

Assignment Overview

Welcome to AP Seminar. This course is designed to develop your skills in analyzing information, exploring perspectives, forming arguments, and communicating your ideas effectively. Over the summer, you will read from our course text and engage in your first research-based exploration by reading, annotating, and analyzing a set of diverse articles.

FIRST TASK: You will read and annotate three chapters of *They Say I Say* 6th Edition by Graff, Birkenstein, and Durst (ISBN 978-1324070030). The assigned chapters are the Preface, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2. You do not need to complete any of the exercises at the end of the chapters. We will be working on those during the first quarter.

SECOND TASK: The second task is to read and annotate eight articles, then use your annotations to create an annotated bibliography in MLA format. These articles will be provided to you in this packet. Bring your annotated copies and a completed annotated bibliography with you on the first day of class. Complete instructions for this task follow below.

Learning Objectives

By completing this summer assignment, you will:

- Practice identifying arguments and lenses or perspectives
- Formulate essential questions based on your reading
- Apply the QUEST framework (used throughout AP Seminar)
- Create a polished annotated bibliography using MLA style

Step 1: Annotate Each Article

As you read each article, annotate (highlight and write notes in the margins) for the following:

1. **Position or Argument** – What is the central claim or point of view?
2. **People or Stakeholders Involved** – Who are the key individuals, groups, or organizations?
3. **Context** – Where and when is the issue occurring?
4. **Significance** – Why is this issue important or relevant?
5. **Inquiry** – What is at least one thoughtful question the article sparks for you?

Step 2: Write an Annotated Bibliography Entry for Each Article

For each article, create an entry that includes:

- MLA citation
- Brief synopsis (3–5 sentences summarizing the article)
- Annotations (in paragraph form) addressing the five points above

TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND REFERENCE MATERIAL**Using the QUEST Framework**

Throughout the course, we will use the College Board's **QUEST** framework to develop critical thinking and research abilities:

- Question and Explore
- Understand and Analyze
- Evaluate Multiple Perspectives
- Synthesize Ideas
- Team, Transform, and Transmit

As you complete your annotations, especially focus on **Questioning**, **Understanding**, and **Evaluating** perspectives. This framework will guide how we explore real-world issues through inquiry.

Lenses to Consider

In AP Seminar, we use different *lenses* or perspectives to analyze issues. For each article, identify **at least one** of the following lenses the article could be viewed through:

- **Cultural and Social**
- **Political and Historical**
- **Environmental**
- **Economic**
- **Scientific and Medical**
- **Ethical**

- **Artistic and Philosophical**
- **Futuristic**

Example: An article about climate change might fall under the **Environmental** and **Economic** lenses.

What Is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations followed by a summary and evaluation of each source, written in paragraph form. In AP Seminar, it helps you track your research, examine the complexity of an issue, and prepare to synthesize ideas from multiple sources. You should consider answering the following questions in your annotations:

- What is the topic of the article?
- Identify and explain what lens best describes the filter through which the topic/issue of the article is considered or examined.
- Who is the author of the article? Discuss the credibility of the author, including his or her reputation, credentials, and potential bias. You may need to do a little research to find the answers to these questions.
- What is the argument presented in the article?
- Explain the context of the article. For example, who are the perspectives involved and/or affected? What is the main issue? When and where did the issue occur? Why is it important/relevant?

Example Annotated Bibliography (MLA Format)

First Name Last Name

Gurnard/Mohs

AP Seminar

Day Month Year

Annotated Bibliography

Auster, Ellen. "Values, Authenticity, and Responsible Leadership." *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 1, no. 98, June 2011, pp. 15-23. *Academic Search Premier*, <https://doi-org.libproxy.csun.edu/10.1007/s10551-011-1022-7>.

Evaluative annotations include both a short description and your evaluation of the cited source. In your evaluation, critically assess the selected source for accuracy, relevance, and quality. Compare to other sources on the same topic that you have also cited to show similarities and differences. Explain why each source is useful for your research topic and how it relates to your topic. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the source. Identify the observations or conclusions of the author. For this summer assignment, you will not be doing any comparing since we are giving you eight diverse articles that aren't necessarily connected to each other.

Holtzman, Casey. "A Part of Something: The Importance of Transitional Living Programs within a Housing First Framework for Youth Experiencing Homelessness." *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 65, spring 2016, pp. 204-215.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.04.009>.

The author of this article, Casey Holtzman, Ph.D., LCSW Associate Professor of Social Work at Northeastern Illinois University, argues that in order to better serve the

needs of homeless youths, research needs to be done on which types of services best meet their needs. In particular, she is interested in understanding the impact of transitional living programs (TLPs) on the lives of homeless young people. Holtschneider found that TLPs were beneficial in many ways including: they provided a sense of family for those living in TLPs, helped them feel more understanding towards each other, and encouraged community and friendship building. I am interested in using this article because I am writing about the relationship between foster care and homelessness and I want to talk about ways to overcome the problem. This article provides strong support for TLPs as a strategy for helping move youths out of homelessness.

Formatting Guidelines MLA

- 1" margins
- Annotated Bibliography title is centered
- Citations are indented half an inch (.5")
- Annotations are indented one inch (1")
- Times New Roman font, 12 pt font size
- Double-spaced
- Organized alphabetically by author's last name
- Start annotation on the next line

Final Notes

- Typed, MLA-formatted annotated bibliographies are required.
- Bring your printed bibliography and annotated articles on the first day of class.

AP SEMINAR SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

Due: First Day of Class (August 21, 2026)

- Your annotations and analysis will be discussed and used during the first few weeks of class.
- Be prepared for a reading quiz that will include questions from each of the eight articles and will assess reading comprehension as well as analytical skills.

If you have questions before the school year starts, feel free to reach out via email to either instructor: gurnardk@kennedyhs.org or mohsm@kennedyhs.org

The New York Times<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/05/opinion/entertainment-junk-psychology.html>**DAVID BROOKS**

The Junkification of American Life

Sept. 5, 2024

**By David Brooks**
Opinion Columnist

Back in February, the music historian Ted Gioia wrote an essay on the state of American culture. He argued that many creative people want to create art (work that puts demands on people), but all the commercial pressures push them to create entertainment (which gives audiences what they want). As a result, for the past many years, entertainment (superhero movies) has been swallowing up art (literary novels and serious dramas).

But now, Gioia observed, even the entertainment business is in crisis. Hollywood studios are laying off employees. The number of new scripted TV series is down. That's because entertainment is being swallowed up by distraction (TikTok, Instagram). People stay on their phones because it's easier. Each object of distraction lasts only a few seconds and doesn't require any cognitive work; the audience just keeps scrolling.

Our dopamine-driven brains drive us to choose cheap distraction over entertainment and art. A 15-second video causes a dopamine release in the brain, which creates a desire for more stimulus, which leads to the habit of more scrolling on your phone, which leads to an addiction to more stimulus. If distraction is swallowing entertainment in our culture,

addiction is also swallowing distraction.

Gioia wrote: “The tech platforms aren’t like the Medici in Florence, or those other rich patrons of the arts. They don’t want to find the next Michelangelo or Mozart. They want to create a world of junkies — because they will be the dealers.”

The phenomenon Gioia describes isn’t happening just to culture; it recurs across American life. We have access to wonderful things. But they require effort, so we settle for the junky things that provide the quick dopamine hits. We could all be eating a Mediterranean diet, but instead it’s potato chips and cherry Coke. We could enjoy the richness of full awareness, but booze, weed and other drugs provide that quick reward. Think of all the things in American life that seem to offer that burst of stimulation but threaten to be addictive — gambling, porn, video games, checking email.

Sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter Get expert analysis of the news and a guide to the big ideas shaping the world every weekday morning. [Get it sent to your inbox.](#)

Even journalism has found ways to trigger dopamine for profit. We journalists go into this business to inform and provoke, but many outlets have found they can generate clicks by telling partisan viewers how right they are about everything. Minute after minute they’re rubbing their audience’s pleasure centers, which feels like a somewhat older profession.

The result is we’re now in a culture in which we want worse things — the cheap hit over the long flourishing. You reach for immediate gratification, but it fails to satisfy. It just puts you on a hamster wheel of looking for the next mild stimulus and pretty soon you’re in the land of addiction and junk food, you just keep scrolling, you just keep snacking. As the psychiatrist Anna Lembke writes in her book “Dopamine Nation,” “The paradox is that

hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, leads to anhedonia, which is the inability to enjoy.”

Big companies don’t care. They have become sensational at arousing and manipulating our cravings. Their goal is to keep us consuming. By offering constant temptation, they appeal straight to our dopamine circuits and threaten to circumvent our capacity for self-control. In their book “The Molecule of More,” Daniel Z. Lieberman and Michael E. Long write, “The sensation of wanting is not a choice you make. It is a reaction to the things you encounter.” The cookie, cat video or margarita is right there in front of you, whispering, “Consume me!” You can’t resist.

Modern life makes us vulnerable to these seducers. People live overwhelmed lives, exhausted, anxious. Willpower is drained. Big Gulps and trashy TV at least provide a break. But afterward, there come the recriminations: Why did I do that? So millions turn to therapists, dietitians, trainers, 12-step programs, lifestyle experts and authors of books on habit formation in order to regain control over their desires.

