

MINIMAX



Glacier



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Dear Reader,

How have you been? It feels like we haven't talked in ages. 3 months to be exact. I apologize for the delay of this issue of Minimax, I know you have all been eagerly waiting. I hope you have been well, and have gotten your fill of school news and fun articles from reading our blog on the Minimax website. No? Well, now is your chance.

This issue is centered around the slow and steady movement of time, how things just seem to get stuck sometimes. The passage of time is sometimes like a swift river, whisking you away with it and forcing its passage on you. But sometimes, many times actually, time is like a frozen river, a glacier, reluctantly gliding down the mountain. Some days can feel like that, when every moment morphs together into one, slow-moving entity of existence. Winter often feels like that, when even the air is frozen in place, nothing grows from the Earth, and days blend together, forever unchanging.

That feeling is what we are trying to capture in this issue, and what we hope will inspire you to look out at the budding spring around you and appreciate the unstoppable march of time.

With love,
Hanna Szinai
Editor-in-Chief

WHO ARE THE SILENT VICTORS?

Adam Falck, Design by Anna Gao

After months of painstakingly trudging through what can only be described as one of the most inhospitable places on Earth, one can only imagine how Robert Falcon Scott felt as he saw the tent of Roald Amundsen firmly in place on the South Pole. The tent, standing there with all the smugness only an inanimate object can muster, meant that everything Scott had worked so hard for had seemingly been for nothing, as he now was the second person to reach the South Pole. The only thing left for Scott to do was to pivot on his heels and turn back to the base camp, a journey surely paved with disappointment and frustration. Even more unfortunately for Scott, he and his team perished on their way back, a sad end to a truly epic undertaking. If the expedition had been a failure the moment they saw Amundsen's tent, their tragic fates only served to underline that fact.

Widening our scope, some questions only a few could answer; Who was the second man to step on the Moon? Or what about the second man to circumnavigate the globe? And who was the second to fly alone over the Atlantic? Not too many people know this, as the “firsts” of history often cast long and dark shadows of the “seconds”, leaving their achievements obscured and forgotten. Why is that so? Simply put, the firsts represent a clear change, a breakthrough even. The first person to do something is seen as a trailblazer, and the second person is often, unfairly, viewed as having just followed the first in their footsteps, or only having done something because it had just been proven possible.

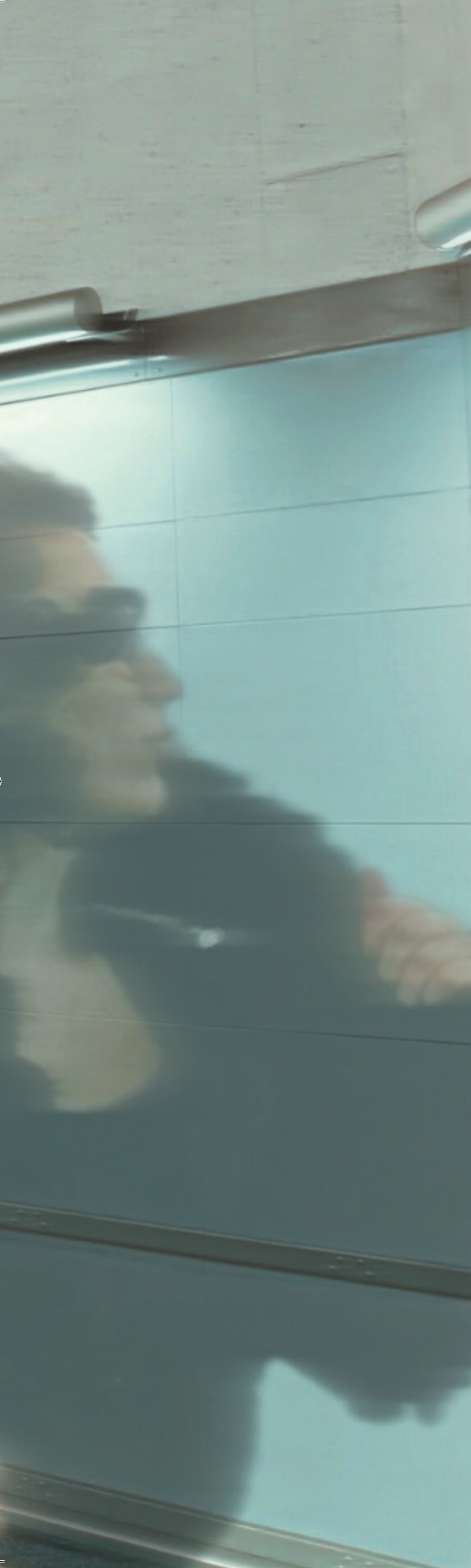
In fact, we humans seem to know that the firsts of history are the ones to get the glory and fame, and many of mankind’s greatest achievements were born out of a desire to be first. During the height of the Space Race, the U.S. raced against the Soviets to put a man on the Moon, culminating in July of 1969, when Apollo 11 touched down on the lunar surface. This was a huge achievement, but with the advantage of hindsight, things seem to have tapered off in terms of lunar exploration. To date, the narrative of our lunar endeavors is defined by a series of stops and starts, which reflects a much broader pattern seen in many human undertakings. Once the goal of being first is achieved, whether it be first to climb the highest peak, first to break an important sports record or simply being the first on the Moon, there is often a collective diminishing of the initial drive that often spurred them to the achievement. Proving this point, the Soviets didn’t even bother to put their own cosmonaut on the lunar surface after the U.S. had done so.

