

THEME :









# Foreword:

## I'm spiraling.

Or is the world spinning around me?  
Is my will seized with worry or is the world worried?  
Worried the paint on the facade is fading.  
The veil on my head has holes.  
The simulation will glitch glitch glitch.

Everything seems so familiar.  
Remixe this, re-release that.  
Does My consumption feed on  
recycled "my consumption"?  
The idea of originally taunts me.  
Ringing in my ear like specter  
with a superiority complex.

To expect ingenuity in world of  
ingenuine creativity,  
Is to expect new music from a  
printed record.  
Only a fool would watch the vinyl spiral,  
in hopes of something new.

**I am the fool.**

By Aydin Karatas



# Contents

<b>This Just In...</b>	3
<i>Daphne Partridge</i>	
<b>The Trend Cycle. Is it Sustainable?</b>	3.1
<i>Kayla Hayashi</i>	
<b>Paradoxical Ties Between Conformity and Non-Conformity</b>	3.14
<i>Leah Sokol</i>	
<b>Repurcussions of The Round Trip Ticket</b>	3.141
<i>Ria Bose</i>	
<b>Not a pep talk. Stop working.</b>	3.1415
<i>Deekshita Gorugantu Venkata</i>	
<b>A Showcase of Original UCLA Radio O-Inspired Art</b>	3.14159
<i>Lily Christie, Jasmin Avila, Somerset Colligan</i>	
<b>Livin' Free in the POST-POST Apocalypse</b>	3.141592
<i>Amari L. Graves</i>	
<b>Punk and Consumerism: Incompatible or Inseperable?</b>	3.1415926
<i>Ava London</i>	
<b>O-Inspired Art Interlude</b>	3.14159265
<i>Alik Shehadeh</i>	
<b>Boot the Reboot</b>	3.141592658
<i>AJ Rosean</i>	
<b>A Dispatch From The Crater</b>	3.1415926589
<i>Arami Chang</i>	

## Editors

*Alik Shehadeh*

*Anjay Singh*

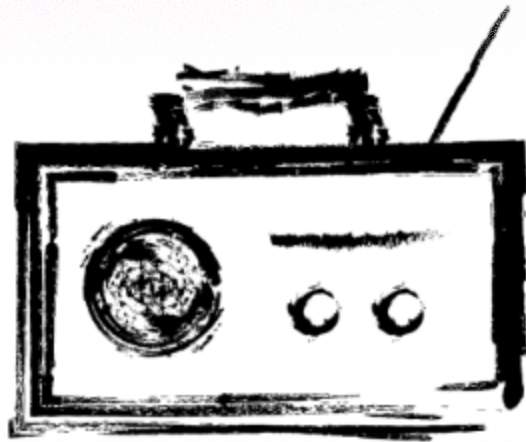
*Aydin Karatas*



# Who Are We?

UCLA Radio is the official student-run radio station of UCLA. We are non-commercial, listener-supported, and have been broadcasting high-quality, freeform programming since 1962. While our primary focus is delivering original and diverse radio content, UCLA Radio members work on art, design, web development, marketing, photography, audio production, and more. Our station strives to promote a safe, inclusive music scene and provide a community for innovative, motivated students from different majors and backgrounds to explore their creativity, build practical skills, and discover the LA music and art scene.

U  
C  
L  
A  
  
R  
A  
D  
I  
O



U  
C  
L  
A  
  
R  
A  
D  
I  
O

@uclaradio  
uclaradio.com  
radio.news@media.ucla.edu





## UCLA RADIO NEWS

1

1980 was the year the 24 hour news cycle began. In 1980 Ted Turner founded The Cable News Network, with the goal of birthing a news network that could be seen by all people, all the time.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

10

We expose ourselves to the tragedies of the world in the name of being well informed, then try to gloss over the emotions that were stirred up with the uplifting segments inserted at the end of the program.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

3

CNN was made to cater to those who wished to be up-to-date on the most recent news, but did not have the room in their schedules to sit down and watch at 6:30pm every evening.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

16

Reporters themselves are subject to the content imposed by the network higher ups, those who benefit the most from viewers in search of affirmations of their gloomy outlooks.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

# this just in.....

By Daphne

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

11

Unfortunately, for most, five minutes devoted to human good is not enough to erase the hopelessness instilled by the twenty five minutes preceding it.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

8

Supply responds to demand, and people want to have constant access to the happenings of society, on a local, national, and global scale.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

14

Networks continue to employ a system of fear based reporting that sucks the audience in and keeps them tuning in hour after hour, day after day.

## UCLA RADIO NEWS

9

However, humans cannot always be relied upon to moderate themselves and what they consume, supporting the concept of news addiction, as we overload our senses with any material possible.



#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

5

People pay to have constant access to a service that tells them what is happening in the world around them, a service which they can hand select from numerous options to best fit their needs, biases, and agendas.

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

6

News anchors become characters in a journalistic drama as opposed to vessels through which pressing intelligence is distributed.

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

15

Until networks can find profit in reporting more positive stories, or make hard choices about limiting broadcast times, the cycle will continue.

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

2

43 years later, the never ending slew of information has spawned news addiction, empty reporting, and a culture of fear mongering.

.....  
**Partridge**

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

7

Whether there are 24 consecutive hours of important news to be reported is subjective and not the point of this article, rather it examines why it exists, and whether it is

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

12

One would hope that networks would see the trend of high anxiety and depression in those who are constantly tuned in to the news, and those networks would attempt to properly

