

The background is a light purple color with several decorative elements. On the left and right sides, there are stylized hands in a dark blue color. Each hand has a large, colorful eye (with a pink iris and a purple pupil) and is adorned with small white stars and dots. Red and orange feathers with black outlines are positioned around the hands. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

# **Iman's Thought Journal**

Philosophy Gym



# Constructing Arguments;

## Should it be mandatory to study arts in school?

Studying arts would give young minds a deeper understanding of the world around them. Making it mandatory in schools could help them with perspectives and would also give them a chance to discover their inner talents and creativity but however, it is true that art is not for everyone. Some students may feel insecure or inferior to others just because they might believe that they are not creative or artsy enough to compete with others which may affect their mental health.



# The Trolley Problem





## **What would you do if you were in Chidi's place when your friend is on the other track and why?**

If I were in Chidi's place, I wouldn't pull the lever to change the tracks of the train even if that means saving my friend because that would be a rational thing to do in such a situation considering how saving my friend would come at the cost of five innocent lives. And also rationally speaking, if death is my friend's fate, I should not be messing with it. However, depending on who my friend is and my relationship with them, the rational part of my brain may be overshadowed by my emotions, so I would end up changing the tracks of the train even if it results in a lifetime of guilt because pulling the lever would mean blood on my hands.





# The Big Bang or a miracle from God?



# Where did the universe come from?

Being asked a question like where did the universe come from really causes you to stop and think for a while because there are a lot of things that come to your mind. Was it the big bang or was it God or perhaps something else. It's about perception and the different ways that you see it. Well maybe there are some things that are better left unexplained. After the entire class discussion, I feel like there are a lot of debates involved that may not always reach a conclusion. And perhaps this is what this course is all about, we're all learning from each other and there are no right or wrong answers.





**A sign from God**

# How would you prove your own existence if you were God?

God is omnipresent and unseen. He works in divine ways so could his existence really be proved? Sometimes you could be going through something in life. Now imagine one day while you're scrolling through your instagram feed, you find the exact post that relates to your situation. You stop and stare for a while. Then you start noticing little things. You find traces of yourself in ordinary things. That instagram post. The title of a youtube video that first catches your eye when you open the app. A motivational speaker on TV but you normally don't even watch television. The key here is the exact timing that would leave you startled because you would know deep down in your heart that it is God talking to you in different ways.





**A letter from me to me...**



**Dear 15 year old me,**

I know life sucks. You are exhausted and everything seems overwhelming. You spiral back and forth into depression but you don't know that because you haven't yet had the chance to think about it that way. You are hopeful for the future but trust me it only gets worse. Brace yourself because 4 years from now, you'll face your worst fears and live through them but it won't stop. You think you have time but the truth is that you don't. You'll lose a loved one to death, and then another just a week apart. One of them is Cadbury. Two people you can't even imagine dying, and that too in the very first week of your first year at university. Sounds pretty awful right? But you won't believe this right now, just like the fact that you'll end up doing everything you think you will never do. You will become a person you might end up hating which I guess you already do so issokay. Not to scare you but enjoy life while you can because things are about to get real messy and even today, sis found out that she's in a huge mess. Everything feels like a dream. Sis is dissociating, again. It's a comparative analysis but your life is just fine right now. Also, spoiler alert! You will happily get an admission in **BNU**. Pretty ironic, right? But hey at least on 75% merit scholarship. And you might even survive a global pandemic okthanksbye.

**19th November, 2020.**

# Capitalism & Religion

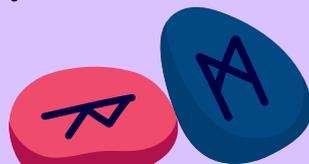




## What is the relationship between them?

I believe that capitalism itself is a religion because what is capitalism in simple terms? It's an economic system where private individuals and/or companies worship money like it's some sort of a mystical god. All they do is exploit labour through low wages, consumers through monopoly power which seems like their main motive and ignore the overall social benefit resulting in unequal distribution of wealth which creates social division so if you look at capitalism as a cult, it is a really dark one.

*Well um hello Illuminati is that you??*



# Romantic vs Platonic



# LOVE

It's a huge debate that has confused me since forever.

What difference does romantic and platonic have because

- we're talking about love here aren't we? Does the only thing that separate them are sexual feelings? Because love itself can be interpreted in broad ways. Romantic love is passionate, thrilling, full of desire. And as fierce as it is, it can make you aggressive and bring out the worst in you whereas platonic love is more calm and light-hearted. It can make you patient. But that does not change the fact that both of them can have overlapping boundaries. Love can shatter your heart into pieces no matter if it's platonic or romantic. It can make you jealous and without love, life may seem meaningless...



