

**Journal of  
Imaginary  
Research**

**Volume Five | 2019**





# Journal of Imaginary Research

Volume Five

2019

Edited by Matthew Cheeseman

Series Editor, Kay Guccione



Welcome to the fifth volume of abstract fiction, created by the global academic community. This year we launched our journal website, published our free workshop on creative practices and sent out another call for imaginary research abstracts. What came back was outstanding and uplifting, and forms our largest volume to date.

Through the *Journal of Imaginary Research* we aim to openly and widely spread the practices of imaginative writing throughout academia. We want to encourage researchers to construct and refine fictional abstracts and biographies that are free from the confines of real research. In doing so, we seek to promote a new relationship with writing; to empower researchers to write for fun, and to find joy in the processes of writing. We hope this helps writers reflect on how they communicate their real research projects and find the joy of creativity within the grind of productivity. Creativity is a property of all writers and the privilege of all researchers. This journal is thus an insight into the creativity that exists within research, and within our researchers.

My sincere thank you to Dr Matthew Cheeseman whose expertise in creative and imaginative writing has underpinned our years of work together. Matthew and I hope you enjoy reading the fifth volume of the *Journal of Imaginary Research*.

—Dr Kay Guccione

## Canis Nebuloris: puppies on the poop deck

by Katherine Inskip



The open cluster NGC2467 in Puppis contains two distinct populations of stars. Recent observations determined contradictory ages for this young and active star forming region. It is unclear if young stellar objects formed naturally in situ or were triggered by shocks associated with pre-existing massive stars. In this context, we carried out deep imaging observations of the Puppis/Canis Major region—the Deep Origins Ground-based Survey (DOGS). Here we report the discovery of a previously unknown astrophysical phenomenon, provisionally identified as Canis Nebuloris. Four distinct specimens were observed at the heart of NGC2467’s nebulosity. Follow-up spectroscopy and imaging reveals Canis Nebuloris to be optically opaque, self-luminous, time-varying in morphology, and ‘just so damn cute’. In subsequent papers, we present a preliminary theoretical model for Canis Nebuloris (paper II), conclusive new observational evidence for a self-sustaining and recursive star formation triggering mechanism associated with CN events (WAG-driven Asymmetric Growth) which we believe to be unique to the Puppis/Canis Major region (paper III) and further high resolution imaging (FIDO: Follow-up Imaging of DOGS Objects) which will lead to a rigorous astrophysical definition of ‘cute’ (papers IV, V).

**Adiya Dacks\*** is a PhD researcher in observational astrophysics at the University of Labrador. Originally from Alsace, she interned with Springer while studying at the University of Heidelberg, before taking up her King Charles III scholarship at University of London.

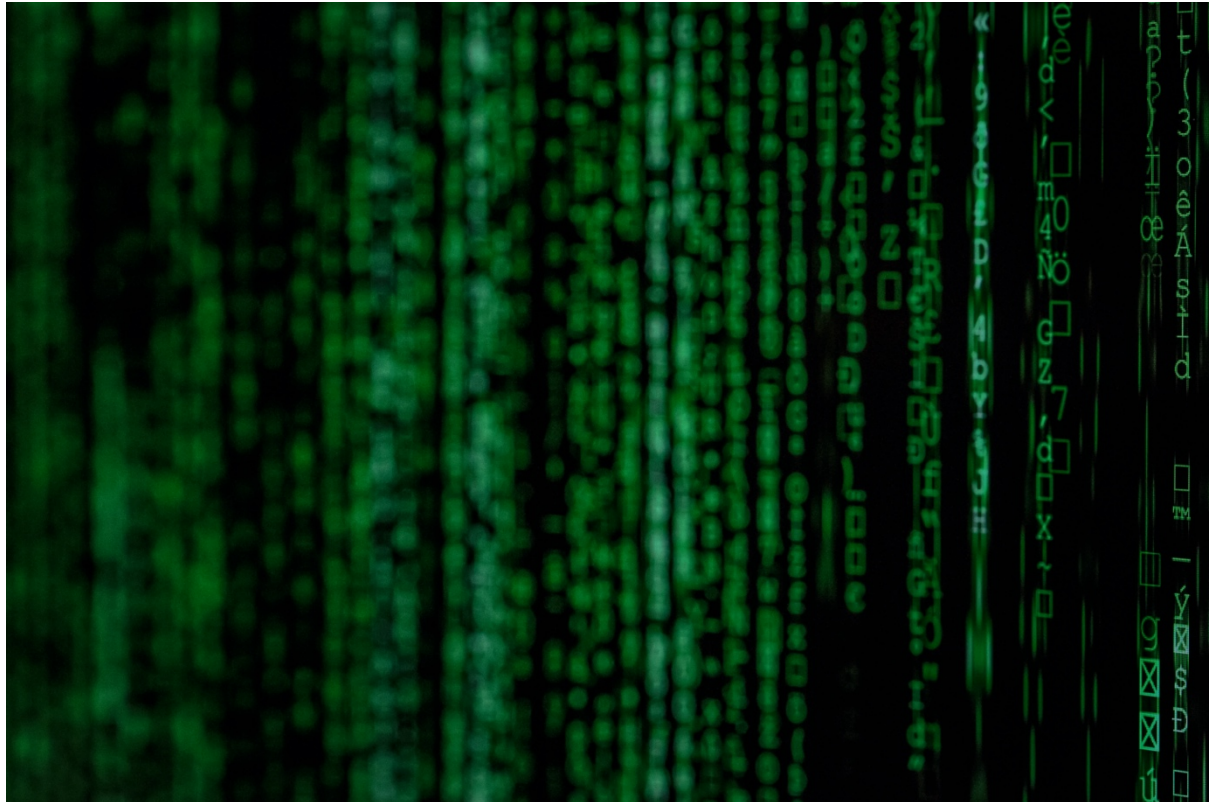
**Janneke Hund** is Professor in Observational Astrophysics at the University of Labrador. Originally from Holbaek, Denmark, she is PI of the DOGS survey, a recipient of the

Newfoundland Medal for Research Excellence, and was recently recognised as number 4 in *Zukunft* magazine's list of Great Danes.

