

## TERROR IN THE TOILETS:

### Dispenser Danger? A Conspiracy Leading Up to the EU

*Written by Gaia De Caro*

It was a dark and stormy morning of December, when I arrived at Descartes Hall (Campusplein 7-8). I locked my bike, and I walked to the building, keeping my head down, fearing the possibility of making eye contact with an acquaintance and having to smile so early in the day. As I walked through the common room, I realised something was different. Cardboard boxes were filling the room. To check whether I had time to investigate the content of the boxes, I peaked at my Casio Illuminator. Unfortunately, the analog numbers spoke clearly: I was late, again. I spinted to class like a Mercedes Sptinter and did not look back

Today, I can but acknowledge in anger that detrimental mistake. If only I had inspected the label of the boxes, I would have been able to predict the clusterfuck that followed. God forbid, maybe even prevented it. Unfortunately, that was not the case, and when, a few weeks later, I found out what was in those boxes, I was too late; the place I, and many others, used to call home had changed forever. My blue veins metaphorically became red in frustration. I had to find out who was behind this, and why they wanted to disrupt our daily routines.

On behalf of my community, I slapped on my investigator hat and started uncovering clues.

I was walking an unpaved road, so, to place the first brick, I contacted the closest institution: the Metis Board. I was able to land an interview with the president, but my initial excitement quickly faded, as Arianna Moro immediately undressed the uncomfortable reality before us:

“I don’t know anything [of the darkness befalling Descartes Hall]”.

As I believe many others are, I became disappointed with the help my local government could provide me; therefo-



re, I decided to move a step up. Without any warning, I barged into the office of Stefan Vuurens, hoping that the surprise element would help with making him cough up some answers. Unfortunately, that did not work. Stefan Vuurens stalled for a long time, by diverging to personal anecdotes, answering every question except the one I was asking. For minutes, I pushed him to give me a name or motive, but he dodged every arrow like people in The Hunger Games movie when Katniss aims arrows at them. Finally, I managed to hit him, and he bled out an answer:

“Contact the facility office”, he said, defeated.

As I was about to leave, Stefan uttered one last sentence through his wheezing breath: “It might go all the way up to the EU”.

The door slammed behind me, and I did not look back. I knew the target was ahead or more likely: above.

Now, my dear reader, I will take a bit of a sideline here, as I fear that I failed to mention what darkness I am trying to shine light upon. I believed that it was not necessary to mention, because of the prominence of the disruption; therefore, I am convinced everyone knows exactly what I am referring to. But for the less attentive, I will no longer hesitate with the revelation: soap dispen-

sers, hand towel dispensers, and toilet paper dispensers have all been switched out in every single bathroom in every single building of Utrecht University, with no space left for mercy. The switch went from Tork to Katrin, setting a landmark in all of our coming of age stories. But fear not – the outrage you’re feeling right now is shared by victims all over the UU campus.

In pursuit of the truth, I sent out some emails and then even more, despite the atrocious pain caused by logging into Outlook. The inactivity of my inbox started to discourage me, and the “dark” default setting was making everything look darker. After a full day, a certain Rob responded to my email offering an interview. The bold white letters of the unread email shone light on my world, making the clouds open up and the sun rise. Rob was my white knight, galloping into my heart with his muscular stallion. But as our Outlook correspondence progressed, Rob’s white cape began to darken, when he refused for our conversation to be documented.

This could have meant one of two things; he had either lost the face of innocence or he was a bit shy. The former made my sense of justice irk. The latter, even if far-fetched, opened me to feel empathy towards a simple man caught in a complicated net of power and deceit. We called. It was 16 o’clock.

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# Time management and work life balance as students

*Written by Victor Medina Pierluisi*

Getting the most out of every day is often on everyone's minds, particularly when we have a look at our calendars and realize that the important deadlines are closer than what we remembered. The few extra minutes or hours would work miracles, we tend to think. However, we often waste some of our time without realizing it. With all its deadlines and assignments, there is surprisingly little guidance in university about how to manage our time effectively. Most of us develop techniques to help us cope with the workload through painstaking trial-and-error, but it does not need to be this way. Today, I would like to offer some tips on how to manage this time that we wished we had spent more wisely, hopefully helping to reduce study-stress along the way. First, let us go over some basics.

Sleeping and eating well goes a long way. You simply cannot reach your full productive potential if you do not commit to taking care of these fundamental aspects of your health. We have all gone through the experience of trying to finish an assignment sleep-deprived and running on caffeine. Not nice right? I doubt anyone of us thinks this is a good strategy to get through university while feeling some sense of fulfillment in the process. Proper sleeping and eating habits vary according to each one of us, so listen to your body and come up with a routine that makes you feel rested and energized. And stick to it as best you can! As someone who has been on the job market for the last 9 years, I can tell you that life does not get any easier after university. We do however, become progressively better at tackling life's challenges. Developing healthy habits now for the little things helps to clear out some vital mental space to tackle the big things later.

Together with developing good physical habits is developing good mental habits. When I started practicing yoga about 3

years ago, my only regret was not getting into it sooner. Meditation, in whatever form, helps you to feel you best. For me, it helps to see the bigger picture and to appreciate the little victories I have had so far. When I eventually get back to work, I feel motivated and excited to keep on making progress. Everyone has different triggers, so take some time to explore what works for you. So, for some it might be playing music, while for others it might be going for a quick jog. When I feel overwhelmed in the middle of the day, I turn into a 10-minute cleaning hurricane before jumping back on the laptop to finish writing that final draft. Regardless of what others may say, I believe that anything can count as meditation as long as it helps you to clear your mind and reconnect with yourself.

