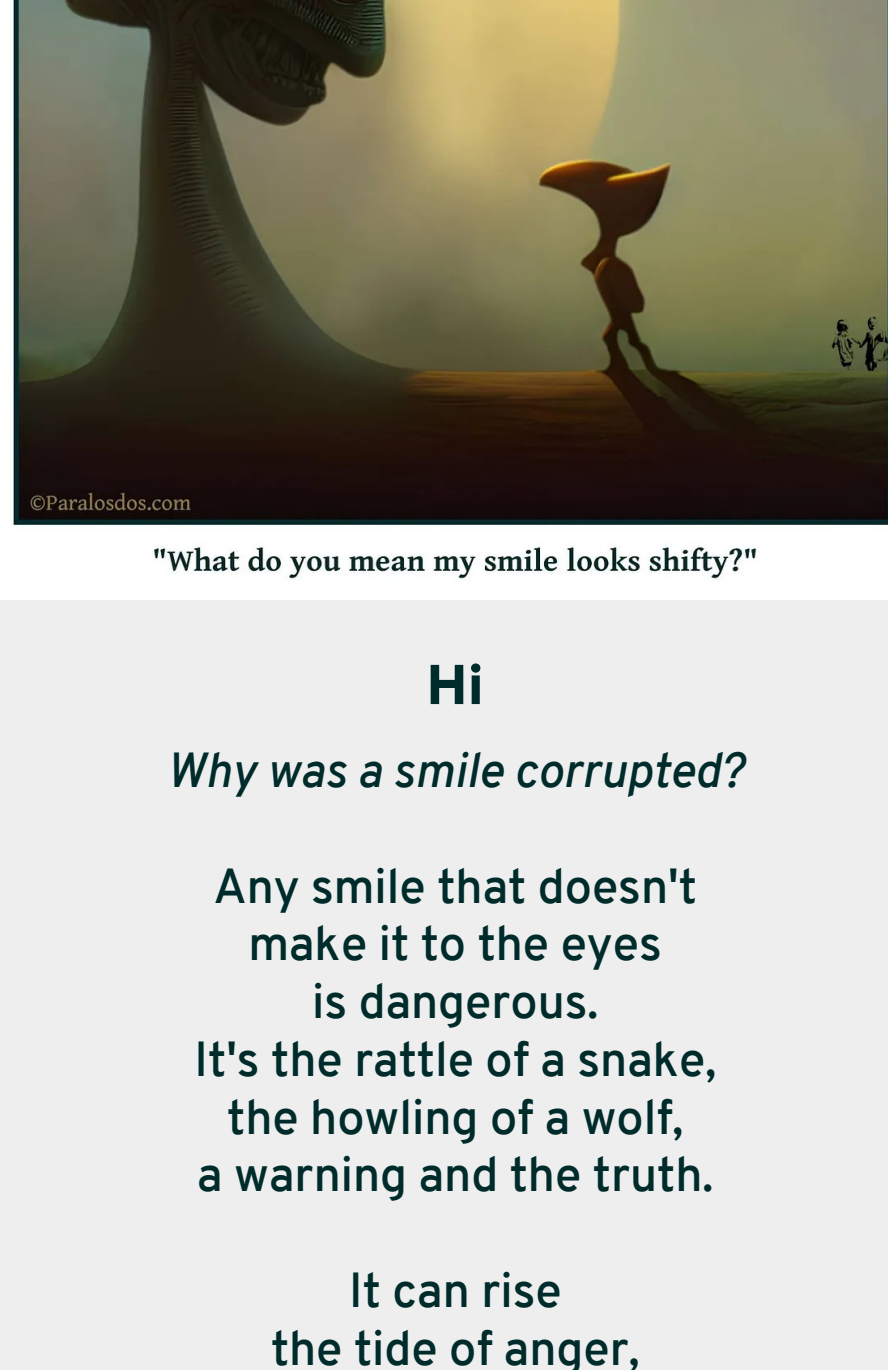


Change Happens

Have a great day,
find your way

The Alien Life



"What do you mean my smile looks shifty?"

Hi

Why was a smile corrupted?

Any smile that doesn't
make it to the eyes
is dangerous.
It's the rattle of a snake,
the howling of a wolf,
a warning and the truth.

It can rise
the tide of anger,
or freeze
the blood
in your veins.

A face of lies
assembled.
A message
unrestrained.

A rare gift,
better received
from an enemy
than a friend.

**The origins of nothing
Why nothing matters**

"Zero has played an intriguing role in the development of our societies. Throughout human history, it has flourished in civilisations fearful of nothingness, and flourished in those that embraced it. But that's not the only reason it's so beguiling. In striking similarity to the perception of absence, zero's representation as a number in the brain also remains unclear. If my brain has specialised mechanisms that have evolved to count the owls perched on a branch, how does this system abstract away from what's visible, and signal that there are no owls to count?"

