEY

AS THE WORLD IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING, WE ARE COMING UP WITH NEW INVENTIONS, THEORIES AND STRATEGIES TO HELP US IN RUNNING OUR WORLD.

AI TECHNOLOGY IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A FAIRLY MODERN INVENTION THAT TOOK THE WORLD BY STORM. IT STANDS FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND IS USED IN MANY ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES, FROM RETAIL AND FASHION, BUSINESS TO SIRI, ALEXA AND GOOGLE HOME. BUT WHAT IMPACT DOES IT REALLY HAVE ON US AND THE MODERN WORLD?

THE TERM AI WAS INVENTED BY JOHN MCCARTHY; THE FIRST REAL DEVICE USING THIS TECHNOLOGY WAS DEVELOPED IN 1955. THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO THIS EMERGING IDEA THAT CAN ASSIST US WITH A LOT OF THINGS, FOR EXAMPLE: DEVICES AND INVENTIONS THAT USE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN FIGURE OUT AND FOLLOW ALGORITHMS (THEREFORE MAKING FASTER DECISIONS), FOR THINGS AS SMALL AS SOLVING A RUBIX CUBE. THIS IS BENEFICIAL FOR TECHNOLOGY LIKE SELF-DRIVING CARS, AS THERE WOULD BE LESS CRASHES BECAUSE THE AI POWERING THEM WOULD MAKE THE DECISION TO TURN OR BREAK QUICKER.

ANOTHER LARGE FIELD THAT THIS EMERGING TECH HAS A BIG IMPACT ON IS BUSINESS. A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE POSITIVE IMPACTS THAT AI-POWERED TECHNOLOGY CAN IMPROVE ARE THINGS LIKE HELPING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF A BUSINESS. DURING MY RESEARCH FOR THIS TOPIC, A POINT THAT CAME UP WAS THAT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN USE INSIGHT AND 'PREDICT WHAT CUSTOMERS PREFER IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM A MORE PERSONALISED EXPERIENCE.' I WAS DISCUSSING THIS IDEA WITH MY DAD, AND WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW BIG COMPANIES USE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, SPOTIFY, IN THEIR 'DISCOVER WEEKLY', WHERE THEY USE OTHER PEOPLE'S PLAYLISTS THAT HAVE SIMILAR SONGS TO YOURS TO RECOMMEND NEW MUSIC TO YOU.

ALTHOUGH AI HAS PLAYED A BIG PART IN BENEFITTING OUR SOCIETY, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A DOWNSIDE. A LARGE CON WHEN IT COMES TO THIS TECHNOLOGY IS UNEMPLOYMENT, WHICH HAS A LARGE IMPACT ON BUSINESS IN A NEGATIVE WAY. HUMANS DEVELOPING AI AND FINDING NEW WAYS TO MAKE ROBOTS AND OTHER ASSISTANTS SMARTER CAN BE A MUCH MORE EFFICIENT WAY TO MANUFACTURE THINGS IN FACTORIES, AND MANY ARE BEGINNING TO ADD AI-POWERED ROBOTS INTO THEIR ROUTINE OF MAKING THEIR PRODUCTS.

'A TWO YEAR STUDY FROM MCKINSEY GLOBAL INSTITUTE SUGGESTS THAT BY 2030, INTELLIGENT AGENTS AND ROBOTS COULD REPLACE AS MUCH AS 30 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S CURRENT HUMAN LABOUR.'

THIS COULD THEREFORE HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE LOSE THEIR JOBS, WHICH COULD HAVE A LARGE IMPACT ON MANY FAMILIES.

'AS AI IS UPDATING EVERY DAY THE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE NEED TO GET UPDATED WITH TIME TO MEET THE LATEST REQUIREMENTS. MACHINES NEED REPAIRING AND MAINTENANCE WHICH NEED PLENTY OF COSTS. IT'S CREATION REQUIRES HUGE COSTS AS THEY ARE VERY COMPLEX MACHINES'

TO MAKE AI PRODUCTS SUCH AS MACHINES AND SOFTWARE NEED UPDATING FREQUENTLY AND ARE QUITE EXPENSIVE TO REPAIR AS WELL AS TO MAKE. THIS IS ANOTHER MAIN NEGATIVE IMPACT AS SOME NEWER BUSINESSES MAY NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEM.

SO, IS AI BAD? OR DOES IT HELP US? THERE ARE MANY ASPECTS OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY THAT HELP US NOW IN THE PRESENT AND COULD BE LARGE BENEFITS IN THE FUTURE, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS LIKE BUSINESS. BUT, AS YOU HAVE READ, THERE CAN BE SOME DOWNSIDES THAT CAN HAVE AN AFFECT ON US AND OUR LIFESTYLE. AS THE WORLD IS EVOLVING, PEOPLE ARE COMING UP WITH SMARTER, MORE EFFICIENT WAYS TO DO THINGS.

I THINK THAT IT IS DOWN TO OPINION AND ETHICAL JUDGEMENT. YOU MAY THINK IT HAS A MORE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON US THEN A POSITIVE, OR VICE VERSA. THOUGH, THERE ARE SOME IMPACTS THAT COULD REALLY HELP BUT ALSO HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR MODERN WORLD. THIS HAS BEEN A REALLY INTERESTING TOPIC TO LEARN ABOUT AND DIVE DEEPER INTO THESE IMPACTS THAT COULD CHANGE THE WAY WE DO THINGS ALTOGETHER.

THANK YOU FOR READING, I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT!

HOW WOULD HUMANITY CHANGE IF WE WERE IMMORTAL?

BY IMOGEN MOLE

WHAT IS IMMORTALITY?

IMMORTALITY IS LIVING FOREVER, ETERNAL LIFE, BEING EXEMPT FROM DEATH; AN UNENDING EXISTENCE. IN MANY RELIGIONS, IMMORTALITY IS OFTEN STATED TO BE ONE OF THE PROMISES OF GOD (OR OTHER DEITIES) TO HUMAN BEINGS WHO SHOW GOODNESS OR ELSE FOLLOW DIVINE LAW, WHILST ON EARTH.

HISTORICALLY, WE KNOW THAT HUMAN LIFE EXPECTANCY HAS INCREASED, DUE TO IMPROVED HEALTHCARE AND LIVING CONDITIONS. IN EARLY 19TH-CENTURY ENGLAND, PEOPLE WERE LUCKY TO MAKE IT PAST THEIR 40TH BIRTHDAY, NOWADAYS THAT'S THE AGE OF A MID-LIFE CRISIS AND 81.26 YEARS (TO BE EXACT) IS THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY. SO, WE KNOW HUMAN LIFE IS EXTENDING, BUT TO WHAT EXTENT CAN IT CONTINUE?

IN SCIENCE, LIFE EXTENSION TECHNOLOGIES PROMISE A PATH TO COMPLETE REJUVENATION, CRYONICS (LOW-TEMPERATURE FREEZING OF THE HUMAN BODY) HOLDS HOPE THAT THE DEAD CAN BE REVIVED IN THE FUTURE. OR, UPLOADING OUR MINDS TO A MAINFRAME. BUT NO EVIDENCE HAS BEEN PRODUCED FOR THE RESOLUTION OF 'PHYSICAL IMMORTALITY'- THE STATE OF LIFE THAT ALLOWS A PERSON TO AVOID DEATH ENTIRELY AND MAINTAIN CONSCIOUSNESS.

NATURE HAS SHOWN WITH CREATURES SUCH AS HYDRA AND PLANARIAN WORMS, IT IS INDEED POSSIBLE FOR A CREATURE TO BE BIOLOGICALLY IMMORTAL, IT IS NOT KNOWN IF IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR HUMANS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

BUT IS IMMORTALITY A GOOD THING?

THE GOOD

THERE IS SOMETHING BOTH DEEPLY AND PERSISTENTLY APPEALING ABOUT THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY, WHAT DRIVES THE APPEAL OF PEOPLE'S OWN IMMORTALITY IS PERSONAL: WHETHER IT'S, THE FEELING OF RELIEF FROM FEAR OF DEATH. ACCORDING TO THE 2017 "SURVEY OF AMERICAN FEARS" CONDUCTED BY CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY, 20.3% OF AMERICANS ARE AFRAID OF DYING. SOME PEOPLE FEAR BEING DEAD, WHILE OTHERS ARE AFRAID OF THE ACTUAL ACT OF DYING. EITHER WAY, IMMORTALITY WOULD SOLVE THIS. IMAGINE NEVER HAVING TO BE WORRIED BY THIS AGAIN, NEVER WORRIED YOU'LL MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING BECAUSE NOW YOU HAVE 'ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD' LITERALLY... PERHAPS NOW, YOU COULD TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY YOU WERE TOO AFRAID TO TAKE BECAUSE YOU WERE AFRAID OF DYING. YOU COULD GO SKYDIVING AS IF IT WERE JUMPING OFF A STEP.

THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH MONEY YOU COULD EVENTUALLY SAVE UP IF YOUR INCOME NEVER STOPPED DUE TO THE INCONVENIENCE OF DEATH, MILLIONS, BILLIONS? THEN YOU COULD EVENTUALLY BUY EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED. IS IT THE DESIRE TO WATCH YOUR FAMILY GROW, SEE YOUR GREAT GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, DO THEY LOOK LIKE YOU?

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS TO ALL WORLD'S ISSUES; LIKE 'WILL WE EVER RESOLVE GLOBAL WARMING?' AND 'WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US IF WE DON'T?'. PEOPLE SPEND THEIR WHOLE LIVES WORKING TOWARDS AN ANSWER FOR THESE PROBLEMS AND MOST WILL DIE BEFORE THEY RECEIVE IT.

AND THE BENEFITS OF THE IMMORTALITY OF EVERYONE AROUND YOU, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE PAIN AND GRIEF OF WATCHING A LOVED ONE DIE, YOU COULD GET TO KNOW ALL YOUR RELATIVES, GREAT GREAT GRANDMA JO COULD WATCH YOU WALK DOWN THE AISLE. YOU WOULD NEVER WORRY ABOUT YOUR LOVED ONES GETTING INTO AN ACCIDENT OR BECOMING SICK.

THE BENEFITS OF IMMORTALITY SEEM TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, THAT'S BECAUSE THEY ARE...WHAT THEY HAVE FAILED TO INCLUDE IS THE LOGIC AND HOW HUMANS' MINDSET AND PSYCHOLOGY WOULD CHANGE IF DEATH WERE NO OBJECT.

THE BAD

THE ENGLISH MORAL PHILOSOPHER BERNARD WILLIAMS SUGGESTS THAT WE NEED NEW EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO HAVE REASONS TO KEEP ON GOING, AND STAY MOTIVATED, TO ACHIEVE THINGS LIKE A UNIVERSITY DEGREE OR MEETING THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE. BUT AFTER ENOUGH TIME HAS PASSED, WE WILL HAVE EXPERIENCED EVERYTHING THAT WE, AS INDIVIDUALS, FIND STIMULATING. WE WOULD LACK WHAT 'CATEGORICAL' DESIRES: DESIRES THAT GIVE US REASONS TO KEEP ON LIVING, AND INSTEAD POSSESS ONLY 'CONTINGENT' DESIRES: THINGS THAT WE MIGHT AS WELL WANT TO DO IF WE'RE ALIVE, BUT AREN'T ENOUGH ON THEIR OWN TO MOTIVATE US TO STAY ALIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF I'M GOING TO CARRY ON LIVING, THEN I DESIRE TO GET MY BOILER FIXED BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO ON LIVING SIMPLY IN ORDER TO HAVE MY BOILER FIXED. BY CONTRAST, I MIGHT WELL WANT TO CARRY ON LIVING SO AS TO FINISH THE GRAND NOVEL THAT I'VE BEEN COMPOSING FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS. THE FIRST IS A CONTINGENT, THE SECOND A CATEGORICAL, DESIRE.

SOME WOULD ARGUE IMMORTALITY WOULD BE LIKE A NEVER-ENDING GAME OF MONOPOLY, FUN AT FIRST BUT THEN BECOME BORING AND TEDIOUS. ELINA MAKROPULOS, A CHARACTER FROM THE OPERA THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR (1926) BY THE CZECH COMPOSER LEOŠ JANÁČEK. BORN IN 1585, ELINA DRINKS AN ELIXIR THAT KEEPS HER (BIOLOGICALLY SPEAKING) AT AGE 42 FOREVER. HOWEVER, BY THE TIME SHE IS OVER 300 YEARS OLD, ELINA HAS EXPERIENCED EVERYTHING SHE WANTS, AND AS A RESULT HER LIFE IS COLD, EMPTY, BORING AND WITHDRAWN. THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR. ACCORDINGLY, SHE DECIDES TO STOP DRINKING THE ELIXIR, AND RELEASES HERSELF FROM THE TEDIUM OF IMMORTALITY.

THEN THERE IS HOW HUMAN'S MINDSET WOULD CHANGE, THERE WOULD BE A SEVERE LACK IN MOTIVATION, 'WHY WOULD I STUDY NOW I CAN TAKE MY UNIVERSITY COURSE NEXT DECADE', THE PROCRASTINATION LEVELS AMONGST ALL OF HUMANITY WOULD RISE DRAMATICALLY AS THERE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT DROP OF URGENCY FOR MOST PROJECTS. LEADING TO A MUNDANE MOSTLY LAZY LIFE FOR THE MAJORITY.

KNOWING THAT THERE IS EVERY POSSIBILITY YOU COULD WALK OUT YOUR HOUSE TOMORROW AND GET HIT BY A CAR AND DIE, IS SCARY YES BUT IT ALSO CREATES A SENSE OF RISK TAKING AND ADRENALIN WHICH MANY PEOPLE CRAVE WITHOUT THE RISK OF DEATH THIS FEELING OF EXCITEMENT MIXED WITH FEAR MAY NOT EVER BE EXPERIENCED.

THEN THERE IS THE QUESTION OF RELIGION, THE PROMISE OF EVERLASTING LIFE, OR GOING TO HEAVEN, IF YOU LEAD A GOOD LIFE ON EARTH WOULD MEAN NOTHING BECAUSE YOU ARE ALREADY LIVING FOR EVER AND THERE IS NOTHING TO TRANSITION TO FROM EARTH, SO WITHOUT THIS BELIEF THAT IN ORDER TO HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE OR GO TO HEAVEN AND BE HAPPY AFTER DEATH YOU MUST BE KIND AND GOOD, NOT STEAL OR BULLY, PEOPLE'S MORALS WOULD BE COMPROMISED AND THE WORLD WOULD GO TO CHAOS.

IN CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, I FEEL IMMORTALITY IS A BAD THING AND WOULD STOP HUMANS HAVING ESSENTIAL FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES. SCHEFFLER POINTS OUT THAT HUMAN LIFE IS INTIMATELY STRUCTURED BY THE FACT THAT IT HAS A FIXED (EVEN IF USUALLY UNKNOWN) TIME LIMIT.

IN HIS ESSAY 'THE MAKROPULOS CASE: REFLECTIONS ON THE TEDIUM OF IMMORTALITY' (1973), WILLIAMS SUGGESTED THAT LIVING FOREVER WOULD BE AWFUL, AKIN TO BEING TRAPPED IN A NEVER-ENDING COCKTAIL PARTY. THIS WAS BECAUSE AFTER A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LIVING, HUMAN LIFE WOULD BECOME UNSPEAKABLY BORING. WE NEED NEW EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO HAVE REASONS TO KEEP ON GOING.

IT SEEMS, THEN, THAT BOTH PHILOSOPHERS AND POPULAR CULTURE TELL US THE SAME THING: YOU MIGHT THINK THAT YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER, BUT REFLECTION SHOULD CONVINCING YOU OTHERWISE.

BUT AS IMMORTALITY IS JUST A FANTASY IT WILL ALWAYS BE OPEN TO PERSONAL INTERPRETATION AND OPINION, SO WOULD YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?



DOES RELIGION DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

BY NIVEDITA PANICKER

TRANCED BY THE MELODIOUS BHAJANS BEING SUNG AND THE OCCASIONAL BELL BEING RUNG.
MEDITATING OFF THE PUNGENT INCENSE.
FEELING THE WARMTH OF THE SACRED CANDLE.
TICKLED BY THE AROMATIC FOOD BEING PREPARED IN THE NEXT ROOM.

THESE ARE MY FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN I THINK OF THE WORD "RELIGION". BEING BROUGHT UP RELIGIOUS, I WAS ENCOURAGED TO BELIEVE IN GOD, SHOW DEVOTION, LIVE BY HINDU MORALS. I WAS BLINDSIDED BY THE FACT THAT EVERY RELIGIOUS PERSON'S EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT. I AM PRIVILEGED TO HAVE A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT THE CASE FOR EVERYONE.

IS RELIGION ALIVE OR IS IT ANOTHER MEANS OF CATEGORIZATION?

FOR MANY, RELIGION PROVIDES AN ESCAPE. AN ESCAPE FROM THE HARSH REALITY OF LIFE. RELIGION OFFERS COMFORT AND SYMPATHY TO THOSE WHO NEED SOLACE. ONE MIGHT SAY THAT AFTER A HECTIC DAY, PRAYING IS THE BEST WAY TO WIND DOWN AND RELAX. IN THAT SENSE, RELIGION CAN HELP WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND RELIEVE STRESS. IT ALSO GIVES A SENSE OF SECURITY BY TALKING/PRAYING TO A MYSTERIOUS FORCE WHOSE PRESENCE MAY BE QUESTIONED BY SOME. EVEN IF GOD IS NOT A PHYSICAL BEING, THE RELIEF OF DESTRESSING IS VERY REWARDING, IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE. MOREOVER, RITUALS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER NATURALLY ALLOWING THEM TO CONNECT WITH THEIR COMMUNITY, DISCUSS THEOLOGY AND FORGET THEIR TROUBLES. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS DURING PILGRIMAGE; THE PILGRIMAGE TO IONA IN SCOTLAND IS KNOWN FOR THE STRONG SENSE OF TOGETHERNESS THIS BRINGS AS ONE CAN MEET NEW PEOPLE, TELL STORIES, SHARE RESOURCES, AND HELP EACH OTHER. RELIGION IS ALSO AN EFFECTIVE MOTIVATOR ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO DO THE RIGHT THING. I HAVE HEARD PEOPLE SAY ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT THEY WILL DO A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT OR UNCOMFORTABLE TASK "FOR GOD" FOR EXAMPLE FOR LENT. THE PROMISE OF AN AFTERLIFE OR HEAVEN MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, STAND UP FOR JUSTICE AND LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS.

