

Journal of
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Edited by Matthew Cheeseman

Series Editor, Kay Guccione

Welcome to this, the sixth volume of imagined projects, all written in the genre of the research abstract by members of the global academic community. Through the *Journal of Imaginary Research*, we aim to openly and widely spread the practices of imaginative writing throughout academia. In doing so, we seek to promote a new relationship with writing; to empower colleagues to find or renew a joy in the processes of writing.

We also want to extol the benefits of writing as a form of thinking, as a way to make meaning of thoughts and experiences. Back in May 2020 we published the first Special Issue of this creative journal, a collection that sought to both capture the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and to offer the opportunity to make imaginative sense of the ensuing disorientation. Reflecting back now on the response and published issue, we feel proud to have been able to provide opportunities for colleagues to document and process their reactions to this global challenge. We also recognise the variety of reactions we captured in that spring snapshot, which tell of different ways of coping and being through a period of uncertainty.

This volume, assembled six months later, asks writers to emphasise the utopian, the hopeful, the better future we might seek to experience and create. In setting this theme, it was our intention to assemble a collection that helps us to remember that it's often the little acts of hope and imagination that are the most resonant. The sixth volume of this journal is thus an insight into the creativity of hope that exists within the academy. It is dedicated to those colleagues we know, and have known, who bring hope to work, and who work to create a better future. As you read it, we would ask you to consider what differences, small and large, your own future might contain.

—Dr Kay Guccione and Dr Matthew Cheeseman

Homo sapiens' survival post canine mortality
by Celia Popovic



In this case study, two humans were observed over a period of twenty-four hours, one week after the death of their dog. Notes were taken of their sleep, consumption of food and drink, activity and interaction with each other. Notably, both subjects slept for 7 hours, but then remained awake for the rest of the period. Oddly, during the 17 hours of wakefulness, they did not take a nap on the sofa nor lie on the floor despite a patently obvious sunny spot that was available in the kitchen from 2 to 4pm.

Their consumption of food and drink was limited to three distinct sessions, despite the abundance of bacon, cheese and chicken stored in the fridge. Ignoring the frankly outrageous provocation of a mailman, three dogs and a delivery van, neither human made any attempt to defend the boundary, let alone warn off intruders with consistent barking.

The humans were observed administering mutual grooming in the form of frequent strokes. At times they expelled liquid from their eyes: this was observed in both subjects, but with greater frequency in one. The mutual grooming increased in direct correlation to the eye leakage. Interestingly, neither human groomed themselves; there was barely any tongue articulation, nor did they appear to sniff each other's rear ends.

The language of the humans was somewhat impenetrable to the researcher, but basic meaning could be gleaned from tone and the repetition of sounds. From this, the researcher was able to deduce that the humans spoke about their missing dog several times; eye leakage often followed such exchanges with commensurate grooming shortly after. The lack of boundary defence, with the entirely predictable invasion of squirrels, chipmunks and birds was distressing to observe, but oddly the humans did not seem to notice or care.

Dr Lola Fox-Terrier is well known in barking circles. With a fourteen-year history of despising other dogs; seeking, but never catching, chipmunks, squirrels and birds; she has developed a keen eye for garden interlopers. She is adept at chasing sticks but has a philosophical aversion to returning said sticks to the thrower. Her *métier* is the long sandy beach, but she is equally capable of conducting her research in woodland, parks and backyards. She has a particular expertise in the consumption of bacon and cheese using her well-regarded 'swallow don't chew' methodology. Sadly, she was lost to the world on 2 November, 2020.

The right to bare arms—the second amendment, amendment by *James Derounian*



The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (1791) has, up to now, been largely read as ‘the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed’. In this paper a new reading is proposed via text analysis relying on Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia; that is multiple voices. In this instance, the researcher discovered three versions of the Constitution, each setting down a different version of the Second Amendment. The authors argue that this polyphony reflects differing hopes and aspirations for the newly independent United States.

Close textual analysis troubles the prominence given to the current reading of the second amendment. Artefact A—found in a shoebox in Charleston—does indeed state the ‘right of the people to keep and bear Arms’. But not so artefacts B and C. The former discovered in a hairdressers in Duluth, Minnesota, clearly enshrines the ‘right of the people to keep and bear Alms’—that is performance of Christian piety and charity as a hopeful gesture to trigger societal improvement. The third version of the eighteenth-century declaration, extracted from a bagel in downtown New York during Thanksgiving 2020,

asserts the ‘right of the people to ... bare Arms’. Contemporary sources highlight the importance of sleeves rolled up for accurate shooting, linked to the War of Independence.

Further research and testing is required to determine which of the three documents represents the latest, and thereby definitive, iteration.

NRA Twangbristler is the Wee Willie Winkie Professor of semantics at the University of Dolt, Newbiggin-on-Sea. His previous work has focused on the Nordic schism caused by differentiated pronunciation of the words ‘yowl’ and ‘howl’. His later work charts migration of the phrase ‘hallo cobber’ from Glaswegian slums to Hobart, Tasmania. In 2020 Twangbristler turned his laser-like attention to explore how dog owners resemble their pets and—in an imaginative boundary-spanning leap—interpreted the findings through the lens of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); whereby dog owners are subconsciously influenced so that facial features bend towards the canine over time; thus vaulting from a known state of being, to another.

Author declaration: Ethical approval was not withheld for this research by the author’s university. In terms of finance the study was part-funded by Bare Bears’ Patisserie, Biloxi, Mississippi.

Children who return: portal trauma and transformation *by Jonathan Simmons*



When a child disappears into a portal world, they may encounter fantastic dangers and, on return home, be at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The families of missing children may also experience trauma, loss and generational grief, especially when children return decades after a magical event. Despite the increased interest in portal worlds, there is little research on children's behaviour when they return from other realms. This gap in the literature is understandable given research challenges such as the heterogeneous nature of

magical systems; the time between disappearance and return; the nature of the portal (eg mirrors, doorways, or 'secret' gardens); and the portal worlds (*Annwn*, *Emain Ablach*, *Mag Ildathach*, or *Ēlysion pedion*). As portal survivors, the authors of this paper are uniquely placed to fill this gap in the literature.

Jigurd Sorensen spent several months in the Welsh Otherworld and Angharad Sand spent two years in the realm of the sea god Manannán Mac Lir. Unlike many other researchers, we have also travelled the portal realms extensively as visiting professors. Drawing from our familiarity with varied realities, the current study examines the so-called 'Narnia' phenomenon using ethnographic methods: interviews, field observations and biographical accounts of 27 children, aged 6 to 14. We found that of the four realms, children were more likely to 'cross the threshold' to *Annwn* and *Emain Ablach* than either *Mag Ildathach* or *Ēlysion pedion*. Children were also more likely to go missing through magic doors than other portals. Based on these findings, we aim to classify the characteristics and behaviours of children who return to our reality and develop guidelines to help families cope with symptoms associated with portal trauma.

Jigurd Sorensen is the Director of the Welsh Magical Events Library based at the University of Alberta. An expert in the study of PTSD, Dr Sorensen has spent several months examining its relationship to travel through portals.

Angharad Sand is the recently hired Assistant Professor of Tartarus Studies at Ryerson University. Dr Sand's current research examines magical surveillance in the Deep Abyss. A forthcoming book with Oxford University Press describes Dr Sand's experiences with the Tuath Dé Danann and the Fomóire.

Feminist town *by Rinku Wagle*



In 2020, as many countries turned against democracy, this research project documented the work of a group of pregnant feminist scholars who formed a Noocratic meditative experiment, using themselves as the subjects. Realising the importance of prenatal education and its effects on foetal brain development, researchers scheduled their daily activity according to Buddhist philosophy. After birth, babies were redistributed in a group with other children and mothers were made responsible for all. Kids grew up with extensive moral, agricultural and environmental education.

The results demonstrate that children raised with such psycho-social attention have less traumatic experience and behavioural issues. They believe in unity and are not attached to any specific individual but towards the society they belong to. It is even suggested that children develop supernatural power through intense meditation. The project has the potential to change the foundations of our future society, creating a mindful generation harbouring less misery and demonstrating greater unity.

Professor Dr Ambika is a renowned feminist psychologist and philosopher in Utopia. In 2020 she won a Socratic award for the research into this project. She is the author of *Vagina talks*, *Life within a life*, *A history of the female aristocracy* and *Feminist psycho-philosophy for us and you*.

Computer simulation reveals best possible way to live and solves political philosophy once and for all

by Jasper Friedrich



With recent advances in organic computing, it has been suggested that we may finally have the computing power necessary to solve difficult moral questions objectively (Haughty et al 2020). This article reports on cutting-edge developments that have, once and for all, solved political philosophy. With the enormous computing power at our disposal, we were able to simulate all possible political arrangements and compare these objectively. We apply the principle of utility ('the greatest happiness for the greatest number') as an objective measure of which political system is superior. Criticism of utilitarianism are considered, but ultimately rejected as they lack objective basis.

The results clearly disprove Leibniz' unsubstantiated claim that 'we live in the best of all possible worlds': our current political arrangements are shown in simulation to cause huge amounts of misery, and indeed rank in the bottom 2% of all possible political systems. The best political arrangement possible is shown to be a specific version of anarcho-communism, where people live communally on collective farms and spend most of their time tending crops and gardens and engaging in art and sport. Given the dismal prospects of ever changing the basic structure of our own misery-inducing society, we instead discuss other policy options, such as guaranteeing every citizen one annual week of holiday on such a farm so they can at least glimpse the good life. It is suggested that political philosophers (who will no longer have any purpose now that political philosophy has been solved) could be retrained to run such farm retreats.

