Journal of Imaginary Research

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Welcome to the May 2020 Special Issue of the Journal of Imaginary Research. This is the first special issue of this creative journal, offered as a divertissement from the widespread uprooting and uncertainty brought by living and teaching in pandemic isolation. The ‘abstract fictions’ this issue contains are contributed by researchers, academics and university staff from across the globe. They are written by volunteers who responded with excitement to our call, and who placed their trust in our suggestion that imaginative writing might be a helpful pursuit. The abstracts are, as always, outstandingly creative, comedic, wry, astute and uplifting—and in this issue reflect how academics have tried to make sense of what it means to write together.

Through the Journal of Imaginary Research we have always sought 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 write for fun, and to find or renew a joy in the processes of writing. The call we circulated was received with the positivity we intended it to inspire, and many encouraging comments came back. Through social media and our day-to-day mailing lists, colleagues replied to us with their thanks for offering the opportunity to construct work within the expansive disciplinary confines of creative writing.

This special issue is dedicated to all the people who, despite wanting to, could not write for the issue. We know that the time, space and mental energy to write and be creative was not universally available, and those of us who were able to, recognise our privilege. We will announce a call for the next volume late in 2020, and when you are ready, we will be here for you.

Our sincere thank you to all writers, and to all readers. We hope you find that this special issue of the Journal of Imaginary Research, does indeed make for diverting entertainment. Creativity is a property of all writers and the privilege of all who work in universities. This journal is thus an insight into the applied creativity that exists within research, and within our researchers.

—Dr Kay Guccione
Arse for elbow: embracing dissonance, contesting purpose
by Victoria Boyd

In a bold attempt to conclusively define the competing intercentrifugalistic perspectives on the relationship betwixt the *gluteal rumpus* (arse) and the *midarmo extendica* (elbow), a pioneering research collective undertook a grassroots, cross-stitch exercise to gather vernacular perspectives. The intention behind the collection of very poorly constructed artefacts was a) to contribute to an esoteric intergalactic kitten tapestry installation and b) to establish a global and authoritative differentiation of both anatomical areas. ‘Kitten caboodle: cats in stitches’ is now open in perpetuity throughout *Ursa Minor*.

Research participants included everyone ever born, so results showed some deviation in opinion. However, key cross-bobbin correlations of note regarding the conceptual differentiation of arses and elbows included latitudinal proximity in a state of relaxation and the ability to produce actual or proxy flatulence noises. Analysis showed these critical principles to be crucial in shaping longitudinal, generational, cross-cultural confusion. Examples were particularly prevalent amongst those respondents employed in the political ‘domain’.

Research outputs are currently being etched by *Vlorrtas* microbes onto miniscule, essentially non-existent micro-chips implanted into each respondent’s retina during a sleep cycle of their choice. A follow-up futility study is being planned for next June.

**Professor Sir Arthur Hynds** has dedicated his career to patronising and confusing through pretend science. In 1979, he was awarded the Gossamer Cardigan of Unfact based on his seminal research on bees and housework, prior to denouncing its validity on his defection to the Academy of Hard Sums. He lives a nice life in the countryside and enjoys making jam.
The social practice of dream-eating in quarantined communities  
by Elena Mitiadis

This anthropological research explores the social practice of dream-eating in quarantined communities. This activity has escalated as a result of prolonged sharing of confined spaces. Research has demonstrated that dreams are globules of matter that escape from the body’s orifices, most commonly the ears and nostrils, just before the return to consciousness. In their semi-gaseous form, the dream particles flutter and exit through open windows, cracks, and ventilation fans. Once out, they survive for a few hours before dissolving into thin air and escaping memory forever.

The practice of dream-eating consists of catching these translucent blobs and ingesting them. This widespread practice is usually associated with urban environments, where the higher population density allows for a wider variety of dreams to be caught and eaten. Research has shown that dream-eating has been practiced by urban dwellers for centuries (even before quarantine).

This study contributes to the existing research, by arguing that dream-eating is a fundamental community practice that enhances social cohesion and promotes the development of a shared consciousness. Data collected through ethnographic fieldwork show that dream-eating creates a special bond between the dreamer and the eater, who gains the temporary ability of feeling the other person’s emotions during digestion. Interviewees highlight how their sense of community has improved and strengthened through this practice becoming part of their daily lives. The prominent role dream-eating
has acquired in quarantined communities is turning it into a fundamental social practice that is affecting the daily lives of urban dwellers and their emotional bonds.

**Oneiricus Nibbles** is Honorary Snooze Professor of Imaginary Vision at the University of Neverland. Their research has focused extensively on the social meaning of dreams and their role in everyday life. In 2015 they were awarded the prestigious Insomnia Award. They are the long-standing editor-in-chief of the journal *People’s Nightmares*. Their office hours are usually between 11pm and 6am.
I cherish the light of the full moon but not the darkness that engulfs the new moon. I realised something was amiss and started paying attention to this oxymoronic insight. Though I know about the value of light in darkness, I have not understood the value of darkness in the presence (or absence) of light. Light may dispel darkness but light itself does not exist without darkness. So, if I value light in darkness, then why not value darkness itself? Darkness without light is a fundamental and profound reality. Thus, I say, darkness can shed its own light which is as valuable as the light in darkness. I’ve christened this light shed by darkness as dark light, which provides transformative insights. To shape these insights I conducted interviews with five professors who teach the value of darkness in heaven and interpreted their interviews through psycho-phenomenological analysis. The condensed finding of the study follows:

I was born in a light dark room and grew up by adapting and adjusting to the atmosphere of the room. It was confusing for me. Was the room trying to adjust with me or was I trying to adjust the room? Whatever it may be, I spent a long time in that room and developed a strong attachment and the ability to adjust within its walls in any difficult situation. I could enjoy the room when I was happy and sometimes the room itself made me happy. Living in a light dark room was so easy for me that I did not have any doubt when I entered it nor when I went outside from the room at any time in any situation. I value the room’s resources and their proper placement within it. I noticed that sometimes I
unknowingly misplaced the resources but quickly corrected this without feeling any regret because it was my room where I had spent a long time. However, nowadays things have changed as I have transformed the room from light dark to dark light. These days I feel like a new tenant. New decorations, new placement of resources, new looks make me feel that it is no longer my room because a dark light room is not the same as a light dark room. Most of the time I feel doubtful while entering and leaving the room. I feel regretful when I misplace the resources of the dark light room because I am not able to replace them correctly as before. On many occasions, before entering the room, I planned what activities I would do inside and how I would make them more meaningful and positive. But, due to the lack of experience of living in a dark light room, I am not able to implement or follow my own plans. Upon hazy reflections, I have concluded that the impacts of my socio-cultural environment and the ‘systems’ that I have adopted since the beginning of my life have shaped my cultural upbringing that suits a light dark room and makes it so difficult to adjust myself in the dark light room.