WOULD YOU STILL DO SOMETHING WHICH YOU DEEM AS NECESSARY AND IMPORTANT, IF PEOPLE AROUND YOU SAID IT WAS A SIN AND INVITE THE WRATH OF GOD?

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY NEXT POINT THAT RELIGION INTERFERES WITH IMPORTANT DECISIONS INDIVIDUALS MUST TAKE IN LIFE- SUCH AS ABORTIONS. CHOOSING WHETHER TO TERMINATE A PREGNANCY IS EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY DRAINING FOR THE MOTHER; 2ND AND 3RD PARTY OPINIONS THAT INVITE RELIGION INTO CONTEXT OFTEN EXACERBATES THE STRESS AND MAKES THE SITUATION WORSE. DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE CONSIDERING THE BEST INTEREST OF THE MOTHER AND CHILD RATHER THAN SOLELY BY PEOPLE WHO INVOKE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES. WOMEN ARE NOT CHILD-BIRTHING MACHINES. THEY SHOULD NOT BE COMPELLED TO FOREGO CONTROL OF THEIR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS FOR THE SAKE OF HAVING CHILDREN. HOWEVER, SOME PEOPLE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THIS. THE PROMISE OF A REWARD OFTEN CAUSES PEOPLE TO CARRY OUT EXTREME ACTIONS TO PROVE THEIR DEVOTION TO GOD- INFLECTING HARM AND INJURY TO OTHERS. THIS RAISES PROBLEM THE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, AND THIS CAN BE OBSERVED IN ALMOST ALL RELIGIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, FROM THE 1970S TO 1980S THERE WAS A RECORDED EPIDEMIC OF ANTI-ABORTION VIOLENCE WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE UNITED STATES WHERE THERE WERE MORE THAN 100 CASES OF ARSON CARRIED OUT BY CHRISTIAN TERRORISTS. ALTHOUGH THE EXTREMISTS CLAIMED THAT ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO TAKE A LIFE, WHICH IS DISGUSTING AND HORRIFYING. THEY CANNOT ACCEPT THAT OTHER PEOPLE FOLLOW DIFFERENT MORALS, AND RESPOND TO THAT DIFFERENCE WITH VIOLENCE. THIS SUPPORTS MY POINT THAT RELIGION INTERFERES WITH IMPORTANT DECISIONS THAT ONE MUST MAKE IN LIFE.

FURTHERMORE, I BELIEVE RELIGION IS OFTEN MISREPRESENTED AND MISUNDERSTOOD. ORIGINALLY, IT WAS A SYMBOL OF TRANQUILLITY, JOY AND PEACE. WHAT HAS IT EVOLVED TO BECOME NOW? AN EXCUSE TO SPREAD HATE? OR TO DIVIDE UP A NATION? THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF POLITICS ON RELIGION IS OBSERVABLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BECAUSE NOTHING DIVIDES LIKE POLITICS. A WELL-KNOWN EXAMPLE IS THE INDIA-PAKISTAN PARTITION. DUE TO TENSIONS RISING BETWEEN THE CONGRESS PARTY AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN 1947, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO SPLIT THE SUBCONTINENT INTO TWO COUNTRIES-INDIA AND PAKISTAN- BASED ON RELIGION. TO THIS DAY, CONSIDERABLE MISTRUST EXISTS BETWEEN THESE TWO COUNTRIES AND THIS HAS TRANSFORMED TO A RELIGIOUS LEVEL TOO. EXAMPLES LIKE THIS RAISES THE QUESTION WHETHER RELIGION INHERENTLY MAKES PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, OR AS A RESULT OF GETTING POLITICISED.

ON THE OTHER HAND, NOT ONLY DOES RELIGION HINDER ONE'S OWN ACCEPTANCE OF IDENTITY, BUT ENCOURAGES PREJUDICE AGAINST THEM TOO, MAKING THE PROCESS HARDER THAN IT NEEDS TO BE. THE DOUBLE STANDARDS HELD BY RELIGION IS IRONIC. RELIGION PREACHES ABOUT SPREADING THE WORD, CONVERTING AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE, THE IMPORTANCE OF EVANGELISM YET DOESN'T SUPPORT LGBTQ+ RIGHTS AS THEY SUPPOSEDLY "PUSH THEIR LIFESTYLE" ONTO THE OTHER PEOPLE. NOT ONLY DOES THIS MAKE IT UNNECESSARILY DIFFICULT FOR RELIGIOUS PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THEMSELVES, BUT ALSO ENCOURAGES OTHERS TO SHUN THEM FROM SOCIETY. RELIGION SAYS THAT GOD MADE US ALL, AND SO MUST LOVE US FOR WHO WE ARE; IF SO, WHY IS IT REPORTED THAT 2% OF LGBTQ YOUTH IN THE UK REPORTED UNDERGOING CONVERSION THERAPY IN 2020, OF WHICH 51% WAS CARRIED OUT BY FAITH ORGANISATIONS?

THAT IS 51% TOO MANY.

AN ALL-LOVING GOD IS COMMON IN ALL RELIGIONS, HOWEVER AS SOON AS AN INDIVIDUAL SWAYS FROM THE "DEFAULT", THEY ARE BRANDED AS SINFUL AND ARE MADE CLEAR THEY ARE NO LONGER LOVED BY GOD. IF GOD INDEED WAS UNIVERSAL, EVERYONE WOULD BE LOVED IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR IDENTITY/THEOLOGIES. AS HUMANS, WE HAVE THIS UNEXPLAINABLE NEED TO BE RIGHT AND TAKE CONTROL. A HORRIFYING EXAMPLE OF THIS IS THE "CORRECTIVE" RAPE GOING ON IN INDIA IN A DESPERATE BID TO MAKE YOUTH "STRAIGHT". A RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN 15 REPORTED INSTANCES OF CORRECTIVE RAPE IN THE LAST 5 YEARS. IF GOD WAS OMNI-POTENT, THEN ARE WE IN ANY POSITION TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR SOMEONE ELSE? THIS SUPPORTS MY POINT THAT RELIGION GIVES PEOPLE A SENSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND EXCESSIVE PRIDE AND THEREFORE DOES MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

OVERALL, I BELIEVE RELIGION HAD INHERENTLY GOOD PURPOSES, HOWEVER OVER TIME HAS BECOME POLITICISED AND DRIVEN BY DOGMA. IT OFTEN GETS EXPLOITED AS PEOPLE USE IT AS A FREE PASS TO SPREAD HOMOPHOBIA, RACISM, TRANSPHOBIA, AND MISOGYNY. AS A DEVELOPING SOCIETY, WE CANNOT POSSIBLY CLING ONTO ITS REMAINS AS MUCH AS WE DID IN THE PAST. WE ARE PROGRESSING. WE ARE ADVANCING. WE ARE LEARNING.

DEAFENED BY THE NARROW-MINDED OPINIONS.
RINGING OF A BELL, A WAKE-UP CALL REMINDING US TO MOVE ON.
SUFFOCATED BY THE INTOXICATING HYPOCRISY.

HOW CAN WE CONTINUE TO MOVE INTO THE FUTURE WITH OUR FOCUS ON SCRIPTURES FROM THE PAST?



IS CLONING ETHICAL?

BY EMILY RICHARD

BIOTECHNOLOGY IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH OUR FUTURE. IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SAVE, TO CHANGE, TO ENHANCE SO MANY LIVES. THE IMPACT IT HAS AND WILL HAVE IS WIDESPREAD, RANGING FROM ELIMINATING FAULTS IN OUR GENOMES THAT CAUSE INHERITED DISEASES, TO AIDING PRODUCE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMO) FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS - SUCH AS IMPROVING NUTRITION CONTENT AND QUALITY, AND INCREASING CROP YIELD. HOWEVER, BIOTECHNOLOGY DOES NOT COME WITHOUT ITS REPERCUSSIONS, WHICH INCLUDE CONCERNS ABOUT THE ETHICS OF THIS INNOVATION. ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE ARE AFFIRMATIVE ABOUT IT, AND CONSIDER BIOTECHNOLOGY TO BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR FUTURE, OTHERS ARE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC, AND BELIEVE FEATS LIKE THESE SHOULD BE LEFT TO HIGHER POWERS. CLONING, IN PARTICULAR, IS A PRACTICE ON WHICH THERE ARE DIVERSE OPINIONS, AFFECTING BOTH HUMAN AND ANIMAL CLONING, AND CLONING OF INDIVIDUAL TISSUES OF THE BODY.. INARGUABLY, MORE RESEARCH SHOULD BE DONE ON THE MATTER, TO SECURE A SAFER, LESS UNPREDICTABLE PROCESS. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING WHAT HUMANS HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED, IT IS NEAR INEVITABLE WE WILL REACH THIS. BUT THE MORAL ISSUES STILL REMAIN: IS CLONING ETHICAL, AND WILL IT BE ETHICAL IN THE FUTURE?

