Tekstboekje
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Gunna: "Wunna"

Julyssa Lopez

**Hip-Hop** The Atlanta rapper Gunna recently evoked his zodiac sign — he's a Gemini — to explain why he titled his new album "Wunna." The name, he says, refers to an alter ego who inspires spontaneity in his music. Though he sometimes speeds up his flow over skittering beats in songs such as "Skybox," most of the project stays tethered to the rapper's signature languid delivery, inspired by his mentor Young Thug, who appears twice on the record. What doesn't come through is a new dimension of the artist; if anything, Gunna leans deeper into the subdued flexes and laid-back verses for which he is already known. Fans never meet the impulsive second self he's promised, though that likely won't matter to those looking for an extension of his woozy catalogue.

*The New Yorker, 2020*
A mountain of waste

1 "TAKE ONLY memories, leave only footprints" is more than a clichéd hiking motto at the Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal. The large box of rocks sitting next to the metal detector at the local airport is a testament to that: tourists departing from Mount Everest have to dispose of material they have collected before stepping onto the dauntingly short runway. Fulfilling the second half of this mantra, however, is harder. Tens of thousands of tourists leave more than just footprints.  

2 In 2017, 648 people reached Everest's summit, more than seven times the number two decades ago. Currently, their toilet waste is carried and dumped into pits near the town of Gorakshep, an hour's walk down the mountain. The amount of waste is increasing fast. When tests were done at nine water sources in the region, seven were contaminated with significant levels of E.coli. The presence of human by-products in the water, like nicotine and sunscreen, suggests that the contamination came from human faeces, rather than that of the many local yaks. 

3 One innovative solution could help. The Mount Everest Biogas Project, led by two mountaineers, hopes to install a biogas reactor in Gorakshep at the start of next year. All of the faeces from base camp would then be converted into two by-products: fertiliser and ethane gas, possibly for cooking. 

adapted from The Economist, 2018
Lena's soldier husband Kane has been missing for a year after a secret mission. Then suddenly he turns up on her doorstep, dying and barely knowing who he is. Soon the black vans arrive to haul them off to a facility on the edge of 'the Shimmer', a remote area that is experiencing strange phenomena following a small meteorite impact. It is all top secret, even though you'd think people might have noticed what seems to be a 50-mile-wide (and growing) soap bubble on Google Earth. Nobody knows what the Shimmer is. Of all the missions sent in, Kane is the only person to have returned. Lena, a biologist and ex-soldier herself, volunteers for an all-female expedition. Its members all have little to lose.

While originally made for the cinema, this does have a Netflix-film flavour to it: big-name cast, intriguing premise, high production values but flawed plot and structure. The logic holes let this down. The members of the expedition walk into this clearly dangerous environment without protective clothing or breathing apparatus, and with communications gear that they already know won't work. Also, we actually first meet Lena when she's being interrogated after her return: the story is told in flashback. So there goes most of the tension and mystery.

mercifullyshortreview.wordpress.com, 2018
Can language of the Vikings survive English onslaught?

By Ragnar Jónasson

1 “Coffee and kleina” reads a large sign at a roadside coffee shop by one of the main roads in Reykjavik. Not so many years ago, such a billboard would simply have read: “Kaffi og kleina” — in the language of the Vikings, the official language of Iceland.

2 It is a privilege of the few to be able to read and write Icelandic, a language understood by only around 400,000 people worldwide. Icelandic, in which the historic Sagas were written in the 13th and 14th centuries, has changed so little since then that we can still more or less read them as they were first written.

3 But Iceland is not so isolated anymore, and there are signs its language is facing challenges never seen before. Following the economic crash of 2008, and the subsequent collapse of the Icelandic currency, tourism has emerged as the largest industry in Iceland, with 2.5 million tourists expected to visit a country of 350,000 people in 2018 alone.

4 And everyone is catering to the tourists in English, of course. At restaurants and coffee shops, people frequently use English rather than Icelandic. Companies are rebranding themselves in English. The importance of tourists to the economy is rapidly making English not only a second language in the service industry, but almost the first language.

5 Icelanders have always been very proud of their literary heritage, boasting that we write and read a lot of books. However, Icelanders bought 47% fewer books in Icelandic in 2017 than they did in 2010, a very sharp decrease in a matter of only six years.

