



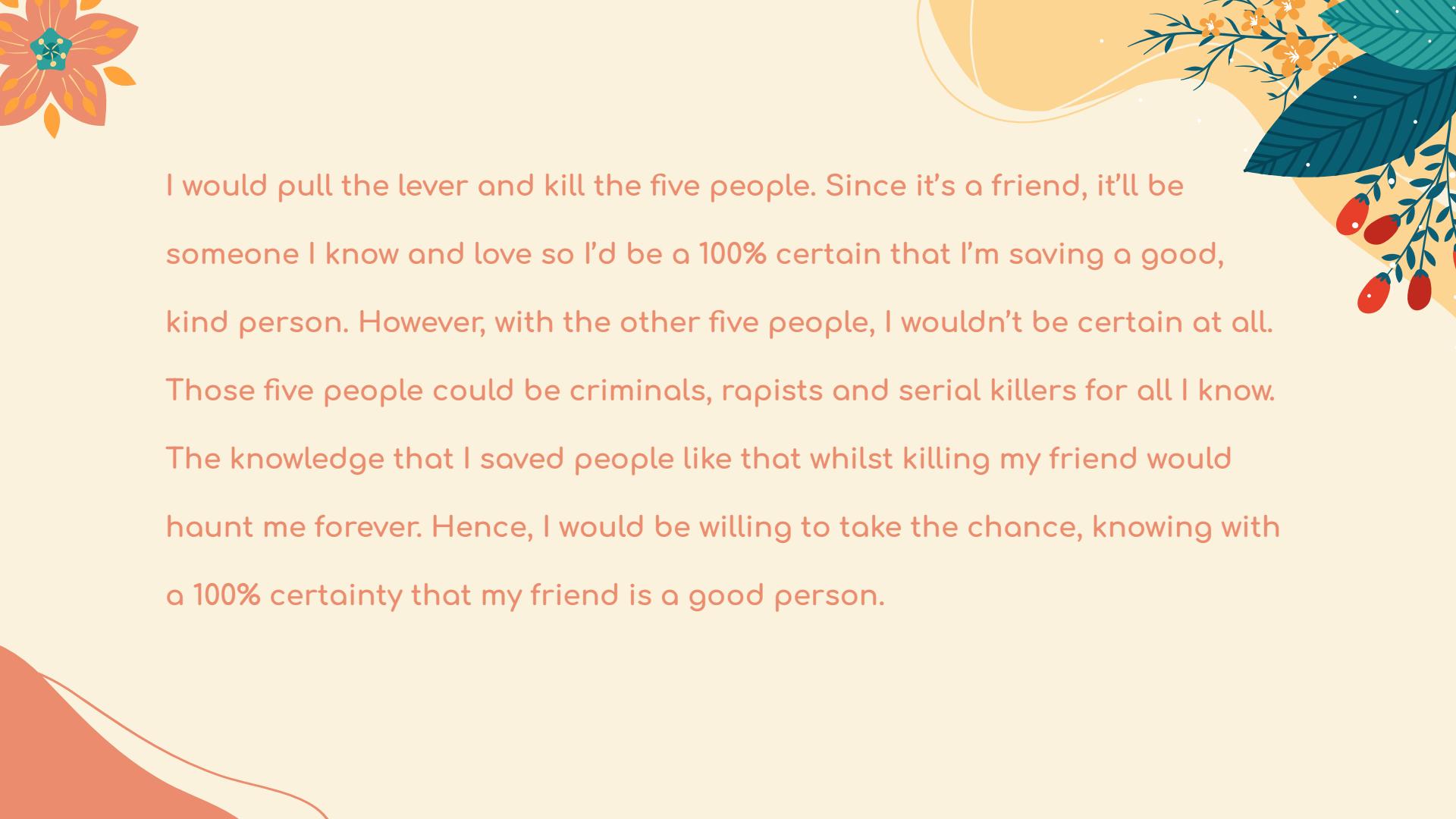
MAHNOOR'S THOUGHT JOURNAL

CHIDI'S TROLLEY PROBLEM



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE IN CHIDIS
PLACE WHEN YOUR FRIEND IS ON THE OTHER
TRACK AND WHY?





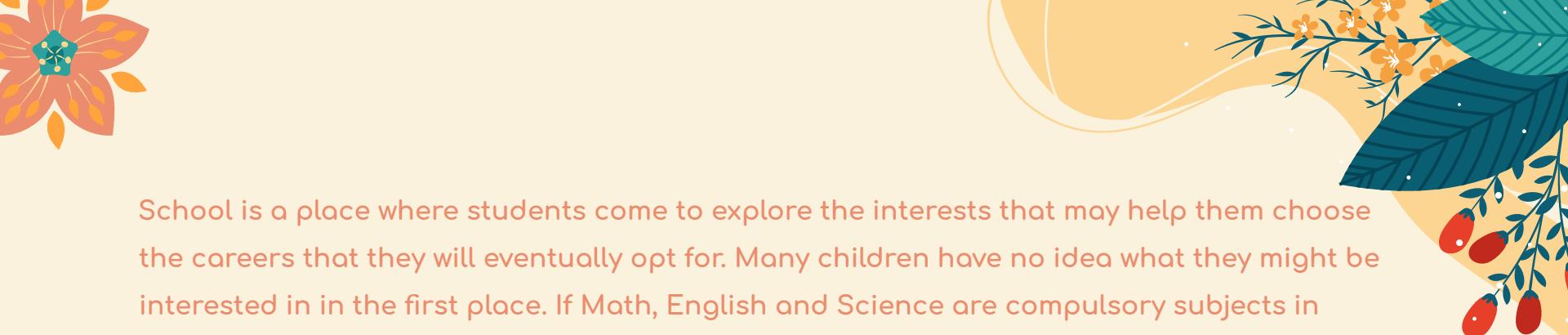
I would pull the lever and kill the five people. Since it's a friend, it'll be someone I know and love so I'd be a 100% certain that I'm saving a good, kind person. However, with the other five people, I wouldn't be certain at all. Those five people could be criminals, rapists and serial killers for all I know. The knowledge that I saved people like that whilst killing my friend would haunt me forever. Hence, I would be willing to take the chance, knowing with a 100% certainty that my friend is a good person.

CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS



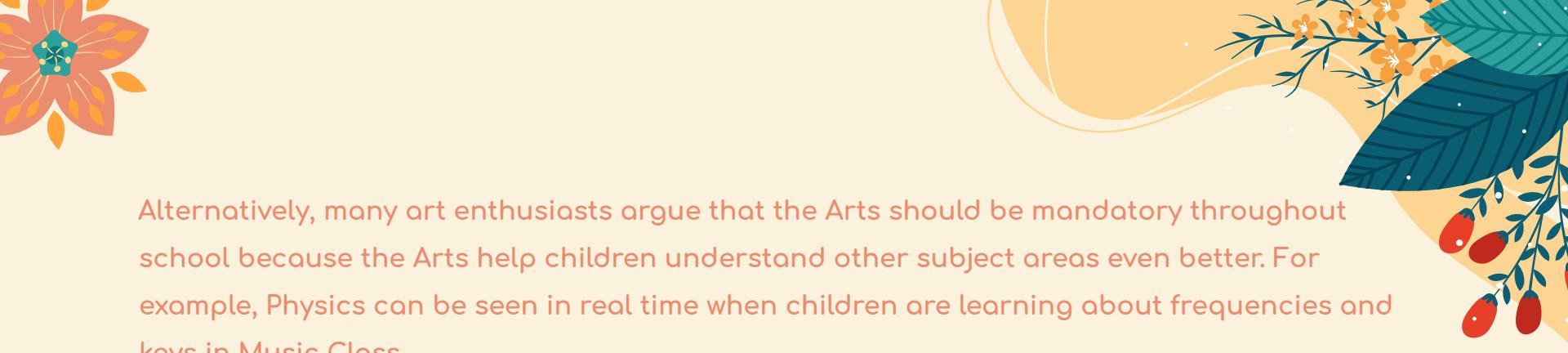
SHOULD IT BE MANDATORY TO STUDY ARTS IN SCHOOL?





School is a place where students come to explore the interests that may help them choose the careers that they will eventually opt for. Many children have no idea what they might be interested in in the first place. If Math, English and Science are compulsory subjects in school, then so should Art – but only till high school.

It is important to recognize that there are many different types of art. When people think of the word “art” they usually associate it with painting, pottery, etc. However, this is not actually the case. “Art” subjects also include Music, Dance and Theatre and it’s imperative that these be taught to children early on while they are able to freely explore all these interests without the fear of ruining important transcripts. Later on, at a high school level, arts do not need to be mandatory because by that point, most children can clearly identify what subject areas they are most interested in.



Alternatively, many art enthusiasts argue that the Arts should be mandatory throughout school because the Arts help children understand other subject areas even better. For example, Physics can be seen in real time when children are learning about frequencies and keys in Music Class.

These art enthusiasts, however, don't consider that all children may not have an aptitude for the Arts. And just like other subjects, art subjects also get harder and harder with each grade level. Once they reach a certain level of difficulty, hard work can no longer help them since most art subjects rely on raw talent, especially fine art. As a result, their grades suffer at the most crucial point in their lives (high school) because they were forced to take a subject that they had no real interest in.

EXPLORING THE APPEALS



PATHOS

The audience will feel like they should support local businesses - evokes a sense of patriotism

PATHOS

The tagline and red logo inspire fear

LOGOS

The audience will know that the product is safe to use.

LOGOS

The audience will know that if they're in trouble, help will be on the way

ETHOS

Clicking order now will take them to a webpage with customer reviews



LOGOS + PATHOS

The audience will imagine themselves 10 feet away from an assailant. Then they'll come to the conclusion that they'd still be able to use the spray without getting close to them.

LOGOS

The audience will be informed of the strength of the spray - which will make escape easier.