Dr Rinku is a renowned Professor of Light and Dark in Nepal. She has been teaching psychoanalysis for a century in different universities and shedding light upon ways to explore how people imagine reality without facts. Her previous publications include Truthless facts, Thinking to unthink, and Devouring imaginations and getting devoured by imaginations.
Man-looking as (in)ability: a study of how men ‘look but cannot find’ items in domestic settings

by Rachel Lehner-Mear

This study explores apparent deficiencies in male sight when seeking household items. It considers what impacts male ‘seeking’ skills and theorises how men are able to ‘look’ without the corresponding skill of ‘seeing’.

Cohabiting dyads with at least one male-identifying partner were filmed within home settings, affording opportunity to capture occurrences of ‘man-looking’. Wearing vision-cams, both partners undertook simple finding tasks, enabling observation of differences in their seeking abilities. Tasks included: locating a pair of socks in the sock drawer, noticing an instruction pinned to the fridge, recognising (and acting on) a full laundry basket. The nature and attributes of their ‘looking’ and the degree of success in their ‘finding’ were compared. Variables measured included where each looked, how, and, crucially, length of looking time.

Results suggest ‘man-looking’ involves particular practices and is attributable specifically to male-identifying partners. Men were unable to find items on 90% of occasions, compared to a female partners’ item location success rate of 100%. The 10% of occurrences where men successfully found items were accompanied by high degrees of huffing and puffing and much yelling of ‘where have you put my X?’. The paper discusses: are male eyes unable to focus within particular (home) settings, is male concentration impaired during specifically domestic search-tasks, have men got little flaps like horse
blinders which cover their eyeballs whenever they need to find something further away than the ends of their own noses or, controversially, does men’s seeking (in)ability relate to underlying social assumptions that if they don’t find it this time, then their partner will almost certainly take over such complex hunts in the future? The paper concludes that ‘man-looking’ is, in its very unskillfulness, simultaneously a highly honed skill aimed at ongoing task-avoidance; ‘man-looking’ is (in)ability.

Dr G Bigolly’s research interests are focused on those gender differences that cause her the most personal frustration in her home life. Her work into ‘why men are simply more irritating than women’ has been widely lauded, producing a series of highly acclaimed books and papers, including What time do you call this? A study into habitual lateness for dinner and Credit card sprees and other retaliations: how women always win. Recently she received a Nobel Prize in recognition of her work on ‘saying it how it is’.
Fun guys to be with: mushroom and toadstool relations in Yorkshire’s mushroom farms

by Sophie Parkes-Neild

Though the terms ‘mushroom’ and ‘toadstool’ have been used interchangeably for centuries, this paper, following the conventions of the Fungiculture Institute, Mold University, refers to safe-to-eat, commercially farmed fungi as ‘mushrooms’ and their feral, poisonous counterparts as ‘toadstools’.

In the past decade, the UK’s mushroom farming industry has grown exponentially to meet the demands of the nation’s growing vegan culture, the restaurant trade and retailers (Spaws, 2018). As farmers invite leading fungicultural researchers into their farms to test new methods to intensify their agricultural practices, a new study at two neighbouring Yorkshire mushroom farms has discovered communication between the commercially farmed Agaricus bisporus, or white mushrooms, resident within the boundaries of the farms, and the profusion of wild toadstool Amanita muscaria, better known as the Fly agaric, at the perimeter.

Using microphones impregnated into the soil between the mushroom and toadstool communities, the researchers at the Fungiculture Institute, led by Professor ‘Champignons’ Huître, have recorded frequent late-night dialogue between the fungi. Work to interpret this dialogue is ongoing, but early findings indicate that the farmed mushrooms emit high frequency calls to which the toadstools respond with an imitation call, demonstrating mirroring and acceptance. Thermal imaging has recorded a raising of temperatures in the
fungi when this dialogue occurs, while time lapse videography records an incremental bending of the stem not visible to the naked eye.

This paper concludes by offering theories regarding the nature of inter-mushroom-toadstool relations and what we, as humans, can learn from this unparalleled show of tolerance, affection and understanding between species.

‘Champignons’ Huître is Director of the Fungiculture Institute, based at Mold University, Wales. A world expert in fungi communication, Professor Huître is also a certified practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) which she hopes to apply to future fungiculture research. She is chair of the Mushroom Learning Network and the Vice-President of the International Society for Mushroom Science.
Lockdown has provided unexpected opportunities for inward-looking ethnographic work in the home setting. Social media has long promoted the tropes that feline research assistants are neither researchers nor assisting when videos or anecdotes of their work have been shared online. Human research collaborators are consistently given credit for all work completed, regardless of who has been leading the study. In collaboration with my research assistant, chosen for her expertise in opposable thumbs, I have worked within an ethnographic space to unpack (and even explode) these negative and potentially harmful stereotypes. The resulting study seeks to understand how beliefs that inhibit the recognition of feline involvement in research have become normalised. It is grounded by the following research questions:

1. What is ‘ownership’?
   a. Who does the laptop belong to when it is an obvious multi-use machine for both work and rest?
2. What are ‘words’ anyway?
   a. What criteria are used when judging whether the words typed in a document ‘make sense’?
3. How has my identity been constructed by the academic community?
   a. Why are my contributions to online meetings consistently trivialised as ‘cute’ when my co-workers never take the time to listen and understand?

Resistance to such work is expected, especially when laptop ownership remains contentious, but the methodological framework allows for such resistance to be reframed as data collection for both questions 1 and 3. It is hoped that findings from this study will demonstrate the under-utilisation of feline researchers and help to dismantle the stereotypes that have made their work so underappreciated and misunderstood.