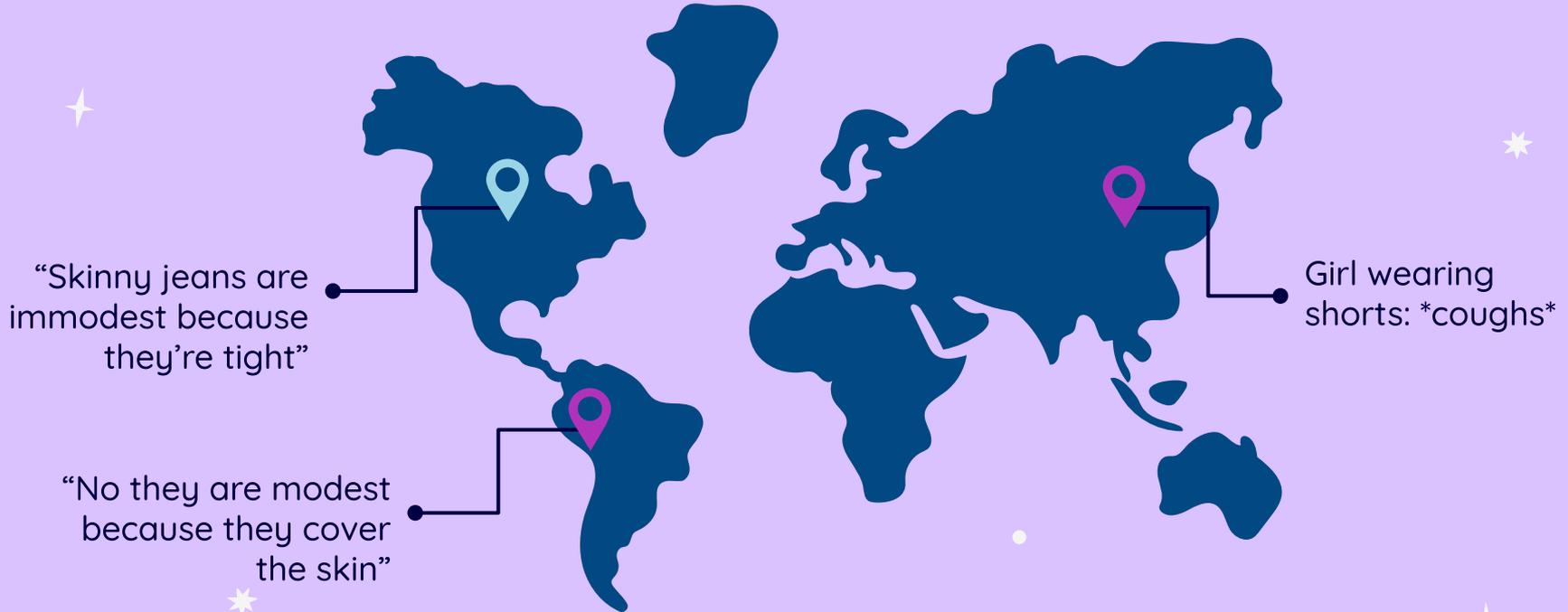
# Why do people love?

All their lives, people strive to find a meaning, a purpose, a reason to live. We, humans, tend to survive by forming connections, building relationships because as much as some of us may hate to admit, we co-depend on one another. But amidst all of this, what role does love play? Why is it so important? Why do we love?

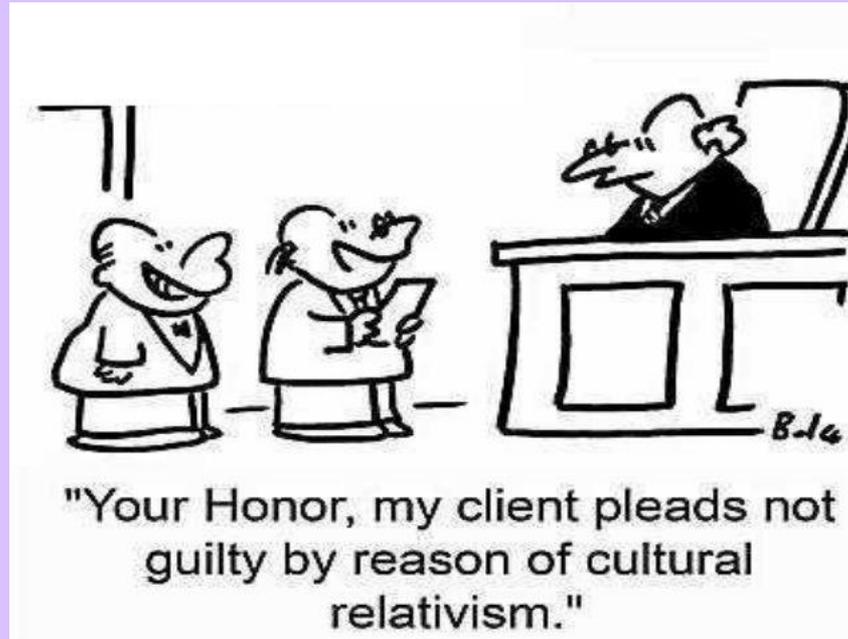
The truth is that love fills the void in us, helps us get rid of loneliness. It makes us feel more alive and infuses our lives with meaning. We humans are full of so much cosmic energy that sometimes we are unable to contain it and it can overwhelm us so we need someone to share that energy with. It is more applicable in romantic relationships but that does not mean that platonic relationships are any less important.