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

13

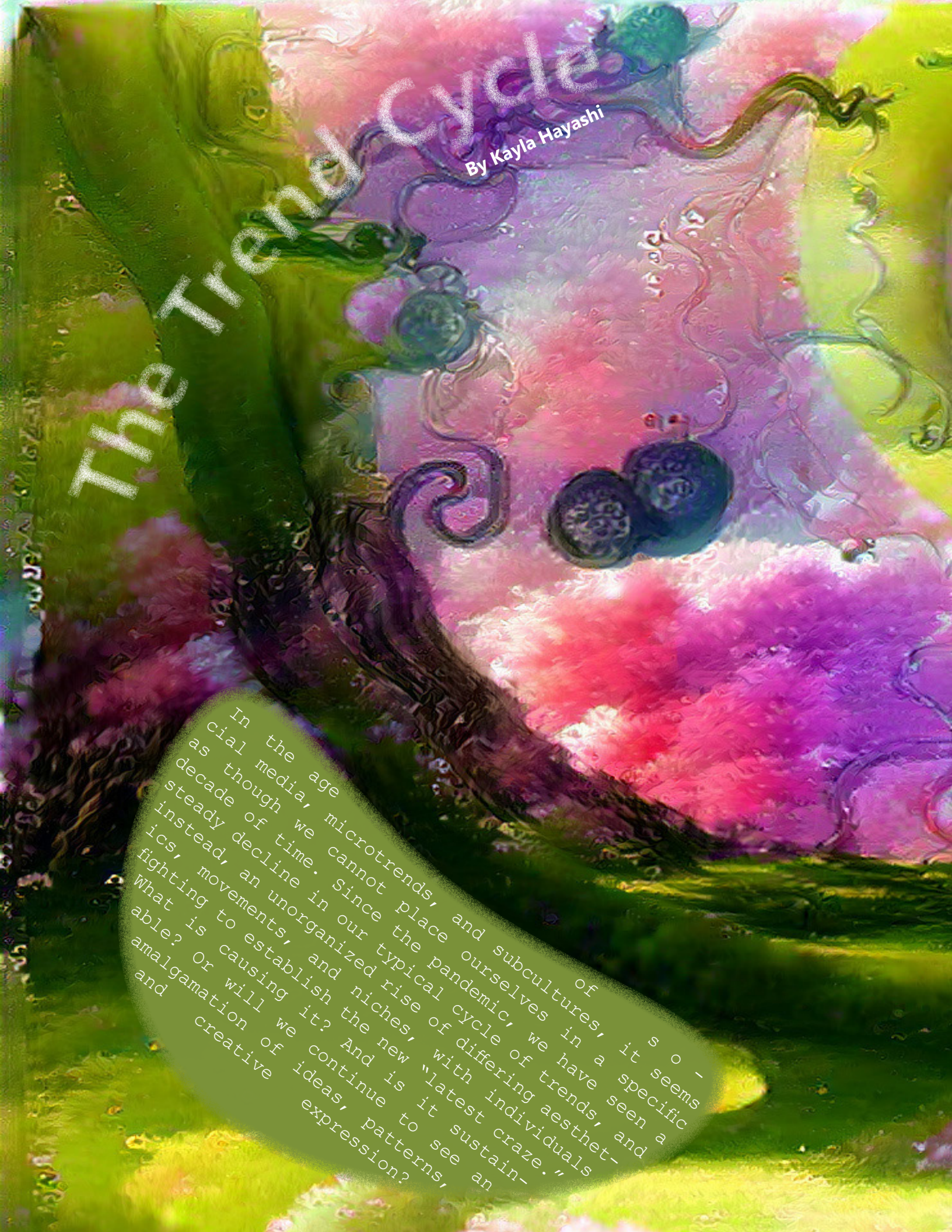
Regrettably, the good doesn't sell as well as the bad, since people experience a negativity bias—the tendency for negative things to have greater psychological influence on us than positive things similar magnitudes.

#### UCLA RADIO NEWS

4

While not intended at its inception, the 24 hour news cycle is partially to blame for the commodification of information.





# The Trend Cycle

By Kayla Hayashi

In the age of social media, microtrends, and subcultures, it seems as though we cannot place ourselves in a specific decade of time. Since the pandemic, we have seen a steady decline in our typical cycle of trends, and instead, an unorganized rise of differing aesthetics, movements, and niches, with individuals fighting to establish it? And is it "latest craze." What is causing it? Or will we continue to see an amalgamation of ideas, patterns, and creative expression?





