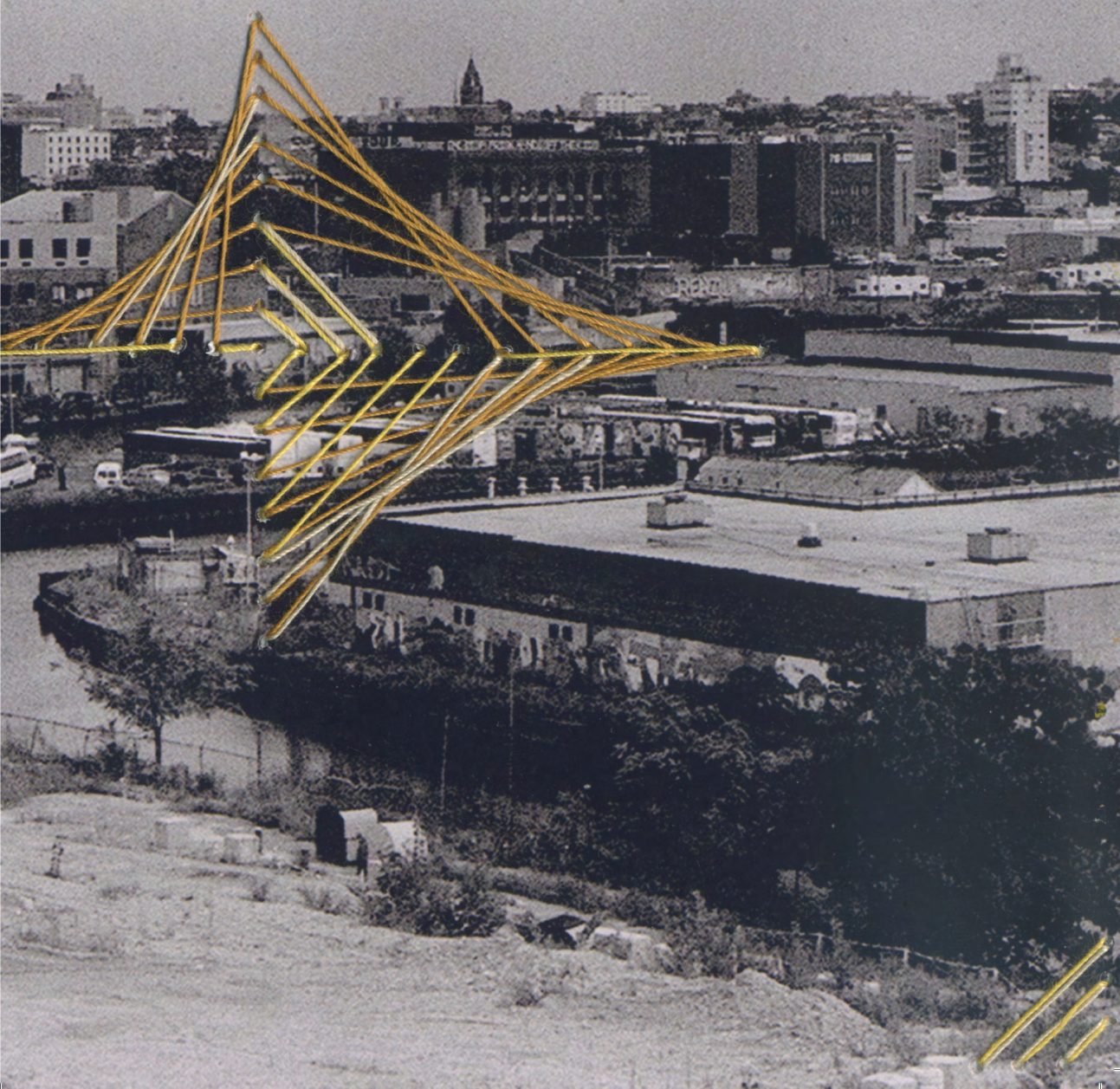


THE
ISIS
HILARY TERM 2013





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ISIS

ISIS attempts to make its matte pages look glossy: styled and professional, grown-up and contrived. But *ISIS* is chaotic. The editorial was written at half three, the morning before deadline; our printers demanding the finished product before our writers had approved their final copies. Our tutors are tyrannical, our essays too short, and *ISIS* is correspondingly shambolic. This term, we've tried to bring you an issue that faces up honestly to its disarray.

Nowadays, our hands remain restless and underused. It is so rare that we create anything tactile; we seldom sculpt, produce or cultivate a skill. Dissatisfied with this, and inspired by our early predecessors, we tried to make this issue ourselves. Where we could, this *ISIS* was gathered and assembled by hand, all tactile and textile; we tried to stitch it, draw it, paint it out of oil, shoot it on film, or construct it from cardboard cast-offs.

We have our first editor, in 1892, to thank for inspiring us to push through the confusion. He faced a remarkably similar situation. At one period we were in such a parlous state that we had ideas of "chucking the whole thing up," but the strength and variety of our Editorial vocabulary stood us in good stead, and by means of this gift we were enabled to instil into the minds of our assistants a sense of their duty to that large and influential section of the Oxford public which has learnt to look forward with a feeling almost amounting to craving for the production of our next number.

We have been bombarded with essays on the Binomial Theorem, the Eight Hours' Question from an Athenian point of view, verses on the provisions of the Lex Papia Poppoea, and similar antediluvian monsters, and other equally indigestible "copy." Against all these difficulties and disadvantages we have manfully striven. We have stood firm. And here is the result of our efforts.

** With thanks to Editor, 8 June 1892*

CULTURE

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Richard Foord

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RENAISSANCE PORN

In 1527 Pietro Aretino published *I Modi*, a collection of sixteen sexually explicit sonnets. The sonnets were accompanied by sixteen equally explicit engravings originally by Marcantonio Raimondi. The Italian Renaissance had just created the world's first hard-core porn magazine.

The engravings in *I Modi* are remarkable on account of their sheer openness. The subjects are exhibitionists having sex in rolling Arcadian hills, a sexual embodiment of the pastoral ideal. Gone are the diminutive penises of classical art: the figures depicted pre-empt the proportions of modern pornography. The images are meta-fictional. They show voyeurs, often cherubs, standing next to copulating couples, leering on unashamedly, directly acknowledging the audience. *I Modi's* engravings leave nothing to the imagination. The reader need not work hard to unpick Aretino's sonnets: "My monstrous dart, my polished lance in place, / With my two henchmen bringing up the rear."

The fact that pornography existed in the Italian Renaissance is hardly surprising. Authors and readers have been getting hot under the collar since

antiquity: Ovid tells us that "there are a thousand ways to do it," John Donne tells his lover to "as liberally, as to a midwife, show thyself," and Rihanna asks "meet me in my boudoir and make my body say ah ah." Despite its established place in cultural history, however, pornography is still something subversive, even dangerous. A 2008 production of *I Modi* at London's Cadogan Hall was cancelled following allegations of obscenity.

The fact that the porn industry was covered in a recent Louis Theroux documentary – a man whose previous projects involve filming the Westborough Baptist Church, Neo-Nazi groups, and street gangs of Johannesburg – tells us something of its cultural status in the modern world. In stark historical contrast to now, *I Modi* was targeted specifically towards the upper and intellectual classes, and had little popular dissemination. Aretino himself was viewed as something of a high roller, sharing a patron with Il Sodoma and Raphael. His depiction of sex may not have had many boundaries, but his work's material circulation certainly did. There is an irony in the way that modern technology has made pornography ubiquitous, yet conservative sensibilities have forced it to lurk in the shadows, rather than sauntering on Arcadian hills, swollen members proudly on display.

RICHARD FOORD

"MY MONSTROUS DART,
MY POLISHED LANCE IN PLACE,
WITH MY TWO HENCHMEN
BRINGING UP THE REAR."



COMEDY IN THE CLASSICAL

It is common practice to create comedy sketches around serious classical pieces. The first movement of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* is frequently used for this purpose: it provides the basis for sketches by Monty Python, PDQ Bach and Rowan Atkinson. Atkinson is fond of using classical music as a foil for his buffoonery. He 'co-performed' *Chariots of Fire* alongside the London Symphony Orchestra at the Olympic Opening Ceremony, repeatedly hitting a single note on the keyboard while acting increasingly bored.

Classical music has long had a serious façade of intellectual superiority. On closer inspection that serious image gives way to a comical one, as it becomes clear that humour is deeply instilled in all forms of classical music, and has been throughout the centuries. This comic value goes largely unrecognised, generally identified only by tiresome, self-congratulatory audience members. But the comic facility of classical music is actually vast, and the jokes needn't be groan-worthy.

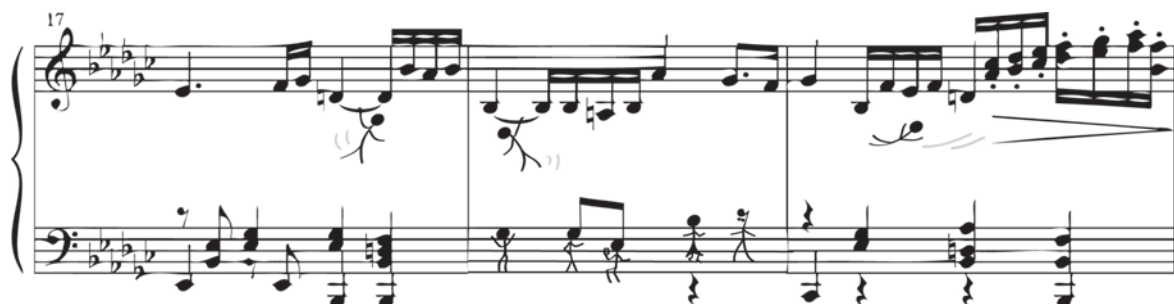
Vocal music lends itself most easily to comic manipulation. The Austrian Romantic composer Hugo Wolf penned some of the finest examples of humorous songs in the canon. One describes a hungover poet who misidentifies his state as one of poetic fervour, and calls upon his muse for creative inspiration. The muse ridicules the poet by dictating in a mock-epic style, with clichéd imagery and clumsy rhythms. The poet eventually returns to wine for salvation. Wolf's music enhances the humour of the text, originally written by Eduard Mörike: the song opens as quietly as possible, sparing the fragile poet any unnecessary noise, while the piano's 'hiccups' soon establish his hungover state. When the singer enters, Wolf instructs the performer to sing with a hollow-sounding, hoarse voice, testament to the effects of a heavy evening of drinking.

Just as vocal music draws out and emphasises humorous lyrics, instrumental music written to a specific text often accentuates the humour of that text. In 'Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks', by Richard Strauss, Till is mischievous throughout. He pokes fun at the clergy, engages in pseudo-intellectual gibberish with learned professors at universities, and flirts shamelessly with attractive girls. Although Till's actions are only hinted at, the music is infused with humorous elements that are suggestive enough to make audiences laugh out loud.

There is a clear difficulty in injecting humour into an art form without words, and so those who have achieved it have been elevated in audiences' eyes for centuries. Joseph Haydn is widely considered a master of humour in instrumental music. In his famous *Farewell Symphony* members of the orchestra gradually leave the stage during the last movement until only two muted violins remain. Celebrated also is his *Surprise Symphony*, during which a sudden fortissimo chord is played at the end of an otherwise piano opening theme of the second movement, in order to waken the snoozing members of his audiences. In the lesser-known *Il Distratto Symphony* members of the string section are instructed to retune their instruments halfway through the finale, before starting the movement again, making for an amusingly anti-climactic ending.

These examples are not unique. Classical music has worked hand in hand with comedy for centuries, but this is frequently hidden beneath a veneer of solemnity, which does it no favours.

ROSALIND ISAACS





REBRANDING BOREDOM

MONOTONY REAPPRECIATED

The patient cocks his thumbs out and draws his fists to his chest. Music tinkles in the background of the advert as the camera retreats and he turns, with his penis tucked between his legs, his hands performing a charade of nipples. Other patients flick at a light switch and a fountain of water is run from a tap to the puddled floor. One man pings a nurse's bra strap as she bends over. A woman's voiceover tells us that the devil makes work for idle thumbs. "Keep yours busy. Text another Virgin Mobile for 3p."

Dickens didn't invent boredom, but he was the first to write the word in his 1853 novel *Bleak House*, a serial about an inert Court of Chancery case in a mud-drenched London, and the 'chronic malady of boredom'. Recently, Motorola honed the term to fit our restless world and began using the term 'microboredom' for the thin slices of free time from which they could offer customers relief in the form of Tetris and Snake.

Seneca talked of the feeling as a kind of nausea, a diagnosis that lingers on in the complaint of being 'sick of something' or 'bored to death', and one that propels Sartre's famous existential tract *Nausea*. One Roman official was even memorialised in the 2nd century AD with a public inscription thanking him for rescuing an entire town from *taedia*,

or boredom. But boredom scholar Peter Tooley sees the feeling as a certificate of wellbeing. Like satiety, boredom is not normally for the starving.

In the Christian tradition, the 'noonday demon' *acedia* was a word for the listlessness that was a precursor to the deadly sin of sloth. It was a danger that could slither into cloistered lives and leave its victims unable to work or pray. Boredom became both a crime and a punishment when sitting in prison cells became a Quaker penalty in itself.

This year, James Ward held a Boring Conference where 500 people bought tickets to gather and listen to talks on electric hand dryers and double yellow lines. Ward is selling boredom, or at least our interest in boredom, back to the masses, at £15 a ticket. It is not a celebration – that would be too stimulating – but a gentle defence of life's pockets of dullness. Ward works for "a high-street retailer" and he likes Twitter because the 140 character limit and immediacy of upload guarantees a thought often not worth saying; a Prufrock measuring out lives in Tweets not coffee spoons.

At one of Ward's festivals, William Barrett asked a crowd to brace themselves for five piping-hot minutes of inertia, and recited 415 colours listed in a paint catalogue for his 'Like Listening to Paint Dry'. There have

been talks on draws in test match cricket, discontinued IBM cash registers, and the non-regulated series of toaster settings on the market. The 2011 sponsor was Hi-Cone, the packaging firm responsible for the plastic strips that hold together cans of drink.

Our popular interest in boredom is not revolutionary. Ward rebrands and commercialises the same interest that sold copies of Nicholas Baker's *The Mezzanine* in 1988, a book of the heavily footnoted thoughts of a man during his lunch break. The same interest brought Gilbert and George to fame as they stood, as though waiting, for seven long minutes in their video *A Portrait of the Artists as Young Men* (1972). Rain falls on a sound effects tape and George smokes a cigarette. A whole generation spent the best years of their lives watching housemates chew their nails on Channel 4. Eddie Izzard now sells out stadiums by imitating a ripening fruit.

Ward is not theorising Andy Warhol, who liked boredom be-

WARD IS SELLING BOREDOM, OR AT LEAST OUR INTEREST IN BOREDOM, BACK TO THE MASSES, AT £15 A TICKET

cause "the more you look at the exact same thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel." While this rebranding of boredom may seem as painfully first-world as allotments dug by people who shop at Waitrose, the whole enterprise actually has less thought behind it than you might suspect.

Ward is a man who made an inventory of Cadbury Twirl prices in dozens of Central London corner shops as a public service.

When his girlfriend was punched in the street and Ward's phone smashed against a brick wall, the real damage was the loss of his back catalogue of neat pictures of Twirls across the city. He dislikes that some people keep books in their toilets. He asks me what kind of nightmarish voices they must have in their heads to mean they can't stand silence for that period of time.

The Boring Conference also builds on the less commercial values held dear by the Dull Men's Club, now a global organisation but which originally capped its membership at seventeen – the number of chairs they had in the meeting room. The website of the Dull Men's Club has pictures of roundabouts in Swindon which are posted multiple times because "there is safety in repetition."

The Dull Men petition for the London Eye to be slowed down, and they have a fan in Kathy from Nebraska who likes dull men because "they appreciate women who needlepoint." The Boston branch of this society was founded for grieving widowers. With a side of their beds left empty, these men had somewhere to talk about airport baggage carousels and raking leaves. There are no fees here though; only a dollar each put towards coffee.

Before Ward branched out into wholesale boredom, he ran an appreciation society for stationery. I ask him whether its appeal was the quirkiness, the same irony responsible for the sale of nasty jumpers and our injection of scenes with fake nostalgia by the Instagram syringe. The irony that sells out the Boring Conference. "Do people join because it is funny to go to a stationary club?" He sounds surprised, and a little disappointed in me: "No, people genuinely like stationery."

ELIZABETH CULLIFORD



MASS Hysteria

July 1518 lives long in the memory of the people of Strasbourg. At the height of a hot summer a distraught French peasant stepped out onto the street, and spontaneously and fervently began to dance. In what must rank as one of the strangest social phenomena in history, she was soon joined by over 400 fellow dancers who, over the course of a month, were afflicted by similarly distressed, trance-like convulsions, dancing day and night, often without pausing to eat, drink or rest. Contemporary sources are unambiguous on the topic: cathedral sermons, physician notes and even documents created by the Strasbourg City Council each make specific reference to this 'dancing'. While local authorities looked on, bemused, many of the participants died, struck down by dehydration, heart attacks and sheer exhaustion.

Explanations for the dancing outbreak abounded. Concerned burghers soon discredited astrological or supernatural causes, finally settling on 'hot blood', a quasi-scientific explanation which argued that abnormal internal temperatures were disrupting the brain's ability to function. Elsewhere, the local council constructed a wooden stage and employed musicians to keep the dancers moving, con-

vinced that the mania could be expunged by repetition, a perverse and fatal move.

