



# A guide to understanding issue # 3

Issue #3, titled “constructed,” covers themes of social construction and conditioning, along with articles connecting our generation’s interests and trends.

In this issue, we explore the forces that shape who we are. From high-intensity essays that challenge norms to softer, reflective pieces, we examine how identities, cultures, and personalities are built, influenced, and sometimes deconstructed. With insights, guides, and stories from diverse perspectives, this issue reveals how our sense of self is continuously molded by the world around us, inviting readers to see identity not as fixed, but as dynamic and ever-evolving.

We poured our hearts into making this issue, and we hope you not only love it but use it as a lens to see our realities in a clearer, more honest way.

- Haaniyah Memon, Editor in Chief & the UOS Digest team



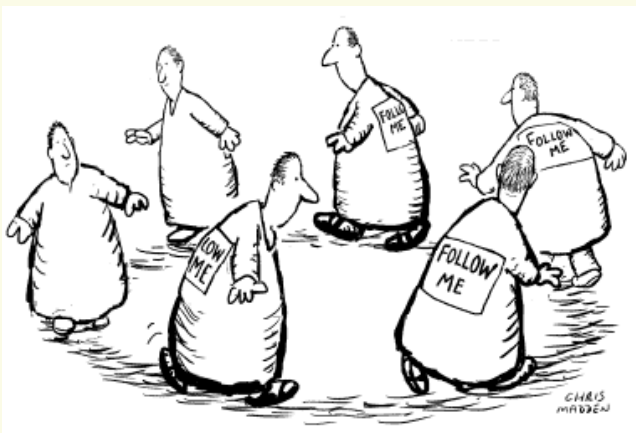
# The Opaque Architecture of Identity

Most of us labor under the delusion that our taste is personal. From the music we play on our daily commutes to the food we crave after an exhausting day, it is all viewed as being part of our identity, any questions about which are dismissed with a simple 'it's just the vibe I'm going for'. Scroll long enough and you'll notice the illusion starting to fade, thousands of people claiming to be 'authentic' while donning the same outfits, frequenting the same brunch spots and even sharing ironically 'unique' music tastes.



Now aware of this pattern, we have to ask : who designs this blueprint we're all following?

To blame this on algorithms and trend culture would be an oversimplification, absolving us of our own part in curating our identities. The true architect is a consumerist culture that lauds us for 'finding ourselves' while handing us the template, peddling us all a pre-packaged identity. Consumer culture conditions society to express itself through its material purchases, which in turn favors itself, think of a consumerist Ouroboros, the infamous depiction of a snake biting its tail perfectly encapsulates this kind of society. This almost Orwellian framework of control does not tell us who to be, it convinces us we chose it ourselves



free of influence. These preferences and tastes are shaped by a select few institutions aligned with the upper class who ensure that this requires a level of capital that most can't afford, reinforcing the divide between social classes.

In the 2019 thriller 'Parasite', Director Bong Joon-Ho explores this class chauvinism where the weaponization of 'refined' taste is used as a means of exclusion by the wealthy, a barrier to set apart the Kim family

By Mustafa Abdullah  
that try and scam  
their way into this  
pre-packaged identity  
designed to exclude  
them.

The prevalence of this downward classism is apparent in even the language we use unbeknownst to us. Labeling certain preferences as being 'distinguished' or of 'refined taste' distinguishes those of a higher social class from those they perceive as beneath them in the social hierarchy since they are the only ones with access to it.



*Parasite (2019) dir. Bong Joon-Ho*

Those who occupy a higher social stratum don't just own a house, they claim to own a 'minimalist masterpiece', a place of intentionality and extravagance that isn't just a choice but a border between them and those they claim superiority over. Similarly, their affinity for opera is rarely about the music but rather its sheer exclusivity.



*Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel (1971-1983)*

sophistication and refinement are often just performances of extravagance, signaling status that mark clear boundaries between social classes.

To revolt against this culture festering within our society is to recognize and make a conscious shift from a mindset of blind consumerist mimicry to one of contentment and authentic self expression, even more so in a society where identities are now performed.

The most radical act in breaking this pattern is not to reject desire, but rather to reject its dominance over individualism.

World renowned French fashion designer Coco Chanel defined luxury as "a necessity that begins where necessity ends." This portrays how



# Authenticity, But Make It Viral

By Sarah Alsaedi

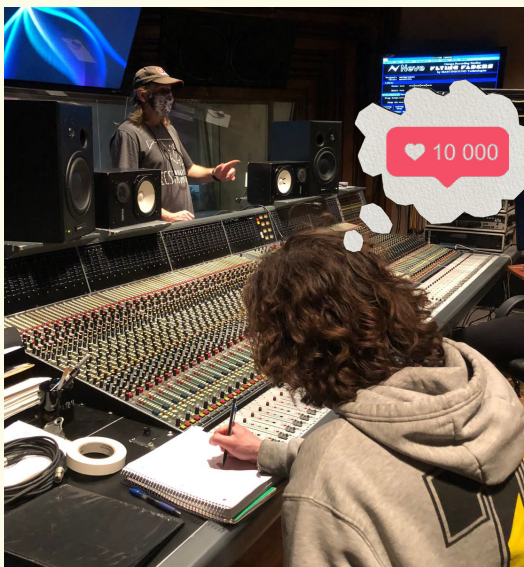


Every few years, the music industry crowns a defining moment. Whether it was a sound, an aesthetic, or a feeling that seems to capture an entire generation's mood. In 2024, Charli XCX's album "Brat" was released, sparking a moment that was widely branded as "Brat Summer." Defined by its neon green graphics, hyper-pop beats, unapologetic brashness, and a carefully curated sense of nonchalance, Brat became more than just an album cycle. It was a lifestyle, an era, and a state of mind that flooded social media. But beneath the fun, rebellious surface lies a deeper question about today's music industry: are artists choosing these moments, or are they being pushed into them?



Music's current landscape is increasingly shaped not by sound alone, but by algorithms. As TikTok continues to replace traditional radio and television, a song's success is no longer determined by its emotional lyricism or compositional complexity, but by whether a 15-second clip can loop seamlessly, spark a viral dance, or become the soundtrack to a new era. In this environment, artists are no longer just musicians, they are content creators, influencers, and brand ambassadors for their own work.

Record labels now expect artists to maintain active TikTok accounts and participate in trends, regardless of whether this aligns with their artistic identity. Virality has become a requirement, not a bonus. Songs are often tested on TikTok before release, with labels pushing their artists to tease unreleased music in attempt to test audience's reactions based on likes, saves, and shares. If a snippet fails to perform, entire tracks, or even full albums, can be scrapped. Creativity is filtered through data, and art is pre-approved by algorithms.



This shift has directly impacted the way music is made. Songs are becoming noticeably shorter, clocking in at under two minutes or slightly longer. Musician and producer PinkPantheress is often cited as a defining example of this change: she found her niche in brief, condensed music that is perfectly structured for looping, virality, and trendy dances. While her sound and unique production is widely praised, it also reflects how artists are adapting their creative output to fit platform demands. Music, once an immersive experience, is increasingly being reduced to a soundbite.



The success of “Brat Summer” also created a blueprint that the music industry is eager to replicate. Suddenly, every artist needs a “moment.” Musicians are encouraged to rebrand, and adopt unique aesthetics to manufacture eras that feel culturally relevant online. Even artists with established careers and loyal fanbases are not immune. Taylor Swift releasing her recent album “The



Life of a Showgirl” and introducing “showgirl orange” into the promotion and merchandise reflects how even global superstars are nudged toward visuals and marketing tactics to stay part of the conversation.

However, this need for a “moment” becomes more troubling when the pressure is applied to successful artists whose work has long thrived outside the mainstream pop environment. Artists like FKA twigs and Florence Welch of Florence + the Machine have expressed their frustration with their labels pushing them to create TikTok profiles, and their expectation to participate in online trends and promotion. Their music has always existed in its own niche world that does not translate easily into casual or popular social media content. Yet they, too, face pressure to adapt.

This conversation also asks a deeper question: how much of our identity is shaped by the music we consume? Music does not simply reflect emotions, it also constructs them. The songs we expose ourselves to, and loop over and over again can influence our moods and even our self-perception.

So, when music is lumped into one genre and sound curated by algorithms, it becomes subtly standardised. This shaping and forcing of the same music and emotions ties directly into culture.



Music has always been one of the strongest carriers of cultural memories and identity, yet in an environment dominated by Western, English-speaking pop, optimised for global virality, ethnic and non-Western sounds are increasingly pushed to the sidelines. As mainstream aesthetics



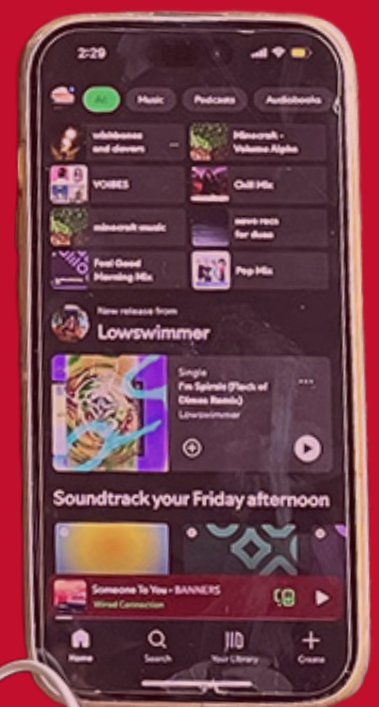
dominate social media trends, culturally specific music struggles to compete unless it is diluted or reframed to fit Western tastes.