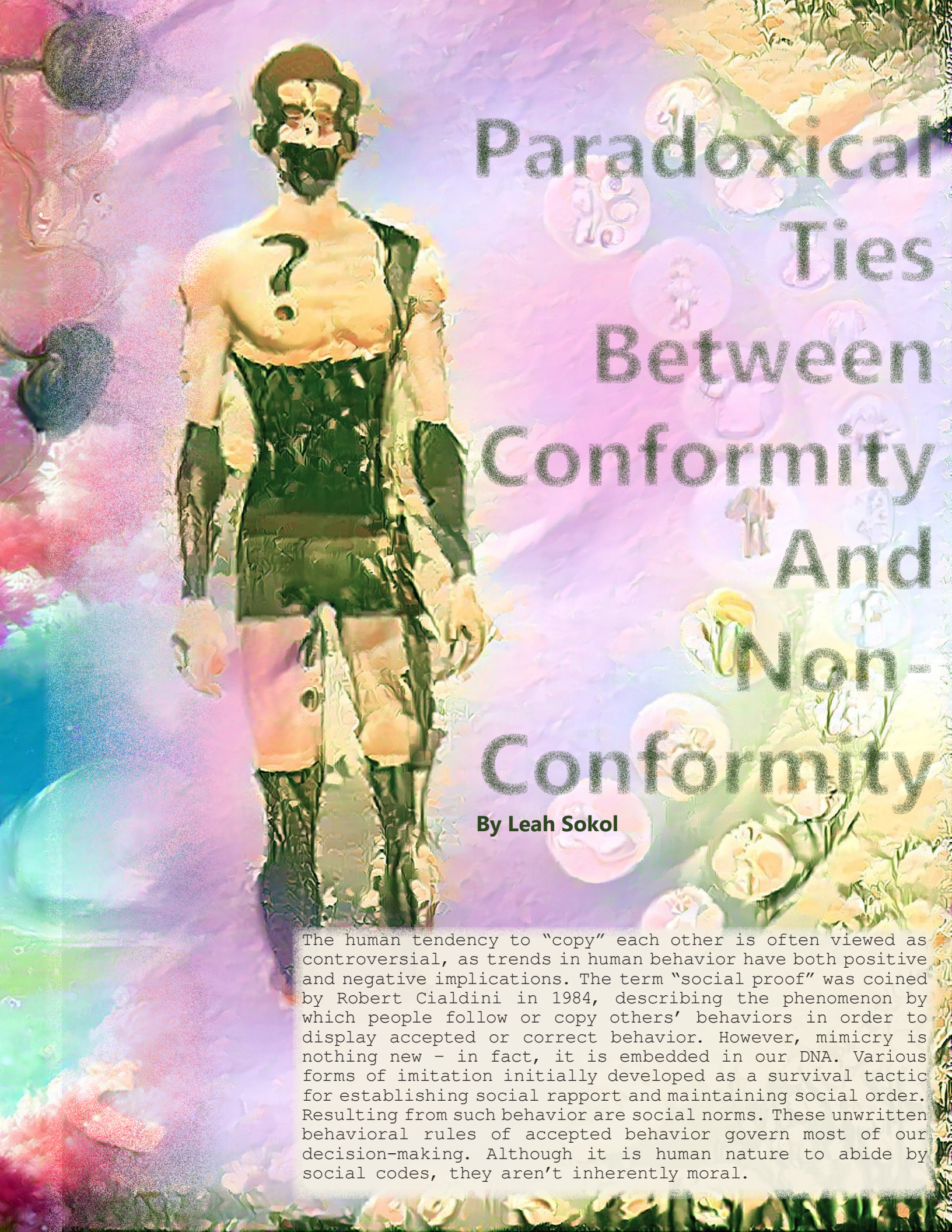




Not only has social media caused this ripple effect in the trend cycle, but a large part of this can be attributed toward thrifting and secondhand purchasing. Over the last few years, there has been a rise in popularity amongst many individuals to thrift and resell vintage clothing and accessories, which has contributed toward these styles being brought back. Thrifting and secondhand purchasing has become a much more ethical alternative when it does not discourage overconsumption, as many individuals still buy these items for short term satisfaction.

Overall, our typical trend cycle has evolved into an accelerated process which we cannot predict the course of. The rise of reissues, renewals, and revivals may be problematic, as people neglect some of the past aesthetics, yet still neglect value of the trend. Will our original version of the trend surround the original version of the trend? Or will creative expression in the future? Or will the trend cycle start to value original aesthetic above art, longevity, and overconsumption utilization of a temporary aesthetic as an identity or facade become the easiest way to fit in?





# Paradoxical Ties Between Conformity And Non- Conformity

By Leah Sokol

The human tendency to "copy" each other is often viewed as controversial, as trends in human behavior have both positive and negative implications. The term "social proof" was coined by Robert Cialdini in 1984, describing the phenomenon by which people follow or copy others' behaviors in order to display accepted or correct behavior. However, mimicry is nothing new - in fact, it is embedded in our DNA. Various forms of imitation initially developed as a survival tactic for establishing social rapport and maintaining social order. Resulting from such behavior are social norms. These unwritten behavioral rules of accepted behavior govern most of our decision-making. Although it is human nature to abide by social codes, they aren't inherently moral.





Disrupting this cycle of arbitrary rules can be empowering, but again, not intrinsically superior. While conformity is described by behavior that is in accordance with socially accepted behavior, nonconformity challenges such standards. Progressive groups throughout history, from suffragettes to civil rights leaders, garnered power by questioning societal norms, many of which are unjust or discriminatory. Redefining what is considered "acceptable," may expand diversity, equity and individuality. However, challenging a norm should be both intentional and sincere. In fact, since the birth of counterculture in the late 60s, normative defiance has become a trend.

The paradox of fringe culture is that the more "success" garnered by a movement, the more mainstream it becomes. Most people believe that conformity and nonconformity are on opposite ends of the spectrum. However, when individuals engage in either behavior without sincere intention, the lines between the two become blurred.

This phenomenon has been described as "the hipster effect," which may explain the lack of originality in the 21st century. Specifically, hipsters originated as a subculture, with beliefs or interests that vary from the larger general culture.





Merriam-Webster defines hipsters as people who are "usually aware of and interested in new and unconventional patterns." Ironically, this interest in unconventionality has become massively trendy across media and cultural platforms. If hipsters were so unorthodox, you wouldn't be picturing a bearded dude with a man bun, circular frames and arm tattoos right now. In fact, MIT researchers analyzed why anti-conformists always end up looking the same. Although the hipster effect may seem like a sociological phenomenon, researchers found that it can be explained by mathematical concepts. Similarly, such trends are seen in physics, finance, neuroscience and other fields.

So how does one avoid the trap of succumbing to cultural trends? Or do trends even need to be avoided? This decision is completely personal, of course. But whether you're pro or anti conformity, you should take some comfort in knowing that the principle following or breaking a trend isn't all that groundbreaking, as science suggests it's more or less the same. A more worthwhile consideration may be the actual substance within the trend itself. It's up to you whether you want to follow or challenge trends and norms, but I suggest you do so with a greater awareness of the why.

