

Best of
Vanguard
2017



Stowe

Best of Vanguard 2017

Introduction

This magazine is a small selection of the many excellent written projects submitted by Third Form Stoics as the culmination of their Vanguard work for the Lent Term 2017. This work was brought together in just a term, with only one 80 minute lesson per week.

The aims of the project were to get pupils to engage in more depth with an academic enquiry of their choosing, and in doing so develop and display their skills around project planning, self-monitoring and reflection, independent academic research, referencing and drafting and redrafting a longer piece of written prose. The pupils designed their own title or question, used a Gantt chart to plan and monitor their progress, offered critique to their peers and were encouraged to reflect on their own work in weekly blogs. The final lesson, when individuals presented their work to each other, saw Stoics animatedly discussing their research around topics such as social media, graffiti, sports psychology, gun laws, the problem of suffering and illegal deforestation.

It has been fantastic to see so many pupils so engaged and taking such pride in their work. I hope you enjoy this selection!



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“To save a man’s life against his will is the same as killing him” - Horace

To what extent is euthanasia justifiable?

By Barnaby Peppiatt (Chatham)

Euthanasia is a topic that has been subject to, and will continue to be subject to, intense debate. As Horace once famously said: ‘To save a man’s life against his will is the same as killing him’. It provokes strong emotions in people and there are convincing arguments on both sides. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the extent to which euthanasia is justifiable.

To be able to answer this question we must first define what the term ‘Euthanasia’ actually means. According to the Oxford dictionary, the definition of euthanasia is, ‘An act of killing someone painlessly, especially: to relieve his or her suffering’. The word is derived from two Greek words - ‘eu’ meaning good and ‘thanatos’ death, together being, ‘Good Death’. When a person is in a state of pain or seemingly never ending suffering, euthanasia can take place and that suffering can be relieved, providing a long, and perhaps even painful death opposed to a short and painless one. Most would say that there is no question about it; obviously the latter would be the better choice. However, there are certain complications that surround the process of euthanising a patient, specifically if the patient is not in a fit state to make the decision themselves. This topic is widely debated in medicine and is considered a very grey area. The only country in the EU where euthanasia is legal is Switzerland, and it is available with a company named ‘Dignitas’, meaning dignity in Latin; their message being ‘To die with dignity.’¹ The state of Oregon in the US is also one of the other few places where euthanasia is legal, although it is only legal for patients to request to receive lethal drugs from a physician. The first part of this essay, then, will explore the arguments for euthanasia and following on from that, the arguments against euthanasia and the problems that revolve around it.



According to a survey conducted by the *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, one in three doctors are in support of euthanasia.² Given that it is illegal in the UK, what might account for this high proportion of doctors being in support of euthanasia? A very strong argument is that people have the right to die and it should be their decision as a human being. A debate within bioethics is over whether it should be considered a universal right, or if it should only apply under certain circumstances, such as terminal illness. Many medical professionals believe that a patient with an incurable disease that renders them incapable of living a fulfilling life, e.g. brain

damage that puts them in a constant vegetative state, should be allowed to exercise their right to die. There would seem to be no reason to refuse this right, especially if they are in pain. Forcing them to be kept alive against their own will could even be ruled as torture.

Before the Suicide Act of 1961 was put in place, attempted suicide was illegal in the United Kingdom. Through this, the act of suicide was decriminalised in England and Wales.³ Therefore, those who had failed in the attempt to kill themselves were no longer prosecuted, although it did not legalise assisted suicide. Because of this act, it could be argued that if suicide is legal for a citizen without a medical condition, it must surely be legal for a citizen with a medical condition.

¹ To view their website: <http://www.dignitas.ch/?lang=en>.

² This was a survey conducted in 2007 with over 4,000 doctors. The study also found that around one in 200 deaths had been hastened by doctors giving patients certain drugs.

³ The text of sections 1 and 2 of this Act was enacted verbatim for Northern Ireland by sections 12 and 13 of the Criminal Justice Act of 1966. However, the Act did not apply to Scotland, as suicide was never an offence under Scots Law.

An interesting case to consider for this concerns Diane Pretty, a British woman who lived in Luton. She became well-known after being the focus of this debate. Several years before her death in 2002, she was diagnosed with motor neuron disease which made it impossible for her to move or communicate easily. This meant that she had to be looked after constantly by her husband and various nurses and doctors. Pretty wished to commit suicide, as she believed her life had got to a point where it wasn't worth living. As a result of this, she took her case to court and stated that under the Human Rights Act of 1998 it was discriminatory for suicide to be a legal option for those capable of committing it and illegal for those incapable.⁴ Furthermore, she continued to say that discrimination is illegal under both UK and European law. Her aim was to persuade the Director of Public Prosecutions to commit to not prosecute anybody involved in helping her to die. However, her case was turned down and she eventually died of her condition. This particular case is brought up continually when it is argued that we have a right to die. Diane Pretty's family believe that she would have died a much more peaceful death if it had been due to euthanasia, rather than due to her condition, and that it was her human right to choose that option.

