**ECT 1210 - Reflection Paper #2**

By Connor Guarino

‘To be a VR & Game Development major or not to be a VR & Game Development major’; it’s a question as old as time and the impasse I currently find myself at. I find myself here because the gray glob of gelatin responsible for my sentience was built with two prime directives, create and help.

For most people, when you ask about their ‘calling’ they describe it as something that is both a want and a need. My mother is a doctor because she finds helping people to be fulfilling and simultaneously it fulfills her need to do moral good. My father, among many things, is a programmer and an author. He enjoys the feeling of creating ‘things’, be it a handy piece of software or a captivating story, and it coincides with his need to leave his mark on the world.

I am, however, split down the middle between the motivations behind my parents’ lives. I want to help people because I relish the feeling of indelibly changing someone’s life for the better. I also need to create things; it is the way I exist and survive in the world. I cannot cope with inefficiency and ignorance. If there is a better way to do something then I must find it, if there is an avenue yet unexplored then I must walk it. Where there are bits and there are bobbins, I must tinker.

A reasonable question at this point is ‘So what?’, there are hordes of things you can do where you both create and help people, just go out and create things that help people or help people create things. The crux of the matter is that I do not feel the need to help people. Though it sounds unpleasant, I can comprehend a life where I’m not constantly chasing the dream of having a room full of people stand on their chairs shouting “O Captain, my Captain!”. I cannot, even for a moment, bear the thought of a life where I’m not working on a side project or meddling with a new doodad or thingamajig. But I don’t find it fulfilling. I don’t feel pride when I look back at the robots, websites, and stories I’ve made because that feels akin to being proud of a nap taken when tired or a snack eaten whilst hungry. Why would I take pride in fulfilling a basic vital function?

This divide is at the heart of my indecision and the reason I’ve been in and out of college(s) for the last ten years. I have been a draftsman, a business planner, a ‘numbers guy’, a web developer, a graphic designer. And of all the hats I’ve worn, the only thing that has felt like my ‘calling’ was being a coach for a high school eSports team. The reason I have yet to graduate despite starting so long ago is because every two years I find myself wrapped up in a new creative outlet with earning potential, go to college for it, and then stop taking classes because I’ve lost interest in it.

I came to Ohio University with the goal of eventually becoming a therapist, specifically I want to work with moody teenagers. I feel a responsibility to use my experience and struggle with mental illness as a means to help a younger generation navigate the world and hopefully do so more successfully and happily than I have. Being a therapist can also afford me the time to pursue my creative interests without having to depend on them for financial stability. The two most common routes to achieving this goal are a master’s degree in social work or a doctorate in psychology, both of which are contingent on having a bachelor's degree. While I think a bachelor's degree in psychology has been unfairly described as a ‘useless degree’, I think it would be for me because I’m simply not interested in most of the jobs available to someone with that degree.

So here I am at Ohio University, surrounded by dozens of opportunities, a cascade of doors behind which are whoozits and whatsits the likes of which I can only dream, holding a golden ticket from my stepmother labelled ‘Employee Educational Benefits’. The only thing I need to graduate with is momentum, any degree keeps me marching towards my dream and provides me with a safety net should life continue to ‘happen’. There are children in candy stores green with envy. While I have narrowed my major choices to ‘tech-related, non-engineering’, I truly have no idea what I want to pursue because I want to take every class I’ve heard about. I want to learn pretty much everything taught in Scripps College. I think VR and Game Development is in the lead because it is certainly the ‘shiniest’ and I have had a lifelong love of video games but ITS is also a major contender. Every time Professor Bowie speaks, I hear about a confusing technology concept that underpins my existence and livelihood and for someone that ‘wants to learn everything’, that feels like a personal challenge. In the most non-descript words I can muster, I can’t not know something, especially if that thing is how something works.

Well, that’s it, that’s my monologue. Thank you, dear reader, for sitting through it, I hope my oversharing made you chuckle at least once. I did not expect to write about this topic, I was initially going to write about the Uncanny Valley and primate facial recognition in babies and lemur but instead a soliloquy about ‘purpose’ and my personal indecisiveness came out, happens to the best of us. Please excuse the overuse of single quotes and semicolons, somewhere Vonnegut is rolling over in his grave and as such I will close on a quote by him that feels apt to the nature of this paper.

“When I write, I feel like an armless, legless man with a crayon in his mouth.”

– Kurt Vonnegut