\*Corresponding author

# Small dick reality, 'firehosing' vs trolls, trumplettes and spellgorithms

*by Vivienne Neale*



This action research was undertaken in response to deepfake image proliferation and the resultant rise of the pornographic kingdom in 2017. Having emanated from under ancient, moss covered bridges in deepest Scandi country during the second decade of 'firehose' rule, trolls moved west massing in the mountainous and bleak lawless kingdom of Redditland. In their festered online caves, carved into black basalt, incels, dwarves and goblins conjured up a DeepNude spellgorithm within a computing cauldron during a prolonged black hat ceremony. This newly created super power enabled users to literally strip the clothes from Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella and other stereotypical patriarchal princesses. The spellgorithm was designed specifically to work solely on female images but (predictably) was not programmed to penetrate muscly male mortals. During the Firehose 2 epoch, in a surprise twist, the spellgorithm was sold to an unknown troll for 30,000 trumplettes. Open Source Bridge trolls and torrenting webkingdoms have since enabled anyone to commission an image of any princess of their choice for only one ginger trumplette.

To combat this misogynistic bias, empowering research was undertaken and further sponsored by the SnowSleepCyborg Corp (SSCC) with the express aim of enabling fairy tale princesses to turn the tables on the trolls. Using a whole skin carved from a poisoned apple, a deeply carved talking mirror and a packet of pork scratchings, the DeepDick spellgorithm

was developed. However, after initial interest and persistent trials no one would pay one trumplette for pictures of miniscule incel genitalia. It is with regret that it was recently reported the trial was sadly abandoned in late 2019, after suggested donations for its continuation could raise little more than a ginger hairpiece and an impeachment dossier.

**Booby Udder** is a double MA graduate researcher at the BRA Research Foundation. She is immersed in disinformation, deepfakes, cyber security, obfuscation, confusion and the disruption of truthful reporting. Her main aim is to print as many lies and wild opinions as frequently as possible, thus exhausting readers in their attempts to prove reality. She also works part time as a political PR and manifesto writer. It's nice work if you can get it. This research also acknowledges funding from a proprietary erectile dysfunction product.

# The treatment of the vampire in the criminal justice system

by Louise Nicholas

## The Phlebotomist



Phlebotomist taking blood, Mary Rouncefield, CC BY-NC

There has long been substantial bias shown within the criminal justice system against individuals who identify as vampires or other members of the supernatural community. In contrast, those who consider themselves to be vampire hunters, witchfinders and zombie slayers largely escape repercussions for their violent and bigoted actions. In contrast to their long-maligned unearthly cousins, these self-appointed keepers of 'normality' are often celebrated in literature, cinema and video games. Drawing on a combination of archival research, observational studies and interviews with vampires, the impact of this disparity is explored in detail. Initial findings confirm the hypothesis: cruel and unusual punishments are frequently administered to supernatural creatures with little or no recourse to a coherent legal framework. Capital punishment seems to be legal and appeals processes are practically non-existent. Policy-makers and practitioners must act urgently to develop more appropriate and welcoming strategies to address disagreements that emerge between the living and undead communities.

**Dr Béla Acula** is one of the world's leading experts in undead social justice. With a career spanning several centuries, his recent work includes *Shaun of the dead: zombies are not pets* and the critically acclaimed *Friends or food? Analysing blood abstinence in the Black Ribbon Campaign*. Awarded an Ig Nobel Prize in 1998 for his work *Sheathing the blade: conscious*



*and unconscious bias in media portrayals of the vampire*, Doctor Acula continues to campaign for equality for the undead through his charity, Equal Rites.

## Multiplicité collaboration: missing authors?

by Natalie Yoh



Imaginary friends are part of normal childhood development and are recognised for their role in teaching interpersonal skills (Kidd, 2012). Whilst uncommon, adults may also maintain relationships with imaginary companions (ICs). This study aims to identify the contribution of ICs within a professional sphere. Semi-structured interviews following a cognitive-evolutionary framework were used to interview student participants. ICs were also interviewed using a state-of-the-art EEG linguist application (BeHeard™) to examine complicity in accruing professional benefits. Both within arts and STEM subjects, participants reported a significant positive relationship function ( $P < 0.01$ ). Higher complicity was reported in the former, with many ICs requesting academic recognition for their contributions. These reported greater direct involvement in work activities. In one case study the student confessed using their IC's language skills to formulate a bilingual conference presentation without their formal recognition, due to fears surrounding stigma. The IC wished to file a plagiarism report. In STEM, 89% of ICs were disengaged with the relevant subject ('who cares about AI anyway?' IC11) but provided substantial psychological support. The results of this study reveal undisclosed academic advantages for students with ICs. Therefore, we advise that academic recognition is regulated for student companions to better reflect their contributions.

**Dr Michael Skellig** is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Kerry. They completed their PhD on 'The disordered growth of imaginations' in 2015. They are known for their pioneering work into methods for the materialism of unconscious thought, specifically with the aim of retrieving lost memories. They are also the co-founder of Mina Institute, established to promote children's contributions to future research. In 2011 they received legal recognition as an Imaginary Companion to Professor Mari Almond (the world-renowned neuroscientist) under the Right to Be Recognised Act (2010, c7).

# **Applied political corruption: a multi-method approach to studying innovation in action in graduate education**

*by Alistair McCulloch*



The sociology of political corruption has focused on the abstract rather than the concrete, hence this paper on an innovative graduate-level Masters in Applied Political Corruption offered at a US Higher Education Institute (HEI). The researcher examined the way participants' real-world experiences impacted on and influenced their preparedness for and sense of agency in the programme. Students were randomly allocated into one of three groups at the point of being admitted to the programme and, at the point of entry, socio-economic characteristics were collected, together with details of criminal records and other interactions with the criminal justice system. Programme assessment was based on a final semester project requiring the student to corrupt one or more public officials. A student's GPA was based on the amount of cash transferred from the public purse to a Bahamian bank account nominated (and established) by the programme coordinator. Eight programme coordinators have left the University in the five years since the programme was established. Despite efforts they cannot be contacted, hence their absence from this study.

In addition to data being collected on the students' background characteristics, the volume of money extracted, and the students' ability to avoid prosecution, interviews with incarcerated public officials were conducted in the Cook County Jail by telephone and through plexiglass barrier during normal visiting hours. Data was also collected on the career outcomes of graduates. This multi-method approach allowed the researcher to

triangulate hard data with victims' phenomenological understandings to give a richer picture of the everyday life of the corruptor of public morals and her/his context than has hitherto been the case. The findings suggest that graduates progress quickly in the corporate world and can also be found in the middle ranks of political organisations within two years of graduation.