Nurturing these habits creates the necessary conditions for your body and mind to cope with university work. The tips I will explain in the next section are the tools to help you be more efficient once you've already set yourself up to succeed. These tips are like a marathon runner's training shoes. They will make it easier to cross the finish line, but most of the heavy lifting needs to happen before the race.

## 1) Write a "To-Do" and a "Not-To-Do" list

Pretty straight forward but with an added twist to help keep you in line. I found that just writing a list of things that I need to do for university would not work for me. On a typical day I would quickly cross out half of the tasks in the list at the start of the day, only to procrastinate and not finish my to-do list. I needed an additional challenge to help channel my energy once I felt good about having gotten some assignments done. Writing a list of things not-to-do next to my to-do list provided this challenge. It helped to constrain my procrastination by making it explicit, which

made it less likely that I would succumb to temptation later in the day. I would write on the not-to-do list things like watch YouTube shorts and scroll through Instagram. Now the goal was not to simply get through the list, but to do it like a champion. "What matters most is how well you walk through the fire" I would tell myself dramatically. However, it only works if you keep it realistic. If you write the same distractions every day, you will fail, and the trick loses its magic. Used wisely, however it can help you to overcome the stickiest procrastination obstacles you are facing in the moment.

## 2) Remember the Pareto Principle

Do not worry, it has nothing to do with microeconomics. The Pareto principle simply states that 80% of the result is achieved by 20% of the effort. It does serve as a useful rule of thumb when it comes to managing how much time you spend on any given task. For example, in my first year I would read over my final drafts endlessly, wasting time that would not make my work significantly better. Most importantly, it took away time from other assignments that I had not even started. The principle is simple: pick an assignment that you need to do and break it into smaller tasks. You will find that some tasks contribute more to the result than others. Start with those, and only focus on the less significant tasks if you have got time to spare. Small effort, big results. So, while "done is better than perfect" may not make much sense when you only have 1 task to work on, it does give an advantage when you are playing the long game. Having a strategy to approach the workload helps to improve your productivity while eliminating some of the stress of having to tackle big assignments. If the Pareto Principle does not work for you, find another strategy that does. Note: this is not an excuse to not proofread your work!

3) Build a good support system

Having someone around for some much-needed encouragement makes you more productive over the long run. Sometimes no matter how much we plan and study, university feels like it gets a little out of hand. For me, whenever I start feeling overwhelmed, my productivity drops to embarrassing levels. I found that having a good mutual support group helps me stay motivated and focused whenever the going gets tough. Having someone else to bounce ideas off when brainstorming for an assignment can make the ideas click so that you have the impulse to start writing. Similarly, having someone remind you of past successes

can help overcome the feeling of inert selflessness we all feel at some point during the block. It is even more fulfilling when the support is mutual. You will find that helping a friend find inspiration to dive back into the books will also motivate you to do the same.

If you have made it this far, then I can pretty much certify that you will be able to tear through university assignments like a machine. Remember that cultivating good physical and mental habits helps to keep me sharp and effective. They keep your engine running smoothly by making you feel less tired and therefore less vulnerable to distractions. Most importantly though, good habits

preserve your health by preventing your system from overheating. Keep in mind that the tricks I proposed need the habits, otherwise they won't work. Start the new year off by thinking about how to develop the habits to put yourself in a better condition to succeed. If you're already there, make it your mission to incorporate consistently one of these tips into your routine. Once you have mastered one, add another until you have conquered all three. Start with the tip that feels most natural to you and let me know what you think of your productivity once you have tried them all out.

## Dispenser Danger? A Conspiracy Leading Up to the EU

*Continuation*

I could not hear him well from the mic of his vehicle, but that did not prevent me from mercilessly enquiring about his connections.

"Who changed the dispensers", I asked Rob.

"I did", he muffled in my ear.

Time halted around me; my arms hardened with goosebumps, and a tear ran down my left cheek. I was speechless but (as often people who are speechless do), I spoke:

"Et tu, Rob".

Despite my sense of betrayal, I enquired further to discover that my newly found arch-nemesis Rob was in fact he who issued the tender for new dispensers. Of course, I challenged his matter-of-fact rhetoric: what about sustainability? why do it at all? are you being corrupted by the bathroom dispenser lobby? Rob denied the latter accusation, but with a lack of evidence, I cannot sustain his statement before the public. In response to the first inquiry, Rob explained through his car microphone that sustainability was a main reason to switch. The other reason was that he had to. Those above him were holding Rob's position at UU hostage: if he did not do what they said, he

would lose his job (as it often happens to be the case when you are employed and need to follow directions). Rob simply did what he was told to be able to feed his family, but by whom?

"It's EU law," he said.

"Because UU is state-owned, we need to issue tenders every so many years so more companies are able to furnish the university".