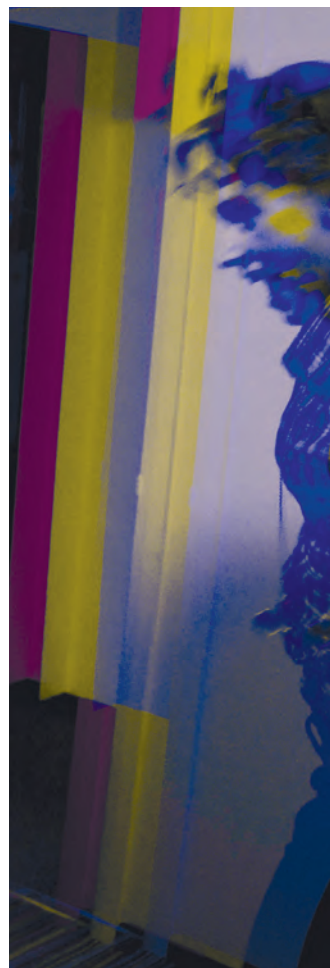
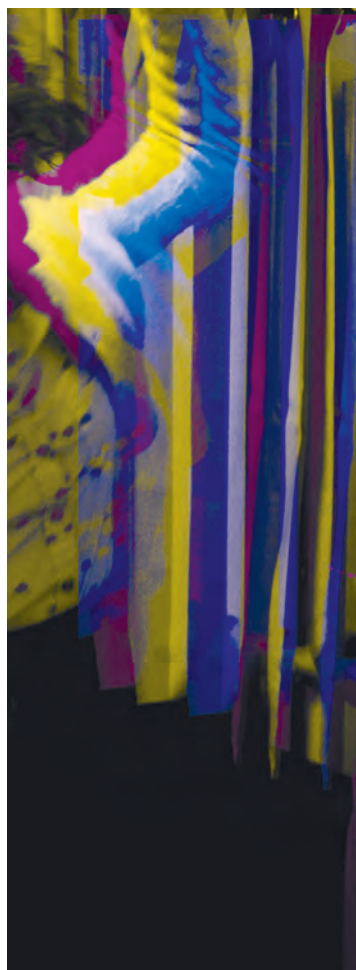
In the centuries that followed, the Strasbourg dancing plague became something of a fixation for scientists. In 1952, Eugene Backman posited a theory that the dancers were made manic by 'ergot', a mould that grew on the rye that made up much of the population's diet and when consumed had hallucinogenic effects similar to those caused by LSD. John Waller, in his *A Time to Dance, A Time to Die*, rejects the idea that the consumption of this substance could provoke "coordinated movements that last[ed] for days". He argues that the dancing plague of 1518 was an instance of mass hysteria, the spontaneous manifestation of the same or similar hysterical physical symptoms by more than one person.

There are hundreds of recorded cases of mass hysteria, including the West Bank Fainting Epidemic – a 1983 incident in which Palestinian teenage girls in the Gaza Strip fainted en masse, struck down by a false rumour of 'chemical warfare' – or a 2007 incident in Mexico City in which a group of students at a boarding school temporarily lost the ability to walk. It involves a collective belief in the presence of some ailment which

induces tangible physical reactions; such reactions are later proven to be psychosomatic, conjured by a mutual pressure on the part of the victims.

Though the psychological cause of the Strasbourg case was eventually explained, attributing contemporary outbreaks of collective panic to irrational quasi-scientific explanations is not as archaic a tendency as one might expect. Whereas in accounting for the dancing plague Waller benefited from the comfortable objectivity afforded by centuries of hindsight, contemporary psychologists and scientists must wrestle with the expectations of a desperate and often belligerent body of victims eager to find a physical cause. In late 2011, twelve cheerleaders simultaneously developed Tourette's-like symptoms in a school in LeRoy, New York, and were afflicted by tics and convulsions for many months. This resulted in a state-funded investigation, the first line of inquiry of which was to seek out pernicious bodies in the local environment. When no such bodies were found and the investigation returned a verdict of 'mass hysteria', parents of the afflicted girls were insulted and demanded a fresh report.

As Dr Phil Stringer, Senior Educational Psychologist for Hampshire County Council



WE ARE FASCINATED BY THE CULT OF MYSTERY
THAT SURROUNDS IT, THE PERVERSIVE SENSATION
OF THE FARFETCHED AND RIDICULOUS

attests: "Once you start talking about illnesses that are psychological in origin, people can get very defensive about it – there still seems to be some stigma attached to it, in a way that there isn't with physical illness." Moreover, the parents' insistence on the presence of a physical irritant only served to validate the girls' psychological instability in their own minds. As Stringer notes, "We have to remember that the parent-child dynamic is very powerful and in some cases adults can unwittingly talk their children into being ill."

Stringer is actually surprised that instances of mass hysteria aren't more common in educational institutions, arguing that the conditions are "ripe for outbreaks". Schools cultivate the ideal milieu for hysterical behaviour, defined as they are by high densities of impressionable young people who are being continually exposed to a cocktail of different social and academic pressures. Indeed, some of the more notable instances of mass hysteria have evolved in primary schools. The Tanganyika Laughter Epidemic of 1962, for example, saw the laughter of three girls in a boarding school spread rapidly to 95 of the 159 pupils and then on to surrounding villages, affecting communities in Uganda and Tanzania over the course of eight months. Children returning home spread the hysteria to their families, damaging local economic and

social stability.

In many of the school cases, the pattern by which the girls succumbed to the laughter is predictable: the behaviour of the eldest and most socially prominent girls informed that of the younger students. Stringer suggests this is an "identification process", as younger, more impressionable students seek to emulate their older counterparts.

But why do these incidents attract such concerted interest from scientists, psychologists and the general public? What is it about mass hysteria that provokes such widespread inquisition? The phenomenon is appealing to the sane observer as an interesting oddity, an alien occurrence that is more suited to vaudeville theatre than everyday life. We are fascinated by the cult of mystery that surrounds it, the pervasive sensation of the far-fetched and ridiculous, despite recent scientific explanations of its origin. It is, ultimately, interesting because it appears so very unusual, so inhuman, and because it does not appear to threaten us, the rational onlooker.

Such a condescending assessment may well be flawed. Mass hysteria is fascinating precisely because it is the exaggeration of a natural and undeniable human propensity – to be vulnerable to mass emotional excitement. Whether screaming Beatlemania or the reaction to the

death of Princess Diana, modern society places individuals under pressure, creating incidents of mass hysteria, just without the academic title. The mass outpouring of emotion in the week after Diana's death was watched sceptically by many observers. Over one million bouquets were left at her Kensington home, while news reports showing men, women and children sobbing uncontrollably became commonplace. The *Telegraph's* Ed West argued that tributes to the late Princess turned into an "orgy of sentimentality" which created the impression that "an invading army had spiked the water supply and everyone had gone bonkers overnight." Though West's tone is jovial his point is clear: this sort of outpouring of collective emotion was a self-perpetuating frenzy, akin to episodes of mass hysteria, rather than a considered phase of mourning.

What is evident is that any pretensions toward an objective, impartial perspective on mass hysteria are misguided – the academic validation afforded to the Strasbourg Dancing Plague or the Tanganyika Laughter Epidemic does not render such events as unrecognizable social anomalies. Instead, these incidents, bizarre as they may seem, reveal some sad but enduring human fallibilities – under intense pressure, there is always the threat that humans may resort to panic, desperation and mindless conformity.

DYLAN
HOLMES WILLIAMS



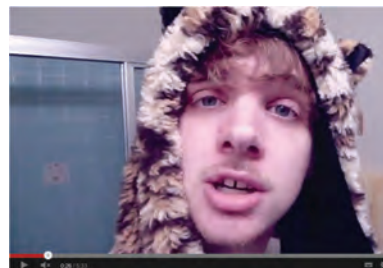
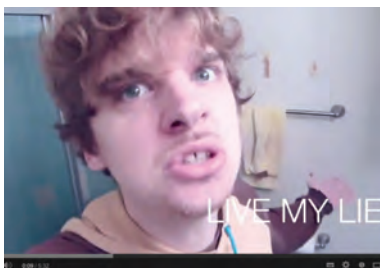
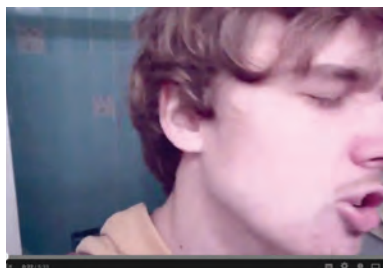
AIKATERINI CHATZIKIDI



ISIS EYE

CTRL ALT LIT

WRITING FROM THE RECESSES OF THE INTERNET



In a five-and-a-half-minute YouTube clip titled ‘we’re alive at the same time :)’, the most recently uploaded video on a 156-video channel, a boyish twenty-something is walking around shouting non-sequiturs. We see him outdoors in the dark, telling the camera “I caught my wife appearing offline to me. From that day forward, our marriage was over” with restrained anger. The video cuts to a bathroom, where we see his face in full glow, a nasal voice emitting through gap teeth, shouting “I am the Sean Parker of twerking. I invented the Napster of twerking! What social network of twerking did you invent?”

At the 2:35 minute mark, he begins reading from Whitman’s preface to *Leaves of Grass*, accompanied by increasingly dramatic music and sweeping footage of jungles, arctic tundras,

and mountain ranges. By the end of the video he has inhabited numerous voices and shouted at length about “sucking my own dick”. Bizarre and borderline-upsetting though the video may be, it is impossible to look away. This is the unexpected charisma of Steve Roggenbuck at work, the self-described poet/blogger who may be changing the world of literature. Maybe.

2012 has been a good year for Roggenbuck, marking his departure on a tour across the US, hosting poetry readings, building a fan-base and sleeping on the couches of friends and strangers alike. It has also been a good year for Alternative Literature, abbreviated as Alt Lit, the enigmatic movement Roggenbuck has come to represent.

A concrete definition for Alt Lit is hard to come by. In an interview for *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*, an online

magazine, three prominent Alt Lit figures, Frank Hinton, Noah Cicero, and Stephen Tully Dierks, attempt to answer the ‘What is Alt Lit?’ question. There are nods to Tao Lin, whose minimalist style and intense engagement with the internet have made him the quasi-official godfather of the movement. Hinton compared Lin to Christ, seeing Lin as the instigator of Alt Lit but not a true practitioner himself. When asked about this supposed role, Lin responded, “I don’t feel anything. I don’t think it has had a concrete effect on my life, except maybe it has attracted some people, that I like, to my writing, but I’m not sure which people exactly.” Lin’s self-described “bleak” answers to my every question regarding Alt Lit, two of which began “I don’t know” and “I don’t want to know,” are even bleaker than his standard interview responses.

Lin has little to say on the subject and seems neither honoured nor offended by his ascribed influence. His instinctive response – to post a screenshot of our email correspondence on his Facebook page – is more illuminating than any of his answers.

What the interview does exhibit is Alt Lit's emphasis on community. A great deal of its fiction and poetry has unifying aesthetic qualities: an ironic sense of humour, a fascination with mortality and a rejection of mainstream publishing conventions. In an interview conducted via Facebook messages, Roggenbuck explains that he understands Alt Lit "as a community. There are some shared stylistic moves and

is one of support and positivity which makes its blogs, the nerve centres of the community, home to writing of vastly different quality. Roggenbuck curtly tells me "There is not objectively better writing. Everybody likes to read different things." The general consensus in the Alt Lit world is that 'good' and 'bad' do not exist so long as the movement has a positive impact on the lives of readers and writers. This optimistic vision is attenuated by the aggressive marketing of the shrewdest internet writers. Those with the most notorious online presences tend to get the most attention.

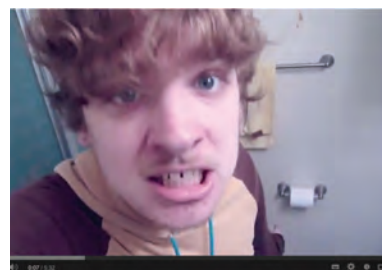
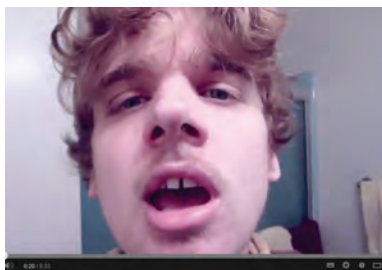
Predictably, the movement's ambiguous status has shifted

goes for Alt Lit icon Megan Boyle, whose *Selected Unpublished Blog Posts of a Mexican Panda Express Employee* is some of the only work which genuinely reflects the self-conscious entitlement of a life saturated by social media. A sample excerpt:

"i want my legs to be 50 feet long and i want to step on things and say 'oops' very sarcastically

i want to interrupt a game of magic the gathering by busting through a wall on a motorcycle

i want to delete everything from someone's computer except a giant ms paint picture of a dick that takes forever to load."



ideas, but the definitive way to become 'Alt Lit' is simply to associate with other people who are 'Alt Lit.' Yet 'Alt Lit' is not merely a tag. If not aesthetically, it is at least on some level linked philosophically, but the line between online community and artistic movement is as uncertain as the wispy moustache on Roggenbuck's face.

The question remains though: is it any good? Surely the under-edited, hastily-posted creative writing of young adults must lack quality. And it usually does. In fact, much of the work is produced by people with few writerly aspirations beyond their own blogs. The Alt Lit universe

attention away from the work itself. Take, for example, the one hundred poems in Roggenbuck's *DOWNLOAD HELVETICA FOR FREE.COM*. The poems are short excerpts from his MSN Messenger history printed in large Helvetica font, ranging from the ironically mundane "AMANDA HAS / OFFICIALLY / REMOVED ME / FROM HER / TOP FRIENDS", to the even more ironically mundane, "THEY JUST / SHOWED THE / WORLD'S / SMALLEST / ADULT BUTT / ON TV... / IT WAS WEIRD." Perhaps more Lil B than Kerouac, more meme than conventional poem, the work is, at the very least, something different. The same

Even if Alt Lit were to die out within the year, written off as a childish trend, what it signals is historic. The internet is not quite terra incognita in the literary world; email correspondence features in numerous novels and young adult author Lauren Myracle's *Internet Girls* series is written entirely in instant message format. Roggenbuck cites as an influence the relatively recent phenomenon of Flarf poetry which harnesses the randomness of internet-generated search terms for content. Alt Lit, however, remains the first body of literary work which embraces spilling one's guts in a Facebook status. Inevitably, mainstream literature

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"I CAUGHT MY WIFE APPEARING OFFLINE TO ME. FROM THAT DAY FORWARD OUR MARRIAGE WAS OVER."

will have to accommodate the internet-heavy childhoods of recent generations, and the shift in style and content could be colossal. But for now, we have Alt Lit.

Roggenbuck's next step is giving the movement a presence IRL, 'in real life'. "I'm very inter-

ested in helping develop IRL Alt Lit scenes, encouraging people to set up reading series, connecting people who live in the same city," which is why he has packed up his laptop and taken to travelling cross-country. "My relationship with 'IRL' is one of the more fraught aspects of my life... I love my work, and my work is primarily on the internet, so I love the internet. I love my friends, and my friends are primarily on the internet, so I love the internet. IRL tasks can feel clumsy and inefficient compared to the internet. Nearly everything good in my lief [sic] was made possible by all the social networking I've done in the last two years,

but I'm also aware that the best moments in my lief [sic] are IRL. I'm glad the travelling has kind of forced me to be IRL a decent amount this year, even if I resent it at times."

It's impossible to know if Alt Lit will find success offline. Much of it depends on the willingness of timid, pseudonymous writers to crawl out of the DSL-lined woodwork and share their work in person. But for the foreseeable future, Steve Roggenbuck will straddle both domains, living online, on your couch, or both.

ANDREW RIDKER

SOVIET SURVIVAL KIT



There is no sex in the USSR..." replied Lyudmila, but the concluding part of her sentence was drowned out by laughter. This hugely entertained the American audience at the first telemost, a live TV-link between Leningrad and Boston held in 1986. Her words were mistaken for a confession and quickly became a household joke, which was as marketable as the image of US pilots showing off their copies of *Playboy* to Soviet planes during the Korean War. Perhaps both anecdotes were set-ups, moments of American PR genius – but there really was no sex. What Lyudmila had meant to say was that there was nothing of America's popular, commercialised sex on Soviet television.

The culture of the West's sexual revolution, and the pop music

and consumerism that went with it, had by then only drifted into the periphery of the USSR's cultural consciousness. Where it appeared it was repressed, either by the state or by society, but predominantly by the starving, goods-less economy. Yet awareness of pop culture still grew, attesting to the ingenuity of a youth that longed to try a way of life it didn't know.

This generation couldn't source Beatles LPs, so they recorded the CIA's muffled, Munich-based *Radio Liberty*. They learnt to scratch music onto X-ray scans and turn them into vinyls: youth culture revolved around someone's broken ankle spinning in the record player. Banned books were photographed so that each page became a numbered polaroid. Branded items represented

the pinnacle of forbidden culture at a time when most people made their own clothes on Zinger sewing machines, so they cut names of tobacco companies off illegally imported cigarette packets and stuck them onto the inside soles of their heels. Urbane young Russians would flash Marlboro or Camel whenever they took their shoes off.

Few people know the end of Lyudmila's sentence, but what she wanted to say on that first telemost was that instead of sex and consumption in the USSR, there was love. Instead of wholesale consumerism there was a romantic, naive ingenuity which for her, and a lot of Soviet Russia, was enough.

POLINA IVANOVA

FROM THE ARCHIVES

4 FEBRUARY 1893

Oxford Types.

(BY A TYPE-WRITER—NOT MR. PUNCH'S.)

No. III.—THE ANCIENT DON.

BORN at a period when the world was just beginning to realize that it was time to think of becoming modern, the Ancient Don had finished his education long before the University had begun to feel, or even to recognize the existence of, the new spirit that was influencing the outer world. Fortunately for him the air did not then, as it does now, hum with examinations, and his Fellowship was not a guerdon won after repeated trials and probations, but was the necessary and natural result of his having been a good boy and won a scholarship at School. Spared even the exertion of a downward jump, he gently slid into his allotted place and has placidly dozed there ever since.