**Sebastian B Ramshackle III** has had a passion for political corruption ever since his involvement at an early age as a volunteer in a minor Congressional election in the mid-west of the Patagonian uplands. Following an undergraduate degree at Oxford, he gained a PhD in Financial Accounting at the Lower West Side University of Chicago, before being invited to take up a faculty position he really couldn't refuse. Since completing his PhD his research has focused on the relationship between preferred accounting methods and the utilisation of stress positions. In 2018 he delivered the keynote address at the New York Family Loyalty conference where he spoke to the conference theme, 'Nothing personal, it's just business'. Sebastian is kind to animals and loves his mother.



## **From the club to the classroom: developing trainee teachers' behaviour management skills via Berlin techno**

*by Emma Clarke and Carsten Aermes*



Concerns over managing pupil behaviour is a key factor deterring graduates from applying for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses. Even amongst those enrolled on such courses it remains the primary concern. This study aimed to develop specific skills for participating trainees in this area. It began by looking at a group considered to have the building blocks required for successful classroom management: presence, ability to read the room and adjust activity accordingly, confidence, positive body language and enthusiasm for their role. This group comprised of volunteers from the body of producers, musicians and DJs who perform electronic music in Berlin. Berlin is synonymous with cutting edge electronic music, specifically techno, and is seen as the vanguard of this influential scene. Although the contexts—classroom and club—have very clear and obvious differences, we allege that those skills intrinsic to building a crowd-pleasing set in a nightclub mirror those of teachers who are able to confidently manage children's behaviour.

The project involved a purposively sampled group of English ITE trainees who were mentored by the second author—a very well-respected figure in the Berlin electronic music scene. He worked with the trainees through observation and a range of visual methods (collage, photo-elicitation and graphic-elicitation) to reflect on the concept of presence and the performative act of teaching. Trainees developed their physical confidence and presence by contributing to DJ sets in Berlin clubs, culminating in a back-to-back performance. After their experience as club DJs, trainees reflected on the similarities between the roles and how the skills they developed behind the decks could lead to a more confident and enjoyable

experience in front of the desks.

**Professor Vanessa Podessa** is an internationally renowned motivational speaker and mentor. Her work spans a range of interdisciplinary fields and methodological paradigms and regularly features in the *National Enquirer* and *Financial Times*. Her research interests include Antarctic exploration, Buddhist *beyuls* and left-field Berlin techno. She is notorious, both on the dance-floor and in the lecture theatre.

**Phoonn.oo** is partly frisky, partly menacing. He is a goliath in his field who straddles the multiple genres of electronic music with ease and athletic grace. He is well-known for his love of stamp collecting and taxidermy. In his spare time he enjoys romance novels and crochet.

## The future is tarot

*by Jessica McLean*



In this time of uncertainty, with political unrest and well-calculated lies spreading on social media, it is getting harder to tell what is real and what is not. With such uncertainty and confusion many people are turning to tarot cards for guidance. In this study a team of Wiccan dignitaries and professors from Rowling's Academy for the Gifted analysed multiple tarot decks assessing their effectiveness in telling the future. Different age groups were asked which deck they identified with. The research identified that the most popular deck with those over 40 was the L Deck, the one that most frequently appeared in newspapers. In fact, 52% of participants in the study confessed to blindly following the advice given to them by the L deck, despite evidence proving these specific cards had repeatedly given them misinformation and actually gave no real insight into the cost of their future. These same participants refused to acknowledge the R deck, which was supported by the other 48% (who were mostly under 40). Our experts were able to ascertain that age was the key factor in determining which deck participants were most likely to turn to for advice on important matters of state, including the tackling of poverty, cuts to public funding and tax avoidance.

**Dr Claire Voyant** is a parapsychologist and self-proclaimed witch. She teaches the art of tarot and tea leaf reading at Rowling's Academy for the Gifted. As the lead researcher on The Future is Tarot project she's had an important role in attempting to settle the feud that arose after a disorganised 2016 survey on the L deck and R deck. She teaches decision making and hopes to eventually create a single community deck that will satisfy all.



# Human reaction to Kafkaesque mechanisms: a virtual reality study

*by Stefania Vaga*



Bureaucratic society evolves independently from people, who often face increasingly contorted, inhuman mechanisms leading to anxiety, apathy or delirium. To investigate this phenomenon, we employed a Kafkaesque model. A significant number of adult individuals (aged 18–68) were immersed in virtual reality for four weeks. Subjects were plugged, without instruction, into a virtual, ever-changing network of underground trains, with virtual passengers communicating only by body language. Over time, passengers were manipulated to look more animalesque; journeys became longer, trains darker. Christmas songs played at all stations. Psychological evaluations were performed during and after experiments. 9% of subjects panicked and were removed from virtual reality, 7% improvised shelters at stations, 2% tried preventing others from boarding by force; 82% kept travelling: 87% in an automatic way, 11% chose a passenger as a guide. One subject violently overpowered a driver gaining control of its train. 92% showed signs of anxiety, 7% tried hurting themselves, while 5% took refuge in imagination, and 0.4% started new philosophies/religions. Of this last group most converted anxiety into imaginary ecstasy, while one subject maintained full lucidity, overpowered the driver and was later diagnosed with borderline psychopathy.

**S Samsa** was admitted to university aged 14. Despite this she obtained her first degree at the age of 28, as she never concluded any of the numerous study courses she enrolled on. She has since worked for several research centres, including MIT, CERN, and ESA. She currently lives and conducts much her research in a hut in the Scottish mountains, remotely

connecting with collaborators. She builds her own technology, which includes her own supercomputer, and has a passion for mossy objects, icy ponds and wooden puppetry.

## Removing emotive pressure: using AI to call bullshit on the collective delusion of 'feelings'

*by Julia Kasmir*



Humans engage in judging trustworthiness as a means of knowing how to treat others. One test is 'appropriate emotional expression' which relies on the assumption that externalised emotions reflect internal emotional states. It is often accepted that two individuals expressing the same emotions are more likely to trust each other. In much commonplace research, artificial intelligence (AI) has been developed to perform this task, adopting the very same biases. In contrast, the research presented here suggests that the humans who do not externalise emotions are the most trustworthy. If humans cannot be trusted with their interpretation of emotional expressions or internal states, neither should AI systems, which are trained on emotional expression data that is tagged as either 'known false' or 'unknown false'. The AI then replies to social media posts with a randomly selected compliment, insult, non sequitur, bad dad joke or irrelevant comment, with the reactions collected and assessed. The actual response falsity is assigned as inversely proportional to the coherence of the responses, with common responses tagged as 'known false' and unique responses as 'unknown false'. Preliminary results suggest that indeed, humans (or at least humans on social media) are collectively simulating emotional expressions in order to fool others into trusting them so as to gain positions of potential advantage.

