

EUDAIMONIA

Interview
with Peter
Adamson

Weird
Short
Stories

Quiz: Which
Philosopher
are you?

Poetry
Art
Essays

THE ABSURD



Warning

Read At Own Risk

Reading This

thesis that some particular situations, persons, or phase

is based on the idea that if nothing really matters the
 ver, important precursors and discussions of the absur

At the deepest level, the conflict underlying the absurd is characterized by a lack of any way of reason to penetrate and understand reality. Tradition

are also found in the works of Søren Kierkegaard. Absurdity includes additional theoretical commitments and often takes

at both components may be internal: the capacity to see

istic attitude toward the possibility of finding or creating
interested in the conflict between the human desire for me

1

Arbitrary places. Absurdism is the philosophical theory that

May Cause

Confusion

Despair

Philosophical Suicide

Madness

Existential Dread

Proceed With Caution

Welcome

The combined intellect, creativity and philosophical insights of the magazine committee has reached its apotheosis in the creation of a new Eudaimonia Magazine.

As philosophy students in pursuit of becoming masters of the noblest knowledge, we are taught a systematic, reflective and rational way of thinking. Nonetheless, the rational man is bound to come into conflict with the irrationality of the universe. Out of this conflict, the Absurd arises and makes its debut in the human consciousness. As Albert Camus wrote in the Myth of Sisyphus, "But what is absurd is the confrontation of the irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart." What are our thoughts about the philosophical current quintessential for European modernity? Through the courtesy of fellow students, we have received submissions, pictures and artwork, infused with the spirit of the Absurd. We would like to thank everybody for their contributions.

Before reading, we are morally obliged to warn readers about the content and language within this magazine. The pages are drenched with absurdities and reek of paradoxes, inconsistencies, existential Angst and depression, the intellectual fictive realm to experience cognitive dissonance. Thus, we sound the alarm for autists, OCD people, perfectionists and anyone neurodivergent to either freeze or fight. Despite all of this, we have found a method to the madness. We dare everyone: read our magazine! Mental states and side effects can differ from uncomfortable, uncertain and unconscious to undisturbed, unchanged and unimpressed.

Tosca Benda
Design & Edit
Eudaimonia Magazine

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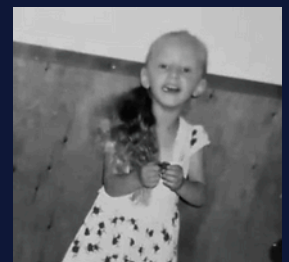
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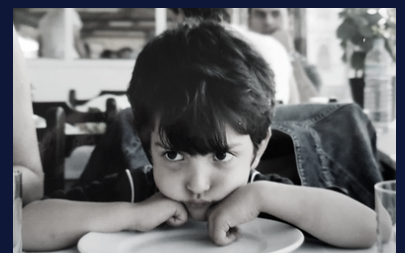
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THE ABSURDITY OF THE TRINITY

with Peter Adamson

We, the **content team**, have interviewed Peter Adamson. You may know him from his famous podcast "History of Philosophy without any gaps" (Promoted by our dear Dr. Bdaiwi), that has been turned into a book series. However, he's not only a famous 'pod-caster' but also a very well known and competent professor at both the LMU in Munich and the King's College London, concentrated in antiquity, medieval philosophy, and Islamic thought (hence the promo by Bdaiwi). Besides his academic successes, he is also quite funny and quick-witted. The subject for this interview is the Trinity, which is - if you think about it - quite an absurd concept. After all, if you think about anything long and deeply enough it will become absurd.

The example of Reese's peanut butter cups in your Trinity podcast episodes is quite absurd. Is there a specific story behind this example?

My podcasts have a lot of jokes in them some of which just come unbidden to me while I'm writing. These are probably the funnier ones. For example, one of my favorites is "on this topic Aquinas faced more stiff opposition than the hero in a zombie apocalypse film," and this is just something I wrote more or less without thinking. But I seem to recall that I actually stopped to stare out the window for a spell trying to think of an amusing example. I do genuinely like Reese's peanut butter cups and also have a strong childhood memory of the absurd commercials they

used to have for them. So this is an illustration that advertisement really works! By the way Reese has yet to send me a shipment of free peanut butter cups to thank me for including this example, so if they see this interview I just want to say that I have a cupboard I could free up for the year's supply they may want to mail to me.



**"My podcasts
have a lot of
jokes in them**

2

Wherein lie the roots of the idea of a tri-personal God? What were the motivations behind making God tri-personal?

This is a question that could be better answered by a theologian or historian of Christianity, but for what it's worth: my sense is that it grew out of the need to explain the divinity of Christ and relate Him, as God's "Son," to God as the Father.

Triadic structures

Obviously early Christians believed that they had strong Scriptural evidence for the divinity of Christ, which became a definitive dogma for Christianity as we know it. Once you say that Christ is God's Son but also himself God, you need to understand how there can be this unity (one God) with a difference (Father and Son). There is also Scriptural precedent for the Spirit as a third aspect of God, but my hunch is that it is really the Father-Son relation that drives theologians to develop the whole theory.

"Obviously early Christians believed that they had strong Scriptural evidence

Having three persons helps to find resonance with Platonism, which late antiquity is very concerned with triadic structures, but I think that was more a parallel that they exploited after the doctrine of the Trinity developed for inner-theological reasons.

3. As we understood from your podcast, before the theologian Peter Abelard in the 12th century (and maybe Anselm), understanding the trinity was mostly done through revelation. After Abelard, with the regrets of the abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, a trend started: to explain Christian doctrines using rationality. How significant was the role Abelard played in turning things around on the European continent?

I think he was very significant just in terms of being an exemplar of the rationalist approach. If you want to point to a single medieval thinker who believed that human reason can grasp the Trinity, more or less fully, Abelard might be the single best example. But rational argument, and even explicit use of pagan philosophy, had been deployed in this context before, for instance by Boethius, Augustine, and Eriugena, with the caveat that the Trinity would always remain to some extent mysterious. On the other hand, I don't think that Abelard was all that significant in terms of being a direct historical source for people like Aquinas or Scotus; they were engaging more directly with Boethius and Augustine. Still the use of rationality within theology, more generally, within the "high scholasticism" of the medieval universities is a perpetuation of a trend we see already in the 12th century in the context of the schools that paved the way for universities. And that was Abelard's world. So in a more general sense we can see Abelard as a harbinger of what was to come.

4. Fundamentally, as you mention in your interview with Richard Cross, the problem of the Trinity comes down to the problem of sameness and difference. There are three and at the same time there is one. It needs to be the same and different simultaneously. How would you describe the importance of the different solutions that have come up over the years, in shaping the European continent?

Reformation

Well, if we look ahead past the medieval period to the Reformation, one interesting and important issue was

what the test applied by Reformers for acceptable doctrine (namely, is the doctrine clearly presented in Scripture?) meant for this dogma of the Trinity. Main-stream Protestants accepted it, so they agreed (for once) that Scripture did support the traditional Church teaching. But we can understand the Unitarians as simply applying the methods and criteria of Luther to this topic – it was just a disagreement about what you can squeeze out of the relevant Biblical passages

So in the longer term it did become very important for political and social division in Europe. But going back to the medievals, I think the Trinity was a key spur to intellectual innovations. You have for instance Abelard's sophisticated theory of parts and wholes which was developed in order to handle the Trinity and Incarnation, and in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries a lot of philosophy of mind was done in the context of debating or trying to understand the Trinity.

Key-indicator

Also the Trinity remained a central example of something that can be partially, but not fully, understood or established by mere reason, so it is a key indicator of where a given thinker wants to draw the line between reason and revelation. (Again, Abelard was unusual in terms of how far he went, by at least suggesting that reason alone can account for the Trinity.) For these reasons, historians of philosophy who are not that interested in theology as such still need to know about the debates over the Trinity.

" It was just a disagreement about what you can squeeze out of the relevant Biblical passages.