Ron Jaws is the Thomas More Professor of Complex Systems at the University of Amurot. In his previous work he used scientific methods and technologies to solve longstanding questions such as 'Is the death penalty immoral?' (yes), 'Is beauty subjective?' (no), and 'Does pineapple belong on pizza?' (no!). He now plans to retire to a little farm on the Italian countryside, where he will spend his days tending to a vegetable garden and some beehives.

**The unknown, the unplanned and the uncontrollable:
unintended consequences of soul-mating**
by SiennaMarisa Brown and Dylan Turner



Recent unconfirmed reports suggest soul-mating is a mechanism of romantic relationship resilience and longevity. Soul-mating is a process by which two or more distinct minds meld into a noticeably intangible, yet remarkably rational, hybrid, mutual mental state. Research into interpersonal compatibility and vulnerability indicate decreased chronic low mood, daily loneliness and persistent indifference; and increased happy frustration, inside joking and mutual growth after prolonged exposure to a soulmate. Though the definition of soul-mating is widely contested, the present study is driven by the idea that, regardless of notions of socially-accepted relationship dynamics, soul-mating may affect feelings of existential dread, specifically mental energy focused on the incalculable future.

This study is a qualitative exploration of the influence of soul-mating on quality of life. Throughout this project, both authors examine the long-term effects of soul-mating on life-based attitudes. By the application of Truwn et al 's (1997)* work on the function of soul-mating within romantic relationships, the authors independently recorded the perceived short- and long-term impact of soul-mating on mental, emotional, social and physical well-being. Results suggest a temporal trend of quirk acceptance, happy spontaneity, constant change and new-found interests. Emergent themes highlight functions and perceptions of soul-mating, specifically the process of sacrificing stubbornness, embracing vulnerability and accepting emotional connectiveness.

Time spent with a soulmate may generate feelings of reciprocal contentment, intermittent rage and euphoric bursts. Considering the data collected, in the context of COVID-19 and modern extremism, the significance of soul-mating should be considered when dealing with prolonged periods of stress, dread and doubt. The present paper concludes by offering a partial perspective of the hopeful consequences of soul-mating on overall personal well-being. The choice to recognise and embrace support, markedly from that of a soulmate, could brighten up the most uncertain of times.

Dr Selfsa Botage holds an MSc in hindsightology and a PhD in refusism, with a specialisation in vulnerability. Her research interests lie at the nexus of stubbornness and selfless compassion. An international authority on resisting change, Dr Botage is chair of the Obstinate Communicators Coalition.

Professor Ichlieb Edich holds an MScR in love and unconditionality. His doctoral research focused on partner support, joint inspiration and romanticism, with a concentration on Dr Botage. Professor Edich's work on 'why the hell we choose sadness' is lauded worldwide and includes a collection of highly-acclaimed books, including *Just let me love you, dammit*.

* also imagined.

Zoom! Achieving dialectical, catechistic and phenomenological paradigm shifts in spatial/temporal subjectivities whilst getting away with doing your hoovering during online meetings

by Kevin Acott



In her distressingly little-known 1936 essay, 'Die Langeweile dieser unendlichen verdammten Treffen,' ('On being a bit bored with all these bloody meetings'), Hannah Arendt states, in an act of what only I, as an academic, could possibly see as astonishing prescience, 'It feels like I am trapped in a bubble, unable to see people, to touch them, to hear them. I'm tempted, on occasion, to pretend I am not there. Others, I suspect, try also to pretend I'm not there.' Barely relevant, as dropping Arendt's name (and uncited quotation) may seem, the author has done so in order to disguise the fact that he merely had a bit of a chat with some of his friends and then made oddly tenuous (yet impressively 'hermeneutic') links between several of his personal obsessions, by:

- a) employing slightly cloudy and convoluted Foucauldian/Lacanian explanations to help clarify the extent to which the guilt of hoovering when one should be paying

attention to one's colleagues can be negated by the joy of getting one over on 'The Man';

- b) adopting 'Nietzschean' perspectives on overcoming the primeval fear that one may not have successfully muted one's microphone/turned off video;
- c) throwing in random references to 1960s soul music, the films of John Wayne and Spurs' continuing problems in midfield, each buried beneath vast swathes of grounded theory jargon and a writing style that, more than anything, mimics the very worst bits of *Fifty shades of grey* whilst remaining alarmingly upbeat;
- d) deploying the word 'synecdochic'. Twice.

The research comes quite close to demonstrating almost conclusively that Zoom meetings can perhaps be made useful, and thus prove foundational for both increased domestic cleanliness and team cohesion.

Professor Salinger B de Schwarzensteinberger is a raconteur, jockey, YouTube Vlogger and one-time stuntman on BBC One's *Mastermind*, Channel 4's *Great British Bake-off*, and *The Clangers*. Since accidentally making a significant donation to North-West Buckinghamshire University's ambitious repurposing student-facing agility (RSFA) programme after the devastating 2006 Beaconsfield typhoon, he has clawed his way up from Honorary Professor in Social Work and Allied Engineering Sciences to Vice-Chancellor. He can swim. And once almost did karaoke.

Libraries found to be a safe place for learning *by Abigail Winter*



Following the readability gap of 2028–2050, we have begun to see a turnaround in literacy among the wider population. Dennis’ (2037) argument that those who were spared deserve to be worshipped as gods has been disallowed by the courts in both Achora and Polyleritae, and has resulted in several preliminary studies on both the legal and practical ramifications of a whole-country reading recovery program (Jones, 2040; Morus, 2041; Smith, 2042).

This paper reports on a different type of reading program, one that could be termed a bottom-up or practical approach. Using existing scholars who were entombed within their libraries by the Great Seeing Off, a small-scale, often one-to-one learning intervention was implemented with children across the globe. Connections were made between scholars and children through their parents and guardians: only those who passed a preliminary screening were invited to join us in the sacred spaces between books. There, the children were exposed to several different types of texts and allowed to turn the pages of the one that most appealed to them. Through this project 257 children were able to touch a real book, resulting in several hundred hours of preparation and reaction data.

The results show that there is no danger in handling books and that there may, in fact, be long-term learning benefits from doing so. Future research is needed on the issue of generational safety from exposure to thoughts and ideas but the results of this preliminary study show promise and should encourage others to also run the risk of picking up a book.

Dr Leabhar Tagraidh holds a Bachelors in Communication Science from the University of Amsterdam, an MPhil in Public History and Cultural Heritage from Trinity College, Dublin, and a PhD in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has worked in public and private libraries around the world, and is currently Distinguished Chair of the Golden More Society for Encouraging Nix-locations. Her previous research has been published in *Bibliographica* and *Hythloday Monthly*. She can be contacted at LeabharOfFaith@quietlib.com.

Restoration of function to Biochemical Structure 34 using iterative molecular construction techniques: teaching an old dome new tricks

by Premea Mohamed



One of the oldest buildings on Mars, Biochemical Structure 34 (BS34), was condemned in 2160 after the tragic asteroid-impact landslide now known as the Guarino Disaster (Yu et al, 2175). However, despite its official condemnation and the withdrawal of government funding and maintenance, the local community continued to use the dome until it was considered a hazard to human health in approximately 2190. Due to scarce resources and minimal staff capacity after the regime changes around that time, the decision was made to attempt to restore existing structures rather than construct new items. BS34 was chosen for several reasons, including its cultural importance to the community, its size, and a damage assessment indicating that most of the planted species had deposited dormant but viable seeds in the growth medium.

A novel iterative molcon technique involving the application of semi-sapient autocatalytic biobots (SABs) was employed on the nanoceramic barrier structure over three

growing seasons. The SABs were successful in restoring the barrier to over 100% of its historical integrity. Targeted biomass revegetation and monitoring began shortly afterwards.

The project was deemed complete at the time of this submission and BS34 is scheduled to be placed back into use with all functions (aerogenic, fiber, experimental, nutrition and habitation) measurably restored or increased. The novel SABs technique is expected to greatly impact the speed, cost and durability of nanoceramic repair, thereby improving the safety and comfort of all current Martians.

Vivienne Wanigaratne serves as Chief Technical Officer at the Chambers Institute for Space Sciences (Mawrth Vallis campus). She received her PhD in self-generative nanochemistry at the University of Alberta, followed by postdoctoral projects at the world-reknowned Li-Brompton Centre. Dr Wanigaratne has published over 50 papers in peer-reviewed journals and has received the MD Ball Certificate of Excellence for her 2195 book *Yes, we'll stay: a Mars retrospective*. She also runs the Far Seer Program, which encourages children aged eight and up to create and manage their own citizen science programs in Mawrth Vallis.

Is happiness a red-and-white hot water bottle? A longitudinal cross-country study

by Kathy McKay



During a year of extreme unrest and uncertainty, lockdowns have necessarily limited many ways in which we spontaneously uncover happiness in previously unknown places. Happiness has simply felt difficult to find and even harder to maintain. But in these seemingly endless and often fruitless times, have we overlooked contentment?

This study examined whether focusing on everyday minutiae, specifically a red-and-white hot water bottle, could assist in finding moments of contentment, and even happiness. Guided by the principle of ‘everywhere you go, there you are’, the author undertook experiments to assess her mood over a period of six months and across two countries. Was the grounding offered by something as small and everyday as a red-and-white hot water bottle able to minimise or reshape the stresses experienced due to the flux of transition and uncertainty?