Even as a cracked thermometer serenely ignores the most violent changes of temperature that are going on around and about it, or as the rusted weathercock stoutly disregards the choppings of the wind, so too the winds of controversy may beat upon the Ancient Don ; thoughts and doctrines may blow now hot, now cold, but they will have no effect upon him. He is blissfully regardless of them all. The glacier is but a sluggard, and the snail is not accounted as a sprinter, and yet, compared with the brain of the Ancient Don, they are as the ostrich of the desert or the Dutchman that lieth in the daytime.

Freed from the sordid necessity of working for his daily bread and butter, and unworried by mental

exercises, he lives long and is happy, for, being surrounded by an atmosphere all his own, his lines are laid in pleasant places, his solitary annoyance being the reiteration of the word Reform, an expression which to him savours of blasphemy ; and of the blasphemy of instability he is innocent. And yet so pre-eminently calm is his temperament that though every proposed change stinks in his nostrils, yet no sooner does it become a *fait accompli* than he accepts it uncomplainingly provided that he can extract aught of good therefrom. Thus, though his religious opinions and his conversation be of somewhat antique cut, yet will he avail himself of the electric light and the corridor train, his body delighting in the new-found joy of light and rapidity of motion, while his mind remains content with darkness and a stationary position.

Except as is hereinbefore stated he knows not Fashion, and, as his mind has been clothed with the same ideas from a time against which the memory of man runneth not contrary, so the garments that deck his person recall the days when William, if not George, was King. He is in fact an interesting relic of a by-gone age, more dear to the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments than to the leaders of the modern educational movement.

In the Tora Bora of Afghanistan, American soldiers played death metal at the entrances of caves in a bid to prise out Al Qaeda fighters. Sometimes they sent F-16s to fly low – earsplittingly so – over enemy camps. Or they used music for interrogation purposes – blitzed prisoners with sound, on and off, for hours on end, until they talked.

Humans don't like noise. We're not built for it. Persistent loudness triggers fight-or-flight responses: adrenalin rush, high blood pressure, stress. Children fare worse than adults, particularly in an educational context. In the 1970s, psychologists performed a study of children living in high-rise apartment blocks, built on bridges above Interstate 95, Manhattan. The academics found that children living in apartments near the ground floor – where the din of the motorway was loudest – had lower reading scores than their top floor contemporaries.

An even more decisive case occurred in Munich in 1992. Munich Airport was closed, and a new one opened on the other side of the city. The test scores of

children near the original airport rose; oddly, those of children near the new airport fell. Psychologists found that “the most consistent effects of aircraft noise exposure found in children are cognitive impairments. Tasks that involve central processing and language comprehension, such as reading, attention, problem-solving and memory appear to be most affected by exposure to noise.”

We've made the world a very noisy place. We communicate – constantly, loudly, over an ever-growing range of devices. Our machines rattle, chatter, grind, and bleep. They tell us how they're doing (a bleep of assent from the supermarket scanner); how we're doing (a bleep of annoyance from the car when you've failed to fasten your seat-belt); and they never, ever tell you quietly.

After a while, we stop noticing. We don't particularly want to live under a flight path – but we accept the constant soundtrack of car, motorbike, car, alarm, ringtone, bell, car. Noise is the healthy hum of human endeavour: it tells us everything's working, everything's moving,

things are being done. Silence, on the other hand, is strange. We don't experience it often – unless you're one of the decreasing minority of people that don't live in cities, or near cities, or close to a motorway.

The quietest place in the world is an anechoic chamber in a laboratory in Minnesota. It has 99.9% sound absorbency – so, 99.9% of the sound created by your footfall inside the chamber is absorbed before reaching your ears. Companies use it to test the noise efficiency of their products. Occasionally, people go in there too. NASA trains astronauts there, to acclimatise them to the gaping silence of space. The longest anyone has lasted is 45 minutes. A violinist booked a session: after a minute or two, he was banging on the door, demanding to be let out. Some experience hallucinations; most feel dizzy and a bit nauseous. The only thing they hear is the sound of their own breathing. After a while, they begin to hear heartbeats, and the sound of blood rushing along their veins. George Foy, the 45 minuter, told the *Guardian*: “Everyone was impressed that I'd beaten the



record, but having spent so long searching for quiet, I was comfortable with the feeling of absolute stillness. Afterwards I felt wonderfully rested and calm.”

George Foy is unusual in being able to tolerate that kind of absolute silence. But he’s not unusual in searching for quiet. A whole industry of silent retreats has built up – here in Britain, in America, and in Western Europe. There are Catholic retreats and Buddhist ones, Sufi and secular, Baptist and Methodist. Mostly they offer a bit of peace and quiet. People go to be silent in the company of strangers. It’s an old idea, and a very popular one.

I joined the quiet multitudes on retreat for two days in December. It was an ex-convent in the Westcountry, surrounded by rolling fields and woodland, a couple of miles east of Dartmoor. There were about 40 of us for the two day retreat: an even number of men and women, two students,

the rest mostly thirty and forty-somethings from London and the South East. One man had a shaven head, a straggly grey beard and a yogic gaze, but he was an exception. Everyone else could have passed for an accountant.

Our days were structured by bells, rung at regular intervals to signify meditation, breakfast, meditation, walking, household duties, meditation, lunch, meditation, walking, meditation, walking, dinner, meditation. We sat on mats and cushions in a dimly-lit hall, and were told to listen to ourselves breathing. Walking was done in silence, by oneself, outside in the garden or along an empty corridor. Lunch and dinner: silent also. It was oddly restful, to listen to the sound of people slurping soup, and munching carrots, and not have to speak. Meditation was harder – bluntly, more boring. You were meant to empty your

head of internal chatter: the silent dialogue of memories and memos and notes-to-self. But I kept visualising a cup of coffee, piping hot. Caffeine, along with meat, fish, books, and mobile phones, was off-limits.

At the end, when allowed to speak, people spoke about what had brought them there. Wanting time to think. Wanting to get away. There was a sense of camaraderie – a sense that having made it through two whole days of silence was quite an achievement; shared, despite the fact that we didn’t know each other’s names. A lady at the front put her hand up and said she’d traded it all in – house, job – for six months at a retreat in India. There were murmurs of approval.

The writer, traveller and war hero Patrick Leigh Fermor wrote a book in the fifties called *A Time to Keep Silence*. Searching for a quiet space to write, he came across an old Benedictine Abbey

NOISE IS THE HEALTHY HUM OF HUMAN ENDEAVOUR: IT TELLS US EVERYTHING’S WORKING, EVERYTHING’S MOVING, THINGS ARE BEING DONE. SILENCE IS A BIT STRANGE

E N T W A Y





"THIS TERROR OF SILENCE WITH NOTHING DIVERTING TO DO."

in France, and installed himself in a cell there. "In the seclusion of a cell – an existence whose quietness is only varied by the silent meals, the solemnity of ritual, and long solitary walks in the woods – the troubled waters of the mind grow still and clear, and much that is hidden away and all that clouds it floats to the surface and can be skimmed away; and after a time one reaches a state of peace that is unthought of in the ordinary world."

I asked Brendan Callaghan SJ, a psychologist of religion and Master of Campion Hall, a Jesuit college at Oxford University, why he thought prolonged silence has such profound effects on people. "Silence allows us to be present to ourselves and to others. But we mostly don't know ourselves very well, and sometimes what we discover is startling (but usually in a sort of 'Oh – that's what was there all along and I never noticed' sort of way)."

Most people are scared of total silence. Perhaps because we're afraid that we'll discover something startling. Perhaps also because we feel dependent on the noise that surrounds us; we need to be distracted. Or at least, that was the American novelist David Foster Wallace's view: "Surely something must lie behind not just Muzak in dull or tedious places any more but now also actual TV in waiting rooms, supermarkets' checkouts, airport gates, SUVs' backseats. Walkman, iPods, BlackBerries, cell phones that attach to your head. This terror of silence with nothing diverting to do."

Wallace thought the 'something' was "some other, deeper type of pain that is always there, if only in an ambient low-level way, and which most of us spend nearly all our time and energy trying to distract ourselves from feeling." Maybe it is pain. Or maybe something less extreme: our own trivial insecurities. In

an era where so much is about self-presentation and self-image, where life is about how people invent themselves as much as what they do, the dialogue inside one's head can become – well – incessant: "What did she say? What did he mean? How does that look? Why did I do that?" Noise doesn't halt the babble, but mutes it, the mental equivalent of putting your fingers in your ears.

Those in retreats aim for a more enduring solution: a kind of inner silence, or mental stillness, which our brains – battered with information and sounds and conversation – are so rarely able to grasp. The real question is why more people don't look for it. Because the phrase isn't wrong; there is something golden about silence.



LIVE, FAST, DIE OLDER

HOW MUCH DO YOU HUNGER FOR A LONGER LIFE?

I didn't appreciate the energising emptiness of hunger until I had struggled against my appetite and accepted the sensation. I soon realised that I'd never really been hungry before. Stress called for comforting food, and I found myself angry for committing to the experiment and for such a long time. But to be free from the three-meals-a-day routine started to feel liberating, and after a week or so I began to find it manageable: accept you won't eat one day, snug in the cosy knowledge that the next, you can eat what you want.

The accepted wisdom is that it is a gastronomic sin to skip meals, especially breakfast: we need three square meals a day to function. To deny ourselves the pleasure of food seems unnatural, even masochistic. However, intermittent fasting has recently been touted as a "genuinely revolutionary" path to physical and mental health and is "on the verge of becoming the next big trend".

Scientists have known for decades that starvation can be beneficial, and can lead to a longer life: calorie restriction has been shown to prolong the lives of animals, and not by insignificant amounts. Lab-mice kept on strict diets have lived 40% longer than their normal lifespan, the equivalent of a human living an extra 30 or 40 years.

However, it's too early to start planning your extra decades now. Research into calorie restriction on humans is still in the early stages, at least partly because it has been assumed that a diet requiring such immense willpower would be irrelevant – people would simply not want to suffer it. This prompts the question, how much discomfort would we be prepared to endure in order to live longer? And at what point do you choose quality over quantity of life?

I wondered if I could starve myself some extra years. One popular method is the '5:2' – in

one week, you have five normal 'feeding' days and two days of fasting. On fasting days, women are allowed between four and five hundred calories, and men up to six hundred.

The hunger came rolling in like waves, but seemed to leave again just as easily. When it came crashing in particularly badly, I drank a lot of green tea, smugly sipping and planning my fifty year retirement. Fasting made me feel less sluggish, a bit sharper. It forced me to become more mindful of what, how and why I eat, changing the act of eating from a mechanical activity to something I actively thought about and controlled.

According to Brad Pilon, author of *Eat Stop Eat*, "the ultimate goal of intermittent fasting isn't to spend the rest of your life adhering to a specific fasting ritual, but rather learning that it's ok to not eat when you are not hungry." A growing group of scientists agree: it's not just what we

eat, but when, and short bouts of hunger seem to produce substantial health benefits. Allocating periods of fasting and 'feeding' is more advantageous than simply reducing your daily calorie intake. Fasting is also psychologically much easier to manage.

There are unique advantages to it. Dr Valter Longo, the Director of the Longevity Institute at the University of Southern California, has shown that fasting has a restorative effect on the body. He has carried out research on a hormone, IGF-1, which is important in infant growth, and how it relates to ageing and disease, especially cancer. IGF-1

and thereby lowers the risk of diabetes. Even asthma sufferers have seen an improvement in their condition. All this considered, the only real obstacle to blissful wellbeing seems to be ourselves; our own hunger.

ISIS asked the scientists involved how likely it was that conclusive benefits could be proven for humans, rather than just mice. Dr Valter Longo believes that "fasting done properly is one of the few effective ways to control your weight and counteract the very bad diets that are being consumed by populations around the world." Dr Mattson, however, erred on the side of caution:

If (and the 'if' is significant) the results shown possible with mice are proved to be true for the general population, Dr Longo argues that "there would be much less need for drugs and hospital beds for the populations adopting both periodic fasting and a mostly plant-based, limited protein diet." People could be mentally agile as well as generally healthier and active for longer. So fasting shouldn't be written off – the message of moderation based on cold hard fact seems to be wise advice.

AT WHAT POINT DO YOU CHOOSE QUALITY OVER QUANTITY OF LIFE?

causes cells to divide, thus when levels of it are low, fewer new cells are produced. Fasting leads to decreased levels of IGF-1: instead of new cells being produced and the concomitant risk of cancer, there is the reparation of existing cells; DNA damage is more likely to get fixed. When we are constantly eating, cells grow too fast to be repaired. Give the body a break, and the liver stops producing this 'go, go!' hormone, and rejuvenates itself instead.

Add to that improved memory, resistance to brain injury, delayed degeneration of the brain, and even improved cognitive ability, according to Mark Mattson, professor of neuroscience at John Hopkins University. He has demonstrated that intermittent bouts of fasting "in which you eat hardly anything at all, and then have periods when you eat as much as you want" can stimulate such brain self-preservation. When calorie intake is sharply reduced, the cells in the brain are stressed in a similar way to muscles during exercise.

The potential benefits don't end there: fasting increases the body's sensitivity to insulin

"Available data is insufficient to justify a clear conclusion as to whether caloric restriction or fasting benefit individuals who are not overweight." Did they believe that people would adopt fasting as a lifestyle? Dr Longo was optimistic, thinking that "it is likely that a percentage of people will adopt it since this lifestyle has been the human lifestyle for tens of thousands of years."

The 5:2 diet is criticised for glamorising hunger, since it has been taken on by the diet industry as the holy grail in the search for the perfect trinity of staying young, slim and beautiful forever. This highlights the unhealthy relationship we have with food, whether under or over consumption. It's also, simply, quite difficult to adhere to, and it seems unlikely to become widespread. The benefits of exercise and dieting are well known. Physical activity even rewards us with pleasure-giving endorphins, and yet we still don't do enough to remain fit into old age. It isn't lack of information which prevents people from living healthier lives – when faced with such an overabundance of food, it's hard to say no.

NATHALIE WRIGHT



ISIS EYE

WILLIAM GRANGER



ROMA MUSIC

STAND UP, PEOPLE: IN SEARCH OF YUGOSLAV GYPSY MUSIC FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF POP

We don't know exactly when the Roma left India, but over the centuries, waves of westward migration have left them scattered across the world. Some of the first Europeans to encounter them assumed they were from Egypt; this is the origin of the word 'gypsy'. Many instead prefer to call themselves 'Roma', which means 'men' in Romani, a language derived from Sanskrit and closely related to modern Indian dialects. In the Balkans, a fractured region that has always served as a bridge between east and west, Roma language and culture is particularly vibrant. Here, as in much of the world, the Roma have often faced discrimination. But in one Balkan state, for a brief period, it looked like things were changing for the better.

Josip Broz Tito, who ruled the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1953 until his death in 1980, is a controversial figure. His attempts to build a non-confessional, multi-ethnic workers' state gave the Roma a platform and a voice, which they have long since lost. In stark contrast to neighbouring dictatorships in Bulgaria and Romania, Yugoslavia's government recognised the Roma as an 'official' minority and promoted their language and culture.

Yugoslavia's status as a non-aligned state open to both Eastern and Western influences, led to the growth of a uniquely Yugoslav music scene. Each major city was home to at least one record label. Musicians who proudly self-identified as Roma, and sung songs in their own language, left careers as wedding musicians to become some of the biggest stars of their day. Their music was urbane and cosmopolitan, inspired by the amazing array of influences available at the cultural crossroads

of Yugoslavia: Roma folk rhythms inherited from India; a host of Slavic folk music traditions; Turkish songs; British and American pop and rock; even the music of modern India, since Bollywood films could



be cheaply imported from a fellow non-aligned state.

For two years now, we've been collecting Roma music on scratched old vinyls, travelling across the former Yugoslavia in the hope of unearthing musical history in the bric-a-brac of flea markets and shops. We did all this because we loved the music. But we also did it because we thought that, after a decade of war, people were in danger of forgetting this little golden age of Roma music, when the Roma were

thought of, not just as skilled performers, but as sophisticated artists whose music was vital to the cultural life of the nation. We met up with these old musicians when we could, and found that even they lacked copies of their early releases. This made us only more determined to understand and tell the story of their music.

Esma Redžepova was one of the earliest and most important Roma musicians to break into the Yugoslav mainstream. She was born in 1943, in what was then the main Roma district of Topana, in the city of Skopje, capital of Macedonia. Esma showed promise as a singer and dancer, but her parents, like many conservative Roma at the time, were hostile to the idea of their daughter singing in public, particularly in the sometimes disreputable *kafanas* (popular coffee houses featuring live music) of Skopje. Even today, many Roma women are expected to stay at home and manage the household. But Esma was exceptionally wilful: at the age of thirteen, her mother attempted to press her into an arranged marriage; she resisted by threatening to kill herself. So it seems fitting that the turning point of Esma's career, which arrived soon after, was marked by her performance of a traditional Roma song – 'Abre, Babi, So Kerdžan?' ('O Father, what have you done?') – in which a

Teodosievski, which had already had some commercial success. They exploded in popularity almost overnight, and were soon acting as an academy for young Roma musicians, who passed through the group as instrumentalists or as backing vocalists. After a few years, the Ansambl Teodosievski moved to Belgrade, partly because – or so claims Stevo in his memoirs – music industry moguls in Skopje were privately hostile to the idea of a Roma rather than an ethnic Macedonian fronting the band.

Belgrade was no paradise of tolerance, but as the capital of Yugoslavia it was the centre of the national music scene – a big city where the band could distance themselves from their racist critics. Stevo and Esma eventually married; their fame and success continued to grow. In 1976 they packed their band into a car and drove through Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan – to India, to perform in the ancestral Roma homeland. They returned via Iraq, playing a gig for Saddam Hussein. On their final trip to India in the early 1980s, they were guests of honour and played at Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's birthday.