The danger of this era lies not in trends themselves, for they have always existed, but in how they now control and dictate creative direction. When music is shaped primarily to satisfy specific

algorithms and cultures, artistic risk-taking becomes a liability. Experimental music, and unique work struggles to survive in a system that rewards instant gratification and “lightning in a bottle” moments.

As “Brat Summer” fades and the industry moves on to its next obsession, the question remains: what is lost in the process? If artists are continually forced to compress themselves into viral formats, we risk losing the soul of music, that has offered escape, relatability, and depth to its listeners. Perhaps true rebellion in music does not lie in a trendy “moment,” a signature colour, or a viral dance. Maybe true rebellion is the refusal to perform for the algorithm at all.





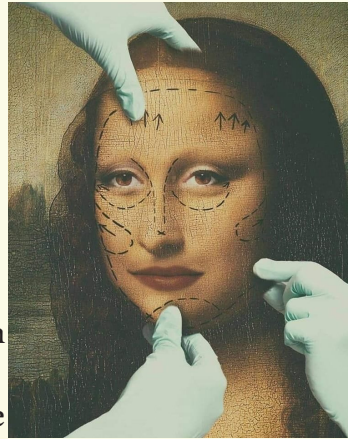


Beauty has never been neutral. Throughout history, what is deemed beautiful has been dictated by the upper class and the elites, curated by the wealthy, for the wealthy, leaving the rest unable to meet these standards and turning appearance into a marker of class. The beauty industry today only deepens this divide, highlighting discrepancy between those who can afford beauty and those who cannot.

Modern beauty standards are built on a foundation of cosmetic procedures, high-end skincare, and constant maintenance. The perception of beauty and what is “presentable” has been distorted. It has less to do with genetic traits and more to do with one’s ability to participate in the beauty economy.

There are certain features consistently associated with attractiveness: clear, poreless skin, symmetrical faces, youthful appearances, and defined facial structures, yet they are rarely inherited and often must be “purchased.”

Uniformity has become the dominant beauty standard. Those who look slightly different and fail to attain these narrowly defined, conventionally attractive features constantly being pushed, are excluded from the category of beauty and narrative altogether. Instead, they’re labeled “unconventionally attractive,” a term that attempts to soften the blunt while reinforcing the same ideology.



# Buying Beauty

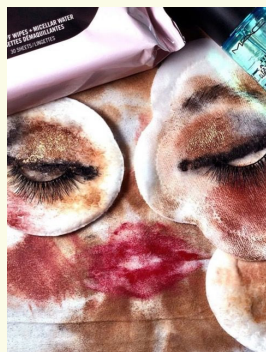
By Mira Fadi

Contradictorily, beauty standards are never fixed. As soon as the cosmetic procedures and enhancements performed to meet them become easily attainable and affordable to everyone, the standards shift and become inaccessible again. When everyone begins to look the same, regardless of wealth, beauty loses its function as a class marker and evolves to ensure the upper class remains distinguishable and superior.

be  
classy.

For a period of time, obviously altered, artificial-looking appearances perfectly aligned with beauty standards and indicated economic freedom. However, the wide adoption of this look has made it unappealing, “high effort,” and associated with lower class beauty. In contrast, the so-called “natural,” minimal, effortless look is considered luxurious, ironically, acquiring it requires expensive, subtle maintenance. What appears effortless is anything but and being naturally natural is never enough.

Gradually, scalpel by scalpel, injection by injection, beauty has become a gatekept asset controlled by the privileged. We are constantly being told what’s beautiful and it always revolves around money. Whether it’s through obvious enhancement or extremely maintained naturalness, wealth has become the ultimate determinate of who is deemed beautiful.





# CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

5- The shared beliefs, behaviors, or social environment connected with a particular aspect of society.

6- To put together in order to make or build

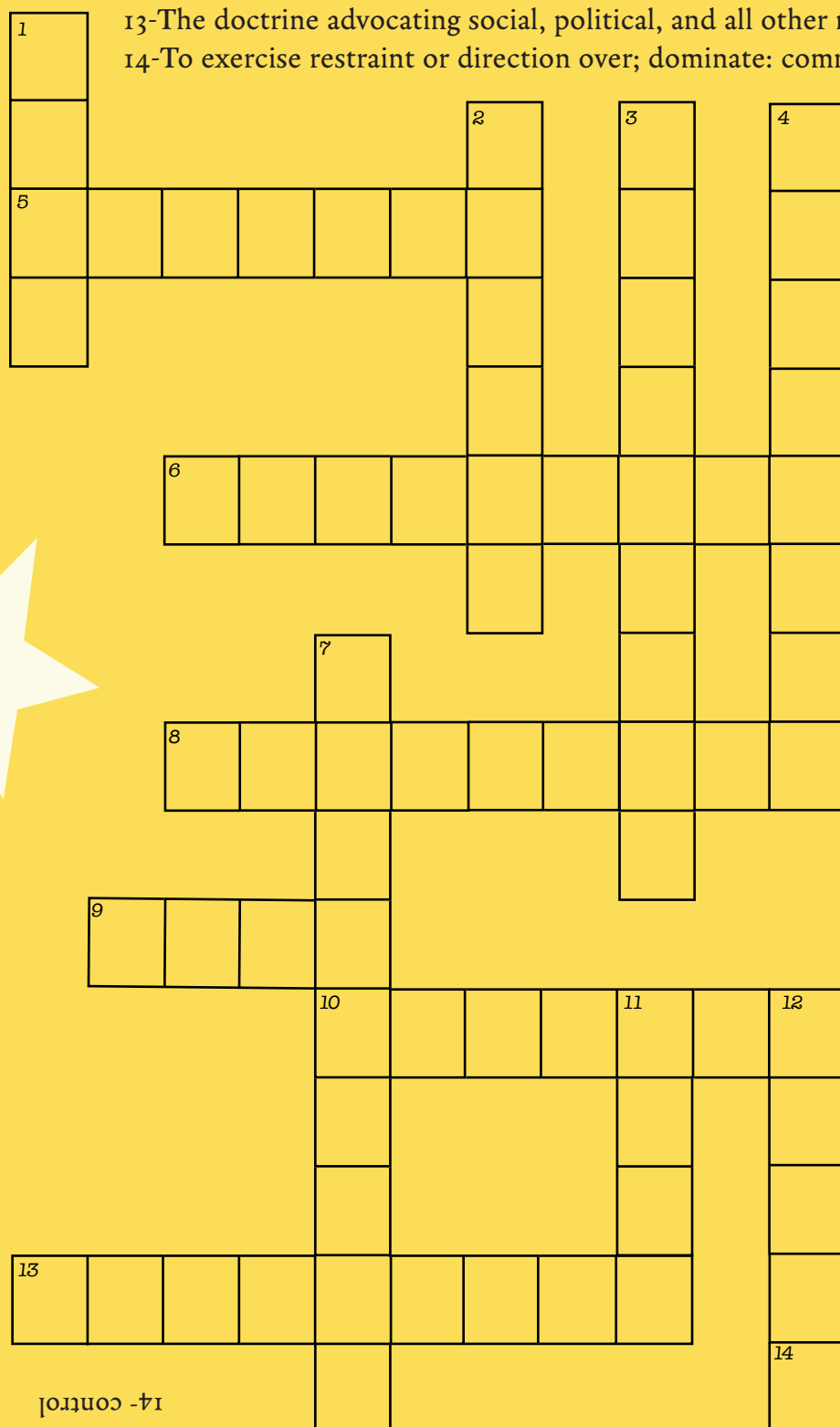
8- A social system in which power is held by men, through cultural norms and customs that favor men and withhold opportunity from women.

9- Having knowledge; conscious; cognizant.

10- Independence or freedom, as of the will or one's actions.

13- The doctrine advocating social, political, and all other rights of women equal to those of men.

14- To exercise restraint or direction over; dominate: command.



- 1- rock
- 2- beauty
- 3- influence
- 4- identity
- 5- culture
- 6- construct
- 7- streaming
- 8- patriarchy
- 9- aware
- 10- autonomy
- 11- norm
- 12- music
- 13- feminism
- 14- control

## DOWN

1- Genre of music also a large stone

2- The quality present in a thing or person that gives intense pleasure or deep satisfaction to the mind, whether arising from sensory manifestations, a meaningful design or pattern, or something else (as a personality in which high spiritual qualities are manifest).

3- The capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of others.

4- Condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing.

7- Relating to information that is transmitted in real time over the Internet, instead of being sent first as a file and then opened after it has been downloaded.

11- Conforming to the standard

12- An art of sound





# Scrolling Past Reality

By Haaniyah Memon

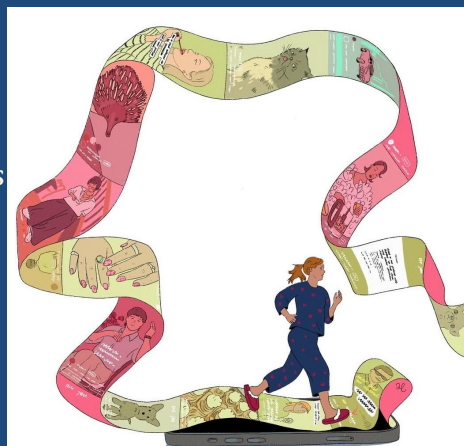
We often perceive the world from an outsider's perspective, but what exactly are we "outside" to?

In today's world, where information flows at its fastest and content is being distributed in its simplest forms, we often forget that the news we take in is real and not part of a fictional story. With the option to tap away from a reality we don't want to confront or scroll past issues we don't "partake in," we fail to acknowledge the truth put in front of us. These decisions our subconscious makes have an impact on our identities.