Thoughts on Chapter 1

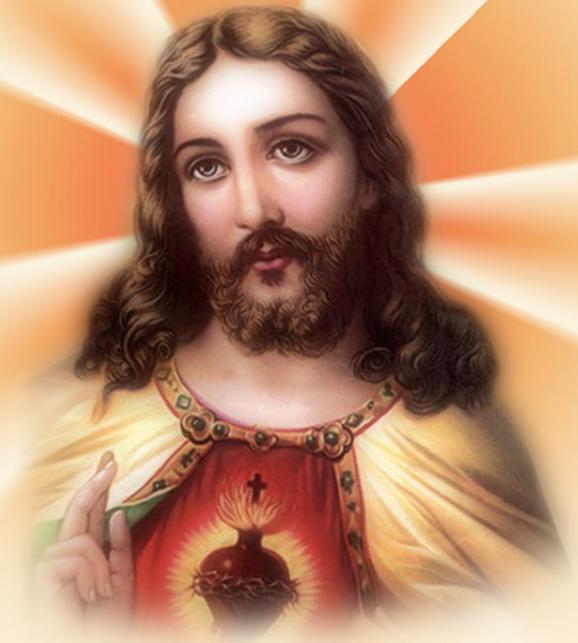


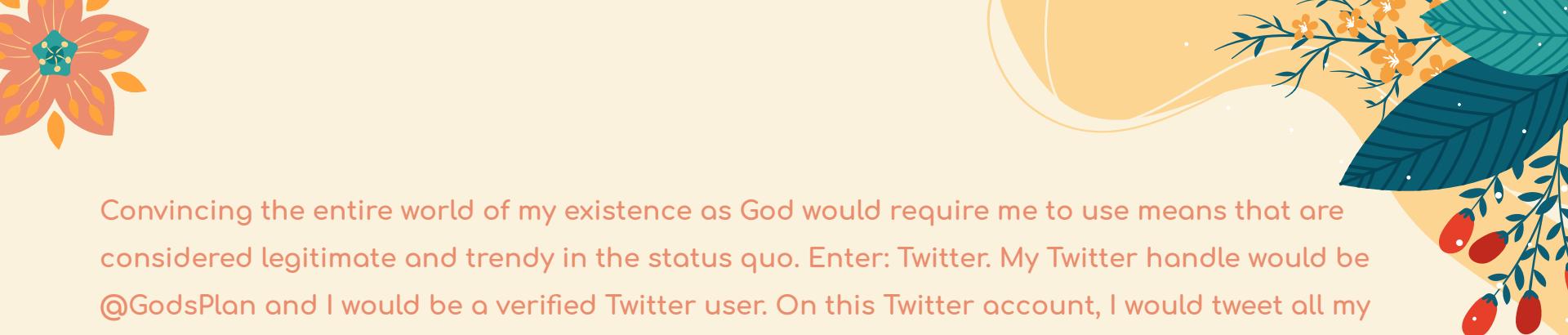
I did not enjoy this particular reading because it did not challenge any of my preconceived notions. It was exploratory but at the same time extremely simplistic. Even when I read it alone, I didn't have a lot of thoughts on the text itself.

I mostly agree with Figgerson but not totally. I don't know, I was expecting a bit more from this first chapter. I felt like it asked the same question over and over again.

However, it was really interesting to hear what about people had to say about their own existence in relation to God's. I definitely had some food for thought after this week's class.

A SIGN FROM GOD

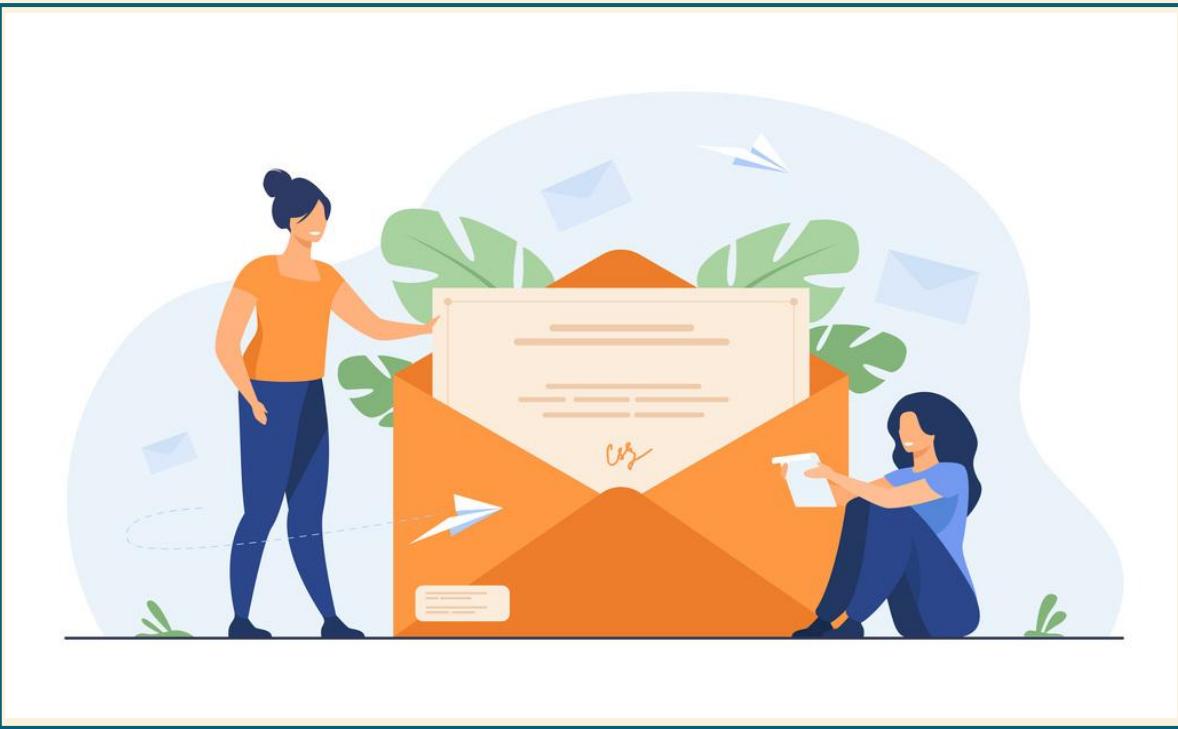




Convincing the entire world of my existence as God would require me to use means that are considered legitimate and trendy in the status quo. Enter: Twitter. My Twitter handle would be @GodsPlan and I would be a verified Twitter user. On this Twitter account, I would tweet all my daily activities before carrying them out - kind of like a to-do list with creative hashtags. For example, "That gender reveal in Cali isn't going to go so well. #savethetrees "

Eventually, these tweets would trend around the world and people would start to make a correlation between these events and my tweets. They would also begin to follow my feed and anticipate events to see if I'm really behind them. When their suspicions are confirmed, I'll be inundated with prayers in my DMs which I would very candidly respond to with "Not gonna happen with your track record, buddy" or "Check your bank account right now, hun x"

LETTER TO MY 15 YEAR OLD SELF



Dear Mao,



I'm writing to you from the future to let you know that you did indeed survive past 16 and don't think about dying anymore. At least, not as much as you used to. You will survive that suicide attempt and will struggle for many years before seeking therapy. And that will be the best decision of your life. You remember that guy Max who you weren't allowed to go to? Yeah, he's your therapist now. You have wonderful friends. You have your grades together.