## Diving into cultural relativism...



- **People's judgement about right and wrong differ from culture to culture so is there no objective moral reasoning?**





It is true that cultural differences can create conflicts in judging whether an action is right or wrong but there could be a challenge to the relevance of cultures. Now imagine, your mother and father belong to different cultures but you love them both equally so it is difficult for you to choose sides. How would you judge whose culture is more relevant? Your father thinks there is nothing wrong in consuming alcohol but your mother comes from a different culture that forbids such practices so she thinks it's wrong. So to claim that drinking is a grave sin and you should not do it is a relative argument.



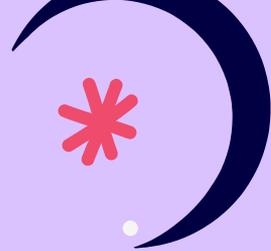
However, some actions are extremely vile and inhumane and should not be pushed into the realm of cultural relativism to judge whether they are right or wrong instead the guilty person should absolutely and with full objectivity be punished. Such actions can include sexual assault and other human rights cases that are totally unacceptable so such acts should be identified and it must be made clear that culture relativism does not apply to them because no argument justifies them. The claim that they are wrong should simply be made a brute fact. Speaking of sexual assault alone, there are certain boundaries that every individual has and they should not be trespassed and I believe that this is something that should be universally agreed upon.



# Skepticism

**a:** the doctrine that true knowledge or knowledge in a particular area is uncertain.

**b:** the method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt, or criticism characteristic of skeptics.



## The sun will rise again tomorrow

Ever since the world came into existence, the sun rises and sets every single day so it is reasonable to believe that the sun will rise tomorrow because that's how it has been for centuries, right? There has never been a day in history that the sun did not rise. But that does not mean that there isn't a possibility that the sun will not rise tomorrow because we do not have knowledge of the future so the claim that *'the sun will rise tomorrow because it rises everyday'* can be falsified because the justification that it gives has no solid evidence attached to it.





## Medicinal drugs work towards healing

It is a popular belief that medicinal drugs can heal because that's what they're made for. Consider you have dangerously high blood pressure, there are pills that can instantly bring your blood pressure down which means that the drug can heal the problem but this claim shows a very limited picture of the reality. Imagine you are badly wounded and the wounds are causing you a lot of pain so you take painkillers. They may aid towards easing the pain but did they actually heal the wound? No. Another thing to consider is that some medicinal drugs may be every effective in treating a problem but what about the side-effects it could potentially cause? So is the healing actually called healing when it's treating one problem but causing another at the same time.





## What does it mean to have Knowledge?

Having knowledge means that you are aware of something and have an understanding of it which comes from learning and/or experience but the requirement here is that for the information to be called knowledge, there has to be some sort of backing or evidence because knowledge is based on facts. If you claim to know something but do not seem to have any solid justification or evidence to prove your claim right, it becomes a belief instead of knowledge. For example, people of different religions claim that there is a supernatural power controlling the universe and that is God, it is their belief because they have never seen God but still claim to know that God exists.





**Which of the following is a better response to the skeptic and why ?**

the 'invisible pebble' response  
the 'dismissive' response

Rather than the 'invisible pebble,' the 'dismissive' is a better response to the skeptic considering how just because a claim seems 'obvious' is no guarantee of its truth. We as humans use our senses to perceive the world and even though we see it as a whole, the world still reveals to us in fragments hence we are limited in our knowledge of the world because the world that we see is incomplete. Our perception of reality is merely based on fragments so we cannot claim for something to be true about the world based on what we see.