The great volume of advice that flows from these people seems to fall into three buckets. First, there is the self-binding bucket. Create rules so you don’t have easy access to the things that tempt you: No phones in school. No carbs in your diet. No alcohol in the house. A woman I once knew got dumped by her boyfriend; of course she came home with a big tub of ice cream. Halfway through the tub she grew disgusted with herself and threw it in the trash. Ten minutes later she was digging through the trash so she could eat some more. Finally, she poured dishwashing soap on the ice cream to help her resist temptation. Effective self-binding.

Then there is the here and now bucket. Don’t go searching for the next dopamine hit; enjoy the life that you already have around you. The neuroscientist Kent Berridge has shown that the wanting circuits in the brain are different from the liking circuits. So try to stimulate the liking

circuits by amping up your enjoyment of the life you already have.

For example, Lembke, the psychiatrist, had a patient who suffered from depression and anxiety and spent her life plugged into Instagram, YouTube and all the rest. Lembke suggested that the patient walk through her days without any devices and let her own thoughts surface.

The patient was dumbstruck at the suggestion. "Why would I do that?" she asked. Lembke said it's a way of becoming familiar with yourself and not being consumed by distractions. "But it's so boring," the patient countered. Boredom can be good, an opportunity for reflection, Lembke argued. Finally, the patient agreed to put down her phone during walks. Later, she reported back to Lembke: "It was hard at first. But then I got used to it and even kind of liked it. I started noticing the trees."

The third bucket is the higher desires bucket. That's based on the premise that you usually can't control a desire through sheer willpower. But you can replace a low desire with a higher desire. Pregnant women give up alcohol because the appeal of a drink is dwarfed by their love for their coming child.

Dopamine can sometimes sound like the bad guy in this conversation, but all in all, it's an awesome neurotransmitter. It's what drives us to create, to learn, to build, to improve. Dopamine pushes us to boldly go where no person has gone before. America was practically built on dopamine. As William Casey King argues in his book "Ambition, a History," throughout most of European history, ambition was regarded as a terrible sin. But when the New World was discovered, people decided that ambition is mostly a virtue, driving us to explore.

The problem with our culture today is not too much desire but the miniaturization of desire, settling for these small, short-term hits. Our culture used to be full of institutions that sought to arouse people's higher desires — the love of God, the love of country, the love of learning, the love

of being excellent at a craft. Sermons, teachers, mentors and the whole apparatus of moral formation were there to elongate people's time horizons and arouse the highest desires.

The culture of consumerism, of secularism, of hedonism has undermined those institutions and that important work. The culture has changed. As Philip Rieff noticed all the way back in his 1966 book, "The Triumph of the Therapeutic," "Religious man was born to be saved; psychological man is born to be pleased."

We have schools to train our minds and gyms to train our bodies. We get less help training, elevating and regulating our desires. History suggests you can elevate people's desires by giving them access to what is truly worth wanting. I imagine the cultural decline that Gioia described in his essay can be turned around if people can experience, at school or somewhere else, the emotional impact of a great film, a great novel, a great concert. It's more desirable than a TikTok. Once you've tasted the fine wine, it's harder to settle for Kool-Aid.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: letters@nytimes.com.

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, X and Threads.

David Brooks is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about political, social and cultural trends. [@nytdavidbrooks](#)

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 22 of the New York edition with the headline: The Junkification of American Life

What Pope Francis taught us: Church teaching finds clarity in acts of mercy

Shortly after the death of Pope Francis, Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York was invited onto "The Today Show" and asked what he would look for in the conclave when selecting a new pontiff. His response was characteristically chipper: While he hoped for someone with the "warmth, heart and smile" of Francis, he also wished to see "more clarity in teaching, more refinement of the church's tradition, more digging in the treasures of the past to remind us what Jesus expects of us."

Cardinal Dolan's prioritization of clarity echoes a common criticism of Francis—namely, that Francis was not explicit, consistent or even dogmatically faithful enough in expressing the church's creedal and moral teachings. For most in the church and most in the hierarchy, Francis was easy to love, even though some who trusted him were frustrated by his seeming imprecision. A smaller contingent, however, delivered this criticism as a protest against a pontiff whom they could not or would not understand.

Within the church's "magisterium," or teaching office, the pope, along with the college of bishops, is entrusted with the task of safeguarding the deposit of faith. So the desire for more clarity in teaching from the successor of Peter seems like it could only be a good thing. But before accepting the framing that a lack of clarity was a particular failing of Pope Francis, it is worth thinking more carefully about what he was deeply clear about and how he worked to protect the teaching of the church.

While moral and creedal beliefs are essential to Catholic teaching, the splitting of doctrinal propositions from the embodied witness of the teacher himself misunderstands the role of the magisterium and the particular lessons the church has learned

from Francis' pontificate. Specifically, the focus on propositional and moral clarity misses how the teaching office of the magisterium was exercised by Pope Francis as an integrated, holistic pedagogy in living relationship with one's disciples.

Francis' style of teaching is closer to the experience of entering into intense friendship and, yes, even love, than attending a lecture or learning a curriculum. Jesus, the master teacher, never began with formal dilemmas, theological lectures or doctrinal tests. To the contrary, the Gospels depict his critics using such methods to ensnare him. Instead Jesus offers his entire person to those he encounters. In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, two of the disciples ask Jesus, "Teacher, where are you staying?" Rather than give an answer, Jesus gives an invitation: "Come, and you will see." The disciples learn even more because they "stayed with him that day."

Francis' critics wrongly assume that his warmth, affection and informality could somehow impede or confuse the content of his teaching. Yet to oppose doctrinal clarity to Francis' joyful smile is to forget something vital about what his papacy offered the church. He was exceptionally clear about the spiritual dangers of prioritizing the wrong kind of clarity at the expense of the mercy at the heart of the Gospel.

In his magisterial role, Francis corrected several mistakes about the nature of church teaching, and he did so with profound clarity and force. Church teaching is not primarily abstract and intellectual, which would reduce it to merely another ideology. Nor is it a way to escape questioning, risk, ambiguity or dissent. The church's teachings cannot be passed along well without a certain vulnera-

bility on the part of the teacher, which includes in some circumstances a willingness to draw close to people's uncertainty and varying situations even at the risk of scandalizing some who see such closeness as moral indifference rather than mercy.

In the Catholic view, truth is an embodied encounter, not simply a downloading of information. "I am the Truth," Jesus says. But the notion of a living and breathing truth seems strange to us because of the modern picture of humans as disembodied minds or intellects that contain ideas, a recurrent philosophical temptation from Descartes to Kant.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers a glimpse of a different possibility. It explains that the magisterium is entrusted with the task of guaranteeing "the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error. Thus the pastoral duty of the magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abide in the truth that liberates" (No. 890). Truth is something we live in.

Over the last 12 years, Francis has taught the church that the experience of truth is not only about learning answers to questions but about learning how to enter into dialogue, one in which the questions run in both directions. We do not have an experience of truth when we are mere recipients of a monologue; rather, dialogue invites one into a relationship. Clarity and refinement of church teaching are not ends in themselves. They are necessary and laudable—but because they are means to the end of abiding in truth, not because they are the truth themselves.

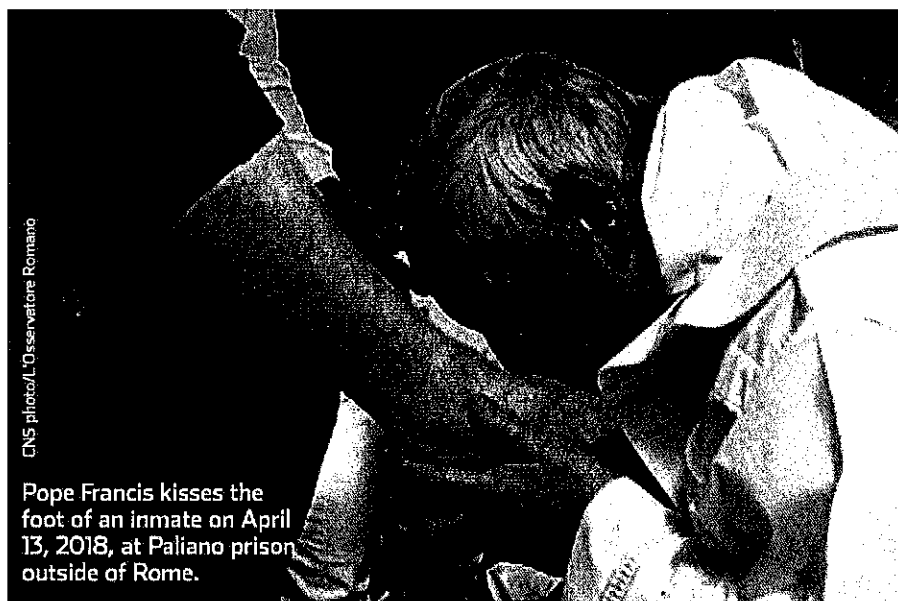
One of the most systemic mistakes exposed by Francis is what he called a kind of gnosticism, or the habit of prioritizing knowledge and intellectual definitions over authentic

moral and spiritual transformation. As Francis wrote in “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” gnosticism is “a purely subjective faith whose only interest is a certain experience or a set of ideas and bits of information which are meant to console and enlighten, but which ultimately keep one imprisoned in his or her own thoughts and feelings... [I]nstead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying” (No. 94).

Such a conception of teaching is sometimes found in the academy but sprouts up within the church, too. When this happens, the church becomes not unlike an endless seminar in which the superior knowledge of the teacher, or the competition of students for attention, becomes the main event.