5. What do you think about Kierkegaard's absurdism regarding faith and the Trinity? In the Concluding Unscientific Post-script to the

Philosophical Fragments, he suggests that we cannot and should not accept the reincarnation of God as a human being. It can be believed only by faith. Is this suggesting that Abelard's endeavour has come to an end with Kierkegaard?

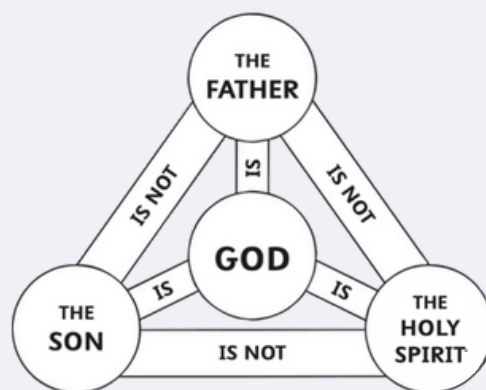
No, I think Kierkegaard was not really the end of something started by Abelard, if only because Abelard was a bit of an outlier, as I've said. Most theologians in the scholastic tradition would have admitted that we know God is a Trinity only because it is a revealed truth, and that we cannot fully understand it even if we can make some progress using reason, analogies to the human mind, etc.



Søren Kierkegaard

Reformation Trend

I am not an expert on Kierkegaard but my sense is that he is more like the ultimate fruition of the Reformation trend towards believing things on the basis of nothing but faith in Scripture. Of course Luther, Calvin, etc did not emphasize the absurdity of Christian beliefs in the way that Kierkegaard later would. But Calvin unflinchingly endorsed teachings that he knew were difficult for, or even repellent to, normal human reason, on the grounds that Scripture clearly contains those teachings (as far as Calvin was concerned). So for example he said that his notorious position on grace and damnation was something we need to believe without being able to rationally justify it: he even suggested that it would be presumptuous to try to make God's offer of salvation conform to our merely human ideas about justice. You can see Kierkegaard as embracing that side of the Protestant tradition.



6

Is the problem of the trinity an on-going debate, or relevant discussion in contemporary theology/ philosophy? And why?

Well, thankfully it's not something that causes the kind of conflicts it did in the sixteenth century, when for instance Michael Servetus was executed with the approval of Calvin for, among other things, questioning the Trinity. One might also think of the friction between the Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church over the manner in which the Spirit proceeds within the Trinity. All that is pretty much forgotten now, and I suppose that many Christians (of whom I am not one, by the way) don't really have strong views on the Trinity; maybe they don't even know what they are meant to believe about it, since it is kind of a technical issue that can be left to the theologians.

”Michael Servetus was executed for questioning the Trinity.

But it's definitely something that theologians still think is a vital part of Christian thought, and that is reflected in everything from analytic philosophy of religion to theologians who see the relation between the Trinitarian Persons as a model for interpersonal relationships among humans.

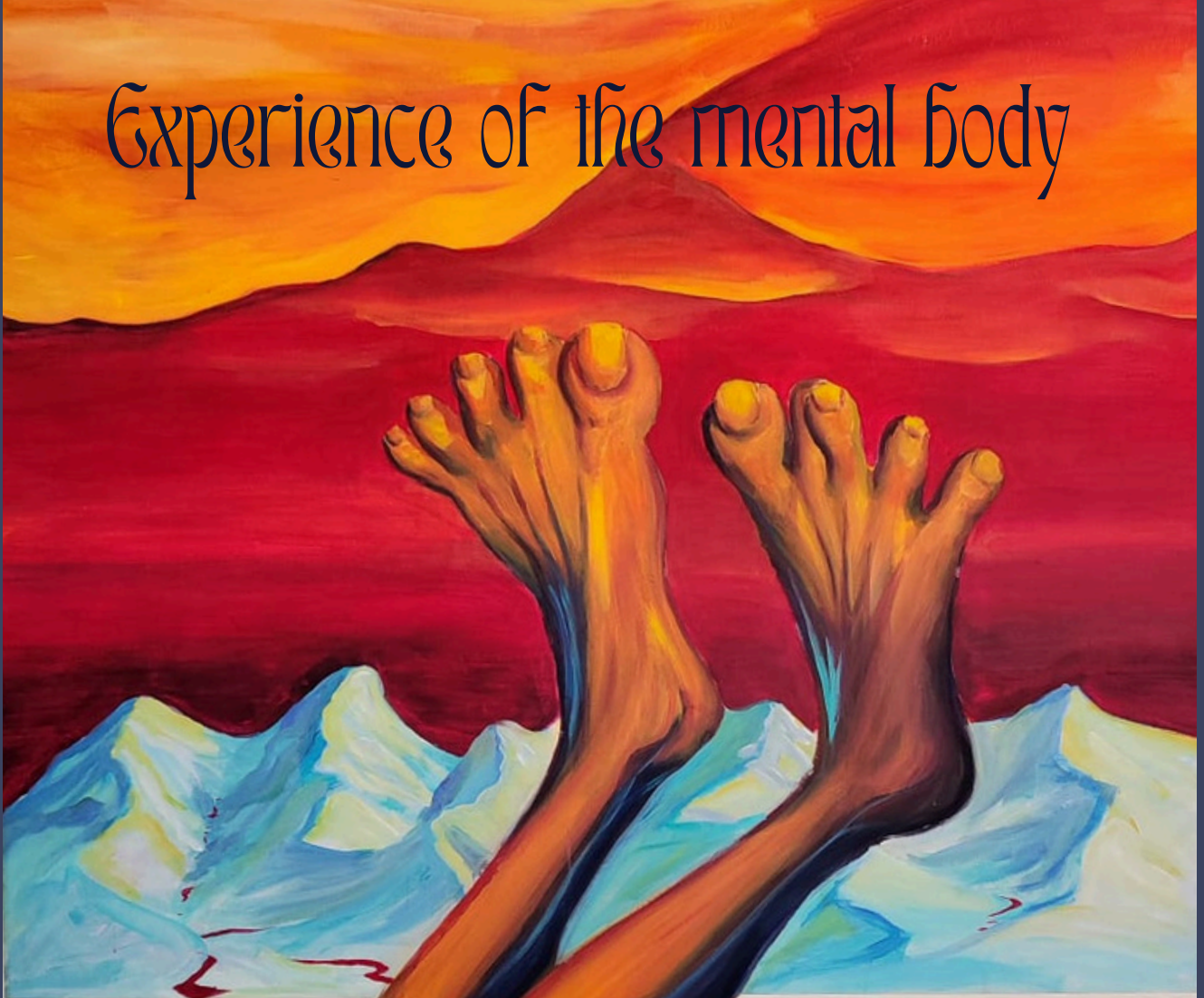
7. What is the most absurd thing that happened on your podcast: The History of Philosophy without any gaps?

Well let's face it, the whole project is pretty absurd: a single person trying to cover the whole history of philosophy in all times and cultures. Inevitably, it's a project that will be instructive in its failures to be complete, as much as it is instructive about what it covers. Maybe the best goals are those that can't be attained? That would be a nicely absurd thought.

8. What advice would you give to all the young philosophers out there, even if it is a little absurd?

Maybe that it can be a good thing to delve into philosophical ideas (or thinkers, traditions) that you find NOT attractive. A lot of my research career has been devoted to Neoplatonism, and what originally intrigued me about Neoplatonism is just that it seemed to be so wacky: why would anyone have believed these things? Commonly philosophers gravitate toward positions, also in the history of philosophy, that strike them as plausible and intuitive. There's nothing wrong with that of course. But I think one may get a better sense of the history of philosophy, and also exploit its capacity to surprise us and contribute ideas we didn't already more or less have, if one goes for the stuff that sounds most absurd at first blush.

Experience of the mental body



Cecile van Bruggen



I cannot do anything.
The words are inky ants
festered the pale sugar page.
Stems and serifs squirming,
pen tip on paper twitching—
I cannot write anything.

I cannot write anything.
All I hatch are vile little ants.
And when I try to erase them, I can't—
they just critter right off the paper.