If it is a human right to die, and a patient wants to die, then it could be argued that a doctor should be allowed to respect that decision and then assist the patient in euthanising them. However, as mentioned above, that is not legal in the UK and would be classed as assisted suicide. That doctor would be arrested and have to face the charges for that crime. A doctor's job is to fight for the life of a patient, so surely they should fight for a patient to die, if that is what the patient wants and they are in a considerable amount of pain and suffering?

A very common pro-euthanasia argument is that terminally ill patients are going to die at some point, therefore the most humane option would be to euthanise that patient, and it would be putting them out of a considerable amount of pain and suffering. It would be almost inhumane to keep them alive only to drag on for a few more weeks of suffering. On average, more than 2.7 million animals are euthanised by vets across the US every year.⁵ It would be suggested by pro-euthanasia activists that if it is viewed as humane to euthanise animals, it must surely be viewed as humane to euthanise humans. Even animals like apes are euthanised in zoos when they are experiencing great or long term suffering.

This final point we should consider is active and passive euthanasia and how it is suggested that if one is legal, the other must also be. There are two types of euthanasia within medicine, active euthanasia being the most common one. In addition to this, however, there is passive euthanasia which is essentially when a patient dies because a doctor either doesn't do something necessary to keep the patient alive or when they stop doing something that is keeping the patient alive. For example, switching off the life-support machine or not carrying out a life-extending operation. As we have already established, active euthanasia is not legal, yet passive euthanasia is.

James Rachels, an American philosopher who specialised in ethics, believes that there is no moral difference between the two.⁶ His main argument is the analogy of a man planning a murder.⁷ The planned murder is one of a child in a bath. The man plans to kill the child by drowning him in a bath and would attempt to make it look accidental. However, when he enters the bathroom, he sees the child slip, hit his head, and fall face down in the water. The child drowns all by himself and the man just stands by watching. His argument is that in our society, the man would not be seen as a better person, from of moral point of view. So, in that analogy, if the man is replaced by a doctor, and the child the patient, it should surely be seen as murder.

The vast majority of religions are anti-euthanasia. Some of these include Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. The Church of England, for example, states that, 'We do not accept that the right to personal

⁴ The Act states that, 'The Act makes it unlawful for any public body to act in a way which is incompatible with the Convention, unless the wording of any other primary legislation provides no other choice.' This is essentially saying that the wording of the act can be 'twisted' to a certain extent to be compatible with the needs of the particular patient.

⁵ This figure is according to the ASPCA. 1.4 million of these were dogs and 1.3 million cats.

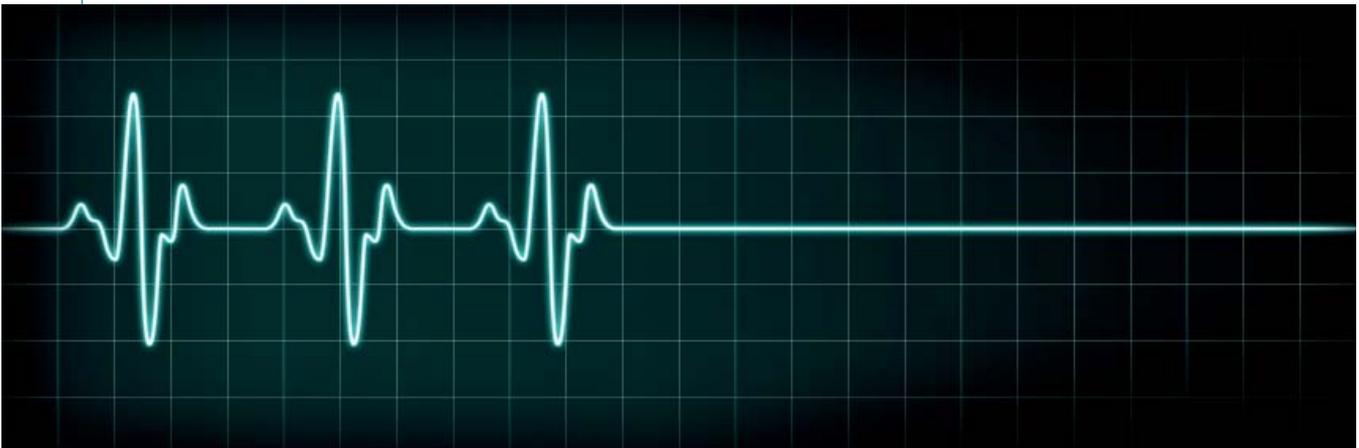
⁶ Over the years of his life, he argued for moral vegetarianism and animal rights, affirmative action, and euthanasia.