In Francis’ vision, by contrast, Catholic teaching does not simply inform but also transforms. He developed an approach to the magisterium that entered into encounter with his hearers, ultimately seeking not only knowledge but mercy and healing. He had a kind of genius for teaching in this way, as is evidenced in the moment where he spoke to a young boy who asked if his atheist father was in heaven. Loving those whom one teaches requires taking into account their personal histories, desires, dreams, ambitions, political preoccupations, health, economic situation and even their sense of beauty.

A masterful teacher like Francis enters into the open questions, wounds and traumas of others without fear. This can be risky: It always seems safer to take the modern disembodied route and deliver another lecture. The alternative is to enter into what Msgr. Luigi Giussani famously referred to as “the risk of education.”



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano

Pope Francis kisses the foot of an inmate on April 13, 2018, at Paliano prison outside of Rome.

A few decades before Francis, Giusani saw that Christian education was losing its force precisely by assuming a narrowly “rationalistic framework, which neglects the important fact that existential engagement is a necessary condition for one to have a genuine experience of truth, and, therefore, to have a conviction.”

The biggest risk of Catholic teaching is the same one that we take when we venture into the deepest of life’s relationships: the risk of sharing one’s entire existence, and the possibility of being misunderstood, humiliated and even forcefully rejected. A near-absolute prioritization of clarity offers a comfortable but illusory invulnerability. It reduces the living demands of Christian witness to a moral and theological system long since worked out and only requiring defense from lofty battlements and against obvious enemies. But Francis the teacher had the courage to remain open, to let his guard down, even as he taught the church and in the face of the vocal doubts of others.

Christians cannot teach mercy and love as propositional truths without living mercy and love as a concrete relationship with those they encounter—let alone those they instruct.

Over and over again, Jesus first offered a friendship to those he met, despite their false ideas—the woman at the well, the rich young man, Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus. He never first demanded their assent to an abstract code.

In the last hours before his death, Francis left a final, unmistakable sign about the meaning of the magisterium. In dangerously poor health, struggling to breathe and speak, he resisted the counsel of his advisors to stay indoors. He insisted on traveling outside to greet the faithful at Easter, even at his own mortal danger.

Francis taught the church, in short, that the magisterium finds its clarity not merely in propositions but in acts of mercy. His words from 2013 ring even more powerfully today: “I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”

David Albertson is an associate professor of religion at the University of Southern California. He is the executive director of the Nova Forum for Catholic Thought. Jason Blakely is a professor of political science and a political philosopher at Pepperdine University in California. He is a senior fellow at the Nova Forum for Catholic Thought.

JANUARY 28, 2022 | 4 MIN READ

How a Record-Breaking Heat Wave Fueled Climate Anxiety

The psychological effects of climate change are a growing concern among mental health experts

BY CHELSEA HARVEY & E&E NEWS



The Columbia River is pictured during a heat wave in Hood River, Oregon in August 2021. [Michael Hanson/AFP via Getty Images](#)

Climate Change

As a record-breaking heat wave roasted the Pacific Northwest last summer, anxiety rose with the temperatures.

Surveys of residents in British Columbia—where the heat in some places soared above 120 degrees Fahrenheit—suggest the disaster caused a spike in negative mental health related to climate change.

The results of the surveys, recently published in *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*, highlight growing concerns among mental health experts around the issue of “climate change anxiety”—a psychological response to the threats posed by climate change.

“We hear from clinicians and people in the community, increasingly, that people are worried about climate change,” said Kiffer Card, a social epidemiologist at Simon Fraser University in Canada, director of the Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance and a co-author of the study. “And there’s really no formal guidance on how to treat or deal with it.”

The Pacific Northwest heat wave struck Oregon, Washington and western Canada in the final days of June 2021. Temperatures skyrocketed across the region, breaking records left and right. Seattle and Portland hit all-time highs of 108 F and 116 F, respectively. And the tiny village of Lytton in British Columbia reached an eye-popping 121 F. Experts estimated that hundreds of people died as a result of the disaster.

Shortly after the heat wave subsided, scientists determined that the event would have been “virtually impossible” without the influence of climate change (Climatewire, July 8, 2021).

Anecdotaly, Canadian news outlets reported that residents felt their anxiety rising as the disaster unfolded. Now, the new study has the data to support it.

Survey results suggest that British Columbians were more anxious about climate change—and its effects on their day-to-day lives—after the heat wave than they were before.

The study got its start in 2019, when Card and a group of other mental health experts started working on the question of how to monitor and research climate change anxiety. They eventually developed a protocol for a survey aimed at monitoring distress and anxiety in response to climate and weather events.

The survey includes 22 questions related to climate and anxiety. Topics range from general questions about how much participants worry about climate change to more specific questions involving their level of concern about the effects of climate change on their jobs or their homes.

The researchers, led by Andreea Bratu of the University of British Columbia, collected their first round of survey results in May and June 2021, before the devastating heat wave struck. At the time, they had no idea the disaster was coming.

“That was our pilot survey, just to test and see how this works,” Card said.

“When the heat dome happened, we thought, ‘What a wonderful opportunity to test this!’ Because it had such an impact on the public discourse and people’s thoughts around climate change.”

Each wave of the survey—before and after the heat wave—included more than 400 respondents. All of them were recruited from social media, including Facebook and Instagram.

The results suggest a substantial increase in anxiety following the heat wave.

Most participants said they were either “somewhat” or “much” more worried about climate change after the disaster. The survey also indicated a significant increase in respondents’ concern that their jobs would be affected by climate change or that where they lived would be hit by climate-related disasters.

“I think this is a wake-up call hopefully to cities to towns across British Columbia and really any area that’s likely to experience climate impacts,” Card said.

According to the authors, the study is the first of its kind to investigate climate change anxiety using a “natural experiment”—monitoring responses before and after a real-life climate disaster. Still, it’s not the first work to raise the alarm about climate change anxiety. Other scientists have been documenting the phenomenon for at least a few years now.

The American Psychological Association, in partnership with nonprofit organization ecoAmerica, has published several reports on climate change and mental health since 2014. The most recent installment was released last year.

“Climate change-fueled disaster events impact individual mental health and include trauma and shock, PTSD, anxiety and depression,” the APA report notes. “Concern about climate change coupled with worry about the future can lead to fear, anger, feelings of powerlessness, exhaustion, stress, and sadness, referred to as ecoanxiety and climate anxiety.”

The report adds that the effects of climate change are not homogeneous across the population. Certain demographics are likely to suffer disproportionate impacts from rising temperatures and increasing climate disasters. These include older people, unhoused populations, Indigenous groups, and communities primarily composed of lower-income people and people of color.

Members of vulnerable groups may be more prone to mental health difficulties resulting from climate change, the report points out, adding that structural racism and discrimination can compound these negative mental health effects.

These ideas highlight one major limitation of the British Columbia surveys. The vast majority of respondents were white.

The surveys' participants otherwise represented a reasonably diverse cross-section of the population. Participants included nearly equal numbers of men and women, with a small number of nonbinary respondents. Most ranged in age from 24 to 65. They represented diverse political leanings and income backgrounds.

Still, the authors note in the study that the lack of racial and ethnic diversity is a limitation. Future research, they suggest, should explore how climate-related events affect the mental health of populations disproportionately at risk from the effects of climate change.

Anxiety around climate change can have a strong impact on major life decisions, Card pointed out. It may affect a person's choice of career, where they choose to live or whether they decide to have children.

A better understanding of the public's psychological and emotional responses to climate change can better equip experts to support them, he added. This kind of support can include everything from stronger climate action and more climate-resilient infrastructure to stronger mental care systems.

"Our hope is to show that this is something that's influencing people's thinking now, that it's causing disruption to people's lives now," Card said.

Reprinted from *E&E News* with permission from POLITICO, LLC. Copyright 2022. *E&E News* provides essential news for energy and environment professionals.

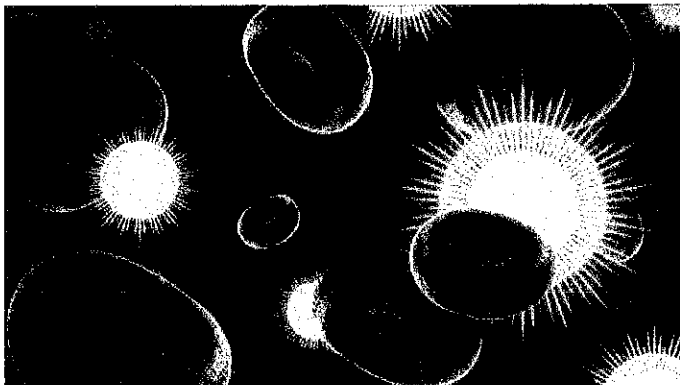
CHELSEA HARVEY covers climate science for *Climatewire*. She tracks the big questions being asked by researchers and explains what's known, and what needs to be, about global temperatures. Chelsea began writing about climate science in 2014. Her work has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Popular Science*, *Men's Journal* and others.

[More by Chelsea Harvey](#)

E&E NEWS provides essential energy and environment news for professionals.