My fantastical journey ended with those words. In lack of a crime, a cult, or a culprit, my interest faded. After that, I asked many more questions, about how the tenders are issued, how the winner is decided, and what the total price for the dispensers was. None of the answers are spectacular, but you can email me if you want to hear more about how the change from Tork to Katrin bathroom dispensers happened. I can even help you with more specific questions such as how one-paper-at-a-time toilet paper dispensers are better for the environment, or if you care to know the point system with which they decide the best soap dispenser company.

Thank you for building a road to the truth with me, even if the truth was obvious and disappointing, as it often turns out to be.

## What comes next?

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## Want to add to the next issue?

Contact us with your ideas! We're always looking for new content and ideas, whether that be an article, some kind of artistic endeavour, or just plain regular feedback.

We'd love for you to add your voice to our own for the next issue, just email us for more information at:

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# The Long Awaited CineCo Review of “Before Sunrise”

*Written by Igor Koziupa*

*Edited by Elias Gerndt-Eisenhower*



Before Sunrise remains one of the most iconic romance movies to have ever been created. It was conceived by Richard Linklater after allegedly having had a similar experience in his life. The movie is part of the “Before” trilogy with first movie coming out in 1995 with later instalments releasing in nine-year intervals. The movie follows an unlikely pair of lovers, an American man named Jesse and a French woman named Celine, who meet on a train passing through Vienna. They decide to have a look around the city for a night and go back to their lives, well... Before Sunrise.

It is reasonable to assume that the movie is more of a character study and that the plot therefore takes second place, leaving us with the liminal space of a film in which, in contrast to a continuously ticking clock, time has stopped. It is a very unique type of movie, where we can all forget about the “show don’t tell” rule and focus on the characters’ personal philosophies.

One subject the director has mastered in all of his movies is talking about societal problems through a uniquely personal lens. In this movie I believe it is an analysis of gender roles in our society. I

would love to point out to you what movie seems to suggest is the biggest problem of Jesse’s character – it is that he is not in touch with his spiritual side as visualised through the scene with a palmist. It is overall an interesting mirror to today’s experience with Scorpios (yes, the star signs). Celine however, by being more introverted, takes a more passive position in their relationship, which is how patriarchy views women, as objects to be desired and not agents able to pursue.

In the analysis of cinema, we often focus on important distinction of realism and formalism, and as your humble CineCo approved guide to cinema analysis I would say that the movie is perfect example of realism in cinema. We can see that the movie ditches most of the tools it has, such as music, editing or cinematography, just in order to show how being alive feels. In this sense, the movie can come off as monotone, as it does not experiment with its form and there are no surreal elements. All of this is in order to connect us more to Jesse and Celine. If not for any other reason, this is why I consider Before Sunrise to be one of the most important movies in cinema history.

One aspect that allows for such an immersive experience is the acting. Large parts of the movie seem to be improvised; however, this is not the case. The director has stated that “It’s a compliment when people think it’s improvised, but I don’t think anyone could ever understand how much work it is for them [Delpy and Hawke]”. The actors are closely connected to their characters, which is evident in the fact that they co-wrote both of the later films.

The movie has a unique place in the trilogy, it is the most liminal of the three. Ethan Hawke, the actor playing Jesse, has famously said in an interview with The Guardian that “The first film is about what could be, the second is about what should have been. [And the third] is about what it is.”

The ending seemed to be one of the more divisive parts of the showing. Afterwards, people started exchanging their opinions as to whether it was a good choice to leave audience on the cliffhanger. We should not forget, however, that the movie represents life, and we cannot simply look into the future and see how our choices will leave us. Fortunately, similarly to life it still goes on, with two movies, Before Sunset and Before Midnight showing what happened to our main characters.

On a personal note, I am very happy that I was able to show this movie to an audience of my fellow students. Ever since I watched it for the first time back in January of 2022, it became an instant favourite of mine. The movie is unique in its simplicity, it visualised the idea of living in the moment and love perfectly. Truly a liminal space of a movie. At the risk of being biased I am giving this movie a score of **10/10**



## “Out of Sight” by Irene Fileccia



# What is

*Written by Cristóbal Palacio Sánchez de la Nieta*

This is a tough subject. From literature to music to movies, the L-word has reigned supreme as a theme of human expression for generations. The Seikilos Epitaph, the earliest piece of written music we have knowledge of, is believed to be a love poem from a man to his dead wife, written on a column in her grave sometime around the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Since then, countless more artists, from Oscar Wilde to Shakespeare to Jason Derulo, have aimed to time and time again to encapsulate the all-consuming feelings and implications this single four-letter word has. And yet, although we hear of love every single day, from the media we consume, the people close to us, or those horrible Valentine's Day ads playing through the first couple weeks of February every year to remind us of our own romantic failures, if I were to ask someone in the street what love is, I truly do not believe they could give me a clear answer. So, with the grace and fury of a man who is fuelled solely by caffeine and spite, I invite you dear readers to follow me through this maze of vagueness and human stupidity as I aim to answer the question that has plagued humanity since its very inception, what the hell is love?

Many writers and philosophers have aimed to understand love, and since both of these professions are composed of thinking all day for a living, it feels like a good start to our exploration.