You still hate your mom.

There are a lot of things I wish I could stop you from doing. Like that horrible drinking habit that you have no business having at 15. Yeah, that one's going to follow you for a few years. But Max's hypnosis will nip it straight in the bud. You're going to fight it and call it pseudo-medicine for a couple of years before realizing you haven't knocked any back for a while. I will, however, tell you to stop stealing your dad's Xanax. It's messing with you and you know it. Put it down. There are better drugs out there to be doing that you'll actually remember doing the next day.



A will leave. And you will try and try to hold onto him but it won't work. You're clearly in love with him. But for the love of God, stop hounding him. He's off chasing his dreams and you're a child. Wipe your tears and learn something useful. He's not going to come back. He will, however, shake your entire world before he leaves. Make sure you're ready for that. Your family will fall apart for a while and everyone will hate you. But it'll be alright. I promise.

Your mother is mentally ill. After you stop chasing that ridiculous engineering dream, you'll study Psychology and realize that a lot of the things she has done to you were because she is ill and refuses to seek treatment. Stop blaming yourself for everything she does. She is an adult and is (somewhat) capable of self-reflection and empathy. It's not your fault that she beats you and says all those terrible things. Try hugging her more.



Your brother is going to take her side for several years. And you're going to resent him for it. But please try and remember that the door is always closed and locked before your mother does what she has to do. He is being gas lit and fed ridiculous stories about you that aren't even true. And you refuse to talk to anyone, so those stories have a bigger impact than they would otherwise. Use your voice. Stop idolizing Dwayne from *Little Miss Sunshine*! I know you relate to him but come on. If you're trying to heal – that's not the way to go. He's just as depressed as you are and probably not the best role model.

You will meet a wonderful boy. A boy who is not going to be a rollercoaster like A was. He's not going to shake your entire world. In fact – your entire world is going to come to a standstill. He's going to walk head first into the eye of your storm and you're not going to mind it one bit. You're going to fall. Hard. He's going to deconstruct the entire idea of love that your parents had thrust upon you without even trying. It's going to be absolutely effortless and you're going to be in complete surrender. After a long, long time the screaming voices in your head will become a dull murmur. Instead, there will be calm. Peaceful, selfless, whole hearted calm.



Lastly, I want you to see your experiences as exactly what they are – experiences. You aren't being punished. Everyone around you has a story. Everyone around you has trauma. What's important is that you don't attach a value to their actions that you aren't exactly sure of yourself. Pain isn't binary like that. What's important is that you face it headfirst. It all piles up in the end if you don't. Let yourself feel it; let it fill up your whole body till you can't breathe anymore. Wave after wave of pain will initially feel extremely uncomfortable. It's supposed to. Don't deprive yourself of this sensory experience. Be hurt. Be angry. Be uncomfortable. It's all you're left with at the end of the day.

Lots of love,

Mao xx



CAPITALISM

&

RELIGION



Capitalism and religion operate on essentially the same principles - work hard and you will succeed. This philosophy is not limited to one religion but pretty much all of them in the status quo. Historically speaking, however, Christianity and Judaism did condemn trade, but once Islam became prevalent, the concept of trading became more globalized.

It's an interesting link because while most religions condemn still theft and greed, they are proponents of trade at the same time. Trade does not and has never been fair. There is always a person who is richer and there is always an exploiter and an exploited so to speak. Many poor people spend their lives hoping that they will be able to work hard enough to earn a living wage - or perhaps become part of the top 1% who supposedly work harder than them. This makes you wonder why there is so much contradiction in religion and why more people are not skeptical of it.

PLATONIC VS. ROMANTIC LOVE

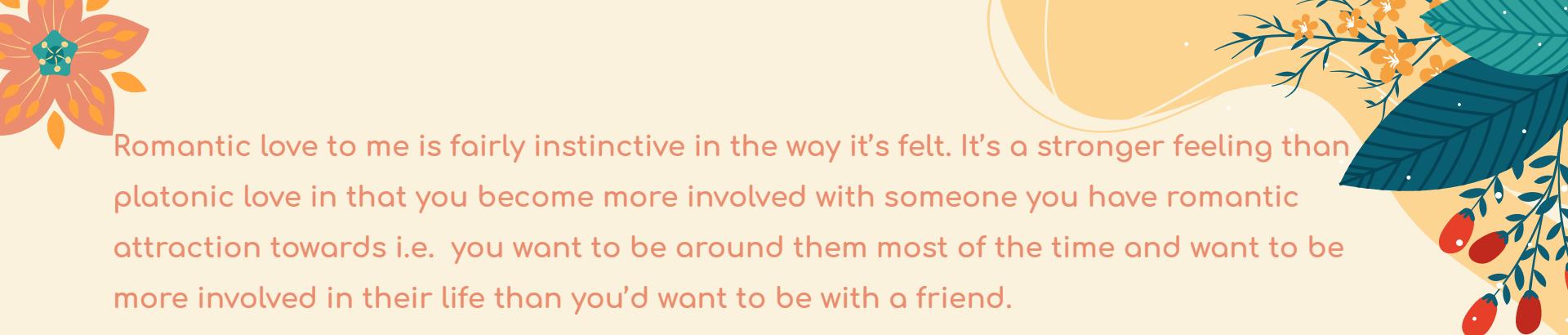




Perhaps it can be said that religion keeps people in the poverty trap while the rich get richer. This is all to maintain social control. In fact - my theory is that whoever came up with the idea of religion had this in mind first and foremost. Religion keeps the poor from revolting and realising their true position in society.