[More by E&E News](#)

Popular Stories

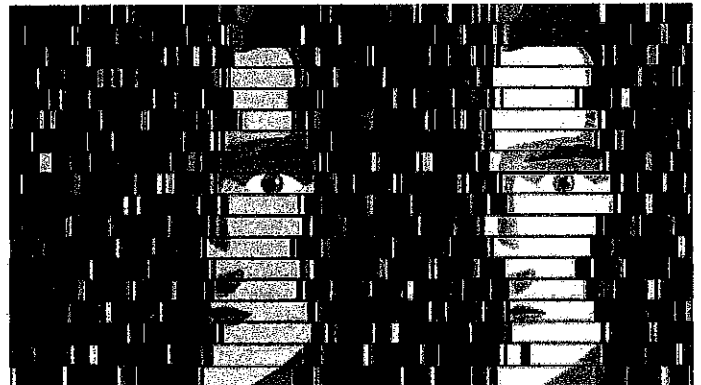


HEALTH | MAY 20, 2025

Can Sunlight Cure Disease?

Sunshine may hold healing rays for a variety of autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis. Scientists are turning this surprising discovery into treatments

ROWAN JACOBSEN



EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY | MAY 20, 2025

DNA Studies Uncover Unexpected Evolutionary Changes in Modern Humans

Mounting evidence from genome studies indicates that, contrary to received wisdom, our species has undergone profound biological adaptation in its recent evolutionary past

KERMIT PATTISON

The New York Times<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/opinion/ai-internet-lawsuit.html>**GUEST ESSAY**

The Internet Is About to Get Much Worse

Sept. 23, 2023

**By Julia Angwin**

Ms. Angwin is a contributing Opinion writer and an investigative journalist.

Greg Marston, a British voice actor, recently came across “Connor” online — an A.I.-generated clone of his voice, trained on a recording Mr. Marston had made in 2003. It was his voice uttering things he had never said.

Back then, he had recorded a session for IBM and later signed a release form allowing the recording to be used in many ways. Of course, at that time, Mr. Marston couldn’t envision that IBM would use anything more than the exact utterances he had recorded. Thanks to artificial intelligence, however, IBM was able to sell Mr. Marston’s decades-old sample to websites that are using it to build a synthetic voice that could say anything. Mr. Marston recently discovered his voice emanating from the Wimbledon website during the tennis tournament. (IBM said it is aware of Mr. Marston’s concern and is discussing it with him directly.)

His plight illustrates why many of our economy’s best-known creators are up in arms. We are in a time of eroding trust, as people realize that their contributions to a public space may be taken, monetized and potentially used to compete with them. When that erosion is complete, I worry that our digital public spaces might become even more polluted with

untrustworthy content.

Already, artists are deleting their work from X, formerly known as Twitter, after the company said it would be using data from its platform to train its A.I. Hollywood writers and actors are on strike partly because they want to ensure their work is not fed into A.I. systems that companies could try to replace them with. News outlets including The New York Times and CNN have added files to their website to help prevent A.I. chatbots from scraping their content.

Authors are suing A.I. outfits, alleging that their books are included in the sites' training data. OpenAI has argued, in a separate proceeding, that the use of copyrighted data for training A.I. systems is legal under the "fair use" provision of copyright law.

Sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter Get expert analysis of the news and a guide to the big ideas shaping the world every weekday morning. [Get it sent to your inbox.](#)

While creators of quality content are contesting how their work is being used, dubious A.I.-generated content is stampeding into the public sphere. NewsGuard has identified 475 A.I.-generated news and information websites in 14 languages. A.I.-generated music is flooding streaming websites and generating A.I. royalties for scammers. A.I.-generated books — including a mushroom foraging guide that could lead to mistakes in identifying highly poisonous fungi — are so prevalent on Amazon that the company is asking authors who self-publish on its Kindle platform to also declare if they are using A.I.

This is a classic case of tragedy of the commons, where a common resource is harmed by the profit interests of individuals. The traditional example of this is a public field that cattle can graze upon. Without any

limits, individual cattle owners have an incentive to overgraze the land, destroying its value to everybody.

We have commons on the internet, too. Despite all of its toxic corners, it is still full of vibrant portions that serve the public good — places like Wikipedia and Reddit forums, where volunteers often share knowledge in good faith and work hard to keep bad actors at bay.

But these commons are now being overgrazed by rapacious tech companies that seek to feed all of the human wisdom, expertise, humor, anecdotes and advice they find in these places into their for-profit A.I. systems.

Consider, for instance, that the volunteers who build and maintain Wikipedia trusted that their work would be used according to the terms of their site, which requires attribution. Now some Wikipedians are apparently debating whether they have any legal recourse against chatbots that use their content without citing the source.

Regulators are trying to figure it out, too. The European Union is considering the first set of global restrictions on A.I., which would require some transparency from generative A.I. systems, including providing summaries of copyrighted data that was used to train its systems.

That would be a good step forward, since many A.I. systems do not fully disclose the data they were trained on. It has primarily been journalists who have dug up the murky data that lies beneath the glossy surface of the chatbots. A recent investigation detailed in *The Atlantic* revealed that more than 170,000 pirated books are included in the training data for Meta's A.I. chatbot, Llama. A *Washington Post* investigation revealed that OpenAI's ChatGPT relies on data scraped without consent from hundreds of thousands of websites.

But transparency is hardly enough to rebalance the power between those

whose data is being exploited and the companies poised to cash in on the exploitation.

Tim Friedlander, the founder and president of the National Association of Voice Actors, has called for A.I. companies to adopt ethical standards. He says that actors need three C's: consent, control and compensation.

In fact, all of us need the three C's. Whether we are professional actors or we just post pictures on social media, everyone should have the right to meaningful consent on whether we want our online lives fed into the giant A.I. machines.

And consent should not mean having to locate a bunch of hard-to-find opt-out buttons to click — which is where the industry is heading.

Compensation is harder to figure out, especially since most of the A.I. bots are primarily free services at the moment. But make no mistake, the A.I. industry is planning to and will make money from these systems, and when it does, there will be a reckoning with those whose works fueled the profits.

For people like Mr. Marston, their livelihoods are at stake. He estimates that his A.I. clone has already lost him jobs and will cut into his future earnings significantly. He is working with a lawyer to seek compensation. "I never agreed or consented to having my voice cloned, to see/hear it released to the public, thus competing against myself," he told me.

But even those of us who don't have a job directly threatened by A.I. think of writing that novel or composing a song or recording a TikTok or making a joke on social media. If we don't have any protections from the A.I. data overgrazers, I worry that it will feel pointless to even try to create in public. And that would be a real tragedy.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email:

letters@nytimes.com.

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on Facebook, Twitter (@NYTopinion) and Instagram.

Julia Angwin is a contributing Opinion writer who writes about tech policy. You can follow her on Twitter or Mastodon or her personal newsletter.

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 24 of the New York edition with the headline: The A.I. Overlords Are Already Ruining the Internet

China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative

China's colossal infrastructure investments may usher in a new era of trade and growth for economies in Asia and beyond. But skeptics worry that China is laying a debt trap for borrowing governments.

WRITTEN BY

James McBride, Noah Berman, *and* Andrew Chatzky

UPDATED

Last updated February 2, 2023 4:30 pm (EST)

Summary

The Belt and Road Initiative is a massive China-led infrastructure project that aims to stretch around the globe.

Some analysts see the project as a disturbing expansion of Chinese power, and the United States has struggled to offer a competing vision.

The initiative has stoked opposition in some Belt and Road countries that have experienced debt crises.

Sign up for a summary of global news developments with CFR analysis delivered to your inbox every weekday morning. [Subscribe to the Daily News Brief.](#)

Introduction

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), sometimes referred to as the New Silk Road, is one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects ever conceived. Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, the vast collection of development and investment initiatives was originally devised to link East

Asia and Europe through physical infrastructure. In the decade since, the project has expanded to Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, significantly broadening China's economic and political influence.

Some analysts see the project as an unsettling extension of China's rising power, and as the cost of many of the projects have skyrocketed, opposition has grown in some countries. Meanwhile, the United States shares the concern of some in Asia that the BRI could be a Trojan horse for China-led regional development and military expansion. President Joe Biden has maintained his predecessors' skeptical stance towards Beijing's actions, but Washington has struggled to offer participating governments a more appealing economic vision.

What was the original Silk Road?

The original Silk Road arose during the westward expansion of China's Han Dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE), which forged trade networks throughout what are today the Central Asian countries of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as modern-day India and Pakistan to the south. Those routes extended more than four thousand miles to Europe.

Central Asia was thus the epicenter of one of the first waves of globalization, connecting eastern and western markets, spurring immense wealth, and intermixing cultural and religious traditions. Valuable Chinese silk, spices, jade, and other goods moved west while China received gold and other precious metals, ivory, and glass products. Use of the route peaked during the first millennium, under the leadership of first the Roman and then Byzantine Empires, and the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) in China.

But the Crusades, as well as advances by the Mongols in Central Asia, dampened trade, and today Central Asian countries are economically isolated from each other, with intra-regional trade making up a small percentage of all cross-border commerce. They are also heavily dependent on Russia, particularly for remittances, which made up nearly one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan before the Russian war in Ukraine scattered remittance-sending migrant laborers.

What are China's plans for its New Silk Road?

President Xi announced the initiative during official visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in 2013. The plan was two-pronged: the overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. The two were collectively referred to first as the One Belt, One Road initiative but eventually became the Belt and Road Initiative.