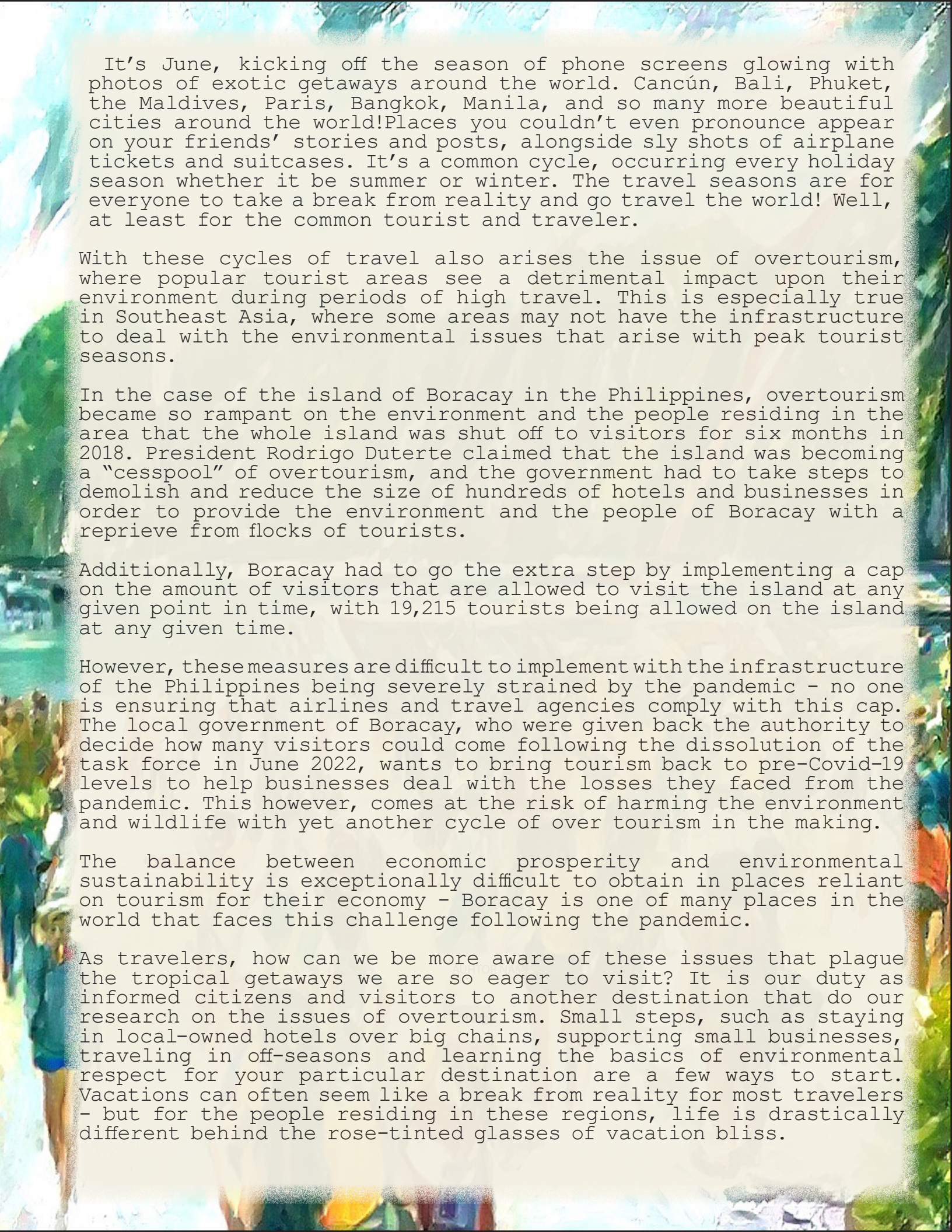




# Repurcussions of the Round Trip Ticket

By Ria Bose





It's June, kicking off the season of phone screens glowing with photos of exotic getaways around the world. Cancún, Bali, Phuket, the Maldives, Paris, Bangkok, Manila, and so many more beautiful cities around the world! Places you couldn't even pronounce appear on your friends' stories and posts, alongside sly shots of airplane tickets and suitcases. It's a common cycle, occurring every holiday season whether it be summer or winter. The travel seasons are for everyone to take a break from reality and go travel the world! Well, at least for the common tourist and traveler.

With these cycles of travel also arises the issue of overtourism, where popular tourist areas see a detrimental impact upon their environment during periods of high travel. This is especially true in Southeast Asia, where some areas may not have the infrastructure to deal with the environmental issues that arise with peak tourist seasons.

In the case of the island of Boracay in the Philippines, overtourism became so rampant on the environment and the people residing in the area that the whole island was shut off to visitors for six months in 2018. President Rodrigo Duterte claimed that the island was becoming a "cesspool" of overtourism, and the government had to take steps to demolish and reduce the size of hundreds of hotels and businesses in order to provide the environment and the people of Boracay with a reprieve from flocks of tourists.

Additionally, Boracay had to go the extra step by implementing a cap on the amount of visitors that are allowed to visit the island at any given point in time, with 19,215 tourists being allowed on the island at any given time.

However, these measures are difficult to implement with the infrastructure of the Philippines being severely strained by the pandemic - no one is ensuring that airlines and travel agencies comply with this cap. The local government of Boracay, who were given back the authority to decide how many visitors could come following the dissolution of the task force in June 2022, wants to bring tourism back to pre-Covid-19 levels to help businesses deal with the losses they faced from the pandemic. This however, comes at the risk of harming the environment and wildlife with yet another cycle of over tourism in the making.

The balance between economic prosperity and environmental sustainability is exceptionally difficult to obtain in places reliant on tourism for their economy - Boracay is one of many places in the world that faces this challenge following the pandemic.

As travelers, how can we be more aware of these issues that plague the tropical getaways we are so eager to visit? It is our duty as informed citizens and visitors to another destination that do our research on the issues of overtourism. Small steps, such as staying in local-owned hotels over big chains, supporting small businesses, traveling in off-seasons and learning the basics of environmental respect for your particular destination are a few ways to start. Vacations can often seem like a break from reality for most travelers - but for the people residing in these regions, life is drastically different behind the rose-tinted glasses of vacation bliss.



# Not a pep talk. Stop working.

By Deekshita Gorugantu Venkata

Okay I know your life is busy—you have no time to even look up from your laptops or books and it seems impossible to breathe. But, for a moment, just breathe and think about the last time you did something that makes you happy—what truly and genuinely makes you just ecstatic.

In such a dynamic and fast-paced world, it is quite easy to get lost, not know what to do or feel like you're never good enough. There is always this constant pressure to achieve something and that pressure, it is a ticking time bomb waiting to explode. This pressure could range from academic pressure to social pressure and is one of the main reasons for the declining mental health among people. This leads to feelings of

fatigue or despair, loss of motivation and tremendous amounts of stress. It feels strenuous to do anything just because we are being too hard on ourselves and pushing ourselves beyond our fringe limit. While some may argue that this leads to the best version of ourselves, it is imperative to note that nothing good ever comes out of an excess of anything. If pushing yourself does not feel appealing and does not give you an enthralling rush of adrenaline, stop; this is the critical point. This is the point where a vicious cycle begins, which if entered can leave you chasing after the extremely elusive, already-touching-the-horizon, what-were-you-doing-two-years-ago equanimity (yeah not to be dramatic or anything).



So, what is this cycle? I like to call it the 'A Race to the end of a black hole'. All these ensuing manifestations of the proliferating pressure are interconnected—when we feel burdened with any external thing, our quality of work decreases, and we are stressed. Does it stop there? That is the dreaded question. When we are

stressed, it just exacerbates the situation and we feel extra pressurized. So, in short, the consequence becomes the cause and it just goes on like an infinite loop (exemplified analogy for the coders). Here is a simple flowchart to comprehend this better because, as the adage goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.



To comprehend the intricacies behind this, live this small anecdote vicariously. You are really stressed out about a midterm and it feels like not doing well on it is not an option. You find it hard to sleep for the days leading up to it because of the anxiety, and so you keep burning that midnight oil. However, on the day of the exam, you miss it—because, ironically, you were 'busy' studying for it instead of getting a much needed-sleep. This is, in fact, a real-life incident that happened with one of my friends at UCLA, who was quite willing for me to use this example as, dare I say, motivation.

So, the aim, of course, is to play the reverse card. Finding happiness in small victories and cele-

brating them is the starting point of this turnaround. These victories are what keep us motivated and make the next target look a little less daunting. As a result of this eradication of pressure, we do better in other prospective challenges. This—this reversal of the cycle—leads to an upward cycle of joy and happiness that keeps repeating and replicating. So, celebrating such small victories is definitely a step towards breaking the vicious cycle by inspiring us to do even better.

