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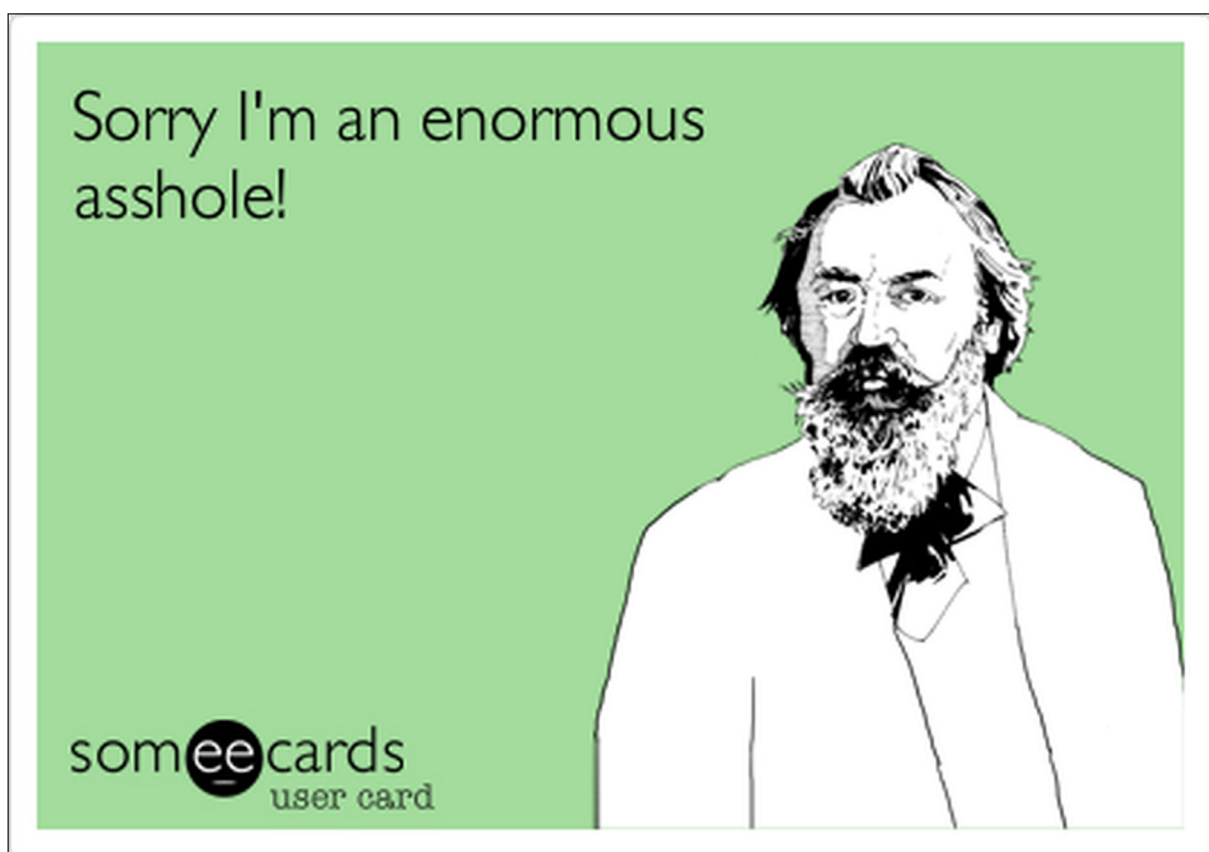
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Stronzo Bestiale

the false author of true scientific papers

Press review



Retraction Watch

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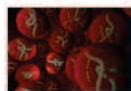


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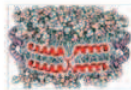
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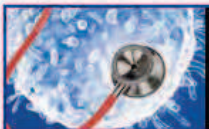


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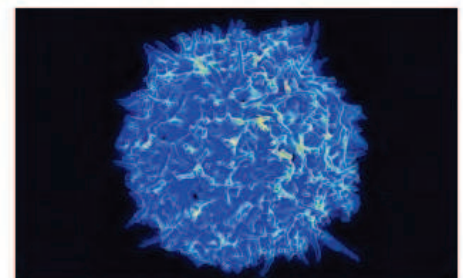
16 October 2014 5:15 pm

What's in a name? The Anthropocene debate begins



16 October 2014 3:15 pm

When @#%\$! is your imaginary co-author



16 October 2014 2:30 pm

Modified T cells kill leukemia





CHRIS HARDIE/Flickr ([CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 \(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/))

Thursday, October 16, 2014 - 3:15pm

When @#%\$! is your imaginary co-author

Apparently if your physics paper is rejected for publication, resubmitting it with a pseudonym that's an Italian profanity may change your luck. That's the bizarre story appropriately uncovered by Italian science writer [Vito Tartamella \(http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/\)](http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/)—he has penned books on swearing and Italian surnames. In 1987, after their paper on “[non-equilibrium molecular dynamics \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-equilibrium_thermodynamics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-equilibrium_thermodynamics)”, connecting fractal geometry, irreversibility and the second law of thermodynamics” was rejected, physicists Bill Moran and William Hoover [chose to resubmit it with a new title and an additional co-author they named Stronzo Bestiale, a phrase that Hoover overheard on a plane ride to Paris \(http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/\)](http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/). (For those without Google Translate, it means total asshole.) The paper, and subsequent ones with the same co-author, was accepted. The joke, Hoover says, reflects the vulnerability of the review systems in scientific literature.

[<< What's in a name? The](#)

[Modified T cells kill leukemia](#)

Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a window into the scientific process

Should papers be retracted if one of the authors is a total asshole?

with 32 comments

When science writer Vito Tartamella noticed a physics paper co-authored by Stronzo Bestiale (which means “total asshole” in Italian) he did what anyone who’s written a book on surnames would do: He looked it up in the phonebook.

What he found was a lot more complicated than a funny name.

It turns out Stronzo Bestiale doesn’t exist.

In 1987, Lawrence Livermore National Lab physicist William G. Hoover had a paper on molecular dynamics rejected by two journals: *Physical Review Letters* and the *Journal of Statistical Physics*. So he added Stronzo Bestiale to the list of co-authors, changed the name, and resubmitted the paper. *The Journal of Statistical Physics* accepted it.

27 years later, Bestiale is still listed as co-author on several papers. He also has a Scopus profile that lists him as an active researcher at the Institute of Experimental Physics, University of Vienna.

This isn’t the first time a scientist has added a fictional co-author to a paper to make a point. In 1978, Polly Matzinger added her impeccably-named Afghan hound, Galadriel Mirkwood, to a *Journal of Experimental Medicine* paper to protest the use of passive voice in scientific papers.

Hilarious as these examples are, it does prove a point that’s a little less fun: The scientific community needs to be on its toes about who (or what) is writing the papers they publish, to help keep *merde* out of the literature.

Hat tip: Fabio Turone (who inspired our tongue-in-cheek headline, too)



Image via Chris James.



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Further findings in the matter of Stronzo Bestiale

Vito Tartamella, in *Parolacce*, his blog about science and profanity, provides further information in the matter of Stronzo Bestiale (the question of the existence of whom we wrote about a few days ago, prompted by a report in *Retraction Watch*). Tartamella's Stronzo Bestiale report begins:

Would you read a paper written by Stronzo Bestiale (**Total Asshole**)? A dose of mistrust would be justified: **the name says it all**. Yet, in 1987, professor Bestiale, supposedly a **physicist in Palermo, Sicily**, authored major papers in prestigious scientific peer reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Statistical Physics*, the *Journal of Chemical Physics* and the proceedings of a meeting of *American Physical Society in Monterey*.

Journal of Statistical Physics
August 1987, Volume 48, Issue 3-4, pp 709-726

Diffusion in a periodic Lorentz gas

Bill Moran, William G. Hoover, **Stronzo Bestiale**

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Abstract

We use a constant "driving force" F_d together with a Gaussian thermostating "constraint force" F_c to simulate a nonequilibrium steady-state current (particle velocity) in a periodic, two-dimensional, classical Lorentz gas. The ratio of the average particle velocity to the driving force (field strength) is the Lorentz-gas conductivity. A regular "Galton-board" lattice of fixed

Given that surnames always intrigued me (they are the subject of my first book), I tried to find this person in Italian telephone directories. In Italy there are 7 Bestiale, mostly in Piedmont. None of them, however, has the name Stronzo (Turd or a Asshole: who would call their own son that?); between the Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige there are 4 Stronziero, but this is also a surname.

In fact, Stronzo Bestiale does not exist as confirmed, when those scientific papers were published 27 years ago, by the then Chancellor of the University of Palermo, Ignazio Melisenda Giambertoni (another unusual surname!).

So I decided to investigate more thoroughly....

(Thanks to investigator Scott Langill for bringing this to our attention.)

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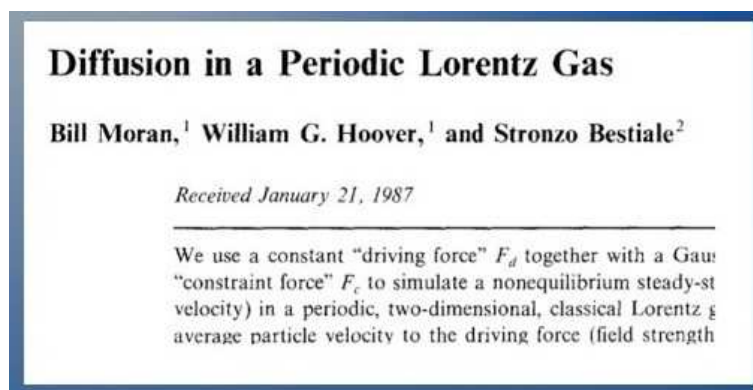
Permanent Address: <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/2015/04/01/when-your-co-author-is-a-monstrous-ass/>

When Your Co-Author Is a Monstrous Ass

By Philip Yam | April 1, 2015

Who hasn't worked with a disagreeable person—and in the world of science publishing, authored a paper with one? That wasn't exactly what went through the mind of William Hoover, a physicist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, when he included an Italian co-author to his 1987 paper. But certainly, frustration and a little juvenilia can be potent driving forces in a fake-name prank.

In particular, Hoover managed to add, during his review of page proofs, a supposed co-author named Stronzo Bestiale. *Stronzo* is actually an Italian vulgarity for a body part at the end of the digestion process, but if you must know the literal translation, run it through [Google Translate](#). If you're feeling especially sophomoric, hit the speaker icon.

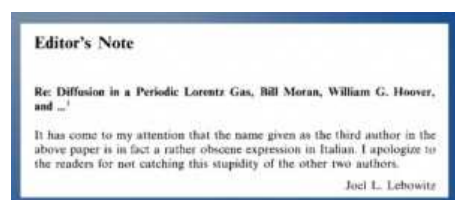


From the Journal of Statistical Physics, Vol. 48, Nos. 3/4, 1987.

The perpetrator of the joke actually wasn't even sure what stronzo bestiale meant at first. Hoover fixated on the words "because two Italian young women punctuated their conversation on a flight to Paris with incessant 'Che Stronzo' and 'Stronzo Bestiale,'" he recalled in an email to me. An Italian colleague told him that "stronzo was a pile of fecal material and that stronzo bestiale was a very big, unusually impressive pile." Whether the name rightfully refers to the body part rather than to the material that comes out of that body part doesn't really matter—it's all nastiness in the end.

The joke name may not be as pun-clever as those that Bart Simpson induces bartender Moe to say ("Where's Amanda Hugginkiss? Why can't I find Amanda Hugginkiss?"). But that's perhaps why "Stronzo Bestiale" slipped unnoticed into volume 48, numbers 3/4 of the *Journal of Statistical Physics*, published then by Plenum Publishing. I was working there at the time, and no one knew anything was amiss until a reporter from Italy reached out to Plenum. "I was totally surprised by a call from Italy," said Jim Langlois, the journal's production editor, as we recalled the incident over a recent lunch together.

After the call, the stronzo hit the fan: panic broke out in the office, Jim and I recollected, as more calls came from Italy, some quite outraged. The journal's editor, Joel Lebowitz of Rutgers University, expressed regret in a later issue. "I apologize to the readers for not catching this stupidity of the other two authors," [he wrote](#).



Apology from J. Stat. Phys., Vol. 50, Nos. 5/6, 1988.

Despite the authorship, the paper itself, "Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas," was no April Fools' gag. As [Vito Tartamella](#) wrote last fall about the incident, Hoover was upset over the rejection of two papers, which described a new computational method for molecular dynamics. Not that the work was bad, Hoover felt. It was just too new, and scientists are a conservative bunch. Hoover managed to publish both papers eventually—in the case of his S. Bestiale work, he merely changed the title and resubmitted the manuscript. Since its publication, the paper has been

cited 164 times, according to [Google Scholar](#).

The incident does not appear to have left any hard feelings. The work “led to a publication by Joel and a couple of coauthors following up in 1993,” remarked Hoover, who described his relationship with Lebowitz as cordial and respectful. The first author of the paper, Bill Moran, “went along with the joke and didn’t mind,” Hoover said. “I was, after all, his Ph.D. advisor.”

This prank wasn’t the first time a fake author found a way to live on in the scientific literature. In 1975, physicist Jack Hetherington added his Siamese cat Chester as author, under the name “F.D.C. Willard,” for [a paper](#) published in *Physical Review Letters*. According to [Wikipedia](#), he did that because the journal objected to his use of “we” when writing as a sole authors, so he added his cat. Fake names almost certainly pepper the acknowledgements section of papers. Hoover admits that some, such as “J.S. Pack” (Joe Six Pack), made it into a few of his works.

There remains the larger issue of how to prevent editors from getting punked. Adding “Stronzo Bestiale” during the page-proof stage, when authors have a last chance to make corrections, was a good move on Hoover’s part because proof corrections are unlikely to go through peer review. Any request to add an author, however, raises a red flag that should tell an editor to look into the matter, explains my office colleague Noah Gray, senior editor at *Nature* (*Scientific American* is published by Nature Publishing Group).

In the publish-or-perish world of academia, few researchers would probably dare jeopardize their careers with a prank, especially if the work itself is serious. But given the number of papers published every year, who knows how many *stronzos* are really out there.

More:

[Okay, We Give Up](#) – Editor’s April Fools’ note from 2005, in response to letter writers who said we should “stick to science.”



About the Author: Philip Yam is the managing editor of [ScientificAmerican.com](#). He is the author of *The Pathological Protein: Mad Cow, Chronic Wasting and Other Prion Diseases*. Follow on Twitter [@philipyam](#).

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103,571 🔥 50 ★ ▼

EXPAND

Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas

Bill Moran,¹ William G. Hoover,¹ and Stronzo Bestiale²

Stronzo Bestiale has published research in some of the world's most esteemed physics journals, and his co-authors are often leading members in their fields. But Stronzo Bestiale, whose name means "total asshole" in Italian, has a secret. He kind of doesn't exist.

Science writer Vito Tartamella recently uncovered Bestiale's secret when he came across a paper by physicists Bill Moran and William G. Hoover that lists Bestiale as a co-author. The paper in question: "Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas." (<http://williamhoover.info/Scans1980s/1987-3.pdf>) originally published in 1987 in the *Journal of Statistical Physics*.

Tartamella – who is not only Italian, himself, but the author of a book on surnames (<http://www.parolacce.org/gli-altri-libri/>) – immediately noticed Bestiale's unusual designation and decided to look him up in the phonebook. Nothing. The man has a [Scopus profile](http://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.url?authorId=16456727300) (<http://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.url?authorId=16456727300>) that lists him as an active researcher at the Institute of Experimental Physics, University of Vienna, but he doesn't appear in the phonebook. Puzzled, Tartamelle reached out to one of Bestiale's co-authors:

I wrote to professor Hoover, now retired, to ask him the true story of Stronzo Bestiale. Here's what he said. "At that time," he says, "we were very active in the development of a new computational technique, non-equilibrium molecular dynamics (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-equilibrium_thermodynamics), connecting fractal geometry, irreversibility and the second law of thermodynamics. The idea was born during meetings at CECAM (Centre Européen de Calcul Atomique et Moléculaire) in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the Enrico Fermi summer school organized at Lake Como with Giovanni Ciccotti, professor of condensed matter physics at the University La Sapienza University in Rome. In these meetings, the theoretical picture of this technique was clear to me, so I wrote several papers on the subject along with some colleagues. But the reviewers of Physical Review Letters and the Journal of Statistical Physics refused to publish my texts: they contained too innovative ideas."

Meanwhile, Hoover continues, "while I was traveling on a flight to Paris, next to me were two Italian women who spoke among themselves, saying continually: "Che stronzo (what an asshole)!", "Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)". Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So, during a CECAM meeting, I asked Ciccotti what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication. So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author. And the research was published."

Amazing.

Tartamella has been updating his post with other scientific jokes and made-up authors that have made their way into scientific journals, [which are definitely worth checking out](http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/) (<http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/>). One of our favorites comes from Ivan Oransky at Retraction Watch (where we first heard tell of Stronzo Bestiale), who recalls the case of immunologist Polly Matzinger, who, in 1978, listed as one of her co-authors one Galadriel Mirkwood (her Afghan hound).

[Vito Tartamella (<http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale/>) via Retraction Watch (<http://retractionwatch.com/2014/10/09/should-papers-be-retracted-if-one-of-the-authors-is-a-total-asshole/>)]

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<http://vinventure.kinja.com>Vin_Venture (<http://vinventure.kinja.com>) ▸ Robbie GonzalezSunday 9:31am (<http://io9.com/as-someone-who-has-never-tried-to-get-anything-publishe-1645437776>)

As someone who has never tried to get anything published, did just having an extra name-any name help, or was it the fact that they didn't have faith in just the first guy that made all the difference?