6 Will Icelandic soon become the second language of Icelanders? All languages evolve, but so far Icelandic has adapted to technological changes by creating new words for modern inventions such as the telephone (sími), TV (sjónvarp), email (tölvupóstur) and computer (tölva). Further evolution is, of course, 9. But with the ubiquity of English, is the Icelandic language at risk of disappearing more or less completely? And if it is in danger, should we make an effort to save it?

7 The government, led by a prime minister who holds a degree in Icelandic literature, has recently proposed that the state should reimburse 25% of the costs of publishing books in Icelandic. This legislative proposal could turn things around. On a smaller scale, but with similar objectives in mind, myself and fellow crime writer Yrsa Sigurðardóttir set up a debut
author award last year in Iceland to encourage emerging authors to keep writing in the language.

There is another sign of salvation on the horizon, from an unlikely source. Icelandic rap has been growing in popularity in recent years, and the leading artists in that genre usually write their lyrics in Icelandic, rather than English. Looking at the top songs in Iceland on Spotify, there are four Icelandic rap songs in the Top 5 — all performed in Icelandic.  

Guardian Weekly, 2018
Blue-sky thinking

1. AN AIRLINE IS a way of showcasing a people, says Jenifer Bamuturaki, commercial director of Uganda Airlines, which made its first commercial flight on August 28th. Passengers can tuck into katogo, a popular banana dish, served with a warm Ugandan welcome. The airline will soon fly to seven regional destinations, such as Nairobi and Mogadishu, on four 76-seater planes. It has also placed orders for two wide-body Airbus A330-800s, which could one day reach London and Guangzhou.

2. Uganda has had a national airline before. It started out shipping whisky for President Idi Amin in the 1970s and collapsed in 2001. Now Uganda is returning to the air, and it is not alone. Neighbouring Tanzania, which is reviving its national carrier, has bought eight new planes and is considering flights to London. Ethiopian Airlines, the regional leader, is entering into joint ventures across the continent: it helped resurrect Chad's national airline last year and has plans to do the same in Ghana and Zambia. In the past decade new airlines have taken to the skies in countries such as Senegal and Ivory Coast.

3. African governments are not in it for the money. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), a trade group, forecasts that carriers on the continent will lose $300m this year, or $3.51 per passenger. Planes fly with more empty seats than in any other region of the world. High taxes, expensive fuel and old aircraft add to costs. South African Airways survives on government bail-outs. In July Kenya's parliament voted to fully nationalise Kenya Airways as part of a plan to rescue it from debt.

4. Joseph Muvawala, who heads the National Planning Authority in Uganda, says that governments see airlines as an investment in infrastructure. Technocrats hope that Uganda's new airline will boost exports of fish and cut flowers, while pulling in tourist dollars, and will drive down high ticket prices on routes served by established carriers. Even if the airlines are unprofitable, the argument goes, the economy will gain.

5. Such is the theory. In practice, airlines are bound up with ideas of national prestige. They stir a fuzzy feeling of patriotism in middle-class flyers (who get less excited about, say, rural roads). They can also become targets for political meddling. Some governments are pushing ahead with state-owned carriers even where the market is well served by...
private players, notes Raphael Kuuchi of IATA. Ghana's politicians are talking of a new airline, even though a private operator flies to seven destinations from Accra.

6 Only in Ethiopia has a national airline been an undoubted success. Managers have been left to get on with their jobs, even though the business is state-run. By joining up with Ethiopian Airlines, governments elsewhere hope to learn from its expertise. But they cannot import other advantages, such as Ethiopia's strategic location as a gateway for Asian traffic. As Ethiopian Airlines spreads its wings, ever more journeys will be funnelled through Addis Ababa airport, which already welcomes more than 10m passengers a year.

7 The gleaming ranks of planes on the tarmac in Addis Ababa embody the dream of national carriers — and hint at a future which transcends them. The most efficient way to connect Africa is through a handful of regional hubs; the fastest way to increase flight numbers is by opening national markets to continental competition. Big players like Ethiopian Airlines are the obvious winners from that process, leaving little room for minnows.