Leading off with today's instalment for nerds. This one has a metaphysical bent. If you're not interested in a philosophical consideration of nothingness and zero as a number, then I recommend you skip this article. But if that sounds like something that needs to be pondered, then this is a very good investigation.

An interesting look into the history of zero, and the concepts behind zero as a numeric representation of nothingness. I was curious how it came to be part of our numbering systems, this answers those questions.

It appears we have difficulty as children with the idea of nothing, the absence of something. Learning to place zero before one in counting essentially becomes the first lesson in abstraction.

So you say

The Origins of 21 Common Phrases

"Give someone the cold shoulder

It has been said that the Iliad is the story of a bad guest breaking hospitality rules, and all the chaos that broke out because of that. This suggests just how important hospitality was in the past, so it's no surprise that a guest would be received with a grand meal in the Middle Ages. However, what happens when they overstay their welcome? They would be served leftovers, such as a cold shoulder of mutton from the previous night's dinner, leading to this memorable phrase."

- This is a fun article exploring some common phrases and their etymology. It's entertaining to anyone who has ever taken any delight in a colloquialism. To see how these words come together and evolve over time.

They often become part of common daily use. We take for granted that we understand what they mean, and we rarely stop to consider how they came to mean what they mean.

Inventing ease

The forgotten story of the woman who invented the dishwasher

"For six months in 1893, Chicago was abuzz. More than 27 million people flocked to the fast-growing metropolis for the event of the century: the World's Columbian Exposition, aka the World's Fair. Perhaps the fair's most pioneering display was found in Machinery Hall, showcasing American inventions like the cotton gin, phonograph, and telegraph. But a more recent innovation was causing an even bigger stir: the Garis-Cochran Dishwashing Machine, the only device in the massive hall invented by a woman."

- I included this story because I think it serves as a celebration of the accomplishments of women in the world of inventions. In the world of ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit.

It's also inspiring to me how women overcome the hurdles they face in making these contributions to the world. There is much to be learned about determination and perseverance in the face of ignorance and stupidity from understanding how success is achieved despite great adversity.

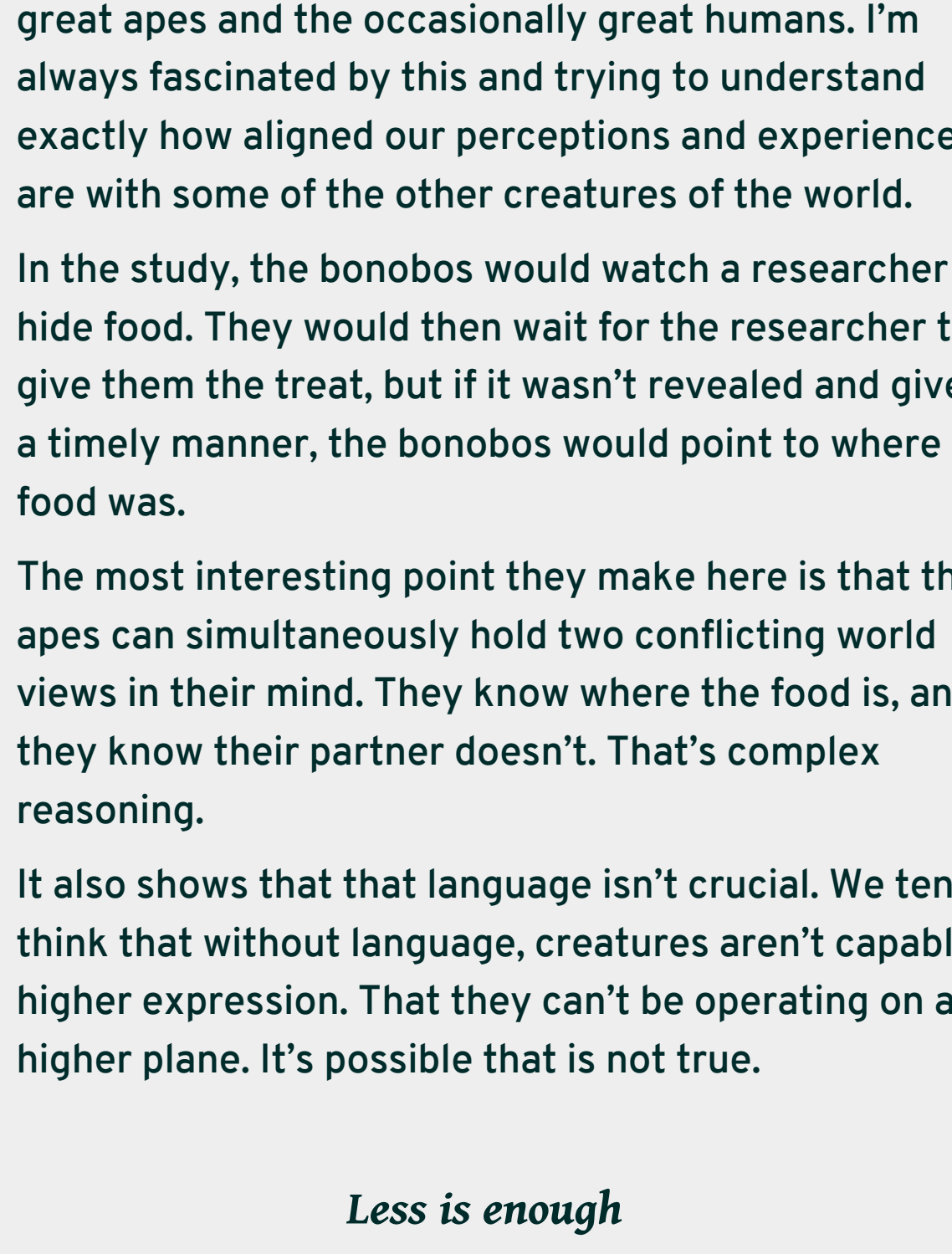
This woman in particular is interesting. She rose from limited means to become affluent, to then find herself in debt. Circumstance and determination led her to inventing a dishwashing machine. She considered it the result of her valuing of time.