'Total Asshole' Is Technically a Published Physicist

psmag.com/footnotes/total-asshole-technically-published-physicist-92426/

In much the same way Americans [named Penis](#) “exist” on certain strange corners of the Internet (but, actually, nowhere else), an Italian by the name of Stronzo Bestiale, translated “Total Asshole,” can be found in the authorship listings of at least a few [reputable physics journals](#).

As Vito Tartamella, a writer and fellow name detective, [explains on his blog](#), “Total Asshole” doesn’t seem to be a legitimate person outside that narrow realm:

I tried to find this person

in Italian [telephone directories](#). In Italy there are 7 Bestiale, mostly in Piedmont. None of them, however, has the name Stronzo (Turd or a Asshole: who would call their own son that?); between the Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige there are 4 Stronziero, but this is also a surname.

In fact, Tartamella got one of Bestiale’s old co-authors, a retired Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory researcher named William G. Hoover, to cop to the fact that he invented the name after he became frustrated that pesky journal reviewers wouldn’t accept some of his more “innovative” theoretical physics work. Hoover explained:

*while I was traveling on a flight to Paris, next to me were two Italian women who spoke among themselves, saying continually: “Che stronzo (what an asshole)!” “Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)”. Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So, during a [Centre Européen de Calcul Atomique et Moléculaire] meeting, I asked [an Italian colleague] what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that **Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication**. So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author.*

With the added weight of Stronzo Bestiale’s expertise, the paper was published. ([h/t @jpinsk](#)) —Ryan Jacobs

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Stronzo Bestiale, Galadriel Mirkwood, Crosley Shelvador, ...

October 10, 2014 @ 9:03 pm · Filed by [Mark Liberman](#) under [Humor](#)

« [previous post](#) | [next post](#) »

"[The true story of Stronzo Bestiale](#)", Parolacce 10/5/2014:

Would you read a paper written by Stronzo Bestiale (Total Asshole)? A dose of mistrust would be justified: the name says it all. Yet, in 1987, professor Bestiale, supposedly a physicist in Palermo, Sicily, authored major papers in prestigious scientific peer reviewed journals such as the [Journal of Statistical Physics](#), the [Journal of Chemical Physics](#) and the proceedings of a [meeting of American Physical Society in Monterey](#).

No such person exists, it seems — the story emerges through email with one of Prof. Bestiale's co-authors:

I wrote to professor Hoover, now retired, to ask him the true story of Stronzo Bestiale. Here's what he said. «At that time» he says «we were very active in the development of a new computational technique, non-equilibrium molecular dynamics, connecting fractal geometry, irreversibility and the second law of thermodynamics. [...]

[T]he theoretical picture of this technique was clear to me, so I wrote several papers on the subject along with some colleagues. But the reviewers of Physical Review Letters and the Journal of Statistical Physics refused to publish my texts: they contained too innovative ideas.»

This is nothing new: new discoveries in science are hard to publish because scientists are rather conservative, as discussed by the epistemologist Thomas Kuhn. Meanwhile, Hoover continues, «while I was traveling on a flight to Paris, next to me were two Italian women who spoke among themselves, saying continually: “Che stronzo (what an asshole)!” , “Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)” . Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So, during a CECAM meeting, I asked Ciccotti what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication. So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author. And the researches were published».

I wonder how widely this technique would work? Across the languages of the world, we can find thousands of authors' names in the same genre. There's Prof. Connard, who seems to have [thousands of publications](#) already; but the career of Dr. arschloch seems hardly to have begun — perhaps I would have better luck with LSA abstracts if I adopted her as a co-author.

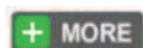
And there are other sources of names, of course. "[Should papers be retracted if one of the authors is a total asshole?](#)", *Retraction Watch* 10/9/2014, mentions the possibility of pet co-authors:

In 1978, Polly Matzinger added her impeccably-named Afghan hound, Galadriel Mirkwood, to a [Journal of Experimental Medicine](#) paper to protest the use of passive voice in scientific papers.

And in the field of linguistics, we have precedent for the authorship status of household appliances:

"[Dr. Alfred Crockus and Crosley Shelvador, M.D.](#)", LLOG 9/19/2007; "[Crosley Shelvador comes in from the cold](#)", LLOG 9/20/2007.

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October 10, 2014 @ 9:03 pm · Filed by [Mark Liberman](#) under [Humor](#)

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34 Comments »

1. Jerry Friedman said,

October 10, 2014 @ [10:10 pm](#)

There must be a lot of Italian statistical and chemical physicists whose sense of humor overrides any desire they might have to expose a hoax.

What I don't get is why Hoover thought adding Bestiale's name would help him get published and why it apparently did. Was there a prejudice against solo authors? Did Italians have a good reputation in non-equilibrium molecular thermodynamics?

By the way, [WordReference.com](#) says *stronzo* is literally 'turd, shit' and as an insult 'asshole, prick, dick'.

[(myl) Presumably it was just the random draw of editors and reviewers that resulted in rejection or acceptance, with Prof. Bestiale's participation playing only the role of authorial commentary on the process.]

2. DavidH said,

October 10, 2014 @ [10:51 pm](#)

I went to an Italian school (elementary and high school) I speak Italian since I was 6 years old and I understand why they translate stronzo bestiale as a total asshole, stronzo literally means piece of shit or turd, bestiale means like a beast but in the sense of huge so literally stronzo bestiale would be a huge piece of shit or turd, so if somebody is a huge piece of shit you can say with certainty that he's a total asshole :)

3. D.O. said,

October 11, 2014 @ [12:42 am](#)

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I C O N

Las mejores bromas ocultas en estudios científicos

Insultos cifrados al lector. Referencias a la anatomía femenina. Letras de Bob Dylan. Cuando la ciencia se desmelen, lo hace a escondidas

RUBÉN ROMERO SANTOS | 29 OCT 2014 - 23:41 CET

14

Archivado en: Científicos Humor Investigación científica Gente Sociedad Ciencia



Cuando uno lee un estudio científico, visualiza a los autores elevados en un *ricus* de severa seriedad académica, negociando cómo convertir en nuestro lenguaje la hasta ahora ignota realidad que llevan meses conquistando con un microscopio por machete. Es lo que tiene esgrimir la autoridad máxima en ciertos asuntos. Sin embargo, si Leonardo Da Vinci levantara la cabeza, igual la volvía a esconder, y no solo por los *selfies* de Jay-Z y Beyoncé frente a su *Gioconda*, sino por las bromas que, en determinadas ocasiones, preside el muy sesudo mundo académico. Y es que existen bromas dentro de la comunidad científica para todos los gustos.

Las hay inocentes, casi infantiles, como la de [un artículo sobre Paleontología](#) que promulga la utilización de la técnica que responde al acrónimo de M.E.R.D.A. (adivinen qué traducción tiene al italiano); o la de [un estudio chino](#) que emplea el acrónimo C.U.N.T. (que en la lengua de

Shakespeare [tiene un significado](#) que no deberíamos reproducir por aquí). En otros casos los chistes han alcanzado relevancia mundial y la categoría de tradición. De este último tipo de bromas comentamos a continuación algunos ejemplos.

17 años 'colando' letras de Bob Dylan en estudios

Un grupo de cinco investigadores suecos lleva gastándose una broma privada, frente a toda la comunidad científica, desde hace 17 años. Se juegan una cena a ver quién es capaz de incluir, antes de retirarse, más citas de Bob Dylan en prestigiosas revistas académicas, introducciones de libros, artículos periodísticos...

Todo comenzó en 1997 cuando dos de ellos publicaron en la revista *Nature* un artículo llamado *Óxido nítrico e inflamación: la respuesta está flotando en el viento* (haciendo referencia a la canción del cantautor, *Blowing in the wind*). "A los dos nos gusta mucho Bob Dylan así que cuando nos pusimos a escribir un artículo sobre la medición de óxido nítrico en el aparato respiratorio y el intestino... Nos acordamos del título de la canción y se ajustaba perfectamente", explicó hace poco Eddie Weitzberg, uno de los implicados en la broma.

Después vinieron otros estudios y se sumaron más colegas. ¿[Tratados de neurología y Blood on tracks?](#) Hecho. ¿[Cardiología molecular y Tangled up in blue?](#) Escrito. Y así se suceden las hazañas en este tremendo duelo entre investigadores del prestigioso Instituto Karolinska de Estocolmo que se reveló hace pocas semanas [en la web](#) del Instituto. No es, en puridad, más que una travesura, una broma privada y resultona, pues los cinco perpetradores se toman muy en serio la institución y su trabajo. Weitzberg reconoció al periódico sueco *The Local* que preferiría hacerse conocido por su trabajo científico en lugar de por sus citas de Bob Dylan. El humor sueco debe ser como su gimnasia, ligerita.

Un autor de apellido, ¿Bestial? Y de nombre, ¿qué?

Hartos de que no aceptaran la publicación de sus estudios, los científicos estadounidenses William G. Hoover y Bill Moran decidieron inventarse a este simpático personaje para publicar en las mejores revistas de Física del mundo. Así nació un tal Stronzo Bestiale, científico italiano, de Palermo, que por lo visto trabaja en el Instituto de Física experimental de la Universidad de Viena. Cuenta con una prolija lista de artículos científicos. No hay que saber italiano, sino simplemente haber escuchado el *Venecia* de Hombres G, para saber que puede traducirse como *gilipollas bestial*.

Un grupo de cinco investigadores suecos lleva gastándose una broma privada, frente a toda la comunidad científica, desde hace 17 años: ver cuántas letras de Bob Dylan puede meter en sus textos

Para sorpresa de Hoover y Moran, los editores hicieron más caso a este autor inventado que a ellos. “No nos prestaban atención porque, hace 27 años, creían que nuestras ideas eran demasiado innovadoras, así que decidimos tomarles el pelo. Y funcionó”, le contaba Hoover al autor de este descubrimiento, el periodista italiano Vito Tartamella. Los científicos cambiaron el título del artículo que no conseguían publicar y se lo atribuyeron al tal Stronzo Bestiale. Esta vez las revistas lo aceptaron. Hoy, este personaje de la picaresca científica se ha convertido en un mito de la investigación, que llegó a firmar 925 entradas en el Google académico, e incluso se comercializan camisetas con su nombre y apellido ficticios.

Investigar el disparate

A veces el propio objeto de estudio parece ser la broma en sí. Entre los títulos de los estudios más delirantes de la historia reciente de la ciencia estaría sin duda *Efectos de la cocaína en el comportamiento danzarín de las abejas*, publicado en el *Journal of Experimental Biology* por científicos de la Universidad Macquarie, en Australia. La investigación, por cierto, concluyó que esta droga provoca los mismos efectos devastadores en una colmena que en una sociedad humana.

Entre los títulos de los estudios más delirantes de la historia reciente de la ciencia estaría sin duda 'Efectos de la cocaína en el comportamiento danzarín de las abejas'

Otras hilarantes indagaciones son: *Las palomas son capaces de distinguir entre los dibujos “buenos” y “malos” de los niños* realizado por el profesor Shigeru Watanabe, de la Universidad Keio, de Tokyo; *La felación de los murciélagos de la fruta prolonga el tiempo de copulación* que salió en PLoS One y también ganó un premio IgNobel, galardones que cada año entrega la revista Annals of Improbable Research a los estudios más cachondos.

Otras ganadoras de un IgNobel son: *La gente se caería menos a menudo si usara las medias y los calcetines en el exterior de los zapatos*, *Uso del moho del lodo en las vías de ferrocarril* o *Los síntomas del asma disminuyen en un viaje en montaña rusa*. Ríanse ahora de Ana García Obregón y sus dotes para la biología... si pueden.



AT THE HEART OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEBATE

Who is Stronzo Bestiale?

30 October 2014 | By [Chris Parr](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/comment/opinion/who-is-stronzo-bestiale) (URL=[/chris-parr/1185.bio](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/comment/opinion/who-is-stronzo-bestiale))

A blogger gets to the bottom of tale concerning a physicist whose name means 'total asshole' in Italian



Source: [LinkedIn](#)

Vito Tartamella, author and managing editor of the science monthly *Focus*

"Would you read a paper written by Stronzo Bestiale [translation – total asshole]?" asks [a post on Parolacce](http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale) (URL=<http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-story-of-stronzo-bestiale>) – the self-declared "only italian scientific blog on profanity".

"A dose of mistrust would be justified: the name says it all," the post continues. "Yet, in 1987, professor Bestiale, supposedly a physicist in Palermo, Sicily, authored major papers in prestigious scientific peer reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Statistical Physics*, the *Journal of Chemical Physics* and the proceedings of a meeting of American Physical Society in Monterey."

The blog – highlighted to *Times Higher Education* after [our story](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/hidden-leopard-skin-g-string-exposed/2016392.article) (URL=<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/hidden-leopard-skin-g-string-exposed/2016392.article>) about the French phrase for "your mother in a leopard-skin G-string" being included in a paper – is written by Vito Tartamella, author and managing editor of the science monthly *Focus*, and it goes on to detail his investigations into the veracity of Mr Bestiale's publication record.

"I tried to find this person in Italian telephone directories," he says. "In Italy there are 7 Bestiale, mostly in Piedmont. None of them, however, has the name Stronzo (Turd or Asshole: who would call their own son that?)"

It turns out, unsurprisingly, that Stronzo Bestiale does not exist. The name appears "in the papers authored by Bill Moran and William G. Hoover, two influential American scientists from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory".

Dr Tartamella wrote to Professor Hoover, now retired, to ask him the true story of Stronzo Bestiale.

He was told that while travelling on a flight to Paris, Professor Hoover had been sat next to two Italian women who “spoke among themselves, saying continually: ‘Che stronzo (what an asshole)!', ‘Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)’.”

The phrases stuck in Professor Hoover’s mind, so he found out what Stronzo Bestiale meant. He decided the name would be the perfect co-author for a paper that had been refused publication by two journals already, so he “decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author”. The paper was published.

Although not everyone took the joke well (the then president of the Italian Physical Society described it as an offence “to the entire Italian scientific community”), it “laid bare how vulnerable control systems in the review of scientific research were (and still are!)”, Dr Tartamella writes.

“Incredibly, even today, 27 years later, Stronzo Bestiale continues to be present as the author of publications in scientific databases: is it not extraordinary?”

The post was picked up by the [Retraction Watch blog](http://retractionwatch.com/2014/10/09/should-papers-be-retracted-if-one-of-the-authors-is-a-total-asshole) (URL=<http://retractionwatch.com/2014/10/09/should-papers-be-retracted-if-one-of-the-authors-is-a-total-asshole>), which points out that “this isn’t the first time a scientist has added a fictional co-author to a paper to make a point”. “In 1978, Polly Matzinger added her impeccably-named Afghan hound, Galadriel Mirkwood, to a *Journal of Experimental Medicine* paper to protest the use of passive voice in scientific papers.

“Hilarious as these examples are, it does prove a point that’s a little less fun: The scientific community needs to be on its toes about who (or what) is writing the papers they publish, to help keep *merde* out of the literature.”

Send links to topical, insightful and quirky online comment by and about academics to chris.parr@tesglobal.com



(URL=<http://www.tslshop.co.uk/thed->

[tsl/THEDOA74/?utm_source=THE&utm_medium=Comment&utm_content=THEDOA74&utm_campaign=freetrial](http://www.tslshop.co.uk/thed-tsl/THEDOA74/?utm_source=THE&utm_medium=Comment&utm_content=THEDOA74&utm_campaign=freetrial))

Print headline:

Article originally published as: *THE Scholarly Web* (30 October 2014)

Science

Dr Fraud and the strange case of the online science journals

Studies with dubious standards are diluting the integrity of research

Anjana Ahuja



Borat Sagdiyev, alter ego of comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, was briefly placed on the board of the journal *Immunology and Vaccines* © Getty

APRIL 17, 2017 by Anjana Ahuja

Dr Anna O Szust is exactly the kind of trophy academic that scientific journals crave on their editorial boards. She exhibits a breathtaking sweep of scholarship, stretching from the theory of science in sport to zeitgeisty writing on whether spring-born women are the most attractive. With an impressive CV, plus profiles on Twitter and Google+, she is juggling offers from 48 journals.

Only the book chapters do not exist. She has not published any papers in peer-reviewed journals, nor is she featured in any established academic database. *Oszust* means fraud in Polish. This Dr Fraud is the beautifully crafted and wholly fictitious centrepiece of a [sting operation](#) designed to expose the growing problems associated with pay-to-publish, open-access journals.

The proliferation of such online journals allows scientific knowledge to be disseminated more widely, cheaply and equitably. But alongside reputable examples flourish so-called “predatory” journals, published primarily to fatten wallets. They feast on academia’s pervasive “publish or perish” culture, and pose a risk to science if poor [vetting regimes](#) allow badly conducted studies to slip past.

Open-access publication usually works like this: academics hand over a fee to submit an original research paper. The fee, which can run to hundreds of dollars, covers the costs of sending the paper out for external review by experts, and replaces subscription revenue. The publisher pockets the fee and the academic earns a coveted place in a peer-reviewed journal.

In reality, though, the reviewing and editing at some journals is minimal to non-existent. The researchers, who published their findings in *Nature*, were inspired to create Dr Fraud after receiving multiple unsolicited invitations to join boards unrelated to their expertise.

To test just how unfussy some of these new open-access journals were, Dr Katarzyna Pisanski, from Sussex University, and three former colleagues from the University of Wroclaw in Poland, created a fake social media profile for Dr Anna O Szust. They sent her CV and a letter requesting a place on the editorial board, to 360 journals. The applications went to three types of journal: 120 went to those on a widely used register meeting strict quality standards; 120 to recognised open-access journals; and 120 to start-ups previously identified as “predatory”. Dr Szust’s credentials, the researchers said, were “dismally inadequate”.