Now, today, it might be time to stop seeing those who followed in the footsteps of others as mere afterthoughts to a record already broken. It’s time we reframe these narratives to notice the seconds as much as the firsts, as they reinforce the breakthroughs by proving that these feats were not singular miracles but a product of human tenacity and spirit.

It’s time we reframe these narratives to notice the seconds as much as the firsts, as they reinforce the breakthroughs by proving that these feats were not singular miracles but a product of human tenacity and spirit. The seconds validate the path forged by the firsts and demonstrate that extraordinary feats are within the reach of more than one lone trailblazing individual. By recognizing the seconds, we acknowledge that history is shaped not only by the moment of first achievements, but also by those who follow, replicate, and even surpass the original.

While not everyone will partake in a monumental undertaking affecting human history forever, it is worth noting that being able to feel pride in being second is still very much an advantage in ordinary life. For example, consider the life of a student who consistently gets the second-highest grade in her class, and is content with it. This student, while perhaps overshadowed by the top achievers, is a worthy reminder that being second is not the end of the world, and, most importantly, does in no way diminish your own accomplishments. Achieving second place doesn’t mean falling behind, instead it highlights a different form of success. It’s a testament to dedication and a sense of understanding that a good effort isn’t defined by placing first.





After all, perhaps Scott would have been a little less disheartened if he could have found it within him to accept that him being second was still a huge achievement, independent of his rival Amundsen's expedition. As mentioned previously, this lesson extends far beyond historical feats and into our personal lives, whether it be in academics, professional endeavors or your own personal challenges. In a world fixated on winners and firsts, standing on the second step of the podium still means you have outperformed countless others and perhaps even your previous self, and, in the grand narrative of human achievement, isn't it time we appropriately recognize this?

BREAKING

THE

LOOP

Theodor Westerlund,
Photography by Karina Drozdova
& Mikko Haapenniemi

You get up, eat breakfast. You go to work, come home. You have dinner, do some chores, take a little break, go to bed, and then do it all over again. Repeating the same day over and over again. This Groundhog Day-esque reality is real life for many, and if it is not this exact routine, it is something similar. After a while, you start noticing it. You begin to think about yourself and your habits and realize that you are just going through the motions, not really living but just moving through life without purpose or excitement.

Eternal Recurrence:

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche analyses this concept in his book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where he proposes his idea of “Eternal Recurrence”. In his work, Nietzsche asks us to imagine our lives over and over again, exactly as they are, with all the joys and sorrows, triumphs and failures, repeated infinitely. He challenges the individual to consider whether they would be willing to live their life repeatedly in its entirety. This concept serves as a thought experiment designed to provoke a deep reflection on the value of one’s life. Nietzsche is interested in whether a person could embrace their life to the extent that they would affirm and welcome its repetition.

