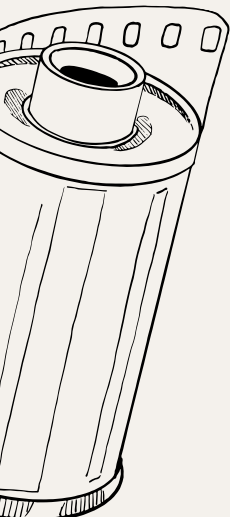
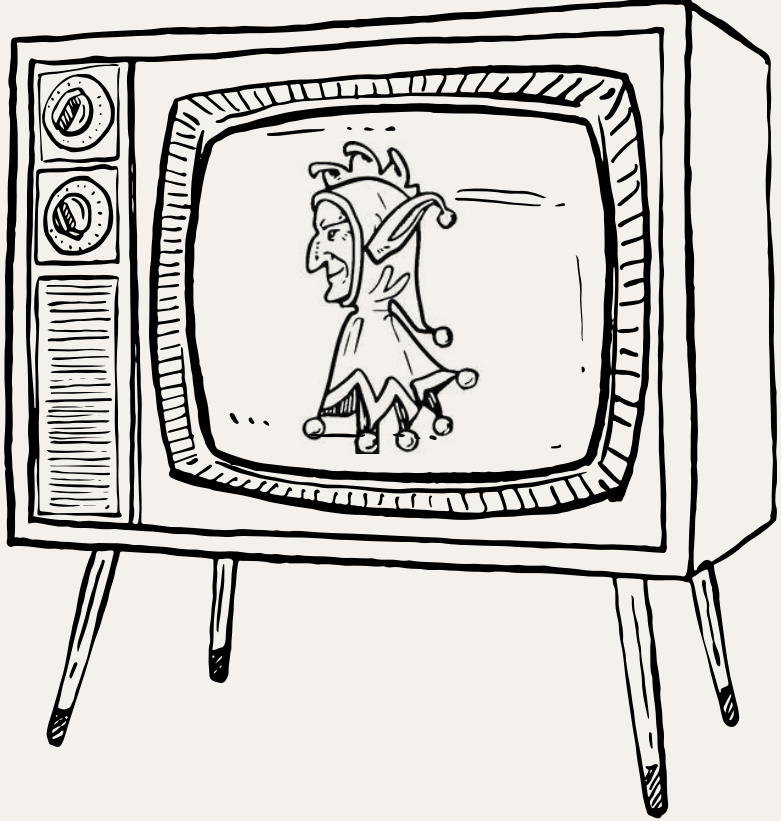
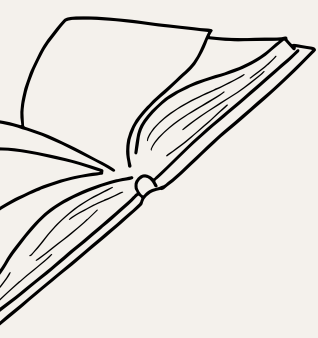
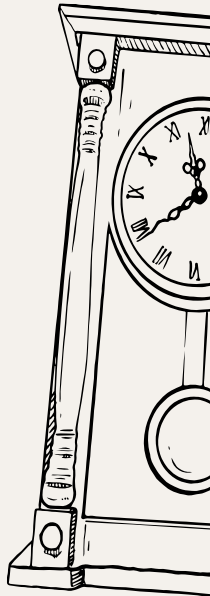


# THE FOOLSCAP JOURNAL

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VOLUME XI

**MEDIA: BEHIND THE SCREENS**

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# *I. MASTHEAD*

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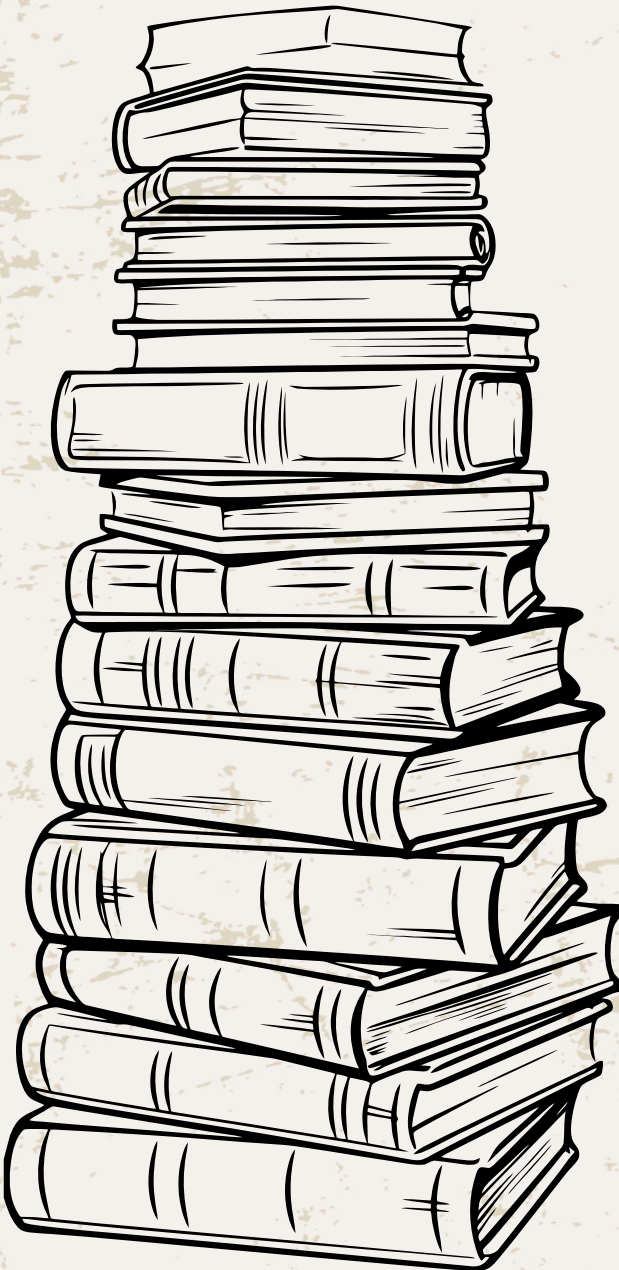
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# *II. A LETTER FROM THE MANAGEMENT TEAM*

Hello readers,

We would like to take a moment to thank everyone for their submissions. It was a joy reading all of them! We would also like to express gratitude to the Book & Media Studies Student Association, especially the President, Mia Jakobsen, for actively addressing any concerns we had and including us in their event to promote our journal.