"Love is like a soul inhabiting 2 bodies"  
– Aristotle

Here Aristotle is eluding to a very common idea, due to the fact that love is most often traditionally found through the bond between two people, he attributes the existence of love to the finding of an ideal "soul-mate", a person meant for another. Although it is true that love exists to create a bond between people, it would be immature to consider any



other sentiment from this sentence as anything other than redundancy. The fact of the matter is, one can love different people, and in fact, many people do not just fall in love with one person in their lifetimes, and instead go through their lives fruitlessly seeking the one person that will make all their troubles go away, falling in love with many people along the way. But love doesn't work like that, it's not some kind of grace sent from heaven in the form of a singular person to be with. Too many people have felt love for too many people for this to be the case.

"Love is like war: easy to begin but very hard to stop" – H. L. Mencken

"But Mr Writer!" I can hear some of you already thinking, "We know what love is! Science and brain chemicals and stuff!". Although you may not have presented this very eloquently, this idea isn't exactly misguided. Although all our lives we have heard of love as a matter of the heart, the scientific community maintains their stubborn position that love is no more than your brain regulating feelings such as lust, attraction and attachment through the usage of chemicals within it like dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin to create a bond with

another person. This knowledge is wonderful, however it means absolutely nothing to me. In all seriousness, although I find science's answer frankly boring and reductive, limiting the human experience to a few chemical processes in your head, it does hold some interesting insight that might help us through this journey. Both dopamine and serotonin are chemicals that are otherwise regulated by drugs such as heroin, LSD or cocaine to create the high that leaves their users addicted, feeling amazing for their duration, and subsequently leading to terrible, intensely emotionally draining situations when they end. Sound familiar?

Both of these approaches have something in common in essence, they both focus on the emergent properties, or symptoms, of love. Science tells me love is addicting, the nature of man leading him to endlessly seek its high, and to feel devastated once this love falls apart. Aristotle's viewpoint almost directly responds to this inherent symptom of love, as he expresses his idea of love from the scope of its final goal, to find someone whose love won't fall apart, a high that won't end, a junkie's wet dream.



However, although these are both helpful ideas in giving us perspective on love's nature, they answer more on to what love is *like* rather than what love *is*. Dear reader, if your hope was that somehow, though the power of my literary expertise, I would somehow find the answer to this damned question, that I might give you the reason why love will make you feel happiness beyond your wildest dreams to later bring you down to the trenches of pain together with everyone else who experiences it then you might be more delusional than Aristotle. However, you mustn't feel ashamed, as your delusion proves exact-

ly my point. Love is not something we can quantify nor prove the existence of, even if we endlessly seek to. Because that is the nature of love in itself, and its whole reason for existence.

What is love? I will answer for you, even if it is because my editor might think I'm being misleading by not telling you. Love is the response man gives when confronted with the terrifying, lonely image of existence. Love comes from the recognition within every single person that life can just be a little too much a little too often, and as people, we need to be able to manage that. Take

the image of Atlas holding the infinite weight of the sky as a metaphor for the human experience. Love's source, where it comes from originally, is recognizing that although we are capable of holding all that weight, it hurts, like a lot. So, as humans do, we adapt. We seek someone who will hold the sky together with us, not because we cannot hold the sky alone but because it helps the pain of our knees, buckling under its weight. So we search, over and over again.

Or maybe I'm wrong, I don't know.

: "The mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death." – Oscar Wilde

## The New World (Dis-)Order: A Hobbesian State of Nature?

*Written by Hans Zindel*

For the last three decades, America's global dominance ensured a relatively stable system of norms that governed the relations among states. As its importance began to decline, other superpowers increasingly filled the gap and asserted their influence on the world stage. This gradual shift towards a multipolar world has begun to subvert the current international order and makes the future stability of international relations highly uncertain. With no common power to police everyone, a disintegrating international system, and colliding interests, the relations between states seem set to become increasingly anarchical. Political philosophy has a term for this, the world is descending into a "state of nature".

In Hobbes's version, the state of nature is a state of war of everyone against everyone. People do not always have to be fighting but can never be safe. Notably, he identifies three factors as the primary drivers of conflict. Because resources are scarce and people have roughly equal chances of prevailing, they compete over them. The result is diffidence: when facing an opponent of equal strength, the best chance to survive lies in anticipating the other's action via force or a ruse. Finally, Hobbes asserts that people fight for their glory, for instance when they feel their honour has been violated. Hobbes famously described life under these conditions as

"poor, nasty, brutish, and short." People must constantly fear being robbed of their possessions or their lives. This undesirable state of affairs is the result of a lack of leadership. Only if all people in society share an authority that guarantees security and the upkeeping of contracts, there can be peace.

Hobbes himself claimed that independent sovereign states were in a similar situation, a "posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another." However, it may be argued that over the last decades, international relations have been largely 'peaceful' in Hobbesian terms. After the end of the cold war, the world was dominated by the only superpower, the US. This hegemonic order reflected American interests and values and was based both on its military and economic superiority and the consent of its European and Asian allies. They were willing to subscribe to the American system and rely on the US for their protection instead of keeping up their own military.

With the defeat of its only ideological rival, communism, American liberalism was the only option for most countries. The 'West', as the US and its allies are often called, used its leverage to push its norms and values on states around the world. These Ideas were also promoted by a growing spectrum of international movements, including NGOs advocating

for human rights and experts assisting in reform policies of post-communist societies. Moreover, the implosion of the Soviet Union and the destruction of its networks and institutions gave the US and its allies a monopoly of patronage and power. For states who needed it, the West was the only source of military, economic, and political support, which it used to its advantage. Especially weaker countries, formerly dependent on Moscow, decided to re-orient for lack of alternatives. They were no longer able to protect themselves from western demands for reform, which were usually tied to the aid they received. The outcome was a liberal international system of norms and institutions centred on Washington.