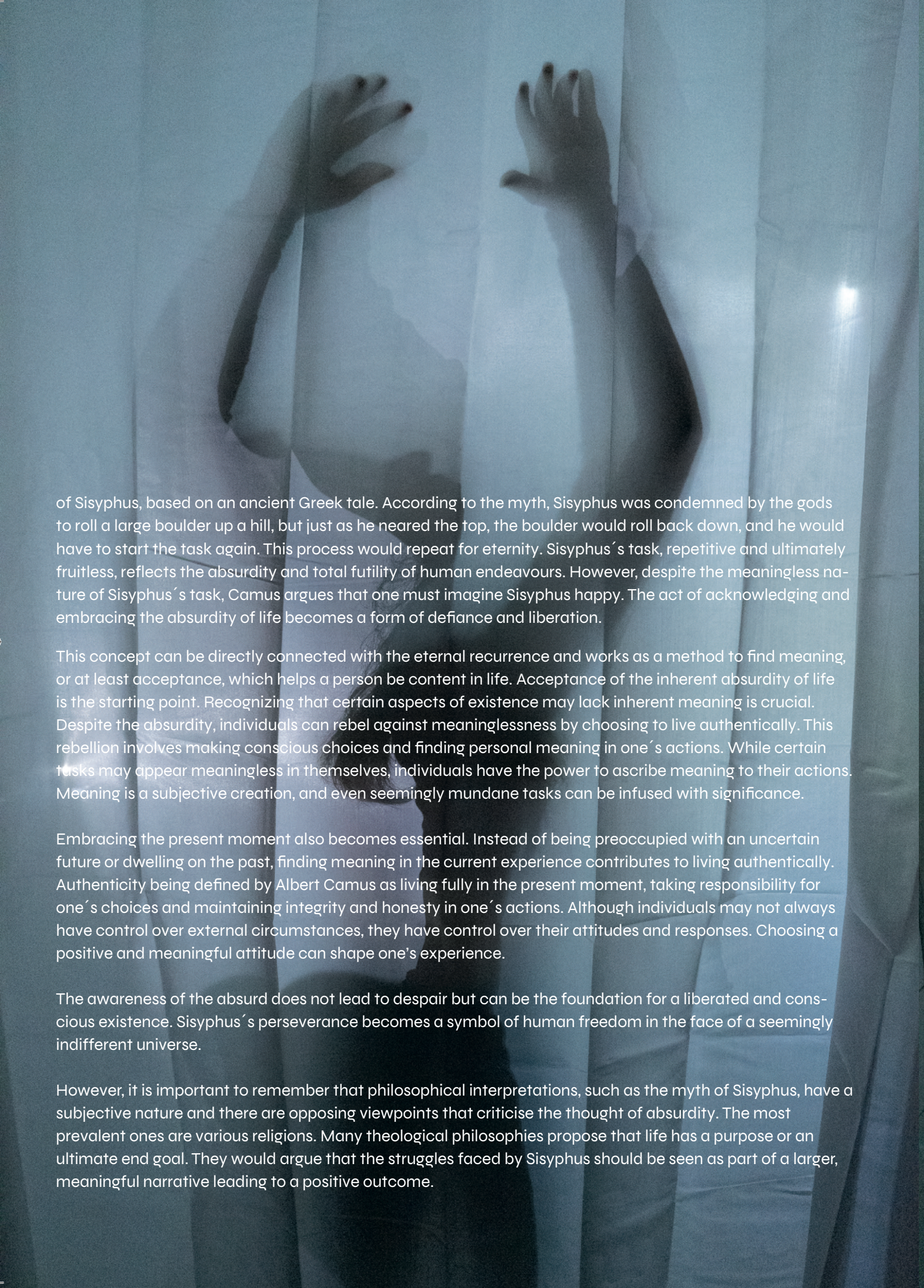
Nietzsche proposes this idea as a response to the philosophical view of Nihilism: “The belief that rejects or denies the existence of inherent meaning, purpose, or value in life”. Embracing the eternal recurrence is a way for Nietzsche to challenge individuals to actively create meaning in their lives. If one accepts the idea that their lives will be repeated infinitely, it becomes crucial to make choices and engage in actions that are worth repeating.