In short, cherish the journey. Laud your victories. And remember, it's always the little things.



# No Really, Stop. Smell these roses.

Art By Lily Christie







Art By Jasmin Avila







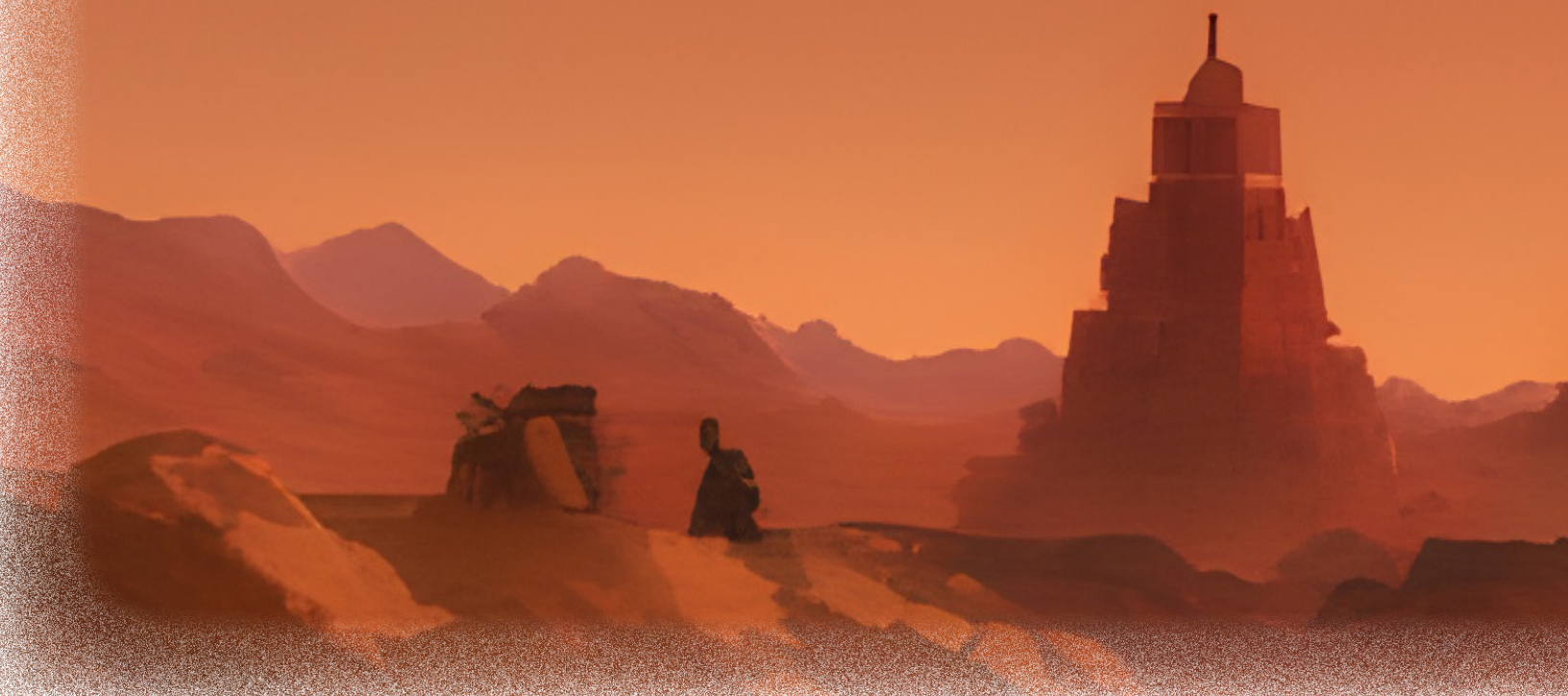


Art By Somerset Colligan



Livin'  
Free  
in the  
POST-POST  
Apocalypse

By Amari L. Graves






The American West has been used to embolden the image of American hardiness and progress while the reality of the region counteracts and undermines those very beliefs. The West was not a place of untouched splendor, but an incomprehensibly vast ocean of biodiversity teeming with life and civilization. Relative to the period of European arrival, the indigenous history of this space long overshadows the brief period of colonization. Humans have lived in the Americas for roughly 15,000 years starting when the first humans crossed the Bering strait during the end of the last Ice Age. Generations that have spanned millenia along with the civilizations that rose and fell within them will forever be unknown due to both the intended and unintended consequences of colonization. What exists now are the remnants of a bygone civilization, the ruins of these ancient people, ancient even to the Hopi people that

encountered the first Spaniards in the 16th century. Entire cities were found to be long abandoned in the American southwest and northern Mexico, with some recent evidence believing that it was possibly due to a massive past drought that spanned multiple generations. The true reasons why such intricate and complex structures were left to decay in the dry desert sun is a mystery lost to time. Images of lively and complex civilizations in the modern day American South as described by French explorer Charles De Soto rang hollow for Europeans who arrived one hundred years later during the 17th century only to find those regions devoid of such people with only infrastructure to indicate that there had been a sizable population. The truth was that a foreign plague had killed up to 90% of the indigenous population of the Americas by the time that the bulk of European colonists had arrived.





The background of the text is a photograph of a desert landscape. The sky is a deep, warm orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the foreground and middle ground, there are dark, silhouetted rock formations. On the left, a large, craggy rock face rises. In the center and right, there are more jagged, pointed rock formations. The overall mood is contemplative and ancient.