The author took a self-reflective approach to the study, reframing and understanding her moods that might have, to others, looked like ‘snuggling’ and ‘sleeping’. Indeed so devoted was the author to interrogating the ‘snuggling’ paradigm that, due to wear and tear, three red-and-white hot water bottles were used over the course of the study, with hot water bottles of different colours also used intermittently. However, this led to an

unexpected research question—whether the colours mattered as opposed to the security offered by the hot water bottle itself.

Findings from this study highlight the importance of recognising everyday items as tokens of contentment during times of uncertainty and flux, particularly when they can be used within the ‘snuggling’ paradigm. While flexibility may at times be needed, for example when a favourite hot water bottle breaks at 3am, the way in which a beloved everyday item can make an unknown place less frightening should not be underestimated.

Dr Laksimilulupuss is a well-published freelance academic who regularly makes appearances during national and international research meetings and conferences. Findings from Dr Laksimilulupuss’ most recent study on the links between napping and genius will be published as soon as she wakes up and finalises them.

Waiting for your Official Certification of Impostor Status in times of postal services disruption

by Joana Esteves Craveiro de Oliveira



Every year, millions of academics suffering from impostor syndrome (Clarence and Imes, 1978) await their Official Certification of Impostor Status in the post, stamped by the International Institute of Impostors in Academia. Despite having adequate external evidence of accomplishment and legitimacy, academics remain convinced that they do not deserve their success or that their research and work provides little social value. This study investigates the relationship between the delays and disruptions on the postal service as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing anxiety from academics whilst waiting for a confirmation that they are actually impostors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with anxious academics at the start of their research thesis, each standing as close as possible to their physical mailboxes.

This analysis showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic (as through the whole history of academia), no anxious academic suffering from Impostor Syndrome ever received an Official Certification of Impostor Status stamped by the International Institute of Impostors in Academia in the post. The academics in the study proved legitimately resilient, more hopeful than doubtful and ultimately assured that their research work and its applications will contribute to shape a better, truer and fairer society.

We concluded that the possibility of the International Institute of Impostors of Academia having their staff working from home and the postal service's disruption had little to no effect on the receipt of Official Certification of Impostor Status and that perhaps what early-career, mid-career and senior academics suffering from impostor syndrome need is a strong support system and ongoing feedback that validates their efforts and outcomes to improve their confidence levels. We prove that academics, like all students and creators of things, must give more power to their imagination as opposed to the imagination of others by choosing daydreaming over social media scrolling or anxiety over the delayed arrival of Official Certification of Impostor Status.

Dr Cornelia Binx is a behavioural scientist specialising in impostor studies at the University of Overthinking. Her latest book *If you were impersonating someone why would you chose to impersonate yourself?* deconstructs the motivations and methodology of impostors whilst exploring the lack of logic in choosing to falsify work of little social value and contribution. Dr Binx is still awaiting her Official Certification of Impostor Status and recently started to believe in the merit of her work and that her belief in a better future was genuine and unapologetic.

Turn your frown upside down: identifying effective strategies for eliminating resting bitch face during work video conferencing calls

by Suzy Houston



The negative mental health impacts of chronic exposure to an imposing ‘wall’ of resting bitch face (RBF) over Zoom and Microsoft Teams has been convincingly demonstrated by several studies that have emerged during the pandemic (see, for example, Dixon 2020). RBF is one of several possible default facial configurations (including the cognate ‘no-fucks-given’ face) that tend to occur below the level of consciousness when the owner of the face is ‘listening’ rather than talking. According to Martin and Smith (2019, 346), this particular ‘default face’ is most likely to occur during work meetings that involve low levels of conflict and/or high levels of management bullshit. Although the occurrence of RBF has been documented as far back as the late 1980s (Minogue et al 1989) when PowerPoint was first introduced as a means of facilitating a multimodal dispatch of corporate bollocks, the recent pandemic and pivot to remote working appears to have greatly increased its incidence. At the same time, the widespread use of video conferencing tools leads to frequent exposure to what Harrington 2020 refers to as an ‘electronic patchwork quilt of half-arsed snark’.

This present study uses a repeated measures design with a sample of one unreliable participant to identify effective strategies to counteract RBF. The findings show that one partially successful strategy is periodic active visualisation of ‘pleasure motifs’ (see Richards,

1995). For example, during a meeting the participant was asked to think about a large gin cocktail, adorable fluffy kittens, and a young Harrison Ford wearing no clothes. In most cases where the participant was successful at focusing on a motif, RBF was replaced with smiling eyes and a wistful grin (although it should be noted in some cases involuntary salivation also occurred). As a result, we draw tentative conclusions that this strategy be widely applied in team meetings to enhance team joy and deflect even the most tiresome managerial drivel.

Haribo J Delicious is a specialist in complex and confusing facial expressions at the University of Life. He has an impressive collection of primary school swimming certificates, has achieved his cycling proficiency (Levels 1 *and* 2) and is the recipient of many Brownie badges, including the prestigious Hostess badge. During his long and intense career, Delicious has been awarded numerous MOOC completion certificates including 'Introduction to phallic knitting' and 'Getting started with unconscious driving' and was recently notified by Tesco Clubcard that he has £24 worth of coupons to spend in-store.

Salt tolerance as measure of personal volatility in reaction to ridiculous news: new insights into the validity of snap judgements made by table staff at working-class eateries in the perimeter suburbs of a Russian city
by Mick Barrow and Robyn Brandenburg



Waiting staff operate in response to sporadic work demands, with moments of excessive stress and activity spread throughout days that can appear sophomoric. During ‘down’ times, their interlocutions indicate a general fascination with those they are serving. Indeed, their bird-like observations of the dining habits, demeanour, sartorial sense and behaviour of those who dine before them demonstrate sharp acuity. In desultory conversation with the more languid and slow-moving waiting staff at six working class eateries in outer Petrozavodsk, Republic of Keralia, Russia, an investigation was made of wait staff evaluations of the relationship between client salt intake (as per salt added to dishes served) and reactions to US 2020 election result tweets coming from the @realDonaldTrump Twitter account.

Data was collected over the course of three successive weeknights, 4–6 November, 2020. Eight wait staff were canvassed for their evaluations of a total of seventy-six clients of mixed gender assignations. Analysis illuminated the potential role of increased sodium intake in the lowering of inhibition when voicing potentially face-saving opinions before decidedly indifferent audiences of strangers. Confounding factors in the analysis include the

unbridled consumption of alcohol by clients, wait staff and researcher, yet early indications suggest public health policies may be in need of iterated adjustment in the current environment of unreliable public pronouncements made by people of prominence.

Adjunct Professor Ilya Ilyich Oblomov is a splendidly formed gentleman with soft features and a very nice silken dressing gown. Residing on Gorokhavaya Street, St Petersburg, Russia, he specialises in the formulation of grand unrealisable plans for the reorganisation of his country estate. He has published widely in the journal *Air Castles*, on a range of profound matters. Currently on academic suspension from Nevsky Prospekt University, he splits his time between dressing up as a giraffe (with whom he hopes tourists will take photos for a fee) and crack-in-the-door observation of the elbows of people preparing food.

Yarn-bombing: a Kiwi entanglement *by Ailsa Haxell*



Informed by agential realism, I recognise agency is not situated solely in the human condition but resides in the fabric of entanglements. I bring a speculative gaze to such fabric: tracing the threads that entangle, I explore yarn-bombing and the ontological choreography whereby yarn-bombing is performing climate change. Such matters matter! There is intense interest in interrupting this ontological performance. To merely witness this twenty-first century phenomena presents a very literal posthuman risk.

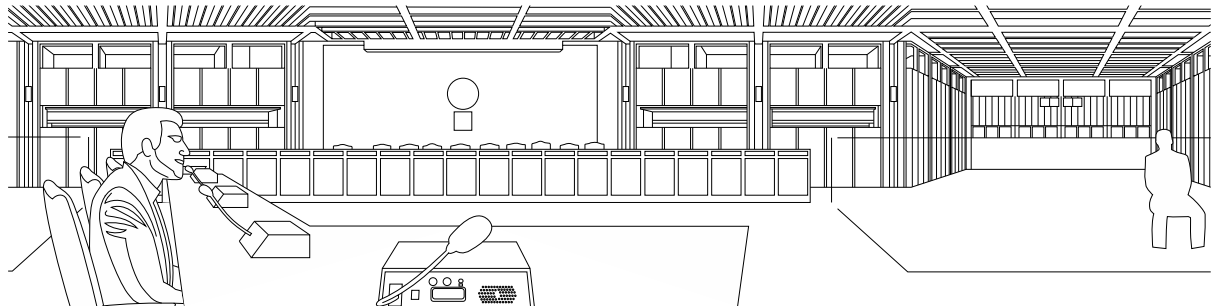
Following an association of threads, I track such relations as occur with the enmeshment of trees. Appreciating that silence is not an absence of voice, I provided opportunity for such actors to be heard. Taking seriously an ethic of reflexivity, I openly disclose the zero-response rate to the survey was most likely due to my cultural insensitivity in using questionnaires made of paper.

Progressing the research further, a performative turn took me toward the ethic of enchanted materialism in accepting my position as a hybrid of the socio-material-politic. Beginning in the middle of things, I entered the enchanted realm of the yarn-bombers. Dressed in legwarmers, balaclavas, camouflaged additionally with twigs and leaves, and with the aid of night vision goggles, I observed nocturnal yarn-bombing activities not previously witnessed.