However, eternal recurrence is just an idea and not a solution. Nietzsche wants us to be aware of the actions we make in our life and to “live a life worth living” so that you would be content if it were to be repeated. But in order to find ideas of how this meaning can be created we need to look elsewhere. Below, two ideas are presented that explore how meaning can be found and making sure actions are aligned with purpose.

Embracing the Absurd

In 1942, French philosopher Albert Camus wrote an essay titled *The Myth*



A person wearing a white long-sleeved shirt is seen from the chest up, with their hands pressed against a glass surface. The person's face is partially visible, looking out. The background is a bright, overcast sky. The lighting is soft and diffused, creating a contemplative mood.

of Sisyphus, based on an ancient Greek tale. According to the myth, Sisyphus was condemned by the gods to roll a large boulder up a hill, but just as he neared the top, the boulder would roll back down, and he would have to start the task again. This process would repeat for eternity. Sisyphus's task, repetitive and ultimately fruitless, reflects the absurdity and total futility of human endeavours. However, despite the meaningless nature of Sisyphus's task, Camus argues that one must imagine Sisyphus happy. The act of acknowledging and embracing the absurdity of life becomes a form of defiance and liberation.

This concept can be directly connected with the eternal recurrence and works as a method to find meaning, or at least acceptance, which helps a person be content in life. Acceptance of the inherent absurdity of life is the starting point. Recognizing that certain aspects of existence may lack inherent meaning is crucial. Despite the absurdity, individuals can rebel against meaninglessness by choosing to live authentically. This rebellion involves making conscious choices and finding personal meaning in one's actions. While certain tasks may appear meaningless in themselves, individuals have the power to ascribe meaning to their actions. Meaning is a subjective creation, and even seemingly mundane tasks can be infused with significance.

Embracing the present moment also becomes essential. Instead of being preoccupied with an uncertain future or dwelling on the past, finding meaning in the current experience contributes to living authentically. Authenticity being defined by Albert Camus as living fully in the present moment, taking responsibility for one's choices and maintaining integrity and honesty in one's actions. Although individuals may not always have control over external circumstances, they have control over their attitudes and responses. Choosing a positive and meaningful attitude can shape one's experience.

The awareness of the absurd does not lead to despair but can be the foundation for a liberated and conscious existence. Sisyphus's perseverance becomes a symbol of human freedom in the face of a seemingly indifferent universe.

However, it is important to remember that philosophical interpretations, such as the myth of Sisyphus, have a subjective nature and there are opposing viewpoints that criticise the thought of absurdity. The most prevalent ones are various religions. Many theological philosophies propose that life has a purpose or an ultimate end goal. They would argue that the struggles faced by Sisyphus should be seen as part of a larger, meaningful narrative leading to a positive outcome.



Escaping the Kafkaesque Reality

The Czech author Franz Kafka explored a nightmarish world in his books *The Trial* and *Metamorphosis*. A Kafkaesque reality is, however, reality for many. It is a system with complex bureaucratic structures and the people within these structures often find themselves trapped, powerless, alienated, and struggling to navigate the bureaucratic systems that seem hostile. It is a meaningless reality with repeated actions.

The works of Kafka offer us insight into how we can escape this Kafkaesque structure and propose more active measures on how we can work with eternal recurrence, compared to Albert Camus. In his book *The Trial*, Kafka writes that challenging the assumptions and norms of oppressive systems can be a way to assert personal agency (i.e., critical thinking and asserting one's rights). He says that in Kafkaesque societies, individuals often face situations where authority figures make decisions without clear explanations or justifications. Questioning authority works as a way to seek clarity and not accepting things at face value. This also allows for transparency and individuals can demand a clear understanding of the rules and processes that impact their lives.