Dr Laksimilulupuss is Key Research Supervisor at the HOME Wellbeing Institute and Visiting Associate at the Cattree Centre of Surveillance Studies, both located in the UK. When she is not busy being Reviewer 2, Dr Laksimilulupuss enjoys copy-editing, popping up unexpectedly in zoom meetings, and undertaking deep contemplative studies on the laptop.
Longevity of blanket forts as a measure of caregiver distress during the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic
by Rebecca Moran

Widespread school closures and shifts to ‘working from home’ in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in millions of caregivers across the world struggling to simultaneously entertain children and complete complex work tasks. Photovoice research conducted in collaboration with 76 caregivers ‘working from home’ with young children revealed a disturbing trend toward delirium, marked by a surprising and unanticipated signifier: the blanket fort.

Initial analysis of photographs and journal entries submitted by caregivers over a two-week period of ‘working from home’ with children suggests that the size of the blanket fort, and the number of days caregivers allowed them to remain assembled, serve as a measure for caregiver distress. Put simply, the larger the blanket fort, and the longer it is left assembled in the home, the greater the likelihood that the caregiver is Not Okay.

This article presents a selection of photographs and journal excerpts to illustrate the urgency of providing appropriate support for caregivers before entire dwellings are consumed by rogue constructions. Additionally, the author hopes that increasing understanding of conditions beyond the webcam view will facilitate employer compassion for those ‘working from home’ with children, and perhaps a reduction in the scheduling of non-essential video conferences by child-free colleagues.
**Dr Ima Luzmahmyind** is Associate Professor in Diversion and Distraction Studies at the University of Fading Hope. She is currently undertaking a coveted research fellowship at the highly acclaimed Showeron Yourown Institute. Dr Luzmahmyind is an experienced auto-ethnographer whose research interests include lying down, silence and uninterrupted periods of concentration.
The impact of day loss discombobulation on the number of shits given
by Kirsty Ohlers

The loss of days or what I am terming ‘day loss discombobulation’ is a phenomenon seen in stay at home workers forced to endure long hours amid children, dogs, dirty dishes and toilet rolls left on the floor whilst managing Zoom calls during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Workers begin to lose a sense of time and of themselves as they trudge from desk to kitchen, to laundry, to bed. The research question centred around the correlation between day loss discombobulation and the participants’ capacity to ‘give a shits’ (sic Australian slang). Participants were asked upon waking if they knew which day it was, and immediately they were asked how many shits they gave about their work for the day, their Zoom attire, their lunch plans and what their children would be doing to amuse themselves. Using a phenomenological technique that relied upon participants being interviewed whilst in their pyjamas with sleep in their eyes, I was able to gather how many shits they truly gave as consciousness and the grim reality of ‘working from home’ hadn’t yet hit. Memorable quotes included ‘F&%# knows what day it is, am I supposed to be working?’ and ‘Wasn’t yesterday Saturday?’, indicating that the day loss discombobulation associated with ‘give a shits’ brings forth a desire for freedom and non-linear life momentum.

The awareness of monotony itself thus brings about the paradox of giving fewer shits about that which we must attend to, therefore allowing our minds to create alternate realities that may in turn benefit our life and work. My findings show that coronavirus-
induced day loss discombobulation is directly correlated to giving less shits, and that this may benefit wellbeing in the long-term.

**Lovsa Gardining** is an Australian researcher with a passion for the non-linear, the strangeness of reality and the wondrousness of the mundane. She uses largely subminimal, esoteric techniques in a quantitative sense, measuring lesser known frequencies such as sleep dazes, mind zaps, brain fogs and zone outs. Lovsa hopes the world will become a better place through this ground-breaking research into the benefits of day loss discombobulation by allowing people to ‘give a shit’ (both positive and negative).
To enact miraculous endeavours: doing brilliance, being brilliant and becoming even more brilliant during a period of restricted liberty

by Jamie McDermott and Lindsey Burns

This paper reports on a classic grounded theory study investigating the practice of academics during a period of prolonged restriction of liberty on the basis of public health need. During this time, academics were required to continue fulfilling their roles remotely from home.

Academics are recognised as being a pretty good sort: intelligent, curious, funny, hardworking, and pretty damn good fun on a night out. This is especially true of the peeps at Buchanan University, in the happening city of Glasvegas (although there are a few folks from neighbouring institutions who would make the cut too). When the odds are stacked against them, academics have the ability to rise to most challenges. The current literature is clear about just how utterly amazing academics are, although little consideration has been given to how this notion of amazingness might alter in response to changes in the location of the work environment.

Data was generated in the form of field notes following in-depth conversations with participants on MS Teams. Based on the principles of theoretical sampling, constant comparison, concurrent data collection and analysis, the main concern of ‘enacting miraculous endeavours’ soon emerged. This reflects that academics, whilst working at home, are driven to work miracles in everything they do. Three categories emerged that determine how academics do in fact ‘enact miraculous endeavours’. ‘Doing brilliance’ is a
process of literally pulling bunnies out of a hat: academics have turned dusty spare rooms into fully functioning office suites overnight. ‘Being brilliant’ is a state of mind and personal sense of success. Academics demonstrate this by quickly expanding their immediate teams—recruiting children and even canine partners to get the job done. ‘Becoming brilliant’ is a process and future state of being which is guaranteed for all academics in recognition of the fact they are just pure dead brilliant.

**M Adeup is Professor of Pure Brilliant Science at Buchanan University.** He is an expert in developing theory by forcing data through the lens of ‘brilliance’. He has published, brilliantly, in the broad area of brilliance across the disciplines. He is interested in the ideas that connect disciplines and takes a critical (and naturally brilliant) stance in his work. He is always looking to collaborate with the brilliant sort to do brilliant things brilliantly.
Perchance to dream: efficacy of direct dream manipulation on the mental health outcomes of self-isolating single adults
by Emer Emily Neenan

Use of self-isolation measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 must be weighed against the detrimental effects that loneliness, boredom, and lack of control have on mental health, particularly on those living alone. This paper describes the successful pilot of a programme to investigate the efficacy of the implementation of the Somnioencephalagic Alteration of Neurotransmitters for Dream Synthesis (SANDS) technique, developed by Lu and Laby (2016), to alleviate the impact of isolation.

Through SANDS, predetermined dream topics are ‘seeded’ in the waking mind, resulting in a high degree of influence over the atmosphere and ‘story’ of the dreams subsequently experienced in later phases of REM sleep. Initially developed for military applications, this programme has the potential to provide nightly excursions, entertainment, and social activities to those self-isolating (Lu and Sid, 2020).