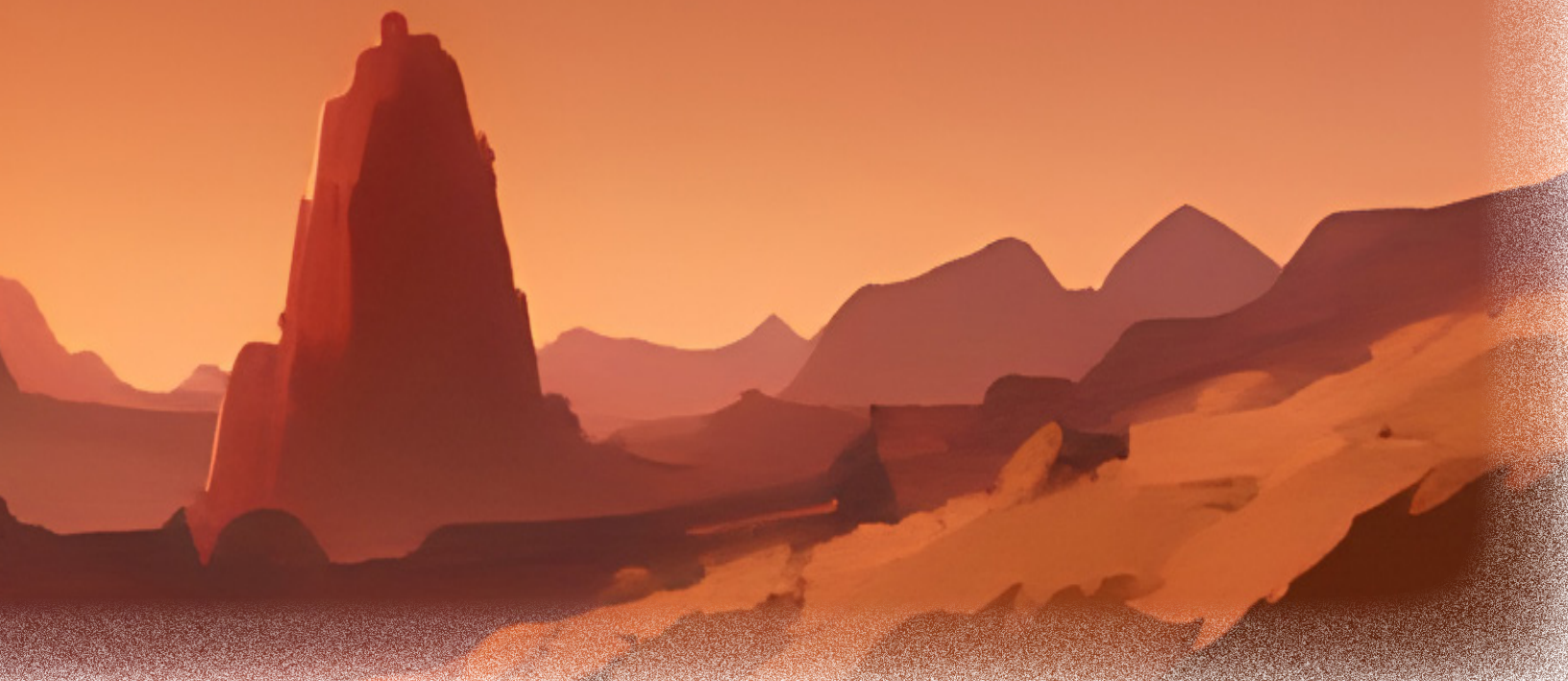
Often in American media we fear the apocalypse as a possible future threat, yet we're living in the aftermath of one. We're living in the post-post apocalypse. The fleetingness of past civilizations relative to the span of human history has often led me to question the institutions that attempt to legitimize their beliefs through an appeal to moral absolutism or divine judgment. This thought has led me to question the authority that American institutions are given due to a belief that such institutions are the byproduct of an enlightened "civilized" people. To treat the U.S. as a transcendental political body, one that transcends the civilizations before it is a mistake. The U.S. is but an unbelievably small blip within the ocean of human life and a microscopic blip on a planetary scale. It is partly due to this conviction,

that I have fallen so hopelessly in love with the American West as a landscape. The region stands defiantly against imperial arrogance. The remnants and scars of millenia are carved deeply within its destitute landscape, the sheer age and decay is shown within the vast canyons and cities of the desert, the unfathomable amount of raw history that is on display have been so well preserved due to its unrelenting hostility. It is a joy of the natural world that I am happy to say is still with us. We are not a people that tamed the west, merely the people that inhabit it now. Much like a science fiction novel, we are the people that live here far, far into the future finding the abandoned cities and bones of a bygone people that dreamed and laughed, that cried and grieved just as we have.



The people of the past died for causes that have no meaning now, so far in the past that the languages that they spoke and the names that they gave themselves are lost to history. Yet despite all of this, the things that they believed in, the concepts that they died for were real to them. The love and depth of humanity that exists now, existed then and despite living in the post-post apocalypse I believe that it still means something. The United States has often taken great steps to suppress its own history in favor of a history that exaggerates its triumphs and absolves itself of its bloodshed. This style of history is done at the behest of institutions that seek to bolster the legitimacy of the American status quo. If one were to understand that our lived present exists upon a foundation of prejudice and unspeakable violence, one may begin to question if the systems that protect the status quo are just at all.

Time as we know it is fickle and non-linear, it is a property of the universe that to me is all things at all times. In the time before the post-post apocalypse, all the emotions and experiences that many of us can relate to on a fundamentally human scale will forever exist as a part of the universe. Much like today the care I feel for others, from falling in love to laying in bed on a sunday, the things that we give meaning to will forever be an aspect of the history of the universe. In a millennia from now when I'm a member of the bygone people, my existence was here and the love I felt was here too. Institutions change and so do continents. But each person, each lived experience is unique to the consciousness that lived it. Each experience matters if we believe it to be and even when we don't, it will forever be written within the records of the cosmos.





# Punk and Consumerism



## Incompatible or Inseparable

By Ava London

IT'S PUNK!

Punk is more than a genre. It is a veritable cultural phenomenon that evolved into a powerful intersection of radical politics and artistic expression. From its conception, punk was inherently linked to an anti-capitalist sentiment, with artists attempting to dismantle the hierarchy facilitated by the idolization of mainstream, mass-produced musicians. Whether intentional or not, punk artists challenged the blind, passive consumption of musical sounds and lyrics, propagating an ethos of "DIY production and musical amateurism" (Phillipov 2006), where shock effects, unconventional mixing techniques, and unpleasant vocal tones were used to facilitate a divorce from the hegemonic relationship between musician and

listener. However, as punk increasingly disaffiliated itself from its underground roots in moving towards the mainstream, the cyclical curse of capitalism was unveiled; punk suffered at the hands of a music economy where musicians are interchangeable hit-producing entities, fated to die out as fast as their first single hits the chart.

The Velvet Underground, Television, The New York Dolls, The Patti Smith Group, The Stooges, The Ramones in New York; The Jam, The Clash, The Sex Pistols in England. With origins dating back to the underground rock scene of the late '60s and early '70s, the world's epicenters of punk were highly intertwined in a mutualistic cycle of inspiration. From Richard Hell of Television inspiring the "look" and lyrics



Malcolm McLaren utilized in designing the Pistols, to bassist Fred Smith playing for Blondie, Television, and The Patti Smith Group, the punk scene was deeply interconnected, despite traversing the Atlantic Ocean.