THERE ARE MYRIAD REASONS TO TAKE A SUPPORTIVE STANCE ON CLONING, AND CONSIDER IT ETHICAL. FOR INSTANCE, IT COULD SOLVE THE DILEMMA OF INFERTILITY FOR COUPLES UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN; THEY COULD, INSTEAD, RELY ON OFFSPRING MADE FROM CLONED CELLS. INFERTILITY RATES ARE RISING, WITH AROUND 15% OF COUPLES STRUGGLING TO CONCEIVE, AS OF 2020. MANY PEOPLE SPEND SIGNIFICANT MONEY ON IVF, SURGICAL PROCEDURES OR OTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THEIR INFERTILITY- OFTEN TO FIND THESE FRUITLESS, AND A WASTE OF THEIR TIME, EFFORT AND EARNINGS. UNNECESSARY GRIEF IS FELT BY ALL THESE PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THEIR ISSUE COULD BE FIXED USING CLONING, WHICH IS A BETTER, INNOVATIVE RESOLUTION TO SOMETHING WHICH NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO ENCOUNTER. ADDITIONALLY, SAME SEX-COUPLES WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS, SINCE THEY CANNOT OTHERWISE HAVE BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN. THIS WOULD BRING JOY TO MANY COUPLES.

CLONING OF A TISSUE OR ORGAN COULD BE LIFE CHANGING. IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE PEOPLE'S TISSUES OR ORGANS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED, TO A LEVEL AT WHICH THEY REQUIRE REPLACEMENT, CLONING WOULD PRODUCE AN IDENTICAL VERSION OF THE INJURED ONE TO BE USED BY THE PERSON. THIS IS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT FROM A DONOR, SINCE THE RISK OF REJECTION FROM THE BODY IS ABSENT.

FURTHERMORE, CLONING COULD ALLOW US TO BRING SOME EXTINCT SPECIES BACK TO LIFE. THIS WOULD NOT ONLY BE AN INCREDIBLE ACHIEVEMENT, BUT ALSO A WAY IN WHICH HUMANITY COULD SOMEWHAT MAKE AMENDS, CONSIDERING THE NUMEROUS SPECIES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE EXTINCT DUE TO OUR FAULTS. THIS WOULD ALSO BE AN INVALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO STUDY ORGANISMS OF THE PAST, AND TO ADVANCE OUR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THEM.

ANOTHER POSITIVE PART OF CLONING IS THAT IT COULD REPRODUCE A PET WHICH PREVIOUSLY PASSED AWAY. ALTHOUGH MANY PEOPLE MANY NOT BENEFIT DIRECTLY FROM SOMETHING SUCH AS THE REVIVAL OF EXTINCT SPECIES, OR A SOLUTION TO INFERTILITY, THE DEATH OF A PET IS A DEEPLY HEART-WRENCHING LOSS WHICH SEVERAL HAVE EXPERIENCED. BEING ABLE TO RELIVE THE TIME SPENT WITH A PET WOULD BE BLISSFUL- ALTHOUGH IMPOSSIBLE, UNLESS CLONING WERE TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER. CLONING CAN ALSO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO AFFAIRS WHICH ARE CLOSE TO THE HEART, SUCH AS THESE ONES.

NEVERTHELESS, THE REASONS ARE VARIED AS TO WHY CLONING IS CONSIDERED UNETHICAL. A FREQUENT ARGUMENT FROM RELIGIOUS PEOPLE COMES FROM THE FACT THAT CLONING, IN ESSENCE, IS THE REPRODUCTION OF HUMANS, AND ELEMENTS OF THEM. FOR MANY, IT IS CONCERNING THAT HUMANITY IS VENTURING THIS FAR, INTO WHAT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS THE AREA OF CONTROL WHICH BELONGS TO A GOD, RATHER THAN US PEOPLE. IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT WE ARE FOOLISHLY PLAYING WITH POWER WHICH ISN'T OURS. POWER WHICH BELONGS TO BEINGS MUCH HIGHER, AND SUPERIOR TO US. TO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE, IT CAN ALSO FEEL AS IF WE ARE BETRAYING THE TRUST WHICH IS SUCH A FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT TO FAITH, THROUGH EXPERIENCING THE NEED TO ADAPT OUR LIVES IN SUCH A DRASTIC WAY. SOME WOULD OPPOSE CLONING WITH THE BELIEF THAT IT IS A FORM OF QUESTIONING THE LIFE THAT HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR US, AND QUESTIONING OF GOD'S WAYS.

IS CLONING ETHICAL?

BY EMILY RICHARD

BUT RELIGION IS NOT THE ONLY CAUSE FOR UNEASE REGARDING CLONING- THERE ARE ALSO SECULAR ETHICAL ISSUES. ONE IS THAT, WITH ACTUAL HUMAN CLONING, ARISES THE ISSUE OF RIGHTS. THE PRIMARY REASON BEHIND CLONING AN ENTIRE HUMAN IS FOR REPLACEMENT OF BODY PARTS AND ORGANS. HOWEVER, ONCE A REPLICA OF A PERSON IS CREATED, BOTH THE ORIGINAL INDIVIDUAL AND THE CLONED ONE ARE VALID AND FEELING; IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A VIOLATION OF RIGHTS TO THEN REMOVE FRAGMENTS OF THE BODY.

DECIDING THE DEGREE TO WHICH CLONES' RIGHTS MATCH OUR OWN IS AN ARDUOUS PROCESS. DIFFERENT PEOPLE WILL HAVE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON HOW THEY SHOULD BE TREATED; WHILE SOME WILL FEEL POSSESSIVE OF CLONES, AS CREATIONS OF HUMANITY, OTHERS WILL REGARD THEM AS EQUALS. THIS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH COMMON STANDARDS AND BOUNDARIES SURROUNDING THE RIGHTS OF CLONES.

ANOTHER DISPUTE IS THAT CLONING COULD ALTER ENTIRELY THE PERCEPTION OF HUMAN LIFE AND ITS WORTH. IF REPLACEMENT OF A PERSON OR THEIR ORGANS AND TISSUES BECOMES VIABLE, PEOPLE WILL BE LESS CAREFUL ABOUT HARMING OTHERS AND THEMSELVES. FOR INSTANCE, CAR ACCIDENTS COULD BECOME MORE RECURRENT, IF PEOPLE'S CAUTION AND ATTENTIVENESS AS A DRIVER OR PEDESTRIAN FADES AWAY.

AFTER ALL, WHY WOULD THEY NEED TO BE PRUDENT- THE WORST CASE SCENARIO, A SEVERE CAR ACCIDENT, WOULDN'T BE UNSOLVABLE. SIMILARLY, IMPULSIVE KILLINGS COULD BECOME MORE FREQUENT, BECAUSE EVEN IF THE ATTACKER WERE TO LATER REGRET THEIR ACTIONS, IT WOULDN'T BE TOO LATE FOR THE VICTIM TO BE SAVED. PEOPLE'S CONSCIENCE WOULD UNDENIABLY BECOME LESS ACTIVE, WHICH COULD RESULT IN NEGATIVELY SHAPING OTHER AREAS OF THEIR LIVES.

MOREOVER, THERE ARE SOME RISKS POSED TO ACCOMPANY CLONING. CELLULAR DEGRADATION IS A PROCESS IN WHICH CELLS BECOME UNSTABLE IN AN ORGANISM, ULTIMATELY ENGENDERING ITS DEATH. THIS CAN HAPPEN IF TOO MANY CLONES ARE PRODUCED VIA EMBRYOS. IT IS A REALISTIC AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE OF CLONING, WHICH HAS TO BE FACED. IF THE PROCESS MISFIRES, THE EFFECTS COULD BE DIRE.

SO, IS CLONING ETHICAL? THERE ARE ARGUMENTS TO SUGGEST THAT BOTH ARE TRUE. PERSONALLY, I BELIEVE THAT CLONING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE RECEIVED WELL GLOBALLY, AS AN ETHICAL PRACTICE, BUT ONLY IF WE DON'T ALLOW ITS INFLUENCE TO BE OVERPOWERING. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE TAKE PRECAUTIONS, SUCH AS DETERMINING THE RIGHTS CLONES WILL HAVE BEFORE ANY FURTHER TRIALS ARE DONE. IT IS EVIDENT THAT CLONING WILL LEAVE AN INDELIBLE MARK; OUR FLAWS AND AVARICE MUST NOT MAKE IT A STAIN.



IS IT ETHICAL TO KILL PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEVERE ILLNESSES?