When turning a blind eye has become as easy as it has, it often happens that we forget we are in control, allowing ourselves to become vulnerable to external pressures. These pressures are often consequences of ignorance and exclusion.

"Exclusion" of oneself from worldly problems (whether social, political, or personal) isn't exclusion at all, but rather is an avoidance of facing a reality where conditioning and classism affect our every move. To be aware of external forces that affect our behaviors and values may be to reject the norms set by others. The way these norms are forced upon us may vary in form. The most widely medium of force right now may be algorithms. But what some fail to acknowledge are the people behind the codes and the content strategies enforced. In short, our enemy is not algorithms. Our enemy is the class position of people whose ideology impels them to deploy algorithms this way.



When the elite decide what's normal, it, in turn, affects information flow, products, services, and our lifestyles as a whole, leading us to fall into routines set for us and taking away from our autonomy, allowing society to be exploited and constructed.

As per the social constructivist views, things we see as natural are actually human-made and change over time, or one could say they are constructed and deconstructed to benefit those partaking in the act.

As Marx said, "It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." The higher you go on the ladder, the more these constructed views benefit you, so simply choosing to neglect the actions of those in power speaks volumes about one's social standing. To lay things out, ignorance is unwilling; it's



defined as "a lack of knowledge or information." Whereas negligence is a failure to act on what's known, "having internal access to the relevant facts but failing to bring them into their conscious mind." Therefore, many can argue that, rather than ignorance, negligence is a symptom of privilege.

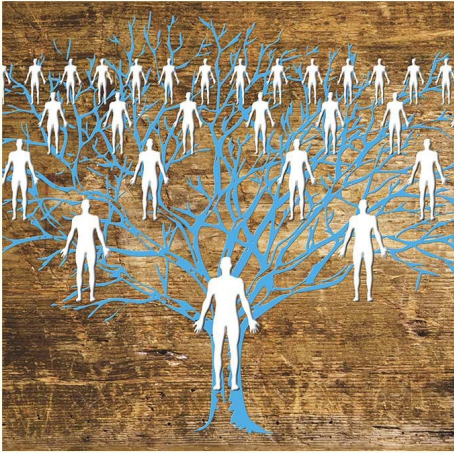
So why dive into this? Many seem to believe that society and technology have evolved in favour of our autonomy, while this is true does not deny the fact that we are constantly under the influence of the upper classes, the medium has just changed now. Being media literate and learning to navigate our way around algorithmic constraints is how we allow our identity and culture to be safeguarded. Being aware of the depth and acknowledging that behind every trend, technology, and decision is a larger systemic reason at hand. So next time you tap or scroll away, think to yourself of the implications.





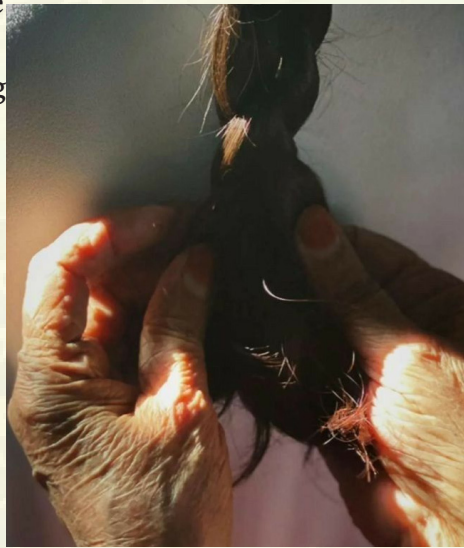
# Our Liberation Is Not a Western Export

By Leen Moufleh



Ubuntu is an ancient Southern African philosophy that means “I am because you are,” expressing the belief that human existence is inherently interconnected. Therefore, I am where I am because of the grace of God – and because of the countless women who came before me.

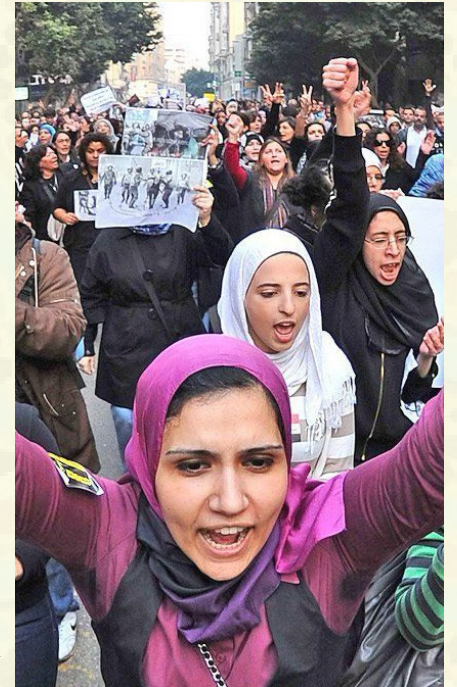
Both of my grandmothers were married before the age of fifteen. Their lives were devoted to childbearing and raising families, a noble pursuit by any measure. Still, I cannot help but wonder who they might have become had they been given the freedom to choose differently. My grandmother has delicate hands that transform any room or table into something quietly magnificent. She has a way with words that feels instinctively poetic, deep, sentimental, and precise. Watching her, it is impossible not to imagine the talents left unexplored, the lives narrowed not by lack of ability, but by lack of choice. That is why, when I look at my own freedoms and opportunities, I feel both gratitude and grief. Gratitude for the life I am able to lead, and grief at the possibility that I may be the only woman in a long bloodline of intelligent, capable, outspoken women who has been granted the right to choose.



Yet when I speak about the struggles women continue to face today, I am often met with sarcasm or dismissal. Sometimes this comes from older women themselves, who believe that calling for women's rights is a slippery slope toward Westernisation, moral decay, or agnostic principles. As though dignity, autonomy, and choice are foreign concepts rather than human ones. Women in the SWANA region are frequently portrayed as passive victims or symbols of backwardness. Western narratives flatten our complexity, implying that feminism is only valid when it mirrors their own. “What do you want?” they ask. “To remove your hijab? To wear revealing clothes out in the street?”

But our feminism has always looked different, because our lives are different.

Western feminism, for all its achievements, has too often positioned itself as universal, as if it speaks for all women, everywhere. A feminism that cannot recognize difference is not liberation; it is domination. When global feminist narratives center only white, Western, middle-class experiences, they do not simply exclude us, they define us by our absence. We become “other feminisms,” “non-Western feminisms,” footnotes to someone else's story. The truth is that gender inequality is not a regional failure; it is a global one. No country in the world has achieved full gender equality. According to the World Economic Forum, it will take more than 130 years to close the global gender gap at the current pace.



Yes, women in our region face some of the harshest social indicators. But the fight for women's rights is inseparable from the fight for democracy, dignity, and progress everywhere. No society can thrive



while leaving half its population behind. The evidence is overwhelming: politics is stronger with women, economies are stronger with women, peace is

stronger with women. It is not a radical idea – it is a proven one, and it is a lesson the world has yet to fully learn.



# Campus Couture

By Intesar & Yassmin Mohammed Khalil

Another year, another round of trends, and we're back with fresh curiosity. This issue we break down what's in fashion, how it caught on, and who's behind it, so read on, because trends never wait around for anyone.

## Trend Construction

Fashion often feels personal, even instinctive. It has a way of passing decisions off as harmlessly aesthetic, but many of the details we treat as normal are anything but accidental. They are choices that have been repeated long enough to feel natural, and powerful enough to shape how we move through the world.

Women's clothing is infamous for its impractically small or entirely fake pockets. At first glance, it feels like a failure in design, but by shrinking pockets, fashion designers have created a dependency on handbags. What we once treated as a style choice has now become a requirement. Essentials had to go somewhere, and so, an entire accessory industry was born. The purse is no longer an add-on, it is a solution to a problem that never needed to exist. Ingenious? Yes. Accidental? Hardly.

Fashion's influence on what we wear doesn't stop there, it also dictates the colors we are allowed to wear. Pink for girls and blue for boys. We live by these rules as if they are laws of nature, when in fact they are just clever marketing decisions. Originally pink was seen as a bold and masculine color as it was considered the closest colour to red, while blue was delicate and refined.

Somewhere along the way, these meanings were flipped, mass-produced, and sold back to us as "normal."

And if something as simple as color can be repackaged, it's only natural that something as complex and powerful as love has a marketing scheme. When it comes to engagement rings, the diamond is the ultimate representation of love and status.

However, the idea of the diamond being so important isn't necessarily natural, it's been marketed. De Beers, the diamond company, began their marketing schemes in the 20th century with the slogan "A Diamond is Forever," creating the illusion that the diamond is a must-have, and that it's eternal. The stone itself isn't rare compared to other gemstones, its perceived value and exclusivity were constructed to shape desire and social norms.

From pockets to palettes to proposals, fashion does not just reflect the world we live in, it also helps construct it. Whether it's the clothes we wear or the values we attach to them, many of fashion's "rules" quietly dictate far more than we notice.

## Campus Fit Check

As the new semester builds itself around lectures and deadlines, some students are carefully constructing their own style, one outfit at a time.

Reem Siralkhatim - *Mass Communication Major*

Bold, minimal and confident" are three words Reem uses to describe her personal style. She believes that her confidence comes naturally when she dresses more for who she is rather than for how she wants to be perceived on campus. "I believe personal style should be authentic", she says.

When it comes to style choices she gravitates towards "pieces that feel natural and comfortable" and adds that she doesn't draw inspiration from one source. A fashion rule she believes in is avoiding mixing too many bold colors in a single outfit, she explains "I like to stick to one or two shades, mostly neutrals, because they feel more balanced and timeless to me."