Recruitment of self-isolating neurotypical single adults living alone took place via phone due to social-distancing requirements. Dream-seeding was completed over three days, and participants’ dreams were recorded nightly via remote theta-wave harvesting and participant journaling, from 7 nights before seeding began to 14 nights after initial seeding. Participants completed weekly self-assessments measuring 3 self-isolation mental health impact factors: loneliness, mental resilience, and depression. In all, 32 participants (17F, 15M) underwent dream seeding, and 29 completed the study (2 participants withdrew, 1 was lost in the dreamscape).
Initial results have been extremely promising, with statistically significant decreases in all three measures, particularly loneliness. A large majority of participants (27) have reported via dream journal how ‘real’ it feels to speak with ‘friends’ whilst dreaming. Interestingly, 13 participants describe striking up a new ‘friendship’ with a ‘gentleman’. Recruitment of up to 3,000 participants is currently ongoing for the full study, and it is anticipated the program could be offered to the general population within months.

**Aisling Lu** holds a BSc in Neuroscience from NUI Tara, an MSc in Practical and Applied Oneirology and a PhD on the ethics of non-invasive dream-harvesting, both from the Mung Seung Centre of HKU. She is currently Professor of Oneirological Studies at Quaternity College, University of Dublin, and PI of the SANDS-NOD research group. Her research interests include dream manipulation, remote and gentle dream-harvesting techniques, sleep paralysis, and dreamscape mapping. She has published widely on dream manipulation and related topics, including 2019’s *Domesticated dreams: modern techniques for in-dream learning*. In her spare time she enjoys collecting names and butterflies.
‘They are just so fussy and I am always like: don’t be so fussy’: children rule-crafting for (re)imagined worlds

by Matthew Harper

Young children with access to technology have increasingly engaged in creating online content via the platform YT2.0, particularly in the post-digital proliferation era and after COVID-19. Amid ongoing global concern for societal restructuring, children’s YT2.0 content continues to span a range of topics and thus provides a rich and expansive repository for analytic research. However, most existing research drawing upon this data neglects children’s imaginative processes, instead examining the impact generating YT2.0 content has on individual success outcomes, including knowledge mastery and income trajectory.

This study aims to investigate children’s YT2.0 videos and imagination, drawing on the notion of ‘rule-crafting’ (see Dahl and Seuss). A small sample (n=26) of children aged eight to twelve were invited to participate. Each child created, within a period of one month, a YT2.0 video in response to the prompt: rules for a new world. The videos on average were five minutes long and were shared with the research team via direct link. The children then met individually with two of the researchers. Using stimulated recall, each child watched their YT2.0 video and subsequently described his or her creative approach and key rule(s).

From our analyses three overarching rules, i) have fun, be kind, ii) take time with family and friends, and iii) love rainbows and unicorns, highlighted powerful messages of hope for a new world that unarguably transcends current paradigms. These rules, crafted via YT2.0, were expressively juxtaposed against current stricter rules with unique humour and original flair. Indeed, a ‘less-strict’ world is not unimaginable, perhaps best put by one child who wished away school rules: ‘They are just so fussy and I am always like: don’t be so fussy’.
Ima Kreeatr has had a formidable career to date, researching children’s literature, literacies and imagination, and demonstrating leading scholarly expertise in the Dahl-Seuss tradition. He also works as a dramatist, media-and-food consumer and commentator and influential life-imagination-reality coach, always drawing on a range of inspirational sources but most notably, internet-validated ones. Kreeatr generates his own YT2.0 content that trends globally daily. His busy schedule revolves around his pet dog, Sharlz.
The no-turn checkmate: further hypotheses towards a universal understanding of notional chess
by Joshua Lambert

Compiling ideas and concepts from a series of lectures, this paper seeks to provide a landmark reference in the field of notional chess by laying a theoretical foundation and suggesting further bounds of enquiry. In providing a definition we start with the acknowledgement that, in line with quantum superposition, each given chess piece must be considered to be not only in its current space, but in any one of its possible positions at the same time. Therefore, since each piece must be thought to occupy any and all of its legal spaces on the board, and since the game is concurrently locked in early-, mid-, and end-game—perpetual check and mate, victory and defeat—the only possible opening in notional chess is the ‘Copenhagen gambit’, in which every piece simultaneously moves nowhere. This is, of course, an illegal move.

Through Unapplied Game Theory we seek to promote a pawn-centric model of analysis. A pawn’s superpositional value, after all, is paramount, since it may promote to any other piece and must therefore be considered to ‘be’ and ‘not be’ any other piece, as well as being and not being itself. We provide a definitive answer to the perennial question of notional chess: is it even worth examining the pawn’s en passant move if it can never actually be executed? Possibly.

Furthermore, this paper presents findings from a new study in which IBM supercomputer OverThought was matched against twenty-seven competitors to not play chess in three-hour sessions. Considering the data gathered, we interrogated the preconceived boundaries of notional chess. Why shackle our analysis of suppositional, superpositional possibilities to a piece’s legal moveset? If a knight can/not move as a knight, for instance, then it also can/not move as a queen, can/not move in a ‘Z’ shaped pattern, and can/not be alleged to have committed murder with the lead pipe in the Billiards Room.
Lastly, we put forward a framework for examining the duality of the non-participating participant and recognise that, as not-playing and playing notional chess are phenomenologically identical, any person is considered to be both participating and sitting out, making it both the world’s most-played and least-played game.

Chicago-born Sergei Alexiekov is a theoretical grandmaster at notional chess, with a world-record zero games played and zero moves taken. Alexiekov’s diploma and certificates remain sealed in a manila envelope and, until it is opened, he must be considered to be both Professor in Applied Supposition and an unqualified enthusiast. He would be the author of Hypothetical introduction to subjunctive studies.
Listening to ABBA improves Perl programming skills
by Giovanna Nicora and Nicola Melillo

It is common knowledge amongst computer scientists that listening to music whilst programming increases productivity. A recent survey (Violet et al 2017) reported ABBA as the first choice for software engineers; the aim of the current study is to further understand music (specifically ABBA’s) improvement to programming skills.

We enrolled 120 software engineers (45% female, age 27–54), and asked them to solve Perl Week Challenge #29 (github.com/manwar/perlweeklychallenge-club) following a specification that was provided to them. Each participant was randomly assigned to one out of three groups of 40 subjects, A, B and C. Each group was assigned to a different room, with acoustic insulation, a sufficient number of computers and water and food ad libitum.