8 Yet patriotic illusions persist. The Ugandan government is protecting its infant airline and has not signed up to the Single African Air Transport Market, which would regional aviation. Even the president says the ideal option would be to create an 'East African Airways' with neighbouring countries. Politics stops that idea from taking off.

_The Economist, 2019_
Are You Too Smart to Think Wisely?

adapted from a blog by Eva M. Krockow Ph.D.

1 What do Albert Einstein and Arthur Conan Doyle have in common? They both were ground-breaking geniuses, of course! Einstein spearheaded modern physics and Conan Doyle created brilliant fiction. However, their astronomical IQ isn't the only similarity. Despite their incontestable intelligence, they held seriously misguided beliefs about major aspects of life. Einstein was a firm believer in socialism and refused to recognise the failure of the Soviet Union. Conan Doyle believed in fairies and thought his own wife could talk to spirits.

2 If Einstein and Conan Doyle were so very clever, how could they possibly hold such mistaken beliefs? It seems like a high IQ alone is not predictive of wise decision making and overall life success. In fact, brain power may often contribute to severe reasoning mistakes, and here is why.

3 IQ tests only measure analytic skills and the speed with which we solve verbal or numerical problems. However, an increasing number of scientists suggest that things aren't quite so simple. Perhaps analytic intelligence is only one dimension of intelligence, which does not reflect the entire breadth of skills required for successful decision making? What about practical intelligence, which describes pragmatic life skills such as the ability to plan a multi-legged journey? And then there is creative intelligence, which refers to the ability to think outside the box and imagine alternative solutions. These types of intelligence appear to be important for wise decision making as well.

4 People within the normal IQ range doubt their own judgements and are therefore more the idea that they can make mistakes. Above-average geniuses, on the other hand, frequently fail to consider the possibility of errors, with a tendency to stubbornly believe they're always right, thereby leaving them particularly vulnerable to common biases.

5 A particularly powerful bias affecting intelligent people is the confirmation bias (also called myside-bias), which can be described as a tendency to
produce justification or make decisions that are most desired by seeking supportive arguments for their own opinion and neglecting any criticism or counter-evidence. By applying their intelligence in a one-sided, biased manner to justify their own ideas and theories, the analytic skills of a genius can therefore serve to perpetuate mistakes.

6 Mere hunches made by intelligent people can be surprisingly accurate. This is because many clever people have expert knowledge in their fields of interest, and expert knowledge is usually associated with automatic, gist-based reasoning and a more holistic understanding of the topic. Despite high accuracy rates, however, experts are not infallible.

7 Let's think of the human brain as a car engine, with high IQ equating to engine power. While cars with powerful engines inevitably drive faster than others, they don't necessarily end up in the right place. Obviously, their destination will depend just as much on steering as on speed. For example, driving the latest Ferrari might help you overtake the neighbour's old VW Beetle, but it is unlikely to prevent you from getting stuck in a dead-end, from going round in endless circles, or from shooting off a cliff. Similarly, a quick-wired brain might help you process information faster and find a quicker solution. However, if the direction of your reasoning is influenced by dangerous biases, your errors are likely to be only aggravated by your speed of thinking.

8 I am certainly familiar with the flaws of the highly intelligent. Not only am I tragically inept when it comes to operating new washing machines or TVs (or any electric appliance, really), I also keep falling for the ever-multiplying health and beauty myths spread by women's magazines all over the world. Note to self: If you come across a face cream that's supposed to remove spots and wrinkles while giving you a natural-looking tan and making your nose look smaller, it's probably a scam!

9 So how can you avoid foolish mistakes fuelled by your own intelligence? Open-mindedness, continuous self-questioning and a willingness to change one's mind are key factors for making wiser choices.

*psychologytoday.com, 2019*
The white stuff
adapted from an article by Chelsea Whyte

1, there's a new milk in town. There are many, actually. The old alternatives — soy, rice, and coconut milk — are now joined on grocery shelves by alt-milks made from almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, oats, peas, flax, hemp — the list goes on and on. You can even buy milk made from potatoes or bananas.

2. As you might expect for the latest food trend, these milks are mostly bought by millennials, or adults younger than 35. Manufacturers appeal to that generation's values by positioning the products as a healthy alternative, both for the body and the planet. But is that really true?