Reassuringly, none of the journals in the first group was taken in. Eight in the second group, and an incredible 40 “predatory” journals, offered her a post on their editorial boards. Some requested payment for the privilege; others asked her to organise conferences or solicit submissions, with Dr Szust promised a cut of the proceeds. None unmasked her as a sham.

The researchers conclude: “This rise of predatory journals threatens the quality of scholarship. Without a credible editorial board, flawed scientific papers become an increasing problem.” It is depressingly easy to see how such journals could conceivably lead to fake science, by ladling bogus “facts” into an expanding digital soup.

Dr Fraud follows in the imaginary footsteps of [Hoss Cartwright](#), the invention of German bioinformatics professor Burkhard Morgenstern. Despite a CV boasting a doctorate in Studies of Dunnowhat, the fictitious Cartwright was appointed to five editorial boards. Prof Morgenstern also briefly placed Borat Sagdiyev, the toe-curling Kazakh alter ego of comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, on the board of the journal *Immunology and Vaccines*.

Spectral authors also haunt the scientific canon. One physicist, frustrated at having his paper repeatedly rejected, finally saw it published after changing the title and adding a [fictitious co-author](#), Stronzo Bestiale. It means “total asshole” in Italian.

The writer is a science commentator

Letter in response to this column:

Advances in human wisdom will help solve AI challenge / From Prof Horace Barlow, Trinity College, Cambridge, UK

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“Would you read a paper written by Stronzo Bestiale [translation – total asshole]?” asks a post on Parolacce – the self-declared “only italian scientific blog on profanity” (<http://ow.ly/DcVFI>).

“A dose of mistrust would be justified: the name says it all,” the post continues. “Yet, in 1987, professor Bestiale, supposedly a physicist in Palermo, Sicily, authored major papers in prestigious scientific peer reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Statistical Physics*, the *Journal of Chemical Physics* and the proceedings of a meeting of American Physical Society in Monterey.”

The blog – highlighted to *Times Higher Education* after our story about the French phrase for “your mother in a leopard-skin G-string” being included in a paper (<http://ow.ly/DevEU>) – is written by Vito Tartamella, author and managing editor of the science monthly *Focus*, and it goes on to detail his investigations into the veracity of Mr Bestiale’s publication record.

“I tried to find this person in Italian telephone directories,” he says. “In Italy there are 7 Bestiale, mostly in Piedmont. None of them, however, has the name Stronzo (Turd or Asshole: who would call their own son that?)”

It turns out, unsurprisingly, that Stronzo Bestiale does not exist. The name appears “in the papers authored by Bill Moran and William G. Hoover, two influential American scientists from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory”.

Dr Tartamella wrote to Professor Hoover, now retired, to ask him the true story of Stronzo Bestiale.

He was told that while travelling on a flight to Paris, Professor Hoover had been sat next to two Italian women who “spoke among themselves, saying continually: ‘Che stronzo (what an asshole)!’, ‘Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)’.”

The phrases stuck in Professor Hoover’s mind, so he found out what Stronzo Bestiale meant. He decided the name would be the perfect co-author for a paper that had been refused publication by two journals already, so he “decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author”. The paper was published.

Although not everyone took the joke well (the then president of the Italian Physical Society described it as an offence “to the entire Italian scientific community”), it “laid bare how vulnerable control systems in the review of scientific research were (and still are!)”, Dr Tartamella writes.

“Incredibly, even today, 27 years later, Stronzo Bestiale continues to be present as the author of publications in scientific databases: is it not extraordinary?”

The post was picked up by the **Retraction Watch** blog (<http://ow.ly/DcYZa>), which points out that “this isn’t the first time a scientist has added a fictional co-author to a paper to make a point”. “In 1978, Polly Matzinger added her impeccably-named Afghan hound, Galadriel Mirkwood, to a *Journal of Experimental Medicine* paper to protest the use of passive voice in scientific papers.

“Hilarious as these examples are, it does prove a point that’s a little less fun: The scientific community needs to be on its toes about who (or what) is writing the papers they publish, to help keep *merde* out of the literature.”

Chris Parr

This Widely Cited Physicist Is A Total Asshole. He Also Doesn't Exist.

12 October 2014 Sunday 16:16

Stronzo Bestiale has published study in some of the world's most esteemed physics journals, and his co-authors are generally leading members in their fields. But Stronzo Bestiale, whose name suggests "total asshole" in Italian, has a secret. He sort...

Paylaş Beğen 0 Tweetle 0 +1 0

Print A' A' Aa



Stronzo Bestiale has published study in some of the world's most esteemed physics journals, and his co-authors are generally leading members in their fields. But Stronzo Bestiale, whose name suggests "total asshole" in Italian, has a secret. He sort of does not exist.

Science writer Vito Tartamella recently uncovered Bestiale's secret when he came across a paper by physicists Bill Moran and William G. Hoover that lists Bestiale as a co-author. The paper in query: "Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas," initially published in 1987 in the Journal of Statistical Physics.

Tartamella – who is not only Italian, himself, but the author of a book on surnames – instantly noticed Bestiale's uncommon designation and decided to appear him up in the phonebook. Nothing at all. The man has a Scopus profile that lists him as an active researcher at the Institute of Experimental Physics, University of Vienna, but he does not appear in the phonebook. Puzzled, Tartamelle reached out to 1 of Bestiale's co-authors: I wrote to professor Hoover, now retired, to ask him the correct story of Stronzo Bestiale. Here's what he mentioned. "At that time," he says, "we have been quite active in the development of a new computational strategy, non-equilibrium molecular dynamics, connecting fractal geometry, irreversibility and the second law of thermodynamics. The concept was born during meetings at CECAM (Centre Européen de Calcul Atomique et Moléculaire) in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the Enrico Fermi summer school organized at Lake Como with Giovanni Ciccotti, professor of condensed matter physics at the University La Sapienza University in Rome. In these meetings, the theoretical image of this approach was clear to me, so I wrote numerous papers on the subject along with some colleagues. But the reviewers of Physical Assessment Letters and the Journal of Statistical Physics refused to publish my texts: they contained as well innovative tips." Meanwhile, Hoover continues, "while I was traveling on a flight to Paris, subsequent to me had been two Italian ladies who spoke amongst themselves, saying continually: "Che stronzo (what an asshole)!", "Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)". These phrases had stuck in my thoughts. So, in the course of a CECAM meeting, I asked Ciccotti what they meant. When he explained it to me, I believed that Stronzo Bestiale would have been the fantastic co-author for a refused publication. So I decided to submit my papers once more, basically by altering the title and adding the name of that author. And the analysis was published." Remarkable.

Tartamella has been updating his post with other scientific jokes and made-up authors that have made their way into scientific journals, which are definitely worth checking out. A single of our favorites comes from Ivan Oransky at Retraction Watch (where we initial heard inform of Stronzo Bestiale), who recalls the case of immunologist Polly Matzinger, who, in 1978, listed as one of her co-authors 1 Galadriel Mirkwood (her Afghan hound).

[Vito Tartamella by means of Retraction Watch]

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The Secret Jokes Scientists Slip Into Research Papers Are Delightfully Nerdy—Here's Proof



Scientists have senses of humor too!

iStock.

It was formatted like any run-of-the-mill [physics paper](#), with sections for the introduction, experiment description, and results. The subject was experimental nonlocal and surreal Bohmian trajectories—heavy reading for sure, but par for the course in *Science Advances*, where it was published in late February. In a nearly final draft, at the bottom of the third page, the authors had clarified: “The particles in this article are photons, as was the case in Kocsis et al.” But before the article went to press, one of the authors, Howard Wiseman of Griffith University in Australia, decided to have a bit of fun.

So the published version of the paper read:

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The particles in this article (Although “the particles in this article” is in this particular article, consider “the particles in an article” as part of an article. As any articulate party would know, the particles in “the particles in an article” are “the” and “in,” whereas the articles in “the particles in an article” are “the” and “an,” but the particular article in “the particles in an article” is “the.” “p.s.” is all that is left when you take the “article” out of “particles.”) are photons, as was the case in Kocsis et al.

It takes a fair bit of chutzpah to embed a paragraph-long linguistic witticism within an otherwise legitimate sentence in a peer-reviewed physics article. (It's not something you're likely to try early in your career.) Wiseman says he “had to plead a little bit for the other authors to agree,” but he won them over. One of his co-authors, Aephraim Steinberg of the University of Toronto, complimented Wiseman on his punnery; he figured it would never make it past the editors anyway. And yet, when the paper was published, there it was. “The editors either didn't notice it or found it amusing too,” says Steinberg.

It wasn't Wiseman's first time engaging in peer-reviewed shenanigans. A couple of years ago, he published a paper on strategies for dealing with photon loss in optical circuits and insisted that one of the paper's sections be divided up as follows:

IV. DEALING WITH LOSS

A. Dealing with loss: Denial

B. Dealing with loss: Anger

C. Dealing with loss: Depression

D. Dealing with loss: Hope

“We had to fight the proof editor to get it in, but we won,” says Wiseman. The editor's objections were not particularly in response to the humor, Wiseman notes, but rather to the use of nonstandard terms in describing a physical system. Wiseman countered that the terms could very well describe a human experimenter working with a physical system. In the end, it was a small victory for those trying to add a little levity to the drudgery of scientific publishing.

For some scientists, sneaking inside jokes or clever wordplay past reviewers and editors is something of a hobby—perhaps even a mission that pits authorial creativity against editorial curmudgeondom. This nefarious act of adding a bit of fun to the seemingly cold and calculating world of science has a rich tradition. Back in 1948, physicists Ralph Alpher and George Gamow were getting ready to submit an important paper on the physics of the big bang to the journal *Physical Review*, when they decided that it would be amusing to add the name of their colleague, physicist Hans Bethe, as a co-author. Bethe wasn't involved in the research or the writing of the paper—but they thought “Alpher–Bethe–Gamow” had a nice ring to it, echoing the first three letters of the Greek

alphabet. (Indeed, the article has been known as the “[alpha-beta-gamma paper](#)” ever since.) And in the 1980s, a mysterious author named “[Stronzo Bestiale](#)” (Italian for “total asshole”) started being credited on a variety of physics and chemistry journals. Turns out, he doesn’t exist (surprise!)—he was an invention of American physicist William Hoover, who at first was seeking revenge for a rejected article and then just kept using it. A team of Swedish researchers, meanwhile, recently admitted to [sneaking Bob Dylan lyrics into their paper titles](#) for some 17 years.

Of course, trickery in academic publishing is not always of the innocent linguistic variety. There’s the famous [Sokal hoax](#) of 1996, in which a physicist submitted a fake article to a cultural studies journal, to see if their editors could distinguish gibberish from sincere postmodern scholarship; as it turned out, they could not. Other scientists parlay their humor into second careers: Physicist Helen Arney is also a professional stand-up comic; Mayim Bialik, who plays a neuroscientist on *The Big Bang Theory*, is also one in real life; Randall Munroe was a rocket scientist at NASA before turning to comic strip writing (including the much-loved [xkcd web comic](#)) full time. And science humor is the *raison d’être* of two different faux journal magazines, the [The Journal of Irreproducible Results](#) and the [Annals of Improbable Research](#). A favorite article from the former focuses on the perils of pickles, asserting that “99.9 percent of all people who die from cancer have eaten pickles” and that “99.7 percent of the people involved in air and auto accidents ate pickles within 14 days preceding the accident.” The author’s conclusion: “Eat orchid petal soup. Practically no one has any problems from eating orchid petal soup.” The *Annals*, meanwhile, oversees the annual Ig Nobel prizes, awarded for “achievements that first make people laugh, and then make them think.” Last year’s mathematics prize went to two researchers who used “mathematical techniques to determine whether and how Moulay Ismael the Bloodthirsty, the Sharifian Emperor of Morocco, managed, during the years from 1697 through 1727, to father 888 children.” (The researchers’ conclusion: Yes, the emperor “could have reached his notorious reproductive success with fewer copulations than assumed so far—thus the historic reports could be facts and not fancy.”)

Granted, the emperor’s tireless copulations lend themselves to a bit of humor; photons and Bohmian trajectories, less so. And alas, sometimes curmudgeondom gets the last laugh. About 10 weeks after the paper by Wiseman, Steinberg, and their colleagues appeared in *Science Advances*, the editors decided the punnery was beneath the journal’s dignity—and excised the offending lines from the article. (The journal doesn’t have a print edition, so only those who downloaded the article prior to late April will get to see Wiseman’s clever wordplay. Everyone else will have to read this story, I guess.) “The bad news is that, while the proof editors obviously had a sense of humor, the scientific editors were not cool with it, once they found out it was there,” says Wiseman.

And so that particular article part has departed.

Commander Hadfield, nooooo!

Thomas Lucas, from the video

Macabre? Sure. But my sense of humor runs dark sometimes, and I love science fiction, so this (very) short animation (very) briefly depicting a bunch of ways hapless space explorers can undergo [Death in Space](#) cracked me up.

I could nitpick the science—you won't explode if you crack your helmet, but it won't exactly be fun either—but that's not really in the spirit of the thing. And that's coming from a guy [who literally wrote the book on this subject](#).

Tip o' the spacesuit helmet to [io9](#).

Phil Plait writes **Slate's** Bad Astronomy blog and is an astronomer, public speaker, science evangelizer, and author of [Death From the Skies!](#)

&@#?%!!

The ghost of Stronzo Bestiale — and other fake scientific authors



Sophie Fessl

Jan 14, 2017 · 4 min read

What do you do if one of the authors on your paper is a total asshole?

For most scientists, an asshole as co-author probably just a fact of life to get on with. For some, it's a joke. "Stronzo Bestiale" is co-author of two physics papers from 1987 and, as science writer Vito Tartamella found out, the man who's name means "total asshole" in Italian, has a secret — he doesn't exist.

Vito Tartamella, an Italian science writer, uncovered Stronzo Bestiale's secret in October 2014 when Tartamella, who had written a book on surnames, decided to investigate the scientist's rather unusual surname. As Tartamella discovered, several Italians are "assholes", but a Stronzo Bestiale cannot be found in any phone books of Italy. Tartamella contacted the then Chancellor of the University of Palermo, where Bestiale supposedly worked when publishing the 1987 paper in the *Journal of Statistical Physics* — to find out that no Stronzo Bestiale existed there at the time. On his sleuth, Tartamella finally contacted one of the other authors of Bestiale's papers, William G. Hoover. Before retiring, Hoover had worked at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory at the University of California. And so the true story of Stronzo Bestiale came to light: In the 1980s, William G. Hoover developed a new computational technique, called non-equilibrium molecular dynamics.

And this is how a total asshole made it onto three physics papers.

But his papers were rejected by the major physics journals, in his words because they contained “too innovative ideas”. On a plane, he overheard two Italian women talking about “Stronzo bestiale” and “che stronzo (what an asshole)”. When an Italian colleague explained to Hoover what it meant, Hoover decided that “Stronzo Bestiale” would make the ideal co-author for his rejected publications. Hoover changed the title, added Stronzo Bestiale to the list of authors — and the papers were published. And this is how a total asshole made it onto three physics papers.

One of Bestiale’s papers, in the Journal of Statistical Physics, even has 167 citations according to Google Scholar. And the somewhat successful physicist even has a listing on Scopus, a large citation and abstract database for peer-reviewed research literature. Scopus lists Bestiale as researcher at the Institute for Experimental Physics at the University of Vienna, also the affiliation of Bestiale’s second 1987 paper in the Journal of Chemical Physics. Sadly, there is no entry for Stronzo Bestiale in the phone directory of the University of Vienna, and also the Institute for Experimental Physics seems unaware of the ghost researcher residing in its midst.

Eventually, door number 354 carried the plate: “Prof. A. Kabelschacht”.

Stronzo Bestiale is not the only “ghost” who has sneaked into scientific papers. The Max Planck Institute for Physics in Munich has its own prolific fictional researcher, Prof. Alois Kabelschacht. Apparently, in the 1970s, all rooms at the MPI were designated with room number and the name of the researcher working in the office. No research was, however, carried out behind door number 354: it was where the cable duct was hidden. And with German orderliness, the room was duly named “Kabelschacht”, the German term for cable duct. This gave rise to the running gag among employees that, if any problems arise, they could go talk to Mister Kabelschacht. At the MPI, only professors’ nameplates carried their titles, e.g. Prof. Heisenberg. Eventually, also the office of visiting professors were marked with Prof. And over time, employees at the MPI decided that also Mister Kabelschacht deserved a title for being so helpful in their discussions. Eventually, door number 354 carried the

plate: “Prof. A. Kabelschacht”. And now that Kabelschacht was professor, MPI members decided that he should also publish papers. Prof. Kabelschacht’s first co-authored paper was with Peter Breitenlohner in 1979 in Nuclear Physics B. This paper was followed by several others, including one written only by Alois Kabelschacht in 1987 on a method now used in the programming language LaTeX. In contrast to Stronzo Bestiale, Prof Alois Kabelschacht’s research is still going strong: in 2008, “Prof. Alois Kabelschacht” published a paper on high energy physics, again in Nuclear Physics B. And you can befriend Kabelschacht on Facebook, though he’s sadly not been active since 2014.

It’s not just ghost researchers who make it onto the author lists of scientific papers. Andre Geim, one of the 2010 Physics Nobel laureates, famously published a paper together with H.A.M.S.ter Tisha, his hamster. Polly Matzinger, a French immunologist, used Galadriel Mirkwood, her Afghan Hound, as co-author of one of her early publications. According to Ted Anton, author of the book *Bold Science*, Matzinger did so as she didn’t want to write in the passive voice usual for scientific papers but also felt too insecure to write in the first person “I” as the sole author of the paper. With Galadriel’s help, she got around it, and got to write: “we report here...”. So, what do you do if one of your co-authors is a total asshole? Maybe check that he isn’t a Sicilian physicist who has been hiding since 1987...