This year's theme, "Media Behind the Screens," was inspired by the growing media landscape we face — encompassing artificial intelligence, fast-paced media consumption, and their impacts on us now and in the future.

We hope you all enjoy reading this year's Foolscap Journal as much as we enjoyed creating it!

Regards,

Kyla Cortez, Salina Khan, and Isabella Morrissette

# *III. THE FOOLSCAP 'S 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY*

## *A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE FOOLSCAP JOURNAL*

Ten years ago, I embarked on an exhilarating journey as the inaugural editor-in-chief of The Foolscap. What began as a vision to cultivate academic discourse within the burgeoning field of Book and Media Studies has flourished into a cornerstone of intellectual exploration at St. Michael's College. As essays flooded in, I knew we were onto something special — a platform where the brightest minds converge to dissect the intricacies of old and new media, guided by the prophetic wisdom of Marshall McLuhan.

Today, as we celebrate a decade of scholarly pursuit, I am reminded of McLuhan's poignant words: "The youth of today are not permitted to approach the traditional heritage of mankind through the door of technological awareness." Yet, through The Foolscap, we have pried open that door, inviting students to transcend the confines of conventional learning and embrace the transformative power of technology. It's been a decade of groundbreaking insights, a testament to the indomitable spirit of inquiry that defines our community. As we look back on our achievements, let us also cast our gaze forward, towards a future where The Foolscap continues to illuminate minds and inspire generations.

Here's to another decade of scholarly excellence and relentless curiosity. Happy anniversary, Foolscap family. The journey has only just begun.

—Keely Kundell

# IV. Contributors



**ELISE CRESSATTI**

**JULIET OLADOKUN**

**ISABELLA MORISSETTE**

**RHEA KAPOOR**

**CADEN ELLIOTT**



# Material Girl! : The Magazine Culture of Madame Bovary

Elise Cressatti



Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* follows the story of Emma, a young woman seeking to live out the passion of her childhood romance novels. What she is met with, though, is a lifetime of disappointment filled with failed relationships, predatory salesmen, and the "pettiness of the passions" (Flaubert 197). Her life resembles not the romance novels of her childhood, but rather the new medium of the age: the magazine. This essay examines how the social ideals and behaviours within *Madame Bovary* fictionalize an emerging "magazine culture" in their preoccupation with commercial consumption and their unfocused, ever-changing nature.

*Madame Bovary* is a novel set in France's Industrial Revolution. This setting is best evidenced when the protagonist's daughter is sent to "earn her living in a cotton mill" — textiles being a central industry during industrialization (Flaubert 311; Henderson 87-88). Along with revolutionizing the textile industry, the Industrial Revolution revolutionized mass media. Print media could be mass-produced on a much greater scale than before, giving rise to the periodical: newspapers, journals, and magazines (Holmes 4-5). Flaubert's novel is filled with mentions of periodicals, demonstrating the prominence of this new medium. Charles Bovary subscribes to a medical journal "in order to keep up to date," Léon passes the time with a "old fashion magazine," which shapes the careers of the novel's medical personnel, and of course, Madame Emma Bovary reads her "woman's magazines" (Flaubert 52, 212, 49).

Marshall McLuhan is best known for his aphorism — "the medium is the message." McLuhan explained the phrase this way: "The message of any medium...is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs," (Understanding Media 8). McLuhan argues that a change in the dominant mediums of a given era will affect the ideas and behaviours of people living in said era. Accordingly, the advent of the printing press in Europe began a "print culture," a social shift towards rationality and specialization. Though the industrialization and serialization of print was not as revolutionary as the initial shift from script to print, the change in dominant mediums still had a significant impact on human affairs.

A primary difference between magazines and novels as mediums is in their structure. The novel follows a plot, while the periodical follows a larger theme. As McLuhan writes, "In newspaper, there is no story line. The events are totally unrelated to one another except by a dateline," ("Is Book Dead?" 448). Magazines are similarly characterized by this periodical nature and disparate content — a "mosaic form" (Understanding Media 222). Regarding the first condition, a magazine issue is just one of many editions, each containing its own unique contents. These editions are published periodically (hence the term, periodical), providing readers with new content regularly.

Regarding the second, a magazine is a collection of unconnected articles ultimately grouped by a larger theme. Articles must be attention-grabbing to begin with but do not need to hold a reader's interest for long. Even when long-form content is serialized in magazines — including novels such as *Madame Bovary* — the reader is forced to move on from the work after each section is published and come back to it in a later issue, reading other works in the interim. Thus, magazines generate and fulfill a desire for frequent new media, both from article to article and issue to issue.

In chapter nine, Emma's encounter with magazines is described: "She subscribed to 'La Corbeille,' a woman's magazine, and to 'Sylphe des Salons.' Skipping nothing, she devoured all the reports of first nights, horse races, and soirées, and took an interest in the debut of a singer and the opening of a new shop. She knew the latest fashions, the addresses of the good tailors, the days for going to the Bois and the Opera" (Flaubert 49). In this short passage, we learn that the magazines Emma reads cover operas, horse races, fashion trends, parties, performances, and clothing advice, among other things. They are not long stories of these topics, but short "reports." The specification that she "took an interest" in two very unrelated topics — a singer's performance and a shop's opening — highlights how magazines acclimatize their readers to split their attention, only maintaining interest in a topic for brief periods of time. Magazines normalize this shortened attention span, but such effects are not confined to just her reading material.