If Esma is the queen of Yugoslav Roma music, then Šaban Bajramović is unquestionably the king. He was born around 1936, a child of the Second

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OF MUSIC

young girl weeps over the marriage she has been forced into by her father. Sneaking out of the family home to perform the piece at the Radio Skopje talent show, Esma won the competition hands down, despite being just a child, not to mention a child from a marginalised community singing in a marginalised language.

Esma so impressed a young accordionist in the audience, Stevo Teodosievski, that he chose her to be the lead singer of his group, the Ansambl



World War. His parents, like so many Yugoslav Roma, were killed in the bloody fighting brought by the Nazi invasion, and the young Šaban grew up wild in the bombed-out streets of his native Niš. Conscripted into the army, he deserted at the age of 19, fleeing in search of a girl he loved. As punishment, he was sentenced to three years of hard labour on the prison island of Goli Otok, a sentence raised to five years after he told the court that the barren penal colony would never be

able to hold him. Despite horrific conditions and violent confrontations with other prisoners, he managed to survive, even flourish, and it was there that he learned to read, formed his first band – the Black Mambas – and was inspired to write the song that started his career: ‘Pelno Me Sam’ (‘I Am Imprisoned’).

Šaban’s soulful voice and leering, effortless cool meant his rapid rise to stardom throughout Yugoslavia was assured – no mean feat for a battle-scarred ex-convict, and all the more remarkable for the fact that the majority of his compositions were in Romani. Šaban never gave up his bad boy lifestyle, but over the years, as his fame increased, his music grew more melodic and borrowed increasingly from jazz and flamenco.

During the same period, the Roma in Kosovo were developing a style quite distinct from that of their southern Serbian and Macedonian neighbours. Kosovo was officially an autonomous province of Serbia, but after 1974, it effectively functioned as a separate federal unit of Yugoslavia. Each Kosovar ethnic group, whether Albanian, Serbian, Slav Muslim, Turk, or Roma, had their own state-sponsored cultural organisation, set up to preserve and promote local musical traditions (as well as to link the population with the local Communist

have been a Yugoslav star. But unlike Esma, she wasn’t able to overcome the cultural conservatism of her community. Neighbourhood gossips, no doubt jealous of her beauty and success, claimed her absences on tour were really the wanderings of a ‘loose woman’. She gave up her career as a musician to live the ‘honourable’ life of a housewife, depriving the local scene of one of its greatest talents.

Nehat Gaši was another scion of the Priština music scene, but unlike Ava managed to find more widespread and lasting success. He gained legions of devotees through his passionate delivery and his habit of improvising lyrics about members of the audience. His songs are filled with strange, hypnotic riffs that come tumbling from his accordion, which, when combined with *tarabuka* drums and the jangling *cümbüş*, a banjo-like instrument of Turkish origin, are reminiscent almost of Qawwali or early Bhangra music. Although he never quite broke into the mainstream, he was a wedding favourite in Roma communities across Yugoslavia and is still regarded as a “legenda” by those most reliable of Roma music critics – the taxi drivers of Šutka.

The story of the flowering of musical creativity among the Roma in Tito’s Yugoslavia, is one that touches on the deep social and political problems still that plague the region. But more than anything,



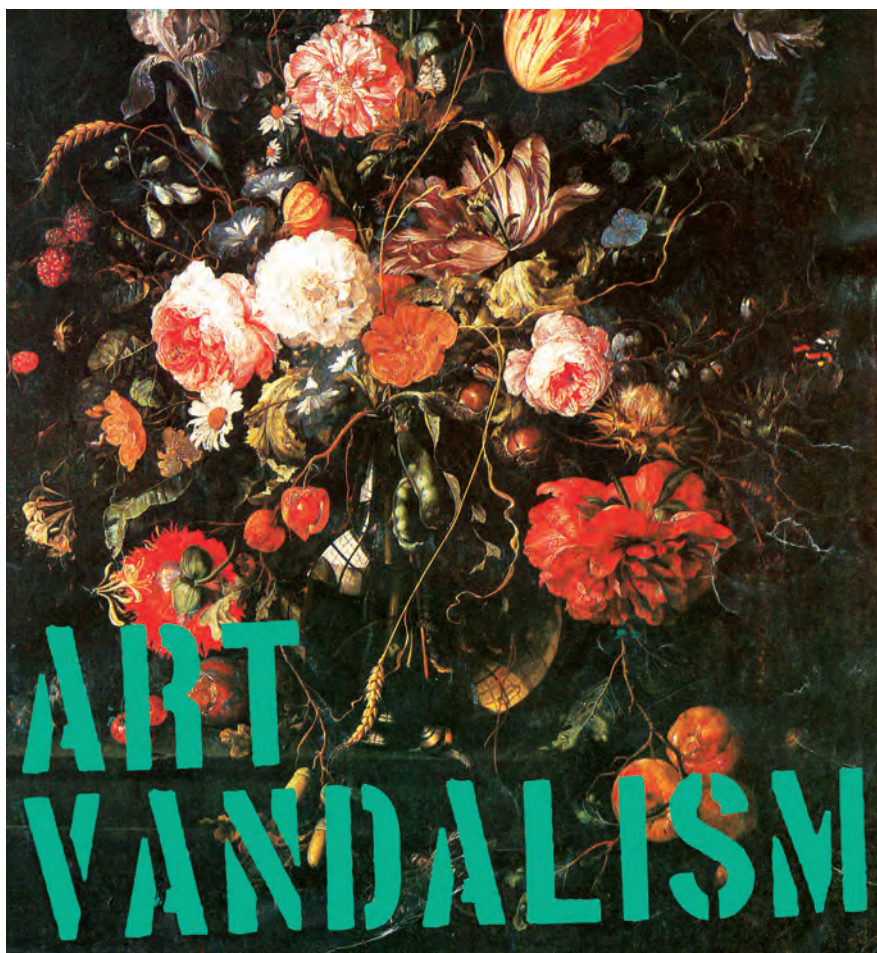
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Party). However, the ‘traditional’ repertoires of the ever-versatile Roma were characteristically diverse, with top Roma musicians exposed to the music of all their ethnic neighbours through their work as session musicians and their performances at weddings, religious ceremonies and local community festivals.

At that time, Ava Selimi was making a name for herself as a singer in the Kosovan capital, Priština. Young, beautiful, with an incredible voice, Ava could

it is a story about moving and beautiful music, imbued with optimism by a people whose hopes were never fulfilled. We hope that we can help to find a way to restore all of these artists, the obscure and the well known, to the central place they deserve in the history of music.

PHILIP KNOX
NATHANIEL MORRIS



WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT GOYA

When Vladimir Umanets, self-proclaimed pioneer of the 'Yellowist' art movement, scrawled the words 'a potential piece of yellowism' on a major Rothko work in the Tate Modern, the public reaction was one of outrage and derision. Umanets' defence that he was not a vandal but a 'Yellowist' was met with a collective sneer from the art world. His justifications were drowned out by the damage to the £9 million painting, one of three major Rothko works gifted to the Tate. The Yellowists' online manifesto reads like a sixth-for-

mer's parody of art-speak, convoluted and unconvincing, and a pitiful justification for the potential damage to a masterpiece.

While Umanets' spurious manifesto is justly scorned, his comment that "art allows us to take what someone's done and put a new message on it" draws attention to a practice which has been in place since 1919, when Marcel Duchamp bought a cheap reproduction of the *Mona Lisa* and drew a moustache and goatee on it. Duchamp used a reproduction; had he decided to make a new work of art out of

the *Mona Lisa* itself the reaction would have been one of horror. Or in a more contemporary example, supplementing the work of another artist is precisely what the Chapman brothers did when they bought a set of Goya's *The Disasters of War*, in mint condition, and drew puppy and clown heads all over them. As highly esteemed, albeit subversive, members of the art establishment, the Chapmans may have shocked, but their art vandalism was ultimately accepted.

What does it take to justify the act of vandalising art? By de-



facing an established work the Chapman brothers dare us to be horrified, thereby compelling an admission that we conform to conservative ideas of art. After all, the notion that art can only be produced by an artist who originates rather than modifies is still deeply entrenched. While the Chapmans' choice to use an original is designed to scandalise, even those horrified by their decision must surely admit that the intake of breath the altered art provokes would be non-existent had the artists used reproductions. So why did Umanets receive a two year jail sentence for his efforts to impose his own theory onto an original artwork, and the Chapmans only prestige and publicity?

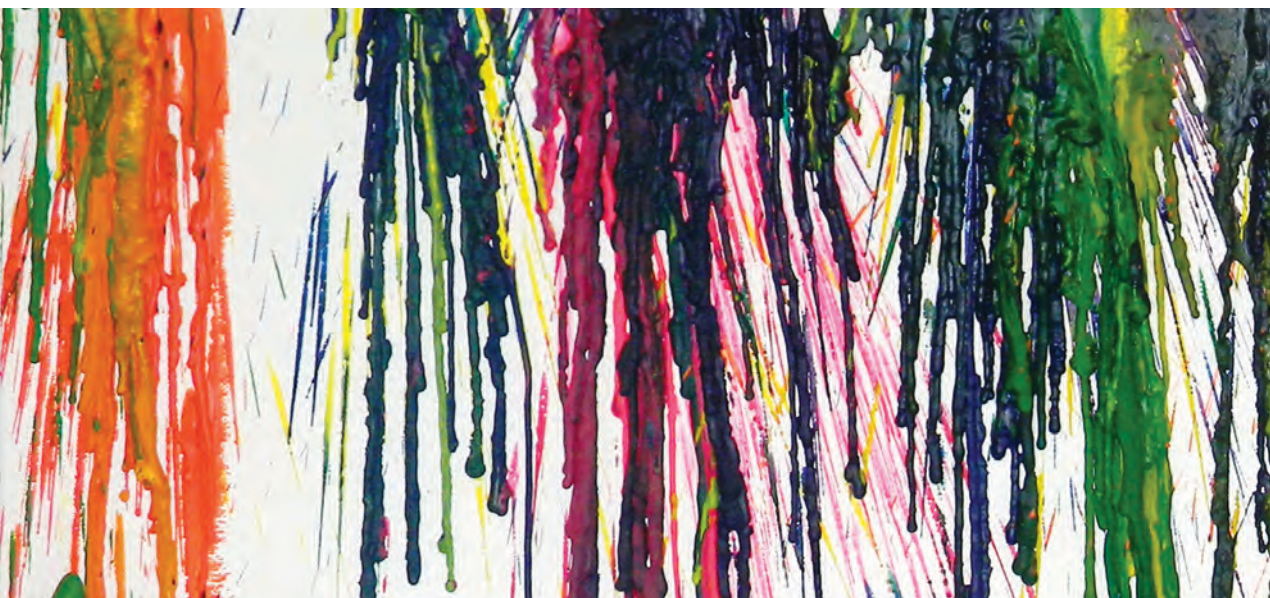
The difference between the Chapmans and Umanets is that what the Chapmans added to the original work was distinctive and profound in its own way. The grotesque, un-human faces drawn over the prints reinforce Goya's response to the horror of war; the images add a crude

deformity that reflect his intention to convey the brutality that so disturbed him. If the vandal has kept the intentions of the artist in mind, does the vandalism become acceptable? Do some works of art invite vandalism? If so, performance artists Yuan Chai and Jian Jun Xi might be applauded for urinating on Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, a found urinal with the added signature 'R. Mutt', as they argued that their performance was inspired by the artist's own assertion that art can be anything. Likewise, 76 year old Pierre Pinoncelli, who attacked *Fountain* with a hammer in 2006, believed Duchamp would have approved of his 'performance art'.

The red spray paint Tony Shafrazi used to scrawl the words 'kill lies all' across Picasso's *Guernica*, was easily removed. The fact that the act had little effect on the painting itself has been seen as a justification for such vandalism. But caring only about the effect on the artwork overlooks what is of manifest importance: the van-

dal's purpose. When I asked Louisa Buck, a British art critic and contemporary art correspondent for the *Art Newspaper*, whether political or ideological intentions can justify vandalism, she replied that "vandalising a work of art may draw attention to a cause or an individual, but rarely in a way that is ultimately helpful to the aims of that individual or cause."

Yet when Shafrazi vandalised *Guernica*, the headlines reached as far as China, Japan and New Zealand. The painting had been seen as an anti-war symbol, which brought the atrocities of the Spanish civil war to the world's attention. Shafrazi argued that it was "gathering dust, castrated in a minor place in comparison to how the world was moving". His aim to bring the art "absolutely up to date, to retrieve it from art history and give it life," was fulfilled and reminded the world of what *Guernica* represented as the piece was fading from view. Once again, a certain type of politically charged art seems to invite acts of vandalism, and justify them.





Suffragette Mary Richardson attacked Velazquez's *Rokeby Venus* with a meat cleaver in 1914, leaving several deep slashes across the naked, reclining nude. Like *Guernica* for Shafrazi, the *Rokeby Venus* was ideally suited to express Richardson's grievances, as it was a rejection of this ultimate symbol of the subjugation of women under the male gaze. Would it then be fair to say that a political agenda, now legitimate in the eyes of most 21st century observers, goes some way to making allowances for vandalism against a masterpiece?

It is one of the paradoxes of art vandalism that the higher the monetary value of the piece defaced, the greater the impact, and in the view of many, the more justified the vandalism. In 2000, the theft of a pack of pencils by fifteen year old Cartrain from Damien Hirst's installation sculpture *Pharmacy* was generally seen as an amusing defiance of what many Hirst critics see as the grossly inflated price of his work.

The pencils in question were part of Hirst's sculpture, and thus valued at £500,000. Cartrain threatened to 'sharpen' them, an act of vandalism that tickled the public's imagination; the image of an irate Hirst demanding his overpriced pencils back from a teenager was enjoyable to many a Hirst sceptic. Cartrain's action was echoing popular public opinion; pencils should not be worth £500,000 and so the idea of their destruction was tolerated. In the public eye, pencils are not regarded with the same reverence as a Rothko.

Clearly, the sense of indignation art vandalism may invoke has as much to do with attachment as price, otherwise Cartrain's theft would have been taken more seriously. When graffiti by Banksy is removed or defaced, the public sense of mourning at its disappearance has nothing to do with monetary value, but with the investment of an emotional bond with the art. Similarly, though Louisa Buck mentioned that the Goya prints are

more valuable in market terms with Chapman intervention than without, this would offer little consolation to Goya devotees.

Art has an extraordinary power to shape responses to world events, so strong that people desire to change or to reinforce the message an artist has tried to convey. While the Rothko vandalism may be dismissed as crude, Umanets' comment reminds us that the boundary between supplementing and altering art, as opposed to defacing it, is blurred. Artists like the Chapman brothers, and those whose vandalism has come to be seen as art, such as Banksy, ensure that there will always be a grey area. When it comes down to the question of justification, it appears to be covertly accepted that the vandalism of great art can be acceptable, if you've got a damn good reason for doing it.

SADIE LEVY GALE





FLESH EATING AND FETISHES

DOING JUSTICE TO THE REASONABLENESS OF CANNIBALISM





It sounds like the beginning of a distasteful joke. What do a petty criminal, a Swedish professor, a porn star, and a room full of auctioneers all have in common? The truth, however, is far from humorous: all of them have consumed human flesh.

The subject of cannibalism rose to renewed prominence last summer with news coverage of the 'Miami Zombie'. On 26 May, Rudy Eugene assaulted Ronald Poppo, a homeless 65-year-old, on the MacArthur Causeway in Miami, Florida. Records of the 18-minute encounter show a nude Eugene, accusing Poppo of stealing his Bible, beating him unconscious and proceeding to consume his face. It ended with police fatally shooting the attacker. Today, speculation still surrounds the issue of exotic drugs such as 'bath salts' and their part in Eugene's aggression, but so far toxicology tests of his corpse have detected only marijuana.

A cursory glance at the headlines surrounding the story illustrates our curiosity with the fantasy element of the phenomenon of cannibalism. 'Rise of the Zombie Flesh-eaters' read one newspaper, as Google searches for 'zombie apocalypse' rose drastically. We are fascinated by the grotesque, supernatural aspect of cannibalism, something which only enters our awareness through sensational articles and gory films.

There are plenty of sensational stories out there. In ad-

dition to the 'Miami Zombie' there's the cuckolded Swedish professor who consumed his wife's lips in a jealous rage; the porn star Luka Magnotta for whom cannibalism was the ultimate fetish; or the asexual Mao Sugiyama, who served his own genitals – with buttoned mushrooms and parsley – to guests in a restaurant after inviting participants via Twitter. These 'flesh eaters' differ significantly from cases such as the 1972 Andes flight disaster, where fellow humans were eaten to prevent death from starvation.

Incidents of cannibalism are rarely discussed in the public sphere as a phenomenon with motives and explanations. We do not want to acknowledge that individuals in our society would choose to consume fellow human beings, even though the fantasy of eating human flesh is more common than actual occurrences, as the internet popularity of fetish sites such as 'Dolcett Girls' and 'Muki's Kitchen' testify. We may wish to avoid the matter, but the truth still stands: many people are enthralled by the idea of cannibalism.

In 1994, Nicolas Claux was convicted of the murder of Thierry Bissonier. After his arrest, police searched his apartment, unprepared for the gruesome store of human remains they were to find. Claux had been robbing Parisian graveyards and mutilating the remains. He also worked at one of the city's morgues, and admitted to stealing flesh from the corpses. "I had been using my position," Claux explained, "as a means to fulfil a lifelong fantasy of mine revolving around cannibalism."

"Sometimes I brought select meats home with me to be cooked," he continued, "but my preference was to eat them raw. It tasted like steak tartare, or carpaccio. The big muscles of the thighs and back were good, but there was no good meat in the

breasts, only fats." Claux's cannibalism can be classified as epicurean, or nutritional, cannibalism, where the motivation is either the taste of human flesh or its nutritional value.

However, as the case of Claux illustrates, epicurean tendencies are only evident through the rhetoric of the accused, and we find that such language is common to most acts of cannibalism. Issei Sagawa, the infamous Japanese cannibal, tried to making a living from the public interest in his crime once he was released from prison. He described his victims' flesh as having "no smell or taste, melting in my mouth like raw tuna." As he wrote in his best-selling account of the act, "nothing was so delicious."

Before he consumed his victim's flesh, Sagawa had sexually assaulted her corpse. Considered a psychosexual disorder, the theory of sexual cannibalism holds that the perpetrators use it to release sexual frustration. Several high profile cases involving sexual cannibalism have captured the media's attention. Perhaps most memorable is that of Albert Fish, who raped, murdered and consumed children in early twentieth-century America. During his trial, several psychiatrists testified on the matter of his sexual fetishes. His defence counsel James Dempsey described him as a 'psychiatric phenomenon', because no other individual possessing his number of sexual abnormalities could be found anywhere in medical or legal records.

The cannibalism of Edward Gein, inspiration for film characters including Jame Gumb of *The Silence of the Lambs*, Psycho's Norman Bates, and Leatherface from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, was certainly motivated by sexual gratification. He murdered at least three people, and the remains of over fifteen other women were found in his house, stolen from a nearby cemetery.

Gein, believed to have engaged in sexual intercourse with the corpses, was also a transvestite. Just like his fictional offspring Gumb, he found delight in dismembering the bodies and peeling away the skin of the corpses so that he could wear them around his household. Whether Gein sexualised the actual consumption of his victims was unclear. However, it is evident that there was a strong relationship between his necrophilia and cannibalistic behaviour.

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Whether these cannibals achieved sexual euphoria through the consumption of flesh, or if it was simply an enabler, is a question currently debated in academic circles. One response is to go to the source for answers. ‘Muki’s Kitchen’ is a website self-professedly dedicated to “cannibalism as an erotic fantasy: good old-fashioned woman-eating, femme-feasting, girl-gobbling fun!” Original photos are published of female models posed as dishes ready to be eaten. The proprietors of the site, Mr. and Mrs. Muki, however, stress that they would never condone physical cannibalism: “It should always stay a fantasy.”

This differs from the ‘Cannibal Café’, an online forum closed by the German authorities in 2002 but still available through internet archives. This open web-

site allowed cannibals to connect with those who wished to be eaten. ‘Girlmeat Wanted’ reads one post, while another user asks to be eaten. “I would like to be served up at a BBQ,” he comments, “mounted on a spit and lightly roasted.”

Mr. Muki explains the origin of this fetish. “The physical sensations of mild fear are similar to arousal. Although it wasn’t about me attracting and eating women. I was the main course.” He points out that children’s stories, from fairy tales to *Looney Tunes*, often include the punishment of being eaten. “I remember I was in the third grade,” Mr. Muki continues, “and our teacher was reading a children’s version of Robinson Crusoe. The whole idea that Friday was a cannibal and was about to be eaten. And then, adding to that, the thought that I could be eaten by other people, who might be very nice to each other and their friends, and would take the time to prepare a human body, cook it properly, and then serve their roast in a ‘civilized’ manner, laughing and talking as they enjoyed their feast -- how exotic! And in my case, erotic!”

Meghan Vaughan, a model for ‘Muki’s Kitchen’ describes being cooked as her “foreplay”. Again, she stresses the imaginary element of her work. “A lot of what I do is be still,” she explains, “not in a necrophiliac way, but in a passed-out way.” As this dormancy suggests, most fantasies and acts of cannibalism are motivated by a desire for dominance over the victim.

Dr. Deborah Schurman-Kaufman, a criminal profiler, agrees with this theory. “Cutting up the meat is sexually exciting, according to cannibals. It makes them feel all-powerful and capable of something very few people have ever done.” The cannibal knows the unique dominance they hold over their victims and this “produces a euphoric state which activates the pleasure centre in the

brain. Each cut brings more good feeling. So it is common to find many smaller cuts on the body.” She also points out the tendency for cannibals to store the bodies of their victims, as in the cases of Gein and Sagawa. The offender keeps “the victims with him at all times. They can never leave. This helps the cannibal retain a sense of control over his life. To himself, he has demonstrated mastery over another human being. The victim is now part of him as a trophy.”

Schurman-Kaufman and other professionals have long debated the cause of this aggression. Some cite childhood trauma, others hold personality disorders solely responsible. Many cannibals, such as Albert Fish, Edward Gein, and Issei Sagawa, were diagnosed with schizophrenia. Mr Muki points out that an attraction to tension, fear, domination or being dominated is common. When asked ‘why cannibalism?’ Mr Muki replies with a question of his own: “Why does balloon fetish even exist?” He maintains his is just one strange fetish among many, although more extreme than most.

A lack of research into these theories has resulted in a lack of understanding. Yet no single theory can fully explain why individuals are fascinated by, and sometimes go ahead with, eating human flesh. As the anthropologist Ruth Benedict declared, “We have done scant justice to the reasonableness of cannibalism. There are in fact so many and such excellent motives possible to it that mankind has never been able to fit all of them into one universal scheme.”



POLITICS

PLAYING HOME
Rebecca Choong Wilkins

RAAD
Daisy Fletcher

WITCHCRAFT
IN UGANDA
Frederick Bowerman

ON FURLOUGH
George Townsend

EXTRATERRESTRIAL
BOOKSHOPS
Luka Boeskens

NEVER UNDER
ENGLISH RULE
Oliver Park

PHARMAKEIA
Peter Endicott

KARAPIRU'S STORY
Jennifer Cearn

BOURNVILLE
Joseph D'Urso



HOW FLATPACK FURNITURE HAS CHANGED CHINA

Families sit around dining tables eating out of take-away boxes; a suited businessman taps away at his laptop and rests his feet on a coffee table; an exhausted young mother lies sleeping, tucked into a duvet. Snapshots of everyday Beijing residents getting on with their lives. Except these people are not at home. They're in Ikea.

In what was then the single largest outlet in the world, I watched people act out their lives in the uniform, boxed-in compartments of Ikea showrooms. 'Try before you buy' took on a whole new meaning as teenage boys self-consciously styled their hair in a mirror, while across the aisle toddlers scribbled on a blackboard in a children's bedroom.

Ikea's concept of selling an entire home, rather than individual products, is perhaps the best-

timed commercial innovation of the 20th century.

The Chinese character 'zhong', meaning China, depicts a vertical line piercing the world and directly translates as 'the middle country'. Originating from 1046 AD, for almost a millennium the Chinese have

paign for mass urban development, the first decade of the 21st century saw the share of people living in large cities grow from 36% to nearly 50%. Between 2007 and 2010, three cities reached 'megacity' status, with a population of over 10 million. The megablock, built to house

PEOPLE ACT OUT THEIR LIVES IN THE UNIFORM, BOXED-IN COMPARTMENTS OF IKEA SHOWROOMS

seen themselves as centre of the world. Why then has this urban middle-class love affair with this foreign manufacturer become so intense?

The answer lies in China's unprecedented campaign for mass urban migration and anxiety over the quality of Chinese produce.

As China launched its cam-

these millions, has become the centerpiece of Chinese urban development.

Where once 200 people lived in single storey courtyard homes or *siheyuan* in Beijing's famous *hutongs*, the city's system of narrow alleyways, now 10,000 homes are neatly stacked on top of one another in colossal, homogeneous megablocks. Ikea's

showroom compartments fit precisely into every room of the megablock model.

The Chinese authorities have promised to build 35 million apartments in Beijing over the next five years: at least 60,000 rooms are being built each day, ready to be furnished by the one-stop, gear-up phenomenon of Ikea.

More significant than the physical destruction of *hutongs*, which date back to the 11th century Zhou dynasty, is the cultural impact of what replaces them. The megablock demands an entirely different kind of consumption.

Hutongs retain strong elements of the communal style of living enforced during the Mao era: they create communities by forcing social interaction. Each *siheyuan* tends to be multi-generational and shared by more than one family. While most homes have acquired plasma TVs and refrigerators, the majority of people still share communal single-sex toilets and showers. This creates a sense of commonality, only strengthened by the fact that there are often no cubicles.

By contrast, megablocks are essentially isolating constructions. The artist and photojournalist Matthew Niederhauser has been documenting sweeping urban change in Beijing for ten years. He observes that megablocks “reshape the manner in which people live and consume by encouraging social atomization in Western-style apartments”. This cuts to the heart of Ikea’s success.

Not only does Ikea sell a complete lifestyle to the nouveau riche of China, it also allows customers to become familiar with an otherwise fundamentally un-

familiar vision of the home.

In one single package, Ikea provides you with bed, duvet, alarm clock, shower curtain, cereal bowls, as well as chopsticks, knives and forks – all at reassuringly high, Western prices.

Benjamin Bacon, a professor at Parsons and founder of product design laboratory RAWR! in Beijing, identifies a Chinese “national self-doubt” regarding their own produce, neatly surmising the country’s acute unease at their low price, low quality manufacture.

With the advantage of cut-rate labour and minimal regulation, Deng Xiaopeng’s opening up of China to foreign export in the 1960s fed foreign demand for cheap merchandise at the expense of developing well-crafted, quality controlled goods. In China, Western brands are not only status symbols. Their high price has become synonymous with coveted reliable quality.

But the fundamental key to Ikea’s success is simple: it allows customers to play home. The megablock dweller can induct themselves into the alien experience of compartmentalised living, with its novel private spaces and en suite bathrooms.

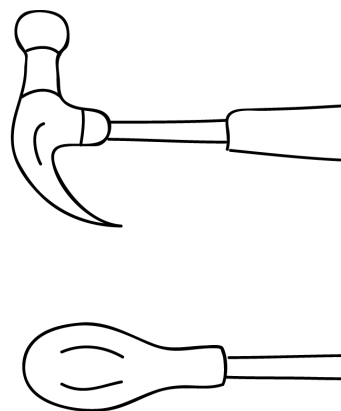
It is hard to say whether the success of the flatpack furniture giant is the result of fortuitous accident (a worn-out child deciding to nap in one of the showroom beds) or alternatively, of commercial brilliance and uncanny consumer insight. What is clear is that the megablock demands new forms of consumer behaviour and drastically different kinds of social interaction.

The once familiar scenes of older men and women crouched in *hutongs* playing *mahjong*, a traditional boardgame, and

housewives selling *baos*, cheap steamed buns, to neighbours and workmen, are being systematically eradicated. *Hutong* life, where neighbours constantly spill into and out of one another’s homes, is being replaced by a different way of living, embodied in the silent nod of acknowledgement given to a neighbour in a lift.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, as China has shifted to a capitalist free-market economy, its current urban development campaign typifies a wholesale reversal of Mao’s land reforms. Where once central government exiled landowners, redistributed holdings to peasants and forced collectivization, now mass city migration necessitates segregated, private living.

And with over half of the 440 cities estimated to be built by 2025 situated in China, this transformation is happening on an internationally unrivaled scale. Speaking to one resident of a soon to be demolished *hutong*, he informs me, “They can rip it all up, I don’t care. As long as I get my compensation.”



REBECCA
CHOONG WILKINS

R.A.A.D.

ANTI-DRUG VIGILANTISM TERRORISES DERRY

Last February, at 9:20 in the evening, Andrew Allen, a married father of two, was shot to death by three men through his bedroom window. This was the first murder committed by members of Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD). The vigilante group, active mainly in Derry and the surrounding areas, claims to protect local communities by targeting supposed drug dealers. They described Allen as a “death dealer” who deserved the “ultimate sanction”.

RAAD have been wreaking havoc ever since two former IRA paramilitaries formed the group in 2008. They police Derry, telling young men they suspect of drug involvement that they must either leave the city, agree to be shot in the legs, or face death. Soon after Andrew Allen’s murder, his brother Daniel was told that if he failed to leave Derry he too would be shot within a few days. Every week four men are exiled from their homes at gunpoint by RAAD.

As an unhappy compromise between being banished from their hometown and being murdered, over twenty young men have faced kneecap shootings. If RAAD’s targets do not flee, their families will get a knock on the door by a balaclava-wearing member of the group, ordering

them to bring the victim to a certain place, and wait around the corner while he is shot in both knees. In one testimonial, a father described how he watched and rang an ambulance while his son was shot and paralysed a few feet away. RAAD have become the arbitrary judges, jury and executioners in this terrorised town.

But they do not see themselves as criminals. In their eyes RAAD protect the people of Derry, albeit through violence. They believe they are acting for the greater good, policing the area in the hope of eliminating drug dealing and its destructive effects. This is not just Action Against Drugs, it is Republican Action Against Drugs. RAAD grows out of a long line of uncompromising Irish idealists. They want a wholly free and pure Ireland, without British influence, and without the influence of narcotics. Yet their attacks are not always due to alleged involvement with drugs. Chief Superintendent Stephen Martin claims “this is a criminal gang who brutalise and shoot young people, but this is also a gang, that if you fall out with them in a pub or in the street, they’ll exile you and order you out of the city.” Sometimes these exiles are forced to bribe members with thousands of pounds to return



home. RAAD, it seems, is motivated by financial concerns too.

Donna Smith, mother of the Allen brothers, claims her sons were not involved with drugs, but were targeted for speaking out against RAAD and removing the group's graffiti. Derry residents live in terror of similar attacks; those being pursued by RAAD are forced to move home every few months, while others barricade their doors and link alarms to the police at night. One mother described how she has been prescribed medication because of the permanent state of anxiety she lives in: "I have to get my next fix before my hands start shaking."

The members of RAAD seem to be enemies of the community in Derry, so why have they not been caught? The PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) have only convicted four people for RAAD related activity since the vigilante group was formed.

The answer lies in Derry's exhausted ambivalence after decades of bloodshed at the centre of the Troubles. Some hold that the Troubles started in Derry in August 1969 with the Battle of the Bogside, a large scale riot which injured over 1000 people. In the following three decades, over 300 people were killed in and around Derry. The fault line in the city is so deep that it has fissured even its name. Catholics still call it Derry, but Protestants call it Londonderry. On maps and signs, it is now called 'Derry/Londonderry', as if to suggest that this religious and political division may be punctuated into submission. Even here they are uncomfortable bedfellows, with the word 'London' often defaced.

In a city whose people have

seen so much hurt, the brutality of RAAD is not as outrageous as an outsider might think. RAAD has supporters as well as enemies in Derry, as Gary Donnelly, an ex-Real IRA prisoner reminds us: "Anyone who thinks these groups are just travelling around looking for targets is seriously deluded. Attacks happen as a result of demand within the community. People within the community shelter RAAD and give them all sorts of back up." Even locals afraid of supporting RAAD might see it as the lesser of two evils – a form of rough justice for drug dealers. In December last year, the PSNI seized £20,000 of drugs from a house raided in

They are united not in their support of anti-RAAD groups or defence of drug dealers, but in their desperation to end violence in Derry. They are not alone. In 1988, Hugh Brady, an ex-IRA member, had already founded the Rosemount Resource Centre, which has taken in over a hundred targets terrorised by RAAD over the past few years. In recognition of its work, the Centre has received funding from the Red Cross.

At the beginning of 2013 Derry was named the first ever UK City of Culture, and even more bizarrely, Lonely Planet's fourth best city to visit this year after San Francisco, Amsterdam

THEY MUST EITHER LEAVE THE CITY, AGREE TO BE SHOT IN THE LEGS, OR FACE DEATH

Derry, along with three grenades, two guns, and a CS gas canister, proving just how entwined drug culture and violence are in the city.

Yet it is hard not to feel that young men targeted by RAAD are being used as scapegoats for a bigger problem of violence and lawlessness, a problem which has long persisted in Derry. Similarly, those opposed to RAAD see the group as a cause rather than a symptom of the continuing destruction. RAAD may be just a new faction of the disillusioned idealist Republicans. Perhaps the answer lies in the boycotting of violence, rather than just picking a side. A group of mothers who had to take their sons to punishment shootings formed MOVE ON, Mothers Opposed to Violence Everywhere in Our Neighbourhoods, for just this reason.

and Hyderabad. Derry may seem an awkward choice as the city of culture, given the gun-barrel force RAAD exert over the city, but the award is a recognition that Derry, a city that produced Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel and the Undertones, has the potential to flourish. With £25 million given in government funding this year, and half of the population currently under 25, there is a feeling that Derry can grow out of its dark past. To do so it will need to give up drugs, but it will need to give up violence too.

DAISY FLETCHER



AFRICA'S CAULDRON

JUJU RITUAL AND CHILD SACRIFICE IN UGANDA

Kampala, Uganda's teeming capital, is rapidly transforming. The epicentre of a thriving economy, it has sprawled rampantly over hills and swamps as rural migrants flock to it in hopeful droves. With almost two decades of relative stability the city has prospered, modernised and expanded at a seemingly exponential rate.

Amid the slums, traffic and bustle, the signs of development and construction are everywhere as new hotels, factories and shopping malls come to dominate the cityscape. Red dirt roads have been smoothed over in grey to facilitate the sensitive suspension of newly imported cars driven by Uganda's emergent elite, the rich and powerful beneficiaries of the country's recent flourishing. High up on the hillsides, their palatial mansions peer down into the wetland valleys where the marginalised majority make their home with the mosquitoes, and through which the domestic and industrial refuse of the city flows into a tranquil Lake Victoria.

Ostensibly the nation is striving towards modernisation according to the Western model, with the encouragement of foreign NGOs and governments,

continuing a process that began with the imposition of British taboos and institutions under colonial influence. From law and morality to education and government, non-indigenous values and practices predominate in Ugandan civil society. Nowhere is this more evident than among the newly affluent middle class. Imitating the developed world in their consumerism, they gamble in Kampala's gaudy new casinos, hold business lunches in expensive European restaurants, and update their social networking profiles over the wireless of coffee shops.

Of course, this adoption of Western modes of practice is far from complete, in many cases acting only as stated principles that are rarely applied, or applied with a distinctly Ugandan interpretation. However, one foreign import that seems to have been embraced with particular wholeheartedness is organised religion, to which Uganda was converted through the rival influences of Victorian missionaries and Swahili-Arab slave traders. Indeed, Kampala's dusty, smog-ridden air resonates with the *melée* of preachers and imams competing over loud-speakers, with calls to prayer and religious services



broadcasted in their entirety. Imposing billboards promote huge open-air rallies led by influential American televangelists: events with names like the Holy Spirit Miracle Crusade. The rear windows of *matatus*, the ubiquitous minibus taxis that trawl and clog Uganda's roads, bear slogans such as 'Jesus is Lord', 'Puff Daddy' and 'Inshallah'.

Many Ugandans I speak to, even those I have known for many years, refuse to accept that I do not worship any God. According to a census conducted in 2002 the population was 41.9% Roman Catholic, 42% Protestant and 12.1% Muslim, with only 3.1% classed as 'other' and 0.9% claiming no religion at all. Yet despite the fact that 96% of Ugandans are affiliated to either a church or a mosque, apparently devout in their subscription to an all-encompassing system of belief under a single deity, there is another, seemingly contradictory and perhaps more sinister set of beliefs of comparable prevalence amongst the population.

Black magic, juju; the supernatural force of the spirit-world, central to the religions of Africa's pagan past, is still a hugely potent and prevalent idea. Misfortune is often attributed to angered spirits, to which shrines are made and appeasing gifts donated. Certain objects are believed to be cursed. I was once told of how a stone was removed from a football ground during play as it was believed to be interfering with the game.

Beyond mere superstition, there are those who claim to possess esoteric knowledge of this supernatural world and to be capable of channelling its power through the practice of witchcraft. "They are everywhere in Kampala and in every village," my friend informs me, breaching the general silence that shrouds the issue. Kasiro, better known to me by his Christian name, Vincent, lives and works in the capital and has visited witchdoctors in the past, in failed attempts to cure physical ailments. Adorned in traditional bark-cloth, beads, shells and feathers, the practitioners of magic perform arcane rituals, communing with spirits through incantations to aid their clients.

A career as a witchdoctor or 'traditional healer' can be highly lucrative and the reverence or fear of the wider community grants significant power to those who hold the position. For a fee one may seek assistance with a host of personal problems or ambitions; "if someone wants to kill you or hurt you, if they want success, a bigger salary or a better position, then they will visit the witchdoctor." In many cases people will consult their local juju practitioner with any health issues they have, rather than seek treatment from a modern medical doctor.

These superstitions are not confined to the poorly educated or the desperate, they permeate the highest strata of Ugandan society. Kasiro claims that "everyone goes to them; politicians,

police... even the priests can use them." In fact, it is members of the newly affluent elite who may be encouraging witchcraft. The sacrifice of chickens, goats and cattle is a common prescription amongst traditional healers, but one which most Ugandans can ill-afford, especially given the fees charged for conducting such rituals. Even more financially exclusive are the high premiums demanded for the sacrifice of humans.

The prestige of those who indulge in these practices is demonstrated by cases such as that of

IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE AND WEALTH-ORIENTED SOCIETY RIDDLED WITH SUPERSTITION, THE RICH ARE INCREASINGLY TURNING TO JUJU TO GUARANTEE THEIR SUCCESS

the wealthy businessmen, Godfrey Kato Kajubi, who owns property both in Kampala and London, and who employed a pair of married witchdoctors to decapitate twelve year old Joseph Kasirye in the south-western city of Masaka. Together with the reverence of juju at all levels of society, the wealth and position of many perpetrators may also explain why government initiatives to tackle the problem, such as the Anti-Human Sacrifice Police Task Force, have been ineffective, with reports of widespread corruption and an unwillingness to upset witchdoctors.

It is unclear whether children are targeted for their particular magical properties or for the practical consideration that they are more easily obtained, but it is the young who are usually selected for murder in the name of juju, befriended and lured with sweets, drugged with chloroform or forcefully taken. Human blood is used in numerous ceremonies, reportedly including the initiation of new witchdoctors who have even been known to douse themselves with it directly from the living victim, as ex-witchdoctor Polino Angela describes in a 2010 BBC Newsnight documentary. Hands and feet, genitals and internal organs may all be harvested for the particular requirements of a commissioned act of sorcery, and not necessarily after the child is dead.

The official Ugandan police figures on ritual killings show a rapid increase in reported incidences over the last decade, although these are widely considered to grossly underrepresent the true scale of the growing pandemic, with only 29 counts in 2009. Cases of child abduction and disappearance have increased in direct correlation with these figures, but

the numbers are many times greater, with hundreds of cases every year, despite the fact that some go unreported by complicit parents.

There are many who doubt that the apparent correlation between Uganda's booming economy and the nationwide surge in child sacrifice is coincidental. In an increasingly competitive and wealth-oriented society riddled with superstition, the rich and ambitious are increasingly turning to juju to guarantee their success and the most potent means of doing so is widely believed to be the ritual murder of children. This correlation between thriving business and brutal murder is most horrifyingly exemplified by the live burial of children in the foundations of new buildings, springing up across Kampala, believed to ensure the success of the enterprise under construction.

Clearly, Uganda's adoption of the Western capitalist model, coupled with the schizophrenic maintenance of pagan beliefs, has acted to encourage and incentivise these barbaric acts. But this terrible phenomenon is not limited to Uganda or even to Africa. In recent years the British authorities have rescued hundreds of children from the hands of so-called traditional healers, children who had been trafficked into the UK from Africa, especially Uganda, for the purpose of bloodletting and sacrificial rites.

FREDERICK BOWERMAN



FROM THE ARCHIVES

11 FEBRUARY 1893

Oxford Types.

(BY A TYPE-WRITER—NOT MR. PUNCH'S.)

No. IV.—THE ORDINARY MAN.

THIS person must on no account be mistaken for the Average Man. The latter has his idiosyncrasies and his eccentricities; he may indulge in freaks, break rules, disregard prejudices—and often does. The Ordinary Man does none of these things. Uncursed with convictions and unblessed with vices, his existence is influenced neither by likes nor by dislikes; his mode of life is not ordered by caprice, constitution, or cussedness. He lives as he is told to live, and consequently he does not live—he vegetates. As devoid of originality as a sheep, and toad-like in his lack of enterprise, he merely assists in the ever-popular work of over-populating the globe.

Nature having placed the necessary penny in the slot, the figure begins to go through its allotted task, its movements being quite beyond its own control. Having eyes it sees what it is appointed to see, and having ears it hears what it is ordained to hear.

Labelled "Oxford," he was safely brought hither by a careful Railway Company, and being on his arrival made cognisant of a miscellaneous collection of mediæval regulations, he proceeds to live within them. Alternatives he cannot appreciate, not being built that way; and thus it comes to pass that he neither avails himself of the roller as a substitute for chapel, nor of valetudinarianism as a substitute for lectures, nor of the customary academic fine as a substitute for a fine academic costume.

His recreation is rowing, and here it is within the range of probability that he may shine, for the mechanical nature of the toil imposed upon him by a succession of autocratic taskmasters is in harmony with his natural bent. He observes a severe course of training and a habit of keeping his eyes in the boat with equal facility, and his obedience at any rate will secure him a seat in his College Eight even if higher honours do not await him. With little to disturb the even tenour of his way he ambles through life pleasantly enough, making few friends, but no enemies. He is not ignorant, for has it not been laid down for his information that there are a hundred books which must be read? He therefore studies the Hundred Best Books religiously. Besides, if by chance he has been told that a First Class is the sole object of a University career, he will obtain that First, his lack of original ideas standing him in good stead during the operation. A pig may be learned and a kangaroo may be well-skilled in the noble science; so, too, the Ordinary Man may gain distinction, continuing to be a mere machine the while.

In fact he goes through his performance according as his clockwork interior is arranged, and when the time fixed for the end of the show is arrived, he stops; and there is one automaton the less in motion.

ON FURLOUGH

PASSENGERS ON THE GREYHOUND TO DALLAS

It was an oppressively sunny afternoon in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and I was scheduled to make a fifteen hour Greyhound journey from Chucky's Convenience Store on the outskirts of town to the bus terminal in Dallas, Texas. I had been warned half-jokingly by my American friends about taking the Greyhound, and, more specifically, about the kind of company I might find myself in. For me, though, as I lugged my backpack into the hold and said goodbye, the bus still had a slight Kerouac-induced aura of peripatetic adventure.

I sat in the first available seat that I came to, beside a middle-aged man in grey tracksuit bottoms, a plain white t-shirt, a grey baseball cap, and grey Adidas trainers. As the bus pulled out of the car park, we struck up a conversation. As it happened,

he was a convict. Not an ex-convict, but a convict, transferring himself to a low security prison camp near Philadelphia, where he was originally from, and where he had been convicted of drug trafficking in the early nineties.

He soon asked, very politely and unassumingly, whether he could use my phone. I said, "of course," and handed it to him. He wanted to call his family to let them know what his situation was. He himself had only been told that he would be allowed to go 'on furlough' two days prior to his departure that morning, without any opportunity to make contact with his parents or siblings, or with his now-adult children.

He also wanted to call "some old girlfriends" from Philadelphia, to see if he could arrange a



meeting before he had to be at the prison-camp. "Fifteen years, it's been," he said, "fifteen years, til this morning."

I asked him how it had felt to get out. "I got in the cab to the Greyhound stop, and the driver – he drives cons to the stop all the time so he knew – he turned round to me and he said, 'It's alright if you want to.' And I did; I cried, and I couldn't stop crying. I can't describe how it felt."

He fiddled frustratedly with my phone, looking as though he hadn't calmed down much since that moment of faux-liberation. It occurred to me that he didn't know how to use it, having been in prison for so long. It was a touch-screen. I showed him what to do and, as he entered the number, pressed green and waited intently. I observed him more closely. He was in fairly good shape, and incredibly clean. His hands looked soft and smooth, his fingernails perfectly clipped, his head close-shaven. The clothes were all new, and somehow even his eyes seemed cleansed; grey and washed out.

HE HAD BEEN INCARCERATED FOR SO LONG THAT ONLY THE RHYTHMS AND ROUTINES OF PRISON LIFE SEEMED REAL

But the call wouldn't go through. I apologised. He said it was fine and thanks anyway, and looked out of the window, dejected. Suddenly he took some bits of paper out of his bag and showed them to me. It was his itinerary. It was vast. The prison had bought him a ticket and sent him off travelling for three days and two nights straight, with only a short break every few hours. If he didn't arrive at the prison camp at the allotted time he would be considered an escapee, and we were already running late.

He would get out this itinerary to show me again several times that afternoon and evening. Unsurprisingly he seemed attached to routine and repetition. When it got to 7pm and we were discussing his day-to-day life in his previous prison, he started to narrate his evening routine as if it were embedded in his body-clock, as if he were still there: "I'm coming out into the yard now before dinner, maybe lifting some weights, you know, maybe just shit-talking with the guys..." He had been incarcerated for so long that only the rhythms and routines of prison life seemed real. Physically, he was sitting next to me on the bus, but psychologically he was still locked up. As a result, the bus ride seemed to be an inexpressibly surreal and intense experience for him, and when he asked tentatively what I did, and

what I was studying at university, I tried to explain, but I quickly realised that I was just another element of his journey's unreality. I was from another world, and we could barely relate to one another at all.

The most recent statement by the Federal Bureau of Prisons regarding the inmate furlough program runs as follows: the Bureau "encourages institutions to furlough transfer appropriate inmates... unless a more cost-effective means of transportation is available." Expense, then, is the main reason why thousands of prisoners are traveling across the US every year, disguised as civilians, riding on Greyhound buses unbeknownst either to the drivers or to civilian passengers. Though the man I met seemed safe enough, if a little on edge, the psychological impact of his circumstances made him unpredictable. As we passed the Mexican border at El Paso I was hardly surprised to hear him thinking out loud, "That fence really ain't all that big..."



BOOKSHOPS

TWO RADICAL BOOKSHOPS THAT MAY BE THE LAST OF THEIR KIND

To stand behind the counter of a political bookshop is to have one's finger on the pulse. No geopolitical event and no talk of the town remain unnoticed. No victorious struggle or shattering defeat that can't be read from people's faces as they enter through the door. No brilliant insight or wrong-headed analysis that won't find expression in a passing remark between bibliophiles.

Le Jargon Libre has seen a lot of political trends come and go. Situated in a part of Paris where the postcard motifs and those looking for them are few and far between, it feels like a revolutionary treasure chest crammed with every book on every heroic struggle ever fought. Founded by Helyette Bess in 1974 as "a place of ease and rest, where people can both read and discuss," the Jargon Libre is all but an everyday bookshop. In fact, it's not a shop

at all. "C'est une bibliothèque de consultation," says the 82-year old owner, who owns all of the books on display. She can tell you a story about most of them and doesn't intend to sell a single one.

In 1984, ten years after the grand opening, the bibliothèque was closed down when Helyette Bess was sentenced to nine years in prison for her involvement in *Action Directe*. Talking to the witty, grandmotherly lady, it's hard to imagine that she was part of the anarcho-communist group responsible for killing George Besse (then CEO of Renault) as well as various strikes throughout the eighties. Yet, Mme Bess has lost none of her revolutionary fervour. With the *Défense Active*, she continues to demand the paroling of imprisoned *Action Directe* activists and remains an active part of the French autonomous scene. While she may still not respect the



SHE CAN TELL YOU A STORY ABOUT MOST OF THEM AND DOESN'T INTEND TO SELL A SINGLE ONE

law, today she obeys it and pays the monthly expenses of €850 through donations and by holding solidarity events.

Much of the appeal of a political bookshop depends on its guardian. Equipped with a lifetime of political experience that no filter bubble could replace, they find the books that 'customers who viewed this...' has never heard about. Thorwald Proll, owner of the Nautilus bookshop in Hamburg, fits this mould. He and his girlfriend opened the store in 1978. Since then the anti-nuclear movement, the collapse of the Soviet Union, resistance to racist mobs in the nineties and even a revival of avant-garde writers from the twenties have left their mark on the bookshelves. In its first days, however, people were still occupied with digesting the most turbulent events of German post-war history.

In 1968 – when the term 'guerilla warfare' was still associated with 'Third World' jungles and violence-against-things was as far as most radicals would take it – Proll, Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin were arrested for setting two shopping centres on fire. In a legendary hearing, Proll proclaimed that they were "not going to defend [themselves] before a judiciary that protects private property more than human beings" and the three escaped to France halfway through their three-year prison sentence.

While Baader and Ensslin went on to found the Red Army Faction (RAF) shortly afterwards, Thorwald Proll left them before it was too late. Throughout 1977, the left-wing militants of the RAF implemented their vision of an 'urban guerilla warfare' and held the nation in suspense. Demanding the release of political prisoners, members of the group assassinated the head of Dresdner Bank and the Attorney General before this 'German Harvest' came to an abrupt end

on 18 October. The RAF's leading members, Baader, Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe, were found dead in their prison cells. In response, former SS-officer and President of the National Employers' Association Hans-Martin Schleyer was killed after being held hostage for 43 days, and found in the trunk of an Audi 100.

Proll must often wonder what would have happened had he not left the group just before things got hairy. Alongside, his continuing political engagement and support for imprisoned comrades, he began writing poetry and selling books. "A connection of commercial work and political consciousness," as he calls it.

The book's aura of subversion has been culturally perpetuated to the extent that one might think that Helyette Bess and Thorwald Proll had no choice but to set up bookshops, the only plausible extension of political life. In Francois Truffaut's 1966 adaption of *Fahrenheit 451*, the director presents us with a dystopian future where fascistoid fire-brigades ensure every book they find is burned as a means to prevent popular upheaval, claiming that "they make people unhappy [...] and anti-social." One day, Guy Montag, protagonist and firefighter, satiates his curiosity and starts reading, just to realize that the opposite is true: "maybe the books can get us half out of the cave!"

Similarly, in *Soylent Green*, 40 million New Yorkers of the future know books only by hearsay and live off a retro-futuristic instant food called 'Soylent'. Unsurprisingly, it's the nostalgic, old bookworm Sol whose studies reveal the 'Soylent Corporation' is at the heart of a disturbing, cannibalistic plot.

In both films, the bibliophile symbolism culminates in the complete identification of the critical mind with the written word: while a group of dissidents in *Soylent Green* call themselves

"books", in *Fahrenheit 451*, they literally take on their identity ("That skinny fellow is *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll."; "I am *The Prince* by Machiavelli. As you see, you can't judge a book by its cover.")

However, today is not Truffaut's tomorrow. The printed word's monopoly on imparting political ideas is a thing of the past. For those thoughts, the wight and length of which exceed the scope of a tweet, status or blog, Amazon has rendered visits to the bookstore obsolete. And yet, they are much more than just a refuge for academics worshipping an anachronistic fetish.

It might not be obvious at first sight – perhaps some won't notice it at all – but to a certain extent, Nautilus and the Jargon Libre radiate a beguiling unwillingness to reconcile themselves with the world surrounding them. Go only to have Mme Bess refuse to welcome you as a 'customer'; buy some 'Aroma Zapatista' coffee at Nautilus and unwittingly fund a Mexican guerilla group.

Yet, it seems radical book culture has had its day and a renaissance is not in sight. Maybe the title of Thorwald Proll's book *We Came from Another Planet* gives us a reason for its decline. After all, what we are witnessing is not so much the widely bemoaned 'death of the book' but rather a sad shortage of extraterrestrials like him and Helyette Bess.

LUKA BOESKENS



ALEXANDER DARBY

ISIS EYE







NEVER UNDER ENGLISH RULE

HOW THE BATTLE FOR SCOTLAND'S FUTURE IS BEING FOUGHT THROUGH ITS PAST

In October 2012 David Cameron and Alex Salmond, Scotland's first minister, announced the 2014 referendum on independence for Scotland. For Salmond and his Scottish National Party (SNP) this was a watershed moment, marking the culmination of a decade-long campaign to give Scottish voters a say on their constitutional future. The three major parties in Westminster are all opposed to independence and have grouped together under the 'Better Together' Campaign: it is a case of the SNP versus what they call the 'English parties'. The vote has added significance for Scottish nationalists because 2014 marks the seven hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, where Robert the Bruce decisively defeated an English army.

The scholar Benedict Anderson argued that all nation states were based on an exclusive 'imagined community' of select historical references and that nationalisms are therefore constructs, designed to foster a unity of purpose and a shared experience among the 'chosen' people. It is a lesson that the Scottish National Party, and indeed most political parties, have long been acutely aware of. Bannockburn itself has, perhaps more than any other historical event, been the focus of the SNP's commemorations of Scottish history. The annual Bannockburn Rally to celebrate the

famous victory over the English has been part of the SNP's calendar for decades, and over the years various party dignitaries have addressed the crowds there.

The decision to hold the referendum in 2014 was no coincidence: the SNP has long played up to, and promulgated, its selective version of Scottish history. Reliance on harking back to medieval times for reference points has not gone without criticism, even from within the party itself. In a 2003 article in the *Sunday Times*, Kenny MacAskill, the current SNP Secretary for Justice, criticised what he called the party and Scottish nation "defining ourselves in terms of a victory over the English". It was time, he argued, to celebrate Scottish successes and not only those that at the same time denigrated the English.

Such celebrations do not have the exclusivity that the SNP desires. For as the party leadership knows, it has to be very sure that the successes it celebrates from history can be deemed distinctly Scottish. The easiest way to make the distinction absolutely clear is to focus on events where the English were the foe. Consequently the party declined to change tack and Salmond denied any anti-English focus to the event, arguing that the rally was "about celebrating the period which forged Scotland's national identity".

For it is in this medieval

period alone that a distinctly separate Scottish history can be discerned. Prior to Bannockburn, cross-border landholding was extensive and Anglo-Norman knights comprised the Scottish ruling elite; Robert the Bruce himself was the product of such a family. But the Wars of Scottish Independence put paid to shared identities: the Anglo-Norman aristocracy in Scotland were forced to differentiate themselves from their southern counterparts, culminating in the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320 which is viewed by some today as the seminal document in Scotland's independent history.

It is on this brief period of antagonistic history which the SNP has firmly trained its historical focus. True, there are alternate cultural focuses of 'Scottishness' such as the writings of Walter Scott and Robert Burns. But while these may be seen by many as the epitome of Scots culture, Scott and Burns composed their works and put their gloss on the Scottish myth as part of a Greater Britain. This is something the SNP would prefer not to dwell on, for if being part of the United Kingdom can nevertheless lead to such expressions of Scottish pride and identity, the historical motive for independence is considerably weakened.

The history of the Wars of Independence period is so important to the party that it even informs its rhetoric when setting out policy agenda. Salmond, the

SNP's leader since 1990, made extensive use of the idea of the "community of the realm" in his 2011 party conference speech. The phrase is found in the Declaration of Arbroath, and assumed significance as the Scottish state began to be conceived as being based on the whole people of the kingdom rather than just the ruling elite. The Declaration states that, "as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule," and if a king compromises on this, the people have the right to drive him out as an "enemy." By using this identifiably Scottish concept, Salmond attempted to posi-

dichotomy between Westminster and Edinburgh is today far more complicated than the SNP are comfortable to admit.

The vote in 2014 continues the SNP's attempt to attach significant importance to events at the turn of the 14th century, and the reason for this can be found in a fuller view of Scottish history. Significant links with England have existed from long before the events at Bannockburn and Arbroath, and from long since then: two World War victories and the creation of the welfare state were achieved in union with the rest of the United Kingdom. Yet the SNP is desperate to persuade Scottish voters that 1320

THE SNP IS DESPERATE TO PERSUADE SCOTTISH VOTERS THAT 1320 REPRESENTS A DECISIVE JUNCTURE BETWEEN THEM AND THE REST OF THE UK

tion the SNP as the party for all of Scotland while conveniently differentiating himself from David Cameron's 'Big Society'.

In a debate on the referendum for independence in January 2012 Nicola Sturgeon, the Deputy First Minister, traced the principle of the Scottish people deciding how they were governed back to the Declaration of Arbroath. The document was quoted by other SNP members and used to emphasise Scotland's constitutional difference from England. Another SNP member went on to draw unfavourable comparisons between the Liberal Democrat Lord Wallace and his namesake from the Wars of Independence. Meanwhile, Labour assembly members emphasised the difficulties in breaking a 300-year-old union and raised the point that the disagreements are not between England and Scotland, but come from within a broad spectrum of Scottish opinion. What Salmond and the SNP portray as a Middle-Ages

represents a decisive juncture between them and the rest of the United Kingdom, in order to justify their pursuit of independence. In a country that has been unified for over 300 years and which overwhelmingly shares a common language this remains an extremely problematic task.

It remains to be seen whether they will be successful in pursuit of that strategy; the result will turn to a large extent on whether Scottish voters can be convinced of the SNP's selective reading of history. Whatever the outcome in 2014, the case of the SNP illustrates the extent to which history is prone to being politicised and manipulated. What we remember, and how we remember it, ultimately depends on what we deem to be important, and what we do not.

OLIVER PARK





People make drugs and drugs make people better. So we are told. But scratch this surface, and you find the implicit confidence one places in medicine's ability to heal is shattered, slowly replaced by the uncertainty that exists in an opaque world where industry is pitted against the individual.

\$43 billion is pretty clearly a lot of money. So is \$497 billion. These are respectively the annual revenue of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the UK's largest pharmaceutical company, in 2011 and the combined net revenue of the world's top nineteen pharmaceutical companies in the same year. These numbers are so big that they generate respect, especially from governments left reeling since the 2008 crash.

This revenue allows money to be ploughed into research programs, and so pharmaceutical companies are able to become giants on the back of drugs taken billions of times by millions across the world. However, as experimental trials are constructed and information is acquired on a drug, results often appear that may not fit with the drug's intended use. Maybe side effects show up, or the expected benefits are not found. Suddenly, a company responsible for marketing a drug is the only entity with information on it. As data goes missing, or is misrepresented, many believe that society's perception of drugs is warped.

Ben Goldacre, author of the recent book *Bad Pharma*, describes his perception of the problem: "Pharma engages in practices that obstruct evidence-based medicine – withholding trial data, engaging in biased dissemination of information – because those practices are possible, legal, and accepted by the medical professions."

The industry walks a tight-rope, manipulating the data it produces on its own drugs, while exerting pressures to make prof-

its. This rope can snap, and did so in July 2012, in the largest health fraud settlement case in history. A \$3bn fine was given to GSK by the United States Justice Department after GSK was found guilty of marketing off-label drugs.

Off-label prescription occurs when doctors prescribe a drug for a purpose other than which it has been approved for by regulatory boards, and it is not legal for pharmaceutical companies to promote this type of prescription. However, between 1998 and 2003, GSK was, among other charges, found responsible for actively encouraging the sale of the antidepressant Paxil to those

CAN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY'S MOTIVES IN CARING FOR SHARE- HOLDERS EVER BE RECONCILED WITH THE NEED TO CARE FOR THE SICK?

below the age of eighteen. Responsible for deciding whether this drug was safe for use by non-adults, GSK subsequently went on to conduct its own experiments. The results showed that children were more likely to commit suicide when taking Paxil, but GSK did not release the data. Their own internal documents note: "It would be commercially unacceptable to include a statement that efficacy [in children] had not been demonstrated, as this would undermine the profile of paroxetine."

This example is but one of a host of cases that has been brought against companies such as GSK. However, a view of the industry as universally evil would be simplistic. There are significant economic and health

benefits in the huge resources that companies are able to invest. Herbie Newell is Professor of Cancer Therapeutics at the Northern Institute for Cancer Research. He stresses the pressure of capitalism in defining the pharmaceutical industry's goal of maximising profit: "As an academic, I see the pharmaceutical industry and the biotechnology sector as partners. Past, and future, there have been rotten apples. But there is a common goal: improving human health. As part of a capitalist society, they have to operate within the system that exists." This concept of 'rotten apples' opens the door to the question of how far individuals are responsible for malpractice; how far is the ability to manipulate this system telling of problems within the system itself?

Trudo Lemmens, a law professor at the University of Toronto, works on issues of data manipulation by the pharmaceutical industry. "I was looking at conflict of interest issues in the context of biomedical research. I discovered quickly that you can't understand what's the pressure on the system, and how people concretely behave in the context of biomedical research, if you don't understand where the pressures come from, and if you don't understand the pressures that exist within the pharmaceutical industry itself."

Andrew Witty, the CEO of GSK, was knighted in the 2012 New Year's honours list, six months before his company received its fine. How can one of the UK's highest honours be reconciled with the practices of the company he leads? Lemmens sees it as an important aspect of the debate: "You have to make a distinction between individual people working in the industry, say as researchers, working with a particular personal commitment to things, and the commitment of the industry as a whole." And there should be no mistake.

The industry's commitment is to its shareholders. Like Lemmens, Goldacre questions how far classifying individuals can help solve the industry's problems: "I don't think talking about 'good' or 'bad' people is very helpful, it doesn't get us any nearer to solutions, and I doubt pharma executives are any more likely to be horrid humans than people in publishing, coding, or design."

Goldacre prefers to highlight one of the most important features of the pharmaceutical industry's actions today: "What is odd, and drifts into unethical and frankly dishonest behaviour, to me, is when companies and their representatives deny that these well-documented problems exist. They exist, they're well-documented, they're inevitable, and they're commonplace, almost banal." A banal action will rarely initiate feelings of wrong-doing in a perpetrator. As long as abuses remain commonplace and possible, they will take place, especially when viewed in light of what is now a clear end-point: profit.

Lemmens describes the current situation as a "kind of pendulum swinging between regulators being put under pressure after significant scandals and then gradual pressure by industry to soften the regulations". Lemmens further highlights the factors which revolve around profits produced by the industry: "The pharma industry is a huge employer. They are paying directly to the regulatory agencies actually for the review of drug products." Once more, the provision of jobs and the funding of cutting edge research is juxtaposed with the promise of huge profits leading to dishonest activity. Goldacre also sees the

financial motives of such companies as the factor that produces malpractice. "It's hardly controversial or strange to say that a company wants to make money, and will use all legal or affordably illegal means to do so."

'Hardly controversial or strange': when billions of dollars are there to be made, systems that can be exploited will be exploited. Removing the allure of billions, so beneficial to the economies of nations across the globe, requires more than

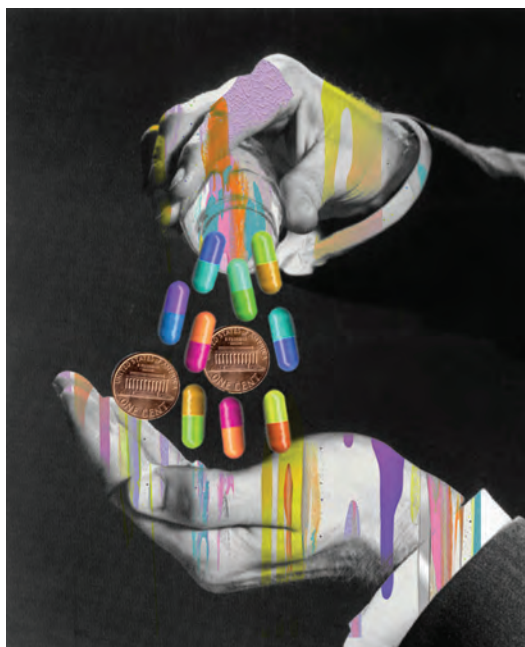
for doctors and commissioners of health services."

However many recent lawsuits focus on evidence from many years in the past; gains have been made in holding the industry accountable. Newell explains how regulations apply to his research: "When you apply for the license to market a drug, a huge amount of data is required, and rules stipulate how it is generated. We're not allowed to submit lab books where pencils and rubbers have been used,

in case changes have been made. We're not allowed to rip pages out of books. They must be numbered." He continues, "Nowadays the companies know about legal implications... they have to present all the data they have on file to regulators."

It remains to be seen if pressure from patients, politicians or activists will increase, paving a way towards further rules for an industry that many insiders see as already heavily regulated. The debate will rage as to whether the industry's motives in caring for shareholders can ever be reconciled with the need to

care for the sick. Evidence is now slowly emerging to suggest that important shifts are taking place in the mind-set of pharmaceutical companies. On 5 February, GSK announced its support for the AllTrials campaign, a movement to bring about the release of all clinical trials results. While improvements are now being seen at GSK, such events are not commonplace. And until they are, drugs and dollars will still be made through a system which is fundamentally flawed.



simple fixes; it requires substantial action. Lemmens believes that seemingly obvious lessons are still to be learnt. "We should actually recognise that there is an inherent conflict of interests when we allow the industry to produce its own data." Goldacre also believes fixes to problems would benefit initially from information dissemination: "I think offering the public a clear, accessible, well-referenced explanation of the problems is a helpful thing, because patients have been failed, and harmed... The great fear of drug companies is better information about drugs,



KARAPIRU'S STORY

HITMEN AND THE AWA TRIBE

On 6 November 2012, a group of fifteen people emerged from a hot, sweaty bus having taken three days to travel 2000 km from their village in Maranhão state, north-eastern Brazil. They had crossed half the country to reach Brasília, the capital and home of the National Court. They were some of the last survivors of the Awá, thought to be the world's most endangered tribe. The unprecedented journey was the Awá's public stand against what they term the gradual genocide of their people.

Loggers are encroaching upon the indigenous territories spread across the rainforest areas of Brazil. They have already cleared at least 30% of the rainforest in the Awá's lands since 1985, and heavily armed loggers, ranchers and hired militia are shooting the indigenous tribespeople on sight. Just last year, an eight-year-old Awá girl was burned alive after wandering out of her village – which was subsequently destroyed. Others have died from ant poison put into their flour stores by local farmers, or have been shot running away from settlers moving into the area. More than twenty of the tribal leaders who have denounced the treatment of their peoples have been assassinated to date.

One man who narrowly survived such an attack was Karapiru, who escaped severely traumatised after fleeing far into the forest with lead shot embedded in his lower back. His wife, daughter, mother, brothers and sisters were murdered; his son was wounded while trying to escape. For twelve years Karapiru was on the run, walking almost 400 miles across the forests and plains of Maranhão, crossing the sand dunes and rivers that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. He told Survival International, an NGO, that he survived only by eating honey, parakeets, doves and red-bellied thrushes. At night he chose to sleep high in the tree canopy to avoid capture by illegal ranchers working in the area. Whenever the solitude became too much, he would hum to himself as he walked.

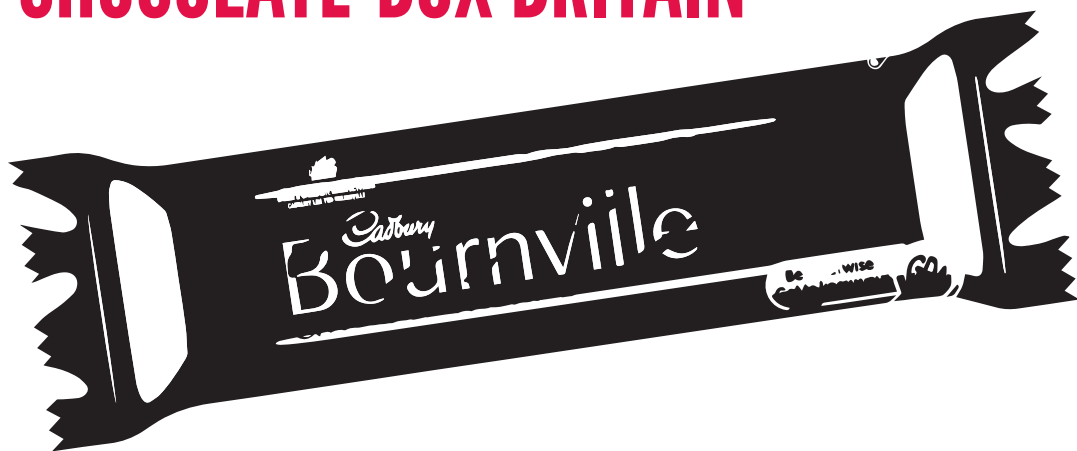
More than a decade later, on the outskirts of a town in the neighbouring state of Bahia, Karapiru was sighted walking through the black ash of a burnt patch of forest carrying a machete, arrows, and a chunk of smoked wild pig. A farmer gave him shelter, and alerted the National Indian Foundation (Funai), which in turn sent a young Awá man called Tiramucum to talk to the unknown Indian. By an incredible coincidence, Karapiru found himself reunited with his long lost son who had been captured twelve years earlier.

With the gradual destruction of their territories, many indigenous peoples are facing starvation, capture, or forced labour. Last October, elders from a Guarani-Kaiowá indigenous community of 50 men, 50 women, and 70 children wrote to the government, threatening to commit mass suicide if the Brazilian Federal Court failed to revoke its decision to move them from their sacred ancestral lands in Mato Grosso do Sul state. In their letter the elders asked for the government to “decree our decimation and total extinction,” and send tractors to dig a mass grave so that their bones could be buried in the same earth as those of their ancestors. Forced into crowded government reserves, swathes of indigenous people have turned to alcoholism and camps are rife with malnutrition. Homicide rates are greater even than in war states; the murder rate in the main indigenous reserve of Dourados is reportedly 495% higher than the Brazilian average. Every six days, a young Guarani-Kaiowá commits suicide in a reserve.

The vast concrete jungles of São Paulo and Brasília habitually eclipse actual rainforests in the media, and with the approach of the 2016 Olympic Games, the world's gaze is now fixed on Brazil. We may have to look hard, however, to spot those stuck in the shadows of its two great resources for the future: the city skyscrapers, and the rainforests.

JENNIFER CEARNS

CHOCOLATE-BOX BRITAIN



One tragic day in the early-2000s the ventilation arrangements of Birmingham's Cadbury factory were altered, and molten Dairy Milk could no longer be smelled from my playground. Quite the opposite happened to Charlie Bucket the day Willy Wonka's factory hummed and spluttered back to life.

Having read Roald Dahl, I had assumed every child grew up within smelling distance of a chocolate factory. But it was unique – Bournville – a village of green lawns and municipal flowerbeds, built in 1879 by Quaker philanthropist George Cadbury in countryside now long since engulfed by Britain's second city.

Cadbury created a radical new type of community for the workers of his factory that formed an enviable contrast to the 'back-to-back' slums of the nearby industrial metropolis. Its primary school's ornate frescoes, lush gardens and striking bell-tower are a tribute to the late-19th century industrial philanthropy movement. Christmas carols on the green remain, as do annual village festivals and daily melodious peals from one of Europe's only manually operated carillons.

The fairy tale received a considerable blow in January 2010, when Cadbury was taken over by the American conglomerate Kraft Foods. This buyout threatened Bournville's fiercely autonomous identity.

This identity is protected by the Bournville Village Trust; a benign local power charged with ensuring the community is not just picturesque but also Quaker in character. Satellite dishes are prohibited, no alcohol can be sold, and shop fronts and porches are painted a distinctive bottle green.

Although the Kraft takeover understandably made residents anxious, in reality little has changed in the day-to-day life of the community. A year 5 pupil at Bournville Junior School told *ISIS* "people were really annoyed at first, but it doesn't seem to have made a difference."

Bournville is now very much part of Birmingham, a city which faces the largest budget deficit in the history of British local government. It is just a short walk from some of the most impoverished areas in the country. Factory workers and school pupils now come from every conceivable ethnicity and religion.

Despite these changes, the community's founding principles – the right to a pleasant living environment for residents, strong civic engagement, and corporate social responsibility – have weathered 130 years of social and economic upheaval with great success. It has embraced diversity and social change while other parts of Birmingham have struggled. Bournville is a remnant of a lost Britain perhaps, but a remnant that takes an optimistic view of the multicultural and globalised city that has come to surround it.

'KRAFT' now appears in clumsy block capitals next to the elegantly italicised 'Cadbury'. American investors rather than descendants of George Cadbury now own the iconic business. Quaker residents, while still influential, are now rare. However, although the signs, shareholders, residents and ventilation systems have all changed, you can still smell the chocolate if you stand close enough.

PEOPLE

DIANE ARBUS
FREAKS

Alexander Woolley

KALLE LASN
WHAT NEXT?
Philip Bell

AURELIA LASSAQUE
OCCITAN
Alexander Woolley



SAGE GOODWIN

HOW TO READ A FREAK

A PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY OF DIANE ARBUS

What I do in the Arbus book is what a lot of biographers do, a lot less explicitly: I try making sense of the reasons why Arbus took the kinds of pictures she did. So, I examine the subjective – emotional, psychological – origins of her art,” William Todd Schultz, author of a recent book on the photographer Diane Arbus, declares.

The ‘photographer of freaks’, Arbus was not overly celebrated during her lifetime. Only a few galleries ever exhibited her work, and her first major retrospective was not held until a year after her death. Since then, a spate of major international exhibitions, along with scholarly work, has spurred interest in Arbus and her oeuvre. Though the process has been hampered by her tight-fisted estate, she is now one of America’s most revered photographers.

But the ‘freakish’ element in Arbus’ work was not what prompted Schultz, a professor of psychology at Pacific University in Oregon, to spend five years writing about her, an experience with which he struggled at times. The life of Diane Arbus was not a happy one. She ended it aged 48, in 1971, by overdosing on sedatives and cutting her wrists with a razor. “Arbus is very, very dark. To go into her life was often to go to a dark place and to live there for hours a day.” The appeal of her art was rather as ‘art per se’: “The specificity of the imagery, the elements in the shot, the density of the image.”

Schultz’s publication, *An Emergency in Slow Motion: The Inner Life of Diane Arbus*, is ‘psychobiography’, a term used derogatorily by sceptics. To its adherents, it is just another way of analysing a life, one that relies on psychological theory and research.

His method, summarised crudely, is to draw biographical meaning out of Arbus’ art. It is a tricky approach, often frowned upon, and one that can lead to ridiculous results, but Arbus may warrant this treatment more than others. She feared that

she would be remembered as merely the 'photographer of freaks', which "may have to do with what she believed, more or less unconsciously, her subject matter 'said' about her. I think her work was covert autobiography... It was a confession, pictorially."

Calling Arbus the 'photographer of freaks' is an easy way to grab attention. But, nowadays, it is almost misleading. "From the present angle they do not seem all that freakish. In fact, in terms of pure subject matter, they strike one as fairly tame. I can easily find far freakier freaks on American reality TV every single night," says Schultz.

He's right, too. In *A Jewish Giant at Home with his Parents in the Bronx* (1970) a tall man, slightly hunching his back because of the height of the ceiling, looks down at his parents; his mother holds her hands on her hips, craning her neck up, while his father, bespectacled and suited, gazes distantly towards his son's waist. The image is intriguing, rapaciously so, but 'freakishness' is hardly something that crosses the mind today.

Arbus' parents were wealthy New Yorkers, and though she grew up during the Great Depression, her family barely felt its effects. But Arbus also "came from a family of silences in which everyone did what they were supposed to. In the fringe were

secrets of all sorts. Arbus was obsessed with secrets, and with exposing what had always been repressed."

Relating this to her work, Schultz proposes that for Arbus, "shooting freaks was shooting the repressed, both personally and culturally. It was also liberating because freaks held no secrets. All was there on the outside to be seen. There was zero concealment, especially in the case of the last photos of the mentally retarded."

Yet Schultz is the first to admit that this narrative of why Arbus worked in the way she did is a simplification. In fact, he will say the same about psychobiography itself: "Lives aren't experiments, variables can't be controlled and pitted against one another post hoc."

Even without Schultz's treatment of Arbus, it would be safe to say that her place among the canon of Western art is firmly secured. The attraction of this type of criticism perhaps itself attests to this. Meanwhile Schultz is off to write a psychobiography of Elliott Smith, the American singer-songwriter who stabbed himself to death.

ALEXANDER WOOLLEY

"SHOOTING FREAKS WAS
SHOOTING THE REPRESSED, BOTH
PERSONALLY AND CULTURALLY."





ISIS EYE





ABIGAIL TYER



To me this is a kind of oxymoronic madness – I can't believe that human beings are being so stupid at this moment in human history. We're still telling each other we have to consume more to get out the fix that we're in which was caused originally by the fact that we consume too much." Kalle Lasn speaks with the energy of an agitator. Behind his soft Estonian accent lies the story that transformed him into a radical thinker. He was born in Estonia in 1942 and spent time in a German refugee camp before his family moved to Australia.

It was during the 1960s, when he had set up a market research company in Tokyo, that Lasn's world view started to change. "I was making money

"It's a process we're all caught up in and there's nothing we can really do about it... that process pumps thousands of marketing messages into our brains every day whether we like it or not." Spoof adverts attack consumerism in the same way as genuine adverts support it. For twenty years the magazine has been running 'buy nothing day' and 'TV turnoff week'.

But on 17 September 2011 the greatest branding exercise to date came to fruition. Thousands occupied Wall Street, and over the next few months occupied streets all over the world – #occupywallstreet.

When this message was printed in *Adbusters* they never expected it to reach so many.

WHAT WE

like you wouldn't believe... and yet, all the people around me who worked for all those advertising agencies that were my clients, you know all of a sudden I got bored with those guys. All they did was go around at night and fuck around and whenever I started talking about anything meaningful then they didn't really want to talk about it."

This disillusionment grew and, after making films and documentaries for PBC in Canada for twenty years, Lasn founded *Adbusters* in 1989. Through this left-wing non-profit magazine, which features clever spoof adverts, poetry and short opinionated articles, Lasn put his ideas on a global stage and provided a platform for others.

Adbusters uses branding masterfully. Its images accuse corporations of perverting consumers, ironically using consumerism's own weapons against it.

"That spark, the occupy movement – and now at *Adbusters* we're saying ok, what's next? How can we push this human experiment of ours on planet earth into orbit?"

Lasn sees the "huge threat" of ecological degeneration and climate change, the failure of the foundations of neoclassical economic theory which "aren't working any more", and the "mental breakdown of humanity" – shown by increasing numbers of people with mental disorders – as evidence that the current system is failing. "This human experiment of ours on planet Earth has never been more shaky [than] it is today."

The Pussy riots in Russia, uprisings in Egypt and the Arab world, protests in Spain, Greece, Chile and Bolivia are all part of this same undercurrent of restlessness that was behind the Occupy movement and even the

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ISIS INTERVIEWS
KALLE LASN, FOUNDER
OF ADBUSTERS
AND THE MAN
WHOSE WORDS
LAUNCHED
OCCUPY WALL
STREET

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2011 London riots, he believes. The ecological, economic and psychological problems result from the failure of the current system and “all add up to this... very scary gut feeling among some young people that the future doesn’t compute anymore”.

“Most of the students at Oxford and most people in North America and the one billion rich people in the world, we’re still doing pretty damn ok” Lasn says as he reaches the height of his crescendo. But he predicts “there will be a crash moment, a financial or ecological crash... if we do have a crisis moment then things could move very fast.”

In recent years critics of the left have attacked it for identifying problems and not providing solutions. Lasn believes that the feeling of frustration among young people is the start of a longer revolution, and the lack of viable solutions is to be expected,



SAGE GOODWIN

citing past revolutions when the ideas have come after initial unrest. "Even though up to now we haven't come up with any big ideas, those big ideas are percolating in the background."

But what is the ideological framework for this movement? "Well, ideology is kind of an old word, now things are more fragmented... I don't think it [capitalism] is going to be suddenly replaced by a totally new system... it will become capitalism 2.0 maybe," he laughs.

In his new book, *Meme Wars: The Creative Destruction of Neo-Classical Economics*, Lasn depicts the flaws of neo-classical economics. It is not radically new, but uses the work that some economists, such as contributors Joseph Stiglitz and George Akerlof, have been working on

Hood tax which would impose a 1% tax from all financial transactions and the banning of flash trading would both be part of Lasn's idea of "capitalism 2.0". "We will figure out the costs of our doing business" with a two-cost market regime which takes into account the ecological cost of products.

Lasn believes this reality will be won through communication technology. "It's going to be brought about by young people with social media tools."

And what have *Adbusters* got lined up to kick-start world revolution? Lasn envisages a #Goldman campaign. A twitter campaign that goes viral "and suddenly all 72 branches of Goldman Sachs are thrashed all over the world." He says, speaking quickly and eagerly. He realises

see the meltdown coming four years ago, and I hope Oxford can once again play a role in shaping the economic paradigm." Lasn is particularly animated when talking about the nearly 100 Harvard students who, in November 2011, walked out of Greg Mankiw's class in protest. The #kickitover campaign aims to take this to a new level.

There are also plans for a video game, #killcap, which involves the gamer trying to defeat capitalism. The tag line reads: "EA Sports – challenge everything"

But when Lasn starts talking about "an apocalypse and a thousand year dark age" I immediately become sceptical. Maybe it's because, as Lasn says, "capitalism does have a style, a tone, a form, a kind of a feeling we all live by, it's a process we're all caught up in and there's nothing we can really do about it." Maybe I am too caught up in it. But I wonder whether there has ever been a generation in which at least some have not felt that the future "doesn't compute".

Is it tenuous to link Pussy riots, who reacted to corruption in Russia, and the anarcho-Marxist Zapatistas in Mexico? Perhaps. Has there ever been a generation in which at least some haven't believed the world is about to end? I doubt it. And what makes me even more suspicious is that I know many of the things Lasn says are buzz words that repeatedly feature in his other interviews and in *Adbusters*. "Capitalism seems to be tankering and

"ALL ADD UP TO THIS... VERY SCARY GUT FEELING AMONG SOME YOUNG PEOPLE THAT THE FUTURE DOESN'T COMPUTE."

already. He sees the current economic system as unsustainable because it ignores the fact that resources are renewable and that we live on a vulnerable planet. It makes humans selfish he says, and has caused them to abuse the planet.

He speaks with the precision of someone who has taken English as a second language. "30% of the world economy is money making money making money ad nauseam... that aspect of capitalism will morph into 2.0" A Robin

"our ability to vent our anger at these financial fraudsters who brought on the meltdown four years ago" and adds "that anger hasn't subsided."

The #kickitover campaign aims to inspire uprising in economics departments in Universities across the world. "My great wish would be that the economics students at Oxford, that they start putting up posters... and asking their professors, you know, how they measure progress and how come they didn't

Y # GOLDMAN SACHS

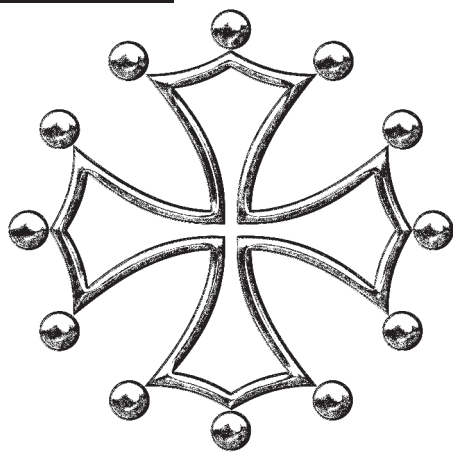
But this isn't a mad has-been lefty. This is a man and an organisation that clearly have the power to motivate thousands through adept use of imagery, words and the internet. The ideas are not peripheral either. The reality of psychological degeneration in the West is supported by a lot of evidence and Lasn's new book debunking current economic thought has seemingly been received with acclaim. The existence of climate change is refuted by only a few. Whatever you believe, the potential power of the Adbusters campaign is undeniable. As Lasn says, "it could take a generation... but people are waking up to the fact that what we are doing isn't sustainable."

"We're living in a very dangerous but hopeful moment in human history," Lasn whispers excitedly "we have the possibility of pulling off a singularity, a one-time mind shift. A revolutionary moment in human history when suddenly we morph into a new orbit and start doing things right."

ASK YOUR PROFESSOR:

Do economists suffer from an academic inferiority complex called “physics envy”?

AURELIA LASSAQUE



Surrounded by posters of the 1984-5 Durham Coalfield Miners' Strike, Aurélia Lassaque and several other poets gathered one icy evening in Housman's Bookshop, a north London establishment run largely by volunteers, where brown stains and holes in the ceiling structure look down on all who enter. A sign points to 'peace, anarchism, socialism, economics, media, poetry and more'. This was one of Lassaque's stops on a global tour to promote her new collection, *Solstice and Other Poems*, published by Francis Boutle Publishers, so minute a house that the founder still answers the telephone himself.

A petite lady from the south of France, Lassaque read in Occitan, one of the so-called patois ("dialects") of France that it has long been the French state's mission to exterminate. Her translator stood alongside her, delivering his English translations, hands trembling but voice clear, resonating through the packed bookshop.

Lassaque grew up in the south of France, in the centre of Occitania, a linguistic rather than political area, deep in 'the wild country'. Occitan is not her mother tongue; it was only when her father, a literature teacher, decided to teach Occitan (and therefore had to learn it) that she began to use the language.

Yet Lassaque only truly fell in love with the language when she started using it for poetry... "The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution were organising a poetry prize in Romanic languages, or European, I don't remember, and I thought I will write in Occitan, and they had to create a special jury to judge my poem."

It was more than just fun, she continued, because "Occitan... was a kind of virginal language; I was totally free to approach the world in what we could call a poetic way." She had not written poetry before in any serious way, and never in French.

"OCCITAN WAS A KIND OF VIRGINAL LANGUAGE."

"My first collection is just in Occitan, and I tried to translate it in French and it doesn't work because I thought totally in Occitan. And then I passed into a bilingual way of writing, so I have two pages and I write the poem in both languages, and finally I also now write poems sometimes in French. And this is a beautiful story because the Occitan language offered me the possibility to tame my own mother tongue as a language of poetry." Previously, "I was not capable to write a poem in French, because I had too much scholar [sic] things in the head."

Other than the very elderly, it is only "militants" who now speak Occitan on a day to day basis, some of whom "are working for cultural institutes, Occitan ones, so they have the opportunity to speak Occitan maybe every day... I cannot say this is not the real world, but when they close the door of the institute, they come in the street, and they have to buy bread, and they have to speak in French."

Lassaque's poems do not speak of the death of Occitan. Their themes are far more universal. Nature is ever present, into which men and women tend to blur away; "we are what we could call the human animal."

Meanwhile work continues at Francis Boutle. A new anthology of Occitan literature, contemporary and historical, in English translation is being planned for 2013. Further tours for Aurélia Lassaque are being scheduled too. As to the future of Occitan, Lassaque laughed and said "Give me my crystal! Honestly I don't know what to say... Occitan is like a phoenix; it could have died already, many times, but it didn't. So I think there's something strong in this language."

ALEXANDER WOOLLEY



 **ISIS EYE**

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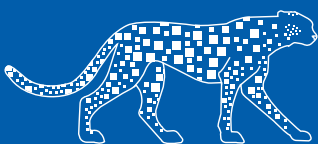
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