Xi's vision included creating a vast network of railways, energy pipelines, highways, and streamlined border crossings, both westward—through the mountainous former Soviet republics and southward, to Pakistan, India, and the rest of Southeast Asia. Such a network would expand the international use of Chinese currency, the renminbi, and “break the bottleneck in Asian connectivity,” according to Xi. (In 2018, the Asian Development Bank estimated that the continent faces a yearly infrastructure financing shortfall of over \$900 billion.) In addition to physical infrastructure, China has funded hundreds of special economic zones, or industrial parks designed to create jobs, and encouraged countries to embrace its tech offerings, such as the 5G network powered by telecommunications giant Huawei.

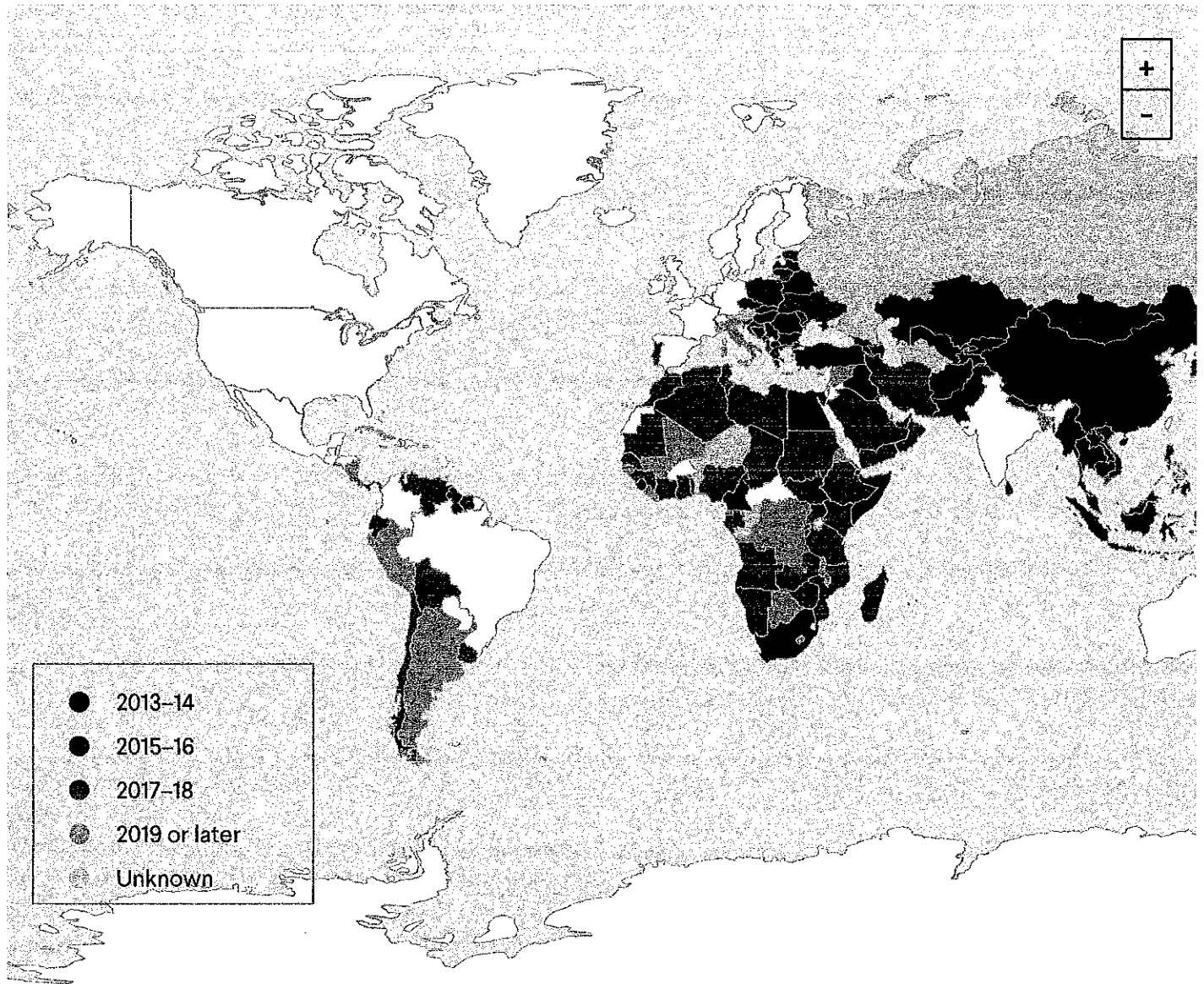
Xi subsequently announced plans for the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road at the 2013 summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Indonesia. To accommodate expanding maritime trade traffic, China would invest in port development along the Indian Ocean, from Southeast Asia all the way to East Africa and parts of Europe.

China's overall ambition for the BRI is staggering. To date, 147 countries—accounting for two-thirds of the world's population and 40 percent of global GDP—have signed on to projects or indicated an interest in doing so.

The Belt and Road Initiative Has Gone Global

Official BRI participants by year of joining

Map	Table
-----	-------



Note: Publicly available information for countries marked unknown is unclear or contradictory.

Sources: Green Finance and Development Center; Green Belt and Road Initiative Center; Belt and Road Portal.

Analysts estimate the largest so far to be the estimated \$62 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a collection of projects connecting China to Pakistan's Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea. In total, China has already spent an estimated \$1 trillion on such efforts. Experts have predicted that China's expenses over the life of the BRI could reach as much as \$8 trillion though estimates vary.

What does China hope to achieve?

China has both geopolitical and economic motivations behind the initiative. Xi has promoted a vision of a more assertive China, even as the country's outstanding loans have grown to the equivalent of over a quarter of its GDP.

Experts see the BRI as one of the main planks of a bolder Chinese statecraft under Xi, alongside the Made in China 2025 economic development strategy. For Xi, the BRI serves as pushback against the much-touted U.S. "pivot to Asia," as well as a way for China to develop new trade linkages, cultivate export markets, boost Chinese incomes, and export China's excess production capacity. "China has had a fair amount of success in redrawing trade maps around the world, in ways that put China at the center and not the U.S. or Europe," says CFR's David Sacks, an expert on U.S.-China relations.

At the same time, China is motivated to boost global economic links to its western regions, which historically have been neglected. Promoting economic development in the western province of Xinjiang, where separatist violence has been on the upswing, is a major priority, as is securing long-term energy supplies from Central Asia and the Middle East, especially via routes the U.S. military cannot disrupt.

More broadly, Chinese leaders are determined to restructure the economy to avoid the so-called middle-income trap. In this scenario, which has plagued close to 90 percent of middle-income countries since 1960, wages go up and quality of life improves as low-skilled manufacturing rises but countries struggle to then shift to producing higher-value goods and services.

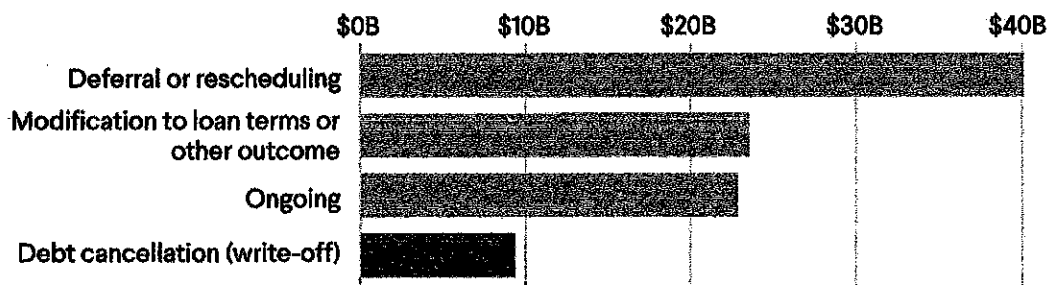
Finally, Beijing could seek geopolitical leverage over BRI countries. A 2021 study [PDF] analyzed over one hundred debt financing contracts China signed with foreign governments and found the contracts often contain clauses that restrict restructuring with the group of twenty-two major creditor nations known as the "Paris Club." China also frequently retains the right to demand repayment at any time, giving Beijing the ability to use funding as a tool to enforce Chinese hot button issues such as Taiwan or the treatment of Uyghurs. In January 2022, Nicaragua officially joined BRI, one month after severing diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

What are the potential roadblocks?

The Belt and Road Initiative has also stoked opposition. For some countries that take on large amounts of debt to fund infrastructure upgrades, BRI money is seen as a potential poisoned chalice. China views BRI projects as a commercial endeavor [PDF], with loans close to a market interest rate that it expects to be fully repaid. Some BRI investments have involved opaque bidding processes and required the use of Chinese firms. As a result, contractors have inflated costs, leading to canceled projects and political backlash.

China Rarely Cancels Debt

Renegotiated debt by outcome, January 2001 to November 2020



Source: Rhodium Group.

Examples of such criticisms abound. In Malaysia, former prime minister Mahathir bin Mohamad campaigned against overpriced BRI initiatives and canceled \$22 billion worth of BRI projects, although he later announced his “full support” for the initiative. CFR’s Belt and Road Tracker shows overall debt to China has soared since 2013, surpassing 20 percent of GDP in some countries.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine roiled global markets, a climbing number of low-income BRI countries have struggled to repay loans associated with the initiative, spurring a wave of debt crises and new criticism for BRI. In Pakistan, for example, imports required to build CPEC infrastructure contributed to a widening budget deficit,

ultimately resulting in a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). And in Ghana and Zambia, high debt loads that partly consisted of BRI loans led to sovereign default. However, many countries that sign on to BRI have few alternatives, Sacks says.