⁷ This analogy was extracted from 'Active and Passive Euthanasia', which first appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

autonomy requires any change in the law in order to allow euthanasia.⁸ Christian belief puts quite a strong block against euthanasia, as it is the official religion of England. Christians are mostly against euthanasia, their arguments usually being based on the beliefs that life is given by God, and that human beings are made in God's image. Some also emphasise the importance of not interfering with the natural process of death.

It can be argued that euthanasia gives too much power to doctors. According to an Age Concern dossier in 2000, 'Do Not Resuscitate' orders are more commonly used for older people and, in the United States, alcohol misusers, and, most shockingly, black people.⁹ This suggests that doctors have stereotypes of who is not worth saving, and this would suggest that it would be a very dangerous thing to give doctors the power to be allowed to decide when people die. Like all of us, doctors are also human, and occasionally their own decision-making may be affected, consciously or unconsciously, by their degree of tiredness or the way they feel about the patient. According to Alexander Capron, a leading US health lawyer, he would not like to have to guess whether, 'the physician coming into my hospital room could be wearing the white coat of the healer ... or the black hood of the executioner.' Their diagnosis for the patient may also be wrong, and with the constant advances in medical research, this century's main desire has been to develop treatments for previously fatal illnesses, and that will continue to happen in the future.

Many people have argued, very convincingly, that the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia would undermine medical research. When the focus changes from curing the condition to killing the individual with the condition, it completely undermines the job of the doctor, which, it can be argued, is to save lives. NHS funds would then be diverted into the 'search and destroy' strategy, instead of into the research needed to instead try and cure those diseases.¹⁰



If euthanasia is legalised there will be further advances in this at the expense of research into cures. Oregon, as was mentioned earlier, has legalised euthanasia. However, in a report on end-of-life care, it was found that less than 20 percent of their hospitals had palliative care programs, and they were awarded an 'E' rating. This alone shows that, because it is cheaper to euthanise a patient, it would be incredibly dangerous to legalise euthanasia, and it could completely diminish palliative care.

Many people believe that the legalisation of euthanasia would lead to pressure on elderly relatives whose families, not having their best interests at heart, might want them to be euthanised. Equally elderly patients might be under moral pressure to free up medical resources, or for organs that could be given up for organ transplantation. In The Netherlands, for example, around one in five patients who choose euthanasia may be influenced by family circumstances.¹¹ When a patient is in a state where death is

⁸ In 1995, Pope John Paul II, also mentioned that euthanasia is a 'Grave violation of the law of God'.

⁹ BBC. (2014). Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/euthanasia/>.

¹⁰ This is called 'ktenology' - the science of putting someone to death.

¹¹ This figure is according to a study conducted by Professor Theo Boer, a leading expert on the ethics of euthanasia.

very likely, or certain it is very expensive in terms of medical care, euthanasia could be seen as a way of relieving pressure on medical resources or family finances. The cost of the drug required for euthanasia is less than £50, which is much cheaper than continuing treatment for many medical conditions. The cost for the continued treatment would most likely be taken out of money that is to be inherited, or family funds. The elderly relative may feel worthless and a burden on their family.

If euthanasia was available, the patient may pressure themselves into asking for euthanasia, or the family themselves may put pressure on the relative to ask for euthanasia. It is argued that, if voluntary euthanasia was legalised, it would almost certainly lead to many cases of involuntary euthanasia. For instance, take an elderly person in a nursing home who can barely understand a breakfast menu. That person is asked to sign a form consenting to be killed. Is this voluntary, or involuntary? And how exactly would this be prevented by the law? At the moment the overall prohibition on euthanasia stands in the way. Once one signature can sign away a person's life, we get into some very serious problems.

Many hospitals and care centres believe that proper palliative care means euthanasia is not needed. They would argue that competent palliative care is enough to prevent a person feeling any need to contemplate euthanasia. As founder of the modern hospice movement, Dame Cicely Saunders said, 'You matter because you are you. You matter to the last moment of your life and we will do all we can to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.'

The World Health Organisation also states that palliative care, 'Affirms life and regards dying as a normal process; it neither hastens nor postpones death; it provides relief from pain and suffering; it integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of the patient.' Many people believe that good palliative care is the alternative to euthanasia, and if it was available to every patient, it would certainly reduce the desire for euthanasia.

The issue of euthanasia is one that is highly debated within medicine, as there is a vast number of different views on the subject. In the future, there will be many more arguments that will emerge on both sides of this ever progressing, ever developing debate, as medicine and society changes. For now, it is clear to see why much of the public are still undecided.

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“Some people become vandals because they want to make the world a better looking place.” - Banksy, Wall and Piece

Is graffiti art, or vandalism?

By Sofia Atkinson-Hieber (Nugent)

Introduction

Graffiti poses a complicated debate that is everlasting. Whether it is as a positive form of art, or as a negative form of vandalism, we see graffiti nearly every day. This essay will talk about the artistic side of graffiti, the view that these are big wondrous works of art; the different styles, such as tagging, or stencils; and the vandalistic side to graffiti, the side of crime, fines and jail sentences. This interests me, personally, as my parents are both art/antique dealers. It may interest others as it is something seen and experienced at a daily basis.