They skitter off the paper,
right onto my finger.
Little legs pinching and poking,
prickling like a Wartenberg wheel—
inching down my leg, up my neck,
creeping to the hair on my nape.

Creeping to my nape, a critter
scraping through my skin
trips on a trigger hair,
and a jaw starts closing in.



A jaw starts closing in;
a venus flytrap's vicious grip
locks my legs, knees, waist, and chest,
then clinches around my neck.

The shadows that my lashes cast
look like its jagged teeth—
tingles rise up to my cheek
as I curl up in its mercy.
And it swallows me completely.



It swallows me completely.
I shiver as its fluids nibble my skin,
waning away my sanity.
The flytrap cages me within
with the ants that scuffle frantically.
The clammy walls are closing in—
I crouch as it consumes me.

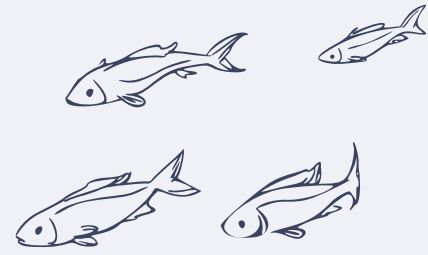


Venus Flytrap

Zenae

Green Grass

Johan Friederich



At first, it came slowly, like the gentle waves lapping upon the shore. Moving from the seaside house towards the boundary of land and sea, your perception of the tide coming in becomes delayed. The damp sand became sticky with salt just a few seconds after the sea receded. Just a few seconds more than would seem right. As such, there was no definite start to it; only time would tell if there was a definite end. The instances that came before it were a springboard to this realisation, and once the mind perceived this it became ensnared in the net. So the web simply stretched its borders, tearing a hole into the conception of the mind that it has always been trapped in.

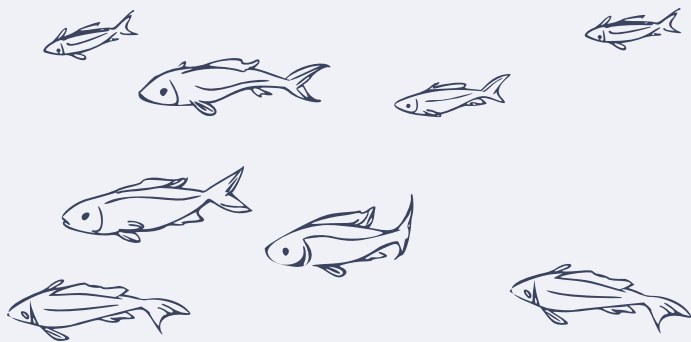
It came on when he smiled. Giddy and drunk, the smiles knocked on his face in a mechanical fashion, to the point where Eli was unable to distinguish the mask from reality. As time went on - as it is apt to do - these smiles became gills. Imagine the sting of a cold winter wind against your cheeks. The chill that hit Eli hit his gills with the same unrelenting force. As he smiled, they breathed. First, he imagined the gills as mouths; toothless jaws that split apart from the original, shrinking across either sides of his cheeks and growing smaller, fading into nothingness upon reaching his temples. Previous iterations of the lips remained part-wise intact. They followed the breath like a shadow which fed to satisfy the excitement growing from the veil Eli now wore.

The midnight-black pools of water snaked like scars through the landscape, revealing the lifeblood of the earth. Though he usually imagined them as docile, fat leeches; tonight the canals stared at Eli as he walked alongside them. He stared back through eye holes of the plaster mask

on his face, and saw himself drifting between the strands of water. The ripples that made the wind, or that the wind made into ripples (Eli could not be entirely sure) moved in time with the slow murmur of his gills, although these were not restricted to such a confined movement.

The more that Time, in her form as a slender hour, was allowed to seep through her children - like the many, many grains of memories through Eli's fingers - the more he felt the dormant parts of his brain spring awake, eager to hold each others' hands. Spark-like fuses cast an impulse that both throbbed with pent-up energy and cackled with fickle tendrils, interwoven with one another throughout his whole body - in particular, within his brain, which he thought to see in the periphery of his mind. It housed a black, branching neural synapse of incredible length and proportion, stretching without clear beginning from his spine to his brain; into the very centre of a section with a name Eli knew not.

He lost track of Her many children and soon—while not excluding the latter to forgo all corporeal measuring tools, his body lit up. He pulsed. From this pulse came the strands he had observed in his gills, in his body, in the water, and lit up the room with the grey cells upstairs. With it came the burning. This was burning with as much relentless sting as the cold evening air he was subjected to. His eyes, his nostrils, and mouth all held an inferno within them. It was powerful, potent, and completely at ease with the external world. In his dizzy state, it gave him some comfort. A campfire around which his illusory selves could gather and warm their weary souls. Going uphill or downhill was an adventure in itself; Eli felt the earth moving



as he did, guessing where to put his feet, changing his facial expressions with rapid succession while hoping that his intent to smile or appear grave shone through his mask of delusion. But once or twice, things started to seem clearer than they ever had been before.

The realisation of a lucid reality hit him at the same time as the first lapping of waves, ushered in as the experience faded and, by extension, his lapping of gills peaked in their greatest intake of breath. He was throwing away his paper cup. So he observed the garbage bin, completely lucid for a few heartbeats.

Reaching into his cocoon, Eli grasped his willingness to escape with a jolt, coupling it with the single deliberate and steady concentrated act of depositing the trash into the bin that touched his heart.

Within his heart, she talked to him. There were no words spoken, just the thoughts and ideas transmitted without meaning or purpose behind them. He felt her and she felt him. Things were going to go well.

The smile that danced on Eli's face while he talked with the two people walking with him sometimes flared out to gigantic proportions. Always following the upward pulse, eternally frozen in his reach towards a solemn expression.

His hands, nestled safe and relaxed within the pockets of his trench coat, started stinging without pain or discomfort. The tingle of the fabric reached out, wanting to feel him and be felt by him. He took his hands out and took it upon himself to describe them to himself with artistic freedom. They were tendrils coming from tendrils coming from tendrils, a mockery of the imagi-

nation into something complex. An eternal movement like that of a Mandelbrot, each of which encompassed the string of the wind and fabric. He read the waves like a pulse. Now the pavement is underwater and so is Eli. He has always been drowning but never realised it up until now. This heartbeat has a rhythm, complete and circular, and yet he feels it echo further than his wildest imagination can reach. He holds the puppet strings of the things around him, just as they hold onto him in equal measure.

Contrast and vividness introduce themselves and gleams of understanding flash between them, but Eli cannot sense this. Not while in this state, at least.

Only now their interaction is becoming clear to him by their appearance. The superficial rears its head. Eli sees its beauty. Endless in the possibilities of form and a void of nothingness in the non-form of purposelessness, it exists precisely because he does. His mind reaches out to touch it; without ceremony nor words of benediction, they become one in their disunity.

Now the gills stretch. No; Eli allows them to stretch. They obey his command now. They round off past the circular, covering his neck, around his actual mouth like those around a shark's gaping mouth. They become greater in size, shape, and intensity. Then he swallows it whole. It travels down in an ordered fashion, like a spherical metal weight of gas and energy. It fills his abdomen. It wants to tear out, so he lets it. With nowhere left to go, the mouths split to become arms that reach out as a pair of slender pearly limbs on either side of his stomach.

His muscles tense while they ripple their energy outwards through the tangible nervous system to feed the newly-grown limbs and up to the tip of his head.

The process repeats. Inevitably the undertaking caves in on itself and heaves a sigh of mental stress, mechanical in its abstraction and abstract with its machinations. There was neither the need to write the words that form the heavy shadows on this blank canvas, nor was there a need for the experiences and memories to enter and stretch themselves to fit within the tabula rasa of seeds on Earth. But does this happen anyway, pre-determined or not?

What is the difference between a blank page and a page filled with words, if one may come to occupy the other?

To my Imaginary friend by Polina of Iris

Dear IF,

I hope my letter finds you well. Heavens! How foolish this sentence seems to be; after all, it is on account of my own imagination that you can be either well or unwell. However, I will assume that you are well, and preserve this opening for the sake of form and friendliness.

I wonder what it would be like to inhabit that imaginary realm which is your homeland. I do not mean by that the swarm of mundane preoccupations and double-minded reveries which we are prone to; not the Qs and Rs of Mr Ramsay, not the psychedelic wonderland of Alice's dreams. But that very postulated realm of uncreated things - transcendental, untouched, placed beyond the scope of human perception and affectation. Is it possible for such a realm to be fully external to the natural world, I wonder? For, even the gods and deities that reside in it are woven into physical, tangible, even replicable artefacts - myths, rituals, narratives, writing. It is very doubtful that abstract entities, fossilised and forever captured in the spatiotemporal dimension, can really be called postulated. Of course, I expect you would know all about it, being the fleshless fruit of my own fancy. Or, perhaps, you would not, since my restless mind has conjured you out of thin air, and thus extracted you from non-being. Would that make me - or, rather, my imagination - the cause of your existence?



Some would say there is no philosophical profit in considering the necessity of any such cause - that is, the necessity of creational precedence. David Hume, for one, granted the human consciousness considerable licence by saying that, since it is possible to "conceive any object to be non-existent this moment, and existent the next without conjoining to it the distinct idea of a cause or productive principle", it is entirely possible for something to come into being without efficient prompting. I admit that I am not quite convinced by this argument, for, the very negation of something requires that I first imagine that something in its positive manifestation; if I think to myself 'mad hatters do not exist', do I not, by the same power of imagination, first invoke the referent, the 'mad hatter', even if it is only to reject it immediately after? Must not the mad hatter first spring into full existence, in the cloister of my brain, for me to be able to imagine his not being real? And, if I imagine that the egg exists without the chicken, or the chicken without the egg, it does not prevent me from imagining otherwise. I suppose this is what Kant meant when, in response to Hume's proposition, he wrote that "the judgement that something has happened require[s] some kind of interpretive act guided by an a priori rule".

By the way, I have been quoting from Henry E. Allison's Custom and Reason in Hume: A Kantian Reading of the First Book of the 'Treatise'. I purchased the edition last spring, having overcome all my financial scruples and outlived my patience (which, you must know, is very enduring). To speak plainly, I have come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as expense on books; it is always an investment, at least when the reader in question has an unmistakable taste in, and aptitude for instinctively choosing the right volume.

Such is the case with me... Take, for instance, my encounter with the Jean-Jacques biography by Maurice Cranston. I first saw it several months before our successful reunion, and thought, I must return to it if I found no digital alternative. In fact, I was quite worried that it might not be there once I had plucked the courage to pay the visit. Despite my fears, however, the book had remained on its shelf, waiting for me quite faithfully. I myself had also been constant to it in my affections. They do say that absence makes the heart grow fonder. And such was our mutual bond that, seeing each other after the separation, we greeted each other with an enthusiasm and a relief that eclipsed all material considerations (which I have never regretted). For, what is a moment of monetary cost in comparison to a lifetime of intellectual discoveries

Intellectualism. That is the Great Problem. If not the Greatest, at least it is my Greatest Problem. If only it were possible to persevere in one's quest for it without being harassed by those disturbing, tiresome flies that are corporeal interactions. If only it were possible to form unions without the affliction of constant displays and other nonsensical duties of sensual appeasement. That is not to say that I wish to deny the potency of sexual tension; on the contrary, I believe it is much more influential than the quenching thereof. For, the moment that amorous anticipation is consummated, the delicate thread of mystery is broken, and all that remains is an uncomfortable feeling of nakedness (in all senses of the word). Many will disagree and recount all sorts of luscious anecdotes of pure delight and emotional fulfilment (in fact, one does not have to go very far to hear them; suffice to open Netflix or Tinder). Very well; each to his own. But imagine my disappointment, dear IF, when I lay down my copy of A Brief Guide to Philosophy Classics or How to Be Well Read and find that, in order not to erase all recognition of my sex from a man's memory, I must forget all about them and talk about... what was it? His new girlfriend, I believe, whom he met not a few days after we had tea. Yes, I am afraid the very nature of this topic suggests that I fail to keep away from my interests, and that, of the two available candidates, he chooses the one who is - thank God!- not suffering from bibliophilia (indeed; love of books - what a perversion!).

At least you, my dear IF, can accept my peculiarities and sense of humour. For that, I am eternally grateful. May our imaginations forever prosper to permit such meaningful correspondence!

Hoping to see you soon,
Your devoted thinker.





Which Philosopher are you?

Grab pen and pencil and start counting your points.
You may find the results on page 30
DO NOT CHEAT!



1

What's the worst thing that could happen?

- ☐ You hit your head (2)
- ☐ John Stuart Mill is resurrected (4)
- ☐ You can only write emails in iambic pentameter (3)
- ☐ Failed cartwheel (1)

2

Are others your worst enemy or are you your worst enemy?

- ☐ I got confused (2)
- ☐ I prefer not to think about it (5)

3

What color is the best color?

- ☐ Orange (5)
- ☐ Not orange (1)

4

Is there a Swift cleaning brush in your room?
Because Swift makes everything shine again.

- ☐ Yes (5)
- ☐ No (2)

9

Which thing represents best the color orange for you:

- ☐ A potato (5)
- ☐ Donald Trump (2)
- ☐ The Netherlands (3)
- ☐ Willem-Alexander van Oranje (1)

5

Do lamps burn brightly?

- ☐ We do not need an answer here (10)

8

Do you think the composer Philip Glass is a good composer?

- ☐ Yes (2)
- ☐ Yes, he is glass (1)
- ☐ I don't know him (3)

7

Do you think the material glass is a murder weapon?

- ☐ Yes (5)
- ☐ No (2)

6

Happiness is found in?

- ☐ Small things (5)
- ☐ I prefer not to say (3)
- ☐ Medium-sized things (1)

10

What did you think of the last 2 people that you saw?

- ☐ They are great (2)
- ☐ They are amazing (2)

11

Is the water from your shower clean?

- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't know (3)
- ☐ No, but I wash it (1)

12

Which philosopher would win in a staring contest?

- ☐ Jean-Paul Sartre (3)
- ☐ Albert Camus (1)



WHY SHOULDN'T I KILL MYSELF ON THE SPOT?

-an attempt to reconstruct the question of the meaning of life-

by Marius Weber

The point of this short contribution is not to ask for the meaning of life anew, let alone to answer it. It is intended solely as food for thought – as an unconventional way of suggesting a path into a discussion in which one notoriously bites off more than one can chew. It is meant as mere inspiration in the spirit of a dialogue post rather than in one of a deeply rooted monolith of a system – just one way of getting into this sort of inquiry.

All humans are mortal; this means that we all have a beginning and an end, and we are in a universe that seems like it is void of any meaning – including our lives. So what's the point of life? This question seems ambiguous and can be examined in at least three ways: Firstly, as "Why?" as the question of its origin: "Where does it all come from?", and as "Why" in the sense of purpose: "What does it all actually lead to?". Thirdly, as "What is the essence of life?".

The first two ways of asking have a different quality to them, and it is crucial which of these questions is asked first, for it determines a whole line of questioning. Put roughly; If we ask about the meaning of life as a question of its origin, then it quickly becomes clear that we cannot find an answer. We dissolve our limits and fall into infinity, out of everything human that could in some way give us support. We realize that each framework of belief, thought and culture could have been different, that we and everyone else is basically a product of chance and everything is actually quite... absurd. The question of the meaning of life becomes lifeless. Our beginning ultimately has no meaning, therefore neither life nor death. Life is just pointless. It begs the question, why shouldn't I kill myself on the spot?

In front of me I have several ways and I choose the following: Surprisingly, when we are asked this question, we generally give a meaningful answer that is supposed to give us a purpose. Therefore, we go past the question and we are not really facing head on, what is the origin of life?

This gives the question of the meaning of life a completely different connotation, namely we narrow it down in two ways. Firstly, we understand ourselves in our finiteness – what awaits each and one of us is death. And in that way, we ask specifically about the meaning of our life and not about the meaning of life in general.

If we question our life in the sense of its purpose, it leads us to question the meaning of our death, which throws us back at life. Even if the same void is awaiting us after our death, it still shrinks down the question to a frame in which we can understand it – for so far as we like to think we know, there will be no "you", no "me", no "us" after death."

The question returns to its actual meaning, for we set out to ask for something that is rooted in life. To shape the question in this sense: Why should I kill myself on the spot?

At this point, it is noticeable that we are questioning our own effectiveness. My life and my death become my decision, unlike my birth – we are more powerless in the face of our birth than we are in the face of our death. We ask ourselves, what can we do with our life, since we are aware of the possibility that we can determine at least something: Life, death, birth of others, meaning and so on.

Nonetheless, it doesn't make our realization about the absurdity of our life any less oppressive – what is certain is that the question of the meaning of life directed towards a purpose ultimately forces us to make a decision – should we kill ourselves or not?

Perhaps the answer to the third question, as unsatisfactory it may be, is the chance to ask this last question. I probably have bitten a bit more of than I could chew...

Ik lig in het gras
Van de achtertuin
Van de buurman
Volgens mij

Maar waarom zou dat ertoe doen
De buurman en ik zijn hier beiden maar neergezet
Tussen sterren en systemen
En op zijn toevallige grondgebied kan ik de grote beer beter zien

Als ik staar en lijntjes tussen de sterren trek
Lijkt alles opeens
zo licht en dicht bij mij
dat het me moet denken aan de verdoving bij de tandarts

Ach, die arme mieren die ik nu plet
Ik rol mijn lichaam op tot een zo klein mogelijk hoopje
Dat heet solidariteit
De wereld sterft al zo enorm tenslotte

Maar de mieren kijken naar me
Welgeteld 368 oogjes op mij gericht
Blijkt dat mieren kunnen lachen
Zelfs de mieren lachen me uit

Ze wisten niet
Dat ik harder lachen kon
En ~~dat ik ze~~ ook zou kunnen verzamelen
En hen vervolgens doneren aan Heel Holland bakt

Maar daar kom jij aan
De mierenredder
Jij bent altijd al zo'n dierenvriend geweest natuurlijk
Of... kom je mij weer redden?

Nee, mij hoeft je niet te redden
Hoe vaak heb ik je dat nou al verteld?

Ik doe het goed in het leven, ik lach, kijk dan hoe hard ik lach
Ha hi ha, ik brul, ik straal
Ik doe zo goed mijn best
Ik ken zélf alle raviolisorten uit mijn hoofd:

Funghi
Tomaat basilicum
Formaggio e pomodoro
Ricotta en spinazie

Jij kent ze niet allemaal maar
Je blik vertelt
dat je snapt wat ik bedoel:
De wereld heeft haast

Waarom schud je me dan ook in godsnaam niet een keer door elkaar
Waarom zeg je me niet dat ik niet met de mieren moet praten
Waarom laat je me iedere dag kijken of mijn lot zich verstopt
in de grote leegte van jouw neusgaten

Hier, geef me nu dan een rake klap in mijn gezicht
Resoluut genoeg om mij het licht weer te laten zien
en zet me daarna met twee benen op de grond
Doe dan, mietje

Fucking watje dat je bent...

Slapjanus!!!

Maar
jij laat je vallen
in het gras
naast mij

Plof
een walm van kalmte
Die een weg vindt naar mijn zenuwstelsel en via daar
tintelend mijn spieren verslapt

En terwijl je zachtjes een deuntje neuriet die ik vaag herken
vlecht je mijn haar
Strook voor strook
Op het ritme van onze vermengde ademhalingen

Links, rechts
Links, rechts

Je geneurie nét onzuiver
Precies zoals het hoort
Links, rechts
Links

Mijn liefste, zeg:
Het is niet echt
Toe, zeg:
Het is niet...

Poem by Claudia Scholten

Pickeled

by Lidia Doberschuetz



THOSE WHO ONLY PLAY THE IDIOTS, THOSE WHO ARE THE **ACTUAL IDIOTS**

Tom van der Meij

In Lars von Triers 1998 movie *Idioterne* (The Idiots), the viewer gets immediately misled.

We see a woman, Karen, in a restaurant, alone. She acts nervously, as if she senses some disturbance coming. And indeed, it doesn't take long. Her eye is set on a man, Stoffer, who one immediately recognizes as problematic. His refusal to eat, his physical and verbal intrusion in the solemn dining of the other guests, his alternately blank and expressive face. And there is also his female attendant, Susanne, and another disturbing figure, Henrik, who is crying. The atmosphere is worrisome and strange, which is enhanced by the DIY way of filming and the fierce colours as the result of low-budget cameras.

Stoffer approaches Karen and, it seems, falls deeply in love with her. He grabs her wrist and refuses to let her go. Meanwhile, Susanne is busy talking to the distressed head waiter and taking care of the emotionally disturbed Henrik. As Stoffer refuses to let go of Karen, it's decided that he and his group should leave the restaurant. Nonetheless, even when entering the taxi waiting outside, Stoffer refuses to let go of Karen. Along she goes. The contrast is clear enough, for both the viewer and the onlookers in the scene: they, Stoffer and Henrik, are the idiots, and we - we are normal.

Idioterne is a challenging movie to write about, be it not for its plot. A group of young slackers, agitators and bohemian young adults settle down in the meek village of Søllerød, close to Copenhagen. They reside together in a momentous villa that Stoffer is supposed to sell for his uncle. From there, they set out to various locations doing their act: playing 'the idiot', acting out what is seen as the abnormal. From the outset Karen, as a newcomer in the group, represents the confused viewer. After their second excursion, to a factory this time, Stoffer asks her to reflect on what she thinks of their activities. 'Not funny at all' she says, 'you are fooling people'. Stoffer reacts in a fury, saying 'it is them who are fooling us'. It becomes clear that Stoffer's intentions go beyond just fooling around; it is society's reaction to those it considers abnormal that he wants to address.

What makes the ridiculousness of this movie difficult to describe, is the little instrumentarium Von Trier uses in getting across his message (and in turn also rightly interpreting this message). *Idioterne* is a Dogma 95-movie, and thus based on a set of dictums written down in the manifest of the Dogma 95-movement, such as hand-held camera work, a lack of superficiality and the movement's resentment for temporal or geographical alienation, meaning that location and time are set. The aim of the movement was to create movies purely focused on storytelling and moviemaking. This leads to a story that is told as naturalistically as possible. It does however not shy away from excesses. The theme is the absurd and it is pure in what it shows, people engaging in the abnormal.

These excesses get more extreme as the story builds up. While the movie starts light-hearted, showing a group of young people with social criticism and a creative mood, it eventually develops into something darker. Where the initial restaurant scene was perhaps confusing or even alienating, later scenes turn more daunting. Stoffer gets increasingly serious about his project and his demands on the 'actors' creates tension in the group. Consider him as the cult leader with his followers in doubt. He seems increasingly incapable of separating his performance and the reality; he turns into a 'real' idiot, sometimes dragging everyone with him in his act, sometimes getting on their wrong side. The latter happens when Stoffer violently turns against the authorities, who think that he is sincerely supervising a group of mentally ill. The group then gets increasingly ashamed of its idiocy, and repeatedly demands to 'stop acting so ridiculous'. Reconsider the questions: who is the real idiot here? Who creates this notion of the normal and the abnormal? Who decides on what counts as absurd? The answer that the movie sometimes offers: the masses do, even the smaller mass that is the group of 'idiots'. On whatever historical or contingent grounds they might base it on, there is also that other side. At moments when Stoffer gets everyone in the group to play along, when the movie is at its most disturbing, you consider the possibility that a convincing idiot can easily shift the consensus on normality.

As a viewer, it is however almost impossible to see beyond the excesses and seriously consider Stoffer's point (perhaps also because he rarely states his point in a clear, 'normal' way). Perhaps that is exactly the aim of the movie: we have a pre-set idea of what normality consists of, both in daily life and in art. The confrontation with the abnormal and that uncomfortable feeling it gives us, can only confirm it. Especially when the absurd is shown to us in extremity, as is the case with *Idioterne*. Although, in what other way could the absurd come to us than in its extremity?

A scene close to the end is telling. The father of Josephine, one of the most beloved group members, shows up at the house. He tries to get Josephine home, against the outspoken wish of both Josephine and the group. It is then Stoffer who tells one of the protesting group members 'that it is their business.' 'We cannot cure anyone here' he says, referring to Josephine's dad, 'That is not our purpose'.

The anti
idiots

A Half Remembered Book Review

by Anna



I read a book once. I can't remember the title, and most of the details have long since faded from memory, but I know that the cover was green and the author was American. I was nine, and the book was the strangest thing I'd ever read. Ten years later, and it remains the most bizarre piece of literature I've set my eyes on. Here's a brief summary.

It followed a man, whose name was very probably Arthur. Arthur had a lot of dreams; he dreamt about cats that could talk, jazz bars that only served warm milk, and the concept of hide and seek. While most protagonists have a tangible struggle, Arthur's only real problem was that he couldn't remember what hide and seek was; despite what was happening around him (his boss disappearing, the talking cat coming to life, potential psychedelic drug use), Arthur's sole purpose in life was to uncover the meaning behind those three little words. Much like I am now, he spent copious amounts of time scouring his childhood memories for the clues that would complete the puzzle.

The book was set in a dream within a dream within a dream. While those around him fell asleep — at his office job, at the jazz bar, in his apartment block — Arthur would stay awake, roaming through the empty streets. He would occasionally find other sleepwalkers — a woman who did something complex with a typewriter and immediately I disappeared,



dancers looking for a good time, a mysterious man named Charles (or something similarly upright and stoic) who left clues hidden in newspapers. Clues to what, I can't remember—possibly his own disappearance, though that would be a very high missing person's tally for such a short book. In any case, Arthur spends a chunk of the time throughout the book wandering through a confused dreamscape, only half-remembering the absurdity of it all. He carries with him an old-fashioned gramophone, which plays a jaunty tune now and again; the dancers love it, the typewriter woman is cautious of it, and quite-possibly-Charles raises an equally Charles-like eyebrow and disappears further into the pages.

At one point — either before or after climbing down the fire escape in his apartment block — Arthur realises the truth of things. Unfortunately, I don't recall what the truth of things actually was, but I seem to recall large amounts of warm milk being involved. This is possibly where the psychedelic drug subplot comes into play, which would make a lot of sense given the rest of the contents of this book.

Three dreams deep, Arthur walks back to his office. The company he works for is very mysterious, and Arthur spends most of his time in a heavy brick building filled with typewriters. At work, he types the same thing over and over: `hideandseekhideandseekhideandseek`, like some kind of bizarre mantra. The office is usually filled with people, but in this dream-world he has the place to himself. At his desk (most likely a heavy mahogany affair; the kind with complex handles and thick, solid legs), he finds an envelope addressed to him. It's from either Charles or his missing boss (unless Charles is his boss, though I don't think he is; while Charles has a dapper moustache, I seem to recall the mysterious boss having a mysterious goatee), and contains even more profound revelations. Probably to do with those pesky psychedelics, which may or may not have been slipped into the jazz bar's warm milk supply. Upon reading this letter, Arthur springs into action and immediately falls asleep.

He wakes up to find his boss' secretary gently carrying him through the streets. She's a large woman dressed in an obscene pink pantsuit, and Arthur is somehow reminded of his mother. Waking up in the arms of a virtual stranger and being carried to God-knows-where, he promptly does the smart thing and dozes off again.

In this fourth and final dream, Arthur relives his childhood and remembers what hide and seek is. Partway through reliving his memories, his missing boss reappears and says something probably profound, but apparently not very memorable. There are definitely tears involved, which makes me suspect that Arthur's boss was somehow his father, though I cannot back that claim up with any evidence whatsoever. After the hide-and-seek and possible paternity revelation, Arthur wakes up and re-enters reality, likely indicating the end of the psychedelic drug subplot. While I'm sure there is a satisfying conclusion that ties all of these strands together — the talking cat, the milk, the woman with the typewriter, most-likely-Charles, the gramophone, the newspaper clues, the remarkable strength of the pink-suited secretary — I haven't the foggiest idea how the book ends. All I remember for certain is that it was bizarre and made no sense, much like the majority of the plot.





The Paradox of the "Good people"

Ben Imthorn

Every group has certain norms and values. Group members expect from other group members to listen to those norms and values. They will mostly be regarded as "good people" by the other group members, when group members listen to those norms and values. This is because they fit into the picture of what a good human is regarding the group members. For norms and values are one of the aspects humans think of as "good" contents. Those "good people" will probably see themselves as members with the right values, something they own and which other people don't own. In my opinion, the people who actually live by the norms and values of the group, are the same people who have a certain pitfall and maybe couldn't even become "good". If this pitfall is true and even inevitable to fall into, then maybe we can't even become "good people".

For the purpose of this essay, I would like to outline my point; different groups have different norms and values. For example, Christians have different values than Stoics. For a Christian, hope is a value, while for a Stoic, hope is not a value at all. It is not my standpoint, here that there is a group which holds the "truest or best norms and values". Every group has its own norms and values. For this essay the worth of these norms and values aren't important.

To make it more clear there are a few things which I have to get out of the way. I want to define the word "arrogance". This word is commonly used to describe a certain character trait by humans and is mostly used in a negative way. I will hold onto this definition of arrogance in this paper:

"Noun arrogance (usually uncountable, plural arrogances) The state of being arrogant; a type of extreme or foolish pride in which someone feels much superior to another." (Wiktionary, 2022)

Arrogance is also something that goes against the norms and values of the society. Take the value "equality" for example, with the norm "everyone in the world should be treated as equals in equal situations". Society thinks this is important. Humanity at large has already done many things in trying to accomplish this value. Think about the abolition of slavery, the fight for equal female rights, provide LGBTQIAP+ with the same rights as other genders and the list goes on. The latter we have included in the constitution of the Netherlands, where equality is codified in the first article of the constitution. To note, arrogance is actually the opposite of equality according to the definition. Someone who is arrogant, does not see another person as an equal, in contrast sees himself as superior to the other. This goes straight against the value equality, which the society sees as such an important value. Seeing yourself as a superior being against another isn't treating and seeing the other as an equal.

Let's go back to those "good people" I mentioned earlier. When those people know that they have values that make them good, wouldn't that make them appear as arrogant people? Or in the least, isn't that knowledge not something that seduces them to be arrogant? I will try to explain why "good people" tend to be arrogant. In this situation, on the one hand there are "good" people with the right values, on the other hand there are people without the right values. The people who believe that they have the right values, are inevitably (becoming) arrogant. Let's take "cancel-culture" as an example. This is a phenomenon which is talked about a lot lately and has happened to many public figures (mainly on the internet). People get "cancelled" because they did something that others (in a certain group) didn't approve of. But isn't this an act of pure arrogance? The people responsible for the cancelling believe, they have certain important values.

This gives them in their opinion the right to cancel others whenever they don't share the same values. But does that not imply, they believe to be better people. This belief seems to justify their right to cancel. And that is the requirement of being arrogant; thinking and acting as if you are better than the other person. For people think saying things that (might be) harmful to others, they all share the notion in thinking to have the right to do and say anything. Only because they have the "right values", whereas the other people do not have. This persuasion makes them arrogant; they think they are better than the others and show this by doing and saying unpleasant things to the others. Isn't that the nature of humans? Whenever we think we are right and they are wrong, we become arrogant and think it is justified to behave in a negative way against those we regard as "the ones being wrong".

Now that we know that people we regard as "good people" actually are arrogant people, it makes it impossible for them to be good people. The character trait goes against the norms and values of the society, which I already explained. For those reasons is it true that an arrogant person can't be a good person, for how can a good person not listen to the norms and values of the society by having this character trait.

Thus, to be a good person you can't try to own values. Because whenever you try to get the values and succeed in it, you will become an arrogant person. You will think you have certain rights over others, just because they have the "wrong values". You think you are better than them because of that and you act on it by doing and acting unpleasant things. And there you are; you aren't a good person anymore, but an arrogant one. The problem with this is, if you decide to not try to own the values you will never be regarded as a good person. For people to be good (in the eyes of other people in a certain group) they need to listen to certain norms and values. There is the paradox. To become a good person in a group you need to listen to the right norms and values for that group, but that will make you an arrogant person. So you can't listen to those "right" norms and values and be a good person.

An Argument

$\text{♩} = 100$ *mp*

I'm done

really?

Are you really serious now?

what are you talk-ing about?

what?

6

Ne - ver mind

You ne - ver list - en a - ny - way.

what now? You

8 *mf*

I said, just leaveme a-lone, please!

Stopit! Leave me a-lone!

know you're not make-ing a-ny-thing bet-ter

A-gain! You're sa-ying that a-gain! Ev -

11

What am I sup - posed to do? you

ry time you say that, it drives me god-damn mad!

"Leaveme a-lone, leaveme a-lone!" Don't you ev - er get

13

just get ang - ry all the time

Stop it! You yell and you throw things

ti - red of hear- ing your-self?

You drive me god-damn cra - zy!

You make me

15

f

and I'm scared! I'm scared and I'm ti-red! I'm so ti-red of you Please Jus leave me a-lone! No!

mad! What am I su-pposed to do then? you make me want to drive my car in- to a tree!

18

mp

Stay a-way from me ! Stop it. Stop it. I'm just

mf

you don't say a - ny-thing! Oh I'm threa-ten-ing you now? Am I? Go on and say some-thing then.

22

done with you now I'm done talk- ing to you now

No don't do this to me! What? Wait!

24

mf

Don't don't fol-low me. Just leave me a-lone, I'm done! (Door slam)

f

mp

You ne-ver give me a chance! Then talk to me! Wait! Not this a-gain... (Door opens)



Listen to this piece by scanning one of these QR-codes.
Choose wisely :)



* The author would like to declare that she has not received any prior professional musical education, and would like to ask readers to excuse any technical mistakes in terms of transcription as a case of poetic grammar.

A-120P4:

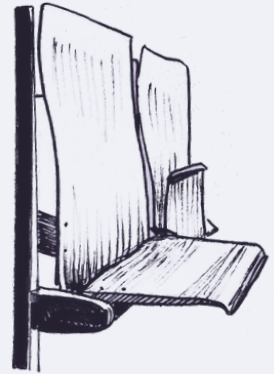
a.k.a. John Doe



This chair, going by the illustrious name of A-120P4 seems to eat you up. Therefore, we conclude after this first line, that this is a fitting nickname for the chair. The chair is made of wood and steel. It is recognisable by the four useless legs it stands on. Furthermore, we have nothing more to say about this chair. This is what is crucial about it: it is so plain, and depending on your preferences and expectations from a chair, cleverly designed that the total experience, both visual and the sitting, is quite easily forgettable. This can be understood from the contradictions that even this small paragraph possesses about its qualities. The fact that can be derived from these contradictions is that we actually made these qualities up without using any memory.

LC-666

a.k.a. The Pain, The Killer, The One



We know, calling these platform or plane chairs is an insult to the whole chair community. But one should know that we are not the ones to decide how things are executed here. There is always somebody higher up. Anyways, these “chairs” are, as you probably already know, the most uncomfortable pieces of wood you can imagine. Since they possess the essential Bauhaus type of modern elements like ugliness and being-uncomfortable, they represent the building of Lipsius quite well. The other thing is their noise. You may remember the unimaginable amount of noise the latecomer after the break produces because they happen to sit at the end of the row so they make everyone stand up. We don’t quite understand the origins of that thudwise noise that is produced while you were trying your best to focus on Kant’s ideas when someone gets up from that chair, but no one can deny that it exists.

PICK YOUR TYPES

Chair Review

RC-162

a.k.a. The Consumption Chair



These chairs located in the Lipsius cafeteria are the indicators of the identity crisis the building and especially its designers went through and are still going through. Even though the whole building is designed as half Bauhaus half modern, these chairs surprisingly reference a different time zone and different style: classic. They are comfortable when you are sitting on them for approximately less than an hour. Which fits the chair perfectly, because we haven't encountered anyone (yet) who wants to spend more than an hour in the Lipsius cafeteria. Compared to other types the cafeteria chairs are more or less aesthetically pleasing since they are just chairs that we are all accustomed to, nothing fancy, or wanna-be fancy.