**Dr N Fidel Stiles** may or may not have a distinguished career in the niche fields of reverse psychology and non-existent criteria. This follows earlier studies on the philosophy of mask wearing, catphished geography and super-hero syndrome (a biopsychoeconomic malady with sartorial complications). Recent publications include *Dishonest emoji: wishful aubergines, exaggerated peaches, Dr Who and Buddhist koans: show us your real face from before your parents were born* and *Social disappointment: what's so great about expectations?* Dr Stiles enjoys critiquing children's art, baking monochromatic gender reveal cakes and peering at people through newspapers with eye-holes cut out.

## **(Re)conceptualising gender equity in STEM unintentionally births the ‘rise of the matriarchy’**

*by Lucy Mercer-Mapstone*



Women unequivocally are underrepresented in STEM. Efforts to increase women's representation have had little effect, being decidedly unradical in nature such as commonly adopted efforts to 'fix the women' by offering upskilling or resilience training. This liberal feminist approach fails to enact systematic change to address toxic patriarchal cultures. I contend that the brutal enculturation that women in STEM undergo from day one of their education is a sociocultural conditioning that inherently limits the radical potential of change agendas. This study, using a sample of 373 women-identified participants in STEM, aimed to (re)conceptualise what gender equity in STEM could look like when the boundaries of women's sociocultural conditioning were temporarily dismantled.

The dismantling of these cognitive boundaries was achieved through the consumption of lowaska: derived from two plants, *Banisteriopsis caapi* and *Psychotria*

*viridis*, containing chemicals which result in a psychoactive hallucinogenic compound. lowaska can trigger 'powerful visionary experiences ... that enable us to access our hidden, inner subconscious landscapes' (Temple of the Way of the Light, 2019). Accessing this hidden subconscious was hypothesised to enable participants to fully explore visions of gender equity in STEM beyond sociocultural constraints. I argue this intervention provided a physical stimulus which engendered a Foucauldian post-structural exploration of the kind of systemic change required for an equitable future. Participants took a clinically approved dose of lowaska in multiple global study locations. A postcolonial feminist approach to sampling aimed to include women with intersectional identities/experiences. Participants were provided with feminist-themed stimuli and expressed their visions in various genres with results shared in multimedia formats of textual, visual, oral, artistic and physical representation.

Study implications offer a foundation for future STEM gender equity efforts. One unforeseen secondary outcome was that participants began forming feminist factions, recruiting growing memberships, who continue to use lowaska as a stimulant for feminist thought. Factions enact visions by carrying out subversive feminist acts to dismantle the patriarchy. These acts have been condemned by insecure male leaders as 'feminist terrorism' while others herald them as the 'rising of the matriarchy'. Future research could take an ethnographic approach to researching and documenting this growing movement.

**Dr Luce Mercer-Mapstone** is a scholar of feminist activism. She publishes here under her nom de plume 'Luce' in an homage to her namesake, French feminist Luce Irigaray. Lucy/e regularly carries out embodied autoethnographic research through a feminist lens. Her most recent project has been to embed herself in a technology company in the semblance of a man so that she can record and analyse the first-hand experience of accessing the gendered privileges of living as a man in a man's world. She plans to translate the learnings from these findings into action for the feminist cause.



# To bee or not to bee: exploring urban constructions of beekeeping identity in a post-bee age

*by Paige Mahoney*



Bees were once the integral source of pollination and honey production across the world. Since the global decline of bee populations, hives no longer buzz with activity. Beekeepers have been forced to confront the loss not only of their bees, but of their sense of self; as they grapple to rechart their identities in this post-bee age, a trend has emerged in urban spaces of ‘beekeepers’ who keep not authentic bees, but structural memorialisations of bees. As these new ‘beekeepers’ tend to and maintain statues, carvings and other architectural details featuring bees, they shape new narratives and communities for themselves that both centre around and erase the very creatures they seek to venerate. Through interviews with several self-identified ‘beekeepers’ belonging to a southeast Australian ‘hive’, this study seeks to examine this growing phenomenon and elicit understandings of why urban dwellers are turning to elaborate ritualised ministrations of bee substitutes in increasingly bee-free environments. Though preliminary, emergent themes include: a sense of belonging, deep-seated culpability for authentic bee decline and a love of shiny objects. Further research is required to determine how these findings may cohere with, and diverge from, how other global ‘hive’ communities construct and understand their own ‘beekeeping’ identities.

**Dr Mellona Aristaeus** is Senior Lecturer in Socio-Apicultural Studies at the University of Elsinore and the founding director and sole member of the Bees in Urban Zeitgeists

Research Centre (BUZRC). She specialises in cultural depictions of beekeeping identity in literature and art, and is the author of the seminal socio-apicultural texts *Beyond the beekeepers: apiculture in Flemish art 1567-1569* and *Beyond Babbity Bumble: bees and their keepers in children's literature in the early twentieth century*. Dr Aristaeus is an honorary member of the Karl Marx Beekeeping Society and currently sits on the editorial board of *The Journal of Theoretical Literary Apiculture*. She is allergic to bees.



## **Robot sailors in the age of AI—‘Knot’ feasible?**

*by Katherine Stephen*



In its most typical mode, life in the merchant navy poses many dangers to the human sailor: rough seas, pirates, anger-drones. Although much process work such as route-mapping and ballast calculation is performed by artificially intelligent systems, much more can be done to ascertain the economic worth of ensuring human safety. This has become especially important in regions where extreme danger is common, such as the North Sea, where increased temperatures have brought large numbers of jumping piranha (*Serrasalmus salticidae*) from South America. Within the last year 83 shipboard deaths attributed to the fish have been reported by the New Seas Commission. A primary purpose of the study is to test robots in their more ‘human’ capabilities; beginning with ropework, specifically knot-tying. In humans, this ability quickly moves through training from conscious practice to somatic tacit knowledge, enabling fuller attention to external factors such as wave height while simultaneously adjusting rope knots and thus ensuring the safe movement of the

vessel as it comes into port. If artificially intelligent machines are capable of running several functions at once, this should logically fulfil the requirement of efficient multi-tasking, but there are questions about how well a machine can select a knot, select a rope, tie the knot, recognise situations where adjustment is needed, adjust and untie, within dynamic and uncontrollable sea conditions. Different types of artificially intelligent machine, including androids, have been tested under varying water conditions and compared against human ability. Finally, predicted human loss has been measured against the cost of providing replacement machines.

