# Journal of Imaginary Research



## Journal of Imaginary Research

Volume Three

2017

Edited by Matthew Cheeseman Series Editor, Kay Guccione

In this third volume of academic fantasies we are delighted to cement a collaboration between the University of Sheffield and the University of Nottingham, who have partnered in 2017 to celebrate Academic Writing Month through a shared festival of activities. These imagined research abstracts, and their imagined researchers were constructed by our real academic staff, research staff and students during WriteFest, the annual festival of research writing. We have used imaginative practices to construct and refine abstracts and biographies that are freed from the binds of research world realities, though each is rooted in a real image, carried into the workshop by a real researcher. These pieces are insights into the creativity that exists within research, and within our researchers—creativity is a property of all writers and the privilege of all researchers.

These though, are not the final outputs of engaging and prioritising the imagination in research writing practices. This volume contains by-products of the true aim of the workshop, which is to reflect on how we can creatively communicate real research projects. When we apply creative techniques to our real-life research writing, we unbind ourselves from formulaic and restrictive writing structures: what we thought we'd be able to say about the research, preconceived ideas about what the outcomes would or should be, shoehorning our findings into existing theory, or aligning with repeated phraseology and regurgitated writing conventions.

Allowing our earliest versions of research communications to skip through a chain of connections which can be followed to conclusion, branched, or polymerised, means that we generate new ways of writing about, thinking about and talking about our findings. It also brings an excitement and enjoyment of writing that serves to refresh our commitment to writing papers, theses, proposals and reports. By taking a creative approach to academic writing, I hoped to ease some of the anxiety that sometimes comes with writing, and reframe the act of writing itself. My sincere thank you to Dr Matthew Cheeseman whose expertise in creative applications for writing, position him perfectly to draw great things from the minds of everyone who has attended his workshops. We hope you enjoy reading the third volume of the *Journal of Imaginary Research*.

Departures from the understory and initiations of creativity: a heuristic for the artistic and cultural flourishing of salivary Microzymase civilisation by Lauriane Suyin Chalmin-Pui



Philosophers and physiologists have long studied the human paths to salivation in the oral cavity. Since the revolutionary discovery of viable Microzymase populations in human saliva, there has been a sustained interest in all aspects of the Microzymatic realm, which is now known for its artistic and cultural sophistication. Geographically situated in the rainforests of the submandibular glands, the Microzymase inhabit the understory strata and only rarely depart from it. Although academic literature spans diverse subjects such as Microzymatic dietary habits, political fora and knowledge accumulation, there remains a dearth in understanding Microzymatic rites of passage.

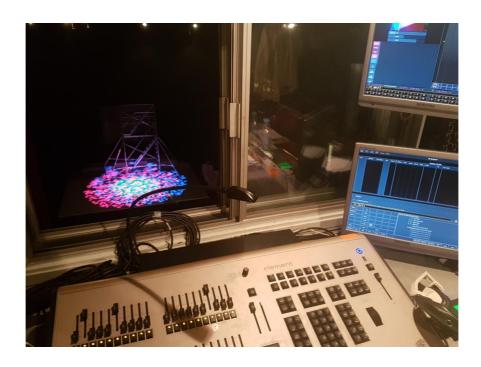
This paper proposes that the exceptional journeys beyond the rainforest understory are perilous initiations of creativity undertaken by individuals designated as artistic geniuses. Based on this, the paper then establishes a heuristic to model a) the timing of these extraordinary circumstances, b) the characteristics of each individual designation, and c) the

characteristics of each individual designation, and c) the likelihood of successful return to the understory. Using a purpose-built lysozymatic Dantescope, PHLEGM tracer-dye and subsequent Ecological Droplet Analysis (n=3051), we demonstrate that Microzymases may migrate to the upper canopy of the sublingual gland, exclusively as part of a 24-hour ritual that takes place precisely every millionth mastication event performed by the host human.