BY JASREET HANS

IMAGINE A PERSON WITH A SEVERE ILLNESS WITH NO CURE. THAT PERSON CAN NOT BEAR TO LIVE ANY LONGER. THEY ARE LIVING IN TORTURE. SOME PEOPLE IN THE PAST – AND EVEN RECENTLY – HAVE HAD TO FACE THE CHOICE: TO DIE OR TO LIVE. OTHERS HAVE HAD NO CHOICE, LIVING UNDER A TYRANNY.

SCHIZOPHRENIA IS AN ILLNESS THAT AFFECTS THE WAY YOU THINK. PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE SCHIZOPHRENIA GET HALLUCINATIONS, DISORGANISED THINKING, LACK OF MOTIVATION AND CHANGES IN EMOTION AND BEHAVIOUR. THE YEARS 1935-1948 WERE WHEN THE NAZIS DECIDED THAT IT WAS DANGEROUS FOR SCHIZOPHRENIC PEOPLE TO BE IN THEIR SOCIETY. AN ESTIMATED 22000 – 269500 INDIVIDUALS WERE EITHER KILLED OR STERILIZED. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE PEOPLE AT THAT TIME THOUGHT THAT THE MENTAL DISORDER WAS A GENETIC CAUSE AND THEREFORE KEPT THE AFFECTED PEOPLE AWAY FROM OTHERS AND POTENTIALLY STOP FUTURE CHILDREN FROM GETTING IT. HOWEVER, PEOPLE HAVE CATEGORISED THIS AS ‘GENOCIDE’ AND ‘THE GREATEST CRIMINAL ACT IN THE HISTORY OF PSYCHIATRY’.

PEOPLE ARE KILLED TO BE PUT OUT OF THEIR MISERY TOO. WHAT IF THEY WOULD SURVIVE, THOUGH - EVEN IF THE PAIN OF LIVING THROUGH AN ILLNESS IS A BURDEN. IN THE NETHERLANDS, IT HAS BECOME EASIER FOR PATIENTS TO CHOOSE TO DIE WILLINGLY. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT MOST OF THE POPULATION LIVING THERE KNOWS AT LEAST ONE PERSON WHO HAS DIED OF EUTHANASIA. KILLING PEOPLE LIKE THIS IS NOT ETHICAL, BECAUSE NATURE SHOULD DECIDE WHEN A PERSON SHOULD DIE. IT BRINGS GRIEF TO THEIR FAMILIES, AND SHOULD A PERSON WISH THAT? THE NAZI GENOCIDE WAS CERTAINLY NOT LEGAL; THE PEOPLE WERE NOT KILLED WILLINGLY. HOWEVER, IF THE AGONY IS TOO MUCH, SOME WOULD WANT TO DIE. FAMILIES WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE PERSON WAS LIVING THROUGH TOO MUCH. AND PERHAPS THE NAZIS WERE TRYING TO PROTECT OTHERS – IN THEIR OWN WAY. THE NAZI’S ACT WAS NOT ETHICAL, AS THE KILLING WAS DONE UNWILLINGLY. WHAT IF THEY DIDN’T WANT TO DIE? OTHER REPORTS HAVE SHOWN THAT THE NAZIS MAY HAVE WANTED TO CUT THE COSTS OF SCHIZOPHRENIC INDIVIDUALS’ CARE. GREED – THIS MAY HAVE MOTIVATED THE NAZIS. MONEY OR 270000 LIVES? THIS ACTION IS CERTAINLY CATEGORISED AS MASS MURDER, THEREFORE AGAINST THE LAW AND UNETHICAL. WHAT IF THE NAZIS WERE ONLY TRYING TO HELP THE WORLD? MAYBE THEY WERE TRYING TO STOP OTHERS FROM INHERITING THE DISORDER. THE NAZIS ARE NOTORIOUS FOR MURDER. THEY COULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT MURDER WAS THE ONLY WAY TO STOP OTHERS FROM GETTING SCHIZOPHRENIA – AGAIN, IN THEIR OWN SPECIAL WAY. WE CAN’T BE ENTIRELY SURE ABOUT WHAT THEY INTENDED, BUT THIS WAS CLASSIFIED AS GENOCIDE, LIKE THE HOLOCAUST. IT WAS NOT ETHICAL TO DO THIS, AND MANY PEOPLE FROWN UPON THEM FOR THEIR CRIMINAL ACTS.

HOW ABOUT EUTHANASIA – SHOULD IT BE ALLOWED, OR NOT? NATURE SHOULD DECIDE WHEN A PERSON SHOULD DIE; A PERSON CHOOSING THINKING THE OPPOSITE COULD PREVENT THEMSELVES FROM HAVING A HAPPY LIFE IN THE FUTURE.

MANY FAMILIES COME INTO GRIEF WHEN A VICTIM ANNOUNCES THAT THEY WILL DIE, TO STOP THEMSELVES FROM EXPERIENCING MORE TORMENT. BUT THEY LEAVE THEIR FAMILIES WITH SADNESS, AND SURELY A PERSON WOULD NOT WANT THIS. THERE ARE NO LAWS AGAINST EUTHANASIA IN THE NETHERLANDS AND SWITZERLAND. IF A PATIENT DECIDES TO TERMINATE THEIR ILLNESS WITH DEATH, EVEN DOCTORS ARE LEFT WITH CONFUSION AND STRESS. YET THERE ARE ARGUMENTS THAT STATE THAT IT IS FINE AND PERFECTLY ETHICAL TO LET INDIVIDUALS IN AGONY TO DIE - IF THEY CHOSE TO DO SO. IF A PERSON IS IN TOO MUCH PAIN, THEN THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE A SAY IN THEIR FUTURE. THEY MAY BE DESTINED TO NEVER HAVE A LIFE LIKE ONE THEY HAD BEFORE. WOULDN’T A FAMILY EXPERIENCE MORE PAIN WHILST LIVING WITH A LOVED ONE WHO IS LIVING IN EXTREME DISCOMFORT; THERE WOULD BE MORE SADNESS. DOCTORS ARE TRAINED IN ETHICS, AND THEY WOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH ONLY A LITTLE DOUBT OR WORRY.

EUTHANASIA IS ILLEGAL IN THE UK, BUT MANY OTHER COUNTRIES PERMIT IT: SWITZERLAND, NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, LUXEMBURG, CANADA, COLUMBIA, AUSTRALIA, USA, FRANCE & NEW ZEALAND. SOME OF THESE COUNTRIES HAVE LAWS MAKING CHILDREN AS YOUNG AS 12 LEGAL TO REQUEST TO DIE, BUT NEED PARENTAL PERMISSION IF THEY ARE UNDER 16. IN ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT SWITZERLAND, AN INDIVIDUAL NEEDS TO HAVE A TERMINAL ILLNESS TO DIE. THERE ARE STRICT LAWS THAT PREVENT THE ACTS OF EUTHANASIA TO BE ABUSED. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, THE ACTIONS CAN BE SEEN AS ETHICAL, ALTHOUGH TAKING SOMEONE’S LIFE MAY BE SEEN AS UNETHICAL.

TO CONCLUDE, IT DEPENDS ON WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE. IF SOMEONE IS WILLING TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIFE JUST BECAUSE OF THEIR MISERY, THEN IT ONLY DEPENDS ON THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY THEY ARE IN. OTHER THAN THAT, IT WILL BE SEEN AS MURDER IF YOU TAKE A LIFE OF A PERSON WHO DOESN’T WANT TO DIE (AS SEEN IN THE NAZI GENOCIDE). IF A PERSON HAS A SEVERE ILLNESS, AND CAN NOT DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES FOR WHAT THEY WANT, THEN THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE ILLNESS WILL SHAPE THEIR DECISION.

WHICH ECONOMIC POLICIES SHOULD GOVERNMENTS INTRODUCE TO TACKLE RISING GLOBAL INEQUALITY?

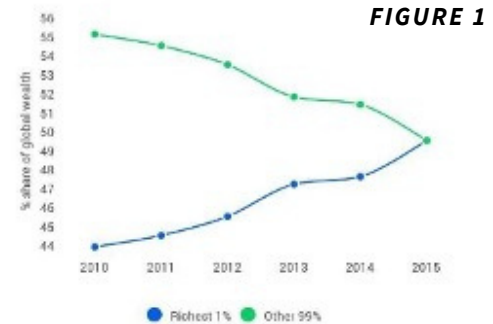
BY WILL FOXHALL

THIS ESSAY WILL ANALYSE THE ROOTS OF GLOBAL INEQUALITY AND HOW GOVERNMENTS CAN COLLABORATE TO CREATE POLICIES OF REGULATION, HALTING THE GROWING INEQUALITY CURRENTLY AND NARROWING CLASS GAPS WITHIN COUNTRIES AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN THE FUTURE. THERE IS A CLEAR DISTINCTION TO BE MADE BETWEEN WEALTH AND INCOME, THE LATTER BEING TAXED FAR MORE THAN THE FORMER; THIS ESSAY WILL ADDRESS AND EVALUATE STRICTER LEGISLATION FOR WEALTH REGULATION – A GLOBAL INHERITANCE TAX AND A MORE HARSH CAPITAL GAINS TAX.