**Reem's fashion advice:** *"There's no such thing as right or wrong in fashion. The best rule is to wear what feels true to you. Fashion is about expressing yourself and feeling confident in your own skin."*

She also prioritizes the quality and fit of the clothing far more than selecting a piece for its brand name. "I'm drawn to pieces that are well-made and compliment the body's shape", she adds.

Authenticity seems to be key for Reem as she believes that her style "wouldn't really change" if no one was watching, explaining that she dresses for herself first. While she might add "small details for fun" or experiment occasionally, her overall look stays true to herself.





## Gulnara Igamberdyeva - *Accounting Major*

Gulnara uses the words “unique, comfortable, and confident” to describe her personal style. She states that she dresses primarily for who she is, explaining that her outfits allow her to express her personality and individuality while remaining appropriate for campus life.

A mixture of “comfort and personal expression” is what influences her style and by “adding small details” she enjoys making her outfits unique. For Gulnara there are no fashion rules she strictly follows, rather she explains, “I focus on pieces that feel like me and stand out in a subtle way, often using interesting textures or details.”

When getting dressed she picks outfits that make her feel good and represents who she is. While comfort and confidence play a role in her outfit choices, expression remains her primary focus.



## Gulnara's fashion advice:

*“Don't be afraid to be different, your style should represent you, not everyone else.”*

practicality. As the brands relevance continues to build, it will likely emerge as a defining “it” bag of the semester.

Sheer fabrics are likely to rise in popularity, largely driven by the “whimsical” mood currently shaping fashion. This shift was already visible in Chanel's Haute Couture Spring 2026 collection, where romantic, fairy-tale-inspired looks

leaned heavily on delicate, translucent layers. It signals a return to femininity that feels intentional rather than decorative.

Alongside this, the deer motif and plaid pattern are expected to surface more visibly. Tied closely to the same fantasy aesthetic, these prints fit seamlessly into the fairy-tale narrative gaining momentum. What begins subtly is unlikely to stay that way for long, it wouldn't be surprising to see them appearing on everyday pieces like jeans and even hijabs.

Another anticipated trend in the coming season is the increase in cultural fusion, especially from East Asia. The incorporation of Chinese design elements, such as the traditional frog button that was featured in the Adidas CTT Chinese Track Top, will be seen in the

future, including in modest fashion, where the same design elements and silhouettes will be featured in Abayas.

Finally, accessories are scaling up. Oversized sunglasses will be a staple this coming semester, especially with the rising popularity of the Miu Miu MU A51S, a clear indication of the shift towards statement pieces.

## Trend Predictions

With the start of the new year, one might wonder which trends will rise, and which will fall faster than 8 a.m. attendance this semester. Well, we've taken it upon ourselves to take a closer look at the trends, and whispers have it that Chanel is set to become the campus favorite of the semester.

A mix of cultural visibility and internal change points toward a rise in youth interest. Tyla's latest single “Chanel” has embedded the brand into everyday pop culture, while the introduction of Ayo Edebiri as Chanel's first Black global ambassador and Bhavitha Mandava as the first Indian model to open a Chanel show, further positions the brand as culturally relevant to a new generation.

This increased relevance will likely play out most obviously through accessories. The Chanel 25 bag has already been spotted on campus, and its slouchy, spacious style aligns with the current preference for ease and



Credit - Pinterest

From careful construction to bold forecasts, we sign off this issue by raising a question to you: How important do you think fashion is in constructing our realities?





Maania Farhan, Azaad Kashmir, Pakistan, August 18th 2025



Aaisha Kafeel @foodies\_musee, Al Warqa, Dubai, February 3rd 2025



Shaffa Zeenath, Ninavur, Sri Lanka, July 25th 2023



Khulud Ahmed Ali, Al Majaz Waterfront, January 1st 2026



Leen Moufleh, St. Petersburg, August 17th 2025



Gulalek Shamuhammedova, @photos\_by\_gul  
Kalba Hanging Gardens, January 1st 2026





Noor Maged ElSheshtawy, Borjomi, Georgia, December 21st 2025



Ghazal AlQawasmi @ghazal\_kawasmi, Fatih, Turkey, December 22nd 2025



Dana Amirah, The Duke's Diwan, Amman, Jordan, August 17th 2024



Nuha Fatima Shahul @ladyrosemary122, Phukey, Thailand October 12th 2023

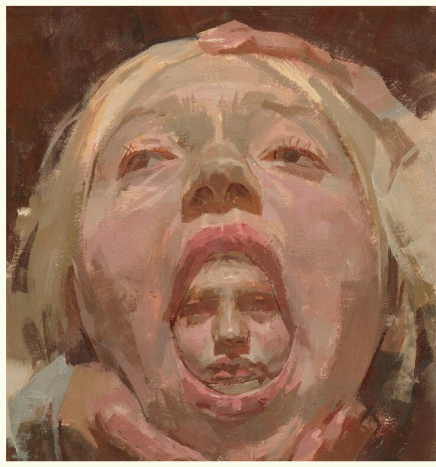


# The Body as A Status Symbol

By Leen Moufleh

## Birkins Are Out, Your Body is In.

Even those of us who reject the idea of status are not entirely immune to it. I'll admit, (somewhat shamefully), that I too indulge in attention-seeking or status-signalling habits from time to time. But in my defence, I am far from alone. Across different eras of history, status symbols have always been visible and tangible such as luxury cars or gold bangles that indicated an individual's high social, economic, or professional standing. Today, we're noticing a trend of non-physical attributes that are exhibiting unique behaviour. We have turned our bodies into the ultimate status symbol.



Consider productivity culture and wellness obsession among elites. Apple CEO Tim Cook wakes up at 3:45 a.m. daily to gain a 'competitive edge', starting with an hour of reading hundreds of customer/employee emails to stay connected.

Similarly, Elon Musk maintains an intensely demanding, 7-day-a-week work schedule, often

working 80 to 120 hours, utilizing 5-minute time-blocking for maximum efficiency, and famously sleeping on factory floors during production crunches. One might reasonably ask: why would these men with net worths of billions feel the need to wake up before dawn to work harder? Has hustle culture turned us into some labor craving, workaholic, money-hungry maniacs? Short answer, yes. Sociology helps explain this through Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption, the practice of acquiring goods or other outward symbols of wealth in order to show others how much wealth one possesses. Which in



modern contexts extends beyond material goods to conspicuous self-discipline. Extreme fitness, strict routines, and relentless productivity signal control, superiority, and moral worth. The body becomes your proof of success.

This logic also applies to beauty standards. What is considered desirable is constantly changing and, crucially, is often dictated by the elite.

Refer to 'Buying Beauty' on Page #6 Whatever becomes

accessible to the masses quickly loses its appeal at the



top. Women's bodies offer a clear example.

In the mid-2010s, curvier figures dominated trends, accompanied by BBLs, lip fillers, and breast augmentations. Today, we are witnessing a return to early 2000s thinness, with terms like "Ozempic face" entering mainstream conversation. The shift is not accidental. As certain cosmetic procedures became cheaper and more accessible, they lost their exclusivity, prompting wealthier groups to redefine desirability.

So what do we take away from this? Perhaps the most unsettling truth is that our bodies are no longer just personal or biological. They are social statements. In a society obsessed with distinction, even flesh and bone are shaped by hierarchy of class. Recognising this may not free us from the system, but it does give us the awareness to question it.





# Why the World Feels the Same Everywhere (and It's Not an Accident)

By Fatima Bint Saif

Have you ever stepped off a plane in a city three time zones away, walked into a glass-fronted café, and felt... absolutely nothing? No culture shock, no confusion, just the immediate, instinctive knowledge of exactly where to stand in line and roughly how fast everything should happen. Welcome to the collective; you have officially been recognised as a Globally Compatible Human. You have been successfully optimised for the modern economy, and you didn't even have to fill out a formal application to get there.

The reality is that businesses didn't globalise culture on purpose; they globalised systems. From a boardroom perspective, «diversity» is a lovely word for a marketing brochure, but it is a logistical nightmare for a global supply chain. True cultural unpredictability is expensive.



It's nice to know that no matter where you go, you can find an ergonomic desk, a clean bathroom, and a predictable user interface. But there's also a lingering "uncanny valley" feeling to modern life. You go halfway across the world to "find yourself," only to find the same version of yourself sitting in a minimalist chair, checking the same notifications, and drinking the same internationally-approved bean water. The world is still diverse on the surface, but underneath the "vibe", the infrastructure is identical. We are all running Human 2.0 (Global Edition); now with %10 more predictability and %0 chance of surprising a spreadsheet.

If a company has to account for the fact that you might decide to nap for four hours at noon, or that you prefer bartering with livestock over tapping a credit card, their profit margins start to sweat. To make global business work, the world didn't necessarily need to change its soul; it just needed to change its operating requirements. Efficiency thrives on the familiar, and nothing scares a spreadsheet more than a population that refuses to follow a predictable trend line.

Think about how we "student" in this environment. Whether we are completing a degree in Sharjah, London, or New York, we've all adopted the same global uniform of academic and economic survival. We use the same polite email templates, wear the same variations of

"interview ready" navy blue, and share an identical, frantic relationship with our digital calendars. This isn't a coincidence; it's the result of globalisation demanding



modular people. Being "easy to deal with" has become the ultimate 21st-century survival skill.

We've learned to be plug-and-play components that can be dropped into any office or terminal on the planet like a universal USB-C cable.

We aren't just getting an education; we're undergoing a software update to ensure we never accidentally confuse a global hiring manager.