The Velvet Underground, Television, The New York Dolls, The Patti Smith Group, The Stooges, The Ramones in New York; The Jam, The Clash, The Sex Pistols in England. With origins dating back to the underground rock scene of the late '60s and early '70s, the world's epicenters of punk were highly intertwined in a mutualistic cycle of inspiration. From Richard Hell of Television inspiring the "look" and lyrics Malcolm McLaren utilized in designing the Pistols, to bassist Fred Smith playing for Blondie, Television, and The Patti Smith Group, the punk scene was deeply interconnected, despite traversing the Atlantic Ocean.

Although punk can be argued to have been birthed from the confines of Hilly Kristal's 350-person-capacity New York music club-CBGBs-The Sex Pistols indisputably made punk mainstream. In October of 1977, The Sex Pistols managed to release one glaringly anomalous LP, "Never Mind the Bollocks." Attracting global notoriety, the Pistol's first and last LP featured songs openly mocking or referencing hugely contentious subjects: "Bodies" referenced the nuanced decision preceding the termination of a pregnancy, "God Save the Queen," while popularly interpreted as an attack on the monarchy, in actuality protested blind submission to the monarchy as an institution, and "Anarchy in the UK" provided an anti-establishmentarian justification for anarchy. Despite the obstreperous album's rudimentary musical components, "Never Mind the Bollocks" was a monumental success, climbing to the top of the charts in the UK, and attracting sizable audiences in the US. In lieu of the album's delusive popularity, McLaren organized an ill-fated US tour, intentionally selecting venues in the East and Midwest to exaggerate the cultural dichot-

omy between band and crowd. When venues actually permitted the band to play, they were met with aggressive, hostile crowds; in combination with Vicious' deepening heroin addiction and Rotten's disillusionment with McLaren's management, the tour culminated in the band's explosive breakup in '78.

By disrupting the mainstream with homemade-sounding, lyrically challenging creations, The Pistols screamed "fuck off!" to a musical era dominated by classical training and blue suede shoes. Donning torn graphic tees and politically disillusioned attitudes, The Pistols laid the foundation for an eccentric, socially-deviant movement, one whose ethos has been preserved to this day as an inclusive, anti-capitalist mode of music production.





The Pistols were attributed with the impossible-making "punk" mainstream. And therefore I conclude with some trepidation; for in popularizing a culture that came into being as a protest against blind complacency with consumerism and popular culture,

were The Pistols responsible for the "death of punk?"

## Did punk die with the Pistols?

Is punk inherently incompatible with a capitalist society that churns out musicians for the masses?

Or could their success in releasing unpolished, socially-conscious music be argued to have established a permanent source of inspiration for those underserved in the production and consumption of music?

While I don't have the answer to those questions, it's undeniable that with cultural artifacts resurfacing left-and-right, the modern trend cycle has popularized ideas birthed by punk; punk is far from out of the public eye, despite its supposed death. From the emergence of Zines to student-run radio stations to young punk bands, the DIY ethos lives on outside of capitalism's constraints, which would prefer for these creations to live and die for profit; for a return on investment; for cycles.



Now 60s to appreciate this masterpiece.  
Do not blink.



Art By Alik Shahadeh

Turn page to continue



# BOOT the REBOOT

By AJ Rosean

As *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3* becomes Marvel's thirty-second theatrical movie release, (with three more premiering this year alone), Disney releases its tenth live-action remake since 2019, *The Little Mermaid*, and Netflix green-lights ten reboots of past franchises - such as *Spy Kids* and the *Power Rangers*. Certainly, the collective appetite for media consumption has turned towards itself - opting for replication rather than invention. It would be no understatement to describe the current state of film and television as a closed circuit.

Of course, distinguishing a truly original piece of media is nearly impossible; entertainment is, inevitably, a culmination of references and inspirations. However, the capacity to which these media conglomerates can reproduce content is a major distinction. When considering that these are the most pervasive media corporations of the 21st-century, it is difficult to imagine that they lack the financial or creative means to produce original

content. In other words, these firms are producing what sells most; the implication being that we, the audience, demand imitation and recreation more than innovation. This preface begs the question: why are we stuck in an echo chamber of recycled entertainment?

One can begin to understand this question with a case study of Marvel - as previously mentioned. It is pertinent to note that the Marvel cinematic universe is cyclical on two fronts: the films are based on the Marvel comics popularized in the 20th-century, and they are also produced within a sequential cinematic canon. An explanation for the repetition could be that viewers follow the films to witness the progression of beloved characters and stories, but the 'superhero versus villain' narrative is not necessarily conducive to change. In layman's terms, the good guy always wins. As a result, Marvel utilizes a reliable formula in order to satisfy audiences with a sense of ease and fulfillment. With three out of ten of the



highest grossing movies of all time being Marvel movies, it's clear this formula works. Nonetheless, after 32 installments of the same fictional 'feel-good' universe, the attention should be turned towards the viewer. Is reality intolerable enough to warrant this amount of participation in a collective fantasy world? Or are the grand successes of a team of superheroes a way to lull audiences into a sense of progress, despite being stagnant otherwise?

Much like the original Marvel comics, Disney is able to rely on its 20th-century laurels by producing live-action remakes and animated sequels. It's no secret that Disney is fond of remaking their classics, especially because many of those stories are staples in the American library of cinema; but, when considering there is a limited pool of original content to recycle, the amount of reproductions gives reason for pause. Unlike Marvel's cinematic sequels, the Disney remakes tell the same story - albeit in varying formats. On a cursory level, it would appear somewhat redundant to rewatch the same film. It seems most possible that the comfort of an established story is more favorable than that of a new one - which requires curiosity and suspense. One might also note that Disney's media is grounded in youthful fables, but produced for all ages. What conditions have caused individuals of any age to be so

deeply invested in recreating a childhood sense of comfort? Further, is the replacement of animation with live-action a way to immerse older audiences by combatting the glaring illusionism of a fairytale?

Between Marvel's perfected 'feel-good' formula, Disney's reliance on its glory days, and Netflix's media assembly line, it would appear that we are fixed in a revolving door of entertainment. That's not to say that these films and programs are vacuous or negligible, but rather to emphasize concern over the fact that we cannot seem to evolve. What's it say that we have become complacent in a mass fictional universe and a recreation of our childhoods? Perhaps the divisive political state of recent years has left audiences searching for normalcy by means of an American band of superheros; or maybe the current political turmoil leaves audiences to idolize a past time of relative harmony. After accounting for a 24-hour news cycle filled with fear-mongering and disaster, it's no wonder that Americans have turned en masse to alternate realities. It's possible that, as the production of news media becomes increasingly unbearable, the American attention span will recycle until it has imploded upon itself.