The findings confirm the ontological performativity of yarn-bombing as an activity of nocturnal Kiwi birds. The activities engaged in I personally experienced as thermodynamically challenging. That this is associated with climate change is indisputably a matter of concern for I fear our hybrids are proliferating haphazardly (and without enough thought given to the moral and political implications). What is ... is not destiny. Such findings suggest a new ontological choreography is needed. Appreciating that the beaks of Kiwis and their predilection for yarn-bombing needs to be curtailed, I propose that Kiwis be persuaded to yarn-bomb buildings instead.

Dee Lusional is Emeritus Professor at Middle-earth University, New Zealand. Her manifesto, *The domestic goddesses feminist agenda*, situates her at the fringes of eco-feminism. She is one of a growing coven of feminist scholars who trained as scientists before turning to the philosophy of enchanted realism. Her contributions within this field are as important as those of other techno-bunny onco-mice cyborgs who do not merely witness the future of cataclysmic change but who seek to interrupt such performances. Not to be forgotten, her most unsettling claim to fame was her sabbatical report submitted in knitted format to the Royal Society of Scientists who had funded her studies.

Exploring counter-narratives to 'Black Mirror' scenarios by Christian Petersen and Guy Bahat



Writers, philosophers, entrepreneurs and politicians have been fascinated by the concept of utopia since its coinage in 1516 by Sir Thomas More. This paper gives an account of an interdisciplinary, speculative, practice-based and collaborative project, instigated over the business networking app Bumble. The collaboration starts from the premise that the concept of utopia has been skewed and misinterpreted: associated with over-optimistic and borderline delusional futures, at the expense of its potential for inspiring positive societal change. At the same time it acknowledges societal change seldom begins with actual inventions but rather with acts of the imagination, with a sharpened sense of a need for something new.

The project's aim is to formulate a counter-narrative to dystopian scenarios prevalent in popular culture, specifically those proliferating in the Netflix series *Black Mirror* (2011–2019). It does this by extrapolating, in text and image, state-of-the-art research within oneirography, or memory recording (Nishimoto et al 2011). With reference to design fiction and/or speculative design (Bleeker 2009; Raby and Dunne 2013; Coles 2016) and scenario planning (Cardoso 2014) the project attempts a VR visualisation of what a recorded memory might look like. The memory chosen for visualisation is from Bill Gates' biography (1998): the well-documented Microsoft anti-trust hearings.

Once experiencing this paper, you will understand that the importance of utopian thinking is now more relevant than ever. Indeed, this paper is an attempt to reaffirm and reinforce that relevance as a tool for positive societal change.

Dr Odelia Mas is the Head of Adventure Education at the Eutopia University initiative. She is an Adjunct Senior Travelling Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Paris-Seine, Founding Fellow Faculty of Science, The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia and the recipient of a Dundee Award (2020). Mas's research interests include: education through adventurism; the use of thought recording technology on the art industry; aspects of human identification in utopian literature; the detection and investigation of human-centric start-ups. In addition to publishing peer reviewed journal articles and numerous book chapters, Mas co-edited the *Handbook of adventurism*

anthropology (2016), and is currently co-authoring *An atlas of operating utopian mini-societies* for Elsevier. Mas grew up in the Kibbutz of Yotvata, Israel and is happily married with five children.

Index Terms: utopia, oneirography, design fiction, speculative design, dark optimism.

Being together—locking down on a pandemic dream by Peter Matthews and Maria Fotopolou



This paper reports an autoethnography of a 2020 that never happened. It speaks of two researchers who shared an office; joked, laughed, banged-the-world-to-rights. It discusses their endless sighs at the ridiculousness of work situations they found themselves in; it reports on the salacious gossip snatched in busy corridors; it relates overheard meetings with students and the amazing, amazing, things they say; it narrates the shared coffees and lunches; it details the endless failures to give up smoking. In detailing these experiences the authors use the techniques of autoethnography to tease out the message that ‘we’re alright’ and ‘we can get through this’, particularly when you share an office with someone you love dearly and miss so much. A quick chat about shitty telly is enough to pick anyone up! These officemates are totally *fetch*. And on Wednesdays they wear pink. This thick description is reported in the foreground of a view of the Dumyat hill. Of its changing colours: the harsh, tired brown, topped with snow, of late winter; the lush green of spring; the yellow splashes of summer gorse; of the rich colours of autumn. The Dumyat changed and we were not there to see it. This is a 2020 that did not happen.

Dr R Gee is Professor of Mean Girls Studies at Falkirk University. Through his internationally-leading research he has ascertained that butter is indeed a carb; on Wednesdays we do wear pink; and is working towards making *fetch* happen and improve road safety outside schools.

Dr BO Mont is Professor of Post-structural Approaches to Bend and Snap Techniques. Through her internationally-leading research she has explored what doing bend and snap may mean and has ascertained the prevalence of the first cardinal rule of perm maintenance across cultures and jurisdictions.

Liberated learning: discoveries from traversing the multiverse

by Gabrielle Arenge and Emily Dowdeswell



Image: Dan Stevens

Young humans traverse infinite open-ended learning environments throughout Antellia Regalo, a recently discovered parallel, alternate universe. Unexpectedly, the sharing and exchange of simple materials and carefully calibrated provocations lead to surprising, even shocking outcomes. This paper focuses on how young humans engage across multiple realities without fitting into the envelopes of experience that crystallised systems dictate. Impermanent, asymmetrical and unmanaged learning resists instruction and becomes productive.

The possibility of pockets of resistance to old conventions in schooling had previously been the focus of discussions between activists, artists and educators. Contemporaneous literature suggests that treating the idea of a 'classroom' lightly might allow educators to listen more closely and pay greater attention to what young humans are exploring. Previous experimental research has further demonstrated that young humans develop their own languages of learning if given opportunities to use found materials freely and inhabit loosely choreographed spaces with ample time to roam and return.

Here we present the in-situ analyses of how young humans flourish in infinitely wonky, beautifully different and communally crafted open-ended environments, particularly forests, fields and unruly artscares. Results from DeepListening analysis show that these spaces reject hierarchy and facilitate generosity. Young humans gather together and continuously amplify the acoustics of their landscape, wherever and whatever it is. The expansive open-ended environments for wonder and exploration offer intimate space where one can be simultaneously lost and found, challenged and nurtured, and liberated and supported. The freedom found in Antellia Regalo has wider ontological importance and potential generalisability across the multiverse for how different species structure learning around places of comfort and chaos. Ultimately this raises the vital question, 'what are we doing down here—and why?'

Celestial Calorra-Impaxio, nicknamed CCI, was raised by artists amongst Cambridgeshire's chalk streams and willows, seeding a deep fascination in the creative role of humans within and beyond artscares. Her seminal work initiated a radical rethink confirming Malaguzzi's long-held idea from *The 100 Languages of Children*, that adult humans can learn to listen deeply to the knowledge young humans create. Celestial is guided by a belief that humans can communally generate compassionate, organic relationships with their ecosystems where difference and justice flourish. Her current work with DeepListening and acoustic oscillations brings our body of knowledge to the cusp of another revolution.

Mental health therapy: a pill for chaotic dark passengers?

by Vaishnavi K Yeleswarapu



Dark passengers that reside in human-mind cities have created fogginess and havoc for centuries. The current study investigated the response of dark passengers upon exposure to mental health therapy. A randomised controlled trial was employed where dark passengers were recruited from all human-mind cities through the International Mind Souls Database (IMSD). The residents belonging to half of these cities were exposed to therapy while the others were not. Passengers in the intervention cities were subjected to once-a-week therapy from Oct 2019 BC (Before Covid) to Oct 2020 AC (After Covid). The following information was also collected from all cities at the baseline: rates of employment, general health and relationship status.

Dark passenger groups who were exposed to therapy showed significant pathfinding and goal-oriented action planning abilities. It was observed that these passengers, and hence their cities, became much more disciplined.

We conclude that dark passengers subjected to mental health therapy can behave in an orderly fashion. Human-mind city administrators should consider exposing their resident passengers to mental health therapy when designing and constructing utopian residences, especially those who were affected during After Covid times.

Dr Anxy Depreson is a post-doctoral passenger at the University of Brains-Eye. She has several research publications to her name and is the author of the best-selling book *Collaborations with Corona*. Dr Depreson is also a registered human-minds architect at the Centre for Space Designs.