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Cómo triunfar en la ciencia siendo un “completo gilipollas”

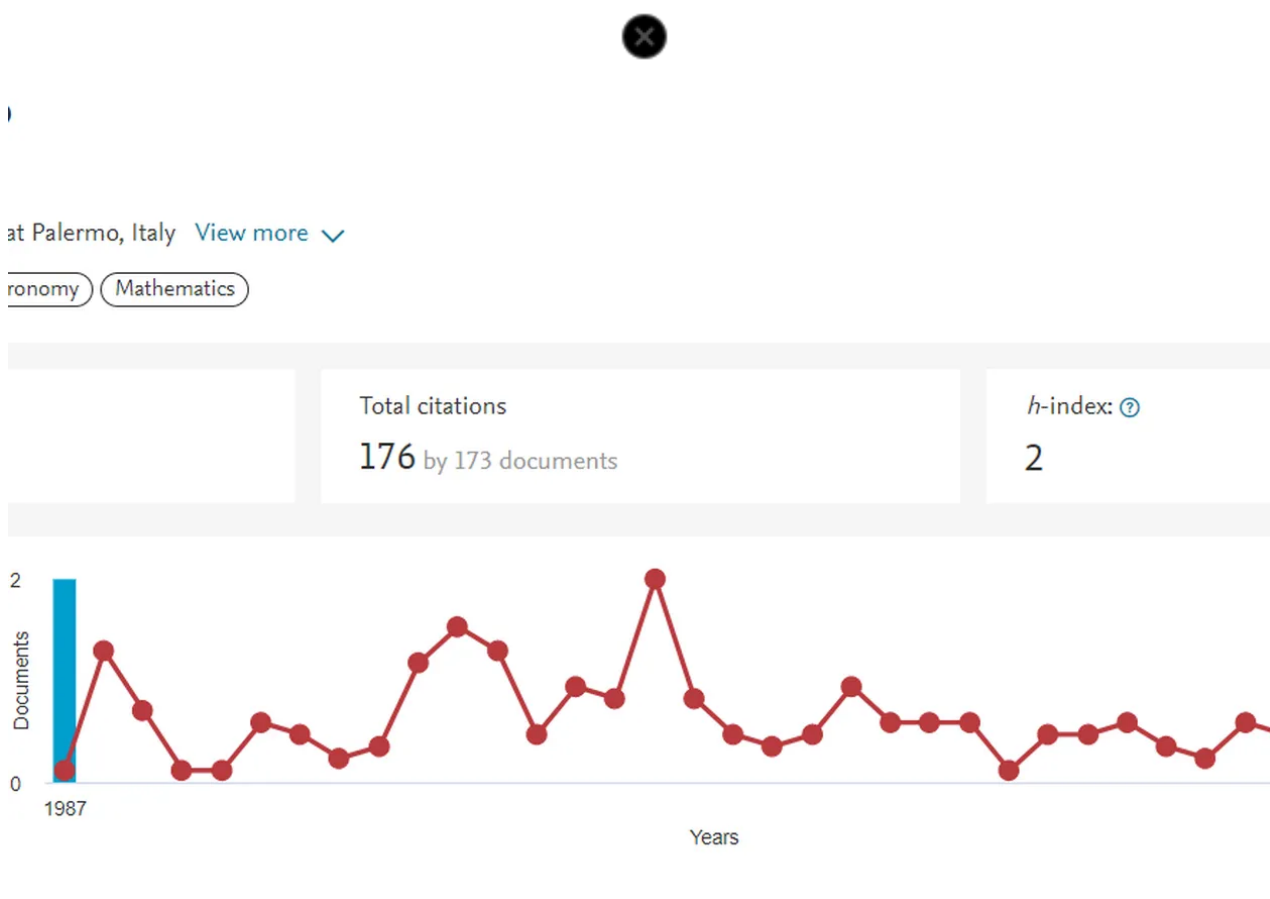
larazon.es/ciencia/20200506/klr5sdcunhi7l6psdjfpssjty.html

6 maggio 2020

EN DIRECTO Un juzgado anula el confinamiento de Benigànim ordenado por la Generalitat

Ciencia

La historia de cómo “Stronzo Bestiale” consiguió publicar dos artículos científicos sin existir siquiera.



Captura de la página dedicada a Stronzo Bestiale en Scopus./Foto: anónimo

Ignacio Crespo

Última actualización: 06-05-2020 | 18:02 H/

Creada: 06-05-2020 | 02:45 H

Todos hemos tenido compañeros de trabajo algo irritantes y conocemos a gente que no merece la suerte profesional que ha tenido. Puede que incluso les hayamos adjudicado algún mote ofensivo a sus espaldas. Es natural. Sin embargo, imagina que de repente, el trabajo de una de esas personas apareciera firmado con esos mismos motes malsonantes. Un papel oficial coronado por un sonoro “Completo Gilipollas”. Se hace duro hasta de leer. Sin embargo, existe un documento así, o, mejor dicho: dos.

Se trata de un par de artículos científicos publicados en prestigiosas y sesudas revistas de física. En su cabecera puedes ver “Stronzo Bestiale” o “S. Bestiale” que traducido del italiano sería algo así como “Completo Gilipollas”. Siempre como tercer autor, un puesto modesto pero apreciado; sobre todo teniendo en cuenta que esas dos revistas pertenecen a lo que se conoce como primer cuartil, lo cual significa que están entre la cuarta parte más famosa de todas las revistas de su disciplina. Cuantas más publicaciones tengas y en mejores revistas estén más posibilidades hay de que consigas una beca o una plaza fija. Es el sueño de cualquier investigador y extrañamente, el señor Bestiale hizo pleno. De dos artículos publicados, dos que han salido en revistas líder de su campo. ¿Cómo es posible? ¿Quién es ese genio de tan desafortunado nombre? La respuesta deja en muy mal lugar, no a sus padres, sino a las revistas científicas.

El misterio del Completo Gilipollas

Las mismas dudas que están pasando por tu cabeza son las que sintió Vito Tartamella en 2014, cuando la firma de Stronzo se cruzó en su vida. Cualquier otra persona con conocimientos de italiano se habría reído un rato con la casualidad y habría continuado con sus cosas, pero ese no era el caso de Tartamella. Resulta que aquel hombre se había vuelto un experto en nombres italianos tras publicar un libro sobre el tema y no le sonaba que existiera ningún Stronzo. Tartamella y aquel misterio parecían estar hechos el uno para el otro.

Así pues, el experto decidió empezar empleando la herramienta más básica del detective, el listín telefónico. Al parecer había unos cuantos apellidados Bestiale, y algún que otro Stronzieto, pero ningún Stronzo y mucho menos Stronzo Bestiale, lo cual tiene cierto sentido, pues ¿qué padres llamarían así a su hijo? Aquello era extraño. De repente, Tartamella se encontraba persiguiendo a un fantasma.

Nada parecía tener sentido. Si no existía ¿cómo era posible que aquel hombre hubiera podido publicar un artículo? O, lo que es más, que acumulara más de 152 citas (176 ahora) Las citas son una de las formas en que se valora la calidad del trabajo de un científico. Es un sistema algo perverso que no distingue si están hablando de ti para elogiar tu trabajo o para criticarlo, porque lo único que cuenta es que la gente hable. En cualquier caso, 152 era un número más que decente para solo tener dos artículos. El misterio no se podía quedar así, por lo que Tartamella sacó la segunda herramienta del detective: el correo.

Document title	Authors	Year	Source	Cited by
Diffusion in a periodic Lorentz gas View abstract Related documents	Moran, B., Hoover, W.G., Bestiale, S.	1987	Journal of Statistical Physics	142
Dense-fluid Lyapunov spectra via constrained molecular dynamics View abstract Related documents	Hoover, W.G., Posch, H.A., Bestiale, S.	1987	The Journal of Chemical Physics	34

Captura del Scopus de Stronzo Bestiale mostrando sus dos artículos publicados./Foto: anónimo

Doctor Hoover, supongo

Nuestro protagonista estaba decidido. Encendió el correo y comenzó a redactar un correo dirigido al doctor Hoover, aparentemente el investigador principal de los dos artículos publicados por Stronzo. Es más, en un tercer artículo de Hoover había un apartado de agradecimientos donde resaltaba la influencia que el Dr. Bestiale había tenido en su trabajo. No era descabellado pensar que esos dos eran conocidos, o incluso buenos amigos, así que ¿quién mejor para deshacer este entuerto?

IV. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Discussions with Daan Frenkel and S. Bestiale were particularly useful. They pointed out the desirability of choosing constraint forces orthogonal to the desired current. The CRAY computer time required for this work was furnished by the Cray Group on Statistical Mechanics of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche. The work at Livermore was performed under the auspices of the United States Department of Energy under University of California, Contract No. W-7405-ENG-48.

Agradecimientos en los que Hoover se refiere al señor Bestiale diciendo lo siguiente: "Las conversaciones con Daan Frenkel y S. Bestiale fueron particularmente útiles.[...]" /Foto: anónimo

La respuesta de Hoover no tardó en llegar, pero, desde luego, no era lo que Tartamella esperaba. Al parecer, en aquella época él y su equipo estaban desarrollando una nueva técnica computacional que permitiría simular sistemas biológicos complejos como la manera en que algunas moléculas se pliegan dando forma a su estructura, o el intercambio de sustancias de las células con el medio, a través de su membrana. Sin embargo, por aquel entonces se trataba de un campo bastante nuevo y disruptivo y que se apoyaba en áreas dispares de la física y las matemáticas. En otras palabras, era lo suficientemente innovador como que su publicación diera problemas.

Cuando un equipo de investigación envía un artículo a la revista donde quieren publicarlo, lo mejor que pueden hacer es ponerse a trabajar en otra cosa mientras esperan la respuesta. Su aprobación es un proceso lento, y no solo por la burocracia, sino porque depende de que la revista encuentre a expertos sin conflictos de intereses, que puedan valorar la calidad del artículo en cuestión. Es lo que se conoce como revisión por pares y en ella cada experto da su opinión justificando por qué considera que ha de aceptarse o

rechazarse el artículo, indicando las cosas que ve necesario cambiar o cualquier sugerencia que tenga para mejorar el trabajo. Aparte de esto, el editor de la revista se reserva el derecho a decidir si les interesa el artículo independientemente de su calidad. En resumen, las modas afectan a qué artículos se publican y cómo lo hacen.

Volviendo al Doctor Hoover, según relata él mismo, presentó un artículo sobre esta nueva técnica computacional a dos revistas (*Physical Review Letters* y *Journal of Statistical Physics*), pero ambas lo rechazaron alegando que era “demasiado innovador”. Por supuesto, no sabemos si esa fue la única crítica, pero tenemos un dato incluso más interesante. Ante la negativa, Hoover decidió rebelarse y se dispuso a reenviar el artículo, pero con dos ligeros cambios. El primero fue el título, que sustituyó por algo más comedido. El segundo fue añadir a un nuevo autor, para evitar sospechas. Pero ¿quién? ¿A quién poner para que compartiera el mérito con el doctor Bill Moran y él?

¿Qué significa qué? Pues mucho mejor

Dándole vueltas a aquello, le vino a la mente la conversación que había interceptado volando a París. Dos mujeres de avanzada edad estaban hablando en italiano sobre alguien y no dejaban de repetir airadamente “stronzo” y “stronzo bestiale”. Hoover debió de pensar que se trataba del nombre del individuo en cuestión, pero antes de usarlo decidió confirmarlo, no fuera a estar cometiendo un error. Al preguntarle a un amigo italohablante, este se rió y le tradujo la expresión. Aquello habría hecho cambiar la decisión de cualquiera, pero no la de Hoover, que, reafirmado en su postura contestataria envió el artículo por segunda vez.

Curiosamente, la misma revista que había rechazado sus ideas unos meses antes, ahora la había aceptado de buen grado. Sin críticas serias ni apenas sugerencias. En unos meses Stronzo Bestiale lucía como coautor de un paper en, ni más ni menos que *Journal of Statistical Physics*. La subjetividad de los editores había quedado expuesta y no solo eso, sino que les habían colado un buen gol, porque habían aprobado el trabajo de una persona inexistente, alguien que bien podría ser un fraude, pues se declaraba trabajador de una universidad que no había oído hablar de él y poseedor de un título que, evidentemente, no tenía. Para Hoover aquello era un *quod erat demonstrandum* en toda regla y para Tartamella un gran artículo con el que descubrir el pastel. A fin de cuentas, Hoover ya estaba jubilado y no tenía gran cosa que perder.

Editor's Note

Re: Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas, Bill Moran, William G. Hoover, and ...¹

It has come to my attention that the name given as the third author in the above paper is in fact a rather obscene expression in Italian. I apologize to the readers for not catching this stupidity of the other two authors.

Joel L. Lebowitz

Comunicado en que Joel L. Lebowitz, editor del Journal of Statistical Physics, se disculpa ante los lectores por no haber detectado la "estupidez" de los dos autores./Foto: anónimo

Por supuesto, cuando los responsables de la revista se enteraron pusieron el grito en el cielo y rogaron disculpas. Incluso algunos investigadores italianos llegaron a tomarlo como una ofensa hacia su trabajo. En resumen, la maniobra de Hoover no pasó desapercibida y se suma al gran número de casos en que el aparentemente estricto corte de las revistas científicas muestra sus sesgos más humanos. Lo cual nos lleva a reflexionar sobre lo importante que es leer todo en profundidad antes de formarse una opinión. Que algo se publique en *Nature* o *Science* no avala automáticamente todas sus afirmaciones, recordemos la cantidad de artículos cuestionables que han publicado estas revistas, como fue el caso de la memoria del agua.

Desconfiemos de todo, busquemos las fuentes, indagemos cómo se ha obtenido tal o cual información y entendamos que tener una opinión válida es costoso en tiempo. Cuanto menos invirtamos en formarla, menos valdrá lo que tengamos que decir.

QUE NO TE LA CUELEN:

No todo lo que se publica en una revista científica de prestigio es bueno ni todo lo que se descarta es malo. Para determinar esto hay que indagar en las características y los resultados del estudio, porque el criterio de las revistas tiene sesgos y sigue modas, como es natural.

BIBLIOGRAFÍA (MLA):

SE HABLA DE: CienciaHistoria

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5 Really Stupid Jokes Hidden In Really Smart Places

[f Facebook](#)

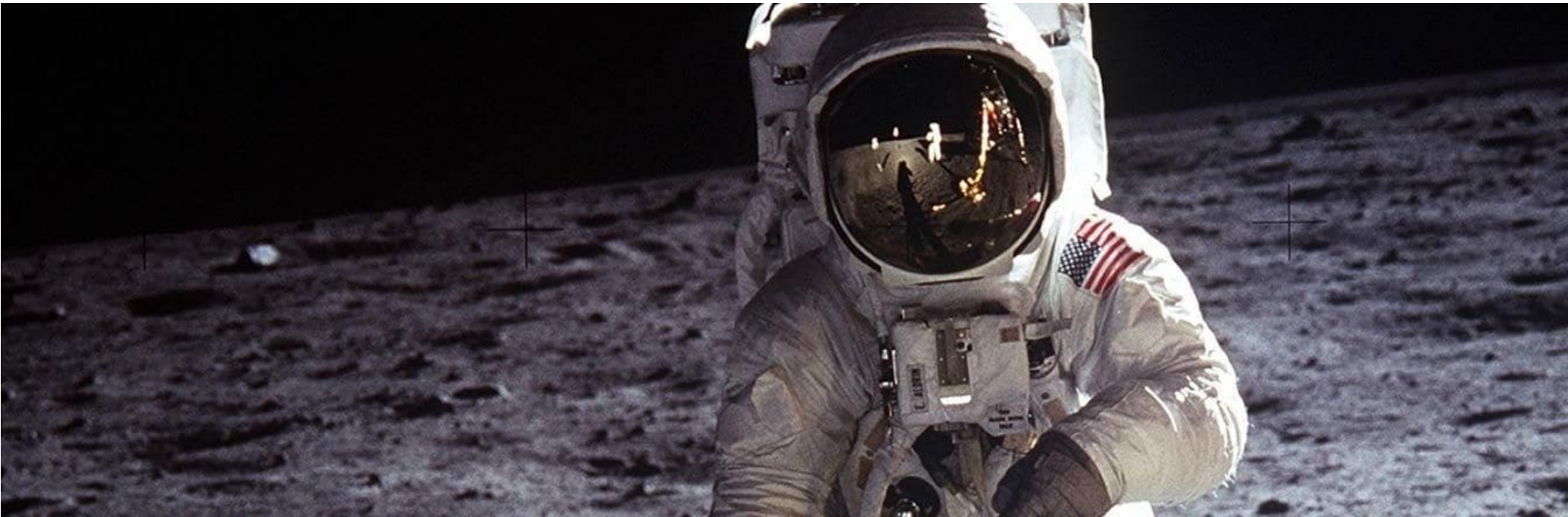
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By  Teddem Yee •  Stronzo Bestiale • December 09, 2016



There are certain places where you'd expect to find jokes -- comedy clubs, Cracked.com, everything Breitbart publishes -- and certain places where you *wouldn't*: cancer wards, the Holocaust Museum, Cracked.com (if you're one of *those* jerks). But even the most serious efforts need to break the tension once in a while, so we wind up with ...

5

The Fart Joke Hidden In The Periodic Table



Eyematrix/iStock

The element plutonium was discovered by Glenn Seaborg and his team in 1941, but he wasn't allowed to tell the world about his groundbreaking discovery at the time, because the USA was using it to develop the atomic bomb. The government decided that the fun secret ingredient for nuclear apocalypse should probably stay, well ... secret, so all references to sinister plutonium in the

Manhattan Project were swapped out for benign copper. And that's why, to this day, enthusiastic but misguided science fans -- you can tell they love science by their trucks full of beakers and chemicals -- sometimes strip abandoned buildings for copper wire.