# Designer Babies



## Should patents be allowed?

On one hand, if you think about it this way, scientists may have their own reasons for putting patents on their inventions which may seem like a petty thing to do but if you look at the bigger picture, it may also be a rational thing to do in order to regulate future experimentation on designer babies because it is true that certain genes can be misused which can destroy future generations. Let's say after an experimentation, something goes wrong and a gene is mutated so it contains an extremely dangerous disease that can harm generations of children if it is passed on so in cases like these patents become important in order to prevent potential harm to the society. In short, keeping the utilitarian perspective in mind, patents should be allowed.



But on the other hand, if patents are allowed, it can prevent future growth and further advancements in this field because like other technology, the possibilities for designer babies are endless and if patents are allowed, it can hinder new findings so in conclusion, patents should be allowed but after careful scrutiny and in some but not all cases. The question of whether or not patents should be allowed in a certain case should be left for the court judge to decide.



**Why do we eat meat?**



## How is eating meat different from the Yulin Festival and abusing kittens?

Eating meat may be considered wrong but then again cultural relativism comes in the way, a concept that was discussed in detail before. Some meat eaters may choose to go vegan but can be faced with several health problems that can occur if your body doesn't get the nutrients it requires to function properly and some of those nutrients can only be gained from eating meat. If you look at it this way, meat becomes a necessity for some. Keeping this mind, let's think about the Yulin festival. It involves killing innocent animals that are meant to be domesticated and not eaten. This may be a relativist argument and I'm not saying that the meat we eat does not involve any sort of animal abuse but based on several findings, animals like cats and dogs possess emotions and are known to be far more intelligent than the animals consumed by meat eaters. There have been reports of animal abuse at the festival; mishandling and being boiled alive which makes the practice unacceptable because the animals are dying a painful death.



Abusing kittens is a different issue altogether. Not only does it involve innocent creatures being mistreated in a way that is absolutely unacceptable, they are not meant to be consumed which makes it a criminal act in the broader picture.

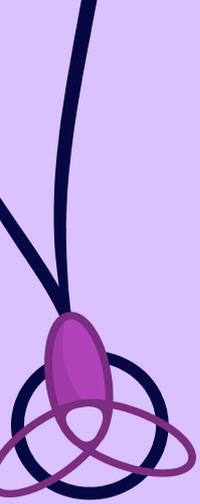
★ In conclusion, it is true that animals eat other animals too so why can't humans eat animals as well? Despite the reason for killing animals is same for the Yulin festival and for people who eat for meat, there is a huge difference in the kind of animals that are being killed and consumed. People always have a choice to not kill and eat animals that are supposed to be domesticated due to their nature which is different than eating meat because of the nutrients it can provide.





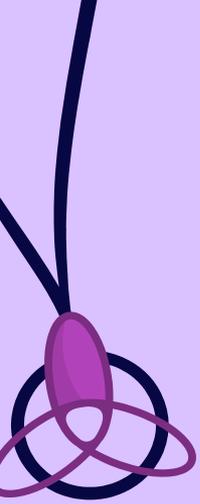
# About the Course





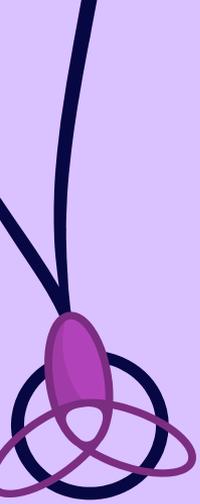
I'll begin by mentioning that I'm a SVAD student and the degree that I'm doing is called Interdisciplinary Expanded Design and Arts because I was always someone with diverse interests. Coming to the point, we were offered a range of different courses this semester, studio and theory both. I came across "Philosophy" while scrolling through the list and I was like wow. Then I saw Hashim Kaleem was teaching the course. I was like double wow. From that very moment, I knew this course was gonna be fun, I just knew.





Fast forward to right now, I can't say I was wrong. Now that we're heading towards our last class of the semester, I'd like to state that it was an extremely interesting course for me. I've always been fond of philosophical debates. This course taught me that whatever you say is right; nothing can be wrong if you're able to defend your argument no matter how bizarre or ridiculous may sound. I think it was a safe space for all of us where we could openly express our ideas without the fear of being judged and raise controversial questions without being killed (not literally ofc). It was like a group therapy that we all needed during this pandemic.





As a university course, it was a little unorganized at times and the weekly thought journal entries along with other coursework sometimes got overwhelming but overall I really enjoyed the vibe of this course but I do think it would've been way more fun if the classes were held in-person because it's easily to lose interest when you're in the middle of an online session. Also, I do wish that our thought journal had more weightage because 15% does not seem enough for the efforts we put into it in terms of its content as well as design.



**Thankyou, Hashim Kaleem**  
for being a wonderful instructor