One of the central tensions in the novel is Emma's dissatisfaction with the constants in her life. I would suggest that her inconstant approach to life resembles the way one reads a magazine. Her tendencies are described thus: "she needed to derive from things a personal gain; and she rejected as useless everything that did not contribute to the immediate gratification of her heart" (31). This need for "immediate gratification" is a defining trait of Emma's, as her actions are guided by a tendency to "indulge her whims," whether it be in fashion, hobby, or lover (109).

Her hobbies vary significantly — sometimes, she is a scholar, reading philosophy and learning Italian; other times she is an artist, painting and playing piano. Emma immerses herself in playing piano, showing "a great passion for music," until one day, she "shrugged and did not open her instrument again" (231). When not changing her activities, she regularly alters her appearance, "often [changing] the way she wore her hair" (109). Other characters in the novel notice this "flightiness," but also observe that she "did not appear happy," despite her indulging in her passions (109). Her romantic pursuits are perhaps where her failure to appreciate constancy is most apparent. Her many relationships do not resemble the grand narratives of

devotion found in romance novels but rather appear as short “reports” of passionate whims. Throughout the novel, Emma develops relations with three men: Charles Bovary, a doctor whom she quickly marries; Rodolphe Boulanger, a wealthy landowner; and Léon Dupuis, a law student. With each man, she initially believes herself to be in love, but soon grows bored. Not long after she marries Charles, she finds that the “happiness that should have resulted from that love” has gone, and is left feeling as though she was “mistaken” for believing she had ever loved him (30). Her affairs similarly give her no lasting satisfaction as she comes to understand “the disillusionment of adultery” (197).

Emma first becomes enamoured with Rodolphe to the point of being “torn apart by all the fury of my love” (167). When he leaves her out of a dislike for commitment, her interests switch from that of a lover to that of a devout Christian. Her daydreams now idealize those that “shed at Christ’s feet all the tears of a heart wounded by life” (189). Once again, her interest is intense to the point of being “excessive,” and yet it does not last for very long (189). Emma’s affair with Léon is characterized by a pattern of passion and ennui. The two bond rapidly after meeting, and soon Emma “could not stop thinking about him” (89). However, after he moves to Paris, Emma swiftly moves on to Rodolphe. At the conclusion of that affair, the two quickly rekindle their relationship, but Emma finds herself bored, “and suddenly Léon appeared to her as far removed as the others” (251).

Emma’s lovers, whether in love with her like Charles or using her like Rodolphe, are nothing more than passing interests to bring excitement to her life. She hopes for a relationship like the ones she read about in the “long chapters” of romance novels in her childhood, or heard in the “love songs of the century before,” but her behaviour is not accustomed to such devotion (32, 31). These mediums are better suited for standing the tests of time than the magazine, as they are constructed with “satin bindings,” or better yet, meant memorized “by heart” (32, 31). As a result, they cultivate an appreciation for enduring things, especially ones of emotion. According to media scholar Harold Innis, the more “time-biased” a medium is, the more it is “a medium of the heart” (Blondheim and Watson 2-4). In contrast, the magazines of Emma’s adulthood are designed to only be relevant for mere weeks, engendering their readers with a fickleness that cannot appreciate lasting emotions. Ultimately, none of her relationships fulfill her romantic expectations because the magazine has conditioned her affections to be swift and fleeting.

A fleeting nature is not the only behavioural change introduced by the periodical. More so than its literary predecessors, the magazine exists as a medium for commercial affairs. The content of the magazine does not aim to

merely fulfill desire, but generate it as well. Unlike the novel, a magazine often contains direct advertisements. However, these are not the only spaces in magazines reserved for commerciality. Much of the content in magazines, particularly women's magazines, is meant to create desire for products, services, or experiences that can be bought. The French woman's magazine in the early 1800s is described as having a "resolute focus on educating the female reader on what and how to consume – whether plays, books, clothes, morals or instruction" (McIlanney, 99).

Returning to Emma's encounter with magazines, the contents described reveal this centring of magazine content on consumption. Some are more overt than others – the "addresses of best tailors" and the "opening of a new shop" give the reader specific goods to desire, along with the businesses where they can buy them (Flaubert 49). Others are less direct, allowing "accounts of first nights, horse races, and soirées" to implicitly suggest the reader purchase tickets to such events and fashions to attend them in (49). These suggestions evidently work, as when Charles takes Emma to the opera, she first "[buys] herself a hat, some gloves, a bouquet" (194).

Emma's unrestrained consumerist tendencies form the second main tension of the novel. Monsieur Leheureux, a local merchant, constantly sells Emma superfluous goods that bury her in massive amounts of debt, ultimately driving her to suicide. He builds on Emma's consumerist desires, convincing her to use credit to purchase new clothing, accessories, and home furnishings with rapid frequency and without concern for their eventual cost. In his initial pitch to Emma, Lheureux stresses that "he went to the city four times a month, regularly" (90). His business model is the magazine made manifest for Emma: there can always be more to buy. Emma is all too willing to take L'heureux up on his offers of frequent consumption: "twenty times in the course of the day, she would send for him" (230). Her constant attention to the consumption of impractical or ornamental goods pervades even her life outside of the store. When reading novels, her interest lingers on the "descriptions of furniture" (50). When visiting Léon's Paris apartment, she dislikes his plain decor and "advised him to buy curtains like her own," (246). Her interests are always attuned to "what and how to consume" (McIlanney 99).

These two tensions — a dissatisfaction with constancy and an ever-present desire to consume — are shown to be deeply connected within the text. She does not just know how to dress well; she knows the "latest fashions" (Flaubert 49). Emma's frequent change of hobbies prompts her to buy various goods to take part in, such as a piano and a riding outfit, before leaving them unused while she pursues new activities. Preference for rapid change encourages rampant consumerism, and the industrialization of both the media industries

that fuel these desires and the consumer goods industries that fulfill them allow for this to occur.