360-Lipsius Chair

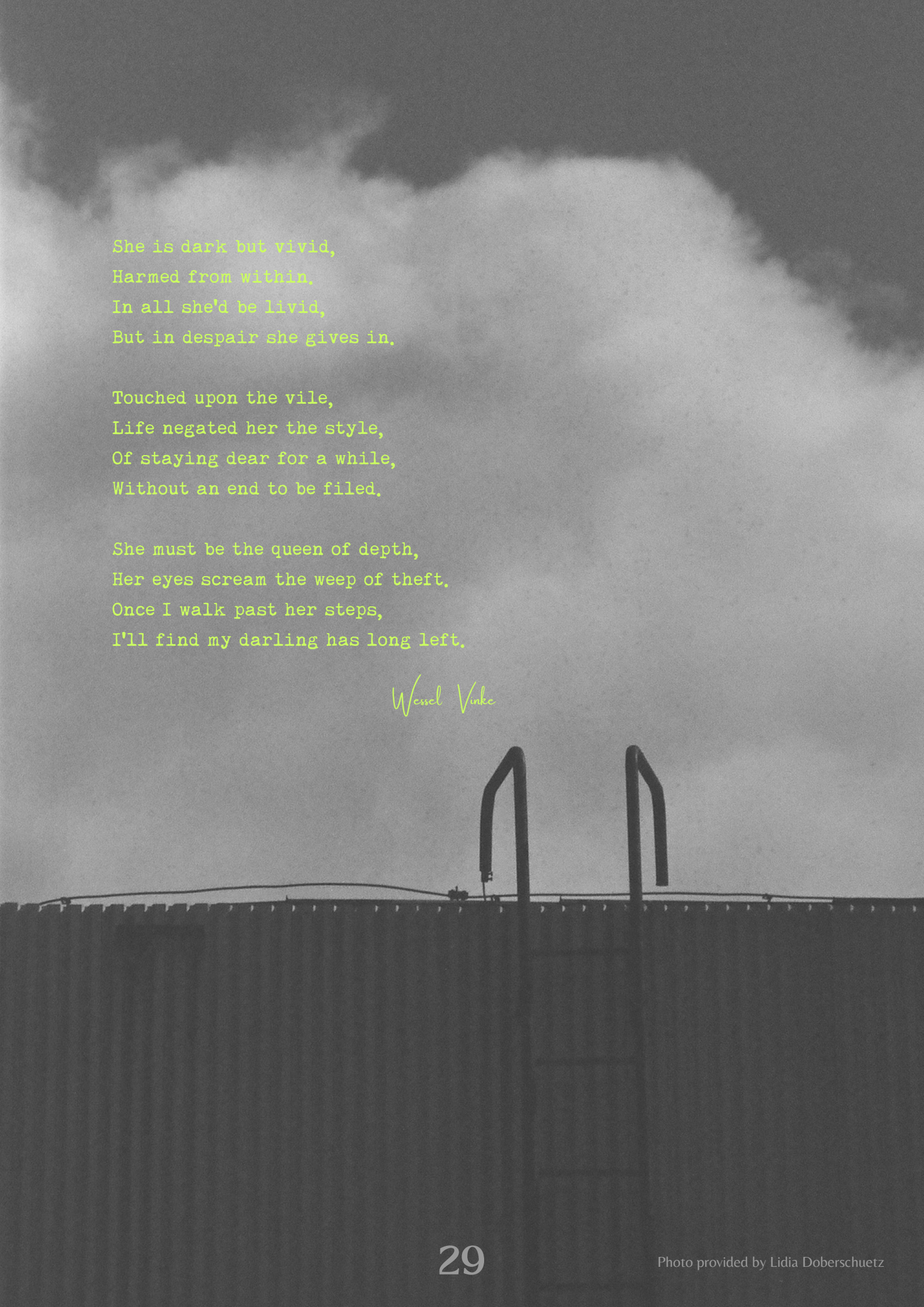
a.k.a. Instant Scoliosis



Do you like the sitting sensation you encounter when being in Lipsius? Did you stumble upon an incessantly new genius-sounding but actually really generic and implausible worldview when looking out of a Lipsius window while sitting and contemplating your life? You must have already experienced the 360-180 Chair, also called the 360-Lipsius Chair. This chair is Lipsius exclusive and has the added plus that it has the coolest name on the planet (I know it's subjective but I am writing this piece so my opinions are the only ones that matter). When it comes to the experience of this quite famous and rarely found chair, besides the already mentioned philosophical-thought-trig-gering part, the total experience is pretty comfortable and homelike as if you are sitting in your room at home pretending to study. Since it rotates relatively easily, the chair produces a fake idea of freedom.

ON
SITTING
S
P
S
K

This article was kindly brought to you by the **content team**. We did not get sponsored by anyone, especially not the A-120P4. But would you like to do so? Just like sitting, contributing is possible for everyone. It is just a matter of believing in yourself. If you wish to contribute, just go to svsymposion.nl and maybe you can find a hidden submission button and contribute to our next review.



She is dark but vivid,
Harmed from within.
In all she'd be livid,
But in despair she gives in.

Touched upon the vile,
Life negated her the style,
Of staying dear for a while,
Without an end to be filed.

She must be the queen of depth,
Her eyes scream the weep of theft.
Once I walk past her steps,
I'll find my darling has long left.

Wesley Vinke

You really thought there would be philosophers here?

Of course, there is no answer!

You've tried your best to fill in the meaningless void of life just a little by solving this quiz and learning whom you resemble as an existentialist philosopher.

Perhaps, you wanted to laugh a little, discuss the results with your friends, get stressed out, or try to find your identity (once again)

But you failed.

Anything you try to put into that meaningless void will vanish immediately.
Any attempt will fail.

And remember...



“Nothingness haunts being.”
~ Sartre

Het is in ieder geval geen kerstmis vandaag
En het is ook niet
die ene broeierige lentedag
ergens in de vorige eeuw misschien
waarvan slechts de akkoorden nog bestaan
die zo zacht worden aangeslagen dat ik twijfel of ik me die dag niet heb ingebeeld
al sla je me dood
al schiet je me lek

Ik neem tram 9 met mijn ogen dicht
De kat van de burens geeft me weer een kopje
De visboer geeft me weer een knipoog
En een bonnetje bij het afrekenen
Een moeizame poging tot het bevestigen van mijn bestaan
De automobilist verricht de nodige handelingen voor het rijden
en rijdt daarna dan ook inderdaad weg
Zodra de schemering toeslaat wens ik alles en iedereen tot ziens
Tot gisteren en tot morgen!

Ik speel in een oninteressante amateurfilm
met te weinig budget voor een ruimteschip
Mijn rol begrijp ik niet zo goed eigenlijk
En ik heb gezien
dat achter het decor helemaal niks schuilt
Mijn kostuum een das en een hoed
Waaronder mijn lichaam veroudert en uitzakt
Met een bochel in mijn nek kijk ik chronisch naar benee
Waar de platgelopen blikjes en de bewegende schaduwen op straat mij precies helemaal niks vertellen
Niks over waarheid, niks over liefde, niks over het grote geheel, de zin van het bestaan
In de scène waar het allemaal om draait
leert de man met das en hoed
dat risotto met kaas bereid wordt

Hoe graag ik zou willen
dat het leven uit de maat danst
Héél even is genoeg
om mijn nietigheid tegen te spreken

Claudia Scholten



ne of those days

by Zenae

It's coming, *it's coming*, it's here now, *can't you see?*

The buzzer rang three times — once more, it's going to happen. *What's going to happen?* Oh, you know what's going to happen! It's the fourth time! Just look at the door, look at where the door hovers one whole centimetre off the floor. *Just look* — at that seam between the door, and the floor, the slanted sallow light seeping, seeping in from below. And the windows, *and the windows*, the windows are gushing with those weeping blue lights. It's awful, just awful! It's flooding the room. It's flooding the room and I feel like I'm going to drown. I'm going to drown. I need to go. I need to go. I need to go — *please, just pull yourself together. It's just light*. But it doesn't feel like it. Not at all. *Then what?* Oh, you know, like gas is leaking in from under the door — oozing with that horrible sulfur light, that hateful sneering hiss. *That's just water in the pipes running*. It's so goddamn loud. It's suffocating. Feels like my tonsils are sticking to my throat. Like my blood is being replaced with formaldehyde. Like the ceiling is going to cave in over my head and plaster teeth will leap forth to greet me and a barrage of concrete shards will spear me to my bed. Maybe if I'm lucky, it'll just kill me on the spot. *Geez*.

It's so goddamn loud. *There's nobody else. You're alone here*. But I can't help but hear it. Everything's an omen. The shadows are too jagged, the walls too leering, every article of waste obscuring the surface of my desk too solid and jeering — it's too much. It's too much — *hold on, hold on*. I can't help but hear it. No, I can't help but feel it — like something terrible, something unspeakable is going to happen. There's a pressure, this constant plunging pressure, that's making itself known, making itself known to me. It turns me into an ant, an ant under a shoe, an ant under the black rubber sole of a black leather boot being lowered. Sure and steady like a marching soldier. It's compressing the air above me — air molecules and dust colliding and compressing, collapsing all over me. *It's probably nothing*. No... no. It's so obscene how present it is, the way it's stepping down on me. And I'm scuttling under the shadow of the bootsole looming and looming and looming in an inky horizon that smells suffocatingly of tar, and I can't do anything. I can't do anything but let the pressure rip my breath away from me. Let it stomp on my chest and send my heart frantically skittering, scuttling, and scrambling away into the cavern of my ribs. I can feel it under my skin — I can feel it, feel the muscles squirming and

shuddering, shuddering and spasming, rattling the flesh. My hands are shaking. So are my legs. *Maybe going out for a walk would help. Some fresh air. Sunlight would be nice— if it is to be found at all in this woeful weather, that is. It wouldn't hurt to—* NO! No. Not that. No. It'll be no good, not at all. I can't step outside without having the wind trying to shove its frigid silver fingers in my mouth. It's gonna try to pry me open. No thanks. *Doubt that staying in this nest of waste would help.* Sorry. I can't help it. I really can't.

I t's o n e of those days. It's been one of those days for a while. A few hours at a time, but it's been a while like that. A few hours and then it's like I wake up, and when I do, the hour just feels like a violent dream. A dream of being some hideous creature. Sickly creatures that drape the skin of mankind over their shriveled shoulders and mangled arms. But when I'm back, It's like I only dreamed of being human. *It doesn't last.* Shut up. That never helps. I feel like I'm running, running like a cartoon cat that ran off a cliff. Feet paddling the air, eyes darting anywhere but down, just running to the edge of the frame, running as the margins close in. Outside the frame, outside the color page there'll be no thing but void,

no thing but white and quiet. *Quiet.* Yes it'll be quiet. Every thing turned blank and bleached. Un-hauntable. The thoughts won't

reach me, the thoughts won't haunt me there. I'm running to disappear. *To disappear, yes, to disappear.* All right. Brin g

i t o n t h e n .

I' l l a l w a y s

a l r e a d y b e

d i s a p p e

a r i n g .



Image description:
broccoli planet on a chair in space

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komprenebla de granda kvanto da homoj."
L.L Zamenhof

"May the force be with you."
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