Graffiti as aesthetic

Graffiti: writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place. Every single person who lives in, has lived in, or has visited a city has observed the colourful, provocative, yet illegal “vandalism” that is graffiti. But is it fair to say that it is a form of crime?

When most people think of graffiti, they think of “tags,” or a close-to-illegible writing of a person’s name or a swear word. While tags are probably the most popular form, graffiti as an art is much more than scarring someone else’s property out of spite. It can consist of a colourful mural with a message of importance, or a black and white stencil piece supporting gay rights. In each case, graffiti art makes a statement. Therefore, surely it is unfair to classify tagging alongside works of art as cared for as legal pieces in museums, such as the work of Banksy or Lady Pink?

“Based on aesthetic criteria, graffiti has to be considered an art form.”¹ Stowers writes this in his book *Graffiti as Art*, which supports the thesis of graffiti being art completely. He makes a separation between simple tags and more diverse and bigger pieces, explaining that tags have little aesthetic appeal and probably should not be considered art. However, it is such a thin line that defines the difference between them, that the government cannot draw it. Larger pieces require planning and thought and contain complex elements such as colour, composition and thoughtful meanings; while tagging consists of picking up a spray can and writing a word with no thought or planning, at times as an act of defacing.

However, after years of slowly being recognised as creating something more than illegal work, graffiti art has now been shown in various galleries in New York and London, and artists are now often commissioned and paid huge amounts to do legal murals and other work for art galleries. Stern Rockwell, an art critic, has said, “I appreciate art, and kids get it when they see it. The writers are working with color and developing a unique style. Either you like it or you don’t, but it’s art.”² He strongly believes graffiti is a form of art and he puts across his point of view very strongly through his book, though he also says that it is highly opinionated and biased, stating that he doesn’t appreciate gang-related tags as he considers them simple vandalism.

Styles of graffiti

Tagging is a very popular form of graffiti, it is also the least appealing and most “vandalistic”, as it is usually a rude word or an artist’s signature with no purpose or message. A popular way of tagging, called

¹ George C. Stowers (2004) *Graffiti as Art* (New York: Shutterstock) 24.

² Stern Rockwell (2009). *Graffiti Lives*. USA: New York University Press. 43. Rockwell currently runs graffmuseum.com and has very strong views on graffiti as an art.

issing, includes using a fire-extinguisher and emptying the carbon dioxide inside to replace it for spray or regular paint. This is used to reach high up platforms, usually reaching heights of nearly 6 meters. This is a difficult task, as it is close-to-impossible to keep your hand steady while holding the extinguisher and usually results in wavy and sloppy writing. As we see in Appendix 1, tagging is quite often done by a group of people, rather than just one alone. It is also often done in a rush and quite fast, so as to not get caught by the police.

Stencils are an alternate way street artists create an intricate piece of art quickly. When they make a stencil of the piece of art they want to create, they rapidly fill it in at the place they want it to be, therefore saving them time and giving them less chance of getting caught. Appendix 2 is one of the famous works of Banksy, showing that important messages can be shown through graffiti. Banksy is famous for using stencils. This comes into view as a more artistic form of graffiti.

'Pieces' are the most elaborate and complex graffiti works. They take hours or possibly days and require planning and thought, as they are much larger, usually covering whole walls. These are usually colourful and more labour intensive than other forms. The main issue with these are that they take time and effort and are usually performed under commission in legal situations, such as in Appendix 3, which is a mural painted on a wall in an aquarium in the USA. This is a more artistic form of graffiti, as with stencils.

Graffiti as hooliganism

Graffiti's artistic merits cannot be denied, however, graffiti is still a form of vandalism. Artists tag both public and private property, which becomes expensive for owners of property, business and land. Paying for graffiti cleanup in the US seems to be affecting the economy quite hugely, shown by a statement written on graffitihurts.org: "In 2006 Chicago budgeted \$6.5 million while Omaha, Neb. spends about \$100,000 annually"³. In addition to these statistics, graffiti vandals often steal their materials. Stealing spray paint and markers adds cost to businesses and to the overall cost of cleanup. The vandalism also affects transportation, as many people do not want to travel in subways or train stations that have been heavily spray painted.

Graffiti can also have a domino effect on areas. Heavily vandalized areas will experience increases in other sorts of crimes as well. Violence and gang-related crimes are most commonly associated with graffiti. In addition, since most taggers are males between 15 and 23, there is the issue that tagging may be a "gateway crime" and may lead the graffiti artists to more serious crimes, such as non-attendance to school or the use of drugs or alcohol. One of the main problems is when an area has a lot of graffiti, people begin to view it as a 'bad neighbourhood.' Nearby property value is likely to drop, while crime is likely to increase. Residents then grow to see graffiti as an eyesore. However, artists that follow through with all these negatives (above), can still have their art in galleries or museums as seen in appendix 4.