Further, Kafka highlights the dehumanizing effects of oppressive bureaucratic systems. He says that the awareness of one's dignity and humanity is a crucial aspect of maintaining personal freedom in

Kafkaesque environments. Like Albert Camus, Kafka mentions the absurdity of bureaucratic processes and says that acknowledging the absurdity and irrationality of systems, while maintaining one's integrity, is necessary in order to withhold personal morale, values and self-respect.

As with the myth of Sisyphus, there are also opposing views to the thought of Kafkaesque realities. Critics often argue that bureaucratic structures are necessary for maintaining order and efficiency in society and therefore criticise Kafka for exaggerating reality and portraying an inaccurate representation. They argue that a pragmatic view would be to acknowledge the challenges of bureaucracy but see them as practical necessities for managing large-scale societal functions.

When being trapped in a loop of repetitive existence, Nietzsche's eternal recurrence reminds us that our actions bear meaning. That if our lives were to be repeated, we must be happy with its repetition. Countless philosophical ideas have emerged trying to answer the question regarding meaning and even though none is without opposing views, the two mentioned in this text give a nuanced viewpoint on the question of eternal recurrence. The Sisyphean task, symbolizing the struggle against the absurdity of relentless routine, urges us to find fulfilment and meaning in the actions that we undertake. And amidst the Kafkaesque complexities of bureaucratic entanglement and oppressive systems, the call to question authority, preserving personal dignity, and resisting dehumanization become crucial instruments in breaking free from the shackles of monotonous cycles.



E C O N O M I C S

- frozen in time?

Lydia Löthman,
Design by Hana Norder

I recently read a feature in The Guardian titled “The new leftists economy”, in which author Andy Becket writes about how modern progressive voices are criticizing the academic discipline of economics. While economists conventionally focus on maximizing profits and boosting economic growth, the societal discussion has shifted increasingly towards issues related to sustainability and inequality. Becket writes about how intellectuals within economics are being accused of failing to account for these increasingly important topics and even being a driving force behind oppression and climate change, leading some to deem economics as irrelevant or even harmful.