But let us now turn to more current events. America's importance on the world stage has been declining over the past ten years. The reasons are diverse: the country's growing internal divisions have hurt its foreign policy stance. Related to this development, the US has begun to phase out its interventionist policies. Notable incidents include President Barack Obama's unwillingness to follow up on his threats against President Assad when the latter decided to deploy nerve gas against his own population. Moreover, the US position in international affairs has also suffered the President Donald Trump's 'America

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# The New World (Dis-)Order: A Hobbesian State of Nature?

*Continuation*



first' approach and the corresponding transactional nature of the foreign policy. Most recently, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, after 20 years, that left the country in anarchy, has sparked much criticism around the globe. While it will remain a superpower, the US's decline has been reinforced by the re-ascend of other nations.

The growing power and influence of autocratic Russia, and more importantly, China, have increasingly challenged US hegemony. Their level of development varies in certain areas, but they are broadly speaking sophisticated enough to be worthy opponents. Both command military resources that are amongst the strongest in the world, with nuclear arsenals that almost match the US's. This holds despite the damages Russia has suffered as a result of its invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, China's economy is set to overtake the US in the coming years and will become the largest in the world.

Perhaps most importantly, China and Russia offer an alternative to US hegemony and continue to establish broad alliances and influence networks of their own. They have broken the western mo-

nopoly on ideology, cooperation, and support. Regarding soft power, China's authoritarian government style and economic growth model became extremely attractive to many developing nations. Often more so, than the American model that has been plagued by problems for years and whose appeal has decreased as a result. Moreover, neither China nor Russia attaches any moral conditions to support or cooperation, it is strictly business. In fact, both are themselves critical of Western efforts to establish liberal norms, which are often seen as imperialistic.

In connection with these developments, both countries have drastically expanded their spheres of influence. For instance, Russia is probably the most important player in the Middle East and is vital for stability in the region. China on the other hand has proven itself to be significantly more ambitious. With its new 'Belt and Road Initiative,' it has opened new trading routes and markets and formed strategic alliances around the world. Especially Africa has experienced an influx of investment from China thus the sway of the Chinese government on the continent has increased dramatically. However, China and Russia are

not the only nations contributing to the shifting power balance. India is also gaining international and regional importance at breakneck speed. With the world shifting to a multipolar order and competition among states mounting, it increasingly resembles Hobbes' state of nature.

The threat to the global order that this transition implies is clear. Without an order anchored in and enforced by the US, every superpower can act according to their own discretion, with very real and immediate consequences. China and Russia have often expressed and shown their discontent with western norms. For instance, China blatantly disregards human rights by enslaving minorities and brutally oppressing its domestic opposition. Moreover, erosion of the existing structure is visible in China's growing confidence regarding its claims on the sovereign nation of Taiwan. The most obvious attack on the status quo, however, comes from Russia. In the past decade, Putin has tested the water in Eastern Europe and subsequently decided that the current system was weak enough to launch an illegitimate invasion into Ukraine. Clearly, both superpowers increasingly rely on their own



'right a strongest', instead of international law

Furthermore, the impression of a state of nature deepens upon examining evidence for the sources of "quarrel" as described by Hobbes. Nations may compete for all scarce things and of interest, but a salient example is the competition for natural resources such as energy, water, and fertile soil. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that roughly 40% of international conflicts were related to natural resources in the past 60 years. Moreover, since this competition will get fiercer due to climate change, the UN Security Council has recognised it as a security threat. The second factor is diffidence: resulting from a lack of security and from competition, states always feel that their interests are threatened by other nations. This may lead them to engage in pre-emptive measures that amount to war. For instance, although many other factors are at play, in this case, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is often regarded as the partial result of distrust. Russia fears the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which it regards as a threat to its interests in the region.

Finally, Glory is supposed to be a source of quarrel. If people feel undervalued, they engage in conflict to extort the respect they feel they deserve. On the international stage, this may be analogous to historically founded claims to land, resources, or recognition. Again, some of the most salient instances include the aspirations of Russia for Ukraine's, and of China for Taiwan's territories.

Despite the apparent utility of Hobbes's state of nature to explain international relations, many scholars have argued that it is unfit to be used for this purpose. These often very theoretical arguments deserve consideration and raise important points that speak to the limits of this concept. However, engaging with them would exceed the scope of this investigation. Instead, only a selection shall be refuted in the following argument. Clearly, international relations are not perfectly analogous to the state of

nature since the latter has been designed for society. But it is similar enough to hold as an analytical tool for the analysis of the former.

The most important objection is regarding Hobbes's most central condition of the state of nature: equality amongst the actors and the corresponding fear of death. This condition would be fulfilled if the weakest state could overcome the strongest, meaning that the strongest state could cease to exist at the hands of its weakest opponent. Clearly, this is not the case in international relations. Economic and military power varies too greatly, even considering the proliferation of atomic weapons.