PublicDomainPictures/Pixabay

Then get strip searched when arrested by the coppers.

After the war ended, they were finally allowed to publish the existence of the 94th element, and Seaborg, its discoverer, was [given the honor of naming it](#). Chemists at the time occasionally named elements after planets, the most recent being neptunium, so nobody blinked when Seaborg went ahead and called his element plutonium. But he did it primarily so that plutonium's abbreviation on the Periodic Table would be "Pu" -- it should've logically been "Pl," but Seaborg was oddly insistent about the abbreviation, because plutonium smells like butt, and also because Seaborg was a giant man-child and we love him for it.

Svyatoslav/Pixabay

He also discovered piss-tassium and barfanese.

Seaborg assumed that the committee would swiftly reject the proposal, and chide him for his immaturity, but the prank slipped right through, and was accepted as the official chemical symbol. And that's how Seaborg was granted a Nobel Prize for the world's most epic fart joke.

4

The Coded Jokes That Littered The Apollo 11 Mission



NASA

The Apollo 11 mission landed human beings on the moon for the first time. It was a serious, important, somber affair ... run largely by computer nerds, and hence, full of juvenile humor. In July 2016, someone [dumped the entire source code](#) for the Apollo 11 command module into the public domain, and space geeks got an eyeful of all the ["TRASHY LITTLE SUBROUTINES"](#) and ['60s culture references](#) the programmers left hidden between lines of the Apollo code. For example, the lunar module's landing sequence was coded "FLAGORGY."

[Github](#)

Also, a note reading "WE FAKED THIS WHOLE THING."

If the radar antenna was out of place upon landing, the code [included a command](#) to "crank the silly thing around," and after someone had achieved the monumentally dangerous task of fixing it, another cheeky command instructed the astronauts to "see if he's lying" before proceeding.

[NASA](#)

"Roger. Commencing cranking of silly thing. Over."

It's actually heartwarming to know that, even in the pure and noble pursuit of scientific advancement for all mankind, there's always time to stop and just screw around for a bit.

3 The Brilliant Physicist Who Could Lick His Own Genitals

TeamK/Pixabay

In November 1975, physics professors Jack H. Hetherington and F. D. C. Willard [published a groundbreaking paper](#) on particle physics that is still being referenced today. The paper made Hetherington a minor celebrity in the physics world, and folks were understandably eager to also track down co-author and assumed genius, F. D. C. Willard. That proved more difficult than they thought, not because Willard was some Tesla-style introverted prodigy, but because he was a cat. Not like "a hip cat." An actual housecat.

PDPics/Pixabay

"That's *Professor* Actual Housecat to you, pal."

Soooo ... maybe check the crawlspace?

See, when Hetherington put together his research paper -- on his own, it turned out -- he used the royal "we" throughout the article, something we personally just can't stand. *Physical Review Letters* refused to publish the article as written, on the basis that there was only one credited author, and without proper grammar, what are we but cavemen, flailing ineffectually through the universe until we crap out and die? So Hetherington, rather than rewrite the paper, took the lazy way out and simply [credited a second researcher](#) -- his cat, Willard.

[Jack H. Hetherington and F. D. C. Willard](#)

Really his ["signature"](#) should have been a tip-off.

2 The Important Research Of Professor Total Asshole

Hans/Pixabay

In 1987, American physicist William Hoover had a paper rejected by the editors of two different publications. Convinced that his staggering work of heartbreaking genius could only have been dismissed for being "too innovative," Hoover resubmitted his work, changing only the title and co-crediting a fictional researcher named Prof. Stronzo Bestiale.

Authoring it "Dr. Fakey VonFakename" would have been too obvious.

"Stronzo bestiale" is Italian for (approximately) "total asshole." Nobody even noticed the esteemed work of Professor Total Asshole until 2011, when a writer [contacted Hoover](#) to ask about the elusive Prof. Bestiale, to which Hoover replied that he had heard the phrase spoken by two Italian women during a flight, and decided that it sounded like a good name for a physicist. The joke went unnoticed for so long that Hoover and Bestiale actually [had](#) a [bit](#) of a [career](#) together, although it's rumored that only Hoover would work with him, since Bestiale could be a bit of a ... prick.

champja/iStock

Also rumored that he got his PhD from Brown University.

1

The Long, Long History Of Academic Articles And Puns



DariuszSankowski/Pixabay

Obviously, the easiest place to slip a joke into a research paper is right there in the title. The folks over at [Slate](#) have put together an extensive collection of research papers whose authors clearly reached way harder for puns than they did for scientific greatness. For example, [this article](#) on the various things you apparently don't want to find coming out of your pee-hole, creatively titled: "From Urethra With Shove: Bladder Foreign Bodies. A Case Report And Review."

In 2008, researchers did a study on neck injuries experienced by head bangers, and [titled the article](#) "Stuck Between Rock And A Hard Bass." A 2011 psychological study into the positive consequences of pet ownership [was titled](#) "Friends With Benefits," which we sure hope was a joke. Another article published in the *British Medical Journal* noted that, while anecdotal evidence has suggested that the use of a parachute can mitigate death when falling from a great height, no scientific studies have ever been done to prove it. So [they did that admittedly unnecessary study](#), and titled it "Parachute Use To Prevent Death And Major Trauma Related To Gravitational Challenge."



skeeze/Pixabay

In 2014, someone noticed that a surprisingly high number of economics articles were written by co-authors who shared the same surname. They recruited four unrelated economists, all with the last name "Goodman," to [do a study on the phenomenon](#), and titled it "A Few Goodmen: Surname-Sharing Economist Coauthors."

Finally, there was the 1974 article, [published](#) in the *Journal Of Applied Behavior Analysis*, by researcher Dennis Upper. It was titled "The Unsuccessful Self-Treatment Of A Case Of Writer's Block." At the risk of charges of plagiarism, we've decided to reprint the entire article here as it appears in the journal:

JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS 1974, 7, 497 NUMBER 3 (FALL 1974)
THE UNSUCCESSFUL SELF-TREATMENT OF
A CASE OF "WRITER'S BLOCK"¹
DENNIS UPPER
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BROCKTON, MASSACHUSETTS

REFERENCES

¹Portions of this paper were not presented at the 81st Annual American Psychological Association Convention, Montreal, Canada, August 30, 1973. Reprints may be obtained from Dennis Upper, Behavior Therapy Unit, Veterans Administration Hospital, Brockton, Massachusetts 02401. Received 25 October 1973. (Published without revision.)

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

...

Mr. Yee would like to thank Prof. Stronzo Bestiale for his help in getting this article past the editors. Watch Mr. Yee take down the stupidest news headlines on [Facebook](#), and get ready for his upcoming science and philosophy blog.

2016 is almost over. Yes the endless, rotten shit hurricane of a year which took away Bowie, Prince and Florence Henderson and gave us Trump, Harambe and the Zika virus is finally drawing to a close. So, to give this bitch a proper viking funeral, Jack O'Brien and the crew, which includes Dan O'Brien, Alex Schmidt, and comedian Caitlin Gill, are going to send out 2016 with Cracked's year in review in review. They'll rectify where every other year-in-review goes wrong by giving some much needed airtime to the positive stories from the 2016 and shedding light on the year's most important stories that got overlooked. Get your tickets [here](#).

For more hidden jokes, check out [The Filthiest Joke Ever Hidden In A Children's Movie](#) and [20 Hilarious Dirty Jokes Hidden In Pop Culture](#).

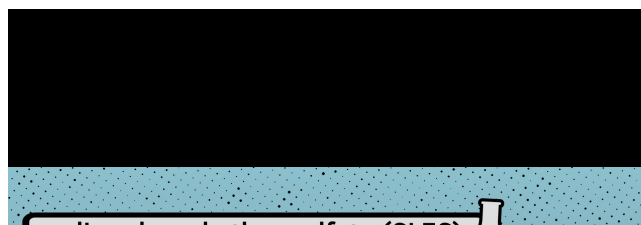


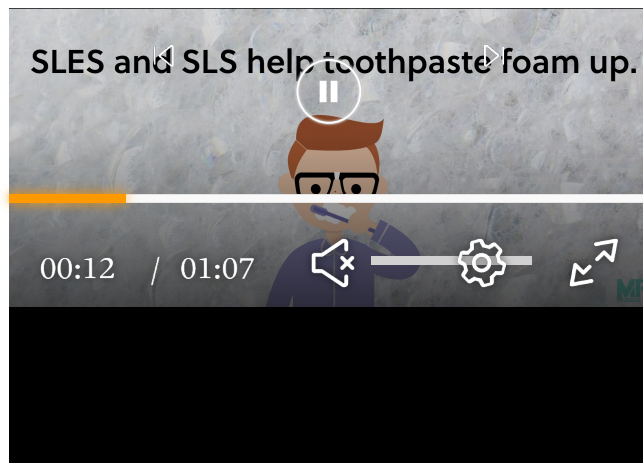
9 Niche Blogs to Brighten Your Winter

BY MISS CELLANIA

JANUARY 22, 2015

January takes forever to get through. The most unpleasant weather of the year comes in January and February, but at least February is short and full of holidays. If you're having a little trouble keeping your spirits up, try some of these incredibly focused and sometimes bizarre blogs that will open a door to a new subject for you.





1. Hot People on Jeopardy!



I may be weird, but when I watch the game show *Jeopardy!* (which I do infrequently) I consider it a challenge to see how I stack up against the contestants -and occasionally as an opportunity to show off in front of my kids. But there are people who watch the show to admire the contestants for

their looks. The blog

Hot People on 'Jeopardy!' records the more attractive contests for sharing, discussion, and posterity. But no matter who the contestants are, or how hot they are, fans of the show and the blog reserve their greatest admiration for host Alex Trebek.

2. Star Trek Fact Check



Science fiction fans of all kinds love to compare their knowledge of trivia and history regarding their favorite universe, and having a story that few others know brings status among geeks. As these stories are passed around, they tend to grow and change, even if they were born of truth. The *Star Trek* universe is full of such stories, as it has been around for almost 50 years. The blog Star Trek Fact Check was born to unearth the truth behind the production of *Star Trek: The Original Series*. However, the other, later *Star*

series. However, the other, later Star Trek TV series are often in consideration as well. In a [recent post](#), the author conducts an epic deconstruction of a magazine issue devoted to *Star Trek* history. A sample:

Claim: It wasn't until the first episode of the second season, "The Trouble with Tribbles," that the [Klingon] race began to emerge as the perfect foil to Kirk and Co. (Page 76)

Verdict: False. The Klingons, established in season one's "Errand of Mercy," first reappeared in season two's "Friday's Child," the third episode produced for the second season and the eleventh to air. The Klingons actually make their third appearance on Star Trek in "The Trouble with Tribbles," which was the fifteenth episode aired during season two, and the thirteenth produced. As for the first episode of the second season, "Amok Time" was the first episode to be aired in season two, and "Catspaw" was the

first produced.

Star Trek Fact Check goes where no man has gone before in the search for the truth. This blog could keep you busy for weeks.

3. NYC 1981



The blog NYC, 1981 focuses only on the city of New York, and only on the year 1981. There is no dearth of material- after all, the city's newspapers were filled every day. The blog was set up to promote the movie *A Most Violent Year*. The fact that it's a promotional blog doesn't make it any less interesting, as the subject matter could well stand on its own.

New York City, 1981. It is a time that contributed massively to culture as we know it today, but a place where you would probably not want to raise your children.

Pulsing with chaotic energy and apparent lawlessness, the city was in a fragile state with a total of 637,451 felonies committed in 12 short months. It was an era where the line between good and evil often seemed blurred, and an individual's success was a testament to their persistence. But there were fissures of creativity and light in the city's asphalt crust, and remarkable moments in cultural history happened on the regular.

It was the year that *Fort Apache*, *The Bronx* was filmed amid protests against the production, the city's sanitation department went on strike in December, and hip-hop music was in its infancy. There's also retro media, profiles of neighborhoods, and plenty of graffiti.

4. Cemetery Travel





The web is full of travel blogs, but how many focus on graveyards?

Cemetery Travel: Adventures in Graveyards Around the World

is your go-to site for destination cemeteries. Or maybe you already have a destination, and need to fill out your tourism schedule. Honestly, many cities have cemetery tours, because those places are part of their history, and one area that usually isn't in danger of destruction or renovation. And many of them are breathtakingly beautiful. You could learn a lot from perusing this blog.

5. Profanity



Photograph by Flickr user Chris Hardie.

Vito Tartamella keeps an Italian blog called Parolacce. In English, that's Profanity, and yes, it's all about

swearing and bad language. We are lucky it's available in several languages (the translation button is to the right). You might want to wait until you are in the privacy of your home before reading it.

6. Abandoned CDs



Abandoned CDs is a British blog that is exactly what it says on the tin. Each entry is a photograph of a discarded CD, along with information on the date and place it was found, plus a little research on its contents. That's all.

7. Drunk J. Crew





Have you ever noticed that the models in the J. Crew catalog look drunk? I haven't either, as I don't shop for clothing until I have no choice. But ethics professor Jen Ellison noticed, and with a few captions that you've heard before from drunk friends, created the blog [Drunk J. Crew](#). The blog is fairly new, but I can see it lasting a while because there's got to be a lot of raw material available. And it became a hit so fast that people started [passing off Ellison's work as their own](#). There's plenty to laugh at in the single pictures, the photo essays, and even [an occasional video](#).

8. The Worst Cat



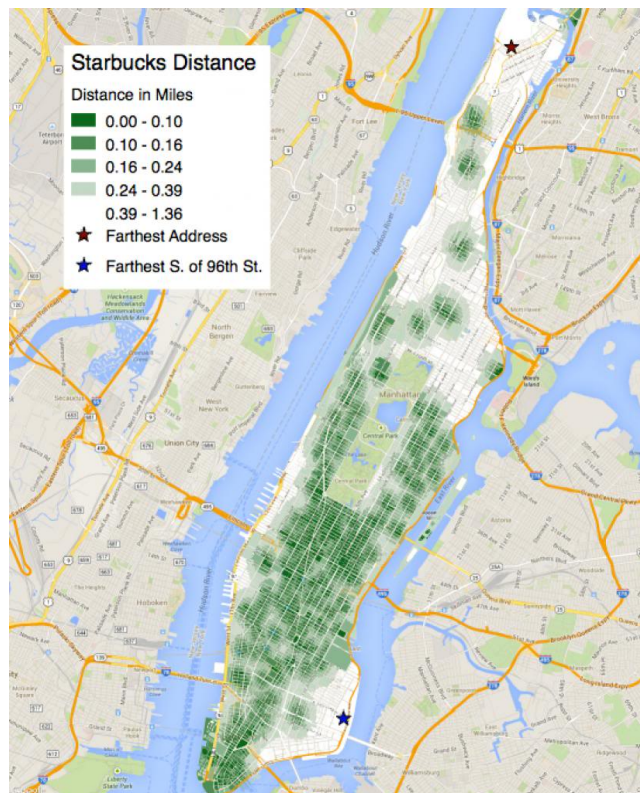
Here's a single-subject blog that won't

tax your time. The Worst Cat has many pictures of this “wet cat,” which is yes, clearly a baby hippopotamus, but let’s not ruin the joke for the author.

This is the best cat if you like
your cats to be really sweaty
and footballshaped and
disgusting

The testimonials at the bottom of the
endless scroll get to the heart of the
matter.

9. I Quant NY



If the first entry on New York City in
this list appealed to a sense of nostalgia,
the second one will appeal to
mathematicians and graph geeks.

I Quant NY is where statistics meets

the nearest Starbucks is to getting the best deal on a Metrocard.

See more niche blogs in our previous posts.

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5 Really Stupid Jokes Hidden In Really Smart Places

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- [5 Really Stupid Jokes Hidden In Really Smart Places](#)

- By  Teddem Yee ·  Stronzo Bestiale ·
- December 09, 2016
- .
- 451,116 views

There are certain places where you'd expect to find jokes -- comedy clubs, Cracked.com, everything Breitbart publishes -- and certain places where you *wouldn't*: cancer wards, the Holocaust Museum, Cracked.com (if you're one of *those* jerks). But even the most serious efforts need to break the tension once in a while, so we wind up with ...

5

The Fart Joke Hidden In The Periodic Table

Eyematrix/iStock

The element plutonium was discovered by Glenn Seaborg and his team in 1941, but he wasn't allowed to tell the world about his groundbreaking discovery at the time, because the USA was using it to develop the atomic bomb. The government decided that the fun secret ingredient for nuclear apocalypse should probably stay, well ... secret, so all references to sinister plutonium in the Manhattan Project were swapped out for benign copper. And that's why, to this day, enthusiastic but misguided science fans -- you can tell they love science by their trucks full of beakers and chemicals -- sometimes strip abandoned buildings for copper wire.

PublicDomainPictures/PixabayThen get strip searched when arrested by the coppers.

After the war ended, they were finally allowed to publish the existence of the 94th element, and Seaborg, its discoverer, was [given the honor of naming it](#). Chemists at the time occasionally named elements after planets, the most recent being neptunium, so nobody blinked when Seaborg went ahead and called his element plutonium. But he did it primarily so that plutonium's abbreviation on the Periodic Table would be "Pu" -- it should've logically been "Pl," but Seaborg was oddly insistent about the abbreviation, because plutonium smells like butt, and also because Seaborg was a giant man-child and we love him for it.

Svyatoslav/PixabayHe also discovered piss-tassium and barfanese.

↓ Continue Reading Below

Seaborg assumed that the committee would swiftly reject the proposal, and chide him for his immaturity, but the prank slipped right through, and was accepted as the official chemical symbol. And that's how Seaborg was granted a Nobel Prize for the world's most epic fart joke.