This ceremony is an initiation for designated Microzymases to transcend beyond their world and into the non-Microzymase world. This eschatological journey is an initiation forming the future creative class, on which the artistic and cultural flourishing of the Microzymatic civilisation relies on. This research reframes our understanding of the salivary Microzymase world by positioning rites of passage as the means to analysing the transcendental experiences underpinning the artistic and cultural flourishing of the Microzymase civilisation as a whole.

Beginning her career in osteology, **Dr Philippine Speichel** moved away from increasingly dry subjects with a doctorate in Oral and Dental Sciences at the Pavlov-Babkin University, Órefice. In 2009, she was appointed to the H Brand Professorship and is currently the University's Deputy Director for Palatable Research. Under her direction, the Speichel Saliva Laboratory is a world-leader in innovative, high-impact research and enjoys a tidal interdisciplinary influence in fields spanning human and animal physiology, art history, anthropology, archaeology and dentistry. The group openly attributes their well-known discovery of Microzymase civilisation to a chance occurrence during the course of a regular trial. Dr Speichel holds five patents associated with Spitting Image technologies and salivary data visualisation.

#### Forging friendships: the excitement of the unknown by Claire Esau



It is claimed that taking up a hobby helps keep individuals mentally active and strengthen social connections. For these reasons many adults play sport, learn languages, or attend regular classes such as cookery or art—but how effective are these activities at delivering on these claims? Results of a survey on hobbies and activities indicated that the less common the hobby, the stronger the friendships forged within the group. Previous studies have suggested that this is a result of the feelings of superiority that come from engaging in something perceived as exclusive and specialised (the phenomenon known as the 'hipster complex'). We believe this is a misnomer and have identified positive feelings arising from endorphins released when thrown into an unknown environment, helping group members to bond.

We investigated this hypothesis by holding focus groups with an amateur production team engaged in the technical aspects of theatre and members of a life drawing class. As well as forging firmer friendships, both groups showed evidence of increased job satisfaction after just twelve weeks of activity. We propose that this is due to an increase in

confidence in approaching the unknown and identifying mistakes as a learning opportunity, which may ultimately aid career progression.

Dr Edna Bird is a social psychologist at the University of Cape Town. Edna completed her PhD at the University of Central Lancashire where she specialised in social anxiety and now volunteers much of her free time to mental health charities. During her undergraduate days Edna discovered a love of stand-up comedy and says one of her greatest achievements is being nominated for Best Newcomer at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for her stand-up show 'Freudian slip-ups: when you say one thing but mean your mother'.

#### Inside the early years' kitchen gardens by Maria Opazo Perez



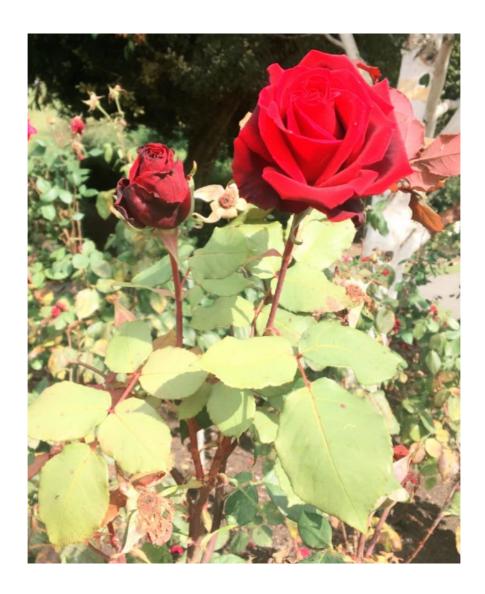
Over the last few decades in Chile, public investment has been made with the aim of providing education for all children under the age of five. This has made early years education an exciting research field. Efforts have been focused on children from the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas, characterised not only because of low family income but also for the absence of green areas: trees, grass, flowers and most important, playgrounds. It has been found that children do not have enough places to play freely in.

This study explores the benefits of implementing kitchen gardens inside nurseries. The aim is to identify the pedagogical possibilities of such settings, documenting children's opportunities to learn through their playful experiences and work with teachers. Using a qualitative framework to collect data, I spent an entire year visiting several nurseries in Santiago. There, I had the chance to observe the implementation of kitchen gardens inside nurseries and to interview early years teachers and children.