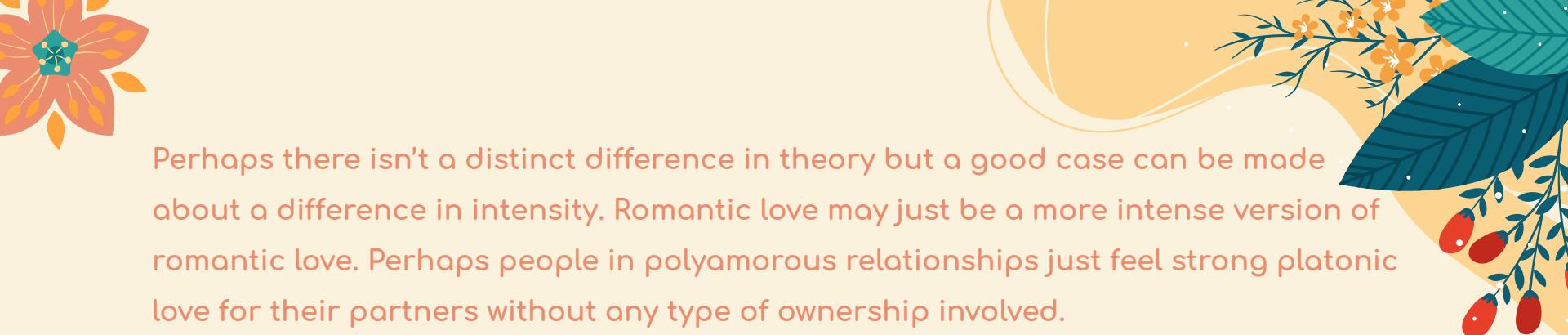
If at some point, a religious working class person does in fact see an improvement in their quality of life, they attribute it to their faith rather than sheer chance. This reinforces and rationalises their faith for them. And by extension - everyone they preach to. Generations upon generations of people hence grow up thinking that if they work hard enough and pray hard enough, God will reward them for their faith and hard work.

Hence, religion and capitalism reinforce each other and in a lot of cases, are one and the same thing.



Romantic love to me is fairly instinctive in the way it's felt. It's a stronger feeling than platonic love in that you become more involved with someone you have romantic attraction towards i.e. you want to be around them most of the time and want to be more involved in their life than you'd want to be with a friend.

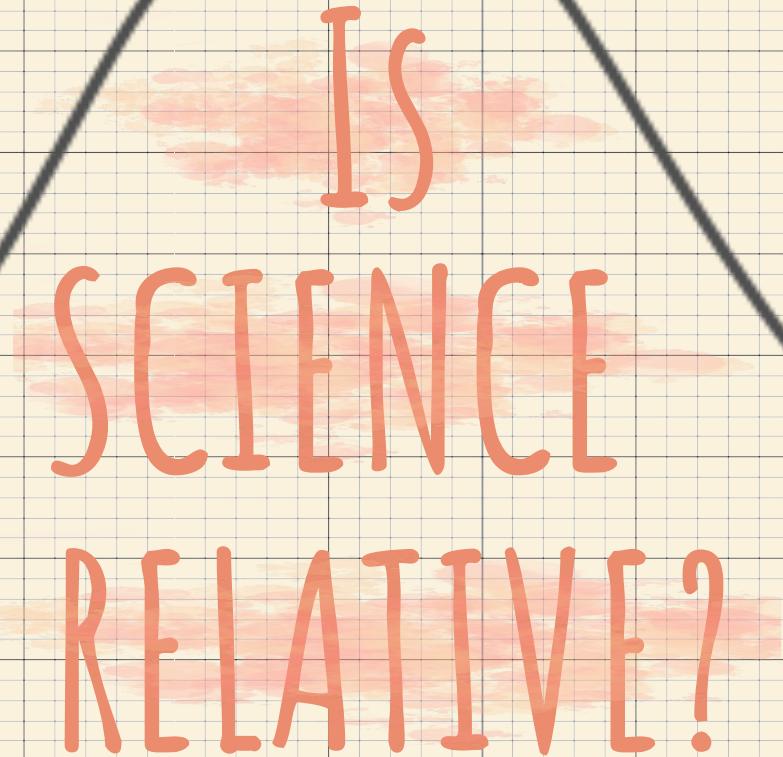
Perhaps one could say that there's a degree of ownership when it comes to romantic love especially in a monogamous setting. There's a degree of "I want you all to myself" and a degree of "I need to be involved with your interests so I can be closer to you" and also a degree of "I want to be the reason for your happiness." In platonic love, there's more room for individuality - you and your peers exist in each other's spaces without many expectations of compromise. You like being in each other's spaces but would be alright if they didn't share everything with you. But I also recognize that this is strictly my own experience of romantic love. Love is an entire spectrum on its own.