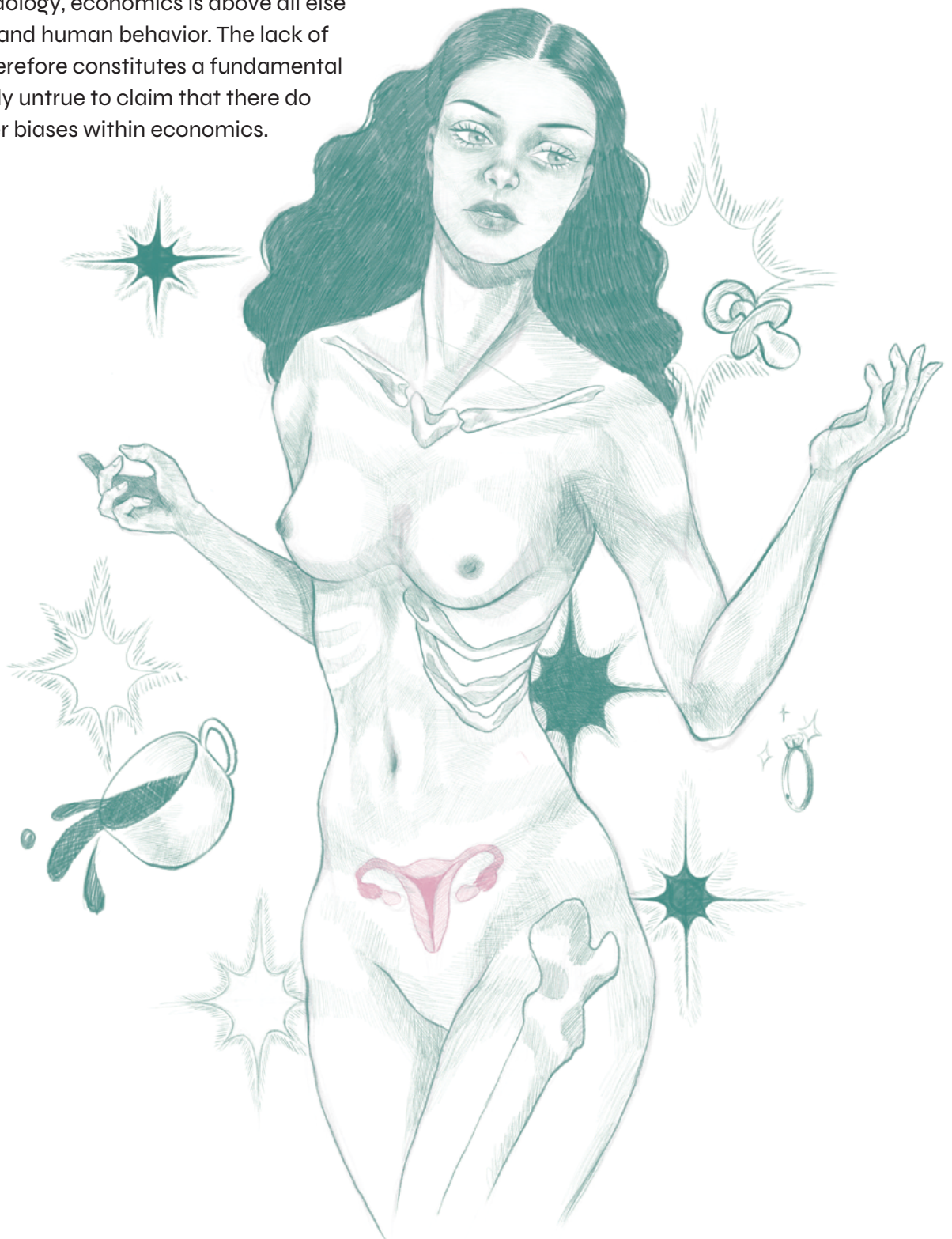
As someone who has spent a good portion of my academic career studying economics, I truly comprehend the critiques. My courses in economics sharply differ from those in political science which include and highlight perspectives that have long been neglected, such as gender inequality, as early as the first semester.

In the book Gender perspectives on economics authors Boschini, Jonung and Persson argue that economics departments at Swedish universities should include more gender perspectives in research and education. Gender perspectives were essentially non-existent in economics until 1990, decades after adjacent disciplines, and are still lacking.

They claim that the inclusion of gender perspectives would improve the economic analysis and make it more relevant for larger parts of the population. They also believe that it would make the subject more inclusive for women. Even though the numbers have started to increase in recent years, economics as an academic discipline is still facing a vast diversity problem with only 17 percent of professors identifying as female in 2019.

It could be argued that the lack of feminist perspectives could be explained by a general shift within economics. During the last couple of decades, the field has drifted further away from the social sciences where gender perspectives are highly present, towards mathematics and data science where an intersectional outlook has generally been deemed as less relevant. For instance, at Lund University, the "Faculty of economy" ("Ekonomiska fakulteten") was housed within the Faculty of Social science for the majority of its history. It only gained independent faculty status in 2004, marked by a growing emphasis on programming and data analytics.

Despite the methodology, economics is above all else a study of humans and human behavior. The lack of intersectionality therefore constitutes a fundamental problem. It is equally untrue to claim that there do not exist any gender biases within economics.



In 2012, the journalist Katrine Marçal published *Who cooked Adam Smith's dinner*, a feminist critique of traditional economic theory. She argues that economists systematically have erased women from the analysis, effectively distorting the results.

This has been the case ever since Adam Smith founded the modern discipline of economics by the publication of *The wealth of nations* in 1776. Even though many centuries have passed since, several of the fundamental principles remain.

