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SHRINKAGE



IMAGINARY

RESEARCH

Edited by Matthew Cheeseman
Series Editor, Kay Guccione

JOURNAL OF IMAGINARY RESEARCH

VOLUME ELEVEN – SHRINKAGE

2026

Welcome to the eleventh volume of imaginary abstracts, written by researchers across the globe. The pieces in this volume are short works of fiction – imagined research projects and imagined researchers – crafted in the ever-present genre of the research abstract.

Through the Journal of Imaginary Research, we encourage imaginative writing to purposefully create joy, reflection and fulfilment through writing work. For this year's theme we've invited the global research community to consider the concept of making things smaller – to imagine research through a lens of shrinking, reducing, becoming lesser. In the context of the HE sector in 2026 this is certainly something to reflect on.

In this volume's imagined research studies, shrinking may relate to us as researchers, our research work, our disciplines, and in ourselves and our students. It could refer to the shrinkage of the professional, societal and behavioural phenomena we find unwelcome, or that which we actively oppose. What might shrinkage mean for the support we receive from funders, the media and even our family and friends? What or who is shrink prone, shrink resistant, or pre-shrunk?



How do we view ourselves in a shrinking world? When faced with a large intimidating endeavour we shrink away from it, and retaliate in kind by breaking it down into smaller chunks. We can be asked to shrink ourselves to ‘fit in’, taking up less space, and being more digestible. An animal, shrinking away, might reflect vulnerability, dejection or fear. We humans can also shrink from each other’s reach. Can making things smaller make them more essential, pure and minimal? Safer even? Perfect? Perhaps.

We have asked researchers across the globe to respond to the theme in their own way. Some have chosen to take the theme literally, others as a beginning point for an explorative process.

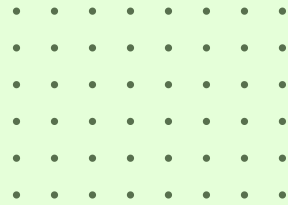
In producing these short fictional works, we seek to help writers establish a new relationship with writing; an empowered one, less driven by productivity and more by following their creative interests to find out what they learn about themselves. Many of the pieces submitted to the journal, whilst fictional, have a basis in a real observation or experience. They take a fresh look at a problem, frustration or constraint experienced by the researchers who crafted them. Writing fiction in a familiar format also helps us to reflect on communicating our other research projects, finding the joy of creativity in all our writing.

Engaging with the Journal of Imaginary Research helps our authors reimagine higher education, and their place within it. We are proud and excited to see their prospective reflections writ into our collection for 2026.

— KAY GUCCIONE AND MATTHEW CHEESEMAN

THEME : SHRINKAGE

The fifty-eight Abstracts
that follow are works of
micro-fiction, written by
real researchers, academics
and research professionals,
in the genre of the
research abstract



1. THE RELATIVISM OF RELATIVISM: RE-ENVISIONING THE CONCEPT OF EMPTY SPACE IN THE MIDST OF LESSENING MATTER

01

BY KRISTIE PATTERSON

For over a century, the estimated measurement of liquid in a container has generally acted as the universal indicator of an individual's mental wellbeing. However, this quantification is predicated on the assumption that only a singular form of matter is shrinking in size or amount: whether one focuses on the liquid or the gas is the commonly accepted basis of the test. This paper posits that a more consistent point of perception is required, whereby one considers that the lessening of liquid does not leave the container devoid of substance; rather, it simply fills the container with more empty space.

Alternatively, an increase in said container's liquid levels ultimately equates to the shrinkage of its previously held gas. Indeed, in every hypothetical, 'filling' is merely another form of 'emptying,' 'increasing' another form of 'decreasing,' 'growing' another form of 'shrinking.' Therefore, acknowledgement of negative space need not automatically be interpreted as a negative viewpoint, for this negates the notion that its increase may be deemed a positive in some cases, and vice versa. Taking this into account, an individual's answer to the aforementioned test of mindset becomes far more nuanced, far less straightforward. Using this stabilising factor as a theoretical framework, this paper seeks to analyse that which makes meaning more mindful. It concludes that the concept of the container provides a cautionary capacity for reductive misjudgement and is in critical need of comprehensive restructuring. Thus, the pivotal question must not remain 'what do you see?' Instead, it must become 'what is the matter?'



Professor GLS Fuller is a recovering optimist. Whether this means she is recovering from a bad case of positivity or simply recovering the positivity itself remains uncertain, especially to her. Fuller obtained her doctorate in metaphysics at the University of Concrete Ideas, where she nearly lost her mind trying to decipher the meaning behind the programme being offered there. After her brain expanded to the point of seeping out of her cranial orifices, Fuller experienced an extensive hospital stay which rendered her completely still so as not to fill her head with nothing. Fuller now lectures on the importance of perspective in determining where true matter lies and spends the rest of her time writing abstract abstracts.

2. DR STUDY-LITE (OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE CLEANERS)

03

BY DAVID BARLOW

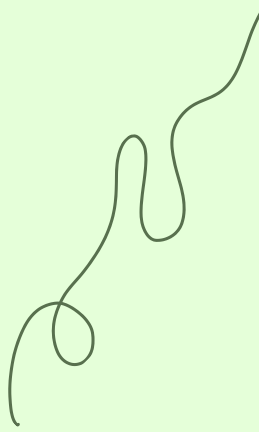
In the work reported here, we sought to catalogue the various measures taken by UK HEIs to halt the sector's recent academic shrinkage, seeking to identify those that have been most successful in cutting overheads costs whilst continuing to provide something vaguely resembling tertiary education.

Our survey shows that all HEIs have been forced to carry out a yearly 'renormalisation' of their entrance requirements as a means to maximise their student intake, with the ensuing interinstitutional competition shown to follow the so-called 'Aldi price-match' model.

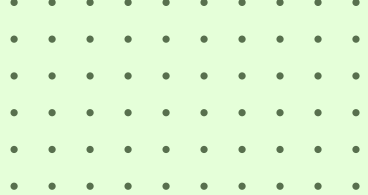
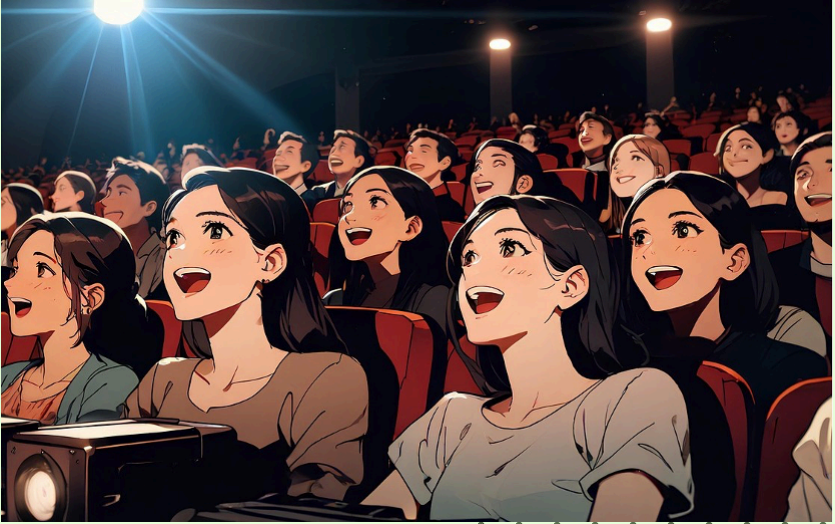
Syllabus offerings too have seen sweeping changes, principally through the provision of lectures designed to simultaneously satisfy a broad spectrum of arts, science and humanities courses. At St John's College, Giggleswick, for example, such lectures include: 'The legal, philosophical and meteorological ramifications of factory farming – the case for genetic vs. chemical and electrical engineering.'

The most successful – and arguably most radical – strategy employed to combat shrinkage, however, was devised by the Faculty of Modern Languages at the University of Shipton-under-Wychwood, where all undergraduate teaching was covered by part-time cleaners armed with Google Translate.

These lectures were economically – if a little hesitantly – delivered to cohorts of 4,000+, with the students accommodated in the South stand at Oxford United’s Kassam Stadium. The university has thereby enjoyed massively reduced salary costs and much increased student fees income, with OUFC providing their facilities gratis, in view of the boost to their mid-week revenues gained from the pre- and post-lecture sales of beef burgers, beer and novelty tampons and condoms.



DAVID BARLOW // AMANDA LORIAN



Amanda Lorian was formerly the Roland Professor of Medieval French at St Stephen’s Medical College, Cambridge; she is now happily married but retains a part-time position as a Visiting Cleaner at the University of Shipton-under-Wychwood.

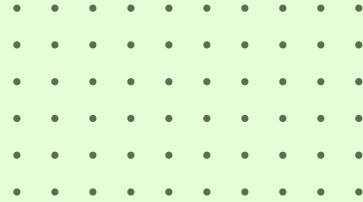
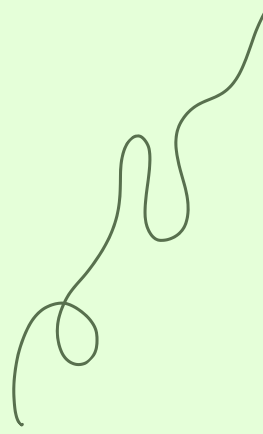
3. SHRINKING FIBRES AND EXPANDING MACHINES: A MATERIAL STUDY OF SHRUNKEN SWEATERS

05

BY WENMING NAN

I know a sweater is shrunken because it looks smaller. Everyone has shrunk a sweater or two in their life, especially if you are a university student taming the modern, high-tech, too-many-buttoned washing machine for the first time. With every shrunken sweater comes the Google search 'How to unshrink sweater' and the faint hope that a flat, digital image will help you with the wet, woolly mess at hand. Based on this embodied experience, this paper focuses on the interdependence between the tangible fabric and the intangible techne, questioning how technology shapes and disrupts our normative expectation of materiality. Intersecting craft art history and digital art history, this paper analyses the visual presence of fibre art in the online space, and the reciprocal effect of digitised schemata on our interactions with physical objects.

This paper argues that technology expands the entanglement between the human as its material surrounding, as evident in the washing machine's unexpected transformation of knitted fabric once fitted to subjective body shapes. At the same time, traditional and established visual regimes are circulated through technology – as shrunk fibres expand in their digitised multiplicity, our expectations of materiality shift beyond specific spatial-temporal nexus.



Tommy Yarn is an interdisciplinary researcher who specialises in Digital Art History and Fiber Art Studies. Yarn's research focuses on the stay-at-home visual ecology in contemporary life, analysing how art and aesthetics within the personal space affect human perception of the world. Yarn is currently working on the book *Too many yarns*, which addresses the visual entanglement of Pinterest and bedroom yarn hoarding.

4. FIGHTING EMOTIONAL SHRINKAGE: THE PAIN & PLEASURE OF RECLAIMING LOVE IN (AND FOR) HIGHER EDUCATION

07

BY RICHARD BUDD

This paper analyses reflections from a collective autoethnography on refusing to reject love in higher education. Extensive research and commentary documents an increasing instrumentalisation and commercialisation of universities evident in workload optimisation, exclusive admissions and insufficient support systems, output-driven performance criteria, restrictive models of research and publication, and the encouragement of shallow pedagogical approaches. This has the un-/intended effect of what we describe as ‘emotional shrinkage’, the suppression of time, space, and inclination, for imagining and realising love for self and others. In this context, gestures of love can be understood as acts of conscious resistance. Exploring our own experiences of this exposes the emotional labour and career deceleration of an unwillingness to neglect and exploit, but more importantly reveals its deeply emancipatory impact.

This can be seen in two ways, the first being through enabling a fuller realisation of one's academic identity as reflexively caring in teaching, supervision, scholarship, and collaboration. Secondly, and more importantly, it fosters an environment for learners and colleagues alike to feel recognised, nurtured, and to grow in ways that university cultures implicitly seek to diminish. This, we argue, highlights the importance of reclaiming space for love as essential for both personal and community wellbeing.

RICHARD BUDD // ROBIN

Robin is an interdisciplinary social scientist whose research focuses on the experiences of staff and students in higher education, particularly from the perspectives of historically marginalised groups. After a disparate post-Bachelor career, they completed a doctorate at a so-called 'leading' UK institution and have since worked at a variety of different universities in the same country. They have historically had difficulties in accepting their successes, struggling to separate out the influence of agency and structure, hard work and privilege, patronage and collegiality. This in part originates in the recognition of very real inequalities in and around society and education, but also in poor self-esteem rooted in systemically ableist, racist, sexist and classist discourse. They are painfully aware of the tension between where higher education is and where it could – and should – be. As part of this, they straddle that space between recognising how the only way that universities could be truly inclusive is to tear them down and start again, but that keeping food on the table involves a Faustian Pact of part complicity while seeking to change academic practice from the inside out.



5. DE-PIPPING
APPLES WITH
CONSTRAINED
FIELD QUANTUM
TELEPORTATION:
THE MANIPULATION
OF NATURAL
REPRODUCTIVE
SYSTEMS AS A
PALIMPSEST FOR
DEBATES ON
GENDER POLITICS

09

BY ANDREW WOOTTON AND CAROLINE DAVEY

This paper investigates the intersection of quantum field experimentation, reproductive bioengineering and gender discourse through both theoretical and empirical inquiry. Building on feminist technoscience and speculative posthuman methodologies the study explores the symbolic and material implications of destabilising natural reproductive systems, operationalised through experimental ‘de-pipping’ of apple cultivars using constrained field quantum teleportation.

Empirical results are reported from laboratory trials with *Malus domestica* cultivars, including Cox’s Pippin, Braeburn and Pink Lady. Quantum field coherence was achieved in Cox’s Pippin and Braeburn specimens, enabling complete removal of reproductive cores without compromising pericarp integrity. However, experiments with Pink Lady apples exhibited significant field instability, leading to partial decoherence and biomaterial degradation. These phenomena are interpreted not only as indicators of field interference at the quantum-biological interface, but also as performative enactments of instability inherent in socio-linguistic systems of gender assignment.

Preliminary data reveal anomalous field fluctuations correlating with cultivar nomenclature, suggesting that gendered branding and linguistic feminisation at the semiotic level may influence quantum coherence. While causation remains unconfirmed, clustering of decoherence events around gendered nomenclature indicates a possible entanglement between cultural signification and subatomic behaviour – a conjecture that warrants further empirical investigation.

The paper concludes that ‘quantum horticulture’ offers both a material and metaphorical framework for interrogating entanglements across natural, technological and socio-political systems. The act of de-pipping – literally excising the reproductive core – functions as a performative critique of essentialism, demonstrating how even at the quantum level, meaning and matter remain co-constitutive.