In this landscape, business logic has spilled over into our very personalities, turning local culture into a "feature" rather than a foundation. We love "authentic" street food or "traditional" architecture, but usually only if they come with high-speed internet and a clear cancellation policy. We have internalised business values so deeply that we don't just live in economies; we live like them. Time is no longer a flow; it's an asset to be "spent" or "saved." Convenience is no longer a luxury; it's a non-negotiable human right. Efficiency has even become a moral virtue. If you aren't being productive, you aren't just resting; you're a "glitch" in the system that needs patching.

Nevertheless, there is a strange, lukewarm comfort in this global standardisation.



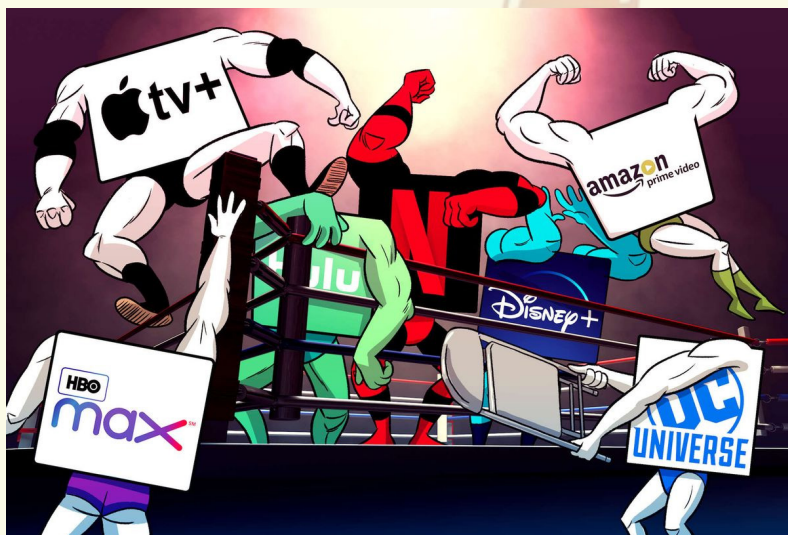
# The Lost Art of Cinema Going

By Batool Maher

As a self-proclaimed movie enthusiast and avid cinema goer, the rise of streaming services is becoming a growing threat to my favorite activities. I get it, it's more convenient to watch a newly released movie from the comfort of your house rather than drive to the theatres. However, I would argue that the experience of going to the cinema has become a lost art. With Netflix bedding Warner Bros for a whopping \$82.7 billion, and the Netflix CEO famously saying that the 2023 phenomenon "Barbenheimer" (where both "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" were released in theatres the same day) would have been just as big on Netflix.

Movies were never meant to be consumed on small screens. Directors design films to be experienced cinematically, not compressed into the dimensions of a phone or laptop. Film-makers such as Christopher Nolan deliberately use high-end equipment, including IMAX cameras, to immerse audiences in vast, detailed visual worlds that simply cannot be replicated at home. When films are reduced to home viewing, much of this intentional craftsmanship is lost, diminishing the experience directors originally envisioned.

Going to the cinema also offers viewers a profound sense of connection. Humans are inherently social beings, and even in silence, a cinema audience shares an experience. Sitting among strangers, you participate in a collective emotional journey with people you may never encounter again. It is walking out of the theatre with tears on your cheeks after a heartbreaking scene, only to notice the quiet sniffle of the person beside you at the very same moment. That fleeting, unspoken understanding binds you together. Why would we willingly sever a connection that exists precisely because it is shared?



I remember watching Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021) in cinemas. Let me set the scene: rumours were circulating that Andrew Garfield and Tobey Maguire might appear; the lights dimmed; my brothers sat beside me; emotions were already high. My cheeks were still



stained with tears from Aunt May's death, when suddenly, they appeared on screen. The eruption of applause from eager fans is something I will never forget. The cinema came alive. I felt full-body goosebumps and smiled wider than I knew I could. It is an experience I have never replicated while watching a film on my laptop or phone.

Another advantage of going to the cinema is the absence of distractions. In today's world, our phones are designed to demand constant attention, with notifications pulling our focus away at every moment. In a cinema, however, those distractions disappear. For two uninterrupted hours, it is just you and the film. Watching at home invites interruptions, messages, pauses, divided attention until a two-hour movie becomes a four-hour drag, never receiving the focus it deserves.

I've tried watching movies without touching my phone, partly because my screen time has gotten out of control. What surprised me is how difficult it feels. This isn't a unique experience, Netflix forces the writers to imply something called "Second-screen writing", where the script is written knowing the viewer is not paying attention. Netflix has apparently curated a niche micro-genre called "casual viewing," specifically designed for those who see TV as more of a vibe than an experience. It's the entertainment equivalent of a screensaver:

nice to have on in the background, but nothing you'll regret missing when you inevitably zone out.

As Stellan Skarsgard said when he won his Golden Globes: "In a cinema, where the lights go down, and eventually you share a pulse with other people, that is magic. Cinema should be seen in cinemas." To conclude, while watching a movie at home is convenient, it derails us from connecting to one another. It can be hard not to get distracted by constant noise at home, by poor writing and by forcing us to stay indoors. Cinema watching should be more encouraged and a bigger activity than it is, despite setbacks like the global pandemic, going to the cinema is still a liked hobby by some.



# Nostalgia Is The Old

## New *By Sherlyn E. Mathew*

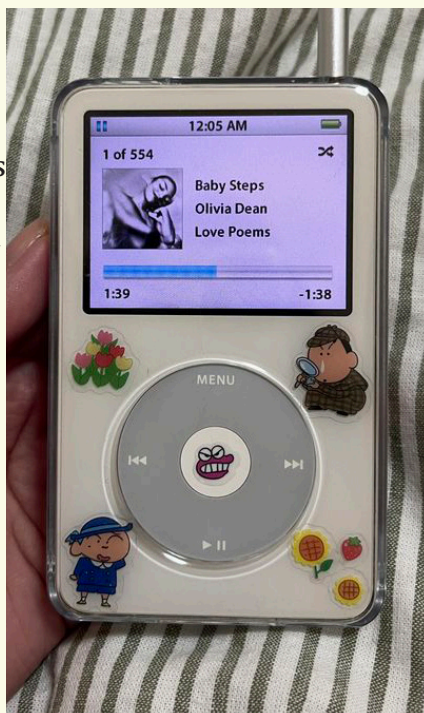
In a world full of digital platforms for practically everything you need, the idea of bringing back single-use media seems almost rebellious. Vinyls, DVDs, camcorders, and Polaroids are all quietly restocking our once empty spaces that we forgot needed filling. This idea of an analogue life is not only making a comeback in the form of media but is also reflected in concept cafes, bookstores, and record shops. What once was normalcy is now repackaged and sold back to us as a trend, with the promise that we get a life capable of slowing down.

Yet, these shifts rarely last. Not all old media will survive. Most of us, like the “dumb phone” users, won’t be able to last more than a week or two before shifting back to smartphones as the limitations of instant gratification become unavoidable. Newspapers and magazines continue to die down as they cannot compete with the speed and convenience of digital platforms.

However, there are mixed opinions when it comes to certain types of single-use media like MP3 and MP4 players, iPod, Walkman and more.

Some say that companies may entirely stop producing MP3s, as they are not of much value when multiple music streaming platforms exist. While for the Walkman, people seem more interested in using it, as it gives off a different feel.

Buying cassettes from record stores, using the wired headphones makes some feel more peacefully grounded to earth. The idea has seen a resurgence from movies like *Guardians of the Galaxy*, as well as the series *Stranger Things*, with people wanting to have one for themselves,



as it allows them to feel something unexplainably freeing that the world right now cannot offer.

One particular form of these single-use media never entirely died, the ones that help record memories. Digi-cams, Polaroids, photobooths, and camcorders all seem to live on for years on end. Though the craze of it died down a bit, it was never entirely snuffed out, with a lot still using it to date. The quality of the older cameras captures colours different from those made now. People seem to enjoy the tiny imperfections in it, which make it seem more like a memory, bringing back the longing for the past.