Subjects in group A listened to an ABBA playlist for the whole duration of the study, while group B listened to a playlist of their choice without ABBA songs. Subjects in group C were asked not to listen to any kind of music. The code evaluation was performed with 10 tests (1 point each) blinded to the participants of the study. The final mean scores for the groups A, B and C were 9.2, 7.2 and 6.9, respectively, with the group A mean statistically different from the mean of the other two groups (p<0.01). The mean time of code submission for groups A, B and C was 4.3h, 6.5h and 6.8h respectively, with group A statistically different from groups B and C (p<0.05). From the results of this study, we concluded that listening to ABBA improves (Perl) programming skills.

Stanislao Populoski is Associate Professor of Computer Science at the Fosso Sacchetto Sound Academy, Italy. After graduating in Computer Science in 1984 from the University of Oxford, he worked for Her Majesty the Queen (secret mission), but he could not handle the British weather and escaped. He became famous as a singer in The 007 Rock ‘n’ Roll Band (winner of three MTV Music Awards), but as he usually says ‘rock is dead. I am more of a pop person’. He is also an activist for the Free Gluten Community, which fights against discrimination towards gluten and associated food products.
Sentience, compatibility and slipped stitches: a treatise on the tangling phenomenon in yarn and appropriate countermeasures

by Jennifer Harwood-Smith

The phenomenon of tangling yarn, particularly when the yarn does not appear to have moved, has been a subject of intense academic research as far back as the sixteenth century text The demon wool, which is referenced in Shakespeare's most popular play The long yarn. While modern theories have postulated explanations such as quantum mechanic's theory of yarn entanglement, in which yarn is reacting to another piece of yarn being knitted somewhere else in the universe, this paper examines the potential sentience of yarn and the appropriate methods of matching yarn personalities to patterns.

Experiments were carried out on yarn which tangled under the following conditions: before it was assigned to a knitting project; at the beginning of the project; at the most complex point of the pattern; in the final stages of completion. Each of these were further tested in proximity to other projects, with the most dramatic result being a black yarn used in a shawl ensnaring two other projects in close proximity, and then proceeding to re-entangle said projects after they had been separated. [Note: this particular yarn has since been placed in isolation for the good of all stitching.]

The sentience of a piece of yarn can be measured in its ability to split, tangle, or, once wound into a ball, roll away simply by being looked at. This paper identifies a methodology for ascertaining the relative sentience of various yarns, the level of
benevolence or malignance, and methodologies for determining the compatibility of yarns with patterns, particularly patterns which are prone to their own perfidies. This system will allow for the identification of yarns which will submit to the knitter's will or should instead be relegated to a knitter's collection of yarns that are bought but never used.

Professor Yar Nover, having been raised by a literal gaggle of spinster aunts, has had a long fascination with the symbiotic relationship between yarn, patterns and humans. She received a BA in Material Sciences and the Paranormal from the University of Chenille, Paris, before commencing postgraduate work at the Institute of Fine Stitching, Milan under Dr KT Bacqueloup, focussing on the phenomenon of dropped stitches and why expletives make them worse. She is currently a research fellow at the Academy of Patterns in Reykjavik and has recently published her treatise *The liminality of lace: transcendence in empty spaces.*
Taming the pulse-centric academic: evaluating the effectiveness of human capital vs Avatars within the academy
by Stella Jones-Devitt

This Randomised Control Trial (RCT) was undertaken at the renowned New Liberalia University (TEF Graphene, 2020) with its motto of ‘NLU for a new you!’ To ensure the best experience for its co-consumer learners, NLU tested the performance of existing human capital, known colloquially by management as ‘pulse-centric academics’ (PCAs) when compared with performance of artificially-intelligent Avatars.

Avatars are economical, requiring no development and being fully compostable at the end of semester. PCAs are required to work 20 hours per day and be on campus 24/7, therefore it was easy to fit tagging devices in extremely discrete places within the exhausted sample population. The Principal Investigator (PI) was concerned that the study might have to use convenience sampling but, as all PCAs were required to rest on-campus in multi-purpose open plan dormitory offices, devices were fitted easily. Every third PCA was digitally activated whilst the additional two thirds remained inactive as the control group (devices are costly). Tags were so discrete that no PCAs knew they were participating which was highly advantageous for conducting a speedy RCT, as ethical clearance was assumed due to the complete anonymity and confidentiality of the uninformed PCA population. It also meant that if any PCAs were retained, post study phase, they did not need to be told about the digital insertions. Moreover, their performances could be monitored on a continuous basis.
It was always intended to replace PCAs with Avatars regardless of findings, so the PI was delighted to report that 100% of RCT subjects were recorded as being feckless, off-message individuals. Reporting was made easier when the NLU CEO took control of the analysis which demonstrated that PCAs fared poorly when compared with anecdotal evidence concerning the performance of brainless Avatars. The former were subsequently replaced, including the PI.

**Carl P Da Foo** is CEO of NLU and although not originally PI for this study, took over after sacking the existing incumbent. Carl has a great track record, testing many innovative ideas. He positions his researcher stance through the NLU Vision he himself developed: ‘Any time, any place, anywhere. There’s a wonderful world you can share. You’re the bright one, we’re the right one. Join NLU.’ As such, he is totally committed to emancipating co-consumer learners who can afford it. All enquiries about ‘Taming the pulse-centric academic’ should be directed initially to NLU’s Acting PR Director, Don Toogood-Tobetrue at dtt@nlu.co.uk.
It’s bedtime—but it’s not night-time?
by Ciaran Burke and Benjamin Burke (aged four)

Dusk and dawn have long directed human activity, the rising sun a ‘wake-up’ call to grab our tools and tend to our flock or crop, whereas dusk gestured to the downing of our tools and our day. Driven by technological advances in transport and, in particular, the steam engine, time became centralised and relied less and less on celestial navigation and instead on clearly operationalised quantitative measures; this paradigm shift has long outlived the industrial revolution in which it was born.

This study is an autoethnographic project, featuring both authors examining the phenomenological friction caused by measuring ‘bedtime’ as either dusk or 7pm during British summer time. Through applying Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) work on the role of negotiation within the social construction of reality, each author record how the other pleads their case for when bedtime should occur. The authors focus on a number of variables impacting on the phenomenological positions, including generational attitudes, comparing Steve (4 years old) and David (34 years old), whether David has a deadline, and whether the next episode of *Mindhunter* is on that night.

In its conclusion, the paper outlines the impact of empty promises of ‘what we’ll do tomorrow if you go to sleep now’ against the recently validated Exciting Excitement scale (Foucault, * 2020) on what is a reasonable bedtime.