Nevertheless, despite this inconsistency, fear of 'death' is sufficiently present in international relations to constitute a state of war. Big superpowers still fear for their 'survival' as they may be 'killed' by other superpowers or alliances. Whether this is possible or likely is unclear, but the fear remains, as evident by the existence of strategic planning and the warnings of experts. The last time such confrontation was closed to escalation was during the Cold War when the confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union peaked. Even if one does not accept that Superpowers fear for their 'lives', other states still threaten their interests. The origin of fear could therefore also lie in the risk of being deprived of the state's assets. Furthermore, if fear and arbitrariness do not exist on the level of superpowers, they most certainly do on the level of weaker nations and individuals. Although they may belong to the sphere of influence of a superpower or an alliance, they are very likely to be the battleground of the inevitable clashes between the superpowers. For them, the lack of an ultimate authority, that provides security for all, very much constitutes a state of war.

But if the world was descending into a state of anarchy, what can be done about it? According to Hobbes, nothing could solve this situation. Contracts in the state of nature must be considered void,

since no one can reliably enforce them, meaning alliances are doomed in the long run. Moreover, it is unlikely that all states would give up their sovereignty to a higher power in favour of peace. Even a less ideal circumstance such as the return to US hegemony seems out of reach since the current trend towards a multipolar world is unlikely to reverse itself in the coming years. The truth is that the future (un-)order is uncertain but there are many reasons for optimism. The world could settle on a relatively stable system where basic rules are subject to common enforcement. Moreover, interdependence and reciprocity will likely remain sources of international stability. But at the moment, these considerations are likely to step into the background, as the relationships between the world's superpowers continue to grow colder.

## Completely not Real Horoscope:

Capricorn: crime is bad. Avoid it. At all costs. Do not brick windshields.

Aquarius: settle down for a while. It's okay to take it slow for a bit.

Pisces: take a little break from people for a sec, go on a walk or something.

Aries: consider maybe it's actually *not* your way or the high way.

Taurus: take a risk bro trust me dude trust me im telling you bro.

Gemini: stop thinking so much, you're giving me a headache.

Cancer: just keep swimming.

Leo: due to recent romantic failure, maybe cool it a little.

Virgo: beware of ants and other small bugs.

Libra: it's okay to take a break for like a second or two days you know?

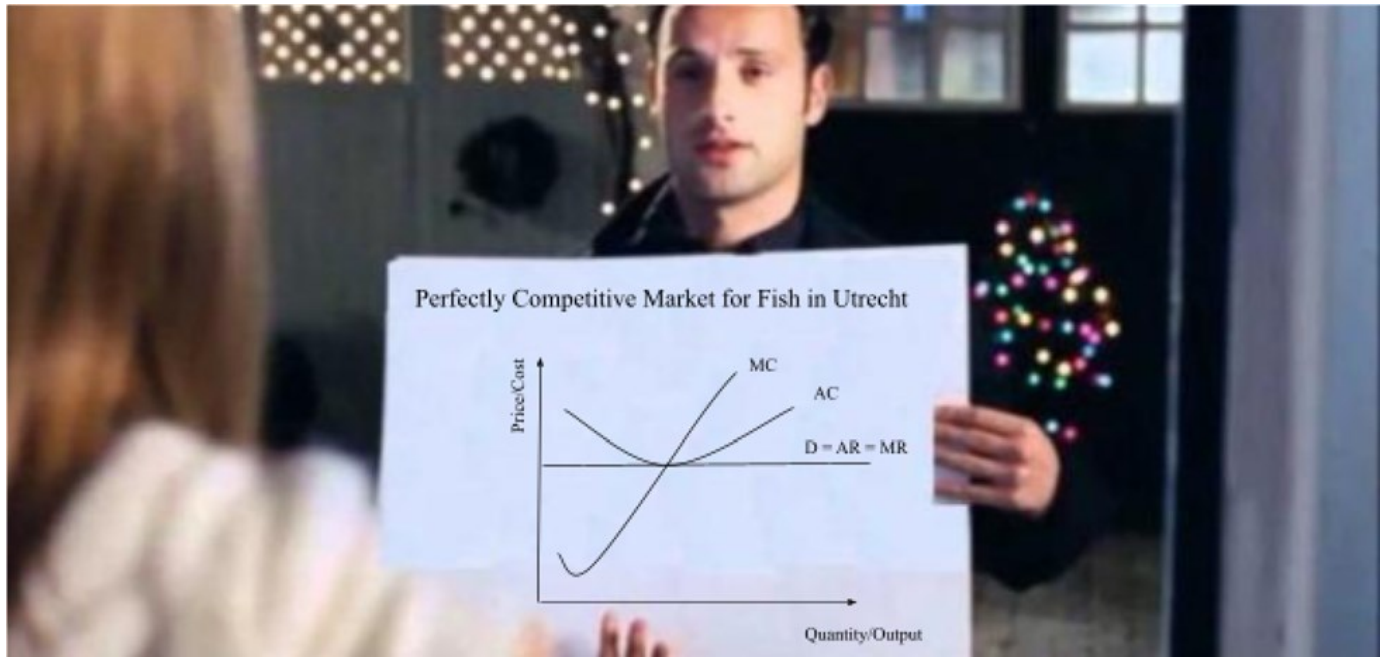
Scorpio: sometimes things are just not that silly, nor goofy, and that's okay.

Sagittarius: take extra care for falling pianos, that's how they get ya!

# Love, Factually:

## An unwarranted economic insight as to why you might still be single

Written by Marisca W



Another Valentine's Day has come and gone, yet for most of us it was just another Tuesday. Yes, the holiday grows increasingly dated each year, but sometimes, there are moments where some of us (often through a substance-induced haze) cannot help but wonder "*why am I still single?*". Fortunately, the online era has invented the ultimate quick fix to our single woes: with just a click, you can open the digital floodgates and endlessly swipe to your heart's content in hopes of finding the one.

Well, in theory. Hate to break it to you, but the odds of someone finding their soulmate on Tinder are akin to the chances of Metis lowering their membership fees- *unlikely*. And while I acknowledge that dating apps hardly exist for the purpose of searching for monogamous love, if you *truly* wish to find someone to get into a romantic relationship with online, what is getting in your way might be explained using economics.

Economics?!?

Okay, I know that to some of you there is no bigger turn-off than economics (especially with the macro midterm being next week <3), but please hear me out.

The specific economic phenomenon which I am referring to is called the paradox of choice. The paradox of choice

occurs when a consumer is presented with too many options, leading to a standstill in their decision making on which variant they will buy. It seems counter-intuitive: you would think that if you had more options, you would have an easier time figuring out which option works best for you. However, the more options you have, the more time you spend evaluating the nuances, which induces anxiety and leaves you dissatisfied no matter your ultimate decisions. The time you spend evaluating makes you painfully aware of your opportunity cost. Additionally, as these options are similar on paper, the difference between your best response and your reservation options is relatively small compared to if you only had a few options to choose from- as then it would be more clear which choice would be your best response.

Using this, we can see that the paradox of choice plays a significant role in online dating. If we think of the people you meet on a dating app as a perfectly competitive market for fish, you, as the fish consumer, have all the price-making power. If one fish firm you are *thinking of exchanging goods with* dares to charge a price above the equilibrium, you are able to instantaneously drop said firm and move on to the next. However, the novelty of a dating app: the intrigue of observing all the fish firms in the sea

might be what is preventing you from getting any catches. In other (less convoluted) words, swiping through an infinite list of prospective partners means that you are too busy mining through the pile of prospectives for your best possible match to consider developing a connection with the person you matched with when you accidentally mixed up your left and your right.

Obviously, I am not advocating for you to settle for *anyone*, but as an ambitious consumer, realize that your time is a scarce commodity. All goods in a perfectly competitive market are virtually identical, which means that it's going to cost more time than your feasible frontier allows for you to get to know all of your *suppliers*. Plus, with each additional firm to consider, you're just going to have diminished marginal returns. Instead, do yourself a favor and lower your pool of prospective firms. Remember that the fundamental, yet all too often overlooked assumption of a perfectly competitive market is that both producers and consumers have full transparency about what the exchange entails. The only way for you to choose the right firm to correct your market failure of asymmetric information is to do your research: talk to them and go on dates! And perhaps if you do, you'll be able to find Love, Factually ;).

# Editor's Note and Credits

*Written by Cristóbal Palacio Sánchez de la Nieta*

**Sarah Hamaker**

Chief Executive Officer

**Max Krauß**

Chief Financial Officer

**Cristobal Palacio**

Chief Officer of Editing and Publishing

**Hans Zindel**

Editor

**Sebastian Vogel**

Chair of Editorial Co.

I remember I was first approached by a certain Max Krauß about creating a newspaper for the PPE community. I, with the confidence of a man who did not truly understand the workload he was placing himself under, said the following sentence:

“I’m making one!”

Now this was a very interesting coincidence, because Max and another person from my year, named Sarah, who had also had a similar idea, had started talking about this that same afternoon, leading to one of the best and most fortunate cases of “right place, right time” I have ever experienced.

That same day we made a group-chat and decided to talk to whomever we’d need to talk to to get the job done. Fast-forward a few days, we were in talks with whoever would listen, from Metis, to the Chair of Editorial Co, as well as a friend of his, who agreed to join the board of the newspaper since they too were interested in this project. The Chair of Editorial Co, Sebastian, would serve as our connection to Metis, and Hans would stay on as an editor, and was in charge of editing for both his own piece “The New World (Dis-)Order: A Hob-

besian State of Nature?”, as well as Victor Medina Pierluisi’s piece “Time management and work-life balance as students”.

Once we had our structure figured out, and we decided we each understood the importance of our role in the newspaper as a whole, we faced one glaring obstacle in our way: *content*.

You see dear reader, content doesn’t just fall from the nearest tree to be harvested like fruits in Animal Crossing, content has to be made, by *writers*. This was most likely the most challenging part of the creation of this first issue, we had to talk to as many people as possible, invite them to write articles or create art for us, and convince them to let us use it, all within the timespan of a single month, while allowing for first drafts, 2<sup>nd</sup> editions, feedback, etc.

However, at the latest hours into the night, I write in the last moments possible, as the best articles we were submitted have been compiled together, to form a first issue that will hopefully act both as a teaser for our future readers to be able to assess the quality of writing that we have gathered, as well as an open invitation to any and all artists to please, feel encouraged to try to write with us! Even if you’ve never written

before, we’re here to help you create the best you can out of your own ideas.

This month alone we have received multiple Valentine’s themed articles, one journalistic investigation on a tragic event that happened within our very Decartes Hall right under our noses, and much more. This being just the first issue, I have to admit, I am just as excited for the future issues as you must be!