Physical books, though faced a downfall due to devices



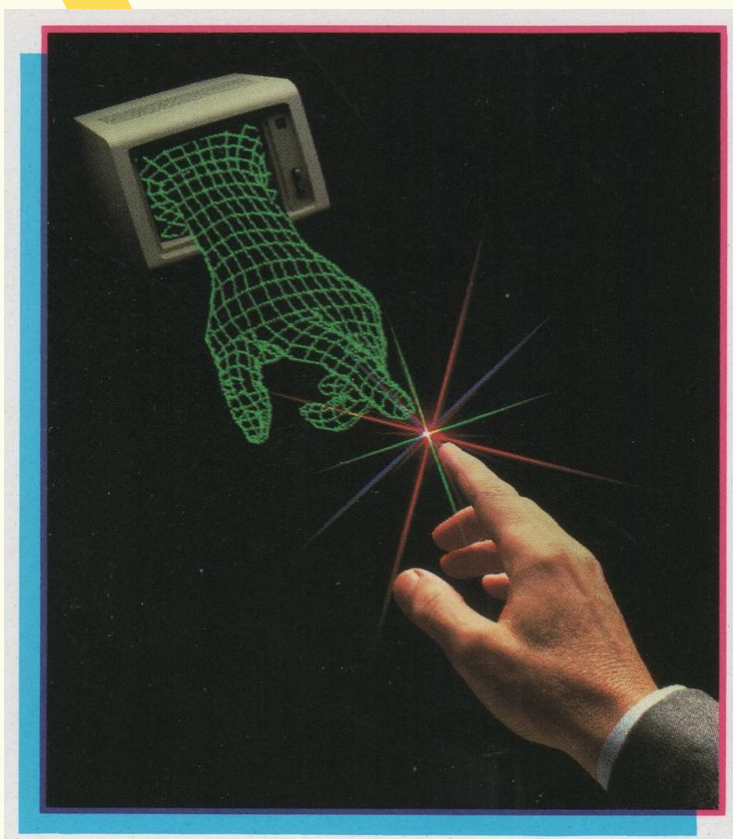
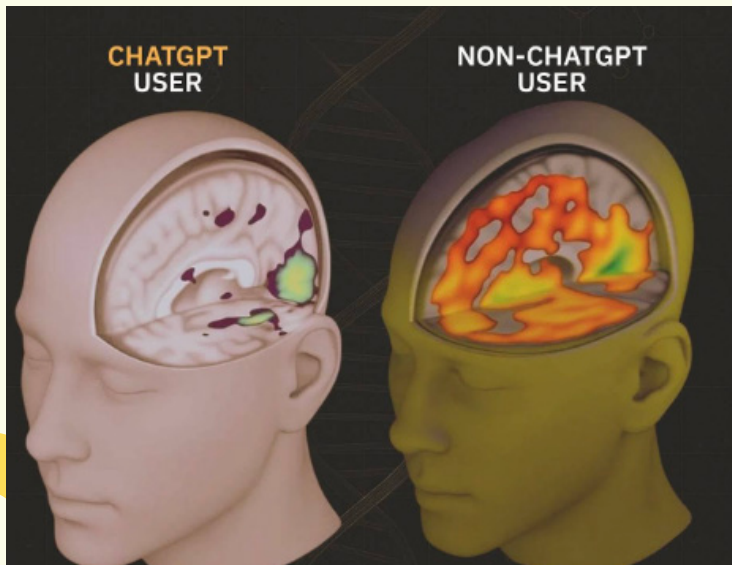
like the Kindle, are on the rise again as people want something more tangible, something they can collect, something that they truly own. The feeling of walking into a bookstore, the smell of the books, the limited edition covers, these are feelings that digital devices cannot compare to.

The entire shift back to physical and single-use media seems like an idea that is absurd, perhaps seen as backward innovation. But understanding it on a deeper level, Physical media allows us to romanticise life in the form of nostalgia. In the end, nostalgia sells because it reminds us that some things are worth holding onto.



# AI: To Be or Not To Be

By Muniba Saeed



An MIT study titled, 'Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt when Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task', has revealed that using ChatGPT to help write essays leads to long-term cognitive harm. According to this study, students who repeatedly relied on ChatGPT showed weakened neural connectivity and weaker memory recall. However, most research stops short of proving causation, instead pointing to correlation only.

Despite this uncertainty surrounding the implications of its use, AI has continually integrated itself into everyday life. Today, AI assists in all tasks ranging from summarizing readings, structuring and writing essays, explaining complex concepts, and even replacing traditional search engines. Aisha Faisal Almutawa, a student at University of Sharjah shared:

***"I feel like AI is unavoidable in my daily life because ever since it started getting popular i feel like it grew on me and i couldn't live without it beacuse it made my life so much easier"***

Avoiding AI has become increasingly difficult, especially in academic environments where efficiency and perfection are rewarded. With tight deadlines and expectations, choosing not to use AI can feel like choosing to struggle unnecessarily. For students, reliance on AI tools is not always rooted in laziness, but often in pressure to produce polished work consistently.

***"Whenever I would have a difficult report to write on and since i want to avoid getting flagged as plagiarized, I had to do my own research and sometimes the results wouldn't satisfy me so I felt very overwhelmed and it would stress me out"***

AI has also become especially crucial for students in filling the gaps left out by expensive textbooks and lecture materials insufficient or unclear. For those studying unfamiliar or highly technical subjects, AI offers immediate support that may otherwise require tutoring, office hours, or additional resources that are not always available. "Until a few months ago I used to barely use text generative AI unless its during exam season (due to lack of free resources online unfortunately)," says Dana Amirah. Rather than replacing learning, students often use AI to make learning possible.



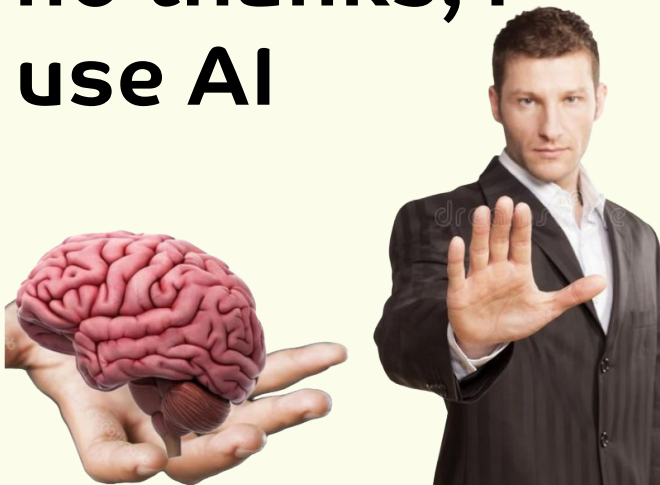
As AI becomes more deeply intertwined with academics, personal life, and even workplace, a noticeable pushback has begun to arise. Rather than fully embracing these tools, some people are choosing to step back from them for a number of concerns including environmental, ethical and cognitive implications. Dana Amirah, a computer science student says:

***“I avoided using AI due to how much it negatively affects the environment and we’re already in an irreversible climate crisis and we’re not caring enough about it,”***

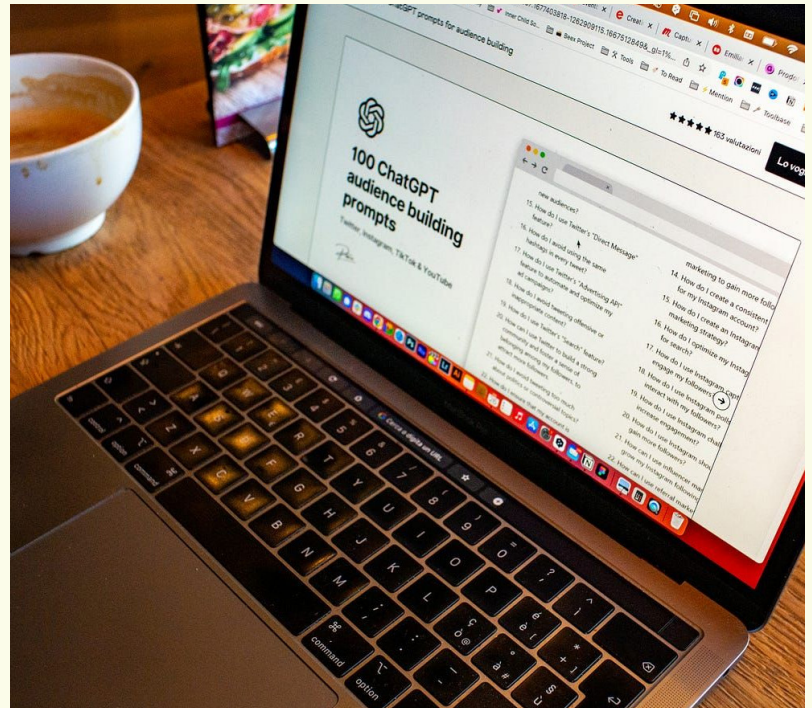
Resistance against AI in students is often motivated by the desire to preserve the process of thinking itself. “Sure, had I used AI, it’d have been much easier to get done with work but at the same time, it would hardly be my work anymore,” says Fidha S., a computer science student.

***“AI takes the joy out of thinking... Knowing that the work you presented was created by AI deprives you of the true feeling of accomplishment”***

**no thanks, I  
use AI**



In the buildup of these small decisions, we see a common theme—taking control of how we choose to use and accept AI. Rather than trying to eliminate AI entirely, we can choose to create a boundary. “I believe we still have a choice to avoid having AI further integrated into our lives,” says Fidha. By refusing to let AI think and create for us is where deconstruction begins.



Ethical considerations also play a role in this pushback. Questions surrounding academic integrity, data privacy, and consent have led many students to reconsider how and when they use AI. This resistance can also be seen on a larger scale.

Initially, brands were quick to hop on the new technology. Coca Cola released an AI generated Christmas ad and faced severe backlash online, with users calling the advert “soul-less” and “devoid of any actual creativity.” Other brands like McDonalds and H&M also faced similar reactions to using AI adverts and models. The paved the way for a new trend: brands adopting a “No AI” approach to keep consumer

trust. This has been used to keep AI restricted to redundant tasks and allow creatives to work on what they can do best.





# 2016 Is Trending – and It Says More About 2026 Than The Past

By Muniba Saeed

## 2026 is the new 2016

According to TikTok, 55 million videos have been created using the app's filter named after 2016. The wave of nostalgia for 2016 all over the internet cannot be missed—and it has brought back with it the top hits, trends, and looks.

Music can be considered one of the bigger forces bringing 2016 back. Zara Larsson's hit Lush Life returned to the charts after a decade, and Spotify revealed a 71% increase in '2016' playlists last year when compared to 2024. We can also observe this with the return of the use of songs like Closer by Halsey, Don't Let Me Down, and Sorry by Justin Bieber on social media.

We can also see the comeback of trends like the mannequin challenge, 2016 makeup, Instagram's Rio De Janeiro filter, and Snapchat's dog filter. This wave of nostalgia can be attributed to a few different reasons, but at its core, a desire for 'simpler times' to return. According to Dana Amirah, a freshman student at UOS, "People are yearning for times as simple as those since we didn't have minimalism and fast fashion shoved down our throats."