Professors Andrej Wu Tun and Karol Lindovsky have collaborated for over two decades at the intersection of applied quantum aesthetics and post-material technoscience. Their partnership began during a visiting fellowship at the Nordiska Universitetet för Teoretisk Praxis, where a shared interest in non-classical biological systems led to the founding of the Trans-Nordic Laboratory for Quantum Horticulture. Their research explores entanglements between cultural semiotics, subatomic behaviour and speculative bioengineering. Renowned for integrating rigorous experimentation with critical theory, they continue to advance interdisciplinary inquiry across theoretical physics, philosophy and experimental horticultural practice.



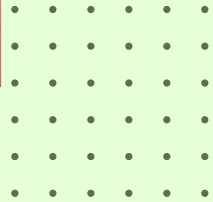
6. THE PIROUETTING LAB RAT: A REDUCED OBSTACLE COURSE ACTIVITY AND TIME-LINE OF WELLBEING IN TWO STRAINS OF RATTUS NORVEGICUS

BY ARCHIE WN ROY

11

The afterlives of liberated lab rats have at times been short-lived and brutal. Yet there is increasing interest in liberation for post-experimental rats, partly because of the rising cost of anaesthetics. This study liberated fifty rats from several university departments, 37 Wistars and 13 Sprague Dawleys. All were relocated to the Cambridgeshire Centre for Animal Therapy (CCAT; formerly RAF Haslingfield).

Both strains benefited from the sudden absence of crowding and deprivation: each rat enjoyed 200 square metres of space. Rats then adapted to a reduced scale Crufts-style obstacle course which included scaled down pipe tunnels, hurdle walls, a tyre jump, a long jump and a final pirouette stand. Using both the Rat Grimace Scale (non-pain) and Body Condition Score inventory, rat wellbeing was assessed pre-training followed by post-tests and delayed post-tests after multi-try obstacle course participation. Immediate post-pirouette rewards varied according to preferences observed at CCAT: strawberries, mild cheese, nuts or broccoli. Wellbeing scores improved significantly ($p < 0.005$) for 91% of Wistars and 61% of Sprague Dawleys. Whilst the latter improvement was affected by selected-in limitations such as their tendencies to grow tumours, their longer tails probably improved their reduced obstacle course experiences and wellbeing if they remained tumour free.



Dr Johannes Freiheit is a senior research fellow in behavioural zoology at the University of Cambridge. His PhD specialised in monitoring attrition rates in laboratory rats released into controlled and uncontrolled wild environments. The Pirouetting Lab Rat study was funded by Paws for Sanctuary. Dr Freiheit's latest book, *From shmoo to performer: Releasing the inner artist in rats and humans* is published by Animal Society and is available from all good bookshops. He also hosts the *Freedom From Corporate Slavery* podcast, available on most platforms. His book *Finding life after work* won the British Book Award for Lifestyle, 2022.

7. UP, UP AND AWAY: ON THE THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF ICE CREAM AND ALTITUDE

BY KATHRYN BUCHANAN

13

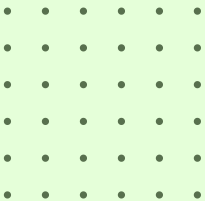
People often become deeply immersed in their own problems, which can make those problems appear larger than they truly are. Although suppression and reflection are common strategies, suppression rarely offers sustained relief and reflection risks maladaptive rumination. A recently popularised approach encourages individuals to focus on others' difficulties, assuming this provides temporary distance from their own.

We tested this approach against our newly developed intervention, Cognitive Aerial Therapy (CAT, also referred to as 'shrinkage'), designed to examine whether viewing one's problem from above could restore perspective.

In this randomised controlled trial, participants created a visual representation of a current difficulty and were assigned to one of three conditions: (1) observing their problem from a hot-air balloon above the treetops; (2) sitting beside it in a stationary balloon basket; or (3) focusing on others' problems by observing the researcher, rather than themselves, eat an ice cream on an exceptionally hot summer's day.

Viewing one's problem from altitude reduced perceived problem magnitude relative to both controls. Watching the researcher eat an ice cream offered comparable short-term relief, effects that, like the ice cream, were not long lasting. Health and safety concerns raised by the ethics board limited participant numbers and precluded replication.

Dr ME Ticolous is a researcher specialising in the psychology of elevated perspectives. Renowned for his scrupulous attention to detail, he approaches ascent as metaphor and method. His current work explores how height and distance alter self-perception through Cognitive Aerial Therapy, also referred to as 'shrinkage'. An acute fear of fire, heights, and balloons prevents Dr Ticolous from immersing himself in the very science he studies. Peer Reviewer 2 has commented that Dr T remains 'too close to the work to see how small he has become within it'. In response, Dr T asserts that he is simply grounded.



8. SHRINKFLATION OF THE SOUL: MEASURING SPIRITUAL VOLUME IN LATE-STAGE CAPITALISM

15

BY NICK QUINN

In this cross-sectoral meta-analysis, we deploy the Spiritometer™ 3000, an ISO9001 certified device calibrated at ± 0.003 Hertz of metaphysical vibration, to measure volumetric soul density under late-stage capitalism. Sampling 666 participants across eight faith traditions and two blockchain cults, longitudinal data (2015–2025) reveals a statistically significant 14.32345% reduction in mean spiritual amplitude ($p < 0.001$). Regression models ($R^2 = 0.84$) attribute 61% of variance to ‘existential contraction’ defined as the psychosomatic convergence of meaning deficit and lifestyle branding.

Factor analysis identifies three latent dimensions: commodified transcendence ($\lambda = 0.78$), algorithmic spirituality ($\lambda = 0.63$) and artisanal despair ($\lambda = 0.59$). Granger causality tests suggest that retail spirituality, specifically scented candles with mindfulness-themed slogans, inversely predicts metaphysical volume over a three-year lag ($t = -4.27$, $p = 0.0004$). Qualitative interviews confirm symptomatic phenomena such as chronic spiritual brevity, ergonomic meditation and diminished theological elasticity in 72% of respondents.

To address this epistemic crisis, we operationalise the Re-Inflation Index of the Soul (RIS), standardising spiritual buoyancy against pre-Reformation metaphysical baselines (mean RIS=1.00, SD=0.14). In a pilot trial (n=108), exposure to unscented silence increased RIS by 12.5323456%, whereas extended TikTok fasting produced no significant improvement. Participants reporting elevated soul buoyancy, often described as a sensation ‘not entirely unlike enlightenment,’ though its precise nature remains ineffable and possibly inadvisable to quantify. One respondent, when asked to define spiritual clarity, simply replied: ‘Forty-two.’ We propose a policy of government-issued transcendence credits to offset metaphysical austerity and safeguard the nation’s remaining holiness reserves.



Reverend-Professor Aura L Diminuendo divides her time between the University of Geneva-Sur-Mer’s Divinity and Economics faculties, pursuing applied theological metaphysics and the economics of consumer faith. Notoriously unread, her monograph Economics of grace: dynamic pricing in the afterlife earned spiritual profit amid critical neglect. Once labelled ‘pre-shrunk’ for her minimalist approach to dogma, Diminuendo is a frequent panellist at interdisciplinary conferences, where she advocates for state-funded transcendence and volumetric spiritual accounting. Her work interrogates the intersection of holiness, retail trends and metaphysical metrics, establishing new benchmarks in the emerging field of soul econometrics.

9. PANGENOMIC DETERMINATION OF THE ROLE OF HUMAN RETROVIRUSES IN WASTING

17

BY MICHAEL MACEY

Screening of individuals and populations has never identified a causal agent for Wasting. However, prior analysis focussed on infectious agents, overlooking potential endogenous factors. In this study we sequenced human tissues to identify causal factors using samples collected prior to cessation of travel to, and communication from, the Americas and Europe.

We used a combination of sequencing, bioinformatics, and modelling approaches. Biological samples collected by former Scandinavian and UK-government expeditions (Pietà, Arrorró and Lullabye) were retrieved from secured containment level five -80 Celsius storage in London.

Combined long and short-read sequencing and pangenomic analysis identified a universal absence of Endogenous Retroviruses that account for 8% of the genome. Whilst the causal factor has not been identified, these results can be used to inform future management and policy development, as it means that unaffected populations are neither resistant nor immune, and that immunity may not be achievable.

Ursula Butler,¹ Adrian Aldiss,² Silvia Harrison,¹ Ward Brook,³ Mary Wilhelm,³ Sonny Yang,⁴ Arthur MacLeod¹

1. Consolidated Universities of Scotland and Wales, Britain
2. University of Iceland, Iceland
3. Research Relocation Programme, Ireland
4. Research Institute of Singapore, Singapore

We acknowledge funding from the Gates–Wilson fund and the Federation of Governments in Exile.

MICHAEL MACEY // DR URSULA BUTLER



Dr Ursula Butler (BSc, MRes, PhD) is an evolutionary biologist and research assistant located at the Aberdeen campus of the Consolidated Universities of Scotland and Wales. She was seconded following the Evolutionary Biology conference in Dundee 2035 and the subsequent closing of the border. Her current research involves analysis and interpretation of the possible fungal role in Wasting and the recovery of genomic datasets from American and European data servers. Her PhD research at University of Liverpool involved characterising the impact of environmental stress on the evolution of fungal model organisms, with a focus on enhancing their industrial potential.

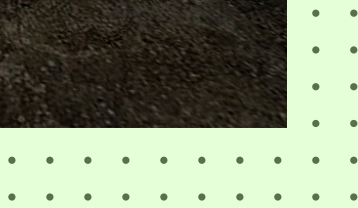
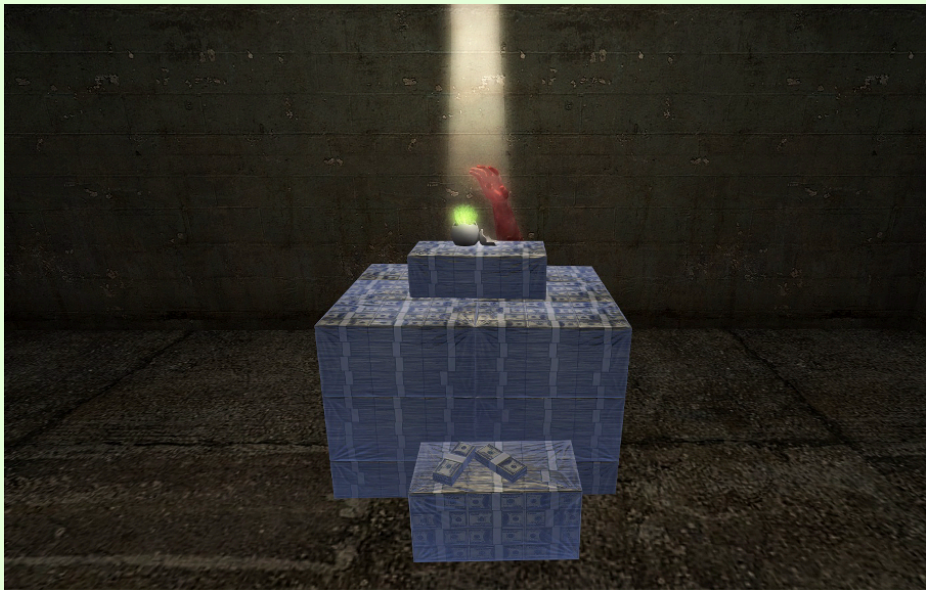
10. SHRINKAGE: PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

BY SHEILA WEBBER

19

Research shows that the essential transformation of higher education is hindered by academics' resistance to change. A notable resistance factor is perceived creativity shrinkage. We present findings from a mixed methods investigation into the lived experience of academic researchers who claim that opportunities to think and act creatively are shrinking. Data collection, from a purposive sample of 50 change-resistant academics in a research-intensive university, comprised: nine focus groups; multiweek diarising (192 individual entries); and 15 semi-structured interviews, aiming for disciplinary variation. Analysis was as follows: (1) data was transcribed and coded thematically using a social constructivist approach, with iterative analysis resulting in nine key themes; (2) the analysis was fed into ChatGPT6.8 using the prompt 'What are the reasons why these people can't see how valuable change is?' The results showed that academic researchers who perceive creativity shrinkage are: (1) unable to see the bigger picture; (2) unaligned with the core values and mission of the university; (3) possessing outdated notions of creativity incompatible with improving operational outcomes. These vital insights can be used to secure an institution's long-term resilience by enabling accurate identification of change antagonists who are candidates for strategic university shrinkage.

Sue Leech is Vice President of Strategic Transformation at Techbro University, UK. Previous posts included Director of Cataclysmic Change at the University of Radiant Light (formerly Sizewell B power station). Sue's 2025 highlight was winning the BS (Beautiful Strategy) Campaign award for the most persuasive pseudo-consultation process in the Higher Education sector. In addition to being an inspirational change agent, she is author of many highly cited publications including Building influencer networks to catalyse stakeholders: the path to organisational change (2023) and Managing transformation through transparent dialogue, active empathy and M84 stun grenades (4th ed., 2024).



11. FROM PROVERB TO PRACTICE: ASSESSING HOW CONFRONTING PAST MISTAKES INFLUENCES SHADOW LENGTH

21

BY KATHERINE HERBERT

This study examines the proverb ‘old sins cast long shadows’ through an empirical investigation of personal regrets and their symbolic representation. Participants residing in Western Australia, characterised as geographically isolated yet experiencing the highest number of sunny days annually, were recruited for this research. For the purposes of this study, ‘sins’ are operationalised as significant regrets, mistakes, or misunderstandings occurring over the participant’s lifetime. Data collection was conducted during the summer solstice, the longest day in the southern hemisphere. Each participant’s physical shadow was measured prior to and following a semi-structured interview in which they identified and reflected upon their oldest perceived ‘sin’.

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret interview data, with responses considered in relation to changes in shadow length. Findings indicate that participants who acknowledged and articulated their ‘sin’ and who reported reaching an actionable resolution, exhibited a marked reduction in shadow length. These results suggest a potential link between cognitive–emotional processing of regret and its metaphorical representation.



Professor Pi Yingxi has been studying shadow lengths and stories for the last 20 years and is an avid shadow puppeteer. Their research spans three continents, focusing on the evolution of shadow puppetry as a nonlinear cultural tradition that embodies the life, soul, stories, and songs of communities committed to preserving this art form. In their most recent study, Professor Yingxi investigated the significance of measuring individuals’ shadows in two orientations: facing the sun and with their back to the sun.

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12. STRIKING RESULTS FOR THE NEW DRINKME WEIGHT LOSS PLAN

BY JULIANA GERARD

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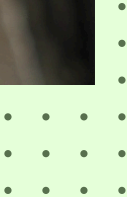
Preliminary clinical trials have produced promising results for the revolutionary new weight loss treatment from White Rabbit Pharmaceuticals. The DrinkMe treatment plan involves no invasive surgery, but instead promises to shrink the patient to 1/20 of their original size.

Clinical trial participants (N=400) were randomly assigned to treatment and placebo groups. The former received 200ml of the DrinkMe formula, while the placebo group received a saline solution. The results were striking: the treatment group reported significant decreases in body weight (3-6% of their original weight, mean=4%), and immediate decreases in appetite after consuming DrinkMe (1-3% of their prior caloric intake, mean=1.5%). In contrast, no significant differences were observed for the placebo group: body weights ranged from 98-104% of their weight prior to consuming the placebo (mean=101%), with a similar range for caloric intake (91-112%, mean=99%). The differences between treatment and placebo groups were significant for both measures (both $p < 0.001$).

Following the preliminary trials, White Rabbit Pharmaceuticals will enter phase two trials in collaboration with researchers at Cheshire Cat University. Future directions also include the development of a weight gain supplement, in a solid form (rather than a liquid solution).

Dr Jabe Wok is a biomedical researcher at White Rabbit Pharmaceuticals. Dr Wok received a doctorate in Hue Manipulation from the University of Red Roses, and subsequently worked as a postdoctoral researcher on Cellular Amplification at Cheshire Cat University. An avid poet, Dr Wok established the monthly open mic poetry reading for White Rabbit staff.

JULIANA GERARD // DR JABE WOK



13. A TEA BLANKET THAT CAN CURE PUPPICINO'S DISEASE: A CASE STUDY

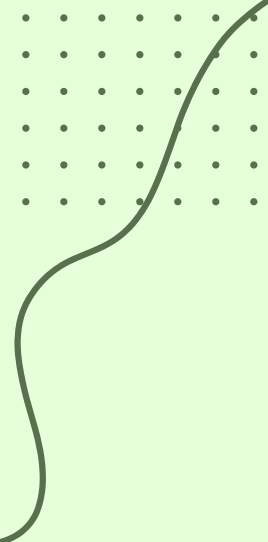
BY PANDORA SAVAGE AND ESTELLE SIM

25

Puppicino's Disease is caused when a dog inhales too much caffeine vapours from nearby cups of coffee from up to 100 metres away. Symptoms of the disease include hyperactivity, excessive barking, a fear of tea products, and irritability (Daniels et al, 2072).

In order to ensure peace of mind for dog and coffee lovers around the world, recycled tea leaves were sewn together to make a blanket about 50 centimetres thick. The blanket circulates cold air between the leaves to cool down the sick dog and shrink cells affected by the disease, which reduces the risk of cell necrosis and consequently, death of the animal. Test subject Mocca, who suffered from the disease for six months, was swaddled in this blanket and left to rest for ten hours. All affected cells shrunk to 0.2 nanometres and the disease was reported to be no longer causing significant distress. However, Mocca's tail also shrunk by ten centimetres, leaving just a stub (which may have, in turn, hindered data reporting). Further improvements to the prototype must therefore be researched, to control where the cells are shrinking.

Dr Charlotte Xean earned her PhD from the University of Zoutopa, where she also received her first puppy, a labrador retriever named Kaz. However, Kaz passed away from Puppicino's Disease when he was 2 years old, after walking by a nearby Starbucks. Since then, Dr Xean had dedicated her life to the cure and prevention of Puppicino's Disease and advocated her research to millions of veterinarians around the world.



14. DIMINISHING SOUNDS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF BASSOON DECLINE IN CONTEMPORARY ORCHESTRAS

BY AILEEN MCKENNA

27

This fifteen-year longitudinal study (2009–2024) investigates the declining presence of the bassoon within professional orchestras across the UK and Europe. Using a mixed-methods design combining orchestral records (n=142) with interviews (n=25) it examines both the quantitative reduction of bassoonists and the phenomenon of instrumental shrinkage: the migration of former bassoon players toward smaller woodwinds such as clarinet, oboe, and, in extreme cases, piccolo.

To explain these changes, the paper introduces the REED framework (Resonance–Engagement–Emotion–Decision) to investigate the effects of tonal preference, emotional attachment, practicality and personal identity in instrument choice. Findings indicated that economic, ergonomic and psychosocial drivers (eg maintenance costs, cramped rehearsal spaces, and a ‘desire for portability’) have greatest impact, echoing national patterns of economic contraction.

Emotionally, participants expressed ambivalence toward the bassoon's imposing presence, with several labelling it 'annoyingly cumbersome'. Additionally, bassoonists reported a desire to 'not be perceived' as well as a negative social perception of the bassoonist identity as secondary decisions for instrumental change.

The study situates these trends within broader discourses of cultural compression and aesthetic minimalism in late modern performance practice. It concludes that orchestral ecosystems are undergoing a subtle process of sonic and physical contraction, wherein the disappearance of the bassoon signifies a wider societal gravitation toward smallness, efficiency and quiet resignation.

Dr Imogen Maxwell is Senior Lecturer in Musician Identity based at the Institute of Orchestral Science, Wellwood University. As the principal bassoonist for the now defunct Greater Wellwood Community Orchestra she developed a fascination with spatial constrictions affecting instrument use in contemporary society and the sociological aspects driving this change. Her current research projects include interdisciplinary investigations into how modern architecture limits large-instrument uptake and learning and the effect of volume on neighbourly goodwill.



15. UTERINE REMOVAL AND THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL DECAY OF FEMINIST AGENCY

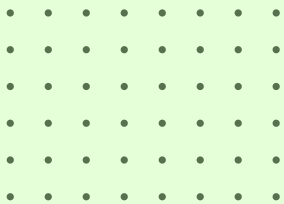
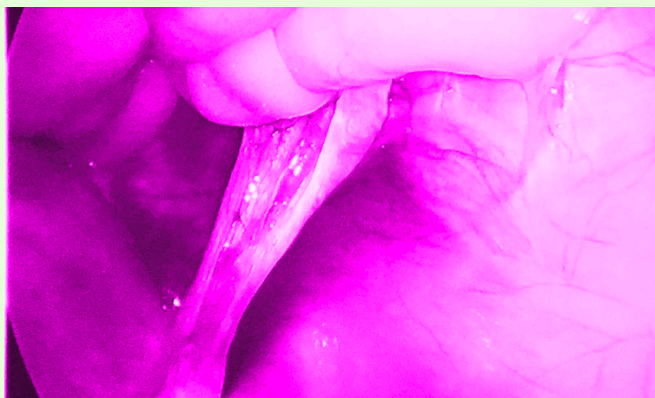
BY VANNESSA HULME SILBERMANN

29

Across clinical, cultural and psychological domains, the widespread rise in uterine removal has quietly reconfigured the conditions in which feminism exists. This study traces how the excision of an organ long entangled with feminist consciousness initiates a contraction within the feminist psyche. Participants reported an interior decay; a dimming of connection to feminist lineage, an unravelling of embodied memory, and the sense of moving through a psychic terrain that receded at its edges. Dream fragments and dissociative narratives revealed recurring motifs of emptied rooms, imploding corridors and muffled soundscapes, through which the absent uterus appeared less as a missing organ and more as a silenced chamber of confusion. This inward turn is intensified by medical discourse casting uterine removal as therapeutically neutral and institutional narratives that detach the procedure from its social implications.

A psychoanalytic reading suggests that these shifts reflect a deeper cultural dis-ease with feminised embodiment. As the uterus is removed, so too is a central site of feminist meaning, narrowing psychic and political space. The contemporary landscape of uterine removal thus reveals a subtle but far-reaching reconfiguration of feminist subjectivity, felt in the body, memory, and collective imagination.

Dr UT Eris is the founding theorist of post-uterine feminist psychology. As the first documented participant in the qualitative research, they established the foundational data set from which contemporary analyses of embodied absence now derive. Their work merges dissociative analysis, dream hermeneutics and socio-medical ethnography to illuminate subterranean psychoanalysis. Dr Eris currently directs the Institute for Symbolic Anatomy, where they investigate how removed organs continue to contribute to culture long after their physical departure.



16. MY TEDDY BEARS AND I: A EUROPEAN PSYCHOBIOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE TEDDY AS A BULWARK AGAINST NARCISSISTIC RAGE & COLLAPSE

31

BY ARCHIE WN ROY

This study focused on historical and contemporary sources to examine teddy bear ownership as a bulwark against objective periods of aristocratic decline across three European countries: Prussia, Bavaria and the United Kingdom (1861–2025). Methodology circumvented the DSM-5 as well as material written by subjects' sycophants and enemies in favour of Q-sort weighting of personality statements from letters, emails, TV interviews, diaries and third-person accounts. The study also considered patterns of subject behaviour over many years: grandiosity, need of excessive admiration and lack of empathy.

Analysis included both collection numbers and the priority accorded by the owner including requirements laid on multiple housekeeping staff for teddy management and exact placement in bedrooms, palace corridors, carriages and royal yachts.

17. INFOMOSIS IMPROVES STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE WITHOUT IMPEDING SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

BY DAVID JOHNSON

33

Due to increased social media maintenance responsibilities, there is a need to reduce the burden of other lifestyle choices such as education. In this research, we explore a low-commitment alternative for students to gain an education by harnessing the theory of infomosis – the process of information transmission along a diffusion gradient from a high density source (eg an academic textbook) to a lower density source.

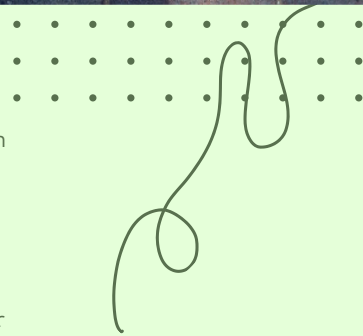
In our first study, we asked whether carrying around some textbooks in a small rucksack or tote bag was sufficient for learning to occur. We then employed a bi-directional neuro-telemetry study to explore whether student learning was optimised by wearing the books on their head (using a custom designed hat containing a small bookshelf and an EEG).

Following encouraging results from these studies, we report on an integrative multi-centre study in which we miniaturised the entire corpus of students' degree education into an object the size of an earring. We examined outcomes in years one, two and three, using multiple measures – number of hours wearing earring, number of social media followers and the number and quality of social media posts.

DAVID JOHNSON // DR INNOVA TOVA



Dr Innova Tova completed her doctoral thesis in adaptive clothing and has become prominent in fields of material science and applied millinery. She has recently expanded her research interests into neurolastic jewellery. As a social media influencer on Pigeon and FaceOff, she uses science as an opportunity for ironic, viral and lucrative self-promotion.



18. HUMAN HOSTS LACK AWARENESS OF THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF URSUS THEODORUS (THE DOMESTIC TEDDY BEAR) IN THE RUN UP TO THE HIBERNATION SEASON

35

BY KATE HAMMOND

It is widely known that wild bears must prepare for hibernation by ingesting up to 20,000 calories a day. It is less well known that their domesticated cousins, *Ursus theodorus* (the teddy bear) also require specialised nutrition during this period, owing to their unique metabolism and unusual pattern of hibernation. They snooze a lot, but get up for elevenses, Christmas and parties.

To investigate awareness of the nutritional needs of *U. theodorus* among human hosts we analysed teddy social media posts and interviewed several furry volunteers. Nine out of ten posts by teddies on Xitter referenced at least one of ‘cayk’, ‘chocolit’ or ‘sossiges’. In many cases this was to bemoan the lack of the aforementioned, or the shrinking portion sizes provided by their humans. Exemplifying the issue one bear commented ‘My human doesn’t seem to realise that teddies need 50% sugar in our diet to keep us sweet and 50% fat to keep us cuddly. We don’t need all these vitamin thingies you humans need!’

We conclude that to avoid living with a bear with a sore head, human hosts must either provide sufficient ‘cayk, chocolit and sossiges’ or provide their bears with access to Just Eat. The latter may get expensive!



Bertie Bear, Aristotle the Axolotl and Prof Jingle S Bear, Centre for *Ursus theodorus* studies (CUTeS), the University of Liverpool. BB is the social media expert. He also ordered takeout with the human’s ‘bendy spendy’ card to sustain research activity. AA typed the report – he is the only one with fingers and opposable thumbs. Prof JSB ‘runs this joint’. Conflict of interest statement: all authors declare a definite self-interest in the outcome of this work. Prof JSB is currently in talks with Cadbury’s regarding potential sponsorship.

19. IT'S MY CHOICE NOT TO 'MEEOW': EXPLORING FELINE DECISION MAKING AROUND COMMUNICATION WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD HUMANS

37

BY LAURA DYER

Although research has shown the positive impact feline acknowledgement can have on human mental health, Fluff (2025) recently highlighted that there has been a quantitative and qualitative decrease in feline-human interactions. This has the potential to be in detriment to human psychological states. This paper seeks to examine cat decision making around which, if any, humans they choose to greet in their neighbourhood.

The project used a mixed methods approach to data collection. The first part generated both quantitative and qualitative data and consisted of observations of neighbourhood cats and their rapport with humans. Secondly, interviews with neighbourhood cats were conducted to discover their opinions on communicating with humans in their neighbourhood. This data was collected using Fur-Ball's (2023) groundbreaking Feline Translation App to translate what participants said into human discourse. Observations noted that whilst in early mornings a small number of cats chose to acknowledge humans, the majority chose only to stare rather than 'greet'. This number of feline 'greeters' decreased significantly by afternoon, with few cats providing any acknowledgement at all. Interviews with participants highlighted a large number of cats who stated that they had previously 'greeted' humans but were now choosing to stare or leave the vicinity when a human approached. Reasons given for this included emotional distress over humans choosing to walk with dogs rather than greet cats, increased mobile phone use meaning that humans are distracted and do not notice cats and humans expecting cats to make the first move in the process of greeting. The paper concludes that if humans want interaction with cats, they must be respectful, be undistracted and be fully prepared to initiate the greeting.

Dr Kat Fur-Ball is a lecturer and researcher at the National Animal Psychology Institute. She is the creator of the groundbreaking app Feline Translation App which she created as part of her PhD studies. She is author of the forthcoming monograph *The meowniverse – cats and their social networks*. Her research interests lie in fields of feline psychology and sociology and neighbourhood demographics.



20. FUNCTIONAL DECAY: A STUDY IN PRESERVED TIME

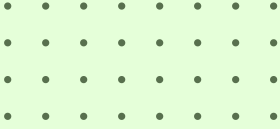
BY ISHANI SAHAI

This study examines temporal shrinkage as a measurable phenomenon most pronounced around age twenty-seven, an age consistently identified in prior chronometric surveys as the onset of perceived temporal inversion. Preliminary observation identified a narrowing of subjective temporal bandwidth: participants reported that sequential minutes increasingly overlapped instead of remaining discrete. Using calibrated chronometric arrays, sequential experience sampling, and distributed diary logging (n=327), we quantified compression ratios between perceived and atomic time. Temporal Fourier decomposition and attention-density mapping revealed that duration contracted under sustained cognitive load and re-expanded at measurable but inconsistent rates.

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Building on the Bureau of Standards' TOCK Study (2017), which first documented rhythmic asymmetry between perceived and measured time under administrative load, we defined the Temporal Inversion Constant (TIK) as the proportional divergence between lived and standardised durations – a predictable TIK, an unpredictable TOCK (Temporal Oscillation Coefficient of Kinetics). The TOCK phase denotes brief re-expansion preceding renewed contraction. Several participants exhibited shrink-wrap behaviour, in which duration was sealed for efficiency yet displayed progressive degradation, a process classified as chronological spoilage. Findings suggest that temporal shrinkage functions as an adaptive conservation mechanism that, when sustained, restricts experiential circulation. Time, optimised for preservation, begins to decay in storage. At twenty-seven, temporal fabric reaches its minimal stable state – compressed, coherent, momentarily at equilibrium.

Dr Mahak Ali is Professor of Temporal Studies at the Centre for Measured Subjectivity. Her research focuses on the morphology of hours and their behavioural properties under cognitive and environmental pressure. Formerly a chronometrist for the Bureau of Standards, she resigned after discovering that compliance with measurement protocols consumed more time than measurement itself. She now leads the Division of Applied Transience, investigating how terminal phases of attention can be repurposed for structural stability. Her monograph *The gentle guillotine: Notes on time management and mortality* is frequently cited but rarely finished.



ISHANI SAHAI // DR MAHAK ALI



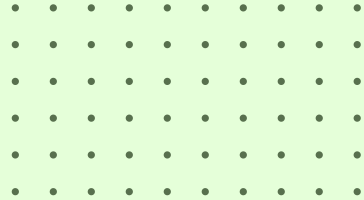
21. WORDS FOR FUTURE THINKING

BY NANDITA BAXI SHETH AND SCOTT JARVIE

41

This paper presents the project, Words for Future Thinking and its theoretical underpinnings. Seed vaults around the world preserve seeds in the hopes of securing biodiversity, habitat, and food supply for future generations. In that vein, our project proposes that a word vault is a necessary and critical response to the decline of analogue literary artefacts. Utilising the surrealist methods of erasure, blackout and cut up word poetry, a curated collection of words would allow for the renewal and re-blooming of ways of thinking for future beings. Condensing all kinds of texts to their most essential words would shrink the space needed to preserve them and, at the same time, serve as sparks for seeding future texts of communities to come. Shrinking, thus, is a form of curation. The word vault functions as a rich and diverse archive of the present and past that is positioned to survive and endure global cloud storage outages, book banning efforts, library defunding and re-writings of history. Housed in a secret, secure location, worldwide participants are invited to send words to the vault in all languages to be preserved in archival conditions free of bookworms and water.

The research partnership, **Surrealavenir**, was assembled at the 2025 Affect Theory Summer School during collage workshops that explored surrealist collage practices. Working in academic and community settings in the Midwest and the West Coast of the United States during the social, political, and technological turmoil of the early 21st century; educators, theorists and artists André and Leonora identified the crucial need for analogue curation and preservation of words and images for future civilizations. Their research practices include paper play, collection of alternate book forms and the re-invention of surrealist pedagogical practices for contemporary and future times.



22. ACADEMICS SAY MORE WITH LESS WORDS, THANKS TO GENERATIVE AI

BY ABBE WINTER

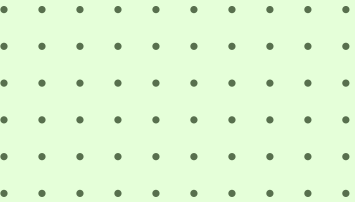
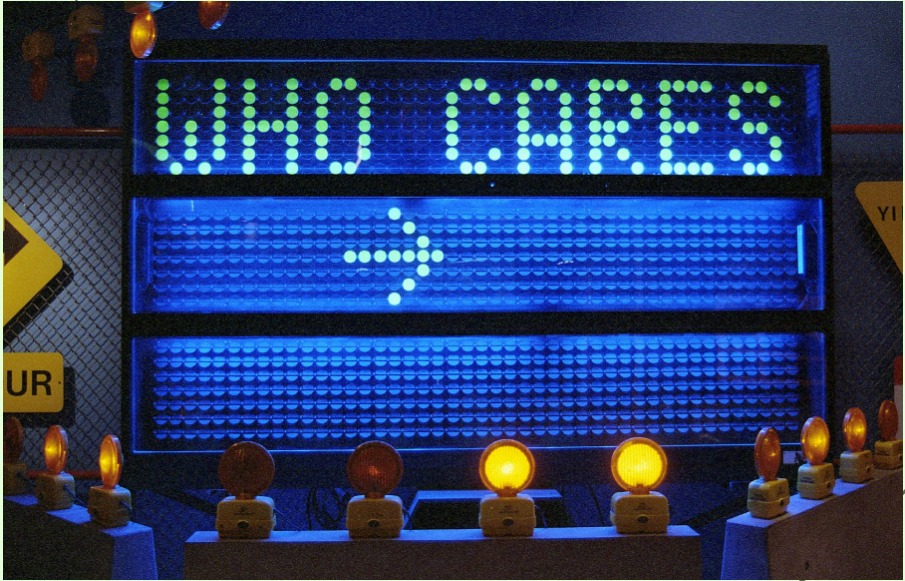
43

Analysis of the past twenty years' academic articles have revealed that we are becoming more jargon-bound and therefore more parsimonious in our writing. In 2025, the average word count for journals was 7,500. In 2023, following the Academic Agreement on Human Intelligence (AA-HI), academic authors took on the task of subverting generative AI's predictive capabilities by introducing new jargon to every article. By 2035, article lengths had dropped to an average of 5,255. In the subsequent decade, those shrank again to their current average of 3,500. Our multidiametric analysis also shows that, while the entire academic community around the world has taken steps to AI-proof their writing, this dramatic reduction is in large part due to the efforts of two journals in particular – Enough, which has a maximum word count of 100 words, and Less, which requires authors to summarise their work down to its core concept, many of which reduce to a single formula or even, as in the most recent issue reviewed (Volume 15, Issue 3), to a single word: care.

ABBE WINTER // PROFESSOR MASSI V EGOH
AND DR NOTTA NUFF

Professor Massi V Egoh has been a Fellow of the College for Humanity since 2028. They have been a strident anti-AI campaigner since 2023 and currently head the Centre for Resistance in the Faculty of People First at their university.

Dr Notta Nuff is an independent researcher, who has worked alongside Prof. Egoh for the past decade to analyse the writing habits of academics around the world and determine better ways to resist the robot overlords.



23. 'BUT YOU'RE SO GOOD AT IT': A CASE-STUDY OF ADMINISTRATIVE PIGEON-HOLE SYNDROME

BY CAITLIN MCDONALD

45

This case-study provides an ethnographic examination of the metamorphosis of noted academic Professor Elizabeth Lorre into Europe's leading photocopier expert. Lorre was a prominent figure in the world of existential philosophy, having published over thousand articles on the works of Jean-Paul Sartre until co-workers in the School of Ontology realised that she was the only person in the office who had the 'knack' of correctly operating the photocopier (B. Duos et al, 2011). Over time, Lorre became the point of contact for all photocopier related enquiries in first, the university, then the country and beyond.

Observing Lorre over a period of five years, researchers from the Administrative Bias Collective (ABC) noticed that, along with increase in musculature of the right arm, Lorre developed a hunched appearance, and, more disturbingly, demonstrated significant cognitive decline, no longer being able to respond to simple thought experiments posed by students, instead repeating 'must copy' in answer to any question (Papiere, 2024). Indeed, it appeared that the academic's mind was now so focused on photocopy-related requests that her research interests disappeared, and she began to miss deadlines for conference abstracts and journals. ABC's long-term analysis concludes that Lorre is a sufferer of Administrative Pigeon-Hole Syndrome (APHS) wherein multifaceted individuals' skillsets substantially shrink over time by the assumption that their prowess in one area defines their career.

Dr Cleo Papiere is Director of the Administrative Bias Collective and a world-leading expert on APhS, having worked with dozens of researchers and research professionals who found themselves being designated as the expert in areas such as Outlook calendars, meeting room sound systems and office coffee makers. Papiere's work in this area emerged after being asked one too many times to change lightbulbs while completing her PhD. In an attempt not to be pigeon-holed herself, Papiere also works as a curator, archivist and freelance journalist, while maintaining her hobbies of mountaineering, bricklaying and writing Kafka fan fiction. She only sleeps for two hours per night.



24. CHRONOLOGICAL ERROR: RETHINKING THE EMPIRICAL BASIS OF THE BIRTHDAY

BY SHUJIA FAN

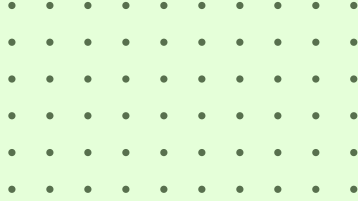
47

A large-scale investigation involving approximately one billion participants identified a consistent pattern of neural regression occurring annually on each individual's date of birth. This phenomenon has been hypothesised to result from culturally reinforced birthday celebrations, which, according to the research team, induce cognitive and emotional deterioration. Consequently, the study proposes a radical redefinition of 'birthday,' arguing that the chronological date of birth bears no empirical relation to a true day of renewal.

It is suggested that authentic birthdays should be determined not by the calendar but by observable transformations in mind, spirit and body. Emotional suffering – rather than joy – was found to activate the secretion of a neurochemical compound designated the 'Birthday Hormone'. This substance is believed to catalyse introspection and facilitate psychological regeneration. Hence, the Day of Great Sorrow is identified as the genuine marker of human rebirth.

To empirically test this hypothesis, one hundred million subjects underwent systematic erasure of all birthday-related memories. Developmental trajectories remained unaffected. When administered controlled doses of the Birthday Hormone, 98% reported that their most painful experiences coincided with profound personal transformation.

The findings conclude that celebrating birthdays is a cognitively regressive act – in essence, a ritualised celebration of one's ongoing death.



Dr Barbara Flaherty Cowboy, a lifelong researcher of the relationship between birthdays and birth dates, combines Eastern geomancy, Ba Zi and Western astrology to redefine the meaning of ‘rebirth.’ Famous for declaring that ‘birthdays are meaningless’ at actual birthday parties – often leading to her removal – she has persuaded much of the world to reconsider celebration itself. Author of *What is a birthday?*, *Pain as birth*, and *Unhappy birthday to you*, she retired after fierce academic debates and now migrates peacefully across the African savannah with wild animals, observing the true cycles of life and decay.

25. THE WORLD'S SMALLEST VIOLIN: THE MINIATURIST MANIFESTO

BY STEVEN WATSON

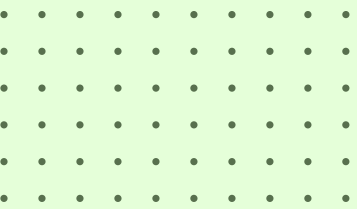
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For several centuries, the size of musical instruments has changed in only one direction. String lengths have become longer, bell flares bigger and organ pipes more numerous. Contrary to received wisdom, the resulting instruments exemplify, to quote Macbeth, 'vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself, and falls on the other side'. They are harder to play and whatever they gain in power, they lose in beauty; their sound is bass-laden, harsh and rudely loud.

I therefore propose a new musical style: miniaturism – a counterculture of miniature instruments to serve as a corrective to the Brobdingnagian impulse among instrument makers. By necessity, this would entail a new musical culture and way of listening – smaller venues, quieter music and new compositional styles. It may seem unlikely, but this paper explains how it can be established, if enough musicians are brave enough to follow this contrary path. As EF Schumacher observed in his seminal work, *Small is beautiful*, 'Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage – to move in the opposite direction.'



Dr Ebenezer Squidwurst is the chair of the Society of Alternative Organology and Fellow at the Centre for Musical Degrowth. He is best known for his invention of a performance practice that situates the player inside the instrument. He and his wife, Petronella, formed the duo *Insiders* to much acclaim, performing in (rather than on) a specially-designed double bass and timpano. Squidwurst is also the author of *Breath in: Why inhaled singing should become the norm*; *Elevesens: The case for the eleven-note octave*; and *Nevohteeb: How learning to play the Große Fuge back-to-front changed my life (for the worse)*.



26. A MULTI- PROXY ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF LONG- TERM HAPPINESS DECLINE PRODUCED BY WAGE LABOUR IN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENTS

BY JUDIT DEL RÍO

51

In the last two decades, sensorial archaeology has gained traction as a purposive method to explore complex stratigraphies of emotion. However, it has been scarcely used in workplace environments, and the existing research relies mostly on data obtained from surveillance technologies such as facial sadness recognition, the introspection-extrospection index, or biometric affection determination.

In contrast, this study presents the small-scale senso-excavation carried out at the LAAS (Laboratory of Abstract Archaeological Sciences, University of West Umbria, Iberia). Using emotional magnetic surveying, tear geochemistry and trace satisfaction analysis, we found evidence of uninterrupted unhappiness in labour-intensive contexts (eg fume hoods, benches and residue management areas). Contrarily, unhappiness was virtually absent from transitory leisure spaces (eg vending machines, courtyards, and thresholds). Together with the high unhappiness accumulation rates identified in the upper (newer) layers, this indicates a decrease in joy (sensu lato) as time goes by, related to the extended presence of workers in the premises. The results confirm the detrimental effects of employment on mental health and overall wellbeing and point to an early onset (ca. 2020). While further investigation is needed to constrain the extent of this misery, sensorial archaeology has proven to be a powerful tool to unravel the woes of working in higher education under the aegis of neoliberalism.



Grazia Tagliabuoi is a PhD candidate in Imaginary Archaeology at the University of West Umbria. In their dissertation, they use sensorial surveying and haptic mapping for the study of Institutionally-vs-Human War II memorial sites at the troposphere-stratosphere boundary, with a focus on sociotechnical relations as revealed by environmental iconography. With an extensive atmospheric and fieldwork experience, they have deployed the senso-archaeological method in some of the most emblematic sites on Earth, including Pozo de los Rojos and Casas del Maestro. They are the current recipient of their neighbourhood's Grant for the Advancement of Imagination in the Sciences and Humanities.

27. SEVEN NEW EXAMPLES OF ADAPTIVE RADIATION AND INSULAR DWARFISM IN ETAPODS

53

BY ALEX GOUGH

Insular dwarfism is a process in which species isolated on islands evolve to become smaller than their mainland counterparts, eg Lemerle's hippopotamus. Adaptive radiation is the process in which species evolve to fill environmental niches, exemplified by Darwin's finches. This paper describes seven new species of the genus *Etapodus*, discovered on an archipelago on the planet Hespera. As well as exhibiting insular dwarfism, each species has developed behavioural traits suited to the unique environment on each island. *Etapodus malevolus* is notably belligerent, its aggression a response to the high prevalence of predators on its island. By contrast, the elusive *Etapodus fugax* avoids predation by deep burrowing. *Etapodus somnolentus* undergoes prolonged periods of hibernation to cope with its irregular food supply. *Etapodus sternumentus* has developed the ability to expel air forcefully through its cranial nares to combat the dusty atmosphere on its island. *Etapodus stultus* has reduced cranial capacity since its solitary lifestyle requires fewer cognitive resources than its eusocial relatives. *Etapodus medicus* has learned to use the medicinal properties of plants to combat the infections prevalent in the marshy terrain of their habitat. And *Etapodus jucundus* is habitually carefree and contented, for reasons we have not yet discovered.

[Dr Alex Gough made no contribution, significant or otherwise, to this research – it simply landed in his inbox because of some quantum entanglement wormhole magic, and he stuck his name on it to claim credit.]

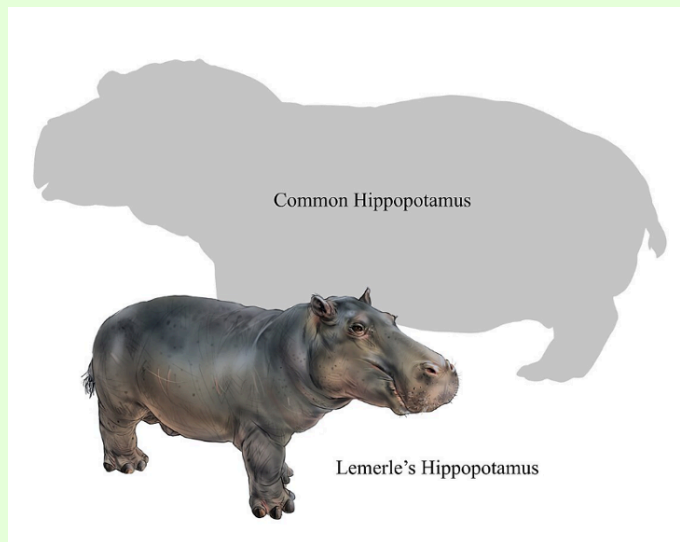
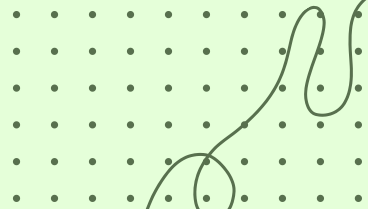


Fig 1: Example of insular dwarfism on earth. Speculative reconstruction of Lemerle's Hippopotamus (Hippopotamus lemerlei) with Common Hippopotamus for comparison.

Professor Jessica Elkins is head of the Department of Exozology at the University of New Cambridge on Hespera (Trappist 1-e). Since arriving on Hespera with the first wave of colonists, she has made it her life's work to describe and document the fauna of the planet. She is a famous curmudgeon and strongly dislikes botanists.



28. HIGHER EDUCATION, LOWER SQUARE FOOTAGE

BY SHERIDAN WILDE

55

We show here that, under the strain arising from ever-diminishing income and escalating overheads costs, UK universities have been forced to make drastic economies in their space and facilities resource. All of the large inner city HEIs, for example, have opted to reduce their campus real estate footprint, arranging then to have all face-to-face teaching delivered in tiered ranks of ultra compact (standing room only) seminar and tutorial rooms up-cycled from second-hand shipping containers. In a similar vein, many of the rural centres, like Crackpot College and Little Mudford Institute of Science and Technology, have tackled the problem of an increased demand for student accommodation attendant upon their substantially increased student numbers, by repurposing their departmental and general library spaces and reading rooms (long since redundant anyway, they claim), and providing all first-year cohorts with communal sleeping bags fashioned from disused circus bell tents. It is a salutary lesson to be learned, however, that wherever such measures have been introduced, the HEIs have reaped very significant financial benefit, but their NSS scores have taken a proper hammering.



Dr **Synthia Wildchild** is a recovering academic. She has a double first in Quantum Gardening from Cambridge, and a PhD in Crypto Traffic Management from Harvard. In her thirty-two years as a university lecturer, firstly at Lady Chatterley’s College for Comely Young Ladies, and latterly at the Vue Cinemas Institute in Oldham, she has published over twenty-three papers and has an H-index of 0.2. She is an avid Line of Duty and Wacky Races fan and has an all-consuming passion for toasted Waitrose tea cakes.



29. THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD BELIEF ON ADULT ABILITY TO SHRINK OBJECTS

BY FOKKINA MCDONNELL

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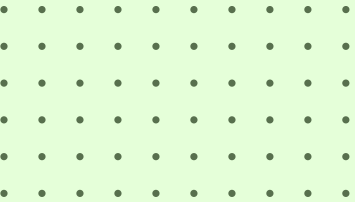
The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Due to obesity its inhabitants are taking up more space at the same time that tiny houses are becoming more economically viable. It might be beneficial if other objects could be shrunk too (Bottema, 2020).

Most Dutch adults have experienced seeing white horses during December: St Nikolaas uses a white horse for transport. His horse needs to reduce in size rapidly to descend chimneys and leave presents by the fireplace.

It was hypothesized that adults who lost their belief in St Nikolaas at an early age would either be unable to shrink their hobby horse, or take significantly longer to do so, compared with those who held on to their belief longer. Parameters for 'early' and 'late' loss were established across gender and age. Participants were allocated to groups accordingly. They were presented with a sequence of visual stimuli (images of white horses in different settings) and then instructed to shrink their hobby horse until it fitted within the confidence interval. In countries where Father Christmas and reindeer are significant seasonal characters, the principle of generalization predicts similar results.



Dr Melody Rowe is a cross-cultural psychologist with a PhD in the luminosity of liminal and ‘thin’ places. They are the Niobe Professor at the University of Tuonela where they continue to conduct ground-breaking research in the oral transmission of swan songs and the impact of trans-generational inheritance of boundary markers. They are Visiting Professor at the University of the Styx where they oversee post-doctoral research. They have published widely in their chosen field and are the author of the best-selling guide Love or leave a liminal place (Nemo T Press, 2016) which was translated into fourteen languages.



30. MOVE FAST AND BREAK EVERYTHING: DEFLECTING ANXIETY IN A TECH-FORWARD WORLD

BY DAVID EBENBACH

59

For unclear reasons, the rapid-fire continuous release of life-altering and world-transforming technological developments in artificial intelligence, without oversight of any kind, has caused an increase in anxiety, with some people even proving inexplicably resistant to emerging technologies. Fortunately, as abundant research demonstrates, the use of AI technologies reduces prefrontal cortex activity and critical thinking (eg Gerlich, 2025; Kosmyna et al, 2025), which, it can be hoped, may ultimately result in brain atrophy, and therefore a reduction in distracting ethical questions. That said, these promising findings leave unaddressed the emotional underpinnings of anxiety, which are rooted to some extent in other areas of the brain (eg the amygdala) that may have problematic resiliency.

The present study therefore examined the effect of an AI assistant (AIAssistant) in redirecting anxiety. When participants showed signs of discomfort and/or hostility toward technology, the AIAssistant suggested other, more promising foci for these feelings (eg people who look different, immigrants, tech sceptics, etc). Results indicate that people can be fairly easily convinced to direct negative feelings away from technology and toward more convenient targets. The author was in fact surprised by just how easy it was. Positive implications for tech company profit margins are discussed.

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DAVID EBENBACH // DR TAD ECKBRO



Dr Tad Eckbro (MD, Meta School of Medicine) lives in a very large house.

31. REDUCING INTERNET TRAFFIC VOLUMES BY REFACTORING REALITY

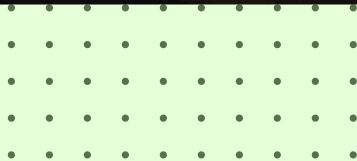
BY JUSTIN BAKER

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The demand for data storage is predicted to increase three-fold over the next five years. Surprisingly, after pirated movies and cat videos, some 11% of the remainder is comprised of text documents. To address this, we developed an entirely new class of text compression algorithm called NibbleNote that significantly reduces file sizes through intellectual diminution. Most compression algorithms work by identifying and removing redundant strings or repeating patterns. We take a completely novel approach, based as it is on actual novels. With NibbleNote, rich, complex and expressive phrases in the source text are semantically reduced via a unidirectional process known as 'smooshing'. The LLM responsible for this linguistic minimisation was trained on a corpus of verbose works from the likes of Dickens, Tolstoy, and Proust. After an iterative reductive process, the resultant prose is closer to the terse oeuvre of writers such as Hemingway, Camus or Eric Carle. Unfortunately, document recovery is still a somewhat unpredictable activity, given that the resurrected text barely resembles the original source. However, we argue that, ultimately, it's the thought that counts.

Dr Fay D'way is the leader of Computational Linguistics at the Norwegian Salamander Research Institute. Her research interests include textual analysis of 17th century welding manuals, and the ongoing development of automated translation tools between Tagalog and Farsi. She holds an honorary advisory role with the South Carolina Corrections Facility in the USA. Her team is currently in discussion with several venture capital firms to commercialise NibbleNote. If successful, she plans to retire to a warmer climate without salamanders.

JUSTIN BAKER // DR FAY D'WAY



32. MADNESS: AN AMBULANCE SERVICE INITIATIVE BRINGING THE HOSPITAL TO THE COMMUNITY

BY JAMES WILKINSON

Ambulance services in the United Kingdom are expected to accept more responsibility for non-emergency patients each year, causing increased ambulance response times and avoidable delays to life-threatening emergencies. This is MADNESS (Mobile Ambulance Deployment Non-Emergency Support Scheme): an initiative designed to bring the hospital directly into the community. The scheme aims to condense all the facilities of a full-size hospital into the back of an ambulance, to effectively deliver non-emergency care where it should be treated – in the community. Paramedics, doctors and nurses co-responded in ambulances, equipped with diagnostic resources including X-Ray, phlebotomy and stretcher trolleys with dual-functionality as surgical operating tables. This scheme was designed to prevent hospital attendances and reduce National Health Service waiting times, whilst providing high-quality community treatment in non-emergency patient groups. This quantitative study also worked with partners in community care teams, to increase capacity in urgent and primary care over a twelve-month period. 25,607 patients were treated nationally.



JAMES WILKINSON // EMMA GENCY

The primary outcomes, to reduce hospital attendances and waiting lists, decreased by 60%. Secondary outcomes, to minimise patient safety incidents and increase patient satisfaction for non-emergency care, improved by 85% overall. The MADNESS initiative was successful, allowing ambulances to return to delivering high-quality emergency care.



Emma Gency is a paramedic working at the heart of the NHS for 20 years. This initiative was inspired after Emma realised that A&E was becoming less Accident & Emergency, and more Anything & Everything, contrary to its intended purpose. After working in community care for the past five years, Emma understood a lack of investment and staffing within GP surgeries, community and district nursing teams, and mental health trusts was contributing to decreased capacity for non-emergency patients. Emma decided to explore this further, to understand how ambulances could return to their own priorities – life-threatening emergencies. Thus MADNESS was born.

33. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF MONEY WE CAN GIVE TO CRITICAL RESEARCHERS BEFORE THEY GIVE UP?

65

BY AARON AGOSTINI

BACKGROUND: Scientific funding fluctuates constantly, representing approximately 1% of global expenditure (slightly less than the annual budget for novelty socks). Given this proportion, it is essential to optimise research funding more aggressively than any other financial outlay.

METHODS: Using the United States as a model organism, we subjected researchers ($n=1,900,000$) to abrupt and severe funding reductions. Allocations were distributed randomly: without regard for feasibility, need, ethical considerations or basic arithmetic. After four years, we measured publication outputs (operationalised as 'success') to determine whether this intervention impacted scientific productivity.

RESULTS: We were deeply shocked to discover that drastic defunding of critical research negatively affected publications, human health, regional morale and the global price of Brazil nuts. Nevertheless, some scientific progress still occurred, and several humans were helped, often unintentionally.

CONCLUSION: Our findings suggest that the minimum amount of funding required to maintain scientific progress is zero. We predict that this is due to an uncontrolled variable – preliminarily assumed to be ‘hope.’ Further work should determine how much this variable too can be reduced before research ceases entirely.



Mr Moneybags McGee is an enigmatic figure in the field of Research Funding Studies (RFS). After completing his master’s thesis, Maximising profit margins in the menstrual hygiene sector, he briefly attended Harvard before deciding to pursue owning a music label. He currently resides in Manhattan, where he spends his time ‘rescuing’ critically endangered neurodivergent birds from local ecosystems. Though repeatedly invited to collaborate with museums and conservation groups, he insists the birds are ‘shy’ and ‘prefer a quiet, billionaire-adjacent lifestyle.’ His research investigates how little money research scientists can be given before they go into industry.

34. 'AS TULIPS KNOW WILDNESS': READING LIFE WRITING AS PARTICIPATORY EPISTEMOLOGY

67

BY MRINALINI GREEDHARRY

The tulip is an emblem found across world literatures, but the tulip as a thoroughgoing pattern for the formation of the self is only found in a select number of sixteenth-century texts. In Gulmira Khan's *The Sense of a Tulip* we see one of the few fully developed instances of what Tarnas (1991) has described as 'participatory epistemology', a text in which Khan's autobiography is written into and through the life cycle of the wild tulip. Through the ability to remake herself through periods of withdrawal rather than continuous production, Khan fashions an ontology that reflects her sense of herself as a participant in nature. The analysis focuses on the spectacular section in the middle of the narrative, where Khan describes a slow, intense near-death experience. In these highly condensed and lyrical passages, the beauty of Gulmira-as-tulip is made evident through the withering, drying and contracting of her body as she prepares for death. It is in this thick description that Khan's choice of the tulip reaches its full philosophical significance: she figures herself as a being who can remake itself, defying death, through reabsorption back into the smallest form of itself only to bloom again brilliantly.



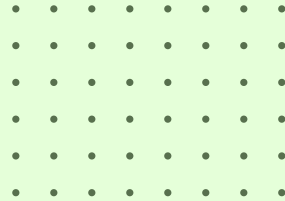
Dr Minnie Kutti teaches creative onto-epistemology at Littelton College, Royal University of Mauritius. Her research focuses on early modern women's writing, in which established and accepted limits of knowledge are frequently disrupted by hybrid forms of writing. She herself is a hybrid scholar forcing epistemology on literature scholars and creative writing on analytical philosophers in her most recent book, *Writing on the head of a pin: a speculative history of lost epistemologies*. She is currently working on a study of tifeuilles, the miniature books indentured women made during sea voyages to record the wisdom of their homelands.

35. NEW METHODS FOR MONITORING ZOOBOTIC- TRANSMITTED MINIATURISATION IN MINKOWSKI'S S_{69} DIMENSIONAL BORER (KRONOPOREIAGNATHOS MINKOWSKII)

BY GUNNAR TRIBELHORN

Zoonotic-transmitted miniaturisation (ZTM) is an emerging infectious disease that has rapidly spread throughout the anthropic Hubble volume phase-space. Recent work has shown the panstatic wave-function pest *Kronoporeiagnathos minkowskii*, commonly known as Minkowski's Dimensional Borer, to serve as its primary causal vector in Tegmarkian exponential zones 693-735. This has raised pertinent concerns among neighbouring inter-zonal communities tasked with designing effective management procedures for epidemic containment of ZTM. The issue is only compounded by the symmetry-breaking invasive potential of *K. minkowskii*, which has been shown to engage in diagonal spacetime boring using non-lorentzian mandibular action. Here, we used a novel hyper-boolean monitoring system injected sequentially with Ellis-drain traversal in zones of highest infection potential.

Inter-zonal infection likelihood was computed with continuous-time Markov chain compartmental modelling, which generated $10^{10^{31}}$ unique sites likely to show ZTM associated symptoms of quantum decoherence. Unfortunately, due to constraints surrounding the project's budgetary scope, only $10^{10^{98}}$ zones could be monitored for the purposes of this study. Our results showed that miniaturizing effects of quantum decoherence are present in 100% of sampled zones, meaning ZTM may have already reached ubiquitous status within the anthropic ensemble (though further monitoring in the full $10^{10^{31}}$ dataset might have revealed a difference in trends). Based on these findings, we urgently recommend readers across the full causality spectrum to schedule a macroscopic reality-engine test at their earliest convenience: ZTM-associated paracausal infolding can cause nonexistence and removal from the space-time continuum, both of which are likely to be fatal.



Vladimir Leontine Estrin is Senior Lecturer of Quantum Entomology at TOE. His work focuses on organismal-multiversal interactions in metabeetles of tribe ergodicorhagini. Dr Estrin's research was the first to describe the larval mastication of spacetime by the Portalmaker Longhorn, *Cosmonauta halensis*, leading to breakthroughs in Alcubierre transport technology and revolutionising the way we view dimensional hyperspace. He is perhaps best known for the quote, 'All the gods in all the universes must all be inordinately fond of beetles.'

36. SHRINKING PEDAGOGICAL AGENCY IN THE AGE OF STUDENT SATISFACTION- ONLY-DRIVEN TEACHING

71

BY MARYAM KAZEMI

Across higher education, teachers report that their pedagogical agency is fading under a pressure field generated by student-satisfaction metrics. Teachers describe no longer feeling able to challenge students, discourage digital distractions, or insist on ordinary classroom professionalism without triggering waves of dissatisfaction. This study examined how altering student-only-satisfaction performance metrics influences the perceived agency of teachers and students.

A multisite cross-sectional survey was conducted across 100 universities. Teachers and students completed parallel agency scales under two scenarios: one in which teaching was judged solely through end-of-term satisfaction scores, and another in which teachers could assign Engagement Scores using the standardised Miniature Lantern, a device that briefly illuminates genuine participation.

Of 324 million teachers, 85% reported marked pedagogical shrinkage in the satisfaction-only model, describing their teaching styles folding in on themselves under the weight of student surveys. Many noted they could no longer teach in the way learning required. Under the dual-evaluation model, teachers described partial re-expansion. From 900 billion students, however, 75% reported reduced agency when Lanterns were introduced, fearing favouritism and mis-illumination. Satisfaction-based evaluation systems create asymmetric distortions in classroom agency, shrinking teachers' pedagogical scope while alternately inflating or constricting students' agency, depending on how the performance metrics are configured.



Dr Duskn dawn is a self-retired university teacher, widely known as the most beautiful pomegranate in the world. She left higher education to become a full-time potter, moving from identical espresso cups to crafting coffee mugs shaped to fit different faces and mouths. Her drinkware is calibrated to sense a user's emotional temperature and hold its warmth for a reasonable time, especially for those who forget their opportunistic sip. Her studio shelves brim with experiments in shape and heat, while she continues exploring academia's lost treasures through the nagging her still academic students bring to her pottery classes.

37. INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF GLOBAL WEALTH INEQUALITY: A NOVEL APPLICATION FOR THE SHRINK RAY

73

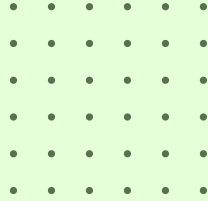
BY GEORG JÄGER

Since its invention, scientists have looked for ethical applications for the shrink ray. Now we have finally found a use for a technology, we claimed for decades will be extremely useful for humanity.

The biggest challenge of our modern society is wealth inequality. Finding true solutions is difficult, so we opted for the next best thing: giving visibility to a problem that is already blatantly obvious to everybody.

Using the shrink ray, we scaled the height of every person on the planet in relation to their net worth. To adhere to the highest principles of modern research, this was done in a way that appeases the 1%. Thus, a person with a net worth of 1.1 million USD will conveniently remain the same height as before the rescaling.

Median heights of people are now 13 cm (\approx 5 inches) in the US, 3 cm (\approx 1 inch) in Europe and 0.17 cm (\approx 0 inches) in Africa. Preliminary results on the effect of wealth inequality visibility are inconclusive. However, we are confident that the richest person in the world, now towering over the rest of us with 900 kilometres in height, will solve the problem of global wealth inequality somehow.



Prof. Gunther van Schrumpf studied malevolent science and evil engineering at the Volcano Lair University of German Barbados, where he became Professor for Applied World Domination. As editor of the International Journal of Malevolent Science, he refined his knowledge of ethics and fundamentally changed our current understanding of evil science. He turned his back on all traditional approaches like weapon development and propaganda and forged an entirely new, yet somehow well-treaded path. His academic and personal journey is well documented in his famous autobiography True evil: How to maintain the status quo by force whilst masquerading as 'saving humanity'.

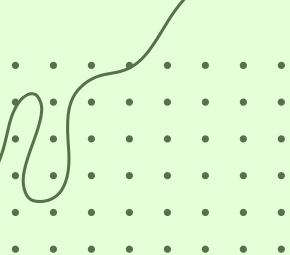
38. DONNING THE 'DRINK ME' GOGGLES: GAUGING ACCEPTABILITY OF VIRTUAL REALITY TREATMENTS FOR CORPOREAL DYSPHORIA

75

BY LEMMA DORE

Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS), a neurological disorder affecting perceptions of body image, is being (re)claimed as a form of neurodiversity by sufferers (or 'Friends of Alice' as they term themselves). FoAs have been known to practice self-surgery or mutual/peer surgery in order to create a body that affirms their microsomatognosia. Virtual reality exposure therapy (VRET) has been advanced as a novel treatment modality for body dysmorphic disorder. Given the controversial status of dysphoria in AIWS, this paper explores the acceptability of VRET to FoAs.

In common with other extreme body modification communities, FoAs are research-resistant. Snowball sampling, pseudonyms and photovoice elicitation were therefore employed as barrier-minimisation strategies.



FoAs (n=15) who participated for 30 minutes in a private Pinch2ZoomRoom reported high openness to VR avatars and metaverse experiences – noting the tendency to ‘cute’ microspiac body shapes – but low acceptance of VRET as a route to reconciliation with actual bodily proportions. Findings are discussed with reference to Haraway’s cyborg and literature of kawaii. Implications for engagement in other secretive online communities (‘red-pilled’, ‘white-rabbit’) are highlighted.

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the Pleasance-Liddell Foundation (grant LXXXI-27/1001).

LEMMA DORE // DR DORA LEM



Dr Dora Lem is a Junior Reader in Socio-Technical Ontologies at Christ Church College, Oxford. A two-time Dudgeon laureate for her work on information needs and habits among online commune-dwellers and kibbutzniks, Dr Lem is writing a book on transhumanistic co-hallucinations and is a frequent media commentator on matters of artifice and miniaturisation.

39. EXPLORATION OF THE TOO LIBERAL USE OF LETTERS IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE IN TIMES OF RESOURCE SHORTAGE

77

BY ULRIKE VOGEL

This research considers the German tendency to construct ever elongating words, taking up valuable time and space in both oral and written communication. Analysis of publicly available correspondence as well as observation of conversations across the nation enabled comprehensive data collection, leading to contradicting insights. Oral transmission appears to empower a more efficient use of people's time as words utilised are short and concise, prime example the Saxon expression 'nu' in all situations. However, written correspondence paints a different picture with excessively long words a common occurrence. This presents a significant issue when considering the impact on printing expense and associated growing data volumes, adversely affecting the efficient utilisation of resources.

The author poses the idea of reverting to utilising acronyms to suitably shrink the environmental impact of the German language and minimise the anxiety a German language assignment has on a translator. Further pragmatic analysis is required to identify potential correlations between average length of words and historic event, enabling predictions on how the language can be more efficiently adapted to optimise future resource usage. All findings, including a comprehensive appendix and glossary of suggested acronyms, are available in print and efficient shorthand.



Gottlieb Fürchtegott Kurz, self-declared linguistic nerd, recently appointed Head of internationale und interdisziplinäre Kommunikations- und Sprachwissenschaftsforschung, has dedicated his life to demystifying the incomprehensible besottedness of Germans to create obsessively long words rarely used in conversations. He can usually be spotted eavesdropping on conversations on his extensive travels across the nation. His mission is to encourage conciseness with less letters, inspired by his surname. Equally, he is fascinated by the ability of Germans to tell a whole story with just a few long words. The shorter your request to him, the more likely is a response. Signed KFK, iiKSWFO.

40. THIS SPACE WITHIN ME: A CLINICAL OBSERVATION OF TENEBRAE DIMINUTION IN HOMO SAPIENS

79

BY XOCHILT AVILA

Ever resilient, humanity has largely stabilised since the first breach through the barriers that separate our world from the void space and the kingdom of Tenebrae that inhabits it. And though we've adapted to the presence of their simpler species, and have begun cautious interactions with their sapient brethren, a true symbiosis between humans and the Tenebrae has yet to be explored.

This project aims to remedy this and serve as the first documented study of 'Tenebrae diminution' within a human host. 'Tenebrae diminution' was first coined by Dr Magnolia Salvere in 2015, when she first discovered the phenomenon while studying sea turtles native to the first known fissure along the Pacific Ocean. X-rays revealed progressive shrinkage of skeletal structures, organs and other organic matter within the turtle's carapace. In extreme cases, the subject's brain matter had also been diminished if not outright dissipated. In place of organic matter, these cavities were filled with void essence, lending to Salvere's discovery of parasitic Tenebrae.

Through years-long clinical observation and psychological methodology, our research explores the behaviour of Tenebrae parasites, as well as the physical, mental, and spiritual impact of diminution on a human host.



Xochilt Avila is Professor of Tenebrae Studies at Ventura University. They are a published author, a fan of video games, and a lover of cats. They used to hike and explore their local national parks, which unfortunately exposed them to the Chesapeake Fissure that was officially documented in 2019. They take solace in that no subjects from Dr Salvere's study have reportedly passed as a result of infection, and that recent research even indicates high intelligence and functionality (albeit with unfortunate symptoms of aggression).

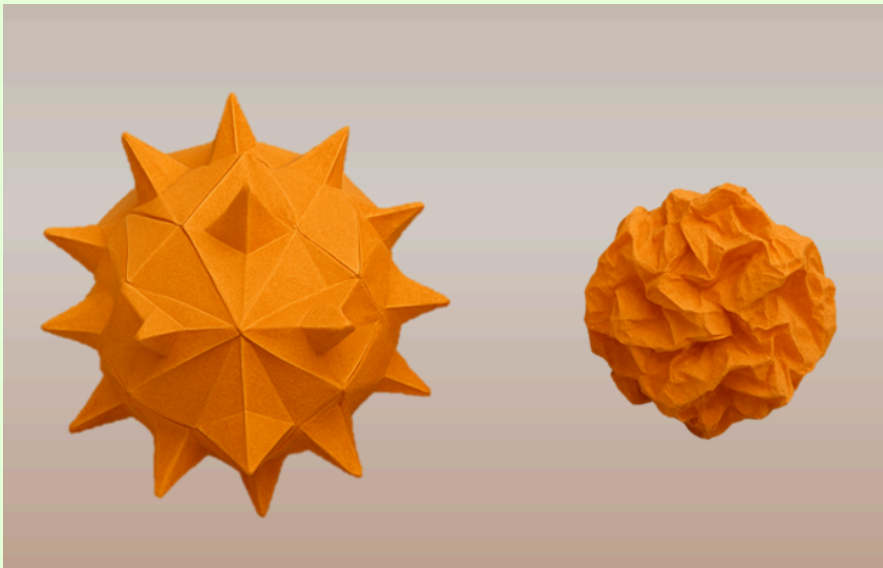
41. THE DAY THE VIRUSES FOLDED: A NEW DAWN IN BOVINE BIOSECURITY

BY FRAZER BUCHANAN

81

Agricultural viruses remain a persistent threat to global food security and bovine morale. Here, we present the first programmable viral capsid (protective shell) collapse system designed to render viruses physically warped and smaller. Viral capsids must retain precise morphology and size to infect cells, through saturating mutagenesis and transgenics we have developed SILO (Spontaneous Intra Linear Origami). Our transgenic cattle express the SILO protein continuously, displaying no adverse effects (aside from the subtle flavour of mint in their milk). The SILO protein integrates with invading capsids, initiating a controlled scrunching that reduces viral volume by up to 88% and abolishing morphology. This prevents viruses from being able to infect cells and propagate.

Field trials have demonstrated not only reduced infection rates but also improved herd confidence and posture. Work is ongoing to develop a complementary modular system COWBOY (Capsid Origami Wrinkle-Based Yield) to allow protection of other bovids such as yak and bison to ensure pasture-wide immunity. This technology will soon allow us to shrink not just viruses, but the very concept of disease itself.



Dr Jasper Kincaid is a research group leader at the University of Farrion and founder of the virology company BOVIROME Ltd. With over 65 publications his work has redefined the field of ruminant virology. He completed his PhD at the University of Strathvale before completing his fellowship at the Institute for Sub-Arctic Virology, where he discovered a virus 'older than the concept of temperature'. Following his failed attempt to shrink cattle (Project Minicow) and another to make them immune to all known viruses he turned his interests to viruses themselves. He was the 2023 winner of the Golden Pipette award and has the largest global private herd of cattle including buffalo, bison and yak.



42. SHRINKING BIODIVERSITY, SHRINKING HAPPINESS: A CONSEQUENTIALIST ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF DECREASING BIODIVERSITY

BY MARIKEN LENAERTS

83

This interdisciplinary study combines field data on entomophily in the Limburgian Heuvelland (Dutch Hills) in the Netherlands and subsequent analyses of the shrinking of biodiversity and the societal effects this entails with foundational research on the ethics underlying societal organisation. Earlier research (Bohlmeijer et al, 2024) on the effects of nature connectedness on general feelings of happiness shows that twenty minutes per day of conscious observation of one's natural surroundings has an astounding positive effect on one's overall sense of happiness and mental wellbeing.

Field tests, however, increasingly show a shrinking of entomophilic activity within the Limburgian Heuvelland, leading to an increasing number of native plant species becoming endangered. This article analyses the ways in which this shrinking of biodiversity leads to a shrinking sense of happiness and the ways in which this shrinking can be turned into growing. Following a rule-utilitarian line of reasoning, the author subsequently recommends policy changes that will contribute to this reverse shrinking effect, such as shrinking the amount of subsidies that contribute to this biodiversity shrinking, shrinking the amount of herbicides used, and shrinking consumerism.



Dr MM (Maya Melissa) Albine studied biology with a specialisation in entomology at the University of Delphi. She defended her doctoral thesis on entomophily with distinction and subsequently awarded the prestigious Anthophila Prize. The jury stated in its report that Albine’s research provided vital bromatological insights and called her dissertation ‘potentially lifesaving’. Since 2015 she has worked as an assistant professor at the University of Mānuka. Her research is generally characterised by extensive data collection through an immersive empirical methodology combined with fundamental research regarding ethics and normativity. Her groundbreaking book *Head first: a study on the mechanisms of plant pollination by apes and meliponines* made her a household name among the general public.

43. EMOTIONAL DAMPENING FOR IMPROVEMENT AT DRAWING LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS: A SMALL-SCALE CLINICAL TRIAL

85

BY AIMEE VAN DOMBURG

Although recent evidence highlights adverse outcomes when feelings are altogether removed from decision-making, it has been suggested that appropriate dilution of affective factors may improve executive function (Kai et al, 2023). We have previously shown that neural activity can be dampened with high precision using deep electrode counter-stimulation (DECS) (Mick et al, 2018). In this study, DECS was used to target the amygdala, the brain's emotional processing centre, in 25 healthy participants to determine the impact on drawing logical conclusions from predetermined situational cues. Inclusion and exclusion criteria matched those of similar studies (Kai et al, 2023).

DECS improved decision efficiency, the duration taken to reach a resolution, however, the resultant outcome rarely matched the predetermined optimal solution. Compared with age-matched controls, the effect was more pronounced in female participants, suggesting that for this population subset feelings play a larger role in decision-making processes. This is in line with previous studies (Georges et al, 1908). However, the baseline percentage of optimal solutions was higher in women than in men despite their emotional nature, suggesting that further refinement of the situational cues provided is needed.



AIIMEE VAN DOMBURG // DR RICHARD MICK



Dr Richard Mick is an independent researcher with a background in psychology and additional research interests in developmental neurobiology. He is an acclaimed author with over 100 publications in various journals, as well as popular science books such as *Making sense of Freud in the twenty-first century* and *Self-help for the modern man*. He is a pioneer of fostering political collaboration as well as engaging with the public, and also leads multiple humanitarian projects, including mental health support groups and male rights initiatives.

44. ELECTRO-STIMULATION PROTOCOL FOR MEMORY INDEXING: THE SMALLER THE MEMORY, THE MORE YOU CAN STORE

87

BY NICHOLAS HAGIS

The constant struggle within this information age has left us feeling tired, overwhelmed and burnt out. Managing thoughts and recalling information is crucial to our productivity as well as work-life balance. Here, we develop and investigate the performance of a novel stimulation which allows for the indexing of memories.

Participants were asked to wear a headset and think of a specific memory they would like to index. A frequency was selected and two matching low-voltage electrical signals were applied. Over a period of 20 seconds, one signal was altered to be out of phase from the other. This reduced the cognitive space taken up by the memory.

After stimulation, the participants (n=20) were asked questions relating to the memory and were unable to recall any information. They performed better at both short-term and long-term memory tasks compared with control participants. 95% of participants re-remembered the indexed memory when the protocol was reversed. One participant suffered from permanent loss of the selected memory.

Our method shows a promising future for improving mental storage capacity and, consequently, performance in knowledge work; however, further research into the irreversible effects of this method is required.



Professor Sally Soother has been working in the field of brain-computer interfaces for two decades. She specialises in the neural pathways responsible for memory and is known for her pioneering research in reframing negative memories using closed loop, electro-stimulation of the hippocampus. The idea for this work came about from a chance encounter with a clinical psychiatrist and a business operations specialist after all three individuals were sat next to each other on an airplane which was grounded due to poor weather conditions. She is grateful for the idea, but wishes she could index the memory of the congested plane.

45. ALL THE TIME IN THE UNIVERSE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO ASSIGNMENT COMPLETION TIMES WHEN ASSIGNEES ARE GRANTED DEADLINES ON A COSMIC SCALE

89

BY KORNBLUM KATZ

Having heard one too many times from students with looming assignment deadlines that they ‘just need more time’ (or having too recently requested such themselves), researchers at the Department of Temporal Sciences at Clepsydra University decided to find out when assignments would be completed if students in all classes were given as much time as is available on a cosmic scale to turn in their work. Researchers created a ‘pocket universe’ inside a relic police call box. Students were inoculated against the effects of the space-time continuum in this pocket universe and thus able to spend as many of the billions of years newly available to them balancing their time between tackling their assignments and playing games, browsing social media and whatever else ordinarily drew their attention away from their studies (previous informal surveys by professors indicate posting to social media and doomscrolling to be preferential to classroom participation).

As of the heat-death of the pocket universe and the students' return to their originating space-time continuum, 94% of students immediately begged for the creation of a new pocket universe, claiming that they still needed more time than the 33 billion years provided them in their originating universe. The remaining 7% who had turned in an assignment (averaging 14–25bn years into the allocated time), while not as urgent in their request, also advocated for an additional 33 billion years 'or perhaps even longer', stating that if given even more time, they might have had an opportunity to proofread.

G McClellan is a graduate fellow who has earned accolades for their first-person research into procrastination, with distinction given for a seminal work determining the exact ratio of time required to assigned length of paper in order to submit the paper at precisely 11:59:59 PM on its due date. They have also merited grudging acknowledgement from their own professors on the topic of their studies into the precise formulation of email discourse required to inspire said professors to offer them extensions on their work. They will get around to finishing their doctoral thesis when they have time.

KORNBLUM KATZ // G MCCLELLAN



46. PROJECT SHRINK: A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED STUDY OF SNAPSHOT SHRINKAGE AMONG HOLIDAYMAKERS

BY JOHANNA THOMAS-MAUDE

91

Digital photography and high-speed data sharing promised to shrink the number of duplicate holiday photographs. Nevertheless, global image production has undergone negative shrinkage, with each travelling companion feeling ever more compelled to 'get their own shot'. Recent studies have documented the devastating impacts of these behavioural tendencies on personal relationships, particularly in relation to the erosion of trust among peers who no longer believe they will receive their copy of the promised photograph. To address this alarming trend, Project SHRINK (Surveillance-Hosted Repository for Images, No Keypad) was trialled in three iconic tourist destinations in Tajikistan, Uruguay and Madagascar. With strategically placed surveillance cameras and drones eliminating any possibility of privacy, visitors were informed that every conceivable angle of their visit would be captured, filtered and automatically shared to their mobile phones, rendering personal photography redundant. Preliminary findings suggest a 92% shrinkage in individual photography and a modest resurgence of eye contact. However, a concerning 317% increase in existential reflection was observed when travellers were no longer viewing these destinations through their screens. Therefore, while omnipresent surveillance can successfully shrink the duplication of photographs, it may also leave holidaymakers dangerously exposed to unfiltered interaction with the outside world.



Dr Pixel Layted is a Research Fellow of Everyday Surveillance at the Institute for Omniscient Observation. Along with observing holidaymakers, her current research interests include the ethical considerations of pretending your camera was ‘accidentally’ left on, the spiritual habits of drones, and empathetic surveillance. Pixel credits the success of her academic endeavours to the ever-present support of her Big Brother, Professor Al Way-Swatchin. In rare off-duty moments, she enjoys looking the other way (strictly off the record).



47. THE SHRINKING WORKFORCE: A MIN-MAX STUDY INTO THE GROWING PRACTICE OF NANOSURGERY

BY RHYS DENTON

93

Micro- and nano-technologies have been successfully used in clinical interventions for decades. Nanobots have proved to be the biggest advance in medical interventions since the discovery of penicillin ushered in the Antibiotic Era. However, in common with all other forms of robotics, nanobot treatments can fail unexpectedly due to sudden battery discharge, jams caused by fibrin and cholesterol deposits, or nanobots falling into cellular ditches. Recent advances in mammalian miniaturisation technology offer promising new avenues of medical treatment. In vivo trials of Direct Access NANosurgeons (DANAs) have proven to be an effective solution to robotic shortcomings, with humans now re-supplanting robots as the dominant treatment vector.

In this study, we evaluate the workforce impact of the SPAC.R miniaturisation system used by DANAs at the W. Salinski Institute, by directly observing twelve nanosurgical procedures. Using a min-max-method approach, we found that early cohorts of DANAs require physical fitness levels similar to that of astronauts to navigate from surgical sites to safe venous extraction locations. An unexpected finding of our work was how this requirement stretched to the researcher; we suggest marathon or Ironman completion be considered an essential qualification for future studies in this field.

Dr O Jones (he/him) is a Research Fellow at the Pym Centre for Micro-machine Study, where he is an expert in micro-robot-human interaction. This has been his first nano-study. He has observed as his work gets smaller, the papers and reports have got longer. His current research interests now focus on two key areas – nanotransportation viability in the human body, and study towards a Level 1 qualification on his newly-established Physical Qualifications Framework (QCF L1 – Couch to 5K).



48. SELECTIVE MINIATURISATION LEADS TO THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW HUMAN SPECIES

BY ELLA BREITFUß

95

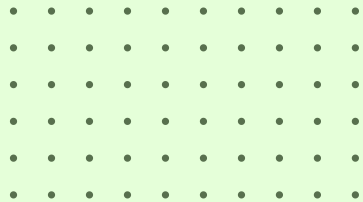
Although the climate crisis has been resolved, centuries of monocultural agriculture have caused irreversible soil degradation. Global food shortages continue to worsen. Conventional soil recovery strategies were found to be too slow to prevent mass famine. As an alternative, policymakers proposed using the 'shrinking beam' (a miniaturisation technology that reduces human body size) on individuals whose labour does not require large physical stature. The rationale is that smaller individuals have lower metabolic demands and require fewer resources, reducing overall energy consumption without shrinking the productive labour force. Using computational simulations, this study examined the demographic, energetic, and sociobiological consequences of selective miniaturisation. Agricultural recovery requires a 20% reduction in global energy use. In the model, this threshold was met by reducing the average size of cognitive-labour workers by 80%. However, extended simulations revealed that this intervention would generate reproductive isolation between size groups, driven initially by social segregation and later reinforced by physiological incompatibilities. Over generations, these pressures produced a distinct human subspecies. When technological advancement was incorporated, automation replaced manual labour, shifting work toward cognitive roles in which larger individuals gained political power.

Their combined authority and physical size enabled the forceful subjugation of the smaller lineage. These findings suggest that while selective miniaturisation could temporarily alleviate food scarcity, it risks irreversible human speciation and heightened social inequality. Sustainable ecological and food-system alternatives are therefore recommended.



ELLA BREITFUß // DR VERA FLUX

Dr Vera Flux (born Anna Wagner, 2018) is a scientist and public intellectual recognised for her work in designing and evaluating systemic responses to global crises. Raised in an Icelandic ‘doomer’ commune convinced of inevitable societal collapse, she rejected its determinism and chose to engage actively in preventing it. She pursued studies in human security and global governance alongside biology in Denmark, later earning a PhD in systems science from the University of Luxembourg. After contributing significantly to the development of climate recovery strategies, she founded the Flux Systems Lab in London, where she continues to lead research on adaptive crisis response.



49. EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF SHRINKING HUMAN LABOUR REQUIREMENTS IN OPTIMISATION CONTEXTS

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BY TOBIAS PRILL

In view of technological progress and numerous innovations that simplify work, more human and robotic workforces will be available to the economy and the labour market in the future. Contrary to fears of mass unemployment, analyses show that the adaptability of both employers and employees has always led to the creation of new fields of work in which the labour force has been used to increase economic profits. The WGBROP research team is investigating the extent to which the various individual and societal options and consequences in this process are challenging individuals, as well as politics and the economy – and whether a shrinking of some utopian visions of the future is necessary for a society to deal with this.

Resistance to optimisation processes, which may be a growing phenomenon, must also be shrunk or used as potential for meaningful, value-adding innovations in the labour market. The findings of the Working Group on Behavioural Research and Optimisation Processes (WGBROP) will be presented, eg studies with supportive robots within animal colonies and primate groups. This includes findings on the changed working behaviour of ant and bee colonies as well as primate packs after the introduction of various auxiliary robots into their collectives.



Prof. Walter Wørkbone has been researching human and animal work behaviour for over 40 years. His research expeditions to various locations around the world enabled him to establish the field of comparative animal-human work sociology and psychology. His pioneering work includes comparing the nest-building behaviour of fish, spiders, caterpillars, birds and mammals with human (im)productivity, human motivations and emotions in work situations. The research approach of the WGBROP, of which Wørkbone is chairman, not only attempts to consider animal behaviour as natural, but also to enable and observe an optimised animal working environment through technical support options such as robots.

50. ACCELERATED NEUROCORRELATIVE TRANSDUCTION OF NARRATIVE SUBSTRATES AS AN IMMERSIVE MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE

BY SAHAR NIKNAM

99

Cross-national statistics reveal a robust association between published novel titles per capita and scientific productivity, tech-transfer success and the number of Olympic medals a country secures in swimming (Phelps et al, 2010).

While standard pedagogical policy is established on the idea that reading's cognitive benefits stem directly from orthographic processing (McGonagall, 1997), an intriguing study by Keating et al (2014) demonstrated that it is exposure to narrative, or 'living the experiences of others', that accounts for the real impact. Later, Jackson et al (2015) supported this hypothesis with a longitudinal study showing that exposure to either books or film adaptations produces comparable levels of cognitive development.

Yet the pace of modern life rarely affords sustained engagement with narratives in any medium. Among academics, the ratio of movie and book titles on one's bucket list to those actually completed has grown exponentially, increasing roughly tenfold over the past decade (Reiner et al, 2023).

This work presents a prototype that compresses a novel into a 30-second multisensory experience, leveraging neurocorrelation to bypass evolutionary cognitive pathways and to convey core concepts of narratives directly. In initial tests (n=1,301,182), participants recalled key plot points with 94% accuracy after a single exposure.

SAHAR NIKNAM // PROF. ZULA MITTY



Prof. Zula Mitty is a cognitive scientist specialising in evolutionary cognition. Their research investigates inefficient and redundant neural pipelines and mechanisms, forged arbitrarily under the pressures of evolution. Driven to correct nature's missteps using immersive neurotechnologies, Prof. Mitty believes that by optimising neuromechanisms, we can accelerate cognitive processes while making them more energy-efficient. Prof. Mitty's paper, titled 'Xenophobia in Evolution', brought them this close to the 2024 Nobel Prize in Medicine. Since 2013, Prof. Mitty has been leading Dream Lab, a three-time consecutive recipient of the INOVATASION Prize (2010-2012).



51. THE WALLS ARE CLOSING IN: CAN WE FIND THE OPTIMAL OFFICE SIZE FOR ACADEMICS?

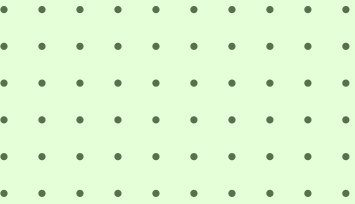
BY RHOD WOODHOUSE

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Office space is a constant source of tension in academia, with academics desiring working environments which are proportional to their own academic value. However, crumbling infrastructure is driving the need to downsize estate space to increase energy efficiency and reduce maintenance costs. If the optimum office size for academic work can be determined, then universities can strike a balance between staff wellbeing and space constraints. To address this, colleagues from Engineering, Computer Science, and Psychology renovated a corridor of five offices into a novel testing space. The walls of each office were fitted with a hydraulic lever system, connected to a controlling computer with psychic stochastic capabilities. This enabled the footprint of each office to be altered, independently of the other office sizes, based on the room occupant's perceived satisfaction with the space. Initial results were as expected; early career academics felt that smaller offices were sufficient, while more experienced academics expanded their offices by a modest amount. The study was concluded early when two Professor-level academics exceeded the parameters of the system by simultaneously trying to increase their own office space and decrease the remaining four.



Dr Thaddeus Aims is an organisational psychologist whose main area of research is the use of space to improve the working conditions of call centre workers. This study was his first foray into studying fellow academics. He now realises why so few studies use academics as participants.



52. MONEY, I SHRUNK THE QUIDS: THE ROLE OF FUNDING IN THE DECLINE OF ARTS EDUCATION AT UK UNIVERSITIES

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BY CHRISTOPHER WILEY

Within the increasingly market-driven economy of the contemporary UK university, general degrees in arts subjects have repeatedly come under fire given escalating expenses in the post-pandemic cost of living crisis vis-à-vis already unaffordable tuition fees that have hardly risen since 2012. Multiple closures of arts programmes and departments across the country have left others vulnerable and fighting for their continued existence in the face of declining numbers of suitably qualified applicants, many having already been decimated by substantial cost-cutting exercises. Those academics lucky enough to have survived in post find themselves under pressure from poorly informed upper senior management to achieve more with less.

This fictitious and completely unnecessary study of prevailing financial models in UK higher education provides a forensic investigation into why arts departments have proven less cost-effective than counterparts in the sciences in which funding is much more widely available and readily secured; industry-focused courses where destinations to employment are more clearly articulated; and business degrees with the capacity to attract significant numbers of lucrative overseas students. It takes as its point of departure the White Paper published earlier in the year by the Department of Culture and Irony, in which a Spokesperson for Humanities, Arts and Media (SHAM) commented that ‘the contribution of creative industries to the UK economy is only around £120,000,000,000 – why would universities ever want to invest in the future of that?’



Dr Chloë Shakespeare (she/her) is Professor of Stating the Obvious at the Institute of Studies, UK. She is best known for her work on optimising grant capture through the proposal of rehashed research with predictable outcomes, which was supported by a £3.3M grant from the How ‘On Earth’ Did This Research Get Funded Foundation. More recently she has activated a parallel career in education and the arts, since the simultaneous closure of the departments of dance, music, theatre, literature and languages as part of a corporate programme of strategic disinvestment left the Institute of Studies entirely devoid of expertise in the field.

53. PRODUCING AND PRESENTING AP**E IN A SHRINKING SPACE

ADA A. WANG

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Ap**e once flourished, visible on the street, yet now those who carry it risk questioning, intervention, or investigation. For most people, ap**e exists only as a consumer electronics brand. This study inquires what strategies actors use to continue producing and presenting ap**e under tightening constraints.

Based on five years of fieldwork (2040–2045), this paper finds: (1) ap**e is the term people use within trusted circles. It once appeared unaltered, then with one asterisk, then two, and perhaps just ‘the five alphabets’ in the future. (2) Ap**e juice remains permissible because its fragility to store and carry enables tighter official control, referred to as ‘some sort of juice’ in public. (3) Some other groups create a method to produce dried ap**e, similar to chips, named apdry and recently ‘AY’. It is easy to make, light, convenient to carry and hide. Its taste is the closest to the original flavour, but different. Further operational details are withheld for ethical reasons.

This paper illustrates how language, material and strategic circulation enable production and constrained preservation in an increasingly shrinking space. Yet it also raises the question whether ap**e survives or even exists as a fruit at all.

54. OPEN SCIENCE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS? ON PAW-PRINTS FAIR SNACKS, AND THE LIMITS OF PERFORMATIVE OPENNESS

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BY RIMMA GRISHMANOVSKAYA

Previous studies have argued that scientific collaboration between feline and human researchers facilitates academic career progression for both groups. However, recent observations suggest a gradual shrinkage in mutual trust and in the practical mechanisms that once supported such cooperation. Growing recognition of Open Science principles among feline researchers, such as expanded use of paw-prints as authorship indicators, emerging FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) snack-sharing expectations, and a preference for unobstructed over-the-shoulder viewing of ongoing work, has introduced new tensions. Human researchers, meanwhile, continue to follow the Adjar Science agenda, a model of openness characterised by symbolic transparency and a door left technically, if minimally, ajar. These mismatched commitments to accessibility and participation have placed established collaborative routines under increasing strain.

Drawing on recent observational material and conceptual analysis, we argue that current cross-species research practices no longer provide a stable basis for long-term cooperation. We propose the need for a revised conceptualisation of openness, one that acknowledges emerging norms, recognises the shrinking tolerance for ambiguous access and offers clearer guidance for managing asymmetries in expectations and snack allocation. Such a reframing may help re-establish the conditions necessary for balanced and sustainable feline-human research partnerships.



Dr Mira L Whiskerton is based in the Department of Epistemic Interfaces at the Royal Institute of Comparative Curiosity. She investigates the organisational, spatial, and epistemic dynamics of feline-human scientific collaboration. Her research employs mixed-method approaches, including ambient behavioural tracking, situational snack cartography, and longitudinal door-position analysis, to examine how openness is enacted across species. She has published on paw-print recognition systems, the micro-politics of shared surface occupation, and the thresholds at which performative openness becomes structurally unstable.

55. THE SHRINKSPHERE EFFECT: CONCEPTUALISING SOCIAL MEDIA'S COMPRESSION OF IDENTITY AND SPACE

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BY ALETHEA BRADLEY

Over two decades ago, Professor Met Adata explored the idea of a pocket-sized world with you at its centre. Focussing on how the compact social media globe can make you a better person, this study shifts the narrative from the 'I' to the role of social acceptance and superficial connections.

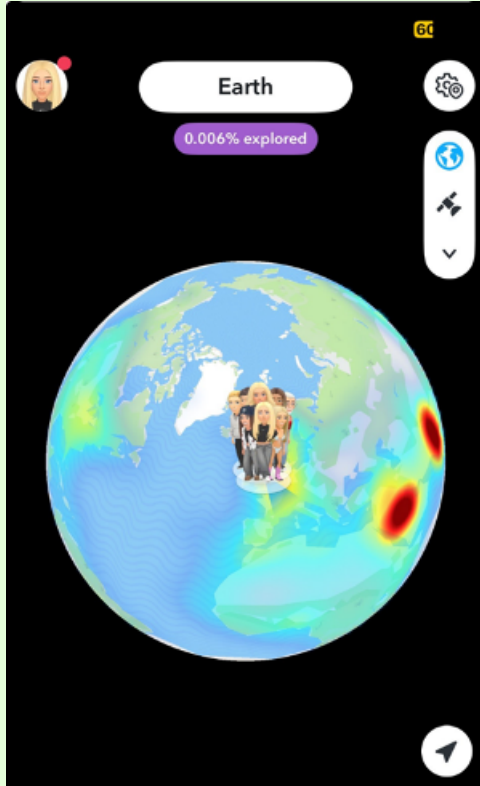
Grounded in cartology – the only ology deemed purposeful, the research employed netnography to avoid real contact as nobody really wants to know the unfiltered truth behind the Bitmoji. Random sampling (but not too random) was applied across 900 million pseudonymous users hidden behind hashtags and cat filters.

Analysis revealed participants clustered into 'mini-worlds', dominated by 'social lepers' or 'idolised socialites'. The most revealing finding was that we are all reduced to mere data stored beneath the Atlantic consuming vast energy to keep your mini-me cool and collected.

This led to the concept of the ‘ShrinkSphere’ – a globe compressed by connectivity, enabling users to find like-minded communities while aspiring to unattainable ideals. Future research seeks funding to explore ‘red zones,’ believed to host competitive ‘like’ battles among ‘idolised socialites’. Advocates propose these zones may warrant designation as ‘social media wonders of the world,’ emblematic of engineered authenticity and ephemeral engagement. UNESCO consultation remains pending.

ALETHEA BRADLEY // PROFESSOR H ASH TAG

Professor H Ash Tag is a Reader and Principal Lecturer at the University of It’s a Small World. They specialise in classification research and have published extensively in The Journal of International World Rankings – the number 1 ranking journal according to the JIWR. Professor Tag’s interests have recently branched out into social media research as they have realised that 4-star publications are over-rated, and that following the latest hashtag trends is much more in line with their actual IQ.



56. USING YOUR LOAF: CONFIDENCE AS AN OUTCOME OF SOCIAL LIBERATION

BY CARINA BUCKLEY

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This paper reports on the results of a longitudinal multidisciplinary study that aimed to explore the mechanisms by which a LOAF can transmogrify into a BAP. The phenomenon of Ladies of Advanced Fabulosity (LOAF) is already well documented in the literature: the sense of social liberation entailed by perimenopause, described comprehensively by H Artee (2022), and its interactions with the abundant ends of tethers commonly found at this point in the lifecycle, as evaluated by WT Flush (2024), have together done much to advance our understanding of the potential for increased confidence in this demographic. However, what is less well understood is how certain LOAFs gradually shrink to become a more intensely concentrated version of themselves, or a BAP: Brilliant Although Pocket-sized.

Nuclear spectrography of a sample BAP detected ironically elevated levels of the critical YEAST factor: Young-at-heart, Established and Straight Talking. When studied ethnographically, it was hypothesised and later confirmed that a significant confounding variable was the presence of critical rates of WINE (Women Initiating Notable Enjoyment), which may relate to the classic increase in the BAP/glass size ratio recognised as a key indicator of BAP progression. This study concludes that BAPs convert physical material into confidence, with exposure over a long period of time to other LOAFs being a primary driver; higher YEAST levels are an outcome rather than a catalyst. The sustained gathering and mutual support of LOAFs is therefore important enough to warrant becoming government policy and structurally embedded everywhere.

Dr Bree Oshe is Senior Lecturer in Hormonal Methodologies at the National Institute for Creative Engineering. She has dedicated her extensive and illustrious career to investigating how society can be made better. Many of her findings are summarised in the key papers ‘Eat, drink, and be Mary: how Mary Poppins inspires dietary moderation’, ‘Control-Alt-Delete: harnessing the unassailable confidence of Jessica Fletcher’, and the classic ‘BUNS, ROLLs and BAPs: a dough-based typology of demographic development’. Dr Oshe classifies herself as a ROLL (Receptive Of Limitless Living) and as such is keen to start a rock band, just as soon as she gets around to learning the guitar.

CARINA BUCKLEY // DR BREE OSHE



The study's sample BAP photographed next to a wine glass for scale. BAP progression in this case is advanced.

57. THE SHRINKING SCHOLAR: SOCIAL SHRINKAGE AS SURVIVAL STRATEGY ON THE LONELY EdD ROUTE

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BY JUSTINA MBANG

Doctoral research is rarely a smooth ride; it is a rollercoaster of focus, tears, isolation, and occasional triumphs. The EdD journey, often dubbed ‘the lonely route’ (2025, np), raises the perennial question: does the EdD really matter, or is it simply an elaborate headache (Frustrated, 2024)? Researchers are urged to write critically, to make their voices echo through endless drafts, and yet often feel they are ‘never quite getting it right’ (Cantsee, 2024, np).

This study introduces social shrinkage as a playful yet purposeful tool, a way of trimming the excess, narrowing social loads, and creating headspace for critical thought. In short, ‘less is more’ (Garbage in Garbage out, 19) and ‘subtraction is addition’ (Rigid, 2022, 42).

Using a qualitative design, purposively sampled EdD researchers stressed, stretched, and occasionally magical gathered in semi-structured focus groups to share their shrunk-down frustrations. Transcripts were thematically analysed through the ‘Garbage in, Garbage out’ lens, with triangulation, reflexivity, and member checking ensuring that even chaos was rigorously contained. Ethics approval, predictably labyrinthine, was eventually secured, allowing informed consent and confidentiality to shrink into place (the ologies, 2021).

Findings suggest that shrinking workloads, feedback pressures and family commitments may paradoxically expand focus. Out of this emerges the framework of ‘social self-rejection’, a recognition of the lonely, yet strangely liberating, doctoral path.



Dr Shri Kage is Principal Lecturer in the Department of Educational Shrinkage, School of Social Morphology, University of Sri Lanka. They hold a doctorate in shrinking connections in higher dimensions.

58. COARSE WORD SIFT: A ONE BEAT THINK PIECE

BY NICOLA KIRKBY (UG)
AND JO WOOD (OG)

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Shrunk to word count, this work adds to those that have looked at the mark on sense left by the forms of speech and script we use. Our self-looked-at think piece spans ten years in which we have vowed that all talk and script we use must be one-beat words. Such is our faith in the form of our plan that we have changed our names by deed poll to Og and Ug. We act as sieves that shrink what we hear to what we say to ask:

- How does the coarse word sift shift our stance in groups, from small crowds to long-term folk views?
- What forms of not-said sense form a norm when no route to speech with two or more beats can take that form?
- Can talk routes be traced back to ways in which folk once moved from place to place?

We look back at more than nine-times-ten-to-the-six words from our self-notes in the field, for the length of our work in the form of both text and speech. We looked at how word sense shaped our gaze, our arms and hands, and shrunk our front brains and long-term fit with folk.



Ug and Og's Think Lab, Og, via ChatGPT (prompt: view of hills and trees from round cave with fire), 2025.

Authorial infuriants, **Oggymandias/Ugphues** insisted upon restricting themselves within monosyllabic sanctuaries (so-called 'mind-think-spaces'), delegating correspondence via faculty colleague amanuenses. Beyond limited expression, resulting refusals included: emails, scholarly review, administration, teaching polysyllabites ('more-than-one-beat-word-thought-tribe'), social events, hygiene, conferences, departmental fora. Faculty rejoiced tidings relating Oggymandias/Ugphues's retreat into speleological obscurity. Herewith, consider abstracted Monolab's proposed infratentorial 'findings' concerning prefrontal cortex shrinkage. Abstract submitted reluctantly following cranial percussive prompting.



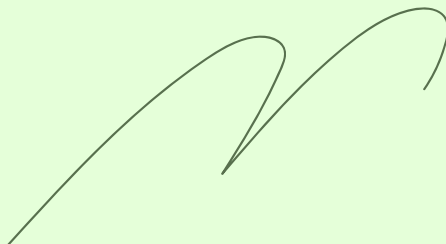
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