*not that one.
While Dr Steve Clever doesn’t actually hold a PhD, being four years old and all, he likes to call himself Dr and is the oldest in his nursery class. He is currently working on a range of projects focusing on how uncomfortable he can make strangers in grocery stores by loudly listing everything in their trolley and saying ‘hmmmm’ after each item.

Dr David Clever is a distinguished scholar of something, but, in recent weeks, has tried to combine childcare and academic research, with very limited results. In his spare time he kayaks, however he hasn’t had any spare time since 2003 and only took up kayaking in 2007.

[Dr Steve Clever is the corresponding author, however he is not allowed an email address yet so you may be waiting some time.]
Unearthing the posthumous corpus: the impact of death upon Montgomery Oberon’s literary output

by Rebecca Davey

This review compares the literary output, before and after his (legal) demise, of nineteenth-century author Montgomery Oberon (1807–1901–). An interdisciplinary application of the Medical and Paranormative Humanities concludes that, since his physical death, Oberon’s corpus contains fewer references to religion, corporeality and overdue library fines.

Since its inception, upon science’s mastery of Targeted Electromagnetic Manipulation by the Paranormative (TEMP), academic study of the Transliteration and Publication of Posthumous Communications (TPPHC) has predominantly focused on legal and ethical socio-political issues: does an unconscious bias within the publishing industry impede the acquisition and representation of deceased talent? In what currency do the dead accept royalty cheques? And of all the human deceased since time began, to whom do the living—comprising a finite number of qualified transliteration technicians—prioritise ‘giving a voice’?

These are noble enquiries, necessary for the harmonious integration of the living and deceased. However, they have left neglected in literary studies the overdue decentralisation of the living author. This preliminary investigation carries implications for a heretofore uncharted line of enquiry into posthumously-communicated (PHC) works: the impact of death upon an author’s process, literary technique and Amazon ranking.
Works referenced include Oberon’s collection of philosophical essays *Upon St Andrew’s cross* (1862), his erotic chapbook *Barefoot hunger* (1868), and his (also surprisingly erotic) guide on business protocol *Lamentation upon the degradation of our nation’s etiquette* (1871). These are analysed parallel to Oberon’s post-death output, including his spoken-word poetry collection *Posthumous corpus* (2016), his biting automortography *All spirits, no liquor* (2017) and his unproduced murder mystery screenplay, *Grave significance* (2019). For accuracy’s sake, the author uses five transliterations of each PHC text (including her own). In accordance with TPPHC ethics, Mr Oberon has approved a transliterated draft of this review and acted as a sensitivity reader for the deceased community.

**Dr Bea Telguise** is a qualified transliteration technician and Professor of Posthumous Communications. Combining TEMP technology with her background in literary studies, she developed her childhood fascination with ‘ghost’* stories into a career championing the legacy and lingering presence of the deceased. She is the commissioning editor of *Ghostwritings: stories by the recently deceased*, and is currently transliterating her late grandmother’s gritty memoir, *Winifred’s methadone kitchen*.

*The fraught term ‘ghost’ story is here preserved to indicate a specific, historical understanding of the literary genre pertaining to the deceased but pre-dating TEMP technology. It is not intended to cause offence.*
Reading the unreadable: what have we learned from blank leaves?
by Edward O’Hare

In recent centuries the field of unprinted book studies has given rise to the occasional fascinating discovery. Research into the history of books that were, either due to confusion, incompetence, lethargy, intoxication, derangement, accident, financial mishandling, deliberate sabotage, charges of plagiarism, overzealous censorship, extreme authorial cowardice or other circumstances, issued by publishers with entirely blank pages has generated a wealth of rigorous critical debate. Speculation has focused upon the possible identities of the authors of these most mysterious of works, their nature and putative subject matters, and above all the reasons why they were fabricated, sold to the reading public and in some cases found great popularity and lasting acclaim despite having no printed content whatsoever.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical summation and, insofar as this may be possible, a theoretical apparatus for analysing the vast and surprisingly rich body of scholarship that has accumulated in this area. It shall bring together questions of hermeneutics, authorial intent and historiography in order to posit an answer to the fiercely contested question of why there are millions, if not indeed hundreds of millions, of books in some of the most distinguished libraries, museums and private collections in the world with
unmarked spines and nothing but sheets of perfectly plain paper between their covers. Furthermore, this paper shall challenge preconceived notions of literary history by placing these unnamed, authorless works, previously regarded as equally worthless and meaningless, in their cultural context so that their true merits and tremendous significance can at last be appreciated.

**Gregor Elvin Trinslope-Spragg** is the Timothy Olaf Flompert Bilge Research Fellow in Book History and Print Culture at the Island of Gurge University. He is a leading authority on such topics as paper stock, leather bindings and animal glue. His many publications include *A study towards a survey of inexplicably published pages* and *Blank: an anthology of recent research into failed publications*. In addition, his work as a curator has seen him oversee the major exhibition *A thousand featureless books* and its sister exhibition *Another thousand featureless books*, both of which are on display in perpetuity at separate locations in Stockholm.
Recent unconfirmed reports suggested that internalising disinfectant may be a strategy worth investigating as protection against COVID-19 infection. We aimed to test the ability of practical everyday vegetables as drinking vessels to facilitate clinical trials of this potentially curative fluid.

Wandering around the garden was used as an initial screening tool for possible vegetables, however due to the season still being spring this was found to be ineffective. A socially distant but unnecessary trip to the shops resulted in several misshapen unwanted vegetables being sourced. These were then tested for absorbency by injection of liquid disinfectant using a discarded children’s medicine syringe, which had been used for actual treatment of COVID-19 infection.

A wonky carrot, a slightly mouldy cucumber, a genetically modified pumpkin and an unwanted celeriac were collected and tested. The carrot failed to receive the syringe and was instead eaten by the hungry, impatient children of the author. The cucumber retained 15mls of liquid before surrendering its bodily integrity. The pumpkin consumed all two litres of household disinfectant before being carved into a presidential avatar during lunch break. Finger injuries were sustained, not from carving, but from the toxic fluid. The celeriac was forgotten about and remains uneaten. All study staff agreed that home schooling was more useful than any further experimentation during lockdown.

This paper concludes that pumpkins may serve as the most useful container for ingesting household disinfectant. However, the fluid does appear to be toxic which suggests it should not be consumed at all, which was a surprise to everyone.
**Dr Don Al-Drump** is a noted experimental vegetable physicist who has a keen interest in the diversification of bargain bucket vegetable use by scientists. His published articles include ‘Vegetable patches—a cure for garden withdrawal’ and ‘Laughing stalk—could celery tickle better than fingers?’.
No more ‘little’ mermaid: partnerships to fight discrimination against fantastical sea creatures

by Jenny Melo

The blue economy (BE) is a means of production rooted in the happy use of ocean resources. According to the World Bank paper, ‘Living by the sea makes you happy. Let’s do it by 2030’, BE will be a source of global economic growth, livelihood and jobs for land and sea creatures in the coming years. Several studies have addressed social aspects affecting the development of this new economy. Some have considered workers’ rights, especially those related to dancing sea horses, performative jellyfishes and talking seaweeds (Flsh, 2019; OCTopus et al, 2014). Little attention, however, has been paid to the discrimination that mermaids pursuing new careers are facing while they are immersed in patriarchal under-water society.

This study uses a deep-phenomenological epistemology and a critical blue sociology lens to characterise the several waves of obstacles faced by a shoal of worker mermaids trying to create a labour union of travel bloggers. This research, gathering a unique sample derived from 8.9e-8 semi-structured interviews with mermaids from the Caribbean and validated through a novel mind-reading approach, claims that the current partnership with the above water Womens’ Pirate Coalition is the most relevant strategy to fight against discrimination. This land and sea alliance is the most suitable strategy to combat the legal barriers put forth by the undersea monarchy to jeopardise mermaids’ freedom to choose. This work opens a new research field in the intersection between mermaid worker rights, happy use of ocean resources and critical studies of the BE.
**Estrella de Mar** is the founder and Director of the Institute of Thinking in the Deep, focused on the study of the social structure of life undersea, down where it is wetter. Her academic work has informed the development of internationally recognised documentaries, such as *Aquaman* and *Finding Nemo*, in portraying gender stereotypes and the reality of blue society, and advocating for their inclusive and fair transformation. She obtained her PhD in Deep Ocean Sociology from the Royal Institute of Fantastical Sea Creatures at Black Pearl, Barbados.
Stimulating motivation of lower-proficiency students via Extra-Terrestrial-for-English learning

by Jean Chiu

Due to the recent coronavirus outbreak, teaching and learning has switched to online. This presents challenges for low-proficiency students in English whose level falls far below that of average university students. This research project attempts to improve their motivation to speak English by maximising their interaction with Extra Terrestrials (ETs). These interactions, managed by synchronous online software, were seen to improve students’ motivation to engage with their own studies as they began to see themselves as professional teachers of ETs.

The teaching mode was online one-human:one-ET by video conference. The human participants demonstrated and explained their activities of interests (such as decoupage arts and crafts, aquaponic fish farming and calligraphy) in a mixture of international English and mother tongue. Next, ETs played the role of learners via artificial intelligence English translators.

The students then instructed a class entirely in English for their specialist interest. Summative assessment showed the lower-achieving participants’ motivation increased by 29%, while human-to-ET interactions were 39% greater than human-to-human tutor interactions, measured by both demonstrated learning screen time and pre-test/post-test speaking proficiency checks. The results suggest that human-ET learning is an effective method of generating English speaking practice given the pandemic’s present limitations on class contact.
**Smiling Jean** is a Professor in the ET Department of the WT University of Languages. She obtained her MA in ET Studies at the Aquaponics Spaceshift University and her Doctorate of Human Beings in the University of the Solar System. Her research interests include human-to-human, human-to-ET and human-to-aquaponics communication, facilitated by shepherd leadership.
This investigation looks at reducing pressure on academic staff during these unprecedented times. It is well documented that pandas (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) are highly capable and accomplished animals that flourish in times of crisis (Black, J. et al 2008, 2011, 2016). In this study we simulated the introduction of pandas in an academic setting and then assessed their performance. Ten groups of Pandas were provided with standard academic equipment including:

1. doors that they could close on simulated undergraduate students
2. simulated PhD students they could ignore
3. simplistic and non-representative measures of their performance
4. four different ORCIDs tied to four different inaccessible institutional email addresses
5. Reviewer 2 (the actual Reviewer 2. Not a simulation).

Panda groups were assessed on their ability to perform to a baseline standard set by an international collaboration of Vice Chancellors, Heads of Faculty, institutional leaders and that guy that got an MBA but we’re not sure how, because he sounds like he’s just reading the textbook verbatim.

This study was discontinued after 21 days. Early in the trial, the pandas developed antipathy towards the investigators, mainly due to the attempted application of a cross-group metric to measure performance. As agreed, we report their opinion: the individual conditions in each group were so different that a single simplified metric would not measure academic success, but solely their ability to conform to the norm (one panda described this...
as ‘an elaborate dance’). Additionally, they made friends with the students, refused to engage with the ‘flawed human system for publishing research’ and helped Reviewer 2 overcome their awkward, inappropriate, over-critical attitude and found out they were just insecure and actually quite nice.

Dr Arthur Stroopwifflie is a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Cross Regional Animal Social Study. He has studied the social interactions of animals from many regions and made them all very cross.
Early clinical evidence for rapid response prescribing in shifting BS contexts, and new trends in BS to PB correlation
by Kay Guccione

Across the average UK lifespan of 81.16 years (ONS, 2017) encounters with Bothersome Situations (BS) average at 4,212, as measured by the New Constant BS scale (Everlast, 2012). Recently this was demonstrated to be at least three-fold higher for women (Side-Eye and Shade, 2018). A range of sources of BS have been determined and it is agreed across research and practice forums that the three most common initiating contexts are Workplace BS, Familial BS and Third-Party BS with the population of the UK commonly interpreted as belonging to one of these three groupings, defined by the source of the majority of the BS they encounter (Galling, 2014).

Clinical intervention strategies for all the groupings follow three main approaches, shake-it-off (SHIO), run-it-off (RIO) and sack-it-off (SIO). Selection of intervention strategy follows standard prescribing guidance (GMC, 2017), deploying single treatment SHIO for the least serious occurrences and escalating to SIO only for those who just cannot even. While most existing studies focus on the alarming rise in Third-Party (sub-group: Political) BS in the UK this study focuses on the second largest UK group, those encountering chronic Workplace BS. This study addresses the emerging requirement for devising an escalated prescribing strategy for individuals with pre-existing high Workplace BS, encountering acute elevated Familial BS. We designed a rapid-response strategy, prescribing multiple RIO interventions beginning at first presentation of Workplace BS-Familial BS coincidence, and
continuing treatment twice weekly on an ongoing basis. Early findings are twofold and we report that (1) immediate and ongoing application of RIO shows positive effects on at least four markers of BS reduction, and (2) co-occurring Workplace BS-Familial BS leads to personal best performances (PBs) when treated with RIO, leading us to posit that enforced working from home could be a key strategy available to the British Olympic Association in ensuring global sports preparedness.