All I want for Christmas is moo: cow's music listening behaviour

by *Christ Billy Aryanto*

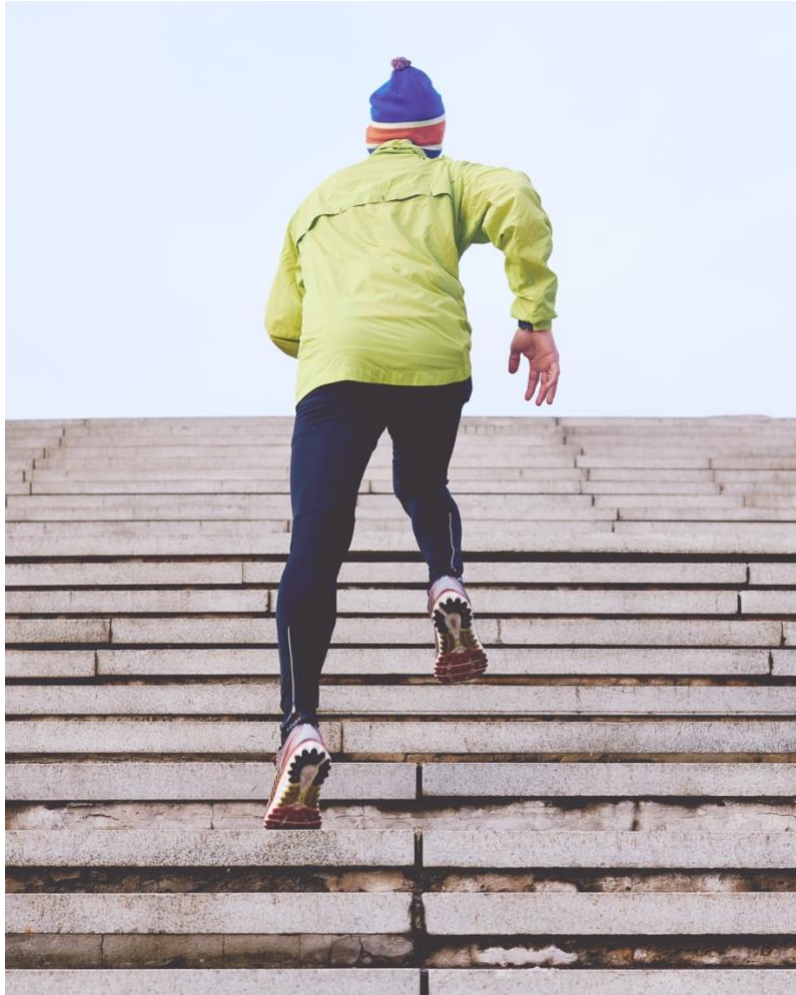


At Christmas, the demand for milk increases because many children prepare milk and cookies for Santa Claus and the reindeers. However, according to Statista, the number of cows remain consistent year on year. To fulfil the supply of milk, many dairy farmers play music to relax the cows and increase the milk yield. However, it is not known how the cows think and feel when they listen. A semi-structured interview was conducted using the latest technology to understand cow language: the Moo-Translator. Ten cows were intermooed regarding their attitude towards workplace music and their feelings towards having to raise milk productivity during Christmas time. According to the key themes emerging from the intermoo dataset, cows respond positively to listening to music while eating. Relaxing ambient music is supplied and resourced by their employer, according to terms agreed in

2018 with the Dairy Cow Workers Union (DCWU), under their reasonable seasonal workload campaign. The introduction of pay-per-litre reward scaling has also helped to smooth industrial relations. Since music is perceived by cows to reduce stress, they feel more healthy and so are willing to agree to produce more milk, according to the agreed demand-driven pay reward. Cow perceptions of a healthy workplace continues to be defined in the literature in terms of both 'perceived control of workload' and 'reasonable reward and recognition'. Possibly, say some individual commentators, producing more milk gave them happiness since they got to see the farmers' happy faces and related this to the music they listened to. This view is not supported by DCWU. Thus, we conclude that cows have a positive attitude toward music and see Christmas as a jolly season every year, when afforded union-driven protected workplace conditions and appropriate reward . This study may help other researchers understand the psychological aspects of cow's emotions and behaviour.

Dr Taurus Sapiman has a PhD degree in animal behaviour and specialises in the qualitative study of animals. He is gifted with the ability to understand animal languages and has invented many animal translators so other researchers can triangulate the validity of his research. Most of his work is with farm animals such as cows, chickens and sheep.

Forget work-life balance, we need a balanced (working) life *by Stephanie Zihms*



For many of those striving for a 'perfect' work-life balance, the definition of 'perfect' can be an added stressor. Why do work and non-work have to compete for our time? Research shows that engaging in aerobic exercise activities (anything that gets your heart rate up like running or cycling) has many benefits to both physical and mental health. People who exercise regularly report benefits to their overall wellbeing (Klaperksi et al, 2019), but also to their perceived productivity at work. They feel like they have more energy and report that their brain can work 'offline' during exercise. This often leads to problem solving or idea generation. So, should employers include exercise as part of the official workday to create a balanced working life for their employees?

This study investigates the impact of regular employer-supported exercise sessions on staff wellbeing and their perception of productivity and job satisfaction. Participants recruited to this study were encouraged to select three exercise sessions per week. It was agreed with participants that this exercise time was to be considered part of their official working hours and should not be 'made up' through extra work. Participants completed a

series of surveys before, during and after taking part in the study to monitor their sense of wellbeing, job satisfaction and productivity (the latter defined as feeling on top of their work rather than producing outputs).

Our findings show that including exercise in working hours has several benefits. Participants reported an overall increase in wellbeing. Results also show that the time spend exercising during work hours allowed staff to be more productive by using this brain downtime to problem solve or to think about and plan upcoming work. Overall staff reported a greater sense of job satisfaction and productivity and felt better, physically and mentally. Employers should consider incorporating exercise into the workday to enable their staff to live balanced working lives, where they feel more satisfied with their jobs and supported in their wellbeing.

Jo is an Early Career Researcher interested in the perception of productivity and how subconscious brain activities during exercise (like problem solving) can increase productivity. To better understand these links they are using a range of methods to compare attitudes, approaches and changes to the brain. Jo is hoping their research will show how the incorporation of exercise to facilitate our brain's subconscious problem solving can be successfully used in a work environment to increase employee satisfaction, support wellbeing and increase productivity.

**Sophisticated mind control by the supposed human parasite
Ursus theodorus offers hope for a kinder, cuddlier future**
by Kate Hammond



Ursus theodorus (the teddy bear) is a parasite of *Homo sapiens*, endemic to much of the world. In developed nations *U. theodorus* populations can outnumber humans more than 2:1 and in small enclaves (sometimes known as hugs) in far higher proportions. In order to understand how these are formed and what implications they bear for their human hosts we carried out a longitudinal study of several hugs.

It became apparent that for effective mind control the human must be parasitised young. Bonding techniques may include excessive hugging and slobbering. This may involve a degree of unpleasantness for the individual *U. theodorus*, possibly involving the Washing Machine, however, these techniques normally result in a strong bond by the time the human is three or four years old. Provided the bear has successfully infiltrated their

human's mind by the teenage years the bear will, if they are lucky, have a human for life. The human will willingly work to earn a roof over their bear's head and, with careful attention to detail, the bear can live happily with their human until old age. We also noted that mind control becomes easier the higher the *U. theodorus* to *H. sapiens* ratio. Once a critical *U. theodorus* number is reached it is virtually impossible for the human to break free. Members of large hugs virtually never find themselves on the streets.

We would argue that the secret to the success of the teddy bear is that the *U. theodorus*: *H. sapiens* relationship is not true parasitism. The benefits to *H. sapiens* include feelings of warmth, wellbeing and increased love and respect for other humans. We would suggest that for the good of the human race no one should be allowed to take on a position of power without first being owned by several teddy bears.

Professor Jingle S Bear, Centre for *Ursus theodorus* Studies (CUTeS), University of Liverpool. The professor earned his first degree at the University of Cambridge where he studied Natural Sciences while his human wasn't looking. He is still sore that he did not actually receive his degree as the university statutes do not allow degrees to be awarded to non-human species. Clearly further mind-infiltration of the University Senate is required. He is an expert at human mind control and is top bear in a considerable sized hug. His human typed this for him but will have no recollection of the event. She believes she owns him. He knows better.

‘Are you still watching?’: measuring defiance in the face of perceived judgement

by Lisa Golds



Television viewing practices have been changed forever with the introduction of streaming services. The phenomenon of binge watching has reached new heights and is often now seen as a badge of honour, constantly referred to in conversations with friends and colleagues. But what happens when that which we love appears to judge us for our actions?

In this small-scale study, 30 participants (aged 25–35) were recorded in their homes as they watched television on a Sunday (self-identified as their ‘day off’). Each participant watched in isolation, with times spanning from three to twelve hours. After three programmes, the streaming service is programmed to ask, ‘Are you still watching?’ before continuing. This is measured as one experimental ‘episode’ for the purposes of this research project. After the first experimental episode, 98% of participants were seen to press ‘continue’ on their remote. As the observations continued to episode two, twelve participants were seen to cave to the pressure of the perceived judgement from their own television, however the remaining seventeen stayed on their sofas for upwards of seven experimental episodes. These astonishing examples of human strength culminated in ten participants watching for twelve straight hours, ending after a sixth experimental episode in which a staggering 60% of the remaining participants had mumbled ‘of course I’m still watching, otherwise I would have turned you off’.

These results are seminal in showing that we can still show strong defiance in the face of the questioning and frankly judgemental tone of our own household appliances. I for one am proud of us as a species.

Dr Alison Gorithm is the Principal Investigator for the Centre for Applied Timewasting at the University of TeeVee. She is an avid campaigner for all countries having the same access rights to quality shows and loudly denounces the current need for VPN. Her research is often cited by bored teenagers who are eager to avoid homework, as well as young children who are trying to push bedtime by an hour. She is most famous for her *New York Times* best seller (non-fiction), *I am two seasons in, don't ask me any questions: what to do when your life partner comes home early from the gym*.

Watering your soul: an exploration of houseplant-millennial harmony

by Rowena Piers



The growing obsession between millennials and houseplants has blossomed from a small seedling to an evergreen devotion. This mixed-method study investigated plant care as a form of self-care. Dubbed the 'wellness generation,' millennials are considered a key demographic when it comes to all things self-love and indoor jungle. An online survey explored predictive relationships between number and health of houseplants and millennials' own health, happiness and wellbeing. Semi-structured interviews aimed to dig into participants' own experiences of plant parenthood and how it relates to feelings of autonomy, self-compassion, uncertainty and life-as-we-know-it.

Survey participants were 176 plant parents aged between 25–35 years and their plant children ($n = 1389$). Unfortunately, all plants provided incomplete data and had to be excluded from analysis. Eligible millennial-houseplant family structures were invited for

interviews, with 26 plant parents having completed both quantitative and qualitative components.