Findings show that kitchen gardens should be a central part of the Chilean nursery experience. Children see them as places where they can play and learn at the same time. By doing so, children learn about plants, seeds, recycling and the use of water; in addition, they develop a sense of belonging regarding the nursery and the community. In that context, this research shows that the implementation of kitchen gardens inside nurseries can be an excellent tool for strengthening the pedagogical potential of the educational community.

**Prof Maria-Jose Opazo** is a Chilean social anthropologist. She holds a PhD in Education from the University of Nottingham. Her research interests are related to early years education and childhood public policies. Currently, she is leading a research project related to the relationship between early years' nurseries and nature. In addition, she advocates for children's right to education coupled with a high standard of living.

#### Layers of nature by Buthaina Al Siyabi



Science and engineering offer us technical solutions to technical problems that are available to the privileged people of the world, but do not always suggest how these research products can be adapted to serve people in more remote places. In such locations nature offers possibilities that are not recognised by engineers; resources that are still not yet understood.

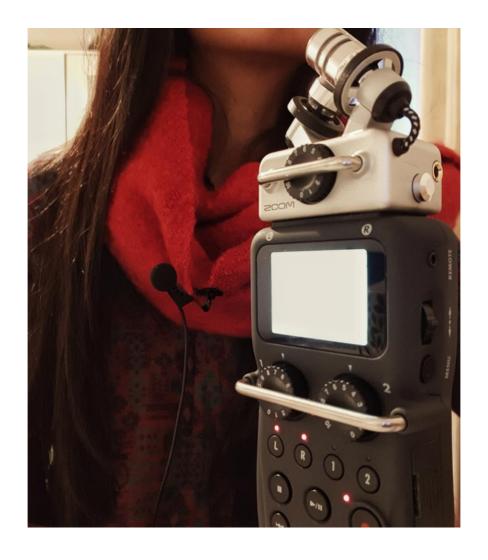
We travelled to a remote village prone to annual flooding, causing regular loss of life to the local population. This happened suddenly, leaving little time to prepare. We asked the question: can we solve the problem of flood warnings by looking into this village's unique

resources? What connections can we make and what systems can we build?

We identified a species of locust that creates an auditory biological alarm in the hours preceding bad weather and sought to use this to prototype a bio-warning device. We identified the sensing abilities of the insect group and the timings and volumes of sounds produced in response to bad climate conditions or increasing temperature. We then designed an artificial device based on the shapes and the functions of the locust morphology, tested it, and found it to be effective at predicting floods. Further insect morphology research enabled the construction of artificial signal boosting antennae based on grasshoppers. This increased the sensitivity of the bio-warning device, enabling detection of less severe weather.

**Dr R Omar** is a researcher in biomimetic engineering. He graduated from the University of Sheffield with a PhD in Electronic and Electrical Engineering in 1980 and has authored many publications in environmental engineering. He has recently focused on bio-inspiration sensing and antenna design, focusing on the integration of indirect methodologies from nature and engineering. He is currently completing the fieldwork for his monograph *Environmental inspiration*.

#### Over coffee on the morning train by Mariam Khokhar



According to a recent report, Britons consume 70 million cups of coffee each day. This study looks at the drinks that are consumed on trains. It is the first to explore people's thoughts over coffee in the early hours of the day, whilst on transport. Caffeine is a chemical that gets rapidly absorbed and distributed throughout the body. Caffeine enhances brainpower, triggers your self-control and effects bowel function, eyesight and digestion. It has been claimed that the effects of caffeine increase if you are on train and looking out of the window. This study therefore focuses on all the thoughts that go through the mind upon sipping from a coffee cup and looking outside the window whilst

travelling on a train. I interviewed 70 people in a period of four months on my 50-minute daily commute from Nottingham to Sheffield, recording people's stories and self-perceptions as they drank their morning coffee. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed to identify major themes.

The chief findings from this study were thinking about work, reflecting on life, reminiscing on old relationships, adding up the bills, reflecting over fights with significant others and wondering how to take control of life. This research had no medical agenda but people felt noticeably better after the interview as they made sense of their own situations. It has given a voice to ordinary human beings travelling on train who have never thought out loud in front of a researcher.

**Dr Marina Khan** graduated from the University of Sheffield and is now a renowned author in Pakistan. During her time in Sheffield, she used to commute daily from Nottingham to Sheffield by train. Every morning, she closely observed people who looked out of the window and sipped coffee. Some frowned, some smiled and the rest just stared. Therefore she became interested in exploring what thoughts go through peoples' minds when they sip their coffee and look outside the window while travelling.

### The purrfect spot: an interpretative phenomenological analysis of feline sleeping preferences by Claire O'Callaghan



Existing studies of feline sleeping preferences are dominated by physiological and psychological investigations of the phenomena that often rely on biological analysis to reveal what we already know: cats like sleeping. But little space is given in such research for feline self-expression. Starting from this visible critical lacuna, this study evaluated cat choices, motivations and spaces for sleep, asking 'where *do* sleeping cats prefer to lie?'

Five case studies in Washington DC were selected for analysis.

Participants were encouraged to use verbal and visual methods to tell their personal narratives. An interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was implemented to allow feline participants to make sense of their own life experiences, with idiography enabling the researcher to examine individual feline perspectives towards sleeping contexts.

The results were limited. Participant observation endorsed existing research indicating that felines like to sleep in warm, secluded spaces,

**Dr Grayson Marx** is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Architecture at Cold Comfort University, West Virginia. His interests include innovative design and environmental sustainability. Grayson's current research on feline sleeping habits form part of a new experimental project into cat whispering. His next book, *I don't care what you think: I love my cat* will be in all good bookshops and sensible retail outlets in 2019. In his spare time, Grayson enjoys watching Bruce Willis movies and drinking coffee.

#### Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are back by Siavash Bakhtiar



Many academics from the Island formerly known as Britain were traumatized by the Insular Academic Wars (2022–2024, 2031–2035). This project, funded by the Danish Royal Society of Arts and the Kierkegaard Foundation, aims to give some of these academics the opportunity to overcome their trauma and continue their activities in a safe environment. Following the methodology of Levi and Berthold (2039) we task academics with inhabiting a new history based on factual and/or imaginary elements in order to help them overcome the loss of European collective identity. Based at the Centre for Post-Factual Studies at the University of Copenhagen, the academics work in networks (or 'clans') that try to re-construct utopian communal narratives. This imaginative work helps reconnect them to a cultural tradition lost after the construction of the Great Wall on the Island and the reformation of the educational institutions that followed. The project takes the name of the famous play written in prison by Daniel Pardstop before he was sentenced to death in 2034. Pardstop's play retells the story of these two Shakespearean minor personae who make their way back from England to Denmark with a letter addressed to the Danes from the King of England that contains just one word: 'hope'.

The project is supervised by **Prof Soren Lycan-Thorpe**, a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist specialising in post-war trauma at Rigshospitalet and **Prof Bénédicte Epineuse** who works for the Department of Imaginary and Post-Factual Studies at the University of Copenhagen. The clans are made of academics who escaped the Island, most of them survivors of the Academic Wars and Doctrine Camps that followed the Break Treaty signed in 2020. They work in close collaboration with the European Centre of Post-Factual Conflicts (Brussels) and the Instituto Spinoza (Lisbon and Amsterdam).

Erasmo Levi and Berthy Berthold (2039) 'V-effekt: a new look at an old concept' in *Island Studies* 15(3), p. 34–71.

#### A study into the effect of isolation on reflective practices by Julian Gosliga

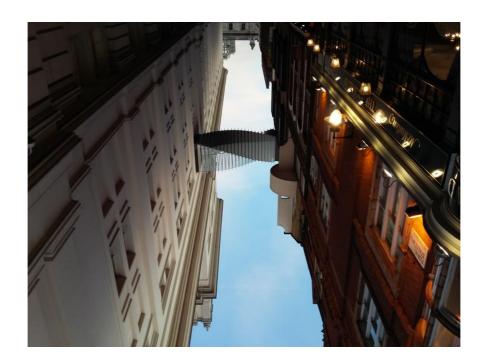


As reflection, self-awareness and mindfulness practices become more popular, it is increasingly important to study conditions, which may aid or inhibit these mental processes. This study examines the effect of varying levels of isolation on the reflective mental process. Volunteers with no history of mental health issues were selected to take part in the study. During this time, the level of social interaction that participants experienced was controlled and monitored. Participants were required to keep a journal detailing their thoughts immediately following meditation and reflection workshops. The participants were housed in special accommodation to control for factors such as diet and sleep patterns. The study stopped short of total isolation (as this was considered unethical), but it was found that 78% of participants reached a saturation point where increased isolation caused what could be considered excessive reflection resulting in a feedback effect. Once this point had been reached, participants would become lost in their own thoughts and either fall asleep or lose sight of the purpose of the exercise. This finding is supported by evidence gathered from interviews with various individuals who regularly engage in meditation or other reflective practices.

Prof S Hassan, less formally known as 'Self-aware' Selah, is a prominent

figure in the Psychology Department at Yale University. A keen interest in reflection and Gnosticism led Prof Hassan to study how we can learn more about the mind and its processes, not by examining others but by observing ourselves. Not known for her sociability, Prof Hassan was rarely seen at conferences or departmental events. Eventually, she took a sabbatical to perform research with herself as the sole participant and experimenter. This proved unsuccessful and she returned to the wider research community to find out—why?

Suspended tunnels between office buildings and pubs relieve employee stress levels and increase turnover by Andreea Mocanu



People who go to work every day often experience very high levels of stress. The present study delivers a method for alleviating this: we placed opaque suspended tunnels between a Central London office block and the pubs surrounding it. We told employees that they were free to go to the pub whenever they liked, without their movements being monitored by their managers or co-workers and without them being seen by passers-by. We measured stress levels prior to the intervention and in the six months after it, using best practice from the study 'Tickling as a measure of stress' (Xavier,

2014). We surveyed 167 people and found that the average stress level went down from 70% to 30% after being allowed to go to the pub without being judged. To everyone's surprise, participating companies reported a median increase in employee productivity of 20% and an increase in turnover of 24–34%. We hope to inspire more workplaces to build tunnels between their offices and various entertainment establishments such as pubs, sweet shops and gadget shops.

**Dr Angela Xavier** is a behavioural scientist at the University of Overthinking. Her research focuses on the side effects of tickling and she has written many acclaimed papers on the topic, such as the controversial 'Tickling as a substitute for grades in University' (2001). From this, her interest in procrastination followed naturally and she has published ten papers on the topic, including the study 'Why do we even bother at all?' (2016). Dr Xavier currently lives in the British countryside with her cat, Emma, and her pet alpaca, Pepper.

#### The achievable balance of happiness by Adriano Ethur Dias



Latin America is known for presenting the highest inequality rates in the contemporary world. Extreme poverty and unimaginable riches are found side-by-side. In this paper, the largest favela in Brazil (located in Rio de Janeiro) is mapped and inequality issues are brought to light and discussed. Different approaches were used for identifying the reasons for Rio de Janeiro having the highest criminality and lowest education levels. Qualitative and quantitative analysis showed that the majority of the favela population do not want to increase their earnings. There is a lack of basic services such as decent housing, health, education and transport. Violence remains a major concern, however the data shows it only escalated to the highest levels in the years after hosting the World Cup and Olympic Games. The discussion presents simple solutions to providing necessities so that the population can achieve desirable levels of happiness. It has been mathematically proven that the city has more than enough resources to achieve this.

**Chico Science da Silva** is a professor based at The Poverty University. He is an engineer, with a Masters in social sciences by the Love Everyone Academy. His PhD thesis won the Forever Happy award. After working for years in the engineering industry, Chico realized the majority of social problems were political and that political shifts were necessary to

apply scientific solutions. This led him to write the Old Yorks bestselling book *Engineering happiness*. After being propelled by its success he joined academic and political life. He was once elected Mayor of Rio de Janeiro: with his willingness to solve problems he was seen as a problem himself and was impeached in a political coup by other politicians.

#### The eclipse—a loss for our fields by Mari Herigstad



Total eclipse is when our indispensable sun is overshadowed by the sterile, simple moon. It has long been hypothesised that this rare event could cause acute and lasting harm, yet this has hitherto been overlooked by scientists most ignorant. To test it I conducted triple tests of soil, silt and sand. Within each field, plants were measured carefully, and my professor's lamp, holding a bright and polished bulb, selected as their 'sun'. As for the 'moon', I chose a base, volcanic rock, presented to me by my department's new replacement as a token of retirement: a simple thing but suitable. My lamp was lit upon the fields. And then obscured.

For every plant within the fields, the loss of light (my shrouded lamp) caused drooping stems and dying leaves. A swift return of light provoked reversal of the wilting, yet there remained regression when compared with normal fields. My data shows, conclusively, that barren rock (the moon) may block the sun (my lamp) and damage fields in manners irreparable. Total eclipse is therefore not a spectacle, but a harbinger of harvests lost, as was believed historically. Future work is well-advised: a

test to prove that the same repugnant loss occurs when zealous youth replaces expertise and eminence.

**Prof Serebryakov** spent his finest years in the University of Moscow Department of Biology. Following a short sabbatical, he recently returned to active research in Krakow, where he is a founder of the newly established Putative Pontification Society for the Benefit of the Uneducated (in honour of his brother-in-law, from his first marriage) and a patron of the Opera Krakowska, alongside his young wife. His eagerly awaited memoirs, describing the recent scandalous lack of support within his former Moscow department, will be published next year.

#### The post-industrial canal mind of Britain by Matthew Cheeseman



This paper contributes to the debate on the aesthetics of Artificial Intelligence (AI). What register should AIs communicate in? From where should they inherit their vocabulary and language? We challenge assumptions that AIs should draw their identity from (often dated) projections of the future and suggest they should be tethered to the remains of past labour.

The Post-Industrial Canal Mind of Britain (PICMoB) is an exercise in building an AI from Britain's artificial waterway system. The code was developed in tandem with DeepMind, the Alphabet-owned research and development company, who purposed PICMoB using language structures, images and vocabulary drawn from the walls overlooking canals. To recover this information drones were installed on barges and tasked with recording surfaces within 10m from the edge of the waterway. These images were analysed to extract expressive data ranging from instructional signage through to graffiti, slogans, curses and expressions of urgent desire.

PICMoB now operates using this site-specific lexicon, in effect communicating via the longstanding relationship between human users and the canal system. As such, PiCMoB has developed a distinctive aesthetic informed by a) its industrial past, b) its repositioning as a heritage object and c) as a declarative zone for anonymous everyday communication.

Lyn Alexander is influenced by the Heideggerian perspective that technology enframes human thought and thus precludes some things from being thought. She studied at the University of Gloucestershire and exhibits with the gallery Seventeen. Her previous work has utilised postpunk aesthetics to explore class politics in the digital age; it includes such installations as Stop Start Stop, a cartoon family and Metal Mickey, a robotic reconstruction of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. PICMoB can be accessed at www.picmob.co.uk.

#### The role of organic materials in reducing domestic and commercial labour

by Kay Guccione



Industry has not made use of wooden materials in electrical components: they are often poor conductors and easily combust. As such this is the first study in which wood-origin components are used as the base materials for electrical plugs instead of the classic plastic/metal combination. We have found that the substitution of wood components has the advantage of being both sustainable and spiritual. Wood plugs, when plugged, combust in such a way that they can be used to channel woodland spirits into the home or workplace. By employing woodland spirits in domestic and commercial work this finding reduces the burden of home and workforce labour whilst reducing electricity-based carbon footprints.

In this study we trialled a variety of woods and, as expected, found that the spookier woods saved participants more time around the home and office. We rated spirit effectiveness using a kilojoules/apparition conversion measure for each wood type and found the labour-saving effect to be between 26–51%, ranging from oak (classically not spooky) to elm (classically terrifying). This study has potential to impact on how domestic and commercial users make reductions in their carbon footprint. The implications on property fire risk, burns and the ethics of enforced spirit-based labour require further investigation.

Dr Willow Whisk was launched on to the Plug Studies scene in 2008 when she won the Mary Celeste Doctoral Prize in the category of Most Innovative Thesis. Her previous career as a specialist practitioner in Operational Plug Management underpins her approach to transubstantial translational research. Willow has been commended for her leadership in utilising public consultation in her research, leading on the National Plug Survey. Willow's most recent research funding is a partnership with the Woodland Underworld Workers Union (WU-WU), and centres on developing hybrid wood species that can endure high voltage spiritualism.

#### Traffic detection using audio waves: a Mulher da Rua Latino Coelho

by KM Florentine Weber



Traffic is a highly significant topic as friction between vehicles' wheels and the subgrade induces rubber abrasion. Ingression of rubber particles into the flooring and further soil layers increases the risk of erosion. Undergrounds are more affected, especially in coastal regions, due to their sandy soil composition. Collapse of streets and buildings and a topographical downwelling towards sea level are the consequences. Thus, recording, analysing and controlling traffic has been a longstanding research aim. Typical data includes time of traffic flux, velocity and type of vehicle (carriage, bicycle, motorcycle).

The oldest method for recording traffic is found in the Portuguese city of Lisbon. A woman's head looks down a two-lane road from a house entrance. Two movable limestone-eye balls are integrated within her head. They give a horizontal angle of 180° and a vertical angle of 70°, meaning her field of vision covers the whole road. Installed behind the woman's pupils is a Sound Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation (SASER) unit sensitive to dome- or head-shaped objects.

Analysis of the intensity, duration and angle of reflection of emitted waves leads to information concerning traffic formations, which are then recorded.

**Tigres Stillwater** is a researcher in audiology for the Technical Institute of Continental America. A mechanical engineer who specialised in optical mechanics, his main research interest is in optical systems. Stillwater is known for his own third eye, located behind his left ear, which he calls his 'prohibitive eye'. He was commended for making the highest efforts in ensuring his research accorded to ethical guidelines. In 1867 he ditched his broken motorcycle in the street of Latino Coelho and noticed the potential of the stone woman's view.

#### Volunteerism and servant leadership by Farida Khalid



The purpose of this study is to explore the perception of volunteers on their developing servant leadership characteristics whilst working in a charitable organisation. Four focus group interviews were conducted consisting of eight participants per group. There were two criteria used to select the participants: length of volunteer work (with a minimum two years) and holding a leadership position at said organisation. The central research question was 'what is participants' perception of developing the characteristics of servant leadership through their volunteers' experience in a charitable organization?' Two areas were explored: a) working as a volunteer and b) commonly developed characteristics. Larry Spears's (2010) list of ten characteristics of servant leadership was used as a benchmark.

Thematic analysis was performed. Surprisingly, the most common developing characteristic perceived by participants was a feeling of gratitude, which is not among Spears' 'ten characteristics of servant leadership'. Nevertheless, familiar themes such as serving others, listening, and healing were identified. One of the important findings was that almost all the participants joined volunteer work after having a tragedy or critical experience in their lives such as divorce, death of a loved one or a life threatening accident.

Dr Khalid M Niazi was born and raised in Jhelum, Pakistan. He earned his PhD in Education from the University of Service (UK). Currently he is investigating volunteerism and life satisfaction. He has published numerous articles and essays and several books on topics related to volunteerism and leadership. Additionally, he has written widely in Urdu and Punjabi on various topics related to volunteerism, services and life satisfaction. Niazi is also a founder of the Volunteerism and Leadership Centre at the University of Service. He has appeared in different public awareness programs on television to educate and motivate others to engage in volunteer work.

Spears, LC (2010) 'On character and servant-leadership: ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders' in *The Journal of Virtues and Leadership* 1(1) p. 25–30.

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# Series editors Matthew Cheeseman & Kay Guccione