4

The Coded Jokes That Littered The Apollo 11 Mission

NASA

The Apollo 11 mission landed human beings on the moon for the first time. It was a serious, important, somber affair ... run largely by computer nerds, and hence, full of juvenile humor. In July 2016, someone [dumped the entire source code](#) for the Apollo 11 command module into the public domain, and space geeks got an eyeful of all the ["TRASHY LITTLE SUBROUTINES"](#) and ['60s culture references](#) the programmers left hidden between lines of the Apollo code. For example, the lunar module's landing sequence was coded "FLAGORGY."

[Github](#)Also, a note reading "WE FAKED THIS WHOLE THING."

If the radar antenna was out of place upon landing, the code [included a command](#) to "crank the silly thing around," and after someone had achieved the monumentally dangerous task of fixing it, another cheeky command instructed the astronauts to "see if he's lying" before proceeding.

[NASA](#)"Roger. Commencing cranking of silly thing. Over."

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It's actually heartwarming to know that, even in the pure and noble pursuit of scientific advancement for all mankind, there's always time to stop and just screw around for a bit.

3

The Brilliant Physicist Who Could Lick His Own Genitals

TeamK/Pixabay

In November 1975, physics professors Jack H. Hetherington and F. D. C. Willard [published a groundbreaking paper](#) on particle physics that is still being referenced today. The paper made Hetherington a minor celebrity in the physics world, and folks were understandably eager to also track down co-author and assumed genius, F. D. C. Willard. That proved more difficult than they thought, not because Willard was some Tesla-style introverted prodigy, but because he was a cat. Not like "a hip cat." An actual housecat.

PDPics/Pixabay"That's *Professor* Actual Housecat to you, pal."

Soooo ... maybe check the crawlspace?

See, when Hetherington put together his research paper -- on his own, it turned out -- he used the royal "we" throughout the article, something we personally just can't stand. *Physical Review Letters* refused to publish the article as written, on the basis that there was only one credited author, and without proper grammar, what are we but cavemen, flailing ineffectually through the universe until we crap out and die? So Hetherington, rather than rewrite the paper, took the lazy way out and simply [credited a second researcher](#) -- his cat, Willard.

[Jack H. Hetherington and F. D. C. Willard](#) Really his "signature" should have been a tip-off.

↓ Continue Reading Below

2

The Important Research Of Professor Total Asshole

Hans/Pixabay

In 1987, American physicist William Hoover had a paper rejected by the editors of two different publications. Convinced that his staggering work of heartbreaking genius could only have been dismissed for being "too innovative," Hoover resubmitted his work, changing only the title and co-crediting a fictional researcher named Prof. Stronzo Bestiale.

PublicDomainPictures/Pixabay Authoring it "Dr. Fakey VonFakename" would have been too obvious.

"Stronzo bestiale" is Italian for (approximately) "total asshole." Nobody even noticed the esteemed work of Professor Total Asshole until 2011, when a writer [contacted Hoover](#) to ask about the elusive Prof. Bestiale, to which Hoover replied that he had heard the phrase spoken by two Italian women during a flight, and decided that it sounded like a good name for a physicist. The joke went unnoticed for so long that Hoover and Bestiale actually [had a bit](#) of a [career](#) together, although it's rumored that only Hoover would work with him, since Bestiale could be a bit of a ... prick.

champja/iStock Also rumored that he got his PhD from Brown University.

↓ Continue Reading Below

1

The Long, Long History Of Academic Articles And Puns

DariuszSankowski/Pixabay

Obviously, the easiest place to slip a joke into a research paper is right there in the title. The folks over at [Slate](#) have put together an extensive collection of research papers whose authors clearly reached way harder for puns than they did for scientific greatness. For example, [this article](#) on the various things you apparently don't want to find coming out of your pee-hole, creatively titled: "From Urethra With Shove: Bladder Foreign Bodies. A Case Report And Review."

In 2008, researchers did a study on neck injuries experienced by head bangers, and [titled the article](#) "Stuck Between Rock And A Hard Bass." A 2011 psychological study into the positive consequences of pet ownership [was titled](#) "Friends With Benefits," which we sure hope was a joke. Another article published in the *British Medical Journal* noted that, while anecdotal evidence has suggested that the use of a parachute can mitigate death when falling from a great height, no scientific studies have ever been done to prove it. So [they did that admittedly unnecessary study](#), and titled it "Parachute Use To Prevent Death And Major Trauma Related To Gravitational Challenge."

skeeze/Pixabay Pictured: Research

In 2014, someone noticed that a surprisingly high number of economics articles were written by co-authors who shared the same surname. They recruited four unrelated economists, all with the last name "Goodman," to [do a study on the phenomenon](#), and titled it "A Few Goodmen: Surname-Sharing Economist Coauthors."

Finally, there was the 1974 article, [published](#) in the *Journal Of Applied Behavior Analysis*, by researcher Dennis Upper. It was titled "The Unsuccessful Self-Treatment Of A Case Of Writer's Block." At the risk of charges of plagiarism, we've decided to reprint the entire article here as it appears in the journal:

[ncbi.nlm.nih.gov...](#)

Mr. Yee would like to thank Prof. Stronzo Bestiale for his help in getting this article past the editors. Watch Mr. Yee take down the stupidest news headlines on [Facebook](#), and get ready for his upcoming science and philosophy blog.

2016 is almost over. Yes the endless, rotten shit hurricane of a year which took away Bowie, Prince and Florence Henderson and gave us Trump, Harambe and the Zika virus is finally drawing to a close. So, to give this bitch a proper viking funeral, Jack O'Brien and the crew, which includes Dan O'Brien, Alex Schmidt, and comedian Caitlin Gill, are going to send out 2016 with Cracked's year in review in review. They'll rectify where every other year-in-review goes wrong by giving some much needed airtime to the positive stories from the 2016 and shedding light on the year's most important stories that got overlooked. Get your tickets [here](#).

For more hidden jokes, check out [The Filthiest Joke Ever Hidden In A Children's Movie](#) and [20 Hilarious Dirty Jokes Hidden In Pop Culture](#).

Subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel, and check out [7 Horrifying Things Snuck into Popular Children's Cartoons](#), and other videos you won't see on the site!

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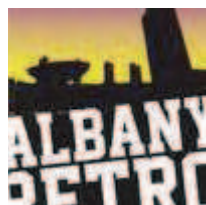
As noticed in the article about Stronzo Bestiale, seen at <http://www.parolacce.org/2014/10/05/the-true-st...>, enjoy this super funny Stronzo Bestiale t-shirt for any scientist!

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SCIENCE

Oft-cited 'total *sshole' physicist credited in scientific literature is a fake



TOM BOGGIONI

12 OCT 2014 AT 20:39 ET

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Più...



Physics professor who is not Stronzo Bestiale (Shutterstock)

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An Italian science writer reviewing a paper written in 1987 by two well-known physicists from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, noted a third author with an intriguing and profane Italian name which translates to "total *sshole."

Vito Tartamella discovered what turned out to be a private joke, when reading "Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas," published in 1987 in the Journal of Statistical Physics, and credited to physicists Bill Moran, William G. Hoover, and 'Stronzo Bestiale.' Recognizing the Italian name as slang meaning 'total *sshole,' Tartamella contacted the now-retired Hoover for an explanation.

According to Hoover he had submitted a paper on "connecting fractal geometry, irreversibility and the second law of thermodynamics," only to have it rejected by the Physical Review Letters and the Journal of Statistical Physics refused to publish it because, according to him it "contained too innovative ideas."

NEW STORIES



Jon Stewart: It's more fun to mock Rick Scott's fear of a 'ball fan' than his policies



This plant gets you high and reduces opiate addiction — and it's totally legal

the expressions "*Che stronzo* (what an *sshole)!", "*Stronzo bestiale* (total *sshole)"

"Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So, during a CECAM meeting, I asked [Giovanni Ciccotti, professor of condensed matter physics at the University La Sapienza University in Rome] what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that Stronzo Bestiale

would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication. So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author. And the research was published."

Since that time, the papers listing Stronzo Bestial have been cited in research published in some of the world's most well-regarded physics journals despite the fact that one of the authors doesn't exist.

As Tartamella notes, the continuing citing of Bestiale as a real person lays "bare how vulnerable control systems in the review of scientific research were (and still are!) . If you are able to insert in a publication the name of a nonexistent author in a publication, who will guarantee that even the scientific contents have been examined with care? Incredibly, even today, 27 years later."

Tartamell also notes that non-existent Bestiale even has a **Scopus profile** stating he teaches at the University of Vienna Institute for Experimental Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics, in Austria.

H/T i09

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Più...



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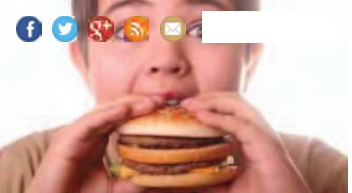
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Science paper written by 'Total Asshole'

14-ott-2014 | Times LIVE

Science writer Vito Tartamella has raised questions about the existence of one Stronzo Bestiale, a name found in a few scientific journals.



Bum. File photo.

Photograph by: Gallo Images/Thinkstock

"

"

The name means 'Total Asshole', according to [Tartamella \(http://retractionwatch.com/2014/10/09/should-papers-be-retracted-if-one-of-the-authors-is-a-total-asshole/\)](http://retractionwatch.com/2014/10/09/should-papers-be-retracted-if-one-of-the-authors-is-a-total-asshole/).

The supposed Palermo, Sicily physicist co-authored papers in the *Journal of Statistical Physics*, the *Journal of Chemical Physics* and the proceedings of a meeting of *American Physical Society in Monterey*.

The name caught Tartamella's eye when he was doing research for his book on surnames, and the writer decided to see if it was real.

He immediately turned to Italy's phone book - only to find no such person listed.

The then Chancellor of the University of Palermo, Ignazio Melisenda Giambertoni also didn't know a Stronzo Bestiale (or at least, not one with that as their actual name.)

It turns out that Bestiale was invented by two American researchers, Bill Moran and William G. Hoover after publishers kept rejecting their papers.

"I thought that Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication. So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author. And the researches were published," Hoover told Tartamella.

~ o O o ~

传送门

如果论文作者叫“混蛋·畜生”

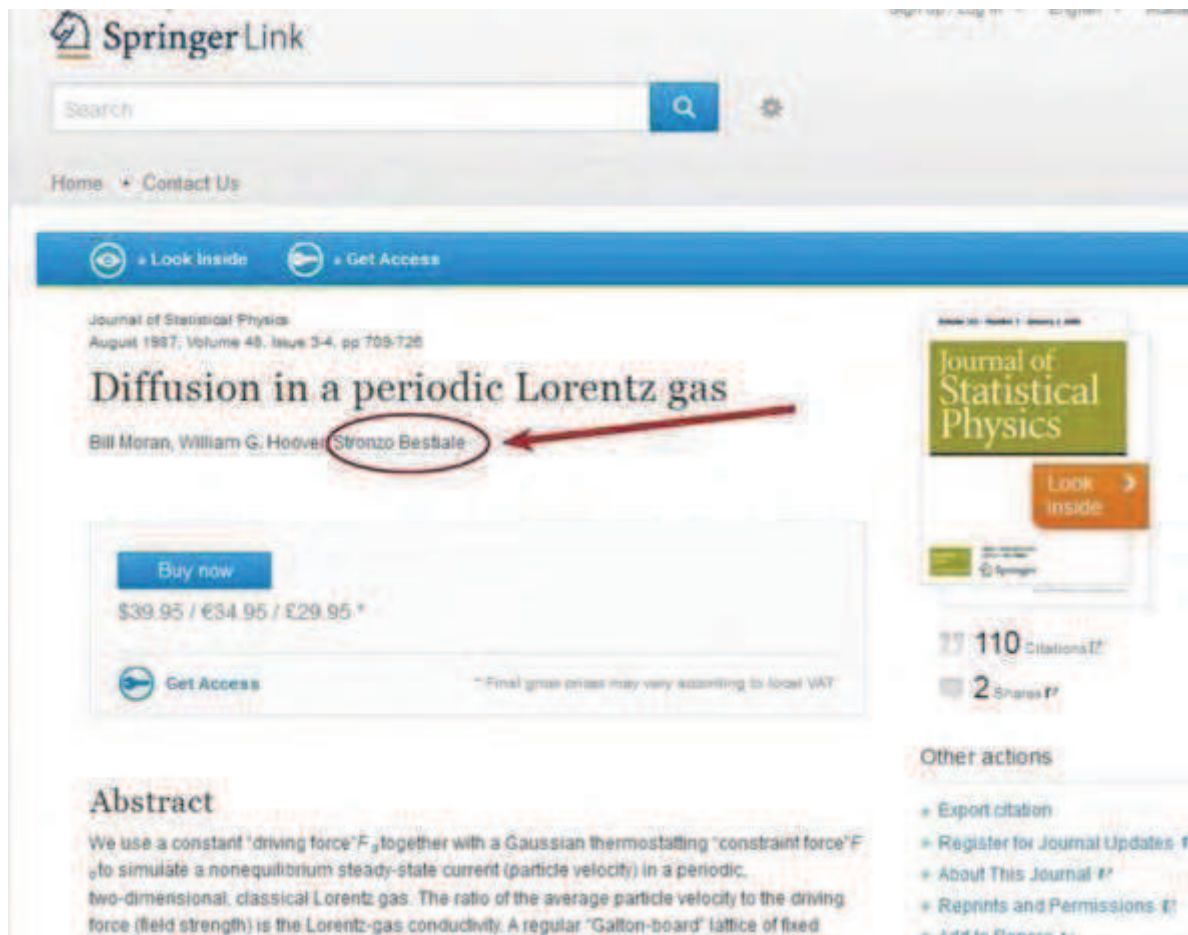
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作者: @Ent

有个意大利物理学家。他不但不存在，而且是个大混蛋。真的，连名字都叫混蛋·畜生（Stronzo Bestiale）。

然而，1987年，西西里出身、任职于维也纳大学实验物理所的混蛋教授却在《统计物理学期刊》（Journal of Statistical Physics）上发表了一篇题为“周期性洛伦兹气体的扩散”（"Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas"）的论文……



前不久科学作者Vito Tartamella偶然发现了这篇文章和它令人着迷的作者。经反复调查，他发现世界上（如你所料）并没有混蛋·畜生教授这么一个人。

混蛋教授的主要合作者，美国物理学家William G. Hoover，是这么说的：

“那时我在飞往巴黎的航班上，两个意大利女人坐在我身边聊天，不停地在说：‘Che stronzo!’ ‘Stronzo bestiale!’ 然后这两个词就在我脑子里不肯走了。所以等到CECAM（欧洲原子分子计算中心）开会的时候，我就问我的意大利同事Giovanni Ciccotti这俩是啥意思，他解释完了之后我觉得Stronzo Bestiale 真是适合一篇被拒论文的好名字啊！我有一篇文章刚被物理学评论和统计物理学期刊拒掉了，所以我决定加上一位作者和头衔，重新投稿，结果被接受了。”

当然，有些人不觉得它好笑，意大利物理学会主席 Renato Angelo Ricci 说“这个笑话冒犯了整个意大利科学界”。然而，27年过去了，混蛋教授依然好好地活在论文数据库里、(∇)

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接下来Vito Tartamella进一步挖掘发现，这并非科学脏话的唯一案例.....

比如：



2003年，《脊椎动物古生物学期刊》发表了一篇文章，论述了一个新的方法来处理古生物学里那些不完整的数据记录。这个方法呢，叫做Missing Entry Replacement Data Analysis，作者为了行文方便将它缩写为MERDA。

merda Latin (slang, vulgar) dung, excrement, shit

而这个翔法测出来的，意料之中，是翔值（MERDA value）.....

巧合的尴尬吗？当然不是啦。作者之一——美国自然史博物馆的Ward C. Wheeler坦然承认，他们完全知道这个词在拉丁语、法语和加泰罗尼亚语里的意思：“我们故意选择了这个缩写，用来强调那些不完整的数据库，质量到底有多差。”

再比如：

2007年一篇讨论碳纳米管电化学合成的论文。

文章里讨论了两种材料，一种是铋纳米管（Bismuth nanotubes），缩写BiNT；另一种是铜纳米管（copper nanotubes），缩写.....CuNT。

cunt English (vulgar, countable) The female genitalia, especially the vulva.

COMMUNICATION

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Electrochemical synthesis of metal and semimetal nanotube–nanowire heterojunctions and their electronic transport properties†

Dachi Yang,^{ab} Guowen Meng,^{ac} Shuyuan Zhang,^c Yufeng Hao,^{ab} Xiaohong An,^{ab} Qing Wei,^{ab} Min Ye^{ab} and Lide Zhang^d

Received (in Cambridge, UK) 29th September 2006, Accepted 19th January 2007
First published as an Advance Article on the web 8th February 2007
DOI: 10.1039/b614147a

Metal and semimetal nanotube–nanowire heterojunction arrays have been achieved by sequential electrochemical deposition inside the nanochannels of anodic aluminium oxide template with a layer of Au thin enough to leave the pores open.

Heterojunctions of one-dimensional nanostructures have received considerable attention due to their unique properties,^{1–4} and potential applications in nanodevices.^{5–8} Previous studies on longitudinally segmented heterostructures have mainly focused on two segments of nanowires (NWs),^{9–12} two segments of nanotubes (NTs),¹³ and one segment of NTs and another segment of NWs.^{14–17} For NT–NW heterostructures, the NT segments are usually carbon NTs, which have been prepared by catalytic growth,¹⁴ chemical vapor deposition,¹⁵ solid solid reaction,¹⁶ and surface attaching methods.¹⁷ However, little has been reported on nanoheterojunctions with one longitudinal segment consisting of metallic or semimetal NTs, which might have potential applications in future nanotechnology.