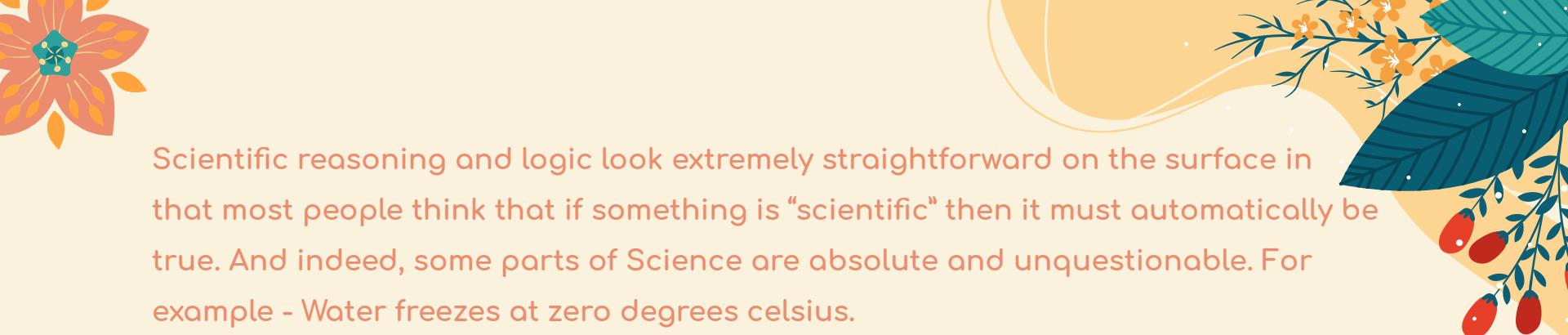
Perhaps there isn't a distinct difference in theory but a good case can be made about a difference in intensity. Romantic love may just be a more intense version of romantic love. Perhaps people in polyamorous relationships just feel strong platonic love for their partners without any type of ownership involved.

I wish there was an all-inclusive answer to this question or one single distinction that one could make - but there really isn't one. What we know for sure is that physical intimacy may not be a good marker for romantic love. People become physically intimate with their friends all the time; some people on the asexual spectrum feel romantic attraction but no sexual attraction. Their love is valid.

What I'm really trying to get at is - we don't know what the difference is. And we probably never will.



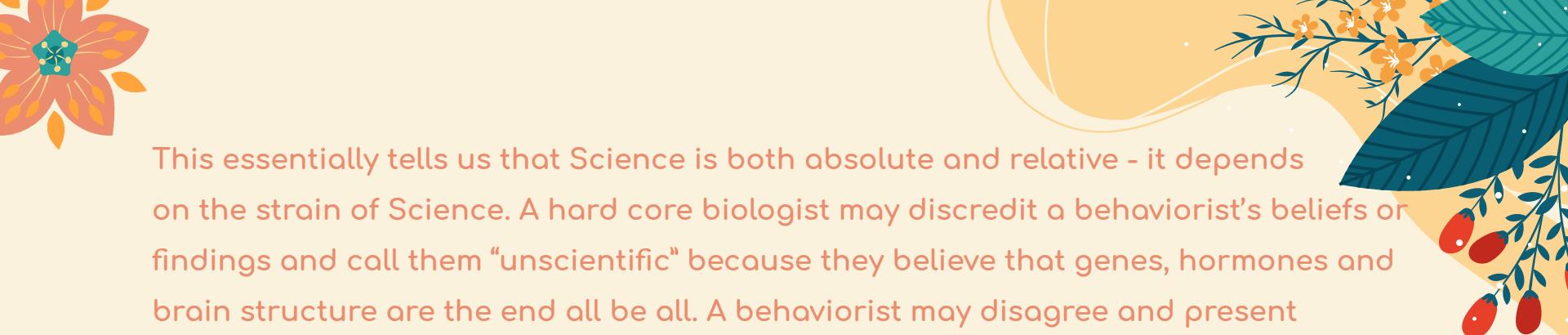
IS
SCIENCE
RELATIVE?



Scientific reasoning and logic look extremely straightforward on the surface in that most people think that if something is “scientific” then it must automatically be true. And indeed, some parts of Science are absolute and unquestionable. For example - Water freezes at zero degrees celsius.

However, Science can also be deceptively relative. What people don’t realise is that while most scientists use inductive logic, i.e they make very specific claims and then come to a conclusion with evidentiary support, not all scientists come to the same conclusion after looking at the same evidence.

For example, different scientists have different views on how gender roles came to be. There are many different schools of thought within the biological and behaviorist perspective that come from the same kind of empirical and non-empirical evidence.



This essentially tells us that Science is both absolute and relative - it depends on the strain of Science. A hard core biologist may discredit a behaviorist's beliefs or findings and call them "unscientific" because they believe that genes, hormones and brain structure are the end all be all. A behaviorist may disagree and present empirical evidence proving that genes have no part in human behavior and that it is in fact our environment that shapes us.

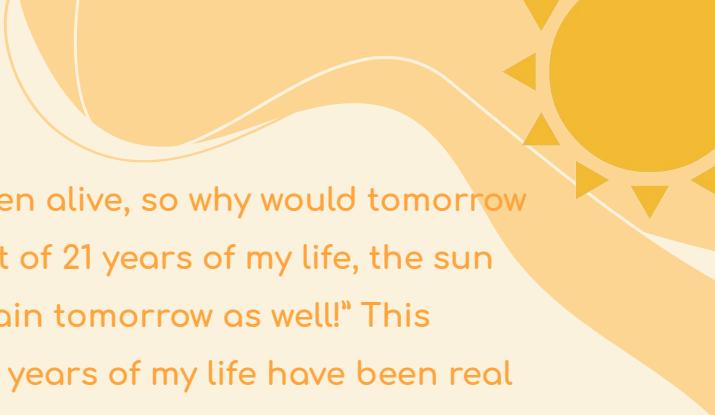
Even in supposedly absolute fields such as medicine, relativism exists. Doctors have differing opinions about the origins of a disease and the correct medicine that can be used to treat it. That's precisely why they often hold meetings to discuss cases that are particularly difficult to treat.

So - is Science relative? Yes, absolutely. :p

BRAIN SNATCHED



WILL THE SUN RISE AGAIN TOMORROW?



Many would say that the Sun has risen everyday since we've been alive, so why would tomorrow be any different? Statistically speaking, this makes sense. "If out of 21 years of my life, the sun has risen a 100% of the time, then it's probably going to rise again tomorrow as well!" This response is not unreasonable, but it's assuming that the last 21 years of my life have been real and not a very complex illusion created by an alien on another planet.

The fact of the matter is, my knowledge of the Sun rising again tomorrow is in question. If I'm making a reasonable deduction by saying that that as per my past experiences, the Sun will rise again tomorrow, I'm still not explaining how I know that that knowledge is the truth. One might then argue that "Hey, we've seen the Sun! It's a giant ball of gas!" but who's to say that that was not just an image of the Sun projected to you from a super computer on Neptune by a bunch of sadistic aliens? Our knowledge of the origins of our knowledge are flimsy at best, so we really can't be sure that the Sun is going to rise again tomorrow. We don't have reasonable evidence to say that the event of seeing the Sun rising everyday and seeing it rise tomorrow are even connected! There could even be an apocalypse tomorrow for all we know.

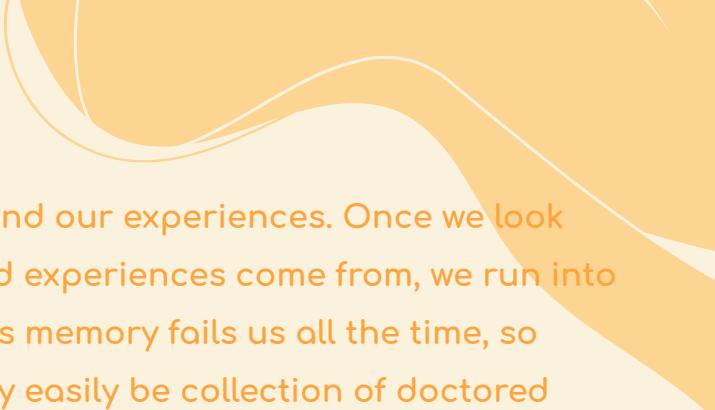
DO MEDICINAL DRUGS WORK TOWARDS HEALING?

The obvious answer to this would be "Yes! If I'm sick and I take medicine - I feel better!" The problem arises when we start to think about whether our knowledge of reality is logically sound or not. How do we know that the entire scenario of us falling ill and then feeling better is not just part of an elaborate illusion? After all - medicine isn't even a cure-all. Sometimes medicines fail us and people end up dying or suffering horrendous side effects. So if medicine isn't universal, saying that the medicines we consume might actually be the aliens on another planet performing experiments on us wouldn't be unreasonable at all.

After all, how do we know the medicines are working? We know if we're feeling better. And where does that knowledge come from? It comes from our own selves! We either use anecdotal evidence to decide whether a medicine works or not - or we rely on a doctor whose knowledge may also just be a collection of illusions. He may be a scientist from another planet disguised as a human. It is an equally likely as our medicines working towards healing because both these scenarios come from our own supposed knowledge of the world.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE?



The knowledge that we have is all collected from our five senses and our experiences. Once we look into this a little further and try to justify where our five senses and experiences come from, we run into a bit of a problem. Our memory fails us all the time, other people's memory fails us all the time, so what does it mean to "know" something? What we "know" could very easily be collection of doctored experiences. This is equally as true as our knowledge just being "there". We could make a dozen different hypotheses just like this and say they have no impact on experiences but that's just the thing - they do. If any one of them is true - then that would mean that we do not actually own the knowledge that we think we have. All the different hypotheses would have an equal chance of being true.