Of course, this is not to say that reading magazines prompted immediate, drastic behavioural changes in Emma. Rather, her actions and ideals are shaped by the cultural ideas and behaviours that such media fosters. The novel occurs at a time when society is shifting to an industrialized age, and the mass media it consumes shapes all those within it. Emma is certainly not alone in her inconstant behaviour and constant consumption — the society that surrounds her is similarly materialistic and unfocused. In the opera episode, the narrative draws attention to the show-going public's constant preoccupation with the commercial, even when they are supposedly immersed in the realm of art: "they had come seeking relaxation in the fine arts from the anxieties of commerce; but not actually forgetting business, they were still talking cotton, proof spirits, or indigo" (195). Emma's behaviour is just a more severe instance of these tendencies.

A 'magazine culture' is one of impermanence and consumption, where behaviours are shaped by and for the benefit of industry. Emma's self-destructive behaviour demonstrates the negative impact a 'magazine culture' can have on society at large. Ultimately, her inability to find a meaningful connection to something — be it a lover or a hobby — and her imploding financial situation proves fatal for Emma. Her consumerism and inconstancy demonstrate the magazine culture's existence in the time period of the novel, but certainly not its excellence.

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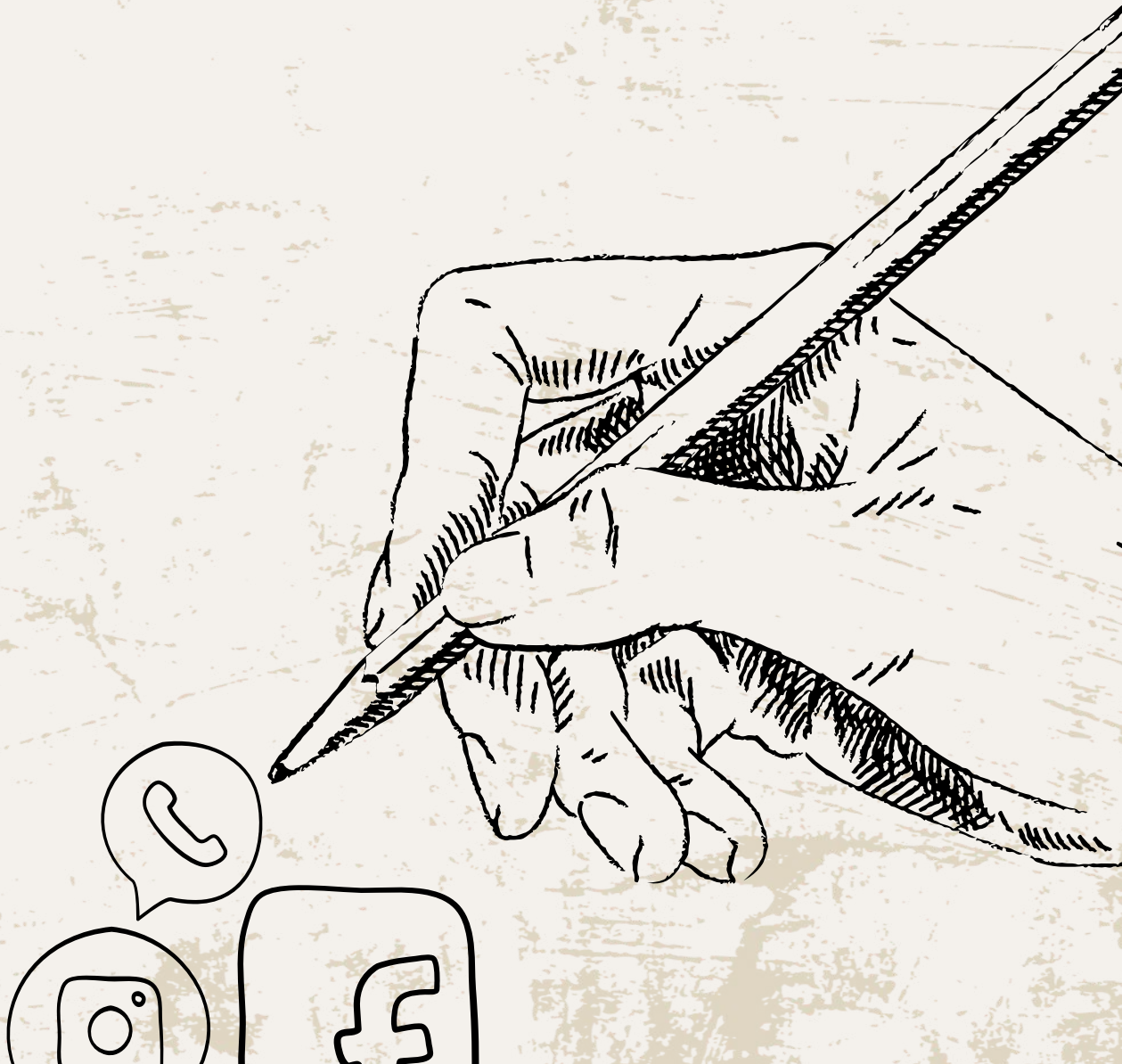
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# Social Media Unfolding

Juliet Oladokun







I have carefully crafted a digital artwork in response to The Foolscap’s Journal’s theme of “Media: Behind the Screen.” The artwork, titled “Social Media Unfolding,” reflects my personal interest and relationship with social media as an integrated aspect of my life. It aims to showcase my appreciation and perception of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter as geometric and abstract art forms.

I believe that social media is a form of art, as it imitates and influences life. This artwork highlights how social media has evolved from a platform to an environment, hence the silhouette birds. I have used blue contour lines to represent this evolution, inspired by the concept of Media Ecology. This understanding has influenced my perception of reality, wherein communication, socialization, and personalization are fundamental building blocks.

The artwork is hyper-stylized to depict the overwhelming complexity of social media on ourselves and others. The various social media icons symbolize my construction of taste and meaning-making for each app. For instance, TikTok for its musical and television content, Meta apps for keeping individuals connected, Twitter for social commentary and news, blogs and YouTube for online profile and influencer culture, and podcasts as a modern form of radio.

In conclusion, “Social Media Unfolding” is a testament to my appreciation of social media as a form of abstract art that has become an inseparable part of our daily lives.