Conclusion

The people debating over whether graffiti should be classed as art or as vandalism are highly opinionated, with most of the information available being very biased. In conclusion, we might argue that there is no 'right or wrong' answer. Depending on what aim and purpose the piece has, it should be considered and judged accordingly. However, the line should be drawn in all fairness to the artists that create incredible pieces. Possibly we could draw it when an artist becomes known or respected, such as Banksy, or when it is not done in someone else's property. Maybe it should be a vote of the people, not the government, as they are the ones who see it. Possibly they should be able to decide if it stays or goes and how punishable it should be. As Sanchez states on his website, "The art aspect cannot survive without the illegality of the activity, and the vandalism would not be as worthwhile if the vandal was not truly accomplishing something provocative and beautiful."⁴ This implies that *graffiti is art through vandalism*.

³ Donalds, C. (2003). *Vandalism*. Available: graffitihurts.org. Last accessed 23rd Feb 2017.

⁴ Art critique and owner of an Art Gallery in Amsterdam.

Appendixes:



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To what extent is reduced privacy on the internet a bad thing?

By Hugo Paynter Bryant (Grenville)

I believe that companies on the internet are not respecting our privacy in the way they should. However, I also think that there could be benefits to this lack of privacy. In this essay, I will be interpreting the word 'privacy' as, 'a state in which you or your information is not being observed'.

When Tim Berners-Lee made the internet we know today, he decided the internet should be 'free', but at what cost? For example, Facebook¹, (one of the biggest, if not *the* biggest social media site) is, "selling users information and giving it to companies who then send user specific advertisements to you, making you buy more", according to internet guru Adam Conover². There are benefits to person-specific ads, such as general convenience. For instance, if you were an unemployed accountant and you were looking to apply for jobs online, business social media sites such as LinkedIn³ could take your private information, such as which businesses you looked at recently and tried to apply for, and then send you a tailor-made advert advertising a company which needs accountants. However, this can have adverse effects. For instance, Facebook can go too far into your private information and even find out things about you that even you didn't know. For example, a woman named Julia Angwin was browsing Facebook and their algorithm had found out her sexual orientation and a "gay cruise" advertisement popped up at work and all of her colleagues knew when she didn't want them too. I believe this presents a clear problem with social media and search engines such as Facebook and Google knowing too much about us.

In addition there have been headlines from outlets such as 'NBC News', which argue that, 'online privacy fears are real'. These news articles could be seen as just a way to grab the reader's attention and the content may be exaggerated, however the baseline facts are true. In one article the writer explains how, "The Net was born as an open research tool, and thus was never designed to allow privacy or security."⁴ In some cases, medical files which are supposedly 'private' are easily accessible on forums or searchable on most engines. It can be devastating to relationships and social status if personal medical information can be accessed this easily.

Even the internet privacy companies are being stolen from. Richard Smith, one of the leading experts in internet privacy, has had his credentials stolen, including his bank details.⁵ It took him a year to recuperate his losses; the person who stole his identity was using his fax and home phone number when filling in his billing details, so Smith lost a lot of money, as well as losing a good reputation. This identity theft illustrates how easy it is for internet hackers to steal your details and use them against you. Maybe this could have been avoided if we had more privacy on the internet.

Books such as '1984' describe a dystopian society.⁶ Everyone lives in fear of the 'thought police'. If anyone thinks for themselves or against the government they are sentenced to death. It is easy to relate this story into our own world. We can see the internet as the 'thought police' and for 'The Government' read the big companies such as Facebook (and the companies that Facebook sells our information to), spying on the people and watching their every move.

¹ Created Feb 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg

² From the TV show "Adam Ruins Everything" on TruTV. See also Adam Conover. (5 Dec 2016). *Why Facebook Isn't Free*. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3rS7I6Xyz8>. Last accessed 16th Feb 2017. Also Adam Conover. (7 Dec 2016). *The Terrifying Cost of "Free" Websites*. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pFX2P7JLwA&t=9s>. Last accessed 20th Feb 2017.

³ The work version of Facebook

⁴ Bob Sullivan. (2013). *Online Privacy Fears*. Available: <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/3078835/t/online-privacy-fears-are-real/#WIhoGbaLSt8>. Last accessed 9th Feb 2017.

⁵ Chief Technical Officer at Non-profit Privacy Foundation

⁶ '1984', by George Orwell

This can, however, sometimes be a good thing. There are countless accounts and even more unheard of times MI5 has saved us from attack just by watching chat forums and social media⁷. For instance, the Telegraph has released an article featuring the Chief of MI5⁸. He has been saying that there have been six recent terrorist attacks failed thanks to the British agents and how they used social media and the internet to help them. Parker continues on to say that terrorists carry around smartphones just as we do, they use the internet to bolster their number and get their radical views heard. MI5 have just announced that, “social media companies must reveal details of terrorist plans to their agency.”⁹ Social media companies such as WhatsApp have a special encryption mechanism that makes it almost impossible to hack and view private messages. This is brilliant for terrorists, but a problem for our protection agencies. So now, with this new law, more terrorist attacks can be stopped.