**Dr Tot Black** is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Human Capital, focusing on developments within android intelligence. Her recent book, *Letting go: a pragmatic view of AI errors in elderly care facilities*, gained international attention as the winner of the SmartCities Machine Cooperation Prize. Previous work includes developing the oft-cited theory of transhuman support, and she is a co-founder of the annual Computation of Ethics Conference. She was built in 2037 by the University of Creative Life, Edinburgh.

# **The muzak murders: does easy listening music turn people into killers?**

*by Scott Pack*



This is a comparative study exploring the links between the prevalence of muzak in a particular country and that country's domestic murder rate. For the purposes of the study, muzak refers to any type of background music piped into retail environments and other public spaces. It should be noted that, in the same way that the brand name Hoover has evolved into the common term for any type of vacuum cleaner, and Google is often used to refer to any kind of internet search, Muzak is, in fact, a corporate entity—a company which still exists today—but this study will use the generic term muzak to refer to all manner of piped-in, background and ambient music over which the listener has no control.

The first, seemingly harmless, instrumental tunes played in department stores wafted into the ears of US shoppers in the 1920s. In the ten years that followed domestic murder rates—by which we mean homicides committed within the home by a family member—increased by 16%. In one notorious case, in 1927, Frederick Batten of New Jersey, stabbed his elderly father to death, the pleas for help from the old man drowned out by Batten's loud humming of 'When the red, red robin comes bob-bob-bobbin' along', a song made famous by Al Jolson. An instrumental version was the most played muzak track of the previous year. The crime became known as The Muzak Murder. Similar increases in domestic murder rates can be seen in Canada, the UK and across Europe during the 1930s and beyond, coinciding with the prevalence of muzak in these areas. The study uses archive

crime reports and the muzak playlists of shopping malls to examine causal links between muzak and murder.

**Dr Steve Stack** is Professor of Criminology at Windsor University in the UK, as well as Associate Professor of Popular Music at Abbey Road University in London. He is author of several books including *Jailhouse rock: musicians behind bars* (2009). In his spare time he plays hammond organ in the prog rock band, Blysters of Tyme.



## **Cold nuclear fission resulting from diminishing comestibles**

*by Chris Blackmore*



Cold nuclear fission is a process whereby fragments arising due to fission (splitting) of atoms have extremely low excitation energy such that no neutrons or gammas are emitted. These events have never been observed outside a high flux nuclear reactor until now. In a physics research laboratory setting, a cake appeared on the occasion of a member of staff's 60th birthday. It was left in the lab kitchen with a note inviting all staff and students to partake. CCTV cameras captured the resulting feeding frenzy as first professors, then readers, senior lecturers, post-docs, lab assistants, and finally PhD students arrived to take slices of the cake. Within 30 minutes, just one slice remained. Henceforth, Regrette's equation relating to half-life of cake was in evidence, as every six minutes the slice was cut in half by another member of the department, each of whom, according to Glutton's Law, were unwilling to be the one to eat the final slice, yet held by an equal and opposite compulsion to not leave the kitchen empty-handed, resulting in ever smaller amounts of cake being left, until, at 4.23pm that same day, an unnamed doctoral student approached a crumb and unwittingly performed a cut so fine that the final atom of cake was split, and a state of cold nuclear fission was achieved. Given the recent reproducibility crisis in cake-based research, more research is needed to consider whether the half-life is affected by environmental factors

such as who bought the cake, what the occasion was, where it was left, flavour, filling, topping and proximity of Department to local food bank.

**Anthony Slab** (b 1919) is Professor Emeritus in Theoretical Physics at the University of Sheffield. He has theoretically led a large team over many decades undertaking cutting edge research into cold fusion and cold fission, and was one of the experts called upon to examine the claims of Fleischmann and Pons in the notorious 1989 cold fusion farce. He is the author of many books, papers and pamphlets. As lead author, he has reluctantly but steadfastly agreed to accept any honours and prizes that may ensue from this breakthrough, on behalf of the research team in general and the unnamed doctoral student in particular.

## **Embrace yourselves: a hugging case study**

*by Regina Solis Miranda*



The capacity of giving a hug is reserved for hominins: our body structure allows us to express closeness through the engagement of the upper limbs. In the case of humans, the intentionality expressed through a hug may vary depending on the context. According to Cortez (1990), who studied the prohibition of affective demonstrations under the military regime of Montes de Sangre (1982–83) and its impact on Guatemalan society, the physical act of hugging works as a mechanism for community building. In this study, a team composed of artists and anthropologists conducted a research project that classified the different nature of hugs based on their intersubjective significance and observable facts such as length, tightness, closed vs opened eyes and sighs. Through a phenomenological approach the team aimed at understanding why and under what circumstances people felt the need to hug. The first step was surveying inhabitants of Guatemala City on their hugging habits and locations: the most favoured places to give hugs were found to be coach stations. Secondly, the team conducted a detailed ethnography of the dynamics within the main stations in the country. Anthropologists carried in-depth interviews with people that engaged in hugs, focusing on their motivations, their physical and emotional sensations, and what the hugs were perceived to mean. Visual artists created portrayals of the ‘hugging’ moments based on the collaborators’ insights. Later, using anonymous interviews, poets wrote texts capturing the intentionality behind each hug.

This study proposes the first classification of hugs and their significance in the specific environment of coach stations in Guatemala. The typology includes the **kind of relationship** of the subjects involved in the action (filial, erotic, fraternal, acquaintance), the **message conveyed** (*This is the end, I am finally back, This is weird, I've missed your smell, I've been so afraid, I don't want you touching me ...*), and the **intentionality** (intimacy, support, marking territory, a quest for reassurance ...). It was presented at Guatemala's National Library alongside a poetry reading of the literary work, and an exhibition of the illustrations. On leaving the event participants wondered when they had last enjoyed a hug.

**Dr Esperanza de Paz** is an anthropologist who has specialised in hug studies. She is interested in the particular subjective meaning of hugs, rather than their social cohesion function. She received her PhD at the prestigious Great Arms University. When asked why she had entered the field, her answer was: 'well it is simple, after the prohibition of affective demonstrations in my country, I vowed to support the hugging movement which was truly transgressive. Some people went to jail for hugging. Oh, the government certainly knew how much power was enclosed in the complicity of these bodies.'