# Physical Media, and Online Content: Who's Preserving?

Isabella Morissette



## *Introduction*

My friend recently moved from London to a place near me, so we've naturally been spending a lot of time together. We first bonded over films and television, so perhaps I shouldn't have been as shocked as I was to see her DVD collection. I mean who still has DVDs?

Perhaps this is my own bias, as I've moved around between 10 different homes throughout my 22 years of living, and inevitably found physical media to be something that ends up either donated or given away.

Some things have lasted, like my parents' old photo album collection, our childhood artworks, and select DVDs, but otherwise, it all exists in the elusive and intangible vacuum of a "cloud".

Seeing this kind of physical embodiment of my friend's taste in movies got me wondering how we can extend this kind of collection and physicality to virtual interests. For example, YouTube videos, Tumblr pages, X (formerly Twitter) posts, and more.

While our parents had scrapbooks, photo albums, cassettes, and more to showcase the media that shaped their lives, I would also like to hold and showcase the media that was impactful for me, but how? And why is physical media the most important way to do that?

## *Ownership*

There's of course just the feeling of holding and seeing your media — as collectors and other fans/enthusiasts can attest to — but another major part of investing in physical media is ownership.

The abstract nature of ownership in a digital space has perpetuated a lack of importance placed on it, even digitally. One example of this can be noted by the rise of the non-fungible token (NFT) and the confusion in how that form of ownership materializes.

Further everyday access to media enabled by platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, Netflix or Crave have also collectively allowed us to forgo any desire to create ownership — expunging us from the reality that we are merely renting the media we consume. While renting is fine in the short term, it promises no ownership and evokes time-sensitive access to media.

There is also a long-term issue with storing content only online. For example, while most sites allow you to own the content you produce or upload on their

platforms, these terms and conditions are always subject to change, with platforms able to remove content at any given time for a multitude of reasons.

Take the case of Youtuber Michelle Phan, who joined the platform back in 2007. After eight years of producing content, she found many of her videos struck off YouTube after a lawsuit in 2015 by the dance label, Ultra Records (Gardner, 2015). This illuminates the long-term implications of digital media solely being stored online, even with subjective ownership.

### *More information*

More background and information can also be attained by a physical media. This can manifest in in the quality of the material as Henry Casey writes on DVD's stating: "Thanks to the limits of modern home internet, 4K Blu-rays will always look better than versions on Netflix or Prime Video, as the data is all local," (Casey, 2023).

The difference in information accessible in both digital and physical media is explored by Peter Joseph Gloviczki, via his three aspects of memorialization. Gloviczki writes that a physical form "Usually reveals additional information about both the individual or group being memorialized," (Gloviczki, 2015, p. 66). An example of this information can be a DVD with a description of the content and those involved in the work.

Differently, a virtual form is described as, "Somewhat dependent on the particular characteristics of the virtual space; may have a broader reach than physical memorials; tend to be more interactive than physical memorials," (Gloviczki, 2015, p. 66). For example, a website or a social media post. Using this idea, while there is value in the broader reach and interactivity through virtual media, the physical media aids in providing relevant information, and decoding the concept of the media outside of its primary source.

An example of the information provided by physical media is also bonus material, which Jonathan Gray discusses in his book "Show Sold Separately", to hold a paratextual value in lending "their meanings extra authority, precisely because they are now a digitally integrated part of the show itself." ('Bonus Materials', 2020, p.89).

This concept could be exemplified in an artist like Taylor Swift, who has always left bonus easter eggs in her physical CD liner notes (Merinuk, 2022), and continues to put out physical only content (Sato, 2023), imploring fans to interact with the non digital media.

## *Physical media prevails?*

With this discussion, I would like to assert that physical media is not completely gone and people are still actively consuming it.

According to Billboard, “physical album sales (CD, vinyl LP, cassette, etc.) increased by 8.9% to 87 million in 2023” (Caulfield, 2024), with vinyl dominating as the leading physical music medium. Even DVDs seem to be coming back in popularity to a niche demographic as Toronto’s Roncesvalles neighborhood saw the opening of a new DVD store last year, *Vinegar Syndrome* (Mudhar, 2023).

Still, the decline of physical media cannot be ignored; DVD sales are down 92% since their 2006 peak (Steiner, 2024), major retailers like Best Buy are ending their Blu-ray disc sales (Spangler, 2023) and legacy video stores keep closing (Press, 2024). Outside of these majorities, there is still a very important group dedicated to the preservation of physical media—archivists.

## *Archival work*

Archiving is important work being done by a small group of academic and governmental departments to preserve works for future and legacy purposes. Speaking with Dave Pascoe, a Media Specialist at the University’s Media Commons Archives, he confirmed that archivists are transforming physical to digital, and digital to digital, but rarely, if ever, are creating virtual to physical media.

This makes logistical sense, given that it requires more space, cost, and effort to create and maintain physical media. Moreover, Dave spoke about the nature of the content that he and the archival team focus on, stating that the prioritized material is dependent on a predetermined selection of media based on “cultural relevance, format obsolescence and research value” So, how and what is considered culturally relevant, and why?

## *Cultural relevance*

Well, I argue it’s often not digital and online content. Consider the stigmatization that has always been associated with the internet through statements such as “you can’t trust everything you read on the internet” and “you need to read books to actually learn something.” These associations can hold some truth but are widely associated with an early era of the internet before education was primarily online as we are today.

These sentiments are embodied in commentator David Brooks’s piece “The

Medium is the Medium” in 2010 for The New York Times where he wrote, “The Internet helps you become well informed knowledgeable about current events, the latest controversies and important trends... But the literary world is still better at helping you become cultivated, mastering significant things of *lasting import*.” (Brooks, 2010; emphasis added). This mindset disregards and diminishes the important work being done online by individuals, teams, communities, and more.

Moreover, if “All media work us over completely” as Marshall McLuhan asserts, why is digital media, of which we interact with daily, often not considered “culturally relevant” in an archival and legacy sense? While older media iterations are privileged with still being grounded in a physical capacity, digital is often never made physical, thus failing victim to ownership complexities, long term issues, missing paratextual information and more. So what can we do?