It's not just terrorist plans that Protection Agencies can track down, but also the terrorists' location and other details. There have been many cases where MI5 and GCHQ can find terrorists by just tracking their IP address. However, it's not just big government agencies that can track down people. "Privacy Advocate" Ian Oxman recently bought a car. The car was sold by a third party company, such as We-Buy-Any-Car. The car had a dent in the left door. Oxman wanted to know if the damage was accidental, so, "armed with Vehicle Identification Number", he managed to track down the original owner and ask. A scary (in terms of anyone being able to find you) and reassuring (in terms of the government being able to track down terrorists) thought¹⁰.

Why is our privacy on the internet less than it should be? I think the problem is with us. If a company were to actually make their website completely private, what would they gain? Nothing. This is why companies don't keep our information private. They make more money if they just sell it. If we would fully appreciate the companies that did keep our information safe, maybe more companies would actually do it.

In conclusion, I believe that the advantages don't outweigh the drawbacks to a lack of internet privacy. Tailor-made adverts can ruin or greatly benefit your life. Internet tracking is scary, but can be useful. Identity theft is always a concern when on the internet. Maybe the internet and its spies will bring on a dystopian world, as portrayed in '1984' and how then will the government's use of the internet to track down terrorists benefit our lives?

⁷ MI5. (unknown date of publication). *Cyber*. Available: <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/cyber>. Last accessed 7th Mar 2017.

⁸ Tom Whitehead and Danny Boyle. (17 Sep 2015). *MI5 Chief Andrew Parker: Social media companies must reveal details of terror threats*. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11870917/Six-terror-attacks-foiled-in-year-as-MI5-head-warns-plots-at-three-decade-high.html>. Last accessed 18 Feb 2017.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ This is discussed in the article by Bob Sullivan. (2013). *Online Privacy Fears*.

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To what extent does palm oil affect orangutans in Borneo and Sumatra?

By Tilly Jones (Stanhope)

Borneo is a remote island in South-East Asia, off the coast of mainland Indonesia. The island is split into three sections; one belonging to Malaysia, one to Indonesia and the third is a small country called Brunei¹. Sumatra is a large Indonesian island lying south of the Malaysian peninsula. With these areas being located so close to the equator, the land is covered in dense rainforest, making it vulnerable to logging companies looking for valuable hardwoods and destruction for change of land use.

The rainforest is an area of rich plant and animal biodiversity, supporting thousands of different species, some of which are only found in Borneo and Sumatra. Orangutans are native to this tranquil island, and they are only found here and in Sumatra. These mammals belong to the large ape family and are relatives of humans; they are the creatures we supposedly evolved from.² Orangutans spend 90% of their time in the tree canopy, meaning they rarely come down to the forest floor. They are totally dependent on the forest for their survival. They are very intelligent animals. However, unlike many other monkey species, they like to be alone and take on the forests by themselves. For this reason, Borneo's rainforests are extremely important for their survival.



I live in Singapore and for the last few years each summer we have experienced the haze. This is when smoke from slash and burning of the rainforests in places such as Sumatra and Borneo drift across to Singapore and other neighbouring countries. It causes terrible air pollution, making the air difficult to breathe and the visibility becomes very poor. This triggered my interest in finding out more about the impacts of the palm oil industry on the rainforest and its wildlife.

Palm oil is a vegetable oil that is used in many of our everyday products to give a smooth look and keep things from melting. It can be used for food and non-food products. It has been around for over 5,000 years, however only recently has

it been in such high demand.³ It is in about 50% of everything in the supermarket, from shampoo to biscuits. Palm oil is extracted from the fruit that grows on palm trees, also known as *Elaeis Guineensis*.⁴ Indonesia and Malaysia are the highest producers of this substance, and Borneo is a key region for palm oil production in both the Indonesian and Malaysian parts of the island. Palm trees are grown in large plantations consisting of only palm plants in areas which were once dense rainforest. Vast areas of rainforest were destroyed to clear the land to make these plantations. This has been and continues to be one of the major causes of deforestation in Borneo and in Sumatra.

Deforestation is a growing problem of the 21st century. Large valuable trees are removed for their timber and the remaining habitat is slashed and often burned to clear the land. It is a non-sustainable method, as the trees being cut down are not being replaced with the same trees. The land is either left bare for subsistence farming by residents, or it is used for palm plantations. This can damage the ecosystem, having consequences to both animals and plants living there. Many of the plants and animals which depend on the rainforest habitat require a diversity of trees for different foods and shelter.

¹ Unlike Sumatra and Borneo, Brunei isn't known for palm oil plantations. However, this does not say that there aren't any there.