# **Psilocybin-induced ego dissolution reduces risk of Brexiting behaviour**

*by Camilla Day*



Even since Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, judgementalism has increased in both the individual and societal realms of human life. Major depressive disorder, characterised by ruminatory judgemental thinking and experiential disconnection, is a great burden to healthcare according to WHO. Not only have human beings separated their minds from their bodies, they have divided themselves into nations with an ethos of competition rather than collaboration. In the same way, Brexiteers' desire to leave the EU can be characterised as a manic defence against alterity (otherness), and an inability to sit with conflictual feelings. The aim of the study is to investigate whether psilocybin induced ego dissolution can transform pro-Brexit English men into Remainers.

We recruited 1529 elderly men living in the home counties (>65 y) who voted to leave the EU in the 2017 referendum. These were randomized to receive either 25mg psilocybin or placebo in a safe setting. Some men (n=253) dropped out due to local golf tournaments (Stableford) and fly-fishing holidays to Scotland. The primary outcome was voting 'continue to leave' or 'cancel Brexit' in the second Brexit referendum in February 2020 following the election of the Liberal Democrats in the December 2019 general election. Statistical analysis was performed using independent T-tests.

We found that 550 out of 635 men that received psilocybin and 45 out of 638 men who received placebo voted in favour of cancelling Brexit ( $t= 6.23$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). A qualitative analysis revealed that this change of mind in the intervention group was associated with feelings of connection for other EU countries and individuals during the acute phase of the drug. One previously pro-Brexit English gentleman reported that his desire to leave the EU had been triggered by feelings of jealousy towards the salaries of EU bureaucrats, and during his psilocybin trip he realised how much in common he had with them.

Psilocybin induced ego dissolution can decrease people's desire to separate themselves from other people and EU countries in the form of Brexiting. It is possible that this result could be extrapolated towards other national divides and could also be used to investigate the use of psilocybin in political decision making to improve people's lives.

**Dr Einheit der Welt** is Professor of Psychedelic Medicine, at the Queen's Psychedelic Group, Institute of Dasein. Einheit has been doing research with psilocybin and LSD for 25 years and has published over 100 papers on the health benefits of psychedelics in clinical and health populations. She is a past president of the World Psychedelic Association. She also carries out research into the physical and mental health benefits of Finnish sauna culture. She lives in the Alps with her husband and four children and enjoys ski touring.

# **Development of play throughout the human life course**

*by Amrita Kaur and Arsh Noman*



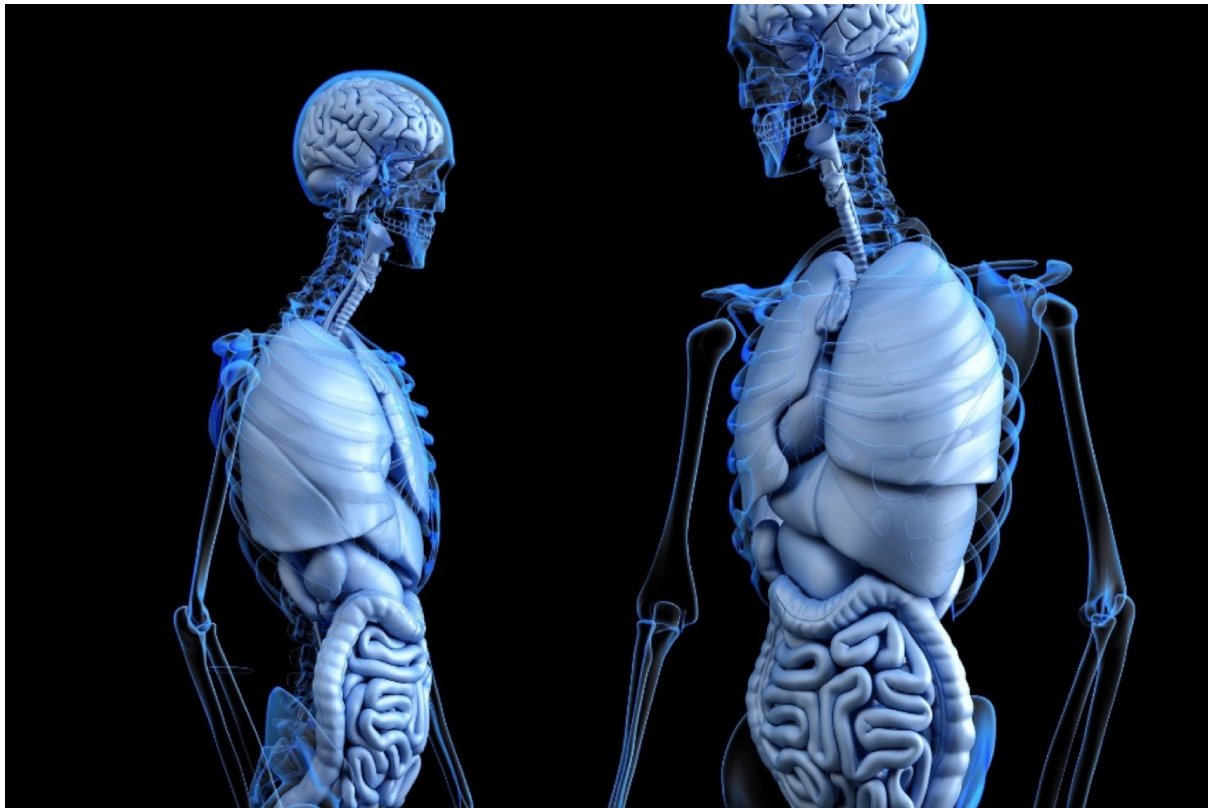
The idea and manifestation of play in an individual's life develops and undergoes transformation throughout the life course. This mixed-method study employed a survey design and phenomenological approach to investigate the meaning and relevance of play at various points in the life course, focusing on its transformation over time, and its association with psychological wellbeing. All in all, 1850 individuals (1000 males and 850 females) participated in the study. The findings revealed that the stages from early childhood to early adolescent were characterised by extreme creativity and expression in defining play. On the other hand, the concept and value of play were almost found to be non-existent in early and middle adulthood. However, a significant increase during late adulthood for the value of play was observed. Higher creativity and the value of play were positively associated with psychological wellbeing ( $r=.78$ ) at all stages. Family level analysis for stage-wise cluster suggested that individuals at early and middle adulthood (predominately females) not only significantly decreased their participation in play but also expurgated others around them to relinquish play-related interests. The study has prominent implications for the significance of play and its association with psychological wellbeing for nurturing healthy societies. The

findings are particularly important to consider further investigation into the mindsets of early and middle-aged adults who placed importance on working for monetary rewards over indulging in play for fun, creativity and thrill.