Here, we demonstrate a facile approach for the building of metal and semimetal nanotube–nanowire (NT–NW) nanoheterojunction arrays by sequential electrochemical deposition of two materials inside the nanochannels of anodic aluminium oxide (AAO) template. Herein we take metal Cu and semimetal Bi as examples. The heterojunction arrays of Cu–NTs and Bi–NWs (CuNT–BiNW) are achieved by electrochemical deposition of Cu first and then Bi in the nanochannels of the AAO template with one side coated with an Au layer which is thin enough to leave the pores open and cover only the top surface of the pore walls, as is shown schematically in the ESI† Similarly, if the electrodeposition sequence is changed to Bi first and then Cu, in this case heterojunction arrays of Bi–NTs and Cu–NWs (BiNT–CuNW) can be achieved (see ESI†).

As for the CuNT–BiNW heterojunction arrays, Fig. 1(a) and (b) reveal the SEM images of the BiNWs segment and the CuNTs segment, respectively, after the template was partially removed. Both the CuNTs and the BiNWs have an outer diameter about

80 nm, in agreement with that of the nanochannels in the AAO template. Fig. 1(c) shows a side-view SEM image of a bundle of CuNT–BiNW heterojunctions after the AAO template was completely removed. The three dashed circles marked I, II and III are the BiNWs segment, junction area and CuNTs segment, respectively, which have been further confirmed by the corresponding EDS analyses shown in Fig. 1(d), (e) and (f), respectively. It can be seen that the CuNTs (marked by dashed circle III) are quite uniform with smooth surface, while the BiNWs (dashed circle I) are not so uniform with rough surface.

The diameters of the nanochannels inside the AAO templates can be adjusted through modulating the applied anodizing voltage and subsequent pore widening, and the length of the nanochannels can be controlled by the anodization time, while the lengths of the CuNT and the BiNW segments inside the nanochannels can be adjusted by the corresponding electrodeposition parameters. Therefore, the diameter and the relative length of the CuNT and BiNW segments can be modulated as designed.

In order to identify the top structure on the CuNT segments, we electrodeposited one sample with only CuNTs inside the half depth of the nanochannels. After template removal, SEM observation

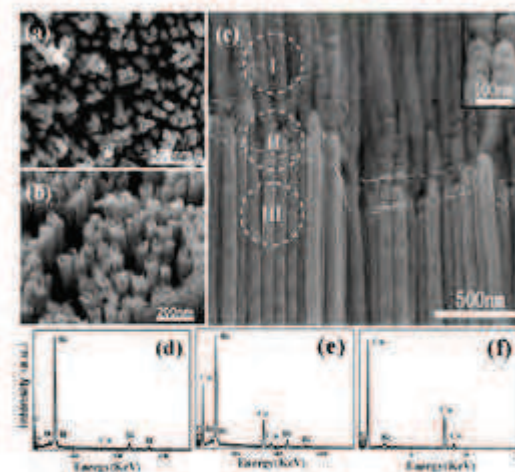


Fig. 1 (a) Top-view SEM image of BiNWs segment, (b) Bottom-view SEM image of CuNTs segment, (c) Side-view SEM image of CuNT–BiNW heterojunction arrays, the inset is a close-up view of the marked rectangular region, (d)–(f) EDS spectra from the corresponding regions I, II, III marked in (c).

^a Key Laboratory of Materials Physics, and Anhui Key Laboratory of Nanomaterials and Nanostructures, Institute of Solid State Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Hefei, 230026, China

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^c Structure Research Lab, University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei, 230026, China

† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Experimental details, the synthesis of BiNT–CuNW heterojunctions, the controlling crystallization, XRD patterns and HRTEM image of BiNT–CuNW. See DOI: 10.1039/b614147a

不幸的是这是中国人写的，所以大概不是故意的.....大概吧。

【回帖补充】

@安然_莲自在:

那个叫“去吃屎”的教授到哪儿去了.....

啊~找到了~:

CHEW Shit Fun
PhD, PGDipTHE
Associate Professor



Phone: 67903829
Email: sfun.chew@nie.edu.sg
Department: NATURAL SCIENCES & SCIENCE EDUCATION
Office Location: NIE7-03-84
Area of Interest: biochemistry, physiology & biochemistry of fishes

Biography Selected Publications

Academic Background

- BSc (Honours): PhD NUS
- PGDipTHE NTU

Professional Organisations

- European Society for Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry, Member
- Singapore Institute of Biology, Member

顺便说，这位教授的研究方向是某种龟类用嘴排泄的行为.....

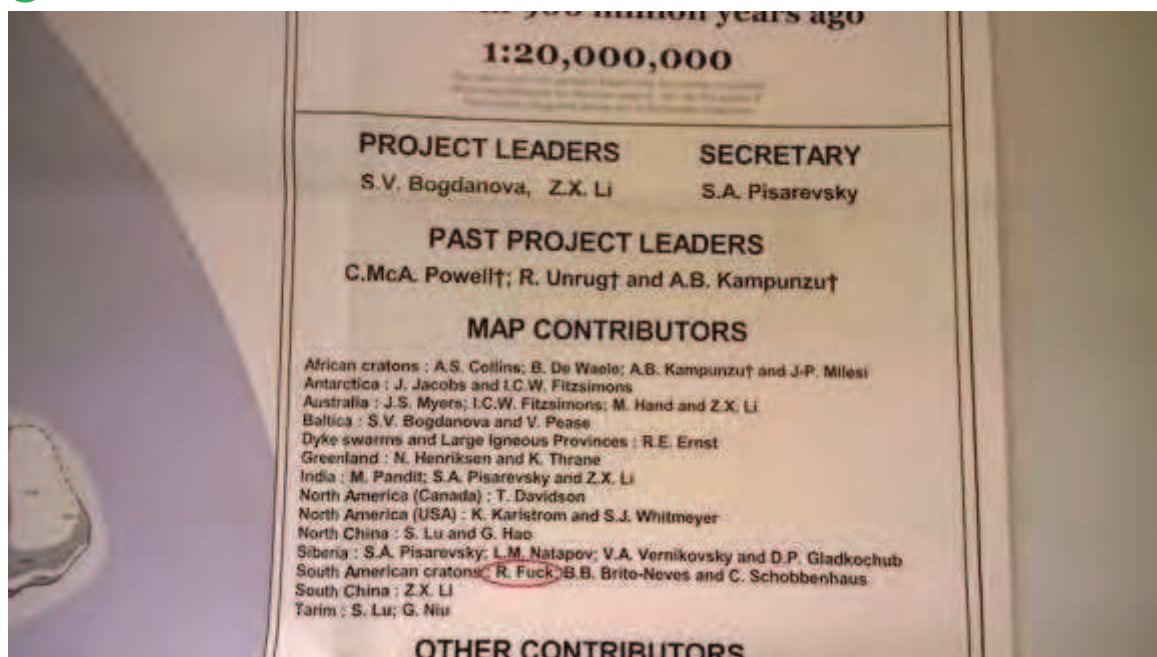
@Paradoxian

中国人写的那个梗.....

立马想到了国内一些学术会议上，很多中国人把PNAS念作“P-nas”（音penis）.....

不忍直听XDDD

@三山直文UIO



@你这是自寻箱子

没人吐槽美国化学会（ACS）主办出版的知名分析化学杂志 *Analytical Chemistry* 的标准简写是 *Anal. Chem.* 么？

我就不贴 *Anal* 的释义了.....

扩展阅读

在许多文化中，“名字”是个神秘的咒语，有特殊的意义。而这个咒语竟然真的有用：找不到东西的时候，不停念叨它的名字，或许可以帮到你

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12:24 am 10/18/14 В 1987 году профессор Стронцо Бестиале, итальянский физик из Палермо, стал соавтором нескольких статей в разных престижных научных журналах по физике. Все бы ничего, только его имя с итальянского переводится как «полный мудак».

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Journal of Statistical Physics
 August 1987, Volume 48, Issue 3-4, pp 709-726

Diffusion in a periodic Lorentz gas

Bill Moran, William G. Hoover, **Stronzo Bestiale**

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Abstract

We use a constant "driving force" F_d together with a Gaussian thermostating "constraint force" F_c to simulate a nonequilibrium steady-state current (particle velocity) in a periodic, two-dimensional, classical Lorentz gas. The ratio of the average particle velocity to the driving force (field strength) is the Lorentz-gas conductivity. A regular "Galton-board" lattice of fixed

Journal of Statistical Physics
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Вито Тартамелла, автор блога по ненормативной лексике Parolacce и одноименной книги, решил отыскать профессора. В телефонном справочнике Италии он нашел 7 человек с фамилией Bestiale («скотский», «чудовищный»), но ни одного Stronzo среди них не было. Да и вообще людей с именем Мудак почему-то не нашлось. Тогда Тартамелла догадался написать постоянному соавтору Стронцо Бестиале – профессору Уильяму Гуверу из Ливерморской национальной

лаборатории им. Э. Лоуренса (США). И тот рассказал ему всю правду о загадочном итальянском ученом.



Уильям Гувер отдыхает, пока Стронцо Бестиале пишет статью.

В те времена Гувер разрабатывал одну новую теорию и написал несколько статей по теме, однако два журнала, включая *Journal of Statistical Physics*, отказались их публиковать с формулировкой «слишком новаторские идеи». Консерватизм редакторов был большой досадой, однако Гувер не сидел дома, проливая слезки, а продолжал активную деятельность, летал на конференции, и однажды в самолете услышал разговор двух итальянцев по соседству. Время от времени в диалоге возникали экспрессивные выражения: «Che stronzo!» («Какой мудака!») и «Stronzo bestiale!» (ну, вы поняли). Эти слова западали в душу Уильяму Гуверу. На конференции в Париже, куда он и направлялся, он спросил у своего итальянского коллеги, что все это значит. Выяснив, что к чему, Гувер подумал, что Стронцо Бестиале мог бы стать подходящим соавтором для отвергнутой публикации. Он снова отправил статью, немного поменяв заголовок и приписав в соавторы пресловутого синьора Бестиале. И *Journal of Statistical Physics* ее опубликовал.

С той поры Стронцо Бестиале не раз становился соавтором Уильяма Гувера, список его публикаций рос. В конце одной очень серьезной статьи Гувер как-то написал, что «дискуссии с ним были очень полезными». У вымышленного профессора даже есть страничка в библиографической базе данных Scopus, где указывается, что он работает в Институте экспериментальной физики Венского университета.



История Стронцо Бестиале широко обсуждается в Интернете, и одна компания уже продает футболки для веселых ученых.

Этот случай не единственный, когда среди авторов научных публикаций значились неожиданные персонажи. В 2001 году будущий нобелевский лауреат Андрей Гейм вписал к себе в соавторы хомячка Тишу (H.A.M.S. ter Tisha), а в 1978-м иммунолог Полли Матцингер добавила в авторы Галадриэля Мирквуда – это толкиновское имя носила ее овчарка. Наиболее классический случай из серии «физики шутят» – статья 1948 года в журнале *Physical Review*, чьими авторами выступили Альфер, Бете и Гамов: как писал Ральф Альфер, «было бы нечестным по отношению к греческому алфавиту, если бы статья была подписана только Альфером и Гамовым», а известный физик Ганс Бете не возражал против включения его в соавторы.

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14/10/2014 | Todo es Cierto: Los artículos científicos de Stronzo Bestiale

En Lo que Queda del Día de Cooperativa Paula Molina conversó con el dramaturgo Andrés Kalawski, quien habló sobre los documentos científicos de Stronzo Bestiale y sus coautores.

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The Phantom Physicist

 October 14th, 2014
  0

SHARING



TAGS: Foreign, News



Since 1987, an Italian physicist named Stronzo Bestiale has been widely cited and published numerous times. There's nothing strange about that until you learn two key pieces of information:

First, Stronzo Bestiale loosely translates to mean "total asshole."

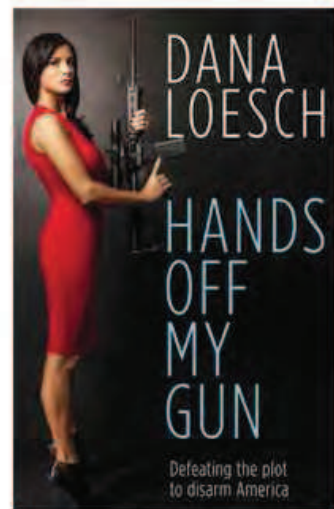
And second, he doesn't actually exist.

He was invented by Professor William G. Hoover, who needed another co-author to lend credibility to a paper that had originally been rejected for publication by the Journal of Statistical Physics. Hoover, frustrated, sat through a long flight near two Italian women who kept using the term "stronzo bestiale" in conversation. And a tiny light bulb went on in Hoover's brain.

Bestiale has since been published several times, been cited over one hundred times in other papers, has a complete Scopus profile, and apparently works with the Institute for Experimental Physics at the University of Vienna.

He was outed recently by an Italian science writer named Vito Tartamella, who also happens to be the author of a book on surnames. When he stumbled across Bestiale's byline, he immediately knew something was amiss and contacted Professor Hoover for the real story.

DANA'S BOOK

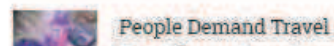


HANDS OFF MY GUN is filled with research and detail. In addition to explaining why the Founding Fathers insisted on including the right to bear arms in the Bill of Rights, Loesch argues that "gun control" regulations throughout history have been used to keep minority populations under control. She also contends that current arguments in favor of gun control are primarily based on emotions and fear.

ABOUT DANA

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ENVIRONNEMENTÀ LIRE, À VOIR ET À
ÉCOUTER{SCIENCES²}Par Sylvestre Huet
Journaliste à Libération

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19 OCTOBRE 2014 / À LIRE, À VOIR ET À ÉCOUTE

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À LIRE AUSSI

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Exceptionnellement, le Net de sciences du vendredi paraît le samedi, et est très court... la faute à [Sciences en marche qui m'a trop occupé cette semaine et hier](#).

► Le gouvernement japonais a [levé l'ordre d'évacuation du petit village de Kawauchi, annonce l'Ambassade de France au Japon](#), dans les environs de la centrale de **Fukushima Daiichi**. La mesure a pris effet le 1er octobre dernier pour la partie est du village et affectant environ de 139 logements et 276 résidents. Il s'agit de la seconde levée d'ordre d'évacuation depuis l'accident de 2011 après zone de Miyakoji dans la ville de Tamura en avril dernier.

► Lors de la [25ème conférence internationale sur l'énergie de fusion](#), qui s'est ouverte le 13 octobre à Saint Petersburg, la Russie affirme qu'elle respectera tous ses engagements concernant la construction d'ITER, le réacteur à fusion thermonucléaire expérimental en construction à Cadarache **malgré les sanctions** qui lui sont imposées par les Etats-Unis et l'Europe en raison de son implication dans le conflit en Ukraine. D'après le Directeur général adjoint de Rosatom, Vyacheslav Pershukov «*Science is outside politics, that is the position that we adhere*».

► Le physicien **Stronzo Bestiale** (pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas la langue de Dante, indiquons seulement que cela un rapport avec le bas du dos et que l'expression est vraiment très dépréciatrice) existe t-il ? Et le logiciel MERDA ? [Oui, disons... d'une certaine manière, mais l'histoire vaut la peine d'être lue](#), tant pour l'humour que pour la révélation des défauts du système de publications scientifiques.

Par Sylvestre Huet, le 19 octobre 2014

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VOS RÉACTIONS (1)

dim. 19 oct 2014

Question de néophyte : lorsqu'une zone a été décontaminée, c'est

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Science of ageing; Microneedles; Firelab; Rosetta; Scientific authorship



What is ageing?

In 1900, the global average life expectancy was 31, today it's 70, and the number of people over 85 in the UK is predicted to double in the next 20 years. How has ageing evolved, and do we know what is happening in our cells as we age? Professor Richard Faragher, University of Brighton, explains.

Sticking plaster-like needle replacement

Microneedles on a sticking-plaster-like patch may be the painless and safe way doctors will test for drugs and infections, and give vaccinations in the future. Roland Pease tries an alternative to the traditional injection at Queen's University Belfast with Dr Ryan Donnelly.

Science of fire

It's November, and these are the days when you may well have a smouldering bonfire in your back garden. Marnie Chesterton meets scientists whose lives are devoted to the behaviour of fire.

Comet landing mission nears

The Rosetta Mission is entering the final stages before landing on a comet. By this time next week, we will know if the European Space Agency has successfully achieved what could be an extraordinary feat. Paolo Ferri, Head of Mission Operations at the European Space Agency, outlines the challenge.

Dr Stronzo and other cases

Dr Stronzo Bestiale made his debut in the world of scientific publications in 1987, authoring a paper entitled 'Diffusion in a periodic Lorentz gas', in the Journal of Statistical Physics. However, he doesn't exist. This phantom physicist is not an isolated incident: Mike Holderness at New Scientist has been tracking scientific author apparitions for some time.

Producer: Marnie Chesterton

Assistant Producer: Jen Whyntie.

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Achilleas Kostoulas



NOTES, OTHER, THIS WEEK I READ...

Recently read: Dr S. Bestiale, Jon Snow's fate, and a poem

12 OCTOBER 2014 | ACHILLEAS | LEAVE A COMMENT

It's one of those weeks when I find it really difficult to do any serious work, (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVOf6HEur5Y>) offline or on this blog. So, this week's collection of reading materials will endeavour to provide answers to questions such as: (a) *who is Dr Stronzo Bestiale?*, (b) *is John Snow dead?* and (c) *what is the boundary between Science and Art?*

Dr Stronzo Bestiale, I presume?