Dr Babs Hackles is a Clinical Reader in Multilocational BS Syndrome. Her latest research programme investigates TIO (turn-it-off), a new intervention strategy devised specifically for teaching from home. Her Marathon PB is 3:53:02.
Wanted! Dead or alive—Schrödinger's cat revisited
by James Derounian

Famously, Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger contended in the 1930s that a notional cat could be simultaneously alive and dead. In a groundbreaking mixed method approach, the author of this paper combined covert participant observation with the experimental teleportation of a cat.

Schrödinger's contention was potentially borne out by a triangulated experiment in which a willing cat was teleported whilst consuming ‘dreamies’ cat treats. Based on observable phenomena Rufus disappeared, at least from the visible human spectrum. This clearly raises the possibility of the pilot feline as alive and dead in multiple dimensions.

However, research participants in the form of owners of rescue cats in north London reported their pet as very alive, or similarly very dead, but not both at the same time. Several key determinants were established: was the animal yowling, defecating or alternatively inert? This exploratory study calls for largescale, longitudinal studies to corroborate or refute Schrödinger’s theory that a cat can be simultaneously dead and alive.

Author declaration: Ethical approval was not withheld for this research. The study was part-funded by the manufacturers of ‘dreamies’ cat treats.
Adolf Kittler is a behavioural scientist at the University of Chinchilla, Burkina Faso. His previous work has focused primarily on whether locusts yodel and the development of a typology for party animals. His latest book charts the extraordinary tale of Tarka the potter, that clearly demonstrates how mammals have the capacity to fashion craft objects.
Some 40 years ago a Dundonian academic published a scheme for the assessment of student work via staircase. Eventually, once a reliable method of chucking from the top landing had been standardised, markers found they could assign reliable grades according to the step on which written assignments landed, with the highest grades going to the bulky items that made it down to the lower treads and +/- refinements arising from overhangs.

This new research arose during the current pandemic. Attempts to staircase grade an outstanding bundle of hard copy assignments had been thwarted by the author’s three young housebound children who hastily gathered the assignments before grades had been identified and recorded. Furthermore, the children proceeded to gleefully chuck the assessments from the very top landing, which resulted in some unfortunate damage to assignments as well as to pictures and bannisters.

Given that most incoming assignments are now digital and accepting that the staircase method may not produce a normal distribution of grades, an alternative marking scheme was trialled based on the time of day logged for the submitted assignments. The paper details the rationale for determining appropriate grades for submission: late evening (desperate to finish), middle of the night (panic completion), early morning (time taken for
last minute changes), early afternoon (thoroughly revised) and early evening (following considered review). Feedback based on these interpretations of submission time was automatically generated in general and encouraging terms. Evaluation showed a reasonable approximation to normal distribution, and an incidence of complaints and appeals comparable to the pattern experienced after laborious traditional staircase grading. Those students who reported having felt happy about their lowly-graded submissions were gently reminded that the department is in the business of education and not of entertainment.

Nhoj Nawoc (disowned) has been involved in questionable educational research since accumulating an extensive file submission that has been unequivocally rejected by high-rated journals. His recent work is noteworthy for his willingness to neglect possible confounding variables, to attribute causation to questionable correlation, to claim important statistical significance when so declared by SPSS comparisons. His striking writing style favours extensive use of tautology, of non sequiturs, and of sentences whose subordinate clauses feature nested subordinate clauses; his publications seem to be better taken as read, than actually read.
The correlation between deadlines and tidiness in the habitually lazy  
*by Alexandra Dey*

This paper seeks to provide a theoretical foundation for the link between an approaching deadline and the cleanliness of the subject’s living quarters in an effort to provide the means by which to predict the point the subject will stop procrastinating and focus on meeting their aforementioned deadline. The Procrastinating Through Tidying (PTT) metric was developed at a social distance from the research participants using data gathered via Zoom and little cameras hidden in the research participants’ offices or studios.

It was found that the emptiness of the laundry basket and number of dust specs on the surfaces of the participants’ living area could be used as an accurate indicator that the participants’ academic or creative output for the day would be zero. The paper concludes that the point at which each participant would sit down and focus on their work was directly related to how flamboyantly and precisely they colour-coordinated their bookshelves; incidentally, this point was typically several hours past the deadline.

*Alway Stomorro* would have been Professor of Lost Opportunities at Pigsllfly University had they not missed the boat to get there. They enjoy thinking about what they might achieve one day (and mindless snacking).
Against ethical approval by force of will
by Matthew Cheeseman

Back then it was exciting: a note in the atmosphere, a change in the texture of light, a whiff, a smell, almost like perfume in the air. Most felt we were becoming the university we always intended to be; more integrated, unified, proud. But I swear I sensed something else, a temperature shift in the corridors, an unusual efficiency in the library. Colleagues at that time were doing much needed work on practice-led research within the institution. As a writer, I busied myself contributing to the development of this framework, which was situated, as it should be, in our local praxis. How ironic, then, that I did not sense what was going on.

There have always been ambitious people in the university. Talented bureaucrats who know how to play the faculty game. When the Ethics Committee first approved the innovations, I, like many, was thrilled: less paperwork, more trust in academic integrity. But ambition grows in increments and I simply didn't appreciate the full implications until it rose before us, a giant in the atrium. I'm sure there was a hurried ceremony to welcome it, and I am sure I chose not to attend, but that, of course, is irrelevant. Our vision shifted beyond the global to the universal. Our ambition for expansion became unrestricted, endless;
nothing would be protected from our thirst for research, our appetite for pupils. We became the University of the Will, addicted to heroism and triumph.

This article, for what it is worth, is a memoir of those changing times, when much good work was performed in what now seems like blissful, studied ignorance.

Julia Roud is a writer. She remains in her position after a failed period of attempting to move to another institution. It seems trite to say that they’re all the same, but it’s the one conclusion she has managed to reach. In that, of course, there is some hope for us all.
With special thanks to Alex Dey, who edited this special issue and worked on the further development and reach of the journal.

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