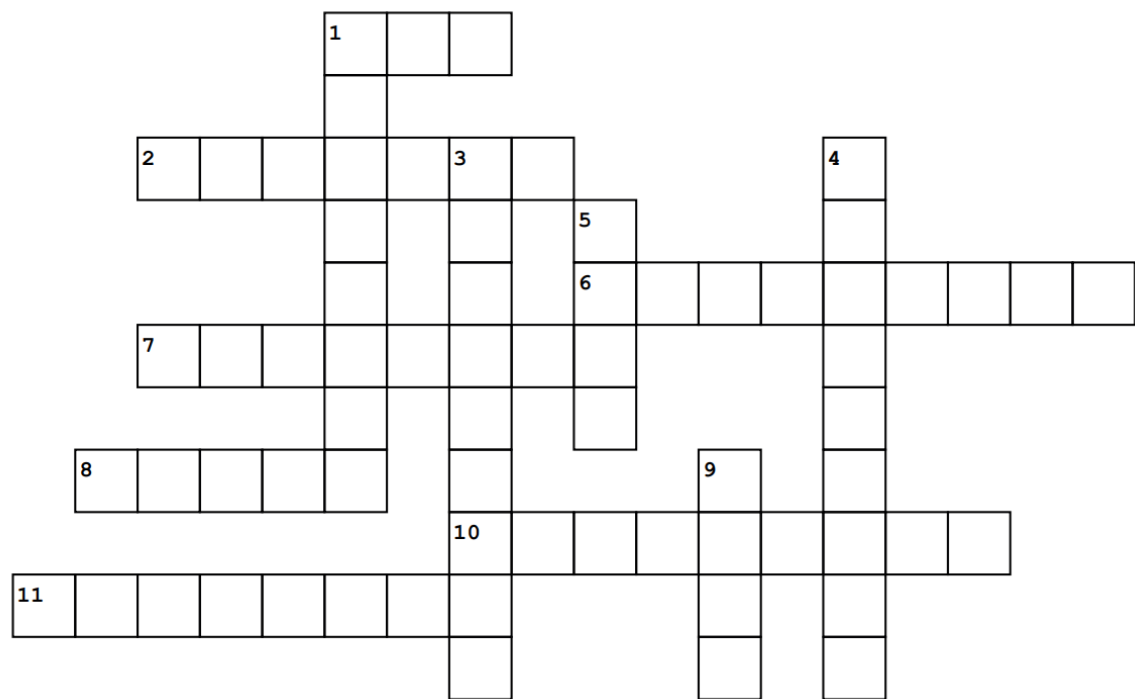
Now dear reader, at this point you may be thinking, well thank you Mr Editor sir, but why am I supposed to care about all this? Well frankly, you might not care at all, but we here at the newspaper seek to be completely transparent with our readers, and for that to be possible, you need to be able to understand how this newspaper works, and who better to tell you and keep you updated, than the person who is editing it! So expect a monthly editorial note containing my thoughts on each month’s issue, as well as any important update from us at the newspaper.

With this, I sign off until next month, Happy reading.

- Cristobal Palacio Sánchez de la Nieta



PPEople’s Review Crossword #1



Across

- 1. First name of the big tower in the center of Utrecht covered with scaffolding.
- 2. Political doctrine often attributed to Benito Mussolini.
- 6. System of governance by one person with absolute power.
- 7. Original nationality of Adolf Hitler
- 8. Student association for PPE
- 10. Measures how much more expensive a set of goods and services has become over a certain period.
- 11. One of the Greek fathers of cynicism, famous for living in a barrel

Down

- 1. Name of our beloved home building for PPE, name of French philosopher.
- 3. The philosophical theory or idea that only one's mind is sure to exist.
- 4. A business cycle contraction that occurs when there is a general decline in economic activity.
- 5. Came up with the concept of the categorical imperative.
- 9. Surname of a famous writer of the "Communist Manifesto".

Solve these puzzles!

Hint: there's 12 words in the Word-Search

9		1	3	4				7
		7	1		8		2	3
4				2	6		1	5
3				1	2	6		
	9					3		1
1	6	8	9		3	5	4	
	1				9	7		4
		5		8	7		9	
7						2	3	8

Y	I	E	H	R	X	U	P	M	E	B	A	P	M	D
D	C	O	F	M	G	K	T	S	Y	Z	Y	H	X	V
T	N	A	E	C	O	N	O	M	I	C	S	I	I	R
K	R	T	R	Q	D	G	U	C	D	W	L	L	D	U
E	I	O	G	C	H	P	C	T	H	K	P	O	F	Q
S	M	Q	Y	F	O	H	O	E	R	C	S	S	K	Y
M	D	D	Q	V	U	M	L	L	E	E	F	O	B	Y
T	E	K	R	A	M	A	E	F	I	E	C	P	Y	F
E	O	H	T	Q	T	A	S	D	J	T	B	H	K	E
N	F	P	U	I	O	B	L	H	H	E	I	Y	T	U
G	Y	I	P	E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	C	T	T
E	P	A	P	V	V	T	O	Z	J	L	Z	A	S	R
L	C	J	E	G	L	W	J	D	Y	W	A	F	F	I
S	W	X	N	E	X	K	V	Q	U	F	Y	V	T	V
G	D	F	E	S	I	T	N	W	O	F	D	M	D	V