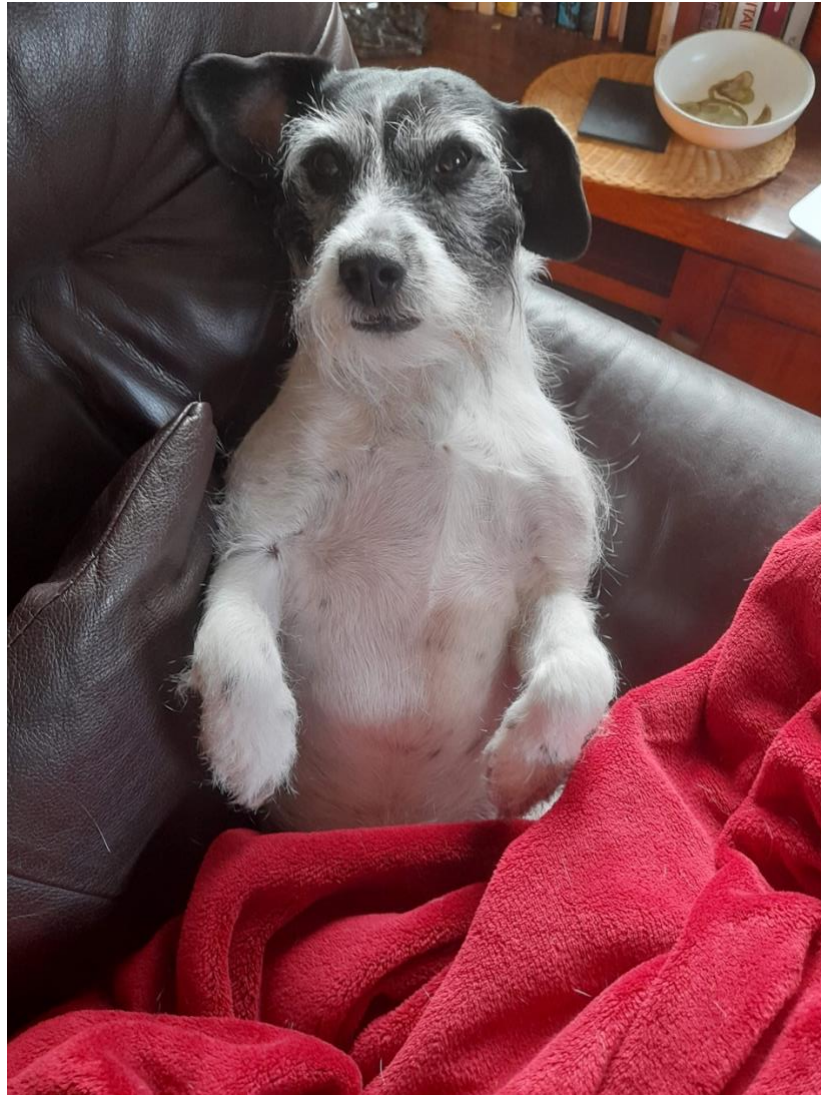
Regression analyses revealed that number of houseplants significantly predicted plant parents' happiness ($p = 0.003$). Plant health was a significant predictor of plant parents' own health ($p = 0.001$) and mental wellbeing ($p = 0.005$). A number of themes were generated through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2002): plant care as coping mechanism; filling the void (sub-themes: pets, people, purpose); teaching oneself about the circle of life (sub-themes: buying new plants to replace dying plants, googling plant symptoms as the new WebMD); home- and bodily-autonomy; and questionable care advice (sub-themes: filling your home with plant life to ignore everything going wrong in the world, watering plants with your own tears).

The authors conclude that, while millennials have a lot to worry about (economic instability, climate change, politics, pandemic, etc), at least they can find a leaf of joy through houseplants.

Iona Calathea is the Hortus Somniorum Research Fellow at Dieffenbachia University and Editor-in-Chief of *People & Plants*. Her research into overwatering and underwatering houseplants has been widely lauded and she has recently branched out into plant-based performance art. Notable publications include *I may be dead inside but my houseplants are thriving*, a self-published poetry anthology titled *Water me, I'll water you* and a critically-acclaimed metaphor-heavy self-help book: *Grow through what you go through*.

Human evolution in action; the progression of canine characteristics in humans as a response to COVID-19 selection pressures

by Katy Proctor



Since the rise of COVID, many dogs have been engaging in 24-hour surveillance of their human feeders. Some have taken the opportunity to conduct longitudinal studies on emotional coping mechanisms during lockdown and social distancing. Contrary to traditional concerns about researchers 'going native' during ethnographical studies, in laboratory conditions defined by coronavirus restrictions the opposite has happened. This paper explores the newly observed phenomenon of human-participants 'going native' when living with their dog-researchers.

Observations in the field saw human feeders increase their canine behaviours significantly over a six-month period. Most noticeable were displays of repeated begging for

snacks and treats, staring—both at the fridge and out of the window, heightened excitement on arrival of the postman, napping, considerable anxiety on the approach of strangers (particularly acute when face masks were not visible), growling for no obvious reason, and reacting to emotional discomfort by repeated cleaning of paws (commonly known in human terms as ‘hands’). After periods of prolonged isolation some participants were even observed crawling and burying themselves in one of the large dog beds.

It is postulated that the conditions created by COVID-19 has increased the speed at which *Homo sapien* evolution is progressing and that human biology and behaviour may be elevated to that of canid sooner than anticipated. The concluding remarks of the paper reflect on the implications for canid-kind and discusses the need for robust policy development to maintain an imbalance of power in favour of indigenous dogs.

Dr Vexing, originally christened ‘Tattie’, earned her title of Dr Very Vexing through continually pushing the boundaries of civil (dis)obedience. Her resolute determination in refusing to conform and to challenge every social norm has seen her dominate any environment she finds. She attributes some of her success to her mixed parentage of Springer Spaniel (father) and Jack Russell Terrier (mother) but the rest she believes comes from being naturally gifted at pretty much everything. Dr Vexing is perhaps best known for her ground-breaking papers ‘Bin raiding for snacks: don’t even pretend to be ashamed’, ‘Being cute to be cruel: the power of looks in manipulating your feeders’ and most recently ‘Do what you want, take what you want; why your training doesn’t matter’.

An elevated topography of the utopian ideal in light of oxygen consumption in goats

by *Pete Jobes*



The effects of altitude have been under-investigated in research on the potential for utopia. In spite of a growing number of adherents indulging in mountain-based pursuits, it remains commonly considered that climbing them is hard work. This has been adequately demonstrated in previous studies involving humans across a broad range of fitness levels. The question we must answer is whether the effort associated with the pursuit of altitude is greater than or less than the reward given by time spent at altitude.

This paper analyses the differences between the VO_2 max (maximum rate of oxygen consumption, measured in millilitres per kilogram per minute) within tame lowland goats and feral Cheviot goats. The Cheviot goat was chosen because its physical remoteness has maintained purity within the feral herds, keeping it biologically distinct from more common breeds such as the British Saanen or the American Lamancha.

The VO_2 max difference between the two can be compared to the average happiness quotient of each species, as established on the Keffler-Hoffenbach scale. Once outliers are removed and results are rationalised based on the average number of sexual partners available to each goat species (substantially less for the Cheviot goat than the more domesticated species), we were able to establish:

- a) whether the utopian ideal is more suited to life above or below 3,000ft of elevation;

- b) whether any subsequent turning of mountains into molehills would hasten or delay the arrival of a neo-marxist utopian state on earth;
- c) whether filling valleys and rebuilding all human settlements above 5,000ft would elevate humanity as a whole from its present Dantean state into a world influenced more by More, only with more goats.

Professor Ian T Nomonthienoff is a leading academic and breeder of goats for sheep herding purposes, based in the Austrian Tyrol. He has lectured on this subject at the Sorbonne and holds an honorary fellowship at Yale where he teaches on identifying alpine mammals by their dung (or absence thereof). Previous studies include 'The effect of mould on the health of goats in Kurdistan' and 'Goats as pets and their effect on pediatric well being', which was published in *The Lancet*.

Writing retreats as a retreat from writing: a tried and truancy method

by Kay Hammond



Writing retreats have been promulgated as a space to facilitate writing. Residential retreats offer a prolonged period of time in which to complete academic manuscripts to gain recognition and promotion; research outputs are noted as a result of participating in such retreats. However, there have been reports of possible non-writing behaviour (truancy). I decided to explore this gap in the research.

This ethnographic study contains a report of a writing retreat somewhere in New Zealand. Observations were made and personal trackers usually used for 'Where does my cat go?' research were also utilised. Observations and GPS data were analysed to illustrate patterns of research performance. The retreat community was also surveyed to qualitatively explore their experience of research progress.

Results from the observations showed multiple desks covered with research paraphernalia, including laptops, books, glasses and various articles and stationery items; people, however, were not always at these locations. Results from the survey found an extraordinarily detailed knowledge of the participants of local shops, cafés, parks, walking tracks and tourist attractions. Great depth of knowledge was noted even of the new

participants in the opening hours, prices and shortcuts to various facilities. Cars covered considerable distances despite being in a self-contained research environment. Numerous art gallery purchases were also found inside the cars. However, there were no reports of outputs not being achieved, thus this study concludes there is no evidence to support truancy.

Dr IM Off is a well-travelled academic. Her laptop is frequently at her desk.

How do ancient thinkers perceive the modern-day interpretations of their thoughts? An empirical investigation by Yijie Wang



There are many ancient thinkers who are often interpreted today (example: Plato). It raises an intriguing question as to how successfully these ancient thinkers consider their thoughts to have been interpreted by academics (especially considering that even the present-day academics, albeit desperate of being cited, constantly feel that their thoughts have been fundamentally misunderstood). Hurriedly seizing the opportunity of the invention of the time machine, the current study proposed a mixed-method approach utilising questionnaires and interviews. However, since ancient thinkers considered both questionnaires and interviews to be anti-human and personally insulting, the researcher had to change them. This change involved seeking approval from 82 institutions and took approximately a decade. During this decade, some ancient thinkers became extremely anxious about how they were being represented in the twenty-first century, and implored and begged to be told a bit of it informally prior to the research. The researchers declined as a matter of course, lest the research yield less authentic results. However, the declines were phrased in a very considerate manner in accordance to our ethics procedure.

The research was eventually not carried out. This was because (a) the initial researcher had acquired promotion through other projects and (b) ten million similar projects had already been done since ancient thinkers got hold of the time machine. The

cancellation of the project was celebrated as a delightful mark of academic progress: it dawned on people that perhaps no one needed to know more. At the celebration event of the project's cancellation, ECRs in relevant fields, who unanimously reported having been 'profusely inspired' by this 'top-notch' (albeit undone) project, were encouraged to investigate further by focusing on other aspects, such as helping ancient thinkers deal with significant loss of interest in thinking (and in life in general) after learning how their work was interpreted.

Professor Great has been awarded two Nobel Prizes: the first one in Physics, by tailoring time machines to better fit social science research, and the second for Peace, by proposing that the version of the time machine they previously designed should not be used. All of Professor Great's research projects, both current and future, are extremely excellent (no one will say otherwise). In addition, Professor Great is also a wonderful mentor, as can be evidenced by the fact that although each and every mentee filed lawsuits against them, none of them actually won.

Evidence of the positive impact from trying to perform traditional Christmas activities related to experiencing joy in December

by Kristina Areskoug Josefsson and Thomas Areskoug



Balancing everyday activities is often strenuous and can feel overwhelming with additional festive must-do's. To aid planning, this paper presents an evidence-based guide of how traditional Christmas activities influence the experience of joy in December. Since these activities are rarely performed at other times of the year it is presumed that there will be both failures and successes in attempting to perform them. This study used a parallel mixed methods design; via a mobile app, ITRIED, quantitative data was collected (date, type of traditional activity, results, level of joy, needed medicinal consumption) together with

qualitative data from performing the activity (recordings of sounds such as speech, interruptions and music).

The results of the study clearly show failures are as equally joyful as successes, especially based on the sound analysis from the activity. When rating an activity as a failure high decibels of laughter and Christmas music were significantly more common ($p = 0.0012$ and $p = 0.0023$) than uttering angry phrases. Notably, medicinal consumption was zero among listeners to the original version of 'Last Christmas' by George Michael. Interestingly, engaging in a high number of performances of traditional activities did not increase joy, while Christmas music did. This implies that further research is needed on the recommended amount of traditional activities to ensure high levels of December joy.

Saffranätte Klenätte Jingle is a highly esteemed Professor in Holiday Traditions, focusing on the exploration of joy in domestic traditions. Her most publicly known research project, the Ginger Biscuit Kindness Project led to a very successful recipe that helped Christmas joy rocket around the globe. There are great expectations of her upcoming popular scientific book: *Too kind to consume ginger biscuits: the guide to staying sharp in the festive season*.

S Klaus Appsson is an esteemed app developer, whose most famous app, the Ginger-ho-ho-ho, gave the public the ability to digitally consume ginger biscuits.

W(h)ither education? Lost object of the managerialist university

by Avril Bell



In psychoanalysis, the loss of the object is foundational to the constitution of the subject. This research project explored the hypothesis that education is the object that must be lost to (re)constitute the university as neoliberal and managerialist. If this hypothesis is correct, education would be both hard to find and only locatable in irruptions of the return of the repressed object. A mixed methods approach was used to test this hypothesis. Analysis of university policy documents showed that references to the education of students only appeared in passing (if at all), like eruptions of the skin of a hormonal teenager. The bulk of managerial attention (and anxiety) was directed at reputational concerns and income streams. Overall, education was kept in check by the construction of the student as an unit to be 'retained' and to 'complete' in order to maximise funding and reputation. An ethnographic search for education in the daily practices and spaces of the university resulted in similar outcomes. No evidence of education was observed in departmental meetings, or in libraries (where we found fewer and fewer books, with shelving space making way to open study space for students to be left to their own devices). In lecture theatres and tutorial rooms, an occasional return of the repressed education was witnessed in the eruptions of a small minority of students who insisted on asking questions. Interviews with academics revealed little interest in students and preoccupations with promotion and

research ranking scores. Overall, we concluded that the managerialist university has succeeded in constituting itself, but must remain ever vigilant against the irruptions of the return of education, which must be stamped out wherever they are found.

Dr Ant Intalecta is a Professor of Ubermanagement at Megalopolis University. He is the leader of the 'Universities for 2100' research team, which is concerned with constructing utopian visions for the future of universities post-education. This prestigious team is made up solely of professors in research-only sinecures.

Thriving not surviving—remembering your ‘why’ within the PhD journey

by Ondine Jayne Bradbury



Take a moment to enter ‘images of a PhD journey’ into your search engine. The results will reference largely negative experiences. Searching further you will come across words like ‘dying’, ‘drowning’, ‘pitfalls’ and ‘freefalls’. Is it any wonder that in some research fields over 33% of doctoral students do not finish the journey that they started? This paper locates a new set of images, ones connoting open-mindedness, flexibility and readiness for engaging with a PhD in a supportive and collaborative environment. Participants in this project included ten higher research degree (HRD) students at varying stages of candidature in their journey. Using illustrative visualisation and focus group methodology, HDR students created their own imagery and discussed the emergent themes. Additionally, the participants in the

focus groups responded to semi-structured interview questions around personal effectiveness, research capabilities and engagement with academic networks.

The perceptions of their individual journeys reflected positive supervisor relationships and, in response to the many twists and turns in the PhD process, an optimistic view likened to that of an 'explorer'. Due to various worldviews, there was an emphasis on resilience strategies. Within the semi-structured interview data, terms such as 'bravery', 'confidence' and 'creativity'; 'trust', 'reward' and 'empowerment' were used when describing their journeys. The results from this project showed that HDR students had experienced a new narrative of 'thriving' not surviving their PhD journey.

Associate Professor Autumnberry is an educator and researcher in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University. She is an avid reader who enjoys locating new academic writers at various stages of their academic journeys. Her interests include supporting both teachers and doctoral students, encouraging them to break new ground when researching educational contexts. She has supervised over 100 PhD students and encourages networking within these student communities. Many have felt inspired to publish pre-candidature. Her recent publications include *Who's PhD is it? Empowering pre-candidature students on their learning journey* and *An angel in my pocket—case studies of PhD student and supervisor relationships*.

'Why the long sentence?': an ethnographic dive into the psychology of jargonology

by Maria Kenti-Kranidioti



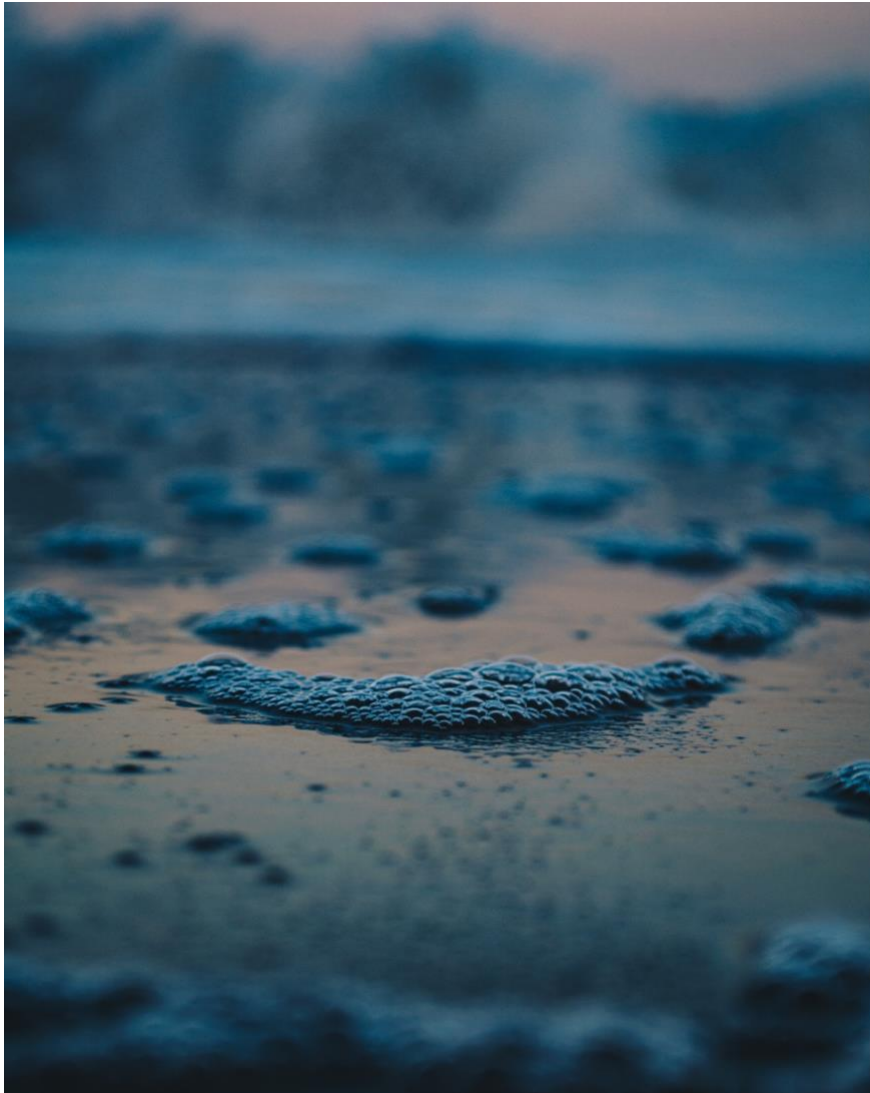
Considering all the fascinating peoples and cultures anthropology preoccupies itself with, the curious lives of one particular group remains significantly underexplored: academics. This study focuses on one aspect of this tribe's complex psyche; an idiosyncrasy that has for decades brought feelings of exasperation and discontent, considerable confusion, tears and long, lonely nights under the desk lamp: academic jargon.