The version that lives today is not that dissimilar from the one that she originally envisioned and had the temerity to bring into production and existence. It's a very interesting story about an unusual and unlikely inventor.

March 15, 44 BC

Ides of March

Assassination of Julius Caesar



Wiki Rabbit Hole

"In modern times, the Ides of March is best known as the date on which Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC. Caesar was stabbed to death at a meeting of the Senate. As many as 60 conspirators, led by Brutus and Cassius, were involved. According to Plutarch, a seer had warned that his harm would come to Caesar on the Ides of March. On his way to the Theatre of Pompey, where he would be assassinated, Caesar passed the seer and joked, 'Well, the Ides of March are come', implying that the prophecy had not been fulfilled, to which the seer replied 'Aye, they are come, but they are not gone.' This meeting is famously dramatised in William Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar, when Caesar is warned by the soothsayer to 'beware the Ides of March.'"

The knowing ape

When Bonobos Know What You Don't, They'll Tell You.

"If someone is supposed to give you a snack, but you know that they don't know where that snack is, you would—obviously—communicate its location to them.

While this might feel ordinary to us, it demonstrates the ability to understand another person's specific lack of information and act accordingly. This concept is called the "theory of mind," and because it's involved in many sophisticated human behaviors, scholars have long debated whether close human relatives might also have this capacity."

- A short and interesting article touching on the theory of mind. Centered around studies with bonobos, who are quite similar to we humans in a lot of respects as far as physiology, emotional capacity and problem solving.

It's intriguing to consider the similarities between the great apes and the occasionally great humans. I'm always fascinated by this and trying to understand exactly how aligned our perceptions and experiences are with some of the other creatures of the world.

In the study, the bonobos would watch a researcher hide food. They would then wait for the researcher to give them the treat, but if it wasn't revealed and given in a timely manner, the bonobos would point to where the food was.

The most interesting point they make here is that the apes can simultaneously hold two conflicting world views in their mind. They know where the food is, and they know their partner doesn't. That's complex reasoning.

It also shows that that language isn't crucial. We tend to think that without language, creatures aren't capable of higher expression. That they can't be operating on a higher plane. It's possible that is not true.

Less is enough

Great Classic Novels Under 200 Pages

Franz Kafka, The Trial (1925) : 160 pages

Required reading for anyone who uses the term "Kafkaesque"—but don't forget that Kafka himself would burst out laughing when he read bits of the novel out loud to his friends. Do with that what you will.

- This article is a listing of 50 books an interweb denizen has deemed classics that are under 200 pages. I think it's a great list. I really enjoyed going through it.

I've read, and gained much from, many of the books. This article is included because it addresses a pet peeve of mine: good books don't need to be 600 pages. I think we are forced to endure more words than necessary because the prices of the books are so exorbitant that the authors or publishers feel that heft of tome creates perceived value.

That's just entirely not true. I think most of us who are readers would recognize that some of the most memorable books we've read were under a few hundred pages. Where the story was tightly and wonderfully told, with all the things that didn't mean anything pruned away.

Picturing flight

Birds Around the World in 31 Incredible Photos

"It's not everyday that you witness two northern gannets fighting in Scotland or watch as a platoon of king penguins explores the Antarctic Ocean. In photographs taken around the world, National Geographic Your Shot contributors captured more than 30 species of birds. Some are taking a dip in the water. Others are flying high through the sky or going on a search for their next meals."

I simply wanted to look at birds today. I find them so inspirational. There's something that's magically wonderful about them being able to do this thing that we most absolutely can't without mechanical intervention.

This magnificent achievement, this ability to soar through the sky. I just think it's amazing. And that this natural flight can come in so many shapes and sizes, and for so many purposes, is truly awesome.

Birds are beautiful. They're so radically different from us. Their way of living is so radically different. And it's an endless source of delight for me personally to look at them.

"In the fields of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind."

Louis Pasteur

it's your life
you understand

Please feel free to forward [Change Happens](#) to anyone you think might enjoy it and have a most excellent day