**Professor Fyreaise Norman** is a sports psychologist at the University of Sports and Adventure, Malaysia. He works with prominent athletes around Asia to understand and sustain their motivation in pursuing sports. Professor Norman grew up as a sports enthusiast and won accolades in the field of tennis at the international level. His mother placed a great emphasis on academic studies and often dissuaded him from pursuing sports, while his father continued to support his passion for sports. He conducts bi-annual seminars throughout South Asia for parental awareness to initiate and support play from early childhood. He published *Play beyond boundaries* in 2018.

## **‘Re-hearing’: a theory of philosophy digestion**

*by Fiona Kennedy*



Prolonged engagement with literature related to epistemology and ontology by doctoral students has been linked to the development of philos-oesophageal reflux. This condition presents with an exacerbated gag reflex (brought on by discussions relating to epistemology or ontology). The sight of students retching in the midst of supervisory team meetings has in some cases even provoked a chain reaction by the supervisory team, rendering discussions on philosophy almost impossible.

While the medical presentation of this condition has been explored, little work has been carried out to learn about the experiences of those with philos-oesophageal reflux, and the impact that this condition has on quality of life and on supervisory team relationships. This paper presents key findings from a grounded theory study that explored how participants managed this medical condition. Using semi-structured interviews, this study discovered that participants had a core concern of ‘supressing the spasm’. Difficulties digesting personal and research philosophies were associated with the gag reflex, and participants needed to develop strategies that would allow them to manage (ie supress) these responses. Such strategies included selective deafness (to conversations related to philosophy) and hearing imagined music (experienced by participants when they heard the words epistemology or ontology). Further exploration of participant experiences revealed that the doctoral students resolved their core concern through the basic social process of

're-hearing'. By 're-hearing' the words epistemology and ontology, students were able to self-manage the condition of philos-oesophageal reflux and achieve a sense of control.

**Dr Di Gestion** has been studying the doctoral student experience for ten years. Her primary concern is with the health and well-being of doctoral students as they progress through their research journey and she has developed specific expertise in the digestive health of students. Her previous publications include *Eating my thesis—an action research project* and *The Great Gatsby; using fiction to promote digestive health*.

# **Has Moore's Law led to the extermination of verbal and written communication?**

*by Sukhraj Singh Takhar*



This paper examines how the rapid development of technology known as Moore's Law (Moore, 1965) enabled the rise of modern computing, the internet, smart phones and tablets. Humans on the other hand seemed to have moved from using written and verbal communication to electronic proxies as the primary means of communication. The research undertakes observations from several different age groups, assessing actual communication taken via face-to-face or through written word communication versus digital means. Semi-structured interviews were conducted across different age groups situating two participants within an enclosed room without any means of technology except for a screen displaying a task/object that needed to be communicated by participant (a) who then only had a paper and pen or verbal reasoning to participant (b).

The results showed a willingness to communicate from the older age group without the aid of any electronic gadgets. However, there was a more bewildered and confused state of paranoia from the younger age groups communicating with their peers and older age groups using verbal and written communication methods only. We conclude the paper with some recommendations for setting aside time each day without any form of electronic gadget to communicate with family and peers in a physical manner or risk the impending extermination of human verbal communication. In terms of written communication in all age groups trying to read another person's handwriting is a complex and at times tiresome process best left to teachers and prescription chemists, technology in this instance is seen as



aiding communication. The limitations of this research lay in finding common topics for the different participant age groups to understand and communicate with each other, thankfully Mickey Mouse, Barbie, Batman and Postman Pat helped.

**Dr I ReadTooMuch** is Senior Communication Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Derby. Dr I ReadTooMuch holds a PhD in spoken language comprehension, is fluent in sixteen languages and has appeared in an episode of the Casualty as an English language translator for an alien patient from the planet Alpha Centuari. Dr I ReadTooMuch holds the world record for playing TV Pong for 36 hours and 52 seconds, set 4 July 1991, aged twelve.

## **Job family restructure, a best practice guide**

*by Kay Guccione*



This secondary research study aims to inform Higher Education (HE) staffing policy through the introduction of major job title families which take into account staff 'personal-value' (defined by super-metric, of the measurement, in a numerical assessment framework of prior published works). We argue that the value of HE staff as Human Resources, can be calculated through a non-critical derivation of Vimpack Factor, and AltMantric. Taken together, each researcher is assigned a Hitch-Index which rewards their attraction to a productivity-based philosophy. These concepts are important in HE governance-controlled, manager-led systems, as they support decision making concerning the allocation of leniency beans. Beans are redeemable against the possibility of sanctions for hullying. Hullying in this paper refers to instances of harassment, or removal of dignity of those who increase one's Hitch-index; where increased hullying correlates with increased Hitch-index, and hence increased leniency beans, in a perpetual cycle.

It is often argued that the demands, purpose, and challenges of HE have changed dramatically over the last two decades. Despite this we deployed a simple, affordable, and non-controversial mode of analysis that we had heard of, and felt we understood sufficiently to have a go at. We deployed then, an undescribed, and undisclosed (hence, unaccountable) method based on using magnets on a string to 'select' (fish for) a global super-metric, that can support us to ascribe a personal-value to the researcher themselves. Our data is confidential and cannot be shared.

In simple terms, by examining the data without the burden of a nuanced critique, we will be able to assign each individual a new personal job-family title based on their personal-value score, on a seven-point staffing spine. We recommend the immediate replacement of all academic job titles. The achievable new job title categories (non-promotable), are: Wound Lecturer (zero-hours), Winged Lecturer, Bounded Lecturer, Blinded Lecturer, Obscured Lecturer, Folded Lecturer, Senior Folded Lecturer and Principle-Moulded Lecturer. We recommend to HE staff that each of you internalise your ascribed title, indicative of success or failure, and let it govern multiple types of self-perception including your self-consciousness, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Remember, leniency beans will be deducted for non-compliance.

Biography: not available (to remain unaccountable).