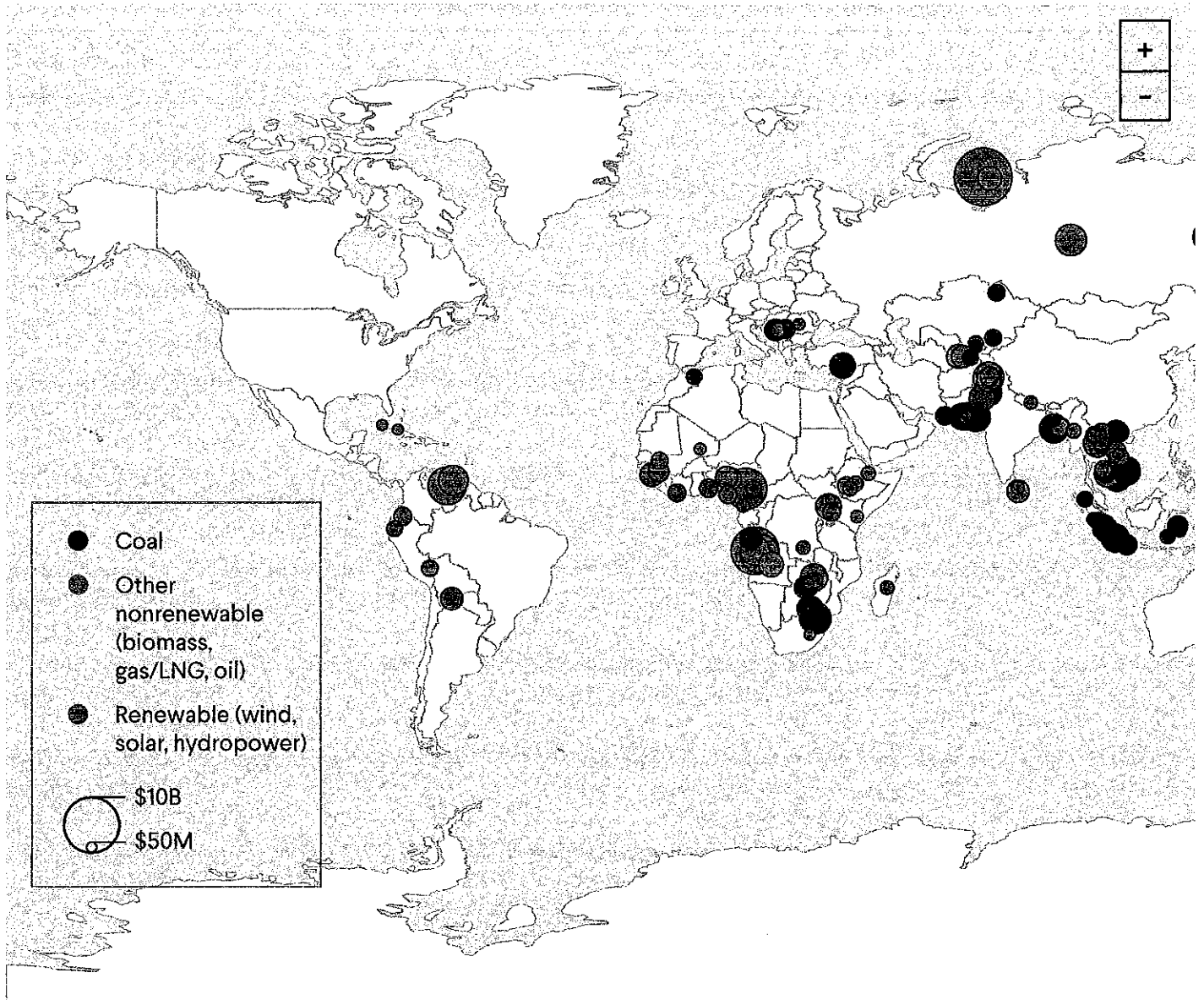
“If loans that you know are charging an exorbitant interest rate are the only way [to get infrastructure financing], you still have to weigh that trade off and probably proceed with that,” Sacks says.

Other skeptics connect the BRI with climate change. Though China committed to stop building coal-fired power plants abroad in 2021, nonrenewable energy investment has made up nearly half of all BRI spending; ambiguity remains about whether the commitment applies to projects already in progress or only to new projects, and if it restricts coal-fired power plant financing in addition to construction.

Most of China's Energy Project Financing in BRI Countries Goes Toward Nonrenewables

Energy projects financed by state-owned Chinese banks in BRI countries since the initiative's launch in 2013

Map	Table
-----	-------



Sources: Boston University; China Africa Research Initiative, Johns Hopkins University; Stimson Center; CFR research.

How has the United States responded to China-led regional integration?

The United States has shared other countries' concerns about China's intentions. Since the Obama administration's Pivot to Asia, the United States has spent billions of dollars and flexed diplomatic muscle to build infrastructure and foster cooperation between low-income countries. President

Donald Trump passed the BUILD act, which consolidated Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a U.S. government agency for development finance, with components of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) into a separate agency (the Development Finance Corporation) with a \$60 billion investment portfolio.

In 2021, President Joe Biden, in collaboration with the Group of Seven (G7), launched the Build Back Better World Initiative (“B3W”) an infrastructure investment program conceived to compete with BRI. Though some supporters say B3W acts as a complement to BRI, many acknowledge that its lack of financing prevents it from acting as a serious challenger to China’s initiative. One year after B3W was announced, commitments under the initiative totaled only \$6 million, and it has been renamed the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. Rather than investing in infrastructure, where China holds an economic advantage (China won more than eight times as many World Bank-funded infrastructure contracts as the United States in 2020), critics say Washington should boost its aid-based lending through existing multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF.

Others have argued that the United States might find a silver lining in the BRI. Jonathan E. Hillman, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, says the United States could use BRI projects as a way to have China pay for infrastructure initiatives in Central Asia that are also in the U.S. interest.

What is the role for third countries?

Some countries have sought to balance their concerns about China’s ambitions against the BRI potential benefits.

India. India has tried to convince countries that the BRI is a plan to dominate Asia, warning of what some analysts have called a “String of Pearls” geoeconomic strategy whereby China creates unsustainable debt burdens for its Indian Ocean neighbors in order to seize control of regional choke points. In particular, New Delhi has long been unsettled by China’s decades-long embrace of its traditional rival, Pakistan. Meanwhile, India has provided its own development assistance to its neighbors, most notably Afghanistan, where it has spent \$3 billion on infrastructure projects.

Although India was a founding member of China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Indian and Chinese officials have since diverged on trade policy. Accordingly, the United States views India as a counterweight to a China-dominated Asia and has sought to knit together its strategic relationships in the region, most recently via the 2022 Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

Japan. Tokyo has a similar strategy to New Delhi's, balancing its interest in regional infrastructure development with long-standing suspicions about China's intentions. Japan has committed over \$300 billion in public and private financing to infrastructure projects throughout Asia. Together with India, Japan has also agreed to cultivate the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), a plan to develop and connect ports from Myanmar to East Africa, though little progress has been made on the initiative since it was announced in 2017.

Europe. Over two-thirds of European Union (EU) member countries have formally signed on to the BRI with large Chinese infrastructure investment responsible for projects such as the renovation of the port of Piraeus in Greece and the Budapest-Belgrade railway in Hungary. Beijing has also funded a number of projects on the continent in non-EU countries. These investments have "made it harder for the EU to craft a united approach to China," and Greece and Hungary have obstructed bloc-wide efforts to criticize China, CFR's Jennifer Hillman and Alex Tippet write.

Some European countries have been more critical. French President Emmanuel Macron has urged prudence, suggesting during a 2018 trip to China that the BRI could make partner countries "vassal states." In December 2021, the EU announced Global Gateway, a \$300 billion infrastructure investment program explicitly meant to rival BRI, which critics say is a "drop in the ocean" compared to BRI. Others worry that China is using BRI funds to gain influence in Balkan countries hoping to become EU members such as Serbia, thereby providing China access to the heart of the EU's common market.

Russia. Moscow has become one of the BRI's most enthusiastic partners, though it responded to Xi's announcement at first with reticence, worried that Beijing's plans would outshine Moscow's vision for a "Eurasian Economic Union" and impinge on its traditional sphere of influence.

As Russia's relationship with the West has deteriorated, however, President Vladimir Putin has pledged to link his Eurasian vision with the BRI. Some experts are skeptical of such an alliance which they argue would be economically asymmetrical. Russia's economy and its total trade volume are both roughly one-eighth the size of China's—a gulf that the BRI could widen in the coming years. And in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine, some analysts have said that Beijing refusal to condemn Russia has alienated Eastern European countries that are viewed as targets of the BRI.

Recommended Resources

This CFR Independent Task Force report evaluates the implications of the BRI for U.S. interests and puts forward a U.S. strategy to respond to it.

This *Financial Times* report on the BRI explores the political controversies—inside and outside China—that it has produced.

This AidData study reviews one hundred Chinese debt contracts with foreign governments.

The *Wall Street Journal* examines how China spent \$1 trillion on BRI.

CFR's Belt and Road Tracker shows how the BRI has changed countries' bilateral economic relationships with China over time.

A National Bureau of Asian Research special report looks at how the BRI could affect China's overall security strategy.

The Center for Global Development's Charles Kenny and Scott Morris argue that the United States shouldn't copy BRI in this *Foreign Affairs* piece.

GUEST ESSAY

The Naval Academy Canceled My Lecture on Wisdom

April 19, 2025



Listen to this article • 8:26 min [Learn more](#)

By Ryan Holiday

Mr. Holiday had been asked to give one of the Stutt Lectures at the U.S. Naval Academy on April 14.

For the past four years, I have been delivering a series of lectures on the virtues of Stoicism to midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and I was supposed to continue this on April 14 to the entire sophomore class on the theme of wisdom.

Roughly an hour before my talk was to begin, I received a call: Would I refrain from any mention in my remarks of the recent removal of 381 supposedly controversial books from the Nimitz library on campus? My slides had been sent up the chain of command at the school, which was now, as it was explained to me, extremely worried about reprisals if my talk appeared to flout Executive Order 14151 (Ending Radical and Wasteful Government D.E.I. Programs and Preferencing).

When I declined, my lecture — as well as a planned speech before the Navy football team, with which my books on Stoicism are popular — was canceled. (The academy “made a schedule change that aligns with its mission of preparing midshipmen for careers of service,” a Navy spokesperson told Times Opinion. “The Naval Academy is an apolitical institution.”)

Had I been allowed to go ahead, this is the story I was going to tell the class:

In the fall of 1961, a young naval officer named James Stockdale, a graduate of the Naval Academy and future Medal of Honor recipient who went on to be a vice admiral, began a course at Stanford he had eagerly anticipated on Marxist theory. “We read no criticisms

of Marxism,” he recounted later, “only primary sources. All year we read the works of Marx and Lenin.”

It might seem unusual that the Navy would send Mr. Stockdale, then a 36-year-old fighter pilot, to get a master’s degree in the social sciences, but he knew why he was there. Writing home to his parents that year, he reminded them of a lesson they had instilled in him, “You really can’t do well competing against something you don’t understand as well as something you can.”

Sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter Get expert analysis of the news and a guide to the big ideas shaping the world every weekday morning. [Get it sent to your inbox.](#)

At the time, Marxism was not just an abstract academic subject but the ideological foundation of America’s greatest geopolitical enemy. The stakes were high. The Soviets were pushing a vision of global Communism, and the conflict in Vietnam was flashing hot, the North Vietnamese fueled by a ruthless mix of dogma and revolutionary zeal. Marxism was, like today, also a culture war boogeyman used by politicians and demagogues.

Just a few short years after completing his studies, in September 1965, Mr. Stockdale was shot down over Thanh Hoa in North Vietnam, and as he parachuted into what he knew would be imprisonment and possibly death, his mind turned to the philosophy of Epictetus, which he had been introduced to by a professor at Stanford.

He would spend the next seven years in various states of solitary confinement and enduring brutal torture. His captors, sensing perhaps his knowledge as a pilot of the Gulf of Tonkin incident, a manufactured confrontation with North Vietnamese forces that led to greater U.S. involvement in Vietnam, sought desperately to break him. Mr. Stockdale drew on the Stoicism of Epictetus, but he also leveraged his knowledge of the practices and the mind-set of his oppressors.

“In Hanoi, I understood more about Marxist theory than my interrogator did,” Mr. Stockdale explained. “I was able to say to that interrogator, ‘That’s not what Lenin said; you’re a deviationist.’”

In his writings and speeches after his return from the prison known as the Hanoi Hilton, Mr. Stockdale often referred to what he called “extortion environments,” which he used to describe his experience as a captive. He and his fellow P.O.W.s were asked to answer simple questions or perform seemingly innocuous tasks, like appear in videos, and if they

declined, there would be consequences.

No one at the Naval Academy intimated any consequences for me, of course, but it felt extortionary all the same. I had to choose between my message or my continued welcome at an institution it has been one of the honors of my life to speak at.

As an author, I believe deeply in the power of books. As a bookstore owner in Texas, I have spoken up about book banning many times. More important was the topic of my address: the virtue of wisdom.

As I explained repeatedly to my hosts, I had no interest in embarrassing anyone or discussing politics directly. I understand the immense pressures they are under, especially the military employees, and I did not want to cause them trouble. I did, however, feel it was essential to make the point that the pursuit of wisdom is impossible without engaging with (and challenging) uncomfortable ideas.

Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, used a military metaphor to make this very argument. We ought to read, he said, "like a spy in the enemy's camp." This is what Mr. Stockdale was doing when he studied Marxism on the Navy's dime. It is what Seneca was doing when he read and liberally quoted from Epicurus, the head of a rival philosophical school.

The current administration is by no means unique in its desire to suppress ideas it doesn't like or thinks dangerous. As I intended to explain to the midshipmen, there was considerable political pressure in the 1950s over what books were carried in the libraries of federal installations. Asked if he would ban Communist books from American Embassies, Eisenhower resisted.

"Generally speaking," he told a reporter from The New York Herald Tribune at a news conference shortly after his inauguration, "my idea is that censorship and hiding solves nothing." He explained that he wished more Americans had read Hitler and Stalin in the previous years, because it might have helped anticipate the oncoming threats. He concluded, "Let's educate ourselves if we are going to run a free government."

The men and women at the Naval Academy will go on to lead combat missions, to command aircraft carriers, to pilot nuclear-armed submarines and run enormous organizations. We will soon entrust them with incredible responsibilities and power. But we fear they'll be hoodwinked or brainwashed by certain books?

Hitler's "Mein Kampf" was not one of the books removed from the Naval Academy library, and as heinous as that book is, it should be accessible to scholars and students of history. However, this makes the removal of Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" inexplicable. Whatever one thinks of diversity, equity and inclusion, we are talking

about not the writings of external enemies here but, in many cases, art, serious scholarship and legitimate criticism of America's past. One of the removed books is about Black soldiers in World War II, another is about how women killed in the Holocaust are portrayed, and another is a reimagining of Kafka called "The Last White Man." No people at any public institution should have to fear losing their job for pushing back on such an obvious overreach, let alone those tasked with defending our freedom. Yet here we are.

The decision by the academy's leaders to not protest the original order — which I believe flies in the face of basic academic freedoms and common sense — has put them in the now even stickier position of trying to suppress criticism of that decision. "Compromises pile up when you're in a pressure situation in the hands of a skilled extortionist," Mr. Stockdale reminded us. I felt I could not, in good conscience, lecture these future leaders and warriors on the virtue of courage and doing the right thing, as I did in 2023 and 2024, and fold when asked not to mention such an egregious and fundamentally anti-wisdom course of action.

In many moments, many understandable moments, Mr. Stockdale had an opportunity to do the expedient thing as a P.O.W. He could have compromised. He could have obeyed. It would have saved him considerable pain, prevented the injuries that deprived him of full use of his leg for the rest of his life and perhaps even returned him home sooner to his family. He chose not to do that. He rejected the extortionary choice and stood on principle.

Ryan Holiday is the author of "Right Thing Right Now" and creator of Daily Stoic, a daily email featuring advice based on ancient philosophy.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: letters@nytimes.com.

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Bluesky, WhatsApp and Threads.

Name: _____

Class: _____

The Complexity of Fear

Are you experiencing anxiety, or is it fear?

By Mary C. Lamia, Ph.D.

2011

Fear is a universal human emotion that researchers, psychologists, and philosophers have been trying to understand for ages. In this article, Dr. Mary C. Lamia reveals why fear is such a complex emotion to understand. As you read, look for evidence to answer these very important questions: What is fear? How does fear drive action?

- [1] As you are walking home alone late at night, you hear the soft, crackling sound of someone or something stepping on dry leaves nearby. Your heart begins to race as you imagine who or what lurks in the shadows. Are you experiencing fear, or anxiety? The differences between these emotions can be confusing. Even in psychological literature you will frequently find the concepts used interchangeably. Fears of the unknown, a fear of death, contamination fear, a fear of flying, catastrophic fear, a fear of success, and a fear of failure are all commonly noted as a "fear," yet they are actually experienced as the emotion of anxiety. Similarly, phobias are considered to be an anxiety disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), even though we think of a phobia in terms of something that is feared, be it insects, enclosed spaces, heights, or contamination. Yet fear and anxiety are important to differentiate, to the extent that one can do so. These emotions can transform into behaviors that may lead you to avoid situations or into defense mechanisms that may obscure the recognition of reality, and consequently they have been understood as keys to the dynamics of emotional illness (Ohman, 2010).



"FEAR" by Jordan Francisco is licensed under CC0.

Fear is generally considered a reaction to something immediate that threatens your security or safety, such as being startled by someone suddenly jumping out at you from behind a bush. The emotion of fear is felt as a sense of dread, alerting you to the possibility that your physical self might be harmed, which in turn motivates you to protect yourself. Thus, the notion of "fight or flight" is considered a fear response and describes the behavior of various animals when they are threatened—either hanging around and fighting, or taking off in order to escape danger. Yet it has also been recognized that animals and people have other responses to a threat: a person or animal might play dead or just "freeze" in response to being threatened; yell or scream as a fighting response rather than get physical; or, isolate as a flight response. As a

result, some researchers suggest an expanded version of the fight-or-flight response, namely, "freeze, flight, fight, or fright" (Bracha, Ralston, Matsunaga, Williams, & Bracha, 2004). Others have suggested that "tend-and-befriend" responses should also be considered, such as turning to others for help or social support, or making a situation less tense, dangerous, or uncomfortable in some way (Taylor, Klein, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, & Updegraff, 2000).

In contrast to fear, anxiety is a general state of distress that is longer lasting than fear and usually is triggered by something that is not specific, even though it produces physiological arousal, such as nervousness and apprehension (Lang et al., 2000). Yet both fear and anxiety emotions are triggered in response to threat. Some researchers distinguish between fear and anxiety by determining whether or not avoidance behaviors are present (Sylvers et al., 2011), or if the intended outcome has to do with avoidance or escape (Lang, et al., 2000). Thus, the presence of avoidance behaviors would indicate fear, in contrast to anxiety where a person may be very much on the alert but does not avoid the situation. However, this can be confusing since in certain anxiety disorders, particularly in phobias, the focus is specific and avoidance behaviors are present. Perhaps better clarifying the difference is the notion that where anxiety is foreboding and puts you on alert to a future threat, fear immediately leads to an urge to defend yourself with escape from an impending disaster (Ohman, 2010).

There are times when a past fear might re-emerge, even though the present situation does not truly warrant the need to be afraid. Such is the case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), where the consequence of a prior situation where you actually were in danger is re-lived in the present when those emotional memories are triggered. Although you may intellectually know that you are safe, your brain automatically prepares you for the worst to happen—a situation that it recognizes has happened before—which speaks to the power of emotional memory. A post-traumatic response can be triggered by a situation that is similar to a past trauma, the date in which a trauma occurred, a particular thought, or by a relationship that brings up an issue that is similar to a trauma that you have previously experienced. In a simple example, people who have been rear-ended in a motor vehicle accident frequently describe that, for many weeks or months, they fear being rear-ended again and, as a result, find themselves vigilantly peering into their rear view mirror in anticipation of an impact occurring. But here we are once again faced with confusion between fear and anxiety. Although a post-traumatic response may have to do with a situation in which fear was the primary emotion involved, PTSD is listed as an anxiety disorder by the American Psychiatric Association (2000). The danger is not an actual one in PTSD, but it is anticipated or expected based on a prior experience. So where the original trauma triggered fear, post-traumatic stress may trigger anxiety that anticipates fear.

- [5] From an evolutionary perspective, the emotion of fear protected humans from predators and other threats to the survival of the species. So it is no wonder that certain dangers evoke that emotion, since fear helps protect you and is therefore adaptive, functional, and necessary. However, there is another important aspect of emotions to consider that, in the case of fear, may be important to decision-making as well as survival. That is, when an emotion is triggered it has an impact on our judgments and choices in situations (Lerner and Keltner, 2001). In a study of risk taking, participants who were fearful consistently made judgments and choices that were relatively pessimistic and amplified their perception of risk in a given situation, in contrast to

happy or angry participants who were more likely to disregard risk by making relatively optimistic judgments and choices (Lerner and Keltner, 2001). Similarly, individuals who are trait fearful—those who tend to have personality characteristics that are dominated by the emotion of fear—will avoid taking risks that are generally perceived by others as relatively benign (Sylvers, et al., 2011). Thus, awareness of your emotions and considering how they might influence your decision-making in a given situation is important in your approach to life, your work, and your goals. Certainly, such is the case of fear in all of its complexity.

References

- American Psychiatric Association (2000). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (Revised), 4th ed. Washington, DC: Author.
- Bracha, H., Ralston, T. C., Matsukawa, J. M., Matsunaga, S., Williams, A. E., & Bracha, A. S. (2004). Does "fight or flight" need updating? *Psychosomatics*, 45, 448-449.
- Lang, P., Davis, M., & Ohman, A. (2000). Fear and anxiety: animal models and human cognitive psychophysiology. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 61, 137-159.
- Lerner, J. & Keltner, D. (2001). Fear, anger, and risk. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2001. 81:1, 146-159.
- [10] Öhman, A. (2010). Fear and anxiety: Overlaps and dissociations. In M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones, & L. Feldman Barrett (Eds.). *Handbook of emotions*. (pp.709-729). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Sylvers, P. Lilienfeld, S., & LaPrairie, J. (2011). Differences between trait fear and trait anxiety: Implications for psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31, 122-137.
- Taylor, S. E., Klein, L. C., Lewis, B. P., Gruenewald, T. L., Gurung, R. A., & Updegraff, J. A. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review*, 107, 411-429.

"The Complexity of Fear", © 2011, Mary C. Lamia, Ph.D. . Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.

Unless otherwise noted, this content is licensed under the [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

The New York Times<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/02/opinion/ai-human-education.html>**DAVID BROOKS**

In the Age of A.I., Major in Being Human

Feb. 2, 2023

**By David Brooks**
Opinion Columnist

Last summer, a piece of artwork generated with artificial intelligence took a first prize at the Colorado State Fair. To me, the image looks like a view from the back of the stage at an opera. You see the backs of three singers, then, past them, vague squiggles and forms that may or may not be an audience, and all around, dominating everything, the fantastical Lord of the Rings-style palace where they are performing.

The artwork looks cool at first glance, but after a second it feels kind of lifeless.

“As I came back to the image and sat with it for a while, I found that my efforts to engage it at depth were thwarted,” L.M. Sacasas wrote in his newsletter on technology and culture. “This happened when I began to inspect the image more closely. As I did so, my experience of the image began to devolve rather than deepen.”

This is what many of us notice about art or prose generated by A.I. It’s often bland and vague. It’s missing a humanistic core. It’s missing an individual person’s passion, pain, longings and a life of deeply felt personal experiences. It does not spring from a person’s imagination, bursts of

insight, anxiety and joy that underlie any profound work of human creativity.

This points to what could be the core reality of the coming A.I. age. A.I. will probably give us fantastic tools that will help us outsource a lot of our current mental work. At the same time, A.I. will force us humans to double down on those talents and skills that only humans possess. The most important thing about A.I. may be that it shows us what it can't do, and so reveals who we are and what we have to offer.

If, say, you're a college student preparing for life in an A.I. world, you need to ask yourself: Which classes will give me the skills that machines will not replicate, making me more distinctly human? You probably want to avoid any class that teaches you to think in an impersonal, linear, generalized kind of way — the kind of thinking A.I. will crush you at. On the other hand, you probably want to gravitate toward any class, in the sciences or the humanities, that will help you develop the following distinctly human skills:

A distinct personal voice. A.I. often churns out the kind of impersonal bureaucratic prose that is found in corporate communications or academic journals. You'll want to develop a voice as distinct as those of George Orwell, Joan Didion, Tom Wolfe and James Baldwin, so take classes in which you are reading distinctive and flamboyant voices so you can craft your own.

Sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter Get expert analysis of the news and a guide to the big ideas shaping the world every weekday morning. [Get it sent to your inbox.](#)

Presentation skills. "The prior generation of information technology favored the introverts, whereas the new A.I. bots are more likely to favor

the extroverts,” the George Mason University economist Tyler Cowen writes. “You will need to be showing off all the time that you are more than ‘one of them.’” The ability to create and give a good speech, connect with an audience, and organize fun and productive gatherings seem like a suite of skills that A.I. will not replicate.

A childlike talent for creativity. “When you interact for a while with a system like GPT-3, you notice that it tends to veer from the banal to the completely nonsensical,” Alison Gopnik, famed for her studies on the minds of children, observes. “Somehow children find the creative sweet spot between the obvious and the crazy.” Children, she argues, don’t just imitate or passively absorb data; they explore, and they create innovative theories and imaginative stories to explain the world. You want to take classes — whether they are about coding or painting — that unleash your creativity, that give you a chance to exercise and hone your imaginative powers.

Unusual worldviews. A.I. can be just a text-prediction machine. A.I. is good at predicting what word should come next, so you want to be really good at being unpredictable, departing from the conventional. Stock your mind with worldviews from faraway times, unusual people and unfamiliar places: Epicureanism, Stoicism, Thomism, Taoism, etc. People with contrarian mentalities and idiosyncratic worldviews will be valuable in an age when conventional thinking is turbo powered.

Empathy. Machine thinking is great for understanding the behavioral patterns across populations. It is not great for understanding the unique individual right in front of you. If you want to be able to do this, good humanities classes are really useful. By studying literature, drama, biography and history, you learn about what goes on in the minds of other people. If you can understand another person’s perspective, you have a more valuable skill than the skill possessed by some machine vacuuming up vast masses of data about no one in particular.

Situational Awareness. A person with this skill has a feel for the unique contours of the situation she is in the middle of. She has an intuitive awareness of when to follow the rules and when to break the rules, a feel for the flow of events, a special sensitivity, not necessarily conscious, for how fast to move and what decisions to take that will prevent her from crashing on the rocks. This sensitivity flows from experience, historical knowledge, humility in the face of uncertainty, and having led a reflective and interesting life. It is a kind of knowledge held in the body as well as the brain.

The best teachers teach themselves. When I think back on my own best teachers, I generally don't remember what was on the curriculum, but rather who they were. Whether the subject of the course was in the sciences or in the humanities, I remember how these teachers modeled a passion for knowledge, a funny and dynamic way of connecting with students. They also modeled a set of moral virtues — how to be rigorous with evidence, how to admit error, how to coach students as they make their own discoveries. I remember how I admired them and wanted to be like them. That's a kind of knowledge you'll never get from a bot.

And that's my hope for the age of A.I. — that it forces us to more clearly distinguish the knowledge that is useful information from the humanistic knowledge that leaves people wiser and transformed.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: letters@nytimes.com.

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on Facebook, Twitter (@NYTopinion) and Instagram.

David Brooks has been a columnist with The Times since 2003. He is the author of "The Road to Character" and, most recently, "The Second Mountain." @nytdavidbrooks

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 22 of the New York edition with the headline: In