## Social media stopped being fun

Over time, social media has shifted from a space for personal expression to one dictated by algorithmic standards and expectations. With heavy monetization, many people now consider themselves brands to be managed and "curated". "And that's what changed everything, people don't just exist online anymore, they manage themselves, their looks, their opinions, everything becomes a part of public image," says Sara. The internet remembers everything: screenshots resurface and circulate, and digital footprints follow users long after they've outgrown the version of themselves they once shared online. Individuals whose power and influence (and sometimes validation) is dependent on online attention and perception, every post is turned into a statement about identity. An identity not reflective of reality—but rather, constructed. Identity is now shaped by engagement metrics and algorithms.



## So, why do we miss 2016?

Clay Routledge, an expert on nostalgia, attributed this nostalgia to the uncertainty of the future while speaking to the BBC. According to him, "We tend to be especially nostalgic when the world feels like it's going through some major change." A biotechnology student, Fatema Busaleh, echoed this sentiment, "...with the current state of the world, the future doesn't look as hopeful as we want, so we tend to look back in time and seek nostalgia for the best times of our lives."

While nostalgia is triggered by times of global uncertainty, it also runs a bit deeper than that. For many, it is the memory of a time when social media didn't feel so performative. "It truly was an Internet era of freedom and artistic expression, rather than performative and calculated, which is what the Internet is like now," says Fatema when talking about why she loves the 2016 trend.



One could call the internet of that time innocent, as our activities were largely uninfluenced by concern about future employers or how something shared may resurface years later. There was less pressure to be visually perfect, politically “correct”, or constantly productive. Being online felt casual, “...the internet wasn’t demanding, it didn’t require us to show up in a certain way,” says Sara Aboud.

The pressure is on conforming to ideas, trends, and aesthetics. “To be honest, I do feel some sort of pressure to maintain aesthetics and curate a perfect on-line identity,” says Fatema. “Posting is supposed to be an expression of your true and genuine self, not a planned and meticulously curated picture taken from the “perfect” angle with “perfect” lighting and the best quality camera.” In a way, the longing for 2016 seems to be about escaping a system that constantly demands perfection.



## You don’t need 2016 back

The internet doesn’t need to look like it did in 2016 to feel human again. The revival of maximalism in makeup, messy and “low-effort” content and ironic humor gradually loosen the grip social media has on identity. “I think people deeply want it (2016) back because they are tired of polishing themselves, we miss being spontaneous without consequences,” says Sara.

Wanting 2016 back is the result of something really simple—that social media has taken more than it has given. But taking back this power does not require abandoning social media altogether. Deconstruction can be simple: in the choice to post without overthinking, to exist online without turning every second of life into content. It is the decision to loosen the grip.

The return of 2016 is not about recreating the past, but about rejecting the pressure that defines the present. What people miss are not the filters or the trends, but the freedom to be unpolished and unperceived. In an internet landscape that demands perfection, choosing imperfection becomes an act of resistance. Maybe the most radical thing we can do online is to stop trying to be perfect.





# DECONSTRUCT

By Yassmin & Intesar Mohammed Khalil

When considering the factors that construct our realities, language is a powerful tool which heavily shapes the way we see the world. It doesn't just describe our world, it also actively builds it. According to a recent study published in the journal, *Frontiers in Psychology*, language has been around for 135,000 years. In other words, it has been around long enough to evolve alongside humanity, living, breathing, changing and adapting just as we do.

However, just like in the game of Chinese whispers, where a message changes as it is whispered from one person to another, many words and sayings have been altered or shortened, losing their original meaning over time. Some sayings today, have meanings that are either completely different or opposite than the ones they started with.

The following are a couple examples:

## 1) "Money is the root of all evil"

We usually use this phrase to criticize wealth or ambition. It puts the blame on money as being the main cause of everything bad.

Original - *"The love of money is the root of all evil."*

The original proverb has a more specific meaning. It doesn't blindly accuse money of being evil, instead it suggests that the love of money is what results in wicked actions. It highlights how greed and obsession are what leads to immorality.

The frequently used shorter version hides the difference between the responsible use of resources and being consumed by them in turn oversimplifying a phrase that carries a moral warning into a blanket statement.

## 2) "Jack of all trades, master of none"

A figure of speech that is used to brand a person that knows a little bit about a lot of things but usually is not very competent in a particular area. This phrase has a negative connotation and discourages curiosity and trying different interests.

Original - *"A jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a master of one."*

Contrastingly, the longer version is a praise and celebrates versatility. It recognizes that being able to do a lot of things is more valuable than being the best at one.

The common use of the shorter phrase exposes how as a society we commend specialization and expertise while also quietly depending on adaptability.



Credit - Pinterest

## 3) "Curiosity killed the cat"

This phrase is usually used as a warning or to silence questioning, whether it be nosy kids or anyone challenging authority. It means that no good comes out of being too curious.

Original - *"Curiosity killed the cat. Satisfaction brought it back."*

The full form of the phrase adds a whole new layer to the meaning. It acknowledges that while curiosity has its risks and consequences, the resulting satisfaction will be worthwhile and fulfilling.

Our preferred use of the shortened form as a society reflects our discomfort in questioning norms and rules we've silently accepted.



Credit - Pinterest



# TED SAYINGS

## 4) “Blood is thicker than water”

This common saying means that family and familial relationships are much stronger and have to be prioritized over any other relationship. The phrase implies that loyalty to family is important, regardless of the loyalty being harmful or undeserved.

Original - *“The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb.”*

This longer version shifts the meaning to the opposite. A covenant is a formal and serious agreement or a promise between people. The meaning suggests that chosen bonds, such as the ones we build on trust and shared experiences are sometimes stronger than those that are given by birth.

The full phrase reframes the idea of family always being first as sometimes the relationships that we actively build can be deeper than those we inherit.

## 5) “Great minds think alike”

This proverb is used humorously to celebrate moments of common thoughts or agreements. It suggests that intelligent individuals or great thinkers often reach the same conclusions independently due to being on similar wavelengths.

Original - *“Great minds think alike, though fools seldom differ.”*

The original version flips the whole meaning. It implies that sometimes agreement indicates a lack of critical thinking. It means that people who come to the same conclusion are not quite smart, rather they have an unoriginal way of thinking.

By dropping the second half of the expression, we as society have turned a cautionary phrase into a praise for similarity, subtly discouraging disagreement and independent thought.



Credit - Pinterest

Credit - Pinterest

## 6) “Winning isn’t everything”

When people use this, they usually mean that there are other things more valuable than just coming out on top. It acts as a reminder that trying our best and enjoying the moment matters more than simply winning.

Original - *“Winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing.”*

This form of the saying has a drastically different tone. It prioritizes winning over everything, implying that anything less than the top position is worthless.

The shortened form commonly used today shows how hypocritical society can be. We try to promote healthy values and not care about winning yet we ignore the fact that we live in a world that rewards results over effort.



The change in these phrases doesn’t only bring to light linguistic evolution, it also exposes cultural priorities. By shortening phrases, we as a society strip down complex and reflective ideas into strict and rigid rules. Yes, the simplified versions are easy to remember and repeat, but at what cost? Is it worth the harmful reinforcements they carry?

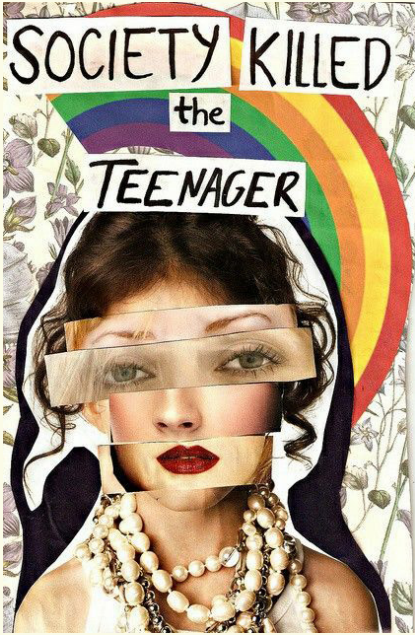
Deconstructed sayings is not about rejecting everything we have known till date, rather its about looking at things critically. Questioning the language we inherit allows us to freely choose our values with a conscious and active mind as opposed to soaking it up passively.



# Silent Sexism

By Batool Maher

Growing up a girl means you have to adhere and bend over backwards without knowing. It is serving men and hearing them mansplain something you're well versed in. Being a woman means having to worry about balancing a career and having a family, and it means having smaller, inconvenient challenges that men do not have to worry about. It means adjusting your voice, your anger and your mood. A woman gets asked, "How do you balance having a family and being a leader?" while a man



gets asked, "What is it like being a leader?" These are all problems and ideas that every girl reading this has nodded along to.

In 2019, an experiment was conducted with 5, 4 and 6 year old kids on an Australian show called "The Secret Life of 6 & 5, 4 Year Olds" where the show hosts got jelly that is salty and gave it for the girls and boys to try. Interestingly, the girls all said that it tastes good, and this gave insight on how girls are more likely to say white lies to show empathy and conduct better social awareness.

As for the boys, they immediately expressed their distaste for the saltiness in the jelly, with one telling the host to take it home instead of giving it to other kids. Being empathetic at such a young age is not something bad, but having to tell lies in order to not hurt the other person's emotions and being polite is learnt behavior that can be manifested into everyday life and in return, make you a people pleaser.

Misogyny bleeds in everyday conversations. There is a discussed phenomenon online called "silent sexism",

which is when a woman experiences some sort of sexism, like hearing the same lame jokes on how she's inferior to a man with the same position, or how there are other roles she is expected to fill than a man.

And sexism doesn't just come in big, bold waves and statements. It can also be in subtle words like calling a woman "lady-like," or saying she is "modest." It's a woman not being able to fill leading roles because

"she might get too emotional" which doesn't even make sense because as far as I can tell, men are way more emotional.

To support my statement above:

In 2020, the world experienced a pandemic that forced countries to face difficult choices. In New Zealand, a women-led country, immediately closes their borders which resulted in the lowest number of cases a country has. To compare, the United States, a men-led country, recorded around 50,000 cases of Covid19- per day.



It is not just being told to clean or to cook for a man, for example, Taylor Swift is hated for being too good at her job, I am not kidding. She gets hate for leading charts and setting the standards on successful singers, in fact, she beats her own records. While The Weeknd gets around the same charts and no one says anything bad about him, he was the highest paid artist in 2025 and no one pitched their forks and flooded social media all about it.

Silent sexism is liking stuff and then being told it is too "girly" like it is an insult. A man is allowed to like football and be passionate about it, he is allowed to yell at the TV for his favorite team losing, but a woman is made fun of for being too much about her interests.

To conclude, sexism is not just "women get paid less," it is deeper and worse than that, and in forms that are not well discussed. Silent sexism haunts a woman's everyday life and can impose challenges not heavily dissected, it is important to notice these issues and talk about them to make the topic more known and establish a better environment for everyone.



# An Overview on "Propoganda"

ideas based on :

By Adam Ismail

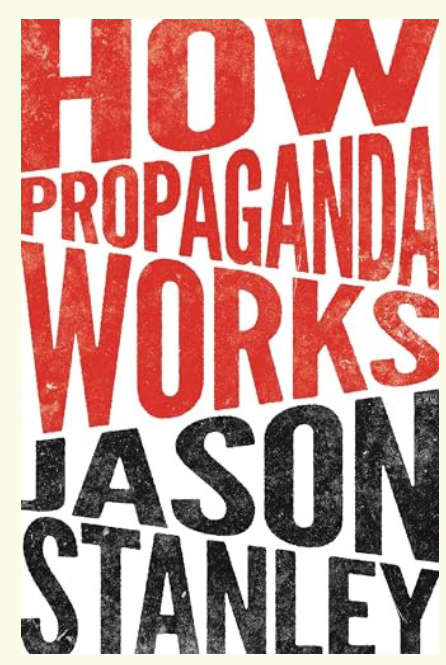
"Public Opinion"  
By Walter Lippmann



"Bending Spines"  
By Randall L. Bytwerk



"How Propaganda Works"  
By Jason Stanley



Propaganda is the attempt to *influence or shape* how one looks at or see things, usually targeted through daily endeavours such as music, movies, art, and news. It's a way of programming you without you ever knowing you're being programmed. It's so effective because, in most cases, it is unnoticeable and can be very discrete. It becomes glaringly concerning when people who claim to be apolitical spread propaganda.

If you have been observing recently, you may notice a trend of divisive and extremist ideas becoming more visible and *normalized* in everyday life. Changes in social media policies, the return of previously banned creators, and shifts in *how speech is moderated* on platforms all contribute to this environment. These developments often align with specific agendas.

During the Second World War, both Allied and Axis powers produced movies, art, and other forms of media. Film is a particularly powerful tool to send a message without being invasive—sometimes even children's movies carry subtle messages. Even Disney often communicates messages, even if the audience isn't ready for them. During times of conflict, countries tend to produce nationalistic movies to instill pride and influence the youths minds, showing how culture can *shape decisions* in powerful ways.

Today, celebrities play a role in shaping *public opinion*. Many are openly politically involved, using their platforms to support causes or promote ideologies. Their fan bases are directly influenced by their statements, endorsements, and social media activity. This shows how modern media and celebrity culture can act as a vehicle for political messaging, subtly *guiding the beliefs* and actions of millions of followers.



*"What society calls  
beauty is learned."*

*- Lupita Nyong'o*



*"Gender equality is  
not about changing  
women – it's about  
changing the system."*

*-Emma Watson*



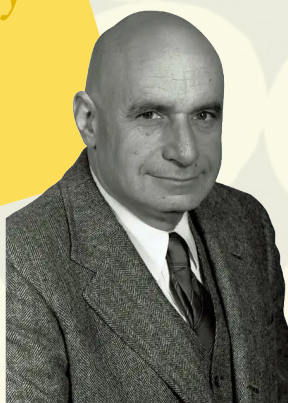
*"Culture does not  
make people. People  
make culture."*

*- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*



*"Reality is socially  
defined."*

*-Peter L. Berger*



*"One does what  
one is; one becomes  
what one does."*

*- Robert Musil*



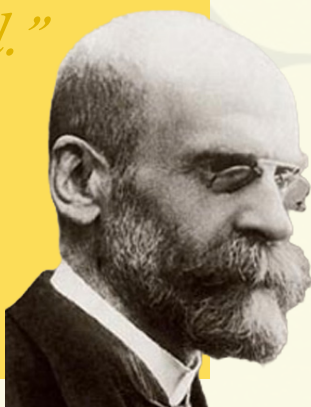
**on construct**

By Razan Abdullah & Mawada Issam

This page highlights  
quotes that recognize  
the construction of soci-  
ety allowing us to think  
deeper on what, how  
and why

*"Society exists outside  
the individual."*

*- Emile Durkheim*





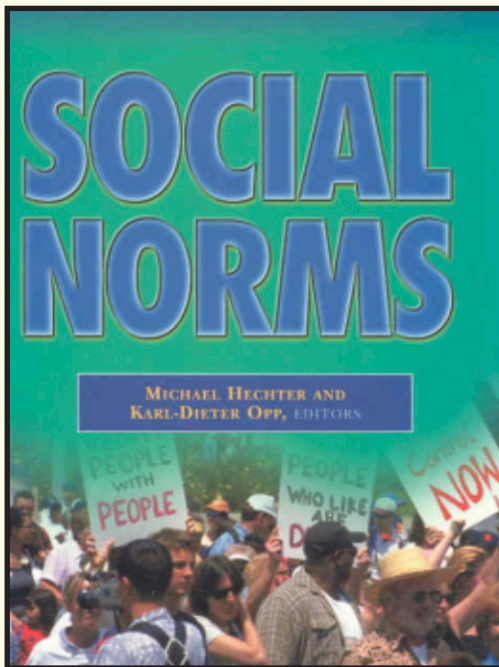
# An Overview on "Normal"

ideas based on :

By Noor Nader

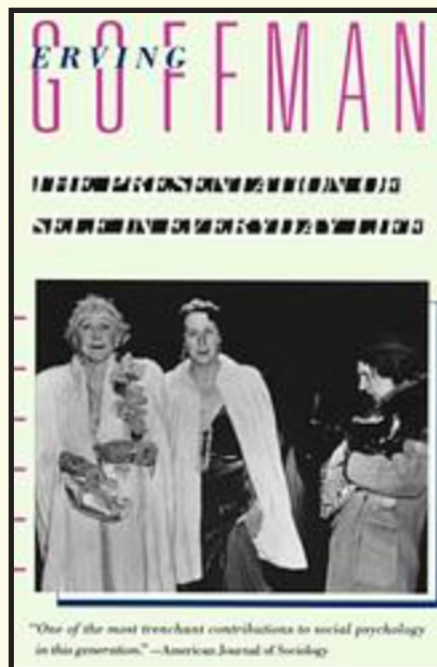
"Social Norms"

By Michael Hechter & Karl-Dieter Opp



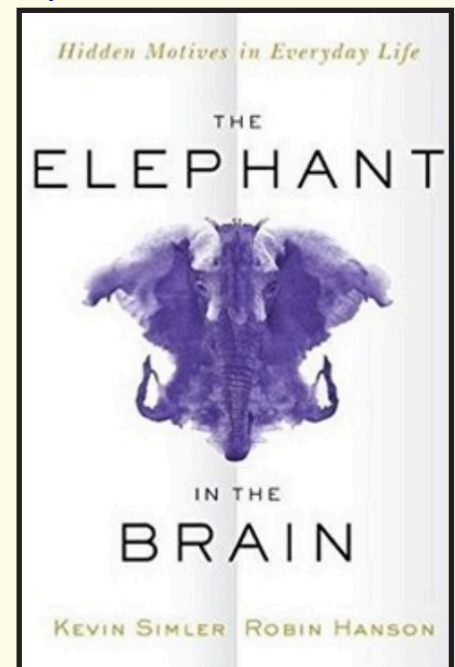
"The Presentation of Everyday Life"

By Erving Goffman



"The Elephant in the Brain"

By Kevin Simler & Robin Hanson



Human societies are *shaped by unwritten rules* that people experience every day without always being aware of them. These rules, known as social norms, influence how people communicate, dress, and behave around others. Although they are rarely spoken about directly, social norms guide our actions from the moment we wake up until we go to sleep.

From a young age, individuals learn what is *considered normal* by observing the people around them. Children learn when to speak, how to behave in public, and what actions are viewed as acceptable or unacceptable in their community. Over time, these behaviors become habits that are followed without much thought. Most people follow social norms not because they are forced to, but because they want to belong and feel accepted.

Social norms *strongly influence* the choices people make in their daily lives. They affect how individuals express their emotions, *what opinions they share*, and how they present themselves to others. Fear of judgment or exclusion often leads people to adjust their behavior in order to meet social expectations. This desire for acceptance plays an important role in shaping how people interact with one another.

These norms tend to have negative effects. Some *limit personal expression* and pressure individuals to hide their *true identities*. When harmful norms are followed without being questioned, they can lead to stereotypes, unrealistic expectations, and unfair treatment.

In today's world, social media plays a major role in creating and spreading new social norms. Trends and lifestyles online can quickly begin to feel normal, even when they are unrealistic. Understanding social norms allows individuals to *question* which ones are helpful and which ones should be challenged.



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