# **Towards a typology of male barging in public spaces**

*by Peter Hartley*



A range of previous studies have demonstrated that male behaviour in public spaces can discriminate against females in public spaces. This study is a systematic ethnographic investigation of an under-researched phenomenon within this area—male ‘barging’—which we define as ‘walking and/or running in public spaces without due consideration for the other occupants of those spaces’. Our selected behaviour was the incidence and nature of male intrusion into female space when walking at the UK average pace (data from factcheckUK) in opposite directions on a public pavement. Our previous observational studies (Lovelace, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018) found that male intrusion on female space is on average 347.5% more likely than female on male. For this study, we collected data on a total of 193 walks of standard duration in 17 different city and town centre locations across the UK.

Our major technical innovation—an overcoat, especially sourced from Gung Ho, utilised embedded ‘sensoriscape’ technology (patent pending) which registers and logs the nature, location and strength of any external contact (our typology of ‘nudging’, also developed with this tech, is available elsewhere (Lovelace, 2019)). Our major theoretical advance in this paper is a validated typology of barging and our next stage of research is to systematically relate the different types to personal and social characteristics. For ease of communication, we have given the 6 main types evocative nicknames. For example, the ‘Boris’ is a style exhibited by individuals who seem to be almost totally oblivious to their

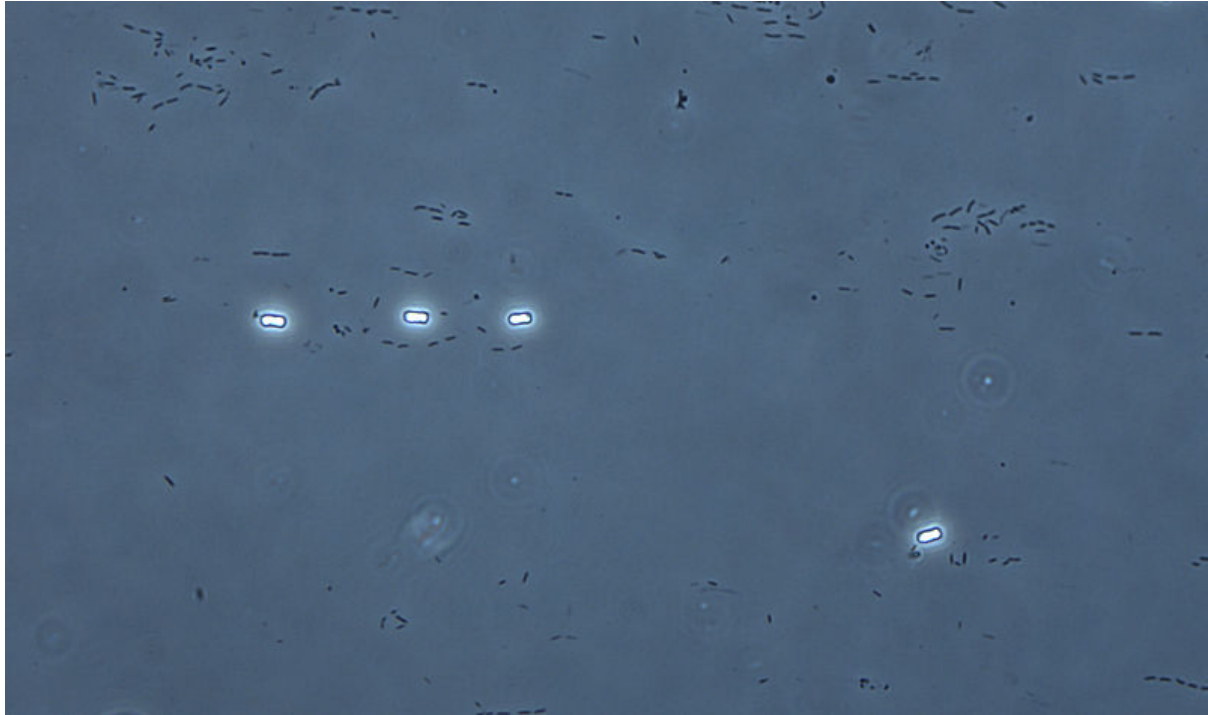
physical and social surroundings. They only notice the ‘barged female’ if a serious incident develops and even then they are more than 82% likely to continue walking/running uninterrupted. Unfortunately, this research has been temporarily halted owing to the difficulty of obtaining adequate insurance cover for our researcher following several unfortunate injuries sustained during data collection (not to mention recent events).

Following the publication of her 47<sup>th</sup> book **Rosa Lovelace** was appointed Professor of Equality at Poppleton University. This follows the recent announcement of her multi-million pound research grant from the Gates Foundation and her (also newly announced) Fellowship of the Royal Society of the Arts. In a thirty-year career in further and higher education, Rosa has impressed academics worldwide with her commitment to social justice—embedding all her considerable campaigns in solid empirical research. She is also well-known for her more popular works, especially her best-selling paperback *And what about children? What I learned from those 900 job interviews*.



## **The end machines have been manufactured and are at work ploughing the lines**

*by Matthew Cheeseman*



These poems are failures of the imagination that end a career of light and hope in a landscape of loss and defeat. These poems, like piss in the wind, are churlishly offered to the impulse to accumulate in the face of certain ruin. They mourn the hope that human civilisation might replenish the land, air, oceans. They fail to believe that we are capable of acting as custodians and instead recognise the shared mutation that has resulted from these decades of uneven accumulation; a nameless thing, this rearrangement of stars, this mineral refashioning, comeuppance; maximal shift; that our species is not (or no longer?) capable of acting in concert to mitigate inequality, pestilence and climate change. This collection is about the deaths to come as the environment shrinks, burns, floods and wastes. Death by boatload, bush fire, death by disease, malnutrition, exposure, bullet. This collection is about the poor, who are always the first to die. It offers feeble incantations in their name, broken spells, patronising words, despairing and impotent footnotes to future extinctions; the strained efforts of a bitter and defeated writer in the face of a certain future. The accompanying exegesis recognises this defeat and then parades the terms of its settlement, reading between its lines, always in vain, for the survival of other value systems. Failing to find alternatives, hope is tiresomely ridiculed. Not having the dignity to be offensive, the work falls short of any redeeming excess. Anything the author might have once smuggled, has long been disarmed.

**Dr Allan Mithen** is Emeritus Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Lancaster. He began teaching poetry to adult learners in the 1980s. Publishing often, Mithen has worked with a rich variety of small presses, developing the York Works on Paper fair. He has served as a trustee of the Poetry Society and, in his later career at Lancaster developed a noted Masters in Critical and Creative Writing before establishing the first (and still only) undergraduate degree in Poetic Practice in the United Kingdom. On retirement he has continued to publish and perform. He is self-isolating.





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