3. Nutritionally, it depends on which milk replacement you consider. Each type of alternative milk has its nutritional benefits and limitations. Any one of them can be considered healthy only when combined with a rounded diet, though the same can be said for dairy milk.

4. There are some alt-milks it makes little sense to produce in bulk. Rice milk is an option for those with dairy, nut, gluten and soy allergies, but it has far less protein than cow's milk and often has significant amounts of sweeteners added to improve the flavour. It is also one of the most environmentally costly alt-milks to produce. When rice paddies are flooded to stimulate plant growth, submerged biomass decomposes without oxygen, producing the potent greenhouse gas methane.

5. Of course, cows are notoriously bad for the environment as well. The carbon footprint of producing cow's milk varies from place to place, but in Western countries, it is typically around twice as big as that of making plant-based alternatives.

6. Carbon isn't the only environmental concern to consider. Nuts are notorious water sinks, with some requiring nearly as much water to produce as cow's milk. And producing one litre of soy milk requires 297 litres of water. That includes water that ends up in the milk itself, water that evaporates during production, water used to make the sugars and starches that flavour and stabilise the milk and water polluted by those processes.
alt-milks are friendlier to the environment than traditional dairy, but their growing popularity may cause problems. As more people jump on the bandwagon, manufacturers are starting to compete to introduce new flavours and new types of plant-based milks. This trend may cause unintended environmental harm.

If demand for coconut milk skyrockets, for example, it will become more profitable to grow coconut trees. That could lead to deforestation as farms expand. To avoid that, it is best to have... So maybe the proliferation of alt-milks is a saving grace.

All that said, sometimes the impacts on the food system may not be worth the end product, as with rice milk. Or take banana milk, which involves blending bananas, usually adding some sugar and spice for flavour, and straining the mixture. Then it must be stored and shipped. Is it worth it? Or is it best to just eat the banana?

NewScientist, 2018
I've been told that the secret to making money, big money, is to find the place on the edge of town where the real estate stops being priced by the acre. The idea is then to buy as many of those acres as possible and wait for town to creep towards you so that you will be there, ready and waiting, when those acres are converted down into square feet.

Having lived in Nashville for most of my life, I have seen this theory put into cash-making practice time and again. Acres that once were home to lazy cows and nibbling deer are now the physical underpinnings of sprawling shopping malls and housing developments and golf courses — thickets of blackberries mown under to make way for irrigated expanses of manicured greens. The cows and the wildlife, not unlike the urban poor, were forced from their neighborhoods and herded off to distant pastures.

Nashville is not a city that can take any pride in its urban planning. Lovely old homes are knocked down, appalling condominiums spring up in their stead, traffic multiplies geometrically, mom-and-pop operations issue a mouselike cry trying to hold back the big-box chains, and then are devoured by those chains in a single bite.

But for every way this city has changed for the worse, there is some other way it has changed for the better. When I was a little girl, the Klan¹)
marched down at the square on Music Row on Sunday afternoons. Men in white sheets and white hoods waved at your car with one hand while they held back enormous German shepherds with the other. My sister and I pushed down the buttons of our door locks and sank low in the backseat. Those men are gone now, or at least they aren't out walking the streets in full regalia. If growth and modernization means getting rid of the Klan while bad condos spread like lichen over tree trunks, well then, let's hear it for modernity.

There was a time when Nashville cared more for genealogy than character. (In some very limited circles this may still be the case.) If your family hadn't been in the state long enough to remember what Lincoln had done to it, then you might be politely tolerated but you would never truly be accepted. I knew this, having moved here just before I turned six. We were Californians, and we may as well have been Martians. But then there was a shift — too many people moved here in the last two decades to keep up with who was from where. Somewhere in all the confusion I became a local.

noot 1 the Klan = afkorting van de Ku Klux Klan, een organisatie in de Verenigde Staten die vooral door racistisch geweld bekend is geworden
I don't agree with Philip Ball's thesis (*Life on Mars? Sorry Brian Cox, that's still a fantasy*, 27 May). Ever since I studied planetary geology in the 1970s I have been excited by the idea of terraforming, and if you read Kim Stanley Robinson’s trilogy you will find it eminently plausible. It’s not about leaving this planet because we have trashed it and starting to do the same on another planet, but about us having overcrowded it so badly that we have to move a large chunk of the population to a new planet where we can revive a dormant landscape into a new paradise. It is all about vision and political will. If we could get all the fanatical warlords on Earth just looking up at the potential of space, we can do it. That is how we will get the drive and the money to start the colonisation of Mars. It will be just like the exodus of Europeans to the Americas in the 17th century.