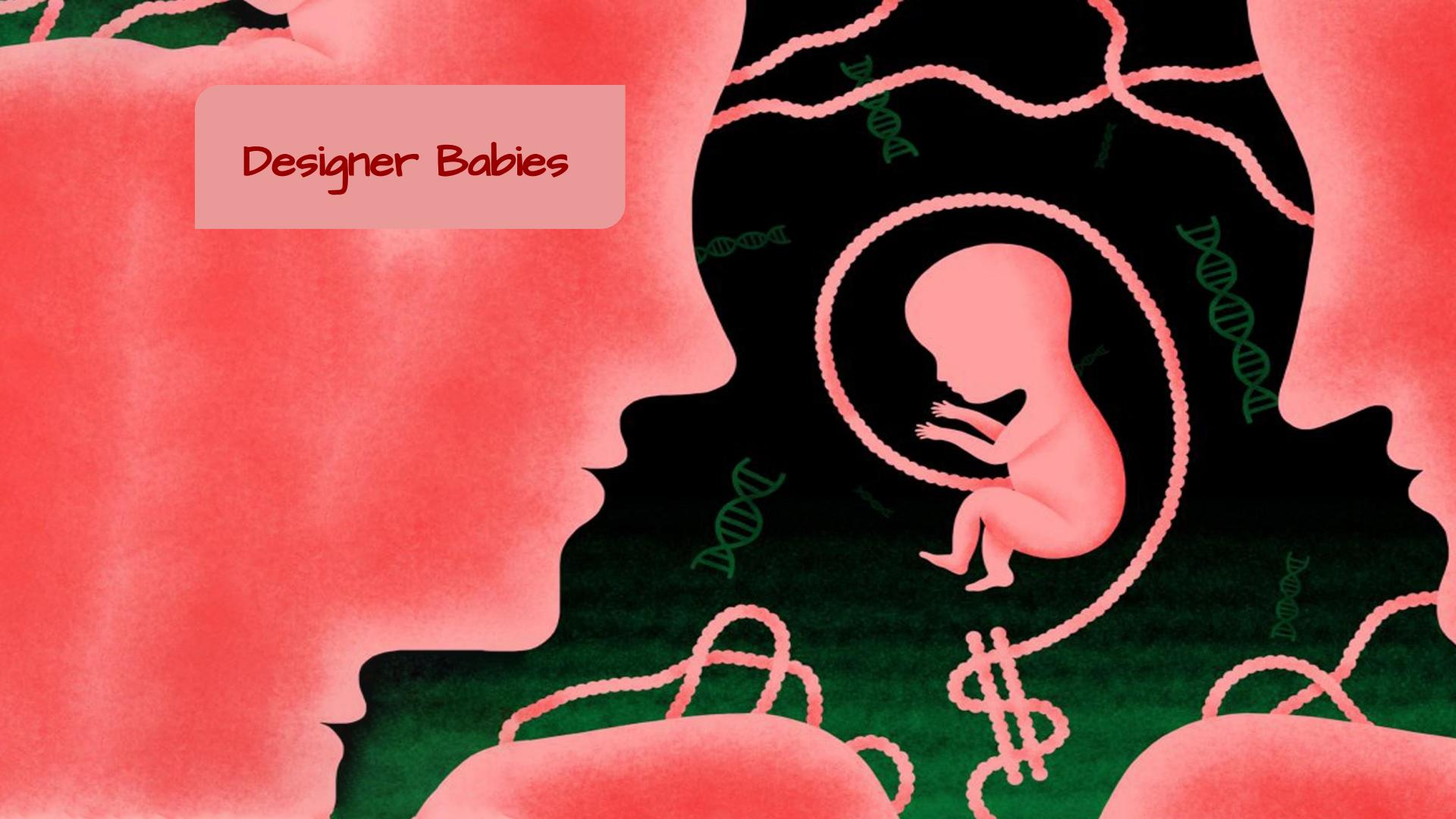
Usually, when we claim to "know" something, we draw on different pieces of evidence to prove that we know it. But doesn't this mean that we depend on the concepts within our statements to prove our point? We're using our knowledge to prove that knowledge exists and is valid, which is inherently flawed. Pointing to an external source as the source of our knowledge seems to be just as reasonable as saying that our knowledge "just exists". The alien on another planet controlling our brains could also "just exist".

THE INVISIBLE PEBBLE RESPONSE VS. THE DISMISSIVE RESPONSE

I think the invisible pebble response is a better response to the sceptic's argument because it's providing a genuine response rather than flipping a metaphorical table and claiming their hypothesis is preposterous. There are many things that were once considered preposterous but were later proven to be very much the truth. For example, people used to think women were less intelligent than men because of the size of their brains. But we threw that out the window, didn't we? We can't just dismiss the truth and pretend to not see something that is right in front of us.

The invisible pebble response is more reasonable in that at the very least - it tries to level with the sceptic. It tells us that the sceptic's hypothesis is empty. It doesn't matter if our brain is in a vat because it does not affect what we experience. It likens the situation to an invisible pebble. Whether you believe the pebble is there or not has no impact on our overarching reality. And if a particular situation has no effect at all - then it would be reasonable to say that that situation does not exist at all. After all, if we're using the cause and effect model of explaining things, then one cannot exist without the other.

Designer Babies



SHOULD PATENTS FOR DESIGNER BABIES BE LEGAL?

Pros

- A patent will attract lots of investors and scientists who will further the research on designer babies.
- 23 and Me will be able to prevent its licensees from unauthorised alterations to their designer baby formula.
- One company owning rights to designer babies means that there will less room for error in future generations. If many companies are allowed to experiment with designer babies, then there's a high chance that one of them passes on a defective gene to all of mankind.

Cons

- Since 23 and Me will have a monopoly over the market, they'll be able to charge whatever price they want for their designer baby. Which means that only the extremely affluent will be able to afford them - this will create irregularities in the future population where there is an irregularity of genes between different social classes.
- A patent in the United States does not mean that no other country can hold patents. So, in spite of patents, there will still be global irregularity in genes.

SHOULD PATENTS FOR DESIGNER BABIES BE LEGAL?

After weighing the pros and cons, I think patents on designer babies should not be legal because they will create an even bigger class divide than what we see in the status quo.

Affluent parents will pay for the perfect child: intelligent, good looking, athletic, etc which will automatically mean that they will have an upperhand in absolutely everything including academics and job opportunities.

There should be a “budget” designer baby or sales on designer babies, which can only occur if there are multiple competitors in the market. A single firm having a monopoly over the market means that they will try to be as exclusive as possible and be aiming to maximise their profits as much as possible - which will once again, exacerbate the class divide that already exists.

Modern Halal Meat - A Mockery of Islam ?



In the first part of the article, the author stated that eating animals that have been killed in a humane manner is Islamic but eating animals slaughtered by capitalist corporations is not because they're not killed in a humane manner. When we think about what "halal" essentially means, it means that a certain prayer is recited before an animal is slaughtered. Most companies are not willing to admit this, but they can't afford the time it takes to say a prayer every single time an animal is slaughtered. It's usually blared on a giant speaker throughout the slaughterhouse. That's what makes it "halal". If being kind to animals is what the author cares about, why not ask Muslims to give up meat altogether? He instead asks Muslims to only eat meat that they have done a proverbial "background check" on. That's pretty hypocritical to me.

The author also talks about the meat industry's carbon footprint but fails to mention that even if these industries were to disappear, other industries would replace them. That's just how economics works. In fact, we're seeing that happening already in places like the United States where veganism is starting to become a trend. The carbon footprint will remain ever present.