## *My Project*

A variety of factors sparked my interest in this paper: my friend's DVD collection, seeing the scope of physical media and archival work being done by our library, and a TikTok by creator Igor Bieski. Bieski’s TikTok shows a famous online controversy, transformed into a DVD with a custom case and home menu alongside the caption “Preserving internet history one DVD at a time” (Bieski, 2023). This inspired me to take on this project for myself, commemorating a physical medium to someone whose online content holds significant meaning to me; Matthew Patrick.

## *Matthew Patrick/Game Theory*

Matthew Patrick (also known as MatPat) is the founder and CEO of Theorist Media, a company that grew from his popular YouTube channel, The Game Theorists. The channel, which began in 2011, grew from the idea of theorizing about games from character design, story lore, and more.

The popularity of this channel would expand into four separate channels amassing over 40 million subscribers and creating a community eager to learn and explore more into the theoretical questions surrounding their interests.

As a media studies student, I find all of his work extremely interesting and able to expand beyond the narrow view that different medias are often afforded. One of my favorite things MatPat has said that I think embodies his work was in a video analyzing the lore around popular horror franchise, Five Nights at Freddy's where he stated:

“My ultimate goal is to get you at home watching, questioning, replaying, and rethinking things — thinking critically about the things that you're watching because that's important when you're playing a silly game about animatronic murder bunnies, but it's even more important when you exist in 2022” (GTLive, 2022).

This January, MatPat announced that after 13 years of hosting the Game Theorist channels, he would be stepping down March 9th whereby others on his team will replace him as the main host. In his last few weeks counting down to his final theory, he was able to make the final videos he had always wanted to, commemorating different aspects of his life such as a Food Theory video on a family recipe book from his late grandparents, and a Film Theory video on the lack of positive male role models in film and television for his son.

And so, in commemoration of MatPat's departure from his channels, I decided to follow in Bieski's idea by creating a DVD of his final videos across the channels. I created a DVD menu with each finale video as a title, as well as a bonus menu with the hidden endings found through an alternate reality game (ARG) hidden across the final goodbye videos.

This is my way of preserving a legacy creator, and all the work that he has done during his time on YouTube. It's not a full discography, and to Głowiczki's point, there are interactive aspects that only virtual can capture and scale, but for me, it's one small step towards building a physical collection that captures all my impactful media, including virtual.

## *Conclusion*

There are a variety of factors why physical media serves a different purpose over virtual including ownership and the information it provides. For these reasons and more, physical media isn't gone, and people are trying to preserve them, however, this often only denotes physical-to-virtual archiving and virtual-to-virtual. Furthermore, online media culture that might not be deemed “culturally relevant” might never see a physical form, despite its importance in our culture and how it shapes our sphere.

As such, I challenge all of us to make strides in physically preserving the digital media that is important to us in any way we can. For me, this was making a DVD, but this could also mean making a CD of your favourite songs or printing out some of your Pinterest pins and making a collage or scrapbook. Which ever you do, remember to be mindful of the things you consume and consider the longevity of your media. But hey, that's just a theory... a media studies theory! Thanks for reading.\*

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# Music in the Post-Internet Era

Rhea Kapoor



Posthumanism considers the idea of being human beyond the physical manifestation of a human (Weheliye 21). It refers to how a person can exist beyond their physical state, i.e. through an online presence. Digital media is being used as an extension of ourselves, and music in the post-internet era is a reflection and extension of the artists. Since the boundary between in-person existence and media is being blurred, so is the line between representation of self in person and music— they are one and the same. As a result, privacy is less strict and songs freely talk about sex and intimacy. For example, “Low” by Flo Rida is a song about admiring a woman on the dance floor based on her physical appearance. In contrast, artists like Frank Sinatra — who released music before the internet — focus on love and intimacy over physical desire. This analysis will use signs to show how posthumanism in the post-internet era has caused music to often be hypersexualized, blurring the line between what is public and private.

Songs in the post-internet era often normalize the objectification of women. Even though posthumanism aims to push the boundaries of normativity, hypersexualization works against it. Women, their bodies and sensations, are being equated with sexuality (Bradby 157). This is noticed in the lyrics of “Low” by Flo Rida, where he says, “Them birthday cakes, they stole the show” (Flo Rida). This is a sexual innuendo which objectifies a woman’s body and creates a standard of beauty. The song normalizes the hypersexualization of a woman from a man’s point of view. The music video also features women in short denim shorts, which in this context are a signifier of sexual appeal (Atlantic Records 1:24). On their own, the clothes women wear in the song do not have a reflection of sexual availability; however, in combination with the lyrics and the meaning behind the song, it is an implication of showing skin to gain a man’s attention. In this way, the song normalizes objectification and sexualizing women in public places.

On the other hand, “The Way You Look Tonight” by Frank Sinatra gives value to personality and quirks that lend individuality. He sings, “Lovely, never, never change/ Keep that breathless charm” (Sinatra). These lyrics directly correlate to a woman’s personality, indicating that love stems from who she is as a person. Therefore, in the pre-internet era, the standard is not for sex appeal through a man’s gaze, but a seeking for depth and intellectual appreciation. His lyrics emphasize this: “With each word your tenderness grows” (Sinatra). The music of the pre-internet era gives importance to conversation and mental stimulation. Under the context of posthumanism, it shows that digital media has caused a shift to hypersexuality, whereas before people were concerned with using media to reflect the wants of their hearts and souls.

Using digital media as an extension of oneself reveals more about an individual than is necessary or would be revealed in person (Waugh 241). Having an online identity means that the idea of privacy is obscured. There is now a symbiotic relationship between post-internet generations and digital media, where the more they reveal, the more beneficial the outcome in terms of internal gratification. Applying this to the medium of music means artists reveal more about the intimate aspects of their lives than is necessary, where sex and intimacy are no longer covered by privacy. Flo Rida describes his reaction to a woman on the dance floor, singing "I'ma say that I prefer the no clothes/ I'm into that, I love women exposed" (Flo Rida). He alludes to his sexual preferences throughout the song, and the women in the music video are the physical manifestations of his desires. Therefore, this song represents how the post-internet generation reveals what used to be private information about themselves through their choice of medium.