INEQUALITY IS PERVASIVE AND ENTRENCHED IN OUR SOCIETIES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY, EXACERBATED THROUGH POWERFUL INSTITUTIONS LIKE EDUCATION AND LAW. INEQUALITY ITSELF IS NOT DANGEROUS AND HAS A ROLE; IT AIDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES TO INNOVATE AND WORK HARD. HOWEVER, THE LARGER THE INEQUALITY, THE MORE SOCIALLY UNSTABLE A SOCIETY BECOMES. THESE ECONOMICS DISPARITIES HAVE BEEN GROWING AT AN EVER INCREASING RATE, AS CAN BE SEEN BY THE GRAPH (FIGURE 1) BY THE BLUE LINE, WHICH IS THE RICHEST 1%, AND THE GREEN LINE, WHICH REPRESENTS THE OTHER 99%. AS THESE LINES CONVERGE, IT REPRESENTS THE SHIFT OF WEALTH FROM THE OTHER 99% TO THE MOST WEALTHY. TO PUT THAT IN PERSPECTIVE, FOUND THROUGH A STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF), THE WORLD'S 2,153 BILLIONAIRES HAVE MORE WEALTH THAN THE 4.6 BILLION PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP 60 PERCENT OF THE PLANET'S POPULATION. AS THESE GAPS WIDEN, THERE WILL BE MORE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UNREST, CAUSING UPRISINGS AND WARS WHICH CAN POTENTIALLY DAMAGE SUPPLY CHAINS AND THE PRODUCTIVE POTENTIALS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, WHILST ALSO LEADING TO RADICAL PARTIES BEING ELECTED AS PEOPLE TURN TOWARDS EXTREMIST GROUPS TO ENACT CHANGE. ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS EXAMPLES OF INEQUALITY LEADING TO UPRISINGS AND RADICALISM WAS SEEN IN RUSSIA IN 1917, WHERE IN THE YEARS PRIOR, THERE WERE LARGE INCREASES IN THE POPULATION AND CONSTANT FOOD SHORTAGES, WHICH HARMED THE PROLETARIAT FAR MORE THAN THE WEALTHY. THIS CAUSED THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY TO GROW IN POPULARITY AND PROMPT A MILITANT UPRISING, OVERTHROWING THE GOVERNMENT IN PROMISE OF MORE EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IN THE COUNTRY

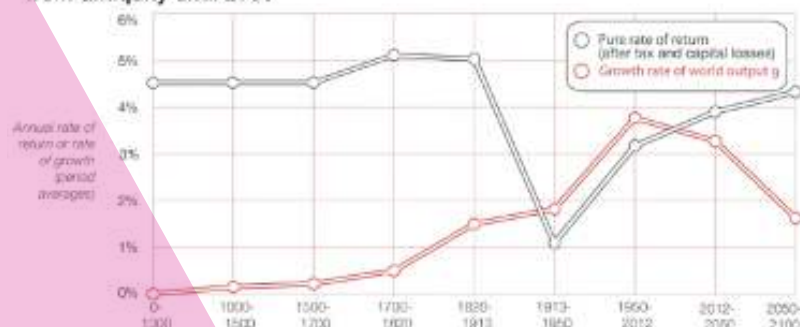
DUE TO THE PARTY COMING TO POWER, THERE SPARKED A LARGE SCALE CIVIL WAR THAT DAMAGED THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES, AND CAUSED AN UNPRECEDENTED FAMINE WHICH KILLED APPROXIMATELY 5 MILLION PEOPLE.

Share of global wealth 2010-2015



TO PREVENT SUCH DISASTROUS EVENTS BEING REPEATED, ONE MUST UNDERSTAND THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM – WEALTH DISTRIBUTION. A MODEL USED TO EXPLAIN THIS DISTRIBUTION AND ITS GROWTH PATTERNS, FORMULATED BY THOMAS PICKETTY IN HIS BOOK 'CAPITAL IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY', STATED THAT IF THE RATE OF RETURN ON CAPITAL (SUCH AS PROFITS, DIVIDENDS AND INTEREST) IS GREATER THAN THE RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE LONG RUN, THEN THERE WILL BE A DENSER CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH IN THE CAPITAL OWNERS. THIS INEQUALITY INCREASES AS THE RICH MAKE MOST OF THEIR WEALTH THROUGH CAPITAL GAINS; THOSE MAKING \$10 MILLION OR MORE ONLY RECEIVE 15% OF THEIR INCOME FROM SALARIES. A DIFFERENT STORY IS TOLD FOR THE GENERAL WORKFORCE, WHICH CAN BE SEEN IN THE GRAPH (FIGURE 2), WHERE THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THE RATE OF RETURN OF CAPITAL HAS BEEN GREATER THAN THE GROWTH RATE OF WORLD OUTPUT, THUS MEANING THAT THE PEOPLE IN POSSESSION OF CAPITAL GROW THEIR WEALTH EXPONENTIALLY, WHILST WORLD GROWTH REMAINS SLUGGISH IN COMPARISON.

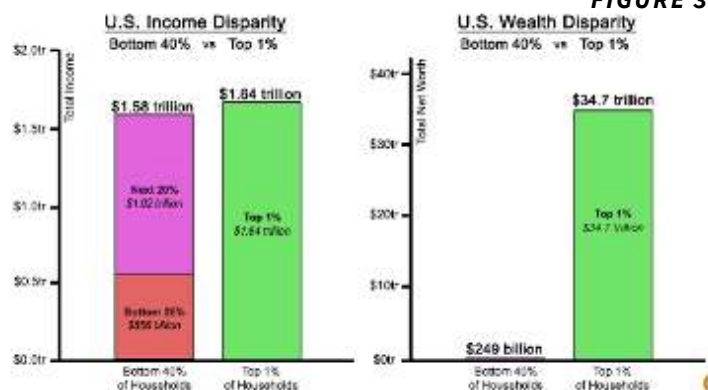
After-tax rate of return vs. growth rate at the world level, from antiquity until 2100



THE ONLY EXCEPTION TO THIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH CAPITAL RETURN AND STAGNANT GROWTH RATE OF WORLD OUTPUT WAS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, DUE TO THE TWO WORLD WARS, WHICH DAMAGED THE CAPITAL CLASS FAR MORE THAN THE OTHERS. THE WAR LED TO A REDUCED SUPPLY OF THE WORKFORCE, MEANING THAT TRADE UNIONS STRENGTHENED, CONSEQUENTLY CAUSING A RISE IN WAGES. THIS MEANT THAT THE GROWTH RATE GLOBALLY INCREASED DRASTICALLY AND, AS LABOUR IS A FACTOR OF PRODUCTION, THEIR COSTS OF PRODUCTION OF THEIR OWN FIRMS INCREASED, MEANING THAT THERE WAS A LOWER RATE OF RETURN ON CAPITAL. THIS PERIOD OF TIME WAS THE FIRST SIGN OF A DECREASE IN GLOBAL INEQUALITY AS THE RATE OF RETURN OF LABOUR GREW FAR FASTER THAN THE RATE OF RETURN OF CAPITAL. CONSEQUENTLY, THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES THAT MAINTAIN HIGH LEVELS OF GLOBAL GROWTH, WHILST DAMPENING THE RATE OF RETURN ON CAPITAL: POLICIES SUCH AS TAXES ON GLOBAL INHERITANCE AND MORE EXTREME TAXES ON CAPITAL GAINS.

CURRENTLY, WEALTH INEQUALITY IS FAR LARGER THAN INCOME INEQUALITY. WHILST WEALTH MEASURES THE VALUE OF ALL OF ALL ASSETS OWNED BY A PERSON, INCOME MEASURES THE FLOW OF ASSETS. USUALLY, PROGRESSIVE TAXES ARE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE THE INCOME DISPARITY, AS CAN BE SEEN BY THE DIAGRAM OF U.S. INCOME DISPARITY VS U.S. WEALTH DISPARITY (FIGURE 3), BUT GENERATIONAL WEALTH ISN'T AS CLOSELY MONITORED, ALLOWING WEALTHY FAMILIES TO POSSESS MOST OF THEIR CAPITAL THROUGH INHERITANCE OF ASSETS. THESE ASSETS ARE TAXED LITTLE, RELATIVE TO INCOME, AS CAN BE SEEN BY THE TABLE, WHERE THE STANDARD RATE OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX FOR THE HIGHER INCOME RATE IS 20% WHILST INCOME TAX IS 40%. THIS INCENTIVISES UPPER CLASSES TO STORE MOST OF THEIR WEALTH IN CAPITAL IN ORDER TO AVOID THE HEAVY TAXING OF INCOME AND TO ENJOY THE HIGHER RATE OF RETURN ON CAPITAL. IF ONE GOVERNMENT WERE TO INTRODUCE HARSHER CAPITAL GAINS AND INHERITANCE TAXES, THEIR ECONOMY WOULD SUFFER AS THE WEALTHY RESIDENTS MOVE TO TAX HAVENS, DECREASING INVESTMENT, WHICH IS ONE OF THE DRIVERS OF LONG TERM GROWTH. CONSEQUENTLY, TO CORRECT THIS FLAW, THE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD AIM TO COLLECTIVELY INTRODUCE A GLOBAL PROGRESSIVE CAPITAL GAINS AND INHERITANCE TAX. THIS IS A TWO PRONGED POLICY AS NOT ONLY DOES IT REDUCE WEALTH DISPARITY, IT ALSO MEANS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS MORE MONEY, WHICH CAN BE SPENT ON LONG TERM INVESTMENTS SUCH AS EDUCATION TO IMPROVE SOCIAL MOBILITY.

FIGURE 3



Income tax bands				
Rate	2019-20	2020-21	Income tax rate	Dividend tax rate
Basic rate	£0 – £37,500	£0 – £37,500	20%	7.5%
Higher Rate	£37,501 – £150,000	£37,501 – £150,000	40%	32.5%
Additional Rate	£150,001+	£150,001+	45%	38.1%

Personal allowance for capital gains

Allowance	2019-20	2020-21	Change (£)
Personal Allowance	£12,000	£12,300	+£300

Capital gains tax rates (for non-business assets)

Capital gains	Standard rate	Residential rate*
Gains which when added to taxable income fall in the basic rate tax band	10%	18%
Gains which when added to taxable income fall in the higher or additional rate tax band	20%	28%

THERE ARE DRAWBACKS AND CRITICISMS TO THIS THEORY. FIRSTLY, IT REVOLVES AROUND INEQUALITY, REMOVING THE FOCUS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ITS PROPORTIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO HIGHER LIVING STANDARDS. IF AN ECONOMY WAS EXPERIENCING A SLOW RATE OF GROWTH, THE GOVERNMENT MAY WRONGLY FOCUS ON THE INCREASING INEQUALITY INSTEAD OF THE SLOWER RISE OF LIVING STANDARDS. ANOTHER CRITIQUE IS THAT THE MODEL UNDERESTIMATES THE DIMINISHING RETURNS ON CAPITAL, MEANING THAT THE RATE OF RETURN ON INVESTMENTS WOULD SLOWLY DECREASE, LEADING TO AN UPPER LIMIT TO INEQUALITY, INSTEAD OF THE SUGGESTED CONTINUOUS GROWTH. FINALLY, GOVERNMENTS MAY NOT HAVE ENOUGH POLITICAL CLOUT TO IMPLEMENT THE INHERITANCE AND CAPITAL GAINS TAXES AS IN SOME COUNTRIES THE WEALTHY HAVE A LOT OF POLITICAL POWER AND CAN PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT FROM PASSING THE POLICY.

TO CONCLUDE, IF MANY POWERFUL COUNTRIES COULD COLLABORATE AND FORM GLOBAL LEGISLATION AROUND CAPITAL GAINS TAXING AND INHERITANCE TAXING, INEQUALITY WOULD REDUCE DRASTICALLY AND WE WOULD LIVE IN A MORE FAIR AND EQUAL WORLD.

PERSONAL IDENTITY- WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU?

BY NINA THOMPSON

WHO AM I?- WHICH WHO ARE YOU? THE YOU IN THE PRESENT, IN THE PAST OR IN THE FUTURE? WHEN IS AM, THIS WEEK, THIS DAY, THIS SECOND THIS HOUR? WHAT ASPECT OF YOU IS I, YOUR PHYSICAL BODY, THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS, EXPERIENCES?

FIRST OF ALL, WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PERSONAL IDENTITY? ESSENTIALLY, IT'S WHAT MAKES YOU WHO YOU ARE, BUT WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES YOU, YOU, THAT PRESERVES YOUR IDENTITY THROUGHOUT YOUR CONSTANT CHANGES AND TIME?

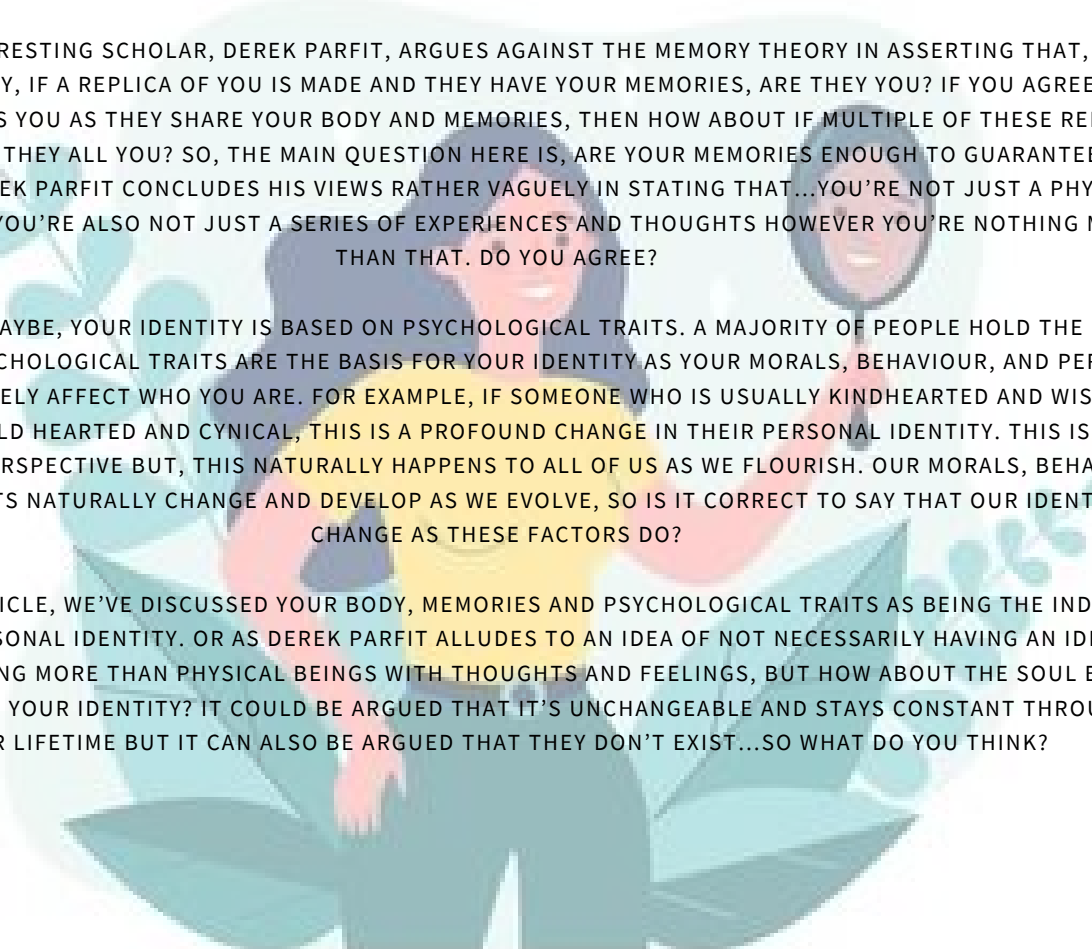
IS YOUR IDENTITY SOMETHING PHYSICAL?YOUR BODY MAYBE. SOME MAY SAY THAT YOUR PERSONAL IDENTITY PERSISTS OVER TIME BECAUSE YOU REMAIN IN THE SAME BODY FROM BIRTH TO DEATH BUT THIS ISN'T TRUE. YOUR BODY IS CONSTANTLY IN A STATE OF CHANGE, YOUR SKIN SHEDS, YOUR CELLS ARE REPLACED, YOUR SKELETON IS CONSTANTLY REMODELLED, SO IN FACT, YOUR BODY IS NOT IDENTICAL FROM BIRTH TO DEATH. THIS BELIEF IN THE BODY HOLDING YOUR IDENTITY-THE BODY THEORY-CAN BE HIGHLY CRITICISED AS IT SOUNDS IRRATIONAL TO SUGGEST THAT EVERY TIME YOU CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF YOU'RE POTENTIALLY CHANGING YOUR IDENTITY, FROM CHANGING YOUR HAIR COLOUR TO GOING THROUGH SURGERIES. AN INTERESTING ANECDOTE TO THINK ABOUT IS THE SHIP OF THESUS, HERE, THE SHIP PILOTED BY THESUS IS KEPT IN A MUSEUM, EVERY TIME A PLANK OF WOOD STARTS TO GET OLD, IT'S REPLACED, EVENTUALLY IN 1,000 YEARS TIME, EVERY SINGLE PLANK OF WOOD IS REPLACED. IS IT STILL THE SHIP OF THESUS IF EVERY SINGLE PART OF THE ORIGINAL SHIP HAS BEEN REPLACED? IF IT IS, THEN WHAT IS IT THAT HOLDS IT'S IDENTITY AS THE SHIP OF THESUS? IF IT'S NOT, WHEN DID IT STOP BEING THE SHIP OF THESUS? TO ADD ONTO THIS ANECDOTE, SAY SOMEONE COLLECTED THE OLD PIECES OF THE ORIGINAL SHIP AND BUILT IT, IS THAT ONE NOW SHIP OF THESUS OR ARE THEY BOTH?

ALTERNATIVELY, IS IT A POSSIBILITY THAT YOUR PERSONAL IDENTITY COULD BE SOMETHING NON-PHYSICAL SUCH AS YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS. JOHN LOCKE INSINUATED THAT OUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS WHAT GIVES US OUR IDENTITY HOWEVER, AS WE DON'T MAINTAIN A SINGLE CONSCIOUSNESS OVER THE PERIOD OF OUR LIVES, HIS IDEOLOGIES LEAD ONTO THE MEMORY THEORY. THE MEMORY THEORY IS THE IDEA THAT WE OUR CONNECTED TO OURSELVES FROM THE PAST THROUGH A CHAIN OF MEMORIES, CONVINCING RIGHT? NOT SO MUCH, THE MAIN ISSUE WITH THIS THEORY IS THAT, NONE OF US RECALL A MEMORY OF US BEING BORN SO ACCORDING TO THIS MEMORY, WE DON'T RETRIEVE OUR IDENTITIES UNTIL WE'VE HAD OUR FIRST MEMORY. AT FIRST GLANCE THIS COULD STILL BE QUITE COMPELLING BUT, WHAT ABOUT WHEN YOU START TO LOOSE YOUR MEMORY? IF SOMEONE SUFFERS FROM DEMENTIA, DO THEY LOOSE THEIR IDENTITY? ALSO, IT'S INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT WE ALL HOLD FALSE MEMORIES SO HOW DOES THAT AFFECT OUR IDENTITIES?

AN INTERESTING SCHOLAR, DEREK PARFIT, ARGUES AGAINST THE MEMORY THEORY IN ASSERTING THAT, THEORETICALLY, IF A REPLICA OF YOU IS MADE AND THEY HAVE YOUR MEMORIES, ARE THEY YOU? IF YOU AGREE THAT THIS REPLICA IS YOU AS THEY SHARE YOUR BODY AND MEMORIES, THEN HOW ABOUT IF MULTIPLE OF THESE REPLICAS ARE MADE, ARE THEY ALL YOU? SO, THE MAIN QUESTION HERE IS, ARE YOUR MEMORIES ENOUGH TO GUARANTEE YOUR IDENTITY. DEREK PARFIT CONCLUDES HIS VIEWS RATHER VAGUELY IN STATING THAT...YOU'RE NOT JUST A PHYSICAL OBJECT BUT YOU'RE ALSO NOT JUST A SERIES OF EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHTS HOWEVER YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN THAT. DO YOU AGREE?

MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, YOUR IDENTITY IS BASED ON PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAITS. A MAJORITY OF PEOPLE HOLD THE BELIEF THAT YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAITS ARE THE BASIS FOR YOUR IDENTITY AS YOUR MORALS, BEHAVIOUR, AND PERSONAL INTERESTS HUGELY AFFECT WHO YOU ARE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF SOMEONE WHO IS USUALLY KINDHEARTED AND WISE THEN BECAME COLD HEARTED AND CYNICAL, THIS IS A PROFOUND CHANGE IN THEIR PERSONAL IDENTITY. THIS IS AN INTERESTING PERSPECTIVE BUT, THIS NATURALLY HAPPENS TO ALL OF US AS WE FLOURISH. OUR MORALS, BEHAVIOURS AND INTERESTS NATURALLY CHANGE AND DEVELOP AS WE EVOLVE, SO IS IT CORRECT TO SAY THAT OUR IDENTITIES CHANGE AS THESE FACTORS DO?

SO, IN THIS ARTICLE, WE'VE DISCUSSED YOUR BODY, MEMORIES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAITS AS BEING THE INDICATOR FOR YOUR PERSONAL IDENTITY. OR AS DEREK PARFIT ALLUDES TO AN IDEA OF NOT NECESSARILY HAVING AN IDENTITY BUT JUST BEING MORE THAN PHYSICAL BEINGS WITH THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS, BUT HOW ABOUT THE SOUL BEING WHAT GIVES YOU YOUR IDENTITY? IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT IT'S UNCHANGEABLE AND STAYS CONSTANT THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME BUT IT CAN ALSO BE ARGUED THAT THEY DON'T EXIST...SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

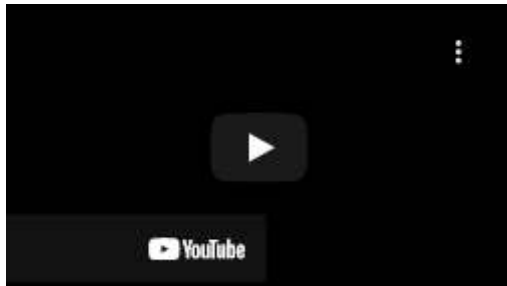


FILM RECCOMENDATIONS

BY OLUCHI IJEH

I'VE COMPILED A LIST OF 7 GREAT PHILOSOPHICAL AND ETHICAL MOVIE SUGGESTIONS THAT I RECOMMEND IF YOU'D LIKE TO FURTHER YOUR KNOWLEDGE IN RPE OR IF YOU JUST HAVE SOME SPARE TIME!

SOUL (2020) - A LOVELY FAMILY MOVIE THAT TACKLES ISSUES SUCH AS DEATH AND IT IS PERFECT FOR ANYONE WHO HAS EVER WONDERED WHAT THEIR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS.



OKJA (2017) - PORTRAYS THE STORY OF ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND THEIR BATTLE AGAINST A BIG CORPORATION WHO WANT TO TURN A PIG INTO A POSTER ANIMAL FOR A LINE OF MEAT PRODUCTS.

THE MATRIX (1999) - IF YOU'VE EVER WONDERED HOW SIMILAR HUMANS ARE TO MACHINES THEN THIS IS FOR YOU.



IDA (2013) - A FILM ABOUT BELONGING AND WHETHER ANYTHING CAN BE JUSTIFIED.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK (2010) - THIS MOVIE IS BASED ON THE CONTROVERSIAL DOCTOR JACK KEVORKIAN WHO HAS, IN MANY CASES, FACILITATED ASSISTED SUICIDE.



INCEPTION (2010) - A MIND BENDING MOVIE THAT TACKLES ISSUES SURROUNDING REALITY, MEMORY AND IDENTITY.

BOYHOOD (2014) - FILMED WITH THE SAME CAST OVER A PERIOD OF 12 YEARS, THIS POWERFUL MOVIE DEALS WITH THE UNRELENTING MARCH OF TIME AND THE MEANING OF LIFE.



PHILOSOPHY BITES PODCAST - WHAT IS A WOMAN?

BY ZHI XIA

FIRST OF ALL I BELIEVE THAT I HAVE LEARNT A LOT FROM THIS PODCAST, SPECIFICALLY ABOUT HOW THE MEANING OF 'WOMAN' HAS CHANGED OVER TIME. THE PODCAST STARTED WITH TELLING US THAT THE MOST COMMON MEANINGS OF THE WORD WOMAN ARE:

1. BIOLOGICALLY-AN ADULT FEMALE HUMAN IE. WITH 2 X CHROMOSOMES
2. SOCIALLY- A STEREOTYPICAL FEMININE ROLE IN SOCIETY
3. IDENTITY- ANYONE WHO IDENTIFY WITH THE FEMALE GENDER IE. WHO YOU FEEL YOU ARE

THE PODCAST ALSO TOLD ME ABOUT THE RESPECTIVE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WHO ARE IN DISPUTE OVER WHAT TO CALL THEMSELVES AS THEY FEEL THAT THEY DO NOT BELONG IN THE BIOLOGICAL CATEGORIES OF MEN OR WOMEN (MALE-FEMALE) SUCH AS INTERSEX OR NON-BINARY PEOPLE. FUTUREMORE, THE PODCAST RECOGNISES THAT THE ONGOING SEX AND GENDER DOES HAVE A LOT OF SOCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND THAT NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE ARE EVEN AWARE THAT THE WORD WOMAN PLAYS A HUGE ROLE IN PEOPLES LIVES WHETHER THEY RECOGNISE IT OR NOT. THEY HANDLED THE TOPIC OF GENDER WELL AND SPOKE RESPECTFULLY WITHOUT BIAS ABOUT EVERY TOPIC, LEADING ME TO PUT MORE THOUGHT BEFORE CATEGORISING PEOPLE INSIDE MY HEAD AS WELL AS LEAVING ME TO FORM MY OWN OPINIONS ABOUT IT ALL AFTER LISTENING TO THE PODCAST. I BELIEVE THAT THEY EXPLAINED THIS VERY CLEARLY WHICH MAKES THE PODCAST ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AGES SO I REALLY RECOMMEND HAVING A LISTEN EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC BECAUSE IT TEACHES YOU A LOT ABOUT HOW TO FIND YOUR OWN IDENTITY NO MATTER YOUR RACE, GENDER, SEX OR AGE.

YOU CAN CHECK OUT THIS PODCAST ON SPOTIFY [HERE](#)

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