² The name "orangutan" comes from Malay words "orang utan", meaning "person of the forest".

³ See Fife, *The Shocking Truth About Palm Oil*, p5.

⁴ <http://greenpalm.org/about-palm-oil/what-is-palm-oil>

The process of deforestation first began 500 years ago in Europe and was originally done by hard manual labour using handsaws, axes and machetes.⁵ There was no large impact on the world because the process was so slow. Nowadays modern technology is used to complete these tasks, making it much faster and more efficient. The alarming rate at which we are now clearing these forests is not only having an impact on the local environment, but is gradually having wider effects across the region and the world. Asia has lost 90% of its forests due to deforestation and many of the amazing local animals are now endangered.⁶ Many threatened species are estimated to become extinct in the next 5-10 years if deforestation continues at the current rate.



Rainforests are not only being cleared by cutting down the trees using machinery, but they are also being burnt. The technique of slash and burn involves the vegetation being roughly chopped back and set on fire. This is a quick, efficient way to clear the land. Often this land belongs to local farmers. When the land is wanted by large palm oil production companies, the farmers need this money and sell it after they have completely cleared it. If the government finds out that the trees are being burnt, the community is blamed, not the companies that have encouraged them to do it. Once the land has been cleared it is much easier for the large palm companies to justify it being used for the plantations.

When localised fires are started, these often get out of hand and spread into larger parts of the rainforest, including those which may be designated as national parks for protection. The flames destroy the trees and plants, as well as killing animals and birds. Slower moving animals such as the orangutan are often caught in these fires and die from the flames or from suffocation in the thick smoke.

Not only does deforestation affect the environment for local people, but the destruction of forest habitats results in the loss of many animals too. Also in several cases, animals have been killed by the loggers if they have got in their way. Approximately 50 orangutans die each week due to palm oil deforestation, and there are only between 45,000 and 69,000 orangutans left in the wild. Palm oil is a continually growing industry and consequently in the future more animals will be lost as more of the earth's rainforests are cut down. This will have many effects including air pollution, global warming and loss of biodiversity, but also many species being pushed to extinction.

The world's demand for palm oil is continually growing; we use it in many everyday products. We use it all the time from getting ready in the morning, in soaps and lipsticks; throughout the day, finding it in detergents and many of our processed foods; and right to the moment before we go to bed, brushing our teeth, as palm oil is in many toothpastes. However, what many people do not know is that palm oil is very bad for you as well. It has significant health risks. It is high in saturated fatty acids which can lead to heart disease, increased blood cholesterol and raised blood pressure. Even if we check labels carefully it can be very difficult to avoid palm oil, as it can be called over 170 different names. Palm oil is a popular ingredient, as it is cheap for what it does and makes a good substitute oil that is not of animal derivation, so is suitable for vegetarians.

⁵ Green Alert (2004). *Vanishing Forests*. Oxford: Raintree Publishers. p4-48.

⁶ These include animals such as the rhino, tiger and orangutan

Overall, the tropical rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra are the habitat orangutans need to live. By the beginning of 2004 there was estimated to be 6.5 million hectares of oil palm plantations across Sumatra and Borneo, which included 4 million hectares of land which had once been forest. Orangutans, as well as most of the species found in the tropical rainforest cannot survive in palm oil plantations. Loss of rainforest habitat as well as the direct threat of clearance by fire are major impacts threatening the survival of orangutans.

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To what extent does tourism benefit Lower Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)?

By Robbie Haigh (Grenville)

Tourism is, “the commercial organisation and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest”.¹ Tourism can both help and injure the economy and the actual reason the country is a tourist destination. However, tourism is very useful to the LEDCs that decide to allow it; it is a source of income and a way for the people who live there to understand what the tourists do and the way they live in their own countries.

Tourism has increased hugely over the recent decades with the help of modernised modes of travel - air, road, rail and sea.² The massive increase in the popularity of tourism over the past years have brought benefits for the locals (for example, jobs for the unemployed in game parks and hotels) and to the economy. Some examples of famous tourist destinations that are LEDC's are Seychelles, Kenya, Uganda, Bali, Tanzania and Madagascar. With tourism increasing, the need for jobs is increasing. The hotels are increasing in size and the need for jobs is enlarging. This means that they are employing the locals from the nearest villages.³ This means that tourism is giving benefits to the local people and helping them feed and supply their families.



According to Dove, “in some countries tourism can make a significant contribution to GDP (Gross Domestic Product)”, through the tourists coming into the country, paying for visas, paying for the accommodation, paying for rental vehicles and much more.⁴ Some of this money goes to the government and when you think about that amount, then times it by the family, then times it by the amount of families that go on vacation, then you can understand the amount of money that the government gets from the tourists. With the government getting more money, it means that they can afford to build more facilities for tourism.