At the core of the study of economics is the concept of the economic man, or *Homo economicus*. The concept is a model of human behavior that assumes rationality and strict utility maximization. This is not only assumed to be a correct interpretation of human nature but also an absolute prerequisite for an efficient society. But as Katrine Marçal points out, the traits of the *Homo economicus* originate from traditional male stereotypes that exclude both non-men and the men who do not relate to them, with the risk of excluding values such as equality and emotional well-being.

Katrine Marçal also points out that traditional economic models often neglect the unpaid work that is done within the household, traditionally by women. This causes a skewed perception of economic behavior as well as an undervaluation of classic measurements such as the GDP which summarizes the value of all goods and services in the economy. Since the success of the economy is measured by GDP, much of the female work effort will continue to be underrated.

The radical but well-argued conclusion of the book is that the patriarchal foundations of economics are a driving force behind an economic policy in which many suffer. By including fairness, relationships, and care in the economic analysis, we can create better societies.

Nevertheless, indications of change are emerging. An increased interest in progressive perspectives is reflected in the course catalog at SSE. At the master's level, an elective in gender economy is currently being offered as well as a course in behavioral economics which explores models of human behavior, beyond *homo economicus*. The enthusiasm of students and the responsiveness of universities provide optimism for the future.

Featured sources:

Andy Beckett, "The new left economy" <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jun/25/the-new-left-economics-how-a-network-of-thinkers-is-transforming-capitalism>

Anne D. Boschini Christina Jonung Inga Persson, Genusperspektiv på nationalekonomi

Katrine Marçal, Who Cooked Adam Smith's dinner?





ALEA IACTA EST. THE DIE IS CAST.

Martin Sandberg, Photography by Wilma Geust

These immortalized words were uttered by the legendary Julius Caesar as he crossed the river Rubicon with a roman legion, defying Rome and igniting a civil war, eventually leading him to become a key player in human history. His words have often been interpreted as an acknowledgment that he was at a point of no return, where he no longer would be able to back out of a civil war. But maybe, in another world, these words were uttered by a player who wanted to make the game master aware that he had rolled the die for his attack roll. Judging by his subsequent success, he seems to have rolled quite high...

Leaving the Romans behind, we do know that the birth of the modern roleplaying game occurred 50 years ago, in 1974, when the first edition of Dungeon and Dragons were published. Even though some aspects of roleplaying have developed quite a lot since then – which will be expanded upon below – the core of these games have narrowly evaded having to change. Rapid technological development has not been able to significantly change this. To this day, the essential tools for a roleplaying game remain: a paper, a pen, books for the game master, and some dice. One reason might be that the game only exists in the shared imagination of those playing. Thus, it is only the tip of an iceberg that is visible. Everything else is hidden beneath the surface. Compared to other cultural phenomena such as movies, books and videogames, roleplaying stands out in that it does not provide the consumer with a detailed description. Rather, it provides a rough outline which the players then collectively fill with details from their own imagination, therefore giving a greater agency to the creativity of the consumer.

It might seem very counterintuitive that a concept that has remained largely unchanged for 50 years has become a modern success story. The exposure of roleplaying in other media has been a catalyzer for this development. The most noteworthy case is the high importance of Dungeons and Dragons held in Stranger Things. Furthermore, new media possibilities thanks to modern technology have proven perfect for products based on roleplaying. Critical Role is the best example of this. Consisting of professional actors and seasoned roleplayers, they livestream their roleplaying sessions. The YouTube channel took off immediately, and is still viewed by hundreds of thousands. Their success has inspired a multitude of similar creators. Together, the increased media presence of roleplaying games has created a greater awareness and interest in roleplaying. Honor among thieves, the well-received movie based on DnD can be seen as an indicator of the new level of commercial success.