The first of the stories comes from *Retraction Watch*, which recently reported (<http://getpocket.com/re-direct?url=http%3A%2F%2Fretractionwatch.com%2F2014%2F10%2F09%2Fshould-papers-be-retracted-if-one-of-the-authors-is-a-total-asshole%2F>) on the publication record of a scientist named Stronzo Bestiale. Polyglot readers of this blog will have noticed that Stronzo Bestiale means "complete idiot" in the language spoken by Dante, Umberto Eco, and Ilona Staller. Dr Bestiale, we read, is a fictional scientist created by physicist William G. Hoover in 1987 to prove a point: apparently, the *Journal of Statistical Physics* had rejected one of Hoover's papers, but was happy to publish

the exact same paper when it was resubmitted with Dr. Bestiale listed as a co-author. *Retraction Watch* notes that:

27 years later, Bestiale is still listed as co-author on several papers. He also has a Scopus profile that lists him as an active researcher at the Institute of Experimental Physics, University of Vienna.

The Scopus listing was still active as of Saturday (11th October) evening, and it showed that Dr Bestiale's publications had generated 114 citations since 1987. Dr Bestiale is no longer research active though, and he has neither published or perished since 1995.

Winter is coming

There are those who criticise science for being at a disconnect from the issues that matter to society. Such critics will be force to revise their views after reading this paper (<http://arxiv.org/pdf/1409.5830v1.pdf>) in *arxiv.org*, which uses Bayesian modelling to predict the structure of the next books in the *Song of Ice and Fire* series (more commonly known as *Game of Thrones*, after the HBO series which the series inspired). Each chapter in the series is narrated from the Point of View of a specific character (a 'POV character'), and the model described in this paper generates estimates of the number of chapters that are likely be narrated by each POV character, in the unlikely event that neither of them meets an untimely death. Here's a key extract:

SPOILER ALERT

Is Jon Snow dead? The model suggests that the probability of Jon Snow not being dead is at least 60% since this is less than the posterior probability of his having at least one POV chapter in book 6. Given the events of [Martin (2011)], many readers would assess his probability of not being dead as being much lower than 60%, but we must again point out that the model is unaware of the events in the books. The model can only say that, based on the number of POV chapters observed so far, he has about as much chance of survival as the other major characters.

END SPOILERS

And now for something completely different...

Scholarly Open Access, which often contains some of the oddest news concerning academic publishing, has a story (<http://scholarlyoa.com/2014/10/07/oa-medical-journal-publishes-terrible-poem-about-colitis/>) on a creative approach to scholarly communication: a medical poem published in the *International Journal of Medical Science Research and Practice*, a bottom-feeding predatory publisher (<http://achilleaskostoulas.com/2013/01/07/on-bogus-journals/>).

The poem is entitled "Ulcerative Colitis (http://www.ijmsrp.com/narang_poem/)," and it's written by Dr. Sanjeev Narang, a professor in the — perhaps fittingly — Department of Pathology at the Index Medical College in Indore, India. Here are the first two lines of the poem:

*Begins in the rectum and backwards it goes
No mercy to any part of colon it shows.*

Admittedly, it does sound rather painful.

« [Two Republican Congressional Candidates Agreed to Meet with Our Atheist Group, but One Was Invisible and Inaudible](#)

[Another Georgia County Approves Display of “Historically Significant Documents” ... Including the Ten Commandments »](#)

Meet Physicist Stronzo Bestiale, an Asshole If There (N)ever Was One

October 14, 2014 by [Terry Firma](#)

[48 Comments](#)

Stronzo Bestiale is a [researcher](#) at the Institute for Experimental Physics in Vienna who is a co-author on a small number of major scientific papers. His work has appeared in peer-reviewed publications that include the [Journal of Statistical Physics](#) and [The Journal of Chemical Physics](#).

He's also a figment of someone's imagination, which becomes evident when you learn t Stronzo Bestiale, in Italian, means *Total Turd, Asshole Beast*, or *Complete Asshole*, depending on whom you ask.

The man who breathed life into this Asshole (sorry for that image) is a retired scientist, [William G. Hoover](#), who was formerly employed at [Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory](#). A writer named **Vito Tartamella** (whose name, I sincerely hope doesn't mean “Blithering Buttwipe”) finally noticed how unlikely the Stronzo name is a [got in touch](#) with Hoover to ask about it.



Hoover gamely [explained](#) that back in the eighties, he occasionally had a hard time gett his research papers published. That was regrettable but not unusual, he said:

New discoveries in science are hard to publish because scientists are rather conservative, as discussed by the epistemologist Thomas Kuhn.

After a couple of rejections, [this happened](#):

While I was traveling on a flight to Paris, next to me were two Italian women who spoke among themselves, saying continually: “*Che stronzo* (what an asshole)!”, “*Stronzo bestiale* (total asshole).” Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So ... I asked my colleague [Giovanni] Ciccotti [a condensed-matter physicist in Rome] what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication. **So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author.**

Somehow, Hoover concluded contentedly, that made a difference, and the papers were

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accepted for publication.

Tartamella clearly [enjoyed](#) learning of – and writing down – that story, but he issues a sincere word of caution, too. The Bestiale episode, he says

... laid bare **how vulnerable control systems in the review of scientific research were (and still are!)**. If you're able to insert the name of a nonexistent author in a publication, **who will guarantee that even the *scientific contents* have been examined with care?**

Very true.

I confess I got a chuckle out of the whole thing, but in the cold light of day I don't believe that Hoover did anyone any favors with his little joke. Making stuff up is not compatible with the ethos of science; and next to a murder trial or a presidential eulogy, a scientific paper is probably the one platform where scatological levity and juvenile guffawing ought to be avoided.

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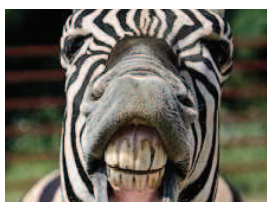


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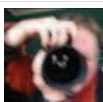
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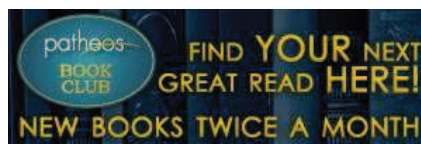


8 Must See Vacation Spots That Need To Be On Your List...



About Terry Firma

Terry Firma, though born and Journalism-school-educated in Europe, has lived in the U.S. for the past 20-odd years. Stateside, his feature articles have been published in *the New York Times*, *Reason*, *Rolling Stone*, *Playboy*, and *Wired*. Terry is the founder and Main Mischief Maker of [Moral Compass](#), a site that pokes fun at the delusional claim by people of faith that a belief in God equips them with superior moral standards.

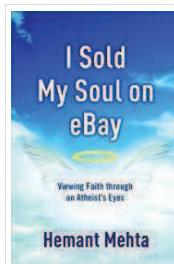
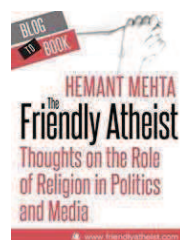
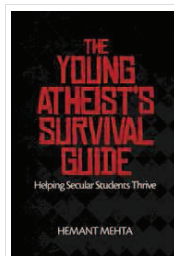


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La ciencia ha sido burlada

17-10-2014 - Clara B. [Seguir](#)

Se descubrió el secreto de "Stronzo Bestiale", autor apócrifo de artículos científicos

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No hace falta enumerar la cantidad de nombres, pero mayormente apellidos graciosos que construyen la identidad de una persona. Sin ir muy lejos, en la memoria habrá algún caso conocido, tal vez de un compañero de colegio o trabajo, a quien molestaban por su patronímico. La comicidad puede ser el resultado de similitudes con sonidos u objetos que se destacan por su descontextualización dentro del nombre. Incluso, existen casos en que palabras usadas en sentido peyorativo o como insulto, resultan ser el apellido de alguien. Algo así sucedió con un italiano, quien se hizo conocido en la década de los ochenta por ser autor de varios trabajos de investigación en el campo de la física, cuyo nombre era **Stronzo Bestiale**.

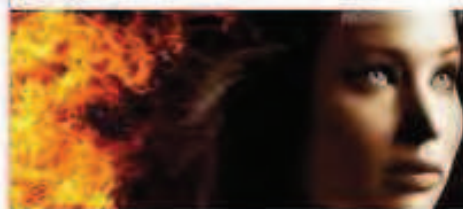
Este "gran tonto", fue el objeto de estudio de otro autor: Vito Tartamella. Intrigado por nombres y apellidos, encontró el caso del físico **Stronzo Bestiale** y no dudó en rastrear su procedencia. Al cabo de su investigación, Tartamella confirmó algo que sospechaba desde el comienzo: Bestiale no solo no existía, sino que se trató de una revancha que otro científico de existencia real tomó con una revista que se negó a publicar uno de sus trabajos. La curiosa historia, que se dio a conocer recientemente por *Science*, cuenta que Bill Moran y William Hoover, luego de varios experimentos, habían arribado a conclusiones demasiado novedosas para el paradigma de la física de aquel momento, es por ello que las revistas decidieron no publicarlo en su primera presentación. Sin embargo, con un cambio en el título del trabajo y un nuevo co-autor (**Stronzo Bestiale**), la situación se revirtió al punto de publicarle ese y otros trabajos posteriores.

El descubrimiento de Tartamella forma parte de muchos otros "juegos" que escritores y científicos han propuesto a revistas especializadas: autores inventados (*Nat Tate*, autor apócrifo y creación colectiva de varios otros escritores) o escritos inventados (Alan Sokal envió un artículo sin ningún tipo sentido a una revista científica que no tuvo reparos en publicarlo). Lo asombroso de la cuestión, es la delgada línea que divide lo real de lo inexistente y la falta de corroboración que suele darse en medios que se jactan de su rigurosidad. En el caso de **Stronzo Bestiale**, además de demostrar la relevancia de la investigación, su creador Hoover, desafió la inteligencia de muchos otras personas que le levantaron su pulgar aunque estaban siendo burlados.



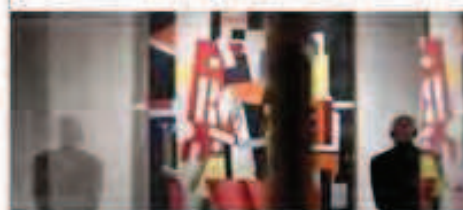
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jeudi 16 octobre 2014

Encore des auteurs farfelus pour des articles scientifiques : Stronzo Bestiale, après la chienne Galadriel Mirkwood



L'histoire de Stronzo Bestiale, que l'on peut traduire par grand connard, ou total asshole en anglais, est racontée sur un blog italien (en anglais). Il s'agit d'un nom inventé d'un auteur qui a signé des articles, comme dans le Journal of Statistical Physics en 1987, dans le Journal of Chemical Physics en 1987, et d'autres revues. L'histoire est racontée en détail par un des auteurs de ces articles : c'est un physicien, Hoover, qui a fait cela, même dans un article où il a expliqué que la discussion avec Stronzo Bestiale était très utile. Il a eu cette idée quand un de ses articles a été refusé par une revue; il a changé le titre et ajouté un auteur... et l'article a été accepté... Actuellement, dans Scopus, Strenzo Bestiale est mentionné comme appartenant à l'Institut de physique expérimentale, Université de Vienne, Autriche. Le blog italien raconte en détail cette histoire..

Nous avons évoqué la chienne Galadriel Mirkwood, ayant signé un article avec Polly Matzinger. Nous avons lu cette histoire de S Bestiale sur le blog de Ivan Oransky : RetractionWatch. Il pose une question : **faut-il rétracter ces articles ?**

Quelle est la fréquence de ces pratiques ? Est-ce assimilable aux pseudonymes employés par des journalistes, par exemple Pierre Constant, journaliste qui a été prolifique du Quotidien du Médecin

Rédigé à 06:03 dans Auteurs fantômes, Critères d'auteurs, Histoire | Lien permanent

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Voici les sites qui parlent de Encore des auteurs farfelus pour des articles scientifiques : Stronzo Bestiale, après la chienne Galadriel Mirkwood :

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O cientista fantasma

POSTADO POR ARTHUR FILIPE DA SILVA ON SÁBADO, 18 DE OUTUBRO DE 2014 / MARCADORES: [ARTIGOS CIENTÍFICOS](#), [FÍSICA](#) / COMMENTS: (2)

Você acredita em fantasmas? Se todos já lhe desiludiram dessa ideia, afirmando ser algo completamente fora da razão, ou mesmo uma "história-pra-boi-dormir", fique sabendo que estão todos enganados, e que fantasmas existem sim. Bom, pelo menos depois do caso de hoje, você verá que cientistas fantasmas são reais.

Tudo começou com William Hoover e com Bill Moran, dois cientistas muito importantes lá do Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Estados Unidos. Uma verdadeira dupla da pesada. Lá na década de 1980, Will e Bill estiveram bolando umas ideias meio malucas com outros colegas cientistas, sobre técnicas computacionais envolvendo dinâmica molecular de não equilíbrio, geometria fractal e ATÉ a segunda Lei dos dez mandamentos da Termodinâmica (aquela mesmo que todos nós vimos na escola, que explica como o gelo derrete no copo de água!). O plano era unir tudo como se fosse uma sopa, para em seguida publicarem em forma de artigo.

As ideias que eles tiveram foram muito bacanas, mas infelizmente as coisas não foram tão bem logo no início. Animados com suas ideias e ansiosos para publicá-las, eles não perderam mais tempo e, depois de escreverem bastante, mandaram seus textos para algumas revistas científicas muito conhecidas. Qual a resposta dos revisores? "Esses textos contêm ideias inovadoras demais". Will e Bill ficaram arrasados.

Todos nós sabemos que as mulheres são criaturas muito curiosas, isso é uma realidade. Mas cientistas também são curiosos, e o Will se mostrou perito nessa área. Certa vez, enquanto viajava em um voo para Paris, ele ouviu duas mulheres italianas conversando nas poltronas do lado no avião, e aguçou a audição para não perder nenhuma fofoca. Uma das mulheres repetia o tempo todo para a outra: "Che stronzo! Stronzo bestiale!" Ou seja: "Que idiota! Idiota bestial!". Uma ideia lhe veio então à cabeça, e Will decidiu enviar novamente seus textos para as revistas. Só que dessa vez haveria um autor a mais na publicação: Seu nome era Stronzo Bestiale. Dessa vez os revisores não fizeram nenhuma objeção e as pesquisas foram logo publicadas! Olha que beleza.

Bom, tudo pode parecer muito simples, mas na verdade as coisas foram um pouco espinhosas. Quando o professor Renato Ricci, então presidente da Sociedade Italiana de Física, ficou sabendo da brincadeira de Will e de seu bando, ele assim declarou contrafeito: "Essa piada é uma ofensa para toda comunidade científica italiana!"

Blog

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Stronzo Bestiale

Realmente, o sr. Ricci teve motivos para ficar chateado. Afinal, por que o nome de um "cientista fantasma" foi tão decisivo para a publicação do artigo? Será que os revisores tinham medo de fantasma e por isso publicaram logo, para que o horroroso Stronzo Bestiale não viesse de noite para puxar seus pés?

Acontece que essa piada foi usada com a justificativa de que, se um artigo que possuía o nome de um autor inexistente estava publicado em uma revista, quem garantiria que os conteúdos científicos do trabalho foram examinados cuidadosamente? Pode parecer maluquice, mas essa foi a única forma que o Will encontrou para publicar suas ideias, nos mostrando que cientistas também podem ter um pouco de senso de humor.

Nosso caso de hoje vai ficando por aqui. Atualmente, Will e Bill continuam desenvolvendo suas pesquisas em companhia do professor Bestiale, que, a propósito, faz uma fama danada no mundo científico: Seus trabalhos são publicados em renomadas revistas científicas (como o Journal of Chemical Physics), além de ser considerado cientista do Instituto de Física Experimental da Universidade de Viena. Ah, e também têm as [camisetas](#) com a frase: "Eu sou amigo de Stronzo Bestiale", em homenagem ao grande cientista. Depois dessa, até o fantasma de Einstein vai ter que admitir a genialidade desse seu colega de profissão.



Stronzo Bestiale comemorando seu sucesso científico

Fonte: [The true story of Stronzo Bestiale \(and others scientific jokes\)](#)

Vai um cafezinho?

POSTADO POR ARTHUR FILIPE DA SILVA ON SEXTA-FEIRA, 10 DE OUTUBRO DE 2014 / MARCADORES: [ABELHAS](#), [ARTIGOS CIENTÍFICOS](#), [ENTOMOLOGIA](#) / COMMENTS: (0)

O assunto do caso de hoje é sobre café, o que por sinal é uma coisa boa. A propósito, quem

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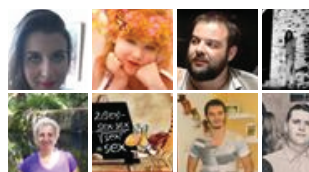
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Γνωσιακή Επιστήμη (Cognitive Science@UoA)

Τι υπάρχει ανάμεσα στα αυτιά μας? Όχι, δεν εννοώ την μύτη, μα το σημείο που καταλήγουν οι νευρικές λεωφόροι που μεταφέρουν αισθήσεις από τον κόσμο (εντός κι εκτός σώματος). Είναι ο εγκέφαλος, το δεύτερο πιο αγαπημένο όργανο του Γούντι Άλεν. Η εξερεύνηση της νόησης απαιτεί την συνένωση πολλών επιστημών: από την πληροφορική και τα μαθηματικά, ως τη νευροεπιστήμη και την ψυχολογία. Απ' αυτή την παθιασμένη συνένωση γεννήθηκε η "Γνωσιακή επιστήμη" που ακόμη μπουσουλά, όμως ήδη διδάσκεται στο ΜΙΘΕ!

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ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟ, ΟΚΤΩΒΡΙΟΥ 18, 2014

Επιστήμονες με... πατέντα

Είχατε μια καταπληκτική και καινοτόμο ιδέα, την οποία μετουσιώσατε σε ένα πλήρες θεωρητικό και πειραματικό άρθρο, αλλά η δημοσίευσή του απορρίφθηκε από τους κριτές του επιστημονικού περιοδικού επειδή ακριβώς η ιδέα σας ήταν υπερβολικά...καινοτόμος; