

The Boomerang

Fall 2024

Dear First Years...

by Muriel Owen

With summer behind us and Introweek now a distant memory, we've officially entered the liminal period known as the Fall Semester. But let's be honest—the first day, week, perhaps even the entire month? It's all a warm-up. Until that first essay, exam, or project looms ominously on the horizon, we might as well dub this period *Summer Volume 2*, purely in the name of academia.

For some, this semester signals the "beginning of the end," as the once-distant thesis creeps closer, no longer a problem for "next year." For others, you've just crossed the gates of UCU, where Introweek is fresher in your mind than your professors' names, your courses, or even your unitmates (it's hard to distinguish between Anna, Ana, and Anja). And for the second years—you may be the middle children now, but you're not forgotten just yet. You're probably still trying to figure out how you ended up on this old military base again, knowing the ropes but not entirely sure how to sail the ship.

I feel uniquely qualified to dispense some wisdom as both a) one of the last of the 'halfies' (assuming this term doesn't fade into oblivion next semester), and b) a veritable campus ghost (if you happen to see me around, you've probably been spending a little too much time at the bar or in the snow).

“ You're in this peculiar bubble where you get

to make your own decisions, and when they inevitably go wrong, the consequences aren't as harsh as you think. Own your choices—whether they're great or disastrous—and learn from them.

Dear First Years, this one's for you...

First and foremost, take ownership. You're not in secondary school anymore and you definitely aren't on a gap year. You're in this peculiar bubble where you get to make your own decisions, and when they inevitably go wrong, the consequences aren't as harsh as you think. Own your choices—whether they're great or disastrous—and learn from them. Don't wait for others to initiate things. Start conversations, and make plans (pro tip: set a date, time, and location, and

be mindful of people's culture around punctuality and dietary preferences). If your professor forgets to upload the slides for the umpteenth time, email them—or better yet, talk to them in person. Most of them are actually quite approachable. You might even get to casually mention that, despite the intense eye contact every time India is brought up, you're actually from Nepal.

“ I hope you meet strangers who become lifelong friends, staff who become mentors, and that this campus—and the city around it—becomes the perfect backdrop to your next 3 (give or take a semester) years.



When it comes to your curriculum at UCU, don't let yourself be steamrolled by requirements. Yes, there are rules (note the ARR or Student Council Office Hours if you want the full breakdown), but exceptions are as common as in French grammar. Your tutor is there to help, but it's on you to show up, express your interests, and advocate for yourself. If you hate history, don't let yourself get strong-armed into that Intro to Modern History course. And don't forget—Google exists for a reason. Before you fire off an email or wait for an answer, do a quick search. Odds are, you'll find your answer faster than you think.

Second, grades matter, sure, but not at the expense of your genuine well-being. So maybe that SCI breadth requirement didn't go according to plan—no one is going to care when you're walking across the stage with your interdisciplinary SSC-HUM degree and a spot in a

master's program. Prioritize sleep, eat, spend time with friends, and go on walks (preferably outside the campus's walls). It's more important than pulling an all-nighter in Voltaire for a mediocre result. And for the love of all things good, stop comparing yourself to others. It's futile, especially in a place like UCU where everyone is truly on their unique academic path.

Lastly, leave this place better than you found it—for yourself and the college both. Your unit is your home, but it's also home to your unitmates, and they're just as stuck there as you are. So be courteous, communicate clearly, and clean. Yes, I'm talking about that dish in the sink that's been there for five to seven business days, despite multiple passive-aggressive group chat reminders. The campus is a shared space, therefore we have a shared responsibility to take care of it. Not to mention, it's the only one we've got.

And while you're at it, push the college to be better too. UCU has its strengths, but there's always room for improvement—whether in day-to-day operations or as an academic institution. That said, keep in mind that the majority of staff care about this place as much as we do, if not more. There's always a way to engage constructively, rather than shutting people out.

“ Lastly, leave this place better than you found it—for yourself and the college both.

Ultimately, I hope you leave this campus better than when you entered it. I hope you leave a little kinder and ideally wiser. I hope you meet strangers who become lifelong friends, staff who become mentors, and that this campus—and the city around it—becomes the perfect backdrop to your next 3 (give or take a semester) years.

Welcome to the Fall Semester of 2024-2025, Classes of 2024.5, 2025, 2026, and 2027. May it be all that you hope for, and possibly more.



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Learn to Listen

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The Day of the Disappeared

by Quetzalli Carrera-López

I have my mom to thank for many of the musical gems I know today, among which I include music by the Mexican singer-songwriter Natalia Lafourcade. Natalia's songs are adorned by gentle, tender hums unique to folk music, followed by her brilliantly touching lyrics. One of her most famous songs (rightfully so) is named after her 2015 album release *Hasta La Raiz*. The song is outright beautiful. It carries a deep sense of nostalgia and longing. It reflects on the importance of remembrance, acting as a love letter to those dear to her, expressing that regardless of time and space, she holds them close: *hasta la raiz*.

“August 30th marks the International Day of the Disappeared, a day to draw attention to the heartbreaking amount of disappearances related to violent government action, migration, conflict, and armed groups, among others.

Natalia underscores the power of memory, and how it can bend time, spreading its corners and edges, allowing our love for a person to grow despite physically moving on. *Hasta La Raiz* does a great job of highlighting the importance of heritage, ancestral love, and the emotional ties that softly anchor us to our roots. In this sense, Natalia touches on the, in many ways Mexican, cultural belief that memory helps keep loved ones alive, long after they or we have moved on.

“A global environment like the one we live in, calls for international action, be it to urge governments to continue the search for missing people, or, much more ambitiously, rethink the political decisions that lead to such damaging circumstances in the first place.

Four years ago, on August 30th, 2020, *Playing for Change* in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), released a video featuring 15 Latin American artists covering Natalia's *Hasta La Raiz*. August 30th marks the International Day of the Disappeared, a day to draw attention to the heartbreaking amount of disappearances related to violent government action, migration, conflict, and armed groups, among others. Hence, the project was an ode to families struck by disappearance, beating with a palpable sympathy for victims.

Though the campaign may explore an experience foreign to you, the striking performances of the artists carry undeniable emotion (my personal favorite being Susana Baca).

Playing for Change shed a new, poignant, light on Natalia's *Hasta la Raiz*. The 2020 rendition suggested a broader, universal meaning, resonating profoundly with the experiences of those grappling with the pain of disappearance. The song therefore takes a different dimension which echoes the unyielding hope and determination to continue searching for those missing. Similar to Natalia's reliance on memory to continue loving those before her, families of missing persons also depend on this remembrance as an emotional link to their loved one, despite the uncertainty of their whereabouts.



Disappearance is a terrifyingly open question that seemingly has no beginning or end. A missing persons' case can take decades to resolve (if ever), leaving families wondering endlessly, desperately remembering, and exacerbating every last option to search and, hopefully, find their loved one; it is a lengthy and grueling process. In Cyprus, Greek and Turkish islanders alike seek answers about their missing friends and family following the civil war; in Chile mothers desperately try to find their children who forcefully disappeared during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship; and in Kenya, families have continuously been broken apart by armed conflict. The International Day of the Disappeared is a day of remembrance, unveiling the real human stories behind desensitized statistics.

Although this article will be published well after August 30th, the relevance of disappearance will continue, especially given the current political landscape. Venezuela's fraudulent elections sparking severe government repression, Israel's genocide in Palestine, and Sudan's raging civil war are all examples of contemporary humanitarian tragedies that leave behind the often overlooked issue of missing people. A global environment like the one we live in, calls for international action, be it to urge governments to continue the search for missing people, or, much more ambitiously, rethink the political decisions that lead to such damaging circumstances in the first place.

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In light of these devastating tragedies, I was reminded of a book I recently read, recommended to me, coincidentally, by one of my mom's ICRC colleagues. *The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak beautifully captures the emotional weight of disappearance and the troubled politics that drive the issue. While Shafak expresses the pain that comes with such ambiguous loss, she also uses her recurrent motif of trees as a way to offer some solace to anyone living through that reality. So, I would like to leave you all with a quote from her book, which, to me, felt like a tight hug to the heart: “The bodies of the missing, if unearthed, would be taken care of by their loved ones and given the proper burials they deserved. But even those who would never be found were not exactly forsaken. Nature tended to them. Wild thyme and sweet marjoram grew from the same soil, the ground splitting open like a crack in a window to make way for possibilities. Myriad birds, bats, and ants carried those seeds far away, where they would grow into fresh vegetation. In the most surprising ways, the victims continued to live. Because that is what nature did to death. It transformed abrupt endings into a thousand new beginnings”.

O Captain, My Captain

Third-Year Professor Recommendations

by Marianna Komornicka

Illustration © Yoan Panev



As a third-year, one of the biggest pieces of advice I can offer newer students is that when you're picking courses, look at the professor first. Their lecture to discussion ratio, how they interpret the readings, if they prefer exams, papers, or projects, if they want to know their students on a personal level; all of these factors make or break a course.

At this point in my UCU career, I have a solid grasp on my favorite professors. However, I remember the semesters I spent fumbling in the dark, trying to gauge who I'd vibe with. With this article, I've tried to do some of the heavy lifting for my lovely underclassmen. Below, I've summarized conversations with several friends and fellow third-years as they reflect on their ride-or-die professors — The John Keatings to their Todd Andersons, the Mr. Miyagis to their Daniel LaRussos, the Julian Morrows to their little academic cults.

Without further ado, I present to you a few of our campus' star faculty....

Anton van de Ven - Science

Recommended by... a philosophy & physics major who's taken his courses in Classical Electrodynamics, Topics in Physics, and Sustainability.

This student described Anton's courses as lecture heavy. His classes are generally jammed full of technical information—perfect for physics lovers. However, you can also find less science heavy content in his Sustainability course. Beyond purely academic material, this student enjoys his digressions and “little insights into the world” on topics ranging from literature to news. On a human level, they described him as a very kind and considerate person.

Recommended for... physics majors and podcast listeners.

Sebastiaan van Bommel - Humanities

Recommended by... a literature & history major who's taken his Tragedy and Homo Universalis courses.

Bas's classes are discussion based, sans powerpoint. The student described him as someone who you can listen to for long periods of time. He's eloquent, insightful, and deeply passionate. He also thoughtfully listens and responds to student contributions. Beware that Bas will force you to reflect and elaborate on your thoughts when you speak in class (I can attest, this is the scariest and best part of his teaching style).

Recommended for... “me,” people who value literature above all else, and readers who are interested in Christian theology (you will 100% read the Bible if you take his courses).

Chiara Robbiano - Humanities

Recommended by... the literature & history and philosophy & physics majors already mentioned. The lit & his major has taken Chiara's World Philosophies course and both students have taken Identity Construction in East Asian Philosophy, Literature, and Film.

I talked to each student separately and both gave long and glowing reviews of Chiara's teaching style. Both mentioned that Chiara is very empathetic and open to the needs, concerns, and opinions of her students. She puts a lot of effort into making her students feel comfortable. One student described her as, “sensitive to the class's moods and sways.” They agreed that her teaching style is very unique and engaging; almost like a spiritual or religious practice. Both students are also very fond of her on a personal level.

Recommended for... “unpretentious philosophy majors,” anyone interested in learning about non-Western cultures, and students who like creative freedom in assignments.

Markha Valenta - Social Science

Recommended by... a political science & psychology major and an economics & anthropology major. The pol & psych major has taken Markha's course on Politics and Religion in the Modern World, and both students have taken Hospitality, Sanctuary, Refuge.

One of the students appreciated how Markha's courses often address relevant current events and sometimes allow students to choose lecture topics. Prospective students should note that her courses are heavy on readings. However, the student that pointed this out said they found all of the readings engaging and enjoyable.

Both students agreed that one of their favorite aspects of Markha's teaching style is her genuine

interest in students' perspectives. She encourages dialogue and doesn't push specific opinions. Markha frequently addresses her positionality and experiences, creating an environment where students feel comfortable doing the same. Both students like that Markha tries to get to know her students on an individual, personal level. She's also mindful of the fact that her students come from different academic backgrounds.

Recommended for... anyone interested in politics or history (emphasis on *anyone*).

Claire Stramrood - Science

Recommended by... a pre-med major who's taken Claire's Mechanisms of Diseases.

This student appreciated how Claire incorporated many real-world examples into her teaching—something that is “sometimes lost in the sciences.” They valued being able to connect class material to the lived experiences of friends and family, contributing to the feeling that the information they gained is valuable for day to day life. Additionally, the class they took was small, allowing Claire to dedicate a lot of time to each student. They enjoyed how she guided students to answers by encouraging them to develop their own ideas first.

Recommended for... any student with basic knowledge in biology or physiology. “I think everyone can gain a lot from [her course].”

Sander van Maas - Humanities

Recommended by... a politics & law major with a minor in philosophy who has taken Sander's course in Metaphysics and Epistemology.

The course this student took was lecture heavy, and their enjoyment of it came largely from Sander's lecturing style. Sander delves deep into various theories and strands of thought, with a charismatic way of speaking that clearly reflects his passion for the field. The student said his lectures, “make you hang onto every word.” They also noted that it's easy to refocus if you happen to zone out, as the lectures are more about a line of inquiry rather than describing the steps to reach a predetermined answer.

Recommended for... “people who like the drama and passion of philosophical thinking.”

Note: the students I talked to are in no way representative of UCU's entire student body.



Small illustration © Jasmine Yi Carder

‘Made in Bangladesh’

by Lamyaa Hegazy

“Fast fashion is destroying our environment.” “Fast fashion is polluting our water with fabrics and dyes.” “Fast fashion is contributing to the climate change crisis.” “Fast fashion is feeding into overconsumption.” While all of these sentiments are valid concerns regarding the fast fashion industry, it is equally important to acknowledge that the industry also violates human rights. As we work towards resolving the damage and contamination caused by clothing items, we should not overlook the exploitative production process it takes to make these clothes in the first place.

Bangladesh is known for its skilled textile and garment workers, and, accordingly, it is the third largest exporter of clothing in the world. Many of the clothing brands we visit frequently, including H&M, Zara, Nike, and Adidas, outsource the production of their garments to Bangladesh. The presence of many international brands has led to Bangladesh relying heavily on its textile and ready-made garment industry for foreign direct investment. The country’s lax labor laws and low minimum wage make it an attractive destination for corporations in the fashion industry. The minimum wage in Bangladesh for garment industry employees is equivalent to 73.19 USD a month. This means that these international brands can make use of Bangladesh’s highly skilled and specialized workforce while paying low salaries compared to what they would pay if they conducted production in their home countries or other countries besides Bangladesh.

“If clothes have a little itchy tag on the back that says ‘Made in Bangladesh’ we must realize that it is a heavy tag to bear.

This reliance has created a crooked power dynamic in which the owners of local garment factories have the liberty to exploit and cheat their workers without facing significant consequences. Many garment workers in Bangladesh have expressed frustration with how they are treated. During interviews, workers from multiple garment factories have revealed that managers deny or delay paychecks and force employees to work overtime by locking them inside the factories. Workers are regular victims of verbal abuse and in some cases even physical and sexual abuse.

Many of the people working in garment facto-

ries in Bangladesh are lower-class citizens. Due to this, they don’t have the luxury of quitting their job and finding a better one. When factory workers don’t receive their paychecks on time, they face dire consequences. A 30-year-old garment factory worker in Dhaka went on record saying, “I fell behind on rent. I couldn’t pay my brother’s medical bills, I’m very scared and vulnerable. It’s not only me. All my coworkers are in the same position.” Even though their human rights are violated constantly, their fear of job insecurity and unemployment makes them powerless in the face of the negligence of their employers.

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Benetton, and Zara’s parent company Inditex.

The Rana Plaza building’s foundation was not fit to house factories and heavy machinery but the owner’s greed led him to disregard building codes and open a garment factory anyway. As a result of the strain being placed on the structure, its foundation grew weaker and weaker every day. Workers reported that the building was shaking while the machines were running. On the day before the accident took place, there were cracks discovered in the walls. Action was taken immediately and the building was evacuated. However, the factory owner forced workers to return the next day or else he wouldn’t pay them at all. On April 24th, the building collapsed resulting in the deaths of 1,134 people and the injury of 2,500 more.

The mistreatment of garment workers still happens today. When we go shopping, we must be conscious of where the clothes on



Garment workers in Bangladesh not only get bad pay, but they work under extremely dangerous conditions which leads to many accidents and injuries. Perhaps the most horrific accident to occur as a result of the negligence of factory owners in Bangladesh is the Rana Plaza collapse of 2013. This accident took place on the 24th of April and it tore the fabric of the fast fashion industry. Rana Plaza was a factory complex in the capital of Bangladesh that produced garments for brands like Primark, United Colors of

display are coming from and how ethically they were made. If clothes have a little itchy tag on the back that says ‘Made in Bangladesh’ we must realize that it is a heavy tag to bear. Let it serve as a reminder of the countless men, women, and children in Bangladesh who work tirelessly under inhumane conditions and speak up for them when they can’t.

We desperately Need to Learn to Listen to Each Other:

A Review of Chiara Robbiano's Decentered and Embodied Practices

by Aralyn Perelli-Harris

I had the opportunity this summer to meet with the wonderful Chiara Robbiano for coffee, and she told me about the Senior Seminar in Philosophy (UCHUMPHI34) that she will teach in Spring 2025. It's titled *"Embodied Decentering in World Philosophies: Towards thinking together"*, and while it may sound vaguely mystical, the more she told me about it, the more I realized how far-reaching and fundamental it was as an idea. This is not only a course for philosophers: it is a course for life. It is for anyone interested in speaking or interacting with others, or interested in a society – that is to say, it is a course for everyone.

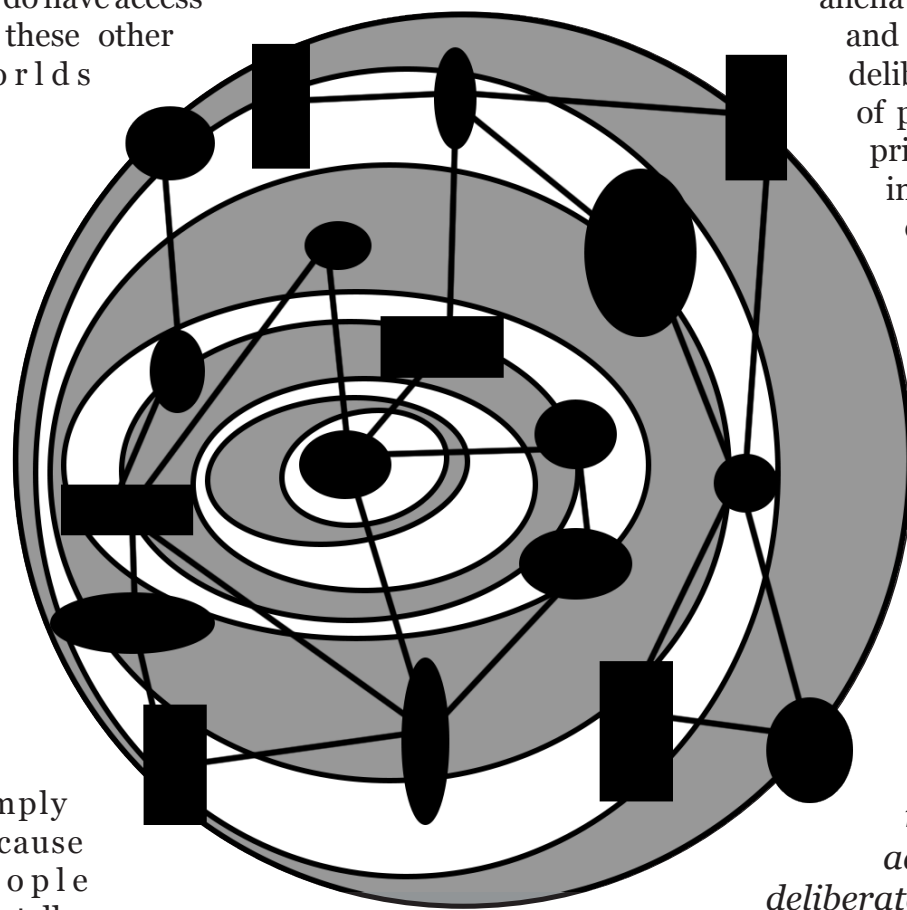
“Epistemic humility is an intrinsic aspect of the course and of the concept of decentering; the recognition that you can only ever know from your own perspective inspires an understanding that the scope of your knowledge is also fundamentally limited.

The basic premise of the course is the “awareness of where our knowledge comes from”, and how to actually be in a dialogue with people from other backgrounds or experiences. Chiara defines decentering as “not seeing oneself as the center”, a concept similar to understanding one's positionality – “checking your privilege”, in other words.

But the idea of decentering goes beyond the critique of Western positionality by entirely reframing the idea of what the “center” even means, and whether there is such a thing as each individual person being the “center” of their life. Instead of thinking that you are the center of your life, and everyone else is the periphery of other perspectives around you, consider instead that everyone is each their own little “node” of consciousness, and that what you consider to be an objective reality is in fact only a part of the constellations of different realities perceived by everyone else.

This is only one of the ways in which I find the idea of decentering to be a mind-blowing idea. It also connects directly to how we live our daily lives in relation to other people. If you think about this idea for more than two minutes, you immediately start to make connections to all sorts of other situations and concepts. If everyone is framing their own reality in their private minds, that means that suddenly there are billions of different realities that you cannot

ever comprehend, because you cannot ever live through the exact same experiences as another person. Fortunately, even though we cannot understand or experience what it is like to be another person, we do have access to these other worlds



simply because people can tell us.

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However, listening to another person, on a very deep level, is hard work, and a lot of people are so focused on their own “center” of reality that they let these other realities pass by without question. I mean, why don't more people attend the FemCo or the PoCCo spaces, where there is an explicit presentation of “this is how I experience the world, come and listen to me”? For the PoCCo events, there is often a much higher turnout for the cultural events, such as the Vietnamese cooking workshop, than the Spill the Chai sessions. Perhaps that says something about people's disinclination to listen to others when it is on a level that truly bisects from their own experience.

And of course, you can't mention decentering without mentioning the Western positioning of a “mainstream” center of reality, which alienates queer and non-western experiences. Chiara calls this alienation “disorientation”, and advocates for the deliberate disorientation of people in positions of privilege as a method of increasing awareness of how this so-called objective reality is merely an illusion. This illusion, of course, applies to everyone, and the call for an expansion of reality by simply listening to others still remains.

“Chiara calls this alienation “disorientation,” and advocates for the deliberate disorientation of people in positions of privilege as a method of increasing awareness of how this so-called objective reality is merely an illusion.

When we grasp that our method of understanding the world stems from an individual perspective, we start to think about how to grow and develop our understanding, and with it, the world. Epistemic humility is an intrinsic aspect of the course and of the concept of decentering; the recognition that you can only ever know from your own perspective inspires an understanding that the scope of your knowledge is also fundamentally limited. Approaching scenarios with the realization that you might never have a full comprehension of events, might never know all the facts, or the extent of the realities at play, might sound very daunting. But I choose to think of it as reassuring, that even if I might not know everything, there is still so much that can be learned regardless, and so much value in attempting it in the first place.

Illustration © Yoan Panev

Small illustration © Jasmine Yi Carder



6 CULTURE

On Becoming an Adult:

A Story About How Everything that Could've Gone Wrong Went Wrong

by Alejandra Monerri Revuelta

When I went on exchange last semester to Dublin, I never expected to run into so many problems. I guess having to apply three times should have tipped me off, but it seems I was not so good at reading the signs.

My problems started on a fateful evening out in Edinburgh with my friends. Between pictures of pretty buildings and selfies of the group, my phone suddenly switched off. It is quite old, I had had it for four years, so I don't know why I was so surprised. I pressed the 'on' switch repeatedly throughout the night, and it would simply not turn back on, meanwhile colourful flashes that scream "my phone is broken" occasionally filled the screen. I was worried. My biggest fear: not being able to listen to music on the plane the day after.

“Exchange made me realise that I'm now an adult, and adult problems suck. So, to conclude, I would like to welcome you all into adulthood as well, and give you some tips from my experience...

Maybe at the moment I wasn't too alarmed but, thinking about it now, if my phone hadn't switched on eventually, it would have been a hassle having to get a new one whilst on exchange.

Indeed, I appreciated my phone in the upcoming weeks, especially when I went to interview for an internship at a science museum that, with no intention of exaggerating, was on the other side of the planet. To get there, I had to take a bus for half an hour, a train that appears once every hour, another bus, and, finally, walk for 40 minutes, to get those steps in. I've never loved Google Maps so much. After further consideration and the fact that the first bus was an hour and a half late, I decided to take an Uber, which I ordered through the privileged use of my phone. I went to my interview, and I did really well; then, as I was coming back in the Uber, I realised that my wallet was not in my bag. I take everything out, put it back in, check my pockets, check the surroundings, ask the Uber driver to go back to the museum, call the Uber driver who initially drove me there so he would check his car, call my friend, Maja, so she would check the bus stop I had been waiting at. But no. The wallet was gone.

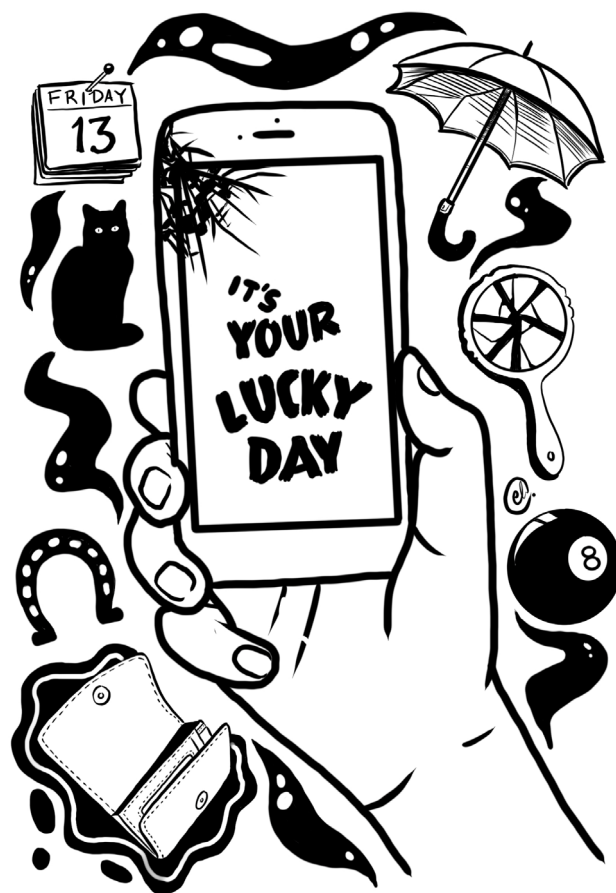
“I have no ID, no bank card, no health insurance, and, worst of all, I lost a cute sticker Maja gave me and a picture of my sister and I in Rome. So, what to do now?

I have no ID, no bank card, no health insurance, and, worst of all, I lost a cute sticker Maja gave me and a picture of my sister and I in Rome. So, what to do now? I go to the ING app and block my card, as well as thoroughly research how to pay through the app, since I had tried in the past and it didn't work. Thankfully, I managed this time, and had my money sorted for the rest of the exchange. I also had my passport, so I booked

an appointment to make another ID for when I got back to Madrid, where I'm from, as well as emailing my health insurance so they would issue another card to me. Moment of panic – survived.

Weeks of peace went by, and I did not give the Edinburgh phone issue and lost wallet another thought. That is until my phone stopped being able to read my SIM card, and I could not call anyone or access the internet with mobile data. It had happened to me for some time that my phone would stop reading my SIM card, but turning it off and on again would fix the problem. Not this time.

So, I learned to live with no wallet and my illegible SIM card, and decided I'd fix the problem, or problems, once I was back home.



The next day, I am at the supermarket with Maja. And, as I go to pay, my phone informs me that I can no longer pay through the ING app. I log into the app to see what is going on, and I notice that it has logged me out after an update. When I try to log back in, I remember that I don't in fact remember my username to the account, and the document with that information is safely packed away in my storage boxes in Utrecht, where I would not be in until August, and it was May. I also had not written it down anywhere and had not told either of my parents what it was. (So, if this is you, go tell someone and write it down *on paper*). I decide to call the bank to ask them for my username; I have to use Maja's phone because I can't call with mine. A very nice woman answers the phone, and I explain my situation to her: "I'm a student in the Netherlands, but I am now on exchange in Ireland. I'm Spanish, but the phone number to my name is German because I grew up there, and I'm calling from a Polish number now because my phone broke—" Disconnected. I must have sounded like the most suspicious caller ever.

Eventually, I requested my username to be sent to my address in Utrecht, and I asked one of my friends, Ahnaf, who was staying at UCU over the summer to collect my letter and send me a picture so that I could log back in.

Meanwhile in Dublin, Maja is paying for me, and we go bouldering the day before we return back home. We laughed about everything that happened to me, no SIM card, no wallet, no money, whilst watching each other climb. An hour goes by, and as we are about to leave, I attempt a final climb of a wall I wasn't able to do. I am close to reaching the end, but, sadly, I slip and fall, landing on my feet, looking very glamorous. Unfortunately, my fall was not in fact glamorous, as Maja and I looked down at my phone, which was now parabola-shaped under the weight of my foot. I pick it up, turn it on, but the screen remains black.

With my flight the next day, I use Maja's phone to contact my parents through Instagram/E-Mail/LinkedIn to ask them for their phone numbers so that I have them in the case of an emergency during my travels.

“"I'm a student in the Netherlands, but I am now on exchange in Ireland. I'm Spanish, but the phone number to my name is German because I grew up there, and I'm calling from a Polish number now because my phone broke—" Disconnected. I must have sounded like the most suspicious caller ever.

When I got back to Spain, I bought a new phone and a new SIM card (so to those of you that have texted my old number, this is the reason I didn't reply!), and I sorted out paying with my phone, requested a new bank card, wrote down my usernames, passwords, and important phone numbers on paper, sent them to my parents, got a new ID, bought a new wallet, ran into some more of these types of problems (ask me about them if you want to know), solved them, found the picture of my sister and I in Rome (it wasn't in my wallet after all), and now I'm here in Utrecht and I'm all sorted. Exchange made me realise that I'm now an adult, and adult problems suck. So, to conclude, I would like to welcome you all into adulthood as well, and give you some tips from my experience:

1. Change phones every couple of years.
2. Travel with both your ID and passport.
3. Write down all of your usernames and passwords *on paper* (and also share them with someone you trust).
4. Write down *on paper* / memorise important phone numbers.
5. Have a Maja and an Ahnaf in your life (aka friends that really help you when you need them).

Not all men?

by Sacha Jeanmaire

Trigger warning: RAPE, sexual abuse, sexual assault, violence

On September 2nd, 2024, in Avignon, France, the trial of Dominique Pélécot and 50 other men began. The trial, expected to last at least four months, has shocked the international community with its horrifying details and the sheer number of accused.

Dominique Pélécot, now in his seventies, is accused of orchestrating the repeated rapes of his wife, Gisèle Pélécot, over the course of a decade, between 2011 and 2021. He posted suggestive images of her on online forums and arranged meetings with men who sought to assault her sexually. The encounters followed strict instructions: the rapists were told to park at a distance to avoid suspicion, not use any perfumes or smoke, undress in the kitchen, wash their hands, and remain silent. Gisèle was unconscious, drugged with anxiolytics and sedatives slipped into her food or drinks by her husband. Dominique filmed and photographed the assaults, creating archives of his crimes.

“The accused are not isolated predators lurking in the shadows; they are integrated members of society – ‘mister anyone.’ They shatter the stereotype of the lone, deviant attacker and remind us that misogyny and violence against women can come from anywhere.”

The extent of the abuse was uncovered in 2022, when Pélécot was caught filming under women’s skirts in a supermarket in Carpentras, the small town where he lived with his wife. A police investigation into his computer and phone revealed over 4,000 photos and videos of the rapes, meticulously organized in 128 different files, each listing the names and dates of the assaults. 72 men were identified by the police, 50 of whom are now standing trial in what is being referred to as the *Procès de Mazan*.

What has horrified the public, beyond the heinous nature of the crimes, is the lack of any common trait among the accused men. They range in age from 26 to 74, come from all walks of life, and have varied professional backgrounds – nurses, chauffeurs, plumbers, firefighters, retirees and unemployed. Some are

fathers, some are single, and the majority have no prior criminal record. It could be anyone.

One lawyer’s defence argued, ‘*There is rape and there is rape. Without the intention to commit it, there is no rape.*’ Many of the accused claimed they did not know Gisèle was unconscious, and asserted that they believed she was a willing participant. They all claimed to believe they were participating in a consensual “libertine” arrangement with a couple. Some even argue that because Gisèle’s husband had given his consent, they thought it was acceptable.

Those excuses clearly violate Gisèle’s autonomy, reducing her to a mere object in the horrifying scenario orchestrated by her husband. Despite video evidence showing these men raping her while she was drugged, and the discussions online revealing that they were aware of her sedation, most of the accused still deny the charges. Only thirteen men have pleaded guilty. Only three out of 50 offered apologies to her.

French law, however, has made it clear since 1857 that a person who is unconscious or asleep cannot give consent. Yet, this didn’t stop the accused from pleading not guilty. It highlights a significant gap in the legal definition of rape, where the absence of a clear and explicit “yes” is not

acknowledged as a violation of consent.

“What has horrified the public, beyond the heinous nature of the crimes, is the lack of any common trait among the accused men. They range in age from 26 to 74, come from all walks of life, and have varied professional backgrounds – nurses, chauffeurs, plumbers, firefighters, retirees and unemployed.”

What makes this case even more alarming is the complete inaction of the accused men. None of them stopped the assault they were perpetrating, reported themselves to the police, or walked away when they saw her sedated. Their actions reflect a deeper societal problem: a pervasive sense of entitlement over women’s bodies. To them, rape is not a crime, but something justified, even normalized. The fact that the husband had given his consent seemed, in their minds, to excuse their participation in the abuse.

This trial forces us to confront the question: is it really “not all men”? These men, who led seemingly ordinary lives, willingly chose to dominate and rape an unconscious, elderly woman. The accused are not isolated predators lurking in the shadows; they are integrated members of society – “mister anyone.” They shatter the stereotype of the lone, deviant attacker and remind us that misogyny and violence against women can come from anywhere.

Although, despite their differences in age, profession, and personal background, these men shared one horrifying commonality: a desire to exert control over a woman, without her consent. This raises profound questions about societal attitudes towards women and their autonomy, and the normalization of male power over women and their bodies.

Demonstrations in support of Gisèle Pélécot have taken place across France, with protestors condemning both the rapists and the broader culture that enables such acts. Meanwhile, Dominique Pélécot has not appeared in court yet, claiming “health issues,” a far cry from the pain and trauma his actions inflicted on his wife and children.

Rape is not just an individual act of violence; it’s a systemic issue that men must take responsibility for addressing.



What's the point to a point?

by Cristina Buruiană

I have known what my purpose was in life ever since I appeared in this world. I don't think many others can boast about this, but I don't say it to be grating or vain. I simply found a lot of comfort in it, in knowing why I was here and what I was meant to do. Even little kids, still wide-eyed and only learning the power of writing, were told about me, told I was the one thing standing between the expression of their ambitious ideas and utter nonsense. "People's ideas need an anchor," the teachers said, "so that they didn't fly off into oblivion and get lost," and maybe you can guess that the anchor was to be me. I have worked at this for so many years I've lost count and I certainly cannot complain. I may not always get the recognition, but I know deep down that I am needed.

But am I really? These days, I cannot tell. I'm still there in books, newspapers, magazines, sure, but on people's phones, I'm practically invisible. Just look at a basic exchange between teens, captured in their natural habitat:

"Hey how's it going?"
"Good good, hbu?"
"Want to meet up for coffee later?"
"Sure:)) I'll text [other friend] too"
"Alright lmk"

You can see me in there, right? Standing proud, doing what I've always been so good at doing...? Oh, you don't? Maybe because I'm. not. there! They use that flimsy, fidgety fellow with the bad posture and the chopped-off turtle tail just fine, but I'm dispensable, I guess. So what if your ideas jump out of the text box and scatter like sheep without the sheepdog nearby, they're not my problem anymore. They can join all those writing ideas you had and never got around to putting on the page.

Or wait, I have a better one: have you ever suggested something to someone and had them reply with "ok."? It's a standard, normal response, is it not? But nooo, I've heard people call it abrupt, or standoffish, or passive-aggressive, even! In what world-?! ...ok, I can see where the idea of aggression comes in. But that wasn't in the text itself, I swear. This is like the times your grandma asks why you're upset when you only have a resting face. I was just being straightforward, you know, that's the answer and nothing else comes after, the thought is done, over, finito. But

to take it as cold or aggressive...? I just don't get it, it makes my ink boil. I never changed, I certainly never meant to become this thing people find distasteful. I only wanted to help...

Or perhaps I am simply too bland, too simple? Maybe it's not that they don't like me, they just outgrew me. People these days want to say much more than I can offer; I could never be ?? or ^^ or even :) (I know we sort of look alike, but we're only distant cousins, I assure you). But hey, maybe I can still contribute. If the classic "sentence-ending" function is not to your liking, I also come in the emphasis variety, i.e. "don't you ever. say. tomatoes. belong. in a fruit salad" or perhaps the mysterious shade, "and then... the mouse stood up on its hind legs... and screamed for justice" or the pensive one, "fries with mayo... could be good." And if you're feeling particularly adventurous, you could submit an essay without me or other punctuation, à la García Márquez, and I'll be sure to show up in the professor's reply (with no ill intent, of course).

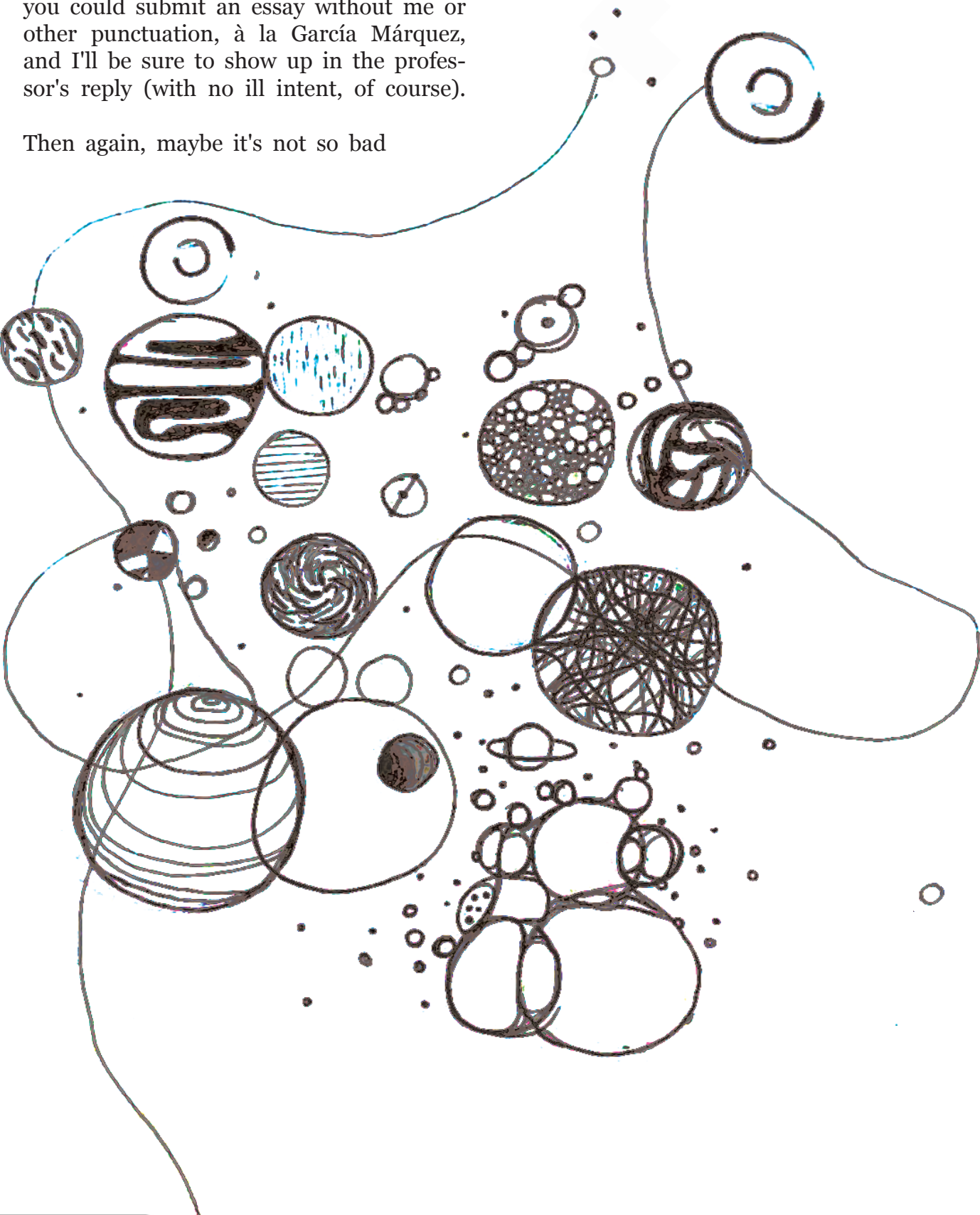
Then again, maybe it's not so bad

that I'm not that present in people's chats. I can take it as my midlife crisis and reinvent myself: I could switch it up a bit and become a point in the middle of the row or at the top, reconnect with my Ancient Greek roots. To be fair, that might get confusing and not catch on to begin with. Well, if that doesn't work, I can always try going into art, I hear there's quite a cozy niche for dot art. See? I can be modern too. At the end of the day, I'll still have my beloved novels, we go together like cookies and cream and everything. I realize I can't force myself on people's phones, so I might as well let the other guys do the heavy lifting for now. My time will surely come.

Signed,
.
(Sept 2024)



Small illustrations © Jasmine Yi Carder



Photograph © Violeta Bagazgoitia Gracia



Is Reset Possible?

An Inquiry Into the Nature of Customary Human Thought Patterns

by Jano Tierney

This question came to me during a lesson many months ago and still occupies a large portion of my thoughts. Put simply, the question is as follows: can an individual reflect upon their ideals to the point where they can destroy them entirely and completely “reset” their outward perspective? Of course, this question immediately fathers a plethora of little subquestions like “Would such a reset in perspective, in turn, cause a reset in identity?” or “To what extent or how should one ‘attack’ their ideals to destroy them?” These infant questions have also nagged me since this concept first occurred to me. This article will attempt to answer these questions in addition to why this reset could be beneficial to many and even serve as a possible solution to many of our ideological disputes today.

“Put simply, the question is as follows: can an individual reflect upon their ideals to the point where they can destroy them entirely and completely “reset” their outward perspective?”

I firmly believe that a debate between two individuals should be a compilation of trades in which each participant hands the other different weapons with which to attack their perspectives. Only this way can a true consensus be reached and the debate be fruitful. This “reset” I write of is an extension of this idea. It is now well known that no individual’s perspectives or ideologies are exempt from external influence and/or persuasion. Therefore, no individual’s ideology is exclusively theirs. The hypothetical reset is a debate in which there is only one participant. If, for example, an individual whose core beliefs include the distrust or hatred of a particular ethnicity could sit and reflect upon this idea from an entirely objective perspective and attack it relentlessly to the point where they can understand that this idea is void of reason, they could realise that said idea was baseless and leave room for a new one to replace it. This process is not limited to any type of idea. In theory, one could reflect the point of idea destruction on any idea present in one’s ideological treasury. But why? What is the goal of any of this, why not simply

keep one’s ideas, listen, and integrate those of others into one’s thought processes without ridding themselves of theirs?

Much like how human perspectives are vulnerable to influence and persuasion, our reactions and interpretations of the ideas of others are heavily influenced, if not utterly controlled, by our own. No matter how hard one tries to perceive new ideas objectively, their preexisting system will unavoidably affect their interpretation. To be free of this influence, one must remove the influencer, and this is only possible through reflection to the point of destruction. It cannot

us, I will ask this question of you, so that my proposal may seem less absurd: if a baby that crawls on all fours were never encouraged by its parents to stand up, is there a chance that it would continue to crawl on all fours into adulthood? The obvious answer to this would be, of course not, the baby would see other humans walking on two legs and learn to imitate them. What if, then, this baby was never exposed to other humans? It cannot be said for certain whether or not this baby will continue to crawl into adulthood, but this does not mean it is impossible. If it is not impossible, it is thus possible for the idea that humans walk on two legs to never be “manufactured” in a human mind and therefore it must be true that it can also be destroyed. However, it must be said that the destruction of this idea would have to be carried out very differently from that of the ethnicity idea. Here, I draw a blank.

“If it is not impossible, it is thus possible for the idea that humans walk on two legs to never be “manufactured” in a human mind and therefore it must be true that it can also be destroyed.

It may be that the method to destroy an idea like this one is hidden behind some other idea that must be destroyed to discover it. This would mean that this method can only be discovered through practical experimentation, through the destruction of

numerous ideas and the removal of influencers. To conclude, this hypothetical “reset” based on destroying an individual’s entire idea system could be seen as the pinnacle of critical thinking. A mental reset could lead to true consensus between individuals and remove the issue of clashing ideologies. There could be danger in this, however. If this system were employed, we would have to avoid the emergence of a dominant ideology that could utterly destroy freedom of thought.

be said that some ideas are indestructible because all ideas are manufactured, and all that is manufactured can be broken. Some ideas may be more difficult to destroy, for example, the idea that humans walk on two legs. It may seem completely absurd that a human who walks on two legs could challenge the idea that humans walk on two legs. I agree with this sentiment, but I also think that if it were impossible to destroy this idea, then this idea must not have been manufactured and must be innate within us.

Innate ideas are a different topic, one that has been debated many times previously. While I will not launch into a discussion about whether or not ideas can be innate within



10 CULTURE

Fix Your Life in Thirty Minutes With This One Easy Trick!

by Bence Bognár

I sleep alright nowadays, and as a consequence of the fact that falling asleep no longer occurs due to pure exhaustion come all the different variations to the theme: change! Fix your life, as soon as possible, by whatever means necessary! Set your alarm for earlier and go exercise! Alter your daily screen time to lay outside a healthy everyman's view of abnormality! Quit all the patterns you perpetuate, become the blank slate the world needs!

These ideas are not necessarily out of the ordinary for one's bed-inhabiting brain when surrounded by 3 AM darkness and filled with a full day's fatigue. But, when all is said and done, inner change is downright *horrifying*. Nearly everyone wants to do it, and they sure as hell keep talking about it, but how many people do you know who fully altered their personality, from one day -- or even one month -- to the next? Do you really want to become the human Ship of Theseus? How many flaws and quirks and bad habits of yours can be altered until you are no longer the same person?

“It's not controversial to say that self-betterment is something everyone should strive for, but if we accept that changing yourself is nevertheless terrifying (which it is), what could be of help? It's stories.

But, sure, you'll know you're still you. There is no way to alter your brain chemistry, I suppose, and your negative aspects don't define you. But what will *others* think? How will you explain the sudden change to everyone who asks? Is it worth changing their perception, something you're already familiar with, and venturing into The Great Unknown of the public-facing persona universe? Maybe those habits are exactly who you are, after all, and even if something is to be done, it would only have adverse effects anyway.

This is my time-honoured good friend Generalized Anxiety rearing its ugly time-honoured head, meaning these

worries, for the most part, are irrational or at least overblown. But if you're anything like me, even in possession of full knowledge that particular fears are not real, anxiety itself remains so. It's not controversial to say that self-betterment is something everyone should strive for, but if we accept that changing yourself is nevertheless terrifying (which it is), what could be of help?

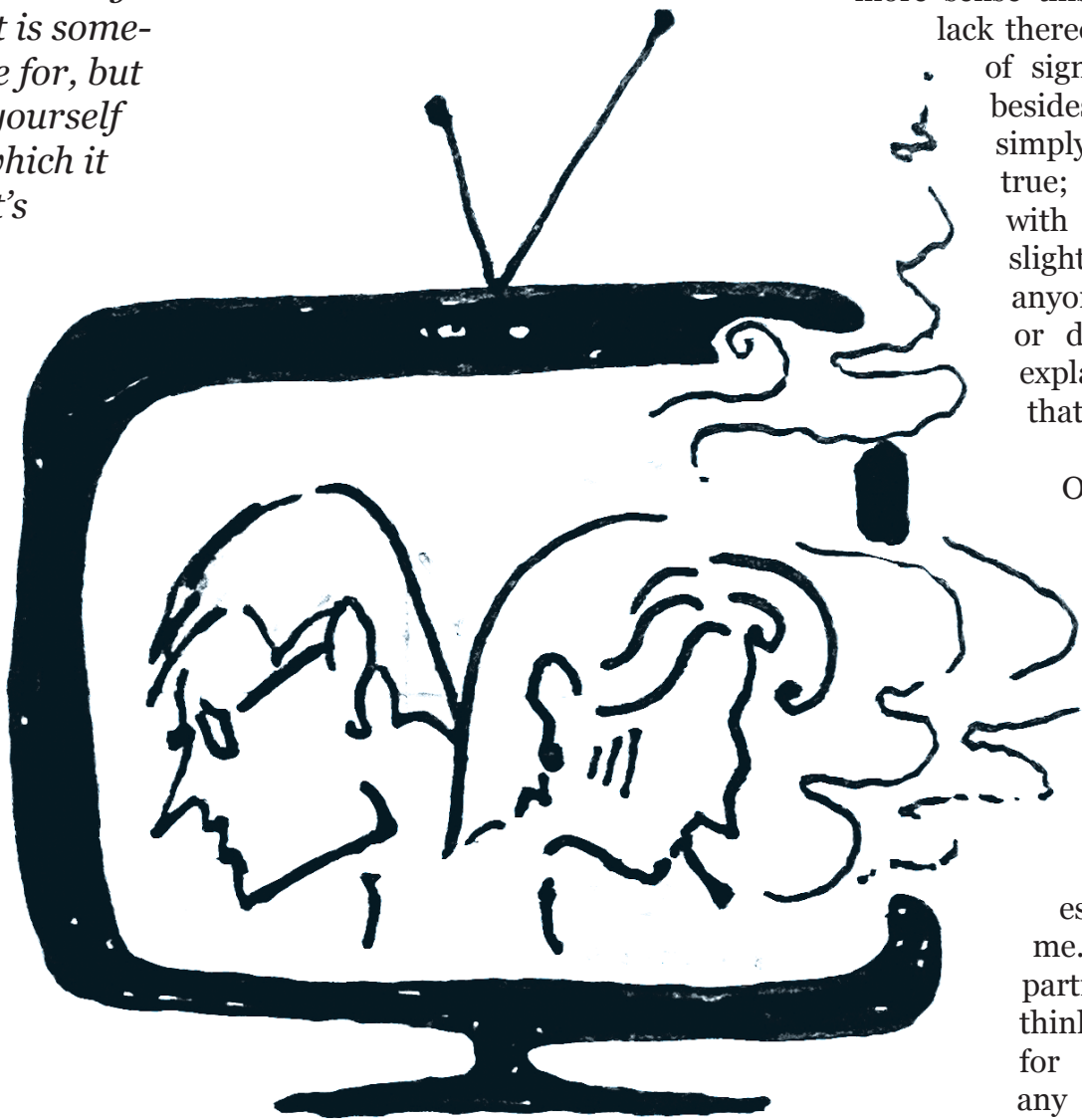
It's stories. Have a story. I had my high school run-ins with tobacco, of increasing frequency as the classes approached finals. My summer had also seen its fair share of cigarettes. Then I arrived in Utrecht, as a stage-frightened firstie (firsty?), greeted by all the amenities Introweek could offer. After the first night my parents left, I remember considering buying a pack of cigarettes as a way to celebrate my new level of freedom, until I realised that, alone in my room, there would be nobody left to hold me accountable -- and with Dutch prices, this would also spell dire consequences for my bank account. So I decided against it, and I haven't smoked anything containing nicotine since. For over a year! Hooray!

A true success story, curbing an objectively bad habit-to-be as soon as it had a chance to appear. Then I repeated the story to many friends at UCU and even more back home, in Hungary. So any one of them may rightly be appalled when I admit, for the first time ever, in this edition of *The Boomerang*: I'm not sure whether this event actually ever happened. Sure, I have certainly arrived at the desired conclusion, but I don't know if the memory I have, in the W room with its awful overhead lighting, about the decision-making moment, is just normally hazy -- as is regular for memories -- or completely manufactured.

“But what will others think? How will you explain the sudden change to everyone who asks? Is it worth changing their perception, something you're already familiar with, and venturing into The Great Unknown of the public-facing persona universe?

Yet, despite this unsureness, doesn't it make more sense this way? The authenticity or lack thereof of moments, of catalysts, of signs, does not affect anyone besides you. At some point, I simply decided to believe it was true; and every time I shared it with someone else, it became slightly more real. No longer was anyone surprised or confused or dismissive: everyone got it explained to them, and that was that.

On the Tuesday night before the Friday I'm writing this on, I had a conscious half-hour of going through where I am in life and how I want to move through it. I decided to try and live more consciously, to pay more purposeful attention to the world and especially the people around me. I'm not sure if it was that particular thirty minutes of thinking that made this striving for change happen, but in any case, I sure as hell will tell everyone about it. And I suggest you do the same: as long as it feels real to *you*.



CHOOSE YOUR CHARACTER

Illustration © Jasmine Yi Carder



To Hate a Unitmate

by Anonymous

We're gearing up to the US elections, and like many non-Americans, I am absolutely captivated by American politics in this crazy contemporary moment. It got me thinking about another, somewhat intense political landscape: the UCU unit. As the leaves start to fall, so do the common pleasantries to our ridiculously messy unitmates. Suddenly we go from "They're a bit messy but I think it'll be ok", to almost murderous thoughts because of the dishes piled in a sink. Every year there, we seem to see this common theme. Every year people seem to have at least one unitmate that they kinda don't love. And that's ok! But it is somewhat interesting to think about: does UCU foster this compulsive need to hate a unitmate? And if so, why?

Maybe it's just bad luck. Maybe UCU is a breeding ground for intelligent but terribly inconsiderate members of society. Maybe it's a result of the inherent interdisciplinarianism of UCU. I mean, how can we expect a history and cog neuro major to mop the floors? They're simply too preoccupied fluttering between Voltaire and Newton. A simple psych or politics major, on the other hand? Well, there's just no excuse.

It may not have anything to do with UCU in particular, though. Maybe it's more to do with the human connection of it all. As we enter a new unit, new place, new courses, and new people, we are desperately looking for something to unite us. And then we see the mice that have set up camp around the trash bag we asked our unitmate to take out three days ago. The collective hatred for that unitmate is such an accessible, path-of-least resistance avenue to form a connection with the people we live with. It's only logical that this hatred grows exponentially, in proportion to the positive connections we make as a direct result of it.

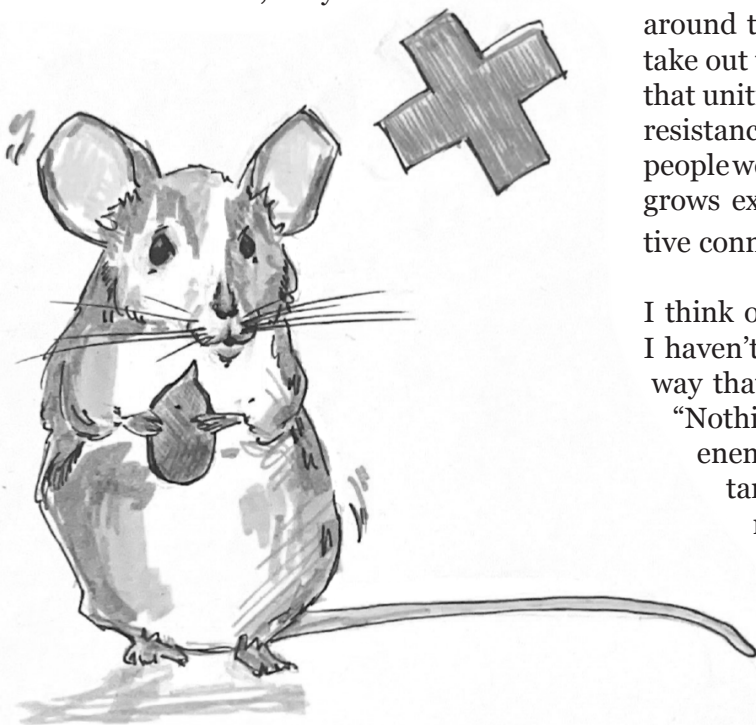
I think of that quote from 'Infinite Jest' (which I haven't read, by the way, I just know it in the way that people at UCU tend to know things): "Nothing brings us together like a common enemy". Condoleezza Rice, former US Secretary of State, said something similar: "We need a common enemy to unite us". It's quite a common, widespread idea about the basis of human connection. It's a theory for why we gossip or talk shit about people, especially when they are not *that*

bad. Uniting against a common enemy is not that deep, really, when it comes to social interactions - right? It's just a unitmate and their dishes, it's just someone who wouldn't do their work for a group project, it's just my ex and who they're getting with. It's all harmless. It can get scarier, though.

“ *It is much easier to get people together over the fact that they hate something, as opposed to getting them together over something they commonly appreciate.*

Blaming a common enemy is increasingly taking center stage in politics, especially with the rise of far-right parties in many countries. Blame the immigrants, blame the poor, blame the rich, blame women and the fact that they can vote (such a take!), blame the education system, and so on. It is much easier to get people together over the fact that they *hate* something, as opposed to getting them together over something they commonly appreciate. People are frustrated with their current circumstances. Price of living is unsustainable, wages are not increasing at the same rates, there are supposedly "less" jobs available (even though the job market is not some sort of zero-sum game, but that's something for another day). These things would frustrate anyone. But just as the solution to me freaking out over finals is *not* to yell at my disgusting unitmate, the solution to our current political and social issues is not to blame a scapegoat.

Picture © Veronika Semenova



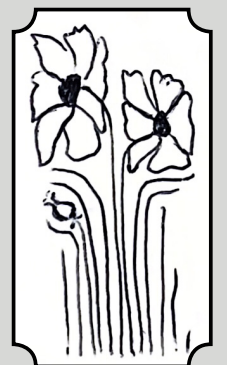
Dear campus,

Welcome back! We hope everyone had a wonderful summer, or at least a restful one. I (as in Ale), personally, was having a very restful one indeed, recuperating from my exchange in Dublin. After a lot of literature, bi-polar weather, and pubs, of course, what I needed was the Spanish sun and sleep. My summer (Jas), on the other hand, was not exactly restful; it was....a summer. But anyways, we hope everyone's settled back into campus and are surviving the terrors of midterms (the real Halloween).

We're proud to present our first edition of *the Boomerang* as co-chairs. We'd like to thank the members of our beloved board for putting up with us. Special shoutout to our new secretary, Quetzalli, and our returning treasurer, Mila. I (Ale) must also mention Jas' out-of-this-world cooking that has powered us through this edition's layout meeting.

We'll see you in the winter edition. Winter is coming, get excited.

XOXO,
Jas and Ale



Small illustration © Jasmine Yi Carder

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This is the first edition of the academic year

12 COLUMNS

Jasmine's Book Nook

Jazz & Slow Days, Fast Company

by Jasmine Yi Carder



“Any writer may be in or out of stop in his or her time, but a great one is inextricably bound to place.”

- Matthew Specktor in his 2016 introduction to Eve Babitz's *Slow Days, Fast Company*

This summer I Specktor to be true twice over, when reading Babitz's famous novel, and in Toni Morrison's brilliant *Jazz*. While the two novels are, in many ways, an odd combination—one set in the cold Avenues of 1926 Harlem, the other in the sweltering parking lots of 1970s Los Angeles; one dealing in the psychological fallout of the post-Reconstruction South and post-WWI North, the other reveling in the glitz and glamor of it's city's most privileged angels—the two books are at near opposite ends of the American landscape. But in both books, it is the landscape that the authors capture so perfectly. They paint time in gorgeous prose and bottle the asphalt streets, gifting their readers cities saturated in color, music, and social complexity.

Getting down into the specifics, I read Babitz's short story collection first. They chronicle Eve's lived experiences. The reader is wrapped in her fast paced commentary and almost off the

cuff references to famous people and places. While the stories aren't meant to collect into one coherent plot, there are written-in annotations to Eve's then lover, which string into something vaguely resembling an overarching story. However, the reason I lapped up her prose the way I did had nothing to do with plot and everything to do with the characters and settings she has shouting down your ears and eyes. She has an extraordinary attention to detail; characters that could've been caricatures and sets that could've been cardboard cutouts come alive in a way that is both realistic and so quintessentially Babitz. I'm sorry if this sounds cryptic, but you'll see what I mean if you read it.

A couple books later, and I was reading Morrison's *Jazz*. *Jazz* is the second in her *Beloved* trilogy, which expand on African American experiences following the abolishment of slavery. Each book in the trilogy starts from a specific historical jumping off point that caught Morrison's eyes. *Jazz* came from a photograph by James Van Der Zee and his brief description,

“She was the one I think shot by her sweetheart at a party with a noiseless gun. She complained of being sick at the party...And [her friends]

took her in a room and laid her down. After they undressed her...they saw the blood...she said, ‘I’ll tell you tomorrow, yes. I’ll tell you tomorrow.’...”

The story sets off after Joe Trace kills his young lover, Dorcas, and Violet Trace tries to stab the corpse's face at her funeral. The narrative explores everything from Joe and Violet's move from the South to Harlem, their adoption and abandonment of a no-name parrot gushing ‘I love you’, Joe's fall from neighborhood stand-up man to adulterer and then murderer, and the couple's *interesting* post-humorous relationship. Intermixed with the plot are the voices of characters so real you expect them to walk off the page *Purple Rose of Ciro* style, and of course, a city that grips you like the music genre the book is named after.

These books are simply magical. If you've ever wanted to visit the two titans of the United States, save yourself the money and read one of these instead; they'll give a hell of a bigger payout than any overpriced hop-on-hop-off tour guide. And if you end up reading both, let me know if you see a similarity or I was only stretching so that I could review two books at once. ;)

Movie Monster

Fly Me to the Moon

by Alejandra Monerri Revuelta



If you check some of my articles from previous editions, you'll see that I seemed to have made it my mission to talk about how maths and physics are present in the humanities. So, when I went to watch *Fly Me to the Moon* in the cinema, I knew what I would be writing my next column about.

Fly Me to the Moon, apart from a great Frank Sinatra song (which does come up in the film by the way) is also an excellent movie. Starring Scarlett Johansson and Channing Tatum, this rom-com follows the story of Kelly (Scarlett Johansson), a marketing miracle, who is blackmailed by a government operative who works for Richard Nixon into “selling the moon”. In other words, her task is to make the mission to the moon appealing to Americans in order to secure the survival of the project and increase its funds. At NASA, she meets Cole (Channing Tatum), the launch director, who is not a fan of her efforts, believing them to distract from the actual

purpose of the mission and, most importantly, a bunch of lies. In working together, they start developing feelings for each other and some jokes are made (this is a rom-com after all) but soon some tensions start to arise. Kelly suggests that a camera should be built into the space shuttle in order to document the moon landing live on TV. Whilst Cole believes this to be impractical, the operative fully supports her idea, having his own agenda in the background. His idea is to have an alternative, a fake, moon landing, a project he wants Kelly to lead, which she is not happy about and which puts a strain on her relationship with Cole and herself. But this is a rom-com, so it has a happy ending.

What really attracted me about this movie was the blend of marketing and the mission to the moon. Again, an example of how the Humanities and the Sciences are more interconnected than one might think. If anyone is interested in this specif-

ically, I recommend you look at the book *Marketing the Moon*, which takes a look at the original advertisements that were used during the months leading up to the launch, and how NASA managed to, through marketing, make the Apollo mission the main character of an entire century (apart from, maybe, the assassination of JFK).

Apart from that, this movie plays a lot with the boundaries between being honest when selling something versus lying. It forces you to ask what is ethical in marketing and more so, what is ethical when selling anything. This extends also to people themselves, as is clear in the movie. How ethical is it when you present yourself to lie about aspects of your personality, to act as if you're someone you're not? When you have a purpose, what is the line between trying to become someone and being fake?

I recommend this movie because it has something for everyone.

Mila's Playlist

by Mila Frattini



September has a texture, something surprising and smooth; it's familiar, but new and resistant to the usual sways. It's a pair of jeans left on a drying rack in your room: *I didn't remember they were there... and, oh, they're so fresh! I can't wait to wear them.* But somehow, they're sticking out at the left knee crease and along the ankles, and they fit a bit tighter than the last time you wore them. Keep them on, though, give the awkward stitches grace, walk as you know, as you do, and soon, they'll be yours again.

Now, how does this have anything to do with music? It doesn't, really. Except that music marks memories and attitudes and new friends and the weather, that one train ride, and the first night alone in your room (*or is it the other way around?*): it's October now – you've made it through a whole month here, and I don't want you to forget that. So, onto the tracks, let's try to recap beginnings in this time soon after.

Some feel-good indie for bike rides to and fro grocery shopping: *Vishnu <3* by Peter Cat Recording Co, *Kyoto* by Phoebe Bridges,

Rare Hearts by The Growlers, and *No More Virgos* by CMAT. The artists: a Delhi-originating alt-rock collective, a witty sad singer/songwriter, a melancholic 2000s Californian surf rock band, and a 'no longer lives in Dublin with her grandparents' eccentric indie-pop star. They've been with me through the streets of Utrecht, inciting rhythmic pedalling and lifting the fall clouds, maybe they can be with you too.

And what about all that time spent indoors, figuring out room set-ups, and finally settling down on your IKEA bed? I'm a preacher of spoken word to wind down; so, here are a few suggestions by one of my favourite artists. Kae Tempest's lyrics from their album 'The Line is a Curve' read like poetry of the soft, soothing type. *Water in the Rain*, with gorgeous vocals from their partner Æssia Ghendir, and *Grace* are stomach clenching and releasing – precise and tender. For something more dynamic, a jazzy rap evening sound, give Nujabes and The Silhouettes Project a listen: *Feather* and *At the Bay* won't disappoint.

Tackling classes and cooking, distinct challenges but musts to master routine-wise, may need something stronger. Blues add that confidence to your step and work well for chopping and sizzling. Recognised as the 'king of the blues', legendary B.B. King and his staccato electric guitar notes will lift you up. From his 1969 album 'Completely Well', *The Thrill is Gone* (probably his most famous song), *You're Losin Me*, and *No Good* all earn their swagger. *Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere* by pianist and singer Hadda Brooks is closer to swing than King's tracks; she was a big part of the genre's transition into rhythm & blues and you might like her if you're for slower beats. If, instead, you want an in-between, skip forward to 2021, to Jackie Venson's *One Step Forward*, or her entire album 'Love Transcends'.

Hopefully, there's something in here that suits you. Like September, like your jeans, give them a chance, they might turn into worthy companions – from beginnings to continuations, a wrinkle-free fit through the changing of the seasons.

Settling it over a cup of tea

by Pieter Dolmans



In the current hellscape of social media communication, we seem yet to have one beacon of hope: content moderation. Whether it be a mean comment on your crocheting tutorial, or a hate campaign that threatens to ruin vulnerable creators' lives, we turn to our AI overlords and Silicon Valley daddies to delete it for us. And this strategy is used quite extensively. Take Reddit as an example: besides sitewide rules which forbid illegal content and content which promotes "hate based on identity or vulnerability," every individual forum (or 'subreddit') has their own rules which define the forum's aims and establish a social atmosphere. And while I won't suggest for a second that content moderation shouldn't happen – it helps keep a platform presentable, and it's likely necessary to prevent illegal activity and general pandemonium from breaking loose – it also brings... problems.

Firstly and most simply, it gives content moderators an incredible amount of power. While they're not able to bring about any punishment to a user outside of the platform itself, punishment within a platform can already be quite severe. On Reddit,

violating subreddit or sitewide rules can get you (temporarily) banned from either respective level. Among those who are banned there will be individuals who use Reddit for the purposes of social interaction or information gathering, so much that it is embedded into their lives. In such situations, a ban means the individual's mode of functioning is (partially) ripped away. This is an especially distressing thought considering the ubiquity of subreddits which exist to provide social refuge or support networks such as r/ADHD and r/Trans (which I name because I've sought refuge in those places many times). And social media only looks like it will become more embedded within our functioning in the coming decades. Do we really want to trust the random unelected wealthy capitalists who happen to oversee these platforms with our lives in that way?

This is not to say that Reddit should not moderate content; filtering out spam, illegal content and bigotry is necessary to maintain a navigable (and non-disgusting) platform. But perhaps the use of the power to isolate and silence individuals should be kept to what is

strictly necessary.

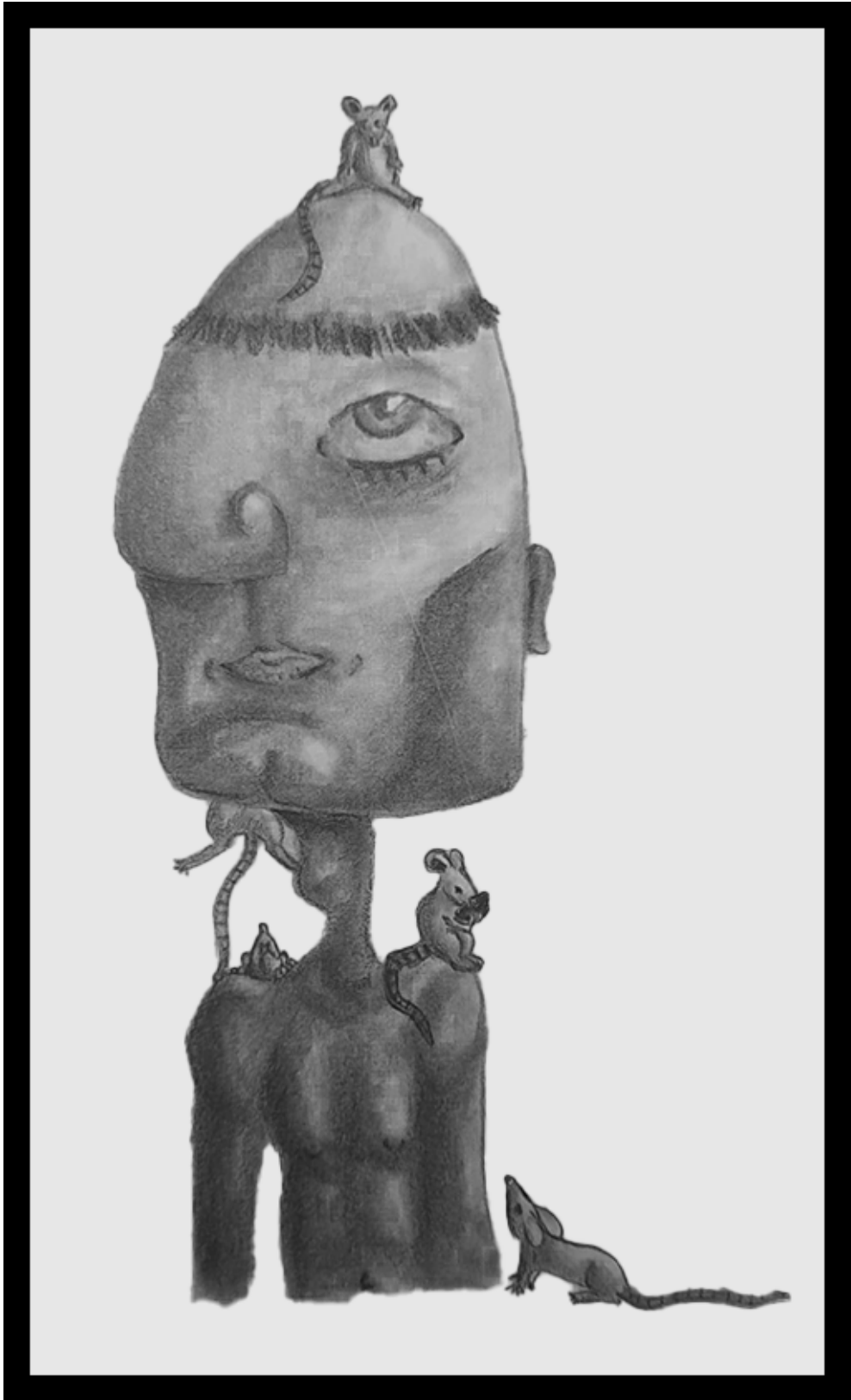
Besides, I don't know whether we should even *want* to rid ourselves of incivility altogether. Sure, it makes us feel bad, and it can ruin open conversations, but this doesn't warrant its outright eradication. When a platform cracks down on incivility, they impose their definition of incivility onto us, even though not all users will agree on what (in)civility entails. Considering cultural and generational differences in communication, good luck not being ghoulishly biased in those decisions. Besides, incivility is not always detrimental. History tells us that when it comes to organising, protesting, and bringing about social change, there's no other motivator like anger.

As always, I don't have all the answers. All I know is that we should probably be much more critical of this system than we currently seem to be.

(partially nabbed from an essay I wrote for the Digital Citizen course)

14 LOGICO SOLUTIONS

Illustration © Ilia Verstraete



*Solutions for last edition

S	A	L	S	E		C	H	I	C		D	I	S	C
P	L	E	A	S		R	E	N	O		I	N	C	A
A	E	G	I	S		E	R	O	S		S	P	E	T
D	E	S	C	E	N	D	A	N	T		L	U	N	E
				N	E	O			L	O	O	T	E	R
R	A	B	I	E	S		S	L	Y	L	Y			
A	B	E	T		T	O	M	E		L	A	C	E	S
P	L	A	I	T		W	E	T		A	L	O	S	A
S	E	N	N	A		E	L	S	A		T	H	A	W
			E	X	I	S	T		J	O	Y	O	U	S
F	L	O	R	I	N			P	A	L				
L	A	V	A		S	A	C	E	R	D	O	T	A	L
O	M	E	N		U	R	I	A		A	D	O	R	E
P	I	N	T		L	E	A	L		G	E	E	S	E
S	A	S	S		T	A	O	S		E	S	S	E	S

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Crossword Solutions

3	6	8	7	9	1	5	2	4
4	7	2	5	8	6	3	9	1
9	1	5	4	3	2	6	7	8
1	5	7	8	4	9	2	6	3
8	3	6	2	7	5	1	4	9
2	4	9	1	6	3	7	8	5
7	2	1	9	5	8	4	3	6
6	8	4	3	1	7	9	5	2
5	9	3	6	2	4	8	1	7

Sudoku Solutions

KEEP UP WITH THE BOOMERANG



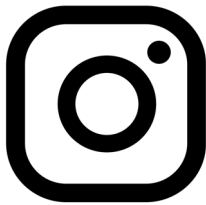
Illustrators
Groupchat



ISSUU
(Archive)



Writers
Groupchat



ACROSS

- 1. Volcano
- 6. Stylish
- 10. A round flat object
- 14. Supplications
- 15. City in Nevada
- 16. Native of Peru
- 17. Breastplate
- 18. God of love (Greek mythology)
- 19. Small barracuda
- 20. Proceeding from an ancestor
- 22. French for "Moon"
- 23. Prefix indicating recent or new
- 24. Plunderer
- 26. Hydrophobia
- 30. Cleverly
- 32. Assist
- 33. Large book
- 35. Shoestrings
- 39. Braid
- 41. Soaked
- 42. Genus of the alewife or shad
- 43. Cassia
- 44. Anagram of "Seal"
- 46. Unfreeze
- 47. Be
- 49. Happy
- 51. Monetary unit of the Netherlands
- 54. Friend
- 55. Molten rock
- 56. Associated with the priesthood
- 63. Portent
- 64. Murres
- 65. Love intensely
- 66. Half a quart
- 67. Faithful and true (archaic)
- 68. Ganders
- 69. Backtalk
- 70. A city in New Mexico
- 71. S S S S

DOWN

- 1. French airplane
- 2. To the windward side
- 3. Hindlimbs
- 4. A Levantine ketch
- 5. A member of an ascetic Jewish sect
- 6. A system of beliefs
- 7. Queen of the gods (Greek mythology)
- 8. Knowing a secret (2 words)
- 9. High-priced
- 10. Unfaithfulness
- 11. Putting in data
- 12. Vista
- 13. Supply
- 21. Where a bird lives
- 25. Leaf of the talipot palm
- 26. Gentle blows
- 27. Possessing the necessary skills
- 28. A leguminous plant
- 29. Wanderers
- 30. Small cold-water fish
- 31. Permits
- 34. Is indebted to
- 36. Type of salmon
- 37. Jacob's brother
- 38. Wood-cutting tools
- 40. Cab
- 45. Slightly open
- 48. A rude expression
- 50. A later time of life (2 words)
- 51. Duds
- 52. Vampire
- 53. Kilns
- 54. Deep prolonged sounds
- 57. Region
- 58. An Italian greeting
- 59. Lyric poems
- 60. Found on feet
- 61. Backside
- 62. Sediment from fermentation

SCANDINAVIAN CROSSWORD

Remote video source						Pepper		Head honcho
Toy needing soap	Outfit		Scots toss it		Lake in Africa	Writing tools		Walk-way
Forest growth								
	Chance		Hamlet's love		Take it easy			
	Mollusk with "ears"	Mature		Sci-fi visitor	Border duty	Precious stone		The fifth element
						Capital on the Tiber		Trial version
Kind of cabbage	...cious, or yummy				Try again			
Giant	Old-style "gladly"				Exec's note			
					Juicy gourd			

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20						21					22			
				23					24	25				
26	27	28	29				30	31						
32					33	34				35		36	37	38
39					40		41				42			
43						44				45		46		
				47		48				49	50			
51	52	53						54						
55						56	57	58			59	60	61	62
63						64					65			
66						67					68			
69						70					71			

3						1		2
				5	8			
		5			3			7
1						9		6
	4					3	7	
		1	9			8	4	
6						7	9	
5							8	

SUDOKU



Illustration © Jasmine Yi Carder

16 QUAD QUERIES

“What unique thing do you do at parties?”

“Diss-a-pear”
-Fukuyama

“Take two things:
my shirt off & a bump”
-Adam Sandler

“Take pictures with people who
look like my friends”
-L

“Give people pokemon cards”
-Ash Ketchum

“Gymnastics”
-gym MILF

“Look for half smoked ciggies”
-#5 second rule

“Not go (they're napping too
hard)”
-Sleeping beauty

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