Since Sinatra released music before the internet and before music videos were recorded, he heavily relied on the power of language as a symbolic system (Lorimer et al. 82). Most of the meaning relies on the lyrics, tempo, and dynamic. Focusing on the lyrics, they can be dissected to exemplify the extent of his emotional attachment. He sings, "I will feel a glow just thinking of you", where "glow" symbolizes happiness and contentment (Sinatra). The word causes a visual imagery of a halo, a radiant circle surrounding a holy person. Essentially, Sinatra feels like a true religious man through love and emotional connection. The word also carries a connotation of warmth, symbolizing liveliness. Furthermore, the switch between "cold" from the previous lyric to "glow" shows that love is putting life and warmth back into him (Sinatra). He keeps an air of mystery about his relationship, not revealing intimate aspects. This text uses language to show how the pre-internet era gives significance to passionate and sentimental relationships, that the post-internet era tends to reject.

Revealing more about oneself through music and other media also reproduces and eliminates intimacy in day-to-day life. Desire is inherent in the music of the post-internet era (Omry 109). It is increasingly becoming more surface-level as sexual innuendos and references are standardized in the music industry. The song focuses on physical attractions, for example, "Shawty was hot like a toaster" and "I was on it, sexy woman" (Flo Rida). It rejects any emotional aspect while making a connection with someone. Furthermore, younger audiences are more susceptible to teachings in pop culture. They are likely to learn from the lyrics and music videos of songs like this and apply it to their lives by reducing a woman's value to her physical appearance.

The title "The Way You Look Tonight" indicates Sinatra giving some importance to a woman's physical features. Instead of commenting on the attractiveness of her body, Sinatra sings "your smile so warm/ your cheeks so soft" (Sinatra). The connotations of these lyrics imply the emotions that link the two together. He gives significance to the little things that are overlooked in the post-internet era. With digital media, people do not look for the personality behind a smile; Flo Rida does not describe the woman's face at all. The younger generations, who are susceptible to morals from pop culture, are likely to be encouraged to value intimacy in the way Sinatra represents it through his lyrics. This is surprising because as times change, gender roles should evolve and positively push the roles of normativity. However, the evolution of music to a post-internet era shows a change from respectful and emotional involvement to a physical and degrading one.

Furthermore, tempo evokes emotion in songs. It can emotionally charge people based on tempo and dynamics (Volpe 61). Excitement and high arousal emotions are associated with a faster tempo (Volpe 62), which is exhibited through Flo Rida's music. The fast tempo in "Low" depicts themes of arousal and exhilaration. This is emphasized through the loud volume and dynamic in the song as well. It is complimented with strong beats that act as a signifier for the power the singer aims to assert on the woman. It represents an urgency in his desire to achieve his end goal of a sexual connection. The song charges its audience to experience the same persistence for a physical relationship and creates an expectation for loud club music to cause arousal.

The tempo in "The Way You Look Tonight" is slower and consistent. Low arousal emotions are associated with slow tempos, such as sadness or love (Volpe 62). In this case, it symbolizes longing and love. It moves past surface-level desire and depicts the want to take their time and enjoy the little things that affect Sinatra emotionally. As a result, the expectations created are of romance and tenderness. Part of understanding music through its sounds is the sounds people make and hear daily (Volpe 62). Cross-culturally, tenderness and devotion are expressed through low vocal intensity, something Sinatra mimics in his music. The consistency in dynamics and tempo is representative of stability in a relationship that does not suffer through anger and rushed desire.

The idea of posthumanism is reflected in both eras, but the personalities being revealed are of different natures. While in the post-internet era, using digital media as an extension of oneself causes an insight into surface-level desires and arousals, the pre-internet era used media to represent heartfelt emotions. It seems that what is deemed a secret has changed through digital media. On one hand, we see an attempt to hide or reject depth and emotion. On the other, the norm was to hide shallow indulgences and cravings.