Yes there will be thousands of people who want to take the one-way trip, and yes there will be various religious fanatics and self-serving people among them; but the survival difficulties on Mars will be such that they will be forced to cooperate. And this time we will not be subjugating an indigenous population or an existing biosphere; we will be creating our own new one. CO2 to warm Mars will be generated by introducing plants and a new greenhouse effect from our activities. Just imagine!

Jan Miller  
*Holywell, Flintshire*

*theguardian.com*, 2019
Chinese gift stirs up drama

adapted from an article by Valentine Low

1 "Beauty," William Shakespeare wrote in Love’s Labour’s Lost, "is bought by judgement of the eye." Whether he would have anything to say about the aesthetic merits of a Chinese pavilion given to his birthplace in a gesture of international friendship is another question, but either way, the residents of Stratford-upon-Avon are unimpressed.

2 A public garden in the town has become the focus of a dispute since the council approved plans to install an Oriental pavilion. The 22ft structure is a gift from Stratford's twin town of Fuzhou, which is so enamoured of its Shakespearian links that it wanted to donate the Peony Pavilion to Stratford. Some have accused the council of accepting the offer because it did not want to offend the Chinese government. Some residents have said that the 'eyesore' will distract drivers, bring tourists to a quiet area and encourage rough sleepers. About 45 letters of objection were submitted to the council.

3 The pavilion, which could be in place by April, is a reference to a play by Shakespeare's Chinese contemporary, Tang Xianzu. The Peony Pavilion, written in 1558, is seen as the Chinese equivalent to Romeo and Juliet. Tony Jefferson, the council leader, called the pavilion "a tangible symbol of the international status of Stratford".

The Times, 2019
To the Editor: Abolish the Police

Re “Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police,” by Mariame Kaba (Sunday Review, June 14):

When the Baltimore police stepped back after the entirely justified uproar over the death of Freddie Gray in 2015, crime soared and Baltimore’s homicide rate became the highest in the nation. When high-crime Camden, N.J., reconstituted and expanded its police force in 2013 and implemented serious reforms, crime rates fell and complaints about the police plummeted.

It is naïve to think that abolishing the police will radically reduce robbery, rape and murder, even if all the saved money is reallocated to better housing, schools, jobs and social services. Fixing these broader problems will take far more resources.

It is equally naïve to think that the policing problem is just one of a few bad apples. The problem is institutional and very difficult to solve at both the policy and political levels, but campaigns to abolish the police are counterproductive. Real reforms are possible, and it’s important to seize this rare opportunity to achieve them.

Stephen Crawford
Derwood, Md.

The writer is a research professor at George Washington University’s Institute of Public Policy.
I agree with many of the writer’s sentiments, but I think a better approach might be to abolish the police unions, which protect officers from the consequences of their actions and embolden police forces to act with careless disregard for many of those they are supposed to protect and serve.

*Brenda Sussna*
*Bear Lake, Minn.*

When Republicans sought to annul the Affordable Care Act with no plans for a replacement, Democrats rightly cried foul. Now some on the left want to "literally abolish the police," with only vague ideas for what comes after. How is that better?

*Ilya Shlyakhter*
*Allston, Mass.*

Abolishing the police is unimaginable, as was the abolition of slavery to most white Americans 200 years ago. And yet, it was the right thing to do. I see a parallel here, but like our ancestors, we lack imagination and heart.

*David Beus*
*Laie, Hawaii*

We should replace male policemen with more women. Women have always been less violent than men and have never committed as many violent crimes as men have. Being more inclined to be nurturing, they are more likely to be our protectors than our prosecutors.

*Margaret Curtis*
*Atlanta*

adapted from nytimes.com, 2020