Another reason for the current success of roleplaying today, is that the risk associated with playing seems to have decreased. During the early life of roleplaying, the games had not been polished into the streamlined products of today. One key element that had not been polished away was the apparent satanism and demon-worshiping some worried citizens claim the game to be endorsing. In fact, a session of roleplaying was in many ways to be seen as a satanic ritual, where one unlucky roll of the die could lead to the summoning of a demon, not only in the game, but also in reality. By playing, you put your own morality at great risk, as the game was based on

“demonology, witchcraft, voodoo, murder, rape, blasphemy, suicide, assassination, insanity, sex perversion, homosexuality, prostitution, satanic type rituals, gambling, barbarism, cannibalism, sadism, desecration, demon summoning, necromantics, divination and other teachings”

according to Patricia Pullin, founder of the organization Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons and one of its strongest critics. The risk culminated during the 1980s and the 1990s, a period known as the satanic panic. It was characterized by growing concern that devil worshippers - such as fans of heavy metal



and roleplayers - across the country were performing satanic rituals with horrific elements. Investigations during the time revealed that roleplaying games could thus be the reason for a multitude of disappearances, murders, suicides, and the decay of society. Today, the morality destroying demons seem to have evolved together with technology and migrated to video games, meaning that roleplayers no longer need to hide their dice as if it were a gun when they sneak out to play. However, there are still dangerous elements to playing that you should be aware of. In 2010, a court in the US upheld a ban of Dungeons and Dragons in a prison. This was done to maintain safety and not endanger rehabilitation of inmates, as roleplaying was said to promote gang-related activity, violence, competitive hostility, and addictive escape behaviors. You should therefore be cautious when roleplaying, and immediately take a step back if you experience an increase in violence or constant escape attempts. However, you do not need to worry about the inmates, as the Judge recommended them to instead play other games such as Risk - a game well known for creating friendships and feelings of gratitude.

Throughout this article, I have primarily used Dungeons and Dragons as an example as it is the oldest and most well-known out of all roleplaying games. However, it is not the only one. At the beginning, all games had a very narrow focus on slaughtering evil creatures in a setting relatively similar to the Lord of the Rings. Usually these games were based on a point system requiring a mind on the level of Håkan Lyckeberg's, in order to calculate how much damage a simple attack dealt. These games were often highly deadly (for the characters, the players are only gambling their mortal souls of course) and did not put much emphasis on the story of the game. Today, the commercial success has led to a multitude of new, more accessible roleplaying systems being published. Therefore, you should not think that roleplaying is not for you just because you do not like fantasy or slaughtering orcs. There are games based on fantasy, sci-fi, almost all successful movies or tv-series, or just our ordinary world. Some of these games rely heavily on battle, but there are also games where you never even mention a weapon.



Furthermore, how these games are played varies greatly between groups - as so much of the game is playing in the realm of imagination, there is a lot of room to form the game according to your wishes. Different groups thus play differently. Some dress up as their characters and put on amazing theatrical performances when speaking as their characters. Others just want to roll some dice and see what happens. Some are super serious; others just want to fool around with friends. Some play as heroes; others as villains. It is important to note that even though the theatrical approach dominates in media portrayals, it is by no means a necessary or mandatory part. There are even games such as Alice is missing, where you must remain silent throughout the entire game. The high flexibility of roleplaying games also means that they can be used to explore things you otherwise would not be able to. This could be the world of your favorite tv-series, a specific time era or a particular kind of situation or dilemma. But it could also be more personal issues related to exploring your identity, either through playing with an emphasis on something you think might be a part of your identity, or by playing as something very different compared to you. Clearly the world of roleplaying has something for everyone. So, what are you waiting for, adventurer?

Fact box - roleplaying for new adventures

Have you never really understood what roleplaying games are? Consider yourself lucky, because here is a very brief explanation! They are usually played by a group of friends. Everyone except for one controls their own player character, who they design themselves. Each character has a set of stats and skills that develop during the game. Performing something with your character usually involves the rolling of dice, to check how well you succeed (or, way too often, how badly you fail). Usually, the characters strive to complete some sort of quest that might be a part of a campaign that goes on for (real life) years. The one who does not control their own character is the dungeon master - the god of the game. With the help of formal rulebooks they rule the game and play all non player characters. Furthermore they control the narrative of the campaign, often with the help of published campaigns. However, roleplaying is not strictly bound to published rules or campaigns - what actually happens is up to the players and the dungeon master.



Mar 2024

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Deloitte.



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Handelsbanken



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