# A DISPATCH FROM THE

A blurred, colorful ring of light in space, resembling a comet or a ringed planet, with the word CRATER in the center.

CRATER

By Arami Chang

*"Part of my interest in the blurred image is how it offers the specter of the image, the ghost, and a haunting dynamic that was captured in the image." - Julie Mehretu*



Over the past few decades, improvements in recording technology have opened up new avenues of musical artistry and soundplay previously unheard of in the industry. Most notably, sampling machines and audio editing software have provided musicians the unique benefit of stitching disparate pieces of music onto a musical quilt, allowing them to piece together various audio snippets into a single song. Sampled music has since held a tight grip on the music industry for a long while and eventually gave way to some of the most celebrated albums in music history, whether you're talking about The Avalanches' seminal plunderphonics behemoth "Since I Left You" or Oneohtrix Point Never's deeply hypnotic "Replica." In his essay titled "Plunderphonics, or Audio Piracy as a Compositional Prerogative," writer and musician John Oswald writes:

*"Can the sounding materials that inspire composition be sometimes considered compositions themselves? Is the piano the musical creation of Bartolommeo Cristofori (1655-1731) or merely the vehicle engineered by him for Ludwig Van and others to maneuver through their musical territory? Some memorable compositions were created specifically for the digital recorder of that era, the music box. Are the preset sounds in today's sequencers and synthesizers free samples, or the musical property of the manufacturer? Is a timbre any less definably possessable than a melody? A composer who claims divine inspiration is perhaps exempt from responsibility to this inventory of*

*the layers of authorship. But what about the unblessed rest of us?"*

Oswald's sentiments certainly make a defense for audio samples as an aesthetic tool, but what happens when samples take on a more active role not as an album's aesthetic but entire narratives and larger thematic statements?

Slauson Malone's "Crater Speak" series is one such album (or in this case, three whole albums) that takes a stab at this idea, spanning from A Quiet Farwell, 2016-2018 (Crater Speak) to Vergangenheitsbewältigung (Crater Speak) and finally for Star (Crater Speak). The first title, released in 2019, is Slauson Malone's only full-length album and acts as the thesis for this project. It's also probably the only entry in the series to faithfully commit to the genre elements of hip hop and spiritual jazz, fully incorporating dense bass lines, jagged beats, glitchy sound effects, and even a few features from underground rappers like Caleb Giles and Pink Siifu.

On the other hand, the second title of the series (whose name roughly translates to "coping with the past") veers into a more acoustic direction. While the glitchy elements of A Quiet Farwell are still present in Vergangenheitsbewältigung, they are only there to embellish the ballad-driven tracks of the EP. Finally, the third title of the series consists of 2 singles that are completely absent of any structure or form present in the earlier titles, delivering only drony ambience over a runtime of 11 minutes. They build on the same musical motifs as the earlier 2 titles but just barely.



Summarizing the series' larger messages is a tall task, but let's give it a try. Simply put, these are all albums about losing one's past. Specifically, they are about losing one's material past. They are albums that are deeply infatuated with physical memory and, because of it, are all the more heartbroken when they realize just how fallible it is. Whereas other kinds of sampled music looks to the past, yearning for a time that was "simpler," Malone is instead critical of this kind of nostalgia because he's wholly aware of what that past entailed.

In fact, Slauson Malone's obsession with the past is rooted in his own identity and his relationship with America's racist history of systematically eradicating black lives through state-sanctioned violence. In the album announcement of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, he writes:

"My fear, my loneliness, my happiness.

My blackness, my queerness, my objectness. My subjectness. I am haunted by likenesses. I'm haunted by myself."

These themes constantly present themselves throughout "Crater Speak" in 3 recurring motifs: the "Smile," "THE MESSAGE," and "The Wake". In "Smiles" #1-55, the same line is constantly repeated across each of the 3 albums: "smile at the past when I see it." On the other hand, "THE MESSAGE" takes form as an interpolation of King Geedorah's "Anti-Matter", with the lines "No matter how hard you try, you can't stop me now" being an obvious nod to that song. Finally, "The Wake" is the sparsest of the bunch, manifesting as a somber melody played on a distorted trumpet.

Over the span of these three releases, however, these motifs start to physically break down throughout each repeated iteration, starting from structured pieces

of hip hop until they finally collapse into ambient walls of noise. The same songs, much like memory, only seem to become more distorted upon each visit. Like revisiting a painful memory, changing small details every time, hoping you would remember it differently the next time.

"THE MESSAGE" 1, 2, and 3 make this particularly clear. "THE MESSAGE 1 (see page 39)" and "THE MESSAGE 2" are short and sweet lo-fi hip-hop tunes that neatly preface the idea of Malone's "message" of "no matter how hard you try, you can't stop me now". Meanwhile, on "THE MESSAGE 3: Blood (see page 39, 179, and Bye)", Slauson Malone interpolates King Geedorah's "Anti-Matter" once again but unlike with previous iterations of the mo-

tif he now possesses a completely different affect. Whereas earlier iterations carry a sort of swagger in their tone, Malone now sings as if each line strikes a chord in him and chokes him up, a quiet sadness caught in his throat.

But even if recalling the past continues to dredge up old wounds for Malone, he still returns to these same ideas anyways. As he continues to sample the same songs and rework tracks from earlier titles, he is in a way reclaiming the past as his own. Adversity, challenge, plight are present in the music. But so are resistance, survival, longevity. Maybe if he reminds himself enough of how far he's made it, maybe then he can finally "smile at the past."





# Goodbye

## **I repeat because I am alive.**

To tune into the news is to keep a handle on my life.

Following trends, thrifting my appearance.

They give rhythm to the spiral.

Like pockets of order amidst bins of oppression.

To revisit and remaster is to  
reminisce and remember.

When nothing else works,  
it is the past that soothes.

Nostalgia is detox, it's unsustainable,  
its listening:

Listening to the old,  
Listening to the new,  
Listening to the silenced,  
Listening to each other,  
Listening to yourself.

The mundane manifests the  
possibility of escape.  
And even if the escape is just  
a new set of repetitions,  
that okay.

## **I repeat because it helps**

**By Aydin Karatas**