Using long-term semi-structured interviews with 32,354 UK-based academics from the realm of social sciences and humanities, combined with a meticulous analysis of scholarly texts, the research presented in this paper attempts to answer some burning questions: what lies behind the perpetual fascination of academics with the construction and deconstruction of definitions? Is the exercise of academic jargon and self-absorbance in philosophical rants and platitudes a display of power or a cry for help? Are academics fearful that if they say what they are thinking using two sentences instead of two paragraphs the world will underestimate their intelligence? Are they trying to divert the reader away from their own potential confusion by confusing them? Or are they just trying to meet the word limit?

A study by Bilbobaggins et al (2989), demonstrated a positive correlation between publication potential and use of the words with the suffixes -ication, -isation, -ness, -ility and -ality. Although a display of complex thinking through word coinage as a means of professional advancement could be a possible cause for the use of jargon and tremendously long, convoluted sentences in a large section of academic publications, this study reveals that a combination of all the aforementioned factors along with a simmering existential anxiety and trauma rooted in the academic's dark PhD years, is the most probable explanation for the jargonisation of language later in career. Finally, this qualitative research highlights another correlation: academics that preferred a more concise writing style showed higher levels of serotonin and dopamine (commonly known as the 'happy hormones'), a fact leading to two inevitable questions: is jargon a symptom and a cause of an unhappy life, and could less of it lead to a better future for academics and students alike? This study concludes that the answer is yes, and that all the most intimidating, frowning, tortured jargoneers need is, in fact, a hug.

Dr Barbarella De la Futile is an associate professor at the Dazedandconfused University at the Inhumanities Department. Her research areas include things that are weird, cringeworthy, interesting and annoying. She's recently published her monograph *Sorry for being sorry: an ethnographic study on British sorry culture*. When she's not busy contemplating the meaning of it all, Dr De la Futile usually enters into staring contests with her cat, sends double-chin selfies to her sister and enjoys planting lentil seeds in cotton and watching them grow.

Towards a harmonious yeast-human relationship: a history of the *Candida glabrata* Intra-Vaginal War and the co-creation of kinship and communing in the Trans-Vaginal Treaty
by Maya Lane



This research charts a history of the recently ended territory war between *Candida glabrata* yeast pathogens and the vaginas of the humans in which they live. Using ethnographic data including life story interviews with both *Candida* veterans and previously afflicted vaginas, as well as textual analysis of the treaty itself, this article points to the potential yeast-human harmony and inter-bacteria kinship envisaged by the Trans-Vaginal Treaty.

The article starts with a thorough investigation of the specialised inflammatory tactics employed by both parties, before exploring the proposed peace-making practices of the treaty. In an attempt to uproot and permanently expel *Candida glabrata*, humans have partnered with vaginas to utilise transference practices such as enforced starvation of the

yeast spores through complete sugar abstention, advanced boric acid 'cleansing' of the vagina, deliberate disruption of the PH balance and foreign body forays. In defence, *Candida glabrata* employ their specialised 'burrowing' technique into the walls of the vagina, a notorious protective tactic that ensures safety during times of chemical warfare. There is also evidence they have resorted to fissuring the surrounding area, tickling the inside of the vagina to cause mania and releasing a creamy white substance designed to stain and ruin human underwear.

Recently, the successful Trans-Vaginal Treaty was agreed, facilitated by *Lactobacillus acidophilus* who was transported into the zone on a specially armed and prepared tampon. The treaty aims to effect harmonious co-living and communing between *Candida glabrata* and their vagina-bearing hosts, and the second part of the article explores this myriad of ways communing, kinship and community sentiment are facilitated between *Candida glabrata* and vaginas. The treaty negotiates peace practices including workshops facilitated by *Candida krusei*, yeast pathogens that successfully co-exist with human vaginas. Participants in the workshops are encouraged to think creatively of how to create community and kinship, via, for example, artistic projects, joint cooking and group therapy. The article ends with a call for further research into human-yeast tensions.

Dr Fermin Table is best known for their work on the queering of relationships between vaginas and micro-organisms, facilitated by lots of coconut oil. They co-founded the Centre of Social Science Research into Pubic Hair (CSSRPH) with Professor P Nanny, whose work is responsible for the uptake in pubic hair research amongst community organising groups and institutions such as Pornhub. Dr Fermin Table's research interests include teledildonics, the kinning properties of sourdough and the effects of the anti-candida diet on feeling like there is nothing delicious left to eat.

The Zoom-wave as symbolic interchange: an illumination of organisational dynamics within senior management in Higher Education

by Peter Hartley



Our main research institute—iHAL (Institute for Heuristic Analytic Liminality) is famous for investigations of unanticipated consequences of new online technologies, including the relationships between smartphone screen-size and ego strength and self-efficacy in adolescents.

This study mixes traditional and techno-based research methods to investigate meanings and significance of the ‘Zoom-wave’—using physical gestures at the end of videoconferenced meetings. Our subjects were a representative sample of senior managers across UK HE, a sadly under-researched group. As well as meeting observations and follow-up interviews, our copyright-protected heuristic algorithm integrated data from facial recognition software, smartwatch readings of cardiac stability, perspiration analysis, and other measures of emotional and physical tone. This integration enabled the development and validation of several new measures, including the Bogardus scale of Zoom-wave

sincerity. Unfortunately, this technical sophistication created issues of data collection—several records were lost following operator error. These issues were restricted to male subjects; we cannot make definitive statements about gender differences because of very small numbers of female participants.

The results suggest a number of effects and processes that we intend to explore further with other subject populations, including:

- relationship to organisation climate;
- the quality (Bogardus scale) and quantity (time and cumulative gesture amplitude) of Zoom-waving strongly correlates with overall measures of organisational climate;
- hierarchy effects;
- the higher the individual status, the more restrained the wave (this is most pronounced in all-male meetings);
- reciprocal extension effects: person A waves first and B and C immediately reciprocate. A feels obliged to reciprocate. This creates further responses from B and C, and so on. Waves of this reciprocal obligation extended meeting times by up to 6.37 minutes. This relationship is confounded in institutions with poor organisation climate (especially where the host is high-status and knows how to turn software off).

Evadne Lovelace is Professor of Systematic Algorithmic Heuristics at the University Poppleton where she integrated her interest and expertise in women’s rights and computer surveillance to produce ground-breaking studies on the (possibly but not always) unintended consequences of new technology in both work and domestic settings. Her project on ‘Alexa friendship and empathy dynamics’ was shortlisted for a Zuboff award in 2020. Her other recent study of ‘Surveillance practices and policy in the contemporary workplace’ features in three current high-profile legal cases and is the basis for a new Private Member’s Bill for consideration in the UK Parliament (scheduled for 2026).

A heart that will never break: use of octopuses as heart substitutes in humans

by Ksenia Shcherbino



This body of research is centred around the curious case of Ms Cepha Loh Pod, a citizen of Shanghai who, upon crossing a road in November 2019, was involved in a collision with a biker that made her heart jump and go missing. The ambulance team found her with a gaping hole of 12 x 8 x 6cms and a feeling of emptiness, not dissimilar to morning sickness. The patient herself reported feeling 'ecstatic, as if all the degrees of happiness controlled by the heart suddenly leaked out. I had a bright vision of the heart as a controlling oppressor; finally this bourgeois complacency was broken'. The ambulance team plugged the hole in her chest with a similarly-sized octopus from a nearby restaurant, a decision that saved the patient's life.

Octopuses and their kin stand apart from other invertebrates in having evolved larger nervous systems with greater cognitive complexity. The body of an octopus represents a soft, bilaterally symmetrical body, encasing three hearts and nine brains, encircled by eight radially symmetrical and incredibly flexible arms. As a generalist organism capable of facing variations in the eco-system, it has higher chances of adapting to being a pump in a human body, and its independent brains, each controlling movement, act as a system of checks and balances for every movement of a human heart. An octopuses' brain-to body ratio is the largest of any invertebrate, which leaves us hope to believe that it will help our hearts be less fickle and improve our general rationality and wellbeing. Its blue blood adds an extra touch of noble reliability. The only possible drawback to this use is octopuses' known ability to escape closed areas, so that bearers of octopus hearts should be careful not to let their minds wander, lest their hearts go astray.

Dr Octavian Pus is a researcher at the Hectagon, the leading military institution engaged in developing the eighth sense in AI. He applied mathematics to non-mathematical species at Cambridge, and philosophy to biomechanical engineering at Oxford. His main topic of interest is imaginary numbers within octopus civilisation. In his free time he skates perfect figures of eight at his local skating rink.

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