One of the reason tourists go to visit LEDCs is because they generally are the countries that have the most exciting wild animals in them. With so many of these animals becoming extinct and only surviving in zoos, the people of the world have to go to LED countries to actually have a look at these creatures. This means that the LED countries are basically sitting on a gold mine, because there are so many tourists flocking in, desperate to see these animals before they also go extinct. This will continue to increase the economy of the country due to the amount of money coming in from the tourists. With a better economy, they will get better/more well-paid jobs. Therefore, tourism could and most likely will be benefitting LEDCs in the years to come.

¹ Oxford Dictionary definition of ‘Tourism’

² Stearman, K (2010). *Travel and Tourism*

³ https://getrevising.co.uk/grids/advantages_and_disadvantages_of_tourism_in_ledcs

⁴ Dove, J (2004). *Tourism and Recreation*

Funding that the tourists are paying for is also assisting the preservation of the conservation areas which the majority of the tourists go to. This therefore means that the conservation areas will be better protected against rubbish, poaching and so forth, so making them more and more popular destinations for tourists. Furthermore, tourism puts the country into the global eye and this will hopefully encourage the government to preserve and try to regenerate these natural wonders. Without tourism, the government would probably not concentrate on it as much as they should.

Tourists additionally also buy the artworks of the local people as souvenirs to bring back with them. This brings an income to those people who do not hold jobs at ranches, beaches, hotels, lodges and parks. Additionally, tourism encourages countries to become productive to try and keep the tourists coming. They do this by building eco-lodges, ecotourism and just by being environmentally friendly in general. This makes the country a more eco-friendly country, which in turn encourages more tourists, because they do not want to damage the environment. This will then bring in more money, therefore benefitting the countries.

On the other hand, tourism does have downsides to it and in many ways is not actually benefitting the LEDCs. For example, in Kenya, The Maasai⁵, “were driven out of their homelands by the government who wished to set up safari parks.”⁶ With nowhere to live and no place to graze their animals, they are being forced to go back onto the safari park and try to graze their cattle on the game reserve. This leads to their cattle being eaten by wild animals, which is depleting their ‘wealth’⁷ and so it is affecting the local Maasai in a negative way.

Also, the natural water cycle is damaged because, “diverting water for tourists can exploit local water reserves”⁸. The wasted water is often being dumped into local rivers, which pollutes them. Even with the usual water supply being quite low in LEDCs, it becomes a serious issue for the local people because they are not able to farm their crops. This can lead to starvation as they are not able to feed or let their cattle drink. This can kill off their cattle leaving them with nothing and most importantly they cannot drink themselves. This is a serious risk and a hazard arising from the tourists and the lodges or hotels they stay in and how much water they waste.



⁵ “The Maasai are a Nilotic ethnic group inhabiting southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. They are among the best known local populations due to their residence near the many game parks of the African Great Lakes, and their distinctive customs and dress.” <http://faharitours.blogspot.co.uk/2016/11/the-maasai.html>

⁶ <https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision/geography/tourism/tourism-ledcs-medcs>

⁷ The Maasai trade cattle with other Maasai, like the cattle are currency.

⁸ http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/tourism/tourism_ledc_rev1.shtml

Tourism can also have negative impact on culture in LEDCs. For example, traditional arts like music, dancing and crafts are being made for almost only one market - tourists. This generally means that it is modified to appeal to the buyer's taste, so it is losing its cultural designs and shapes. "Dances and religious ceremonies often lose their deeper spiritual meanings and so become meaningless."⁹ This can be very bad because the practice that the local people have been doing for their whole tribes' life is suddenly worthless and so it is almost as if the tribe is dying away spiritually. This is an example of how tourism is westernising countries that are tourist destinations and so this is a way in which tourism is not benefitting LEDCs.

Finally, there are some tourists who completely disrespect where they are by wearing inappropriate clothing, through bad behaviour and just a bad demonstration in general. This makes the local people feel like they are being disrespected. They can feel threatened and they have the right to refuse tourists being allowed into their area if they are feeling like they are being wronged. This can build a bad impression of tourists.

In conclusion, I believe that there are many benefits of tourism, however there is always going to be something affecting the country from what they are doing. I think that the answer to building tourism in a way that cannot annoy or harm the country or their people in any way is sustainable tourism. According to Prosser¹⁰, ways to achieve this can include 'socio-cultural sustainability'¹¹, 'economic sustainability'¹², 'environmental sustainability'¹³ and finally 'experimental sustainability'¹⁴. This is where we should focus our efforts.

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⁹ Inskipp, C (2008). *Travel and Tourism*

¹⁰ Prosser, R (2000). *Leisure, Recreation and Tourism*

¹¹ "Development which sustains and enhances the quality of life for families and communities over time." (Prosser)

¹² "A dynamic, flexible system which encourages continued investment and sustains businesses and jobs overtime." (Prosser)

¹³ "Development which conserves the character and quality of physical and ecological resources over time." (Prosser)

¹⁴ "Forms of tourism development which sustain the quality of visitor experience and satisfaction over time." (Prosser)



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