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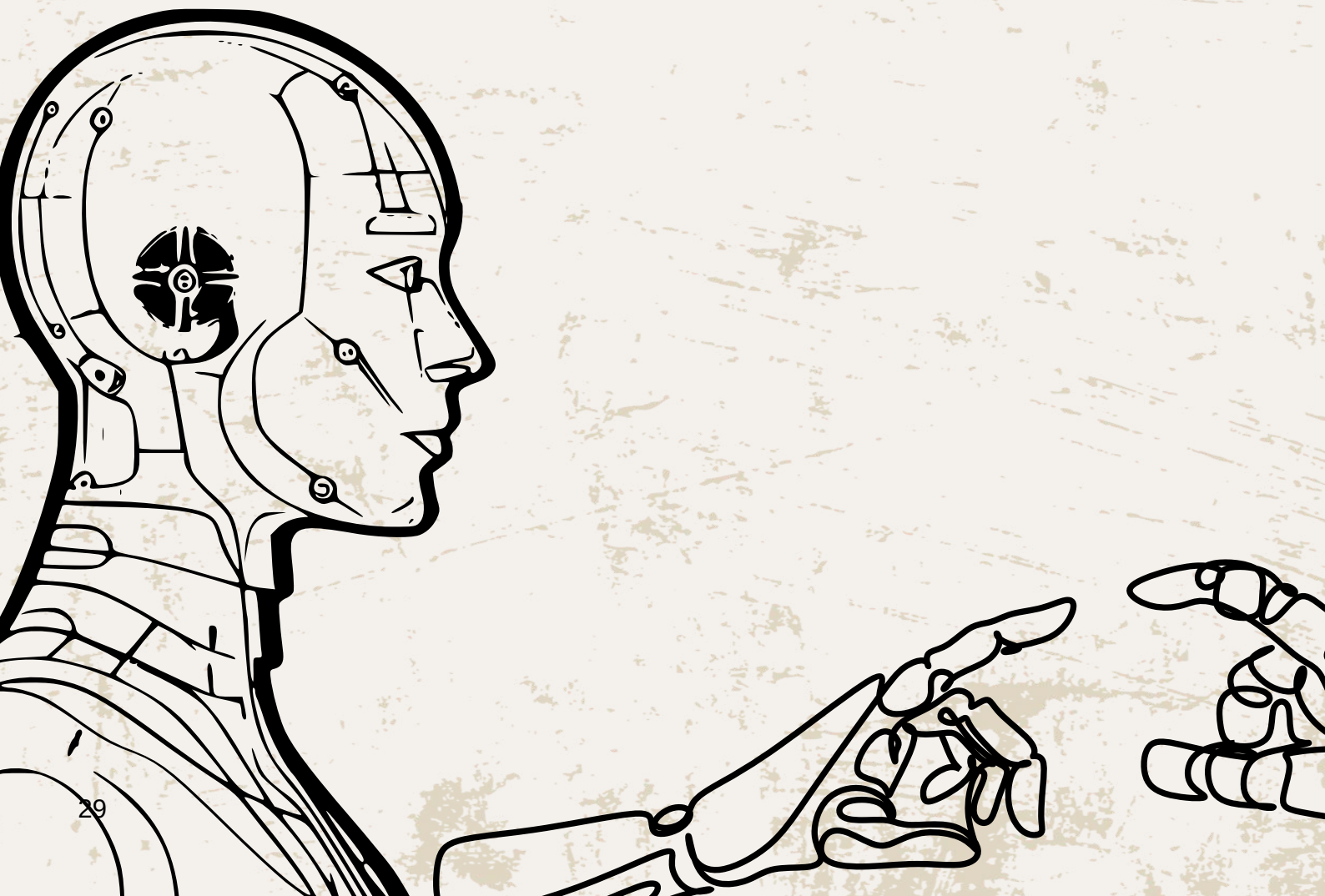
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# Melville's Bartleby The Scrivener and Artificial Intelligence

Caden Elliott



In this essay, I will discuss and analyze the ending of Herman Melville's *Bartleby The Scrivener* in conversation with the rising movement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in modern society. In particular, I will argue how AI presents a false hope for Bartleby and those in his position, and that the core irresolvable issue is the lack of vocation in modern post-capitalist society. My reading argues that the use and insertion of AI into various careers and jobs today is deceptively counter-intuitive and ironically unproductive in a modern society that has so deeply internalized the capitalist productivity regime.

In the text, Bartleby is in consistent denial of his surroundings. His trademark saying, "I would prefer not," is his rejection of any deed, sustenance, etc. that is not immediately pertinent to his redundant career of copying. If placed in modern society (which it can be and is) Bartleby's literal daily task of copying and dealing with the "dead letters" could be easily replaced by AI. It is also effectively used for various writing tasks, such as ChatGPT, so it would be perfectly suited to relieve Bartleby of his position.

The modern ideological consumer world views this as a huge win, however, this could not be further from the truth. Since he dies because he is a product of his career, Bartleby dies because he is his career. Bartleby has no identifiable traits outside of his profession, which is why when he dies, our narrator, despite being seized by his emotions, feels "no need for proceeding further in this history." Bartleby has lost his only redeeming quality to his employer — his presence and capability to work. Bartleby is an extreme example of internalizing the post-capitalist regime. His entire identity and existence is tailored to his profession, making it seem like the capitalist oppression is not present from an outsider's view, but rather it has been internalized. Therefore, I argue that if Bartleby's career were taken over by AI, he would arrive at a similar, if not the same, ending as he does in the text: death.

From this position, it is clear to see how the insertion/usage of AI in a situation like Bartleby's would be unwise; however, what is the central issue that this recognition illuminates. It is that in an internalized post-capitalist structure such as Bartleby's, the individual has lost their

sense of vocation. I stress the term vocation for Bartleby's specific situation due to how he is described at his death. As our narrator attempts to go visit Bartleby, a turnkey asks, "Are you looking for the silent man?" He then directs our narrator, and he comes across Bartleby, "strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones, I saw the wasted Bartleby." Bartleby has reverted into a silent fetal position, obviously indicating that he has passed. However, the specific description of his dead body as "the silent man" is where I believe a



Bartleby's existence is built off of the previously mentioned internalization, that despite seeming like it could be solved by the modern application of AI, it cannot, as it does not solve the true issue of the modern lack of vocation. From this depressing circumstance and ending to Bartleby's life, there is no solution, but rather a horrified recognition by the narrator. Essentially describing Bartleby, the narrator exclaims that the task of dealing with the dead letters only seems fit and even heightens the "pallid hopelessness" of "a man [conceived] by nature and misfortune." Furthermore, he recognizes that the individual attempts of people in Bartleby's situation are in vain, as he states that "On errands of life, these letters speed to death." The metaphor of letters for people (i.e. 'Bartleby-s') is supported in his previous statement that "Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men?" Once Bartleby's employer perceives and recognizes the horror of the situation, he cannot advise a solution--all he can do is lament: "Ah Bartleby! Ah Humanity!"

In this essay, I argued that the true irresolvable issue in Melville's *Bartleby The Scrivener* is the internalized nature of a post-capitalist society that is epitomized in the titular Bartleby. This internalization leads to a lack of vocation (voco = call, "the silent man") that is ultimately the demise of the scrivener. Incorporating this issue with the modern-day rise and usage of AI, I argue that it is ironically counter-productive, as it does not solve the previously identified issue of vocation, leaving Bartleby in the exact same situation. With the lack of a solution in the ending, Melville writes a harrowing recognition of the rising capitalist motion that persists in our modern technology-centred society.

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nd I lost count of the labels I tasted  
found out quickly that trying too many  
wines in a single day can confuse your  
palate. What helps is that each wine  
has its own experts who will help you  
choose wines best suited to your  
palates.

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a host of antique jewellery and  
collectibles shops in their midst.

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accommodations with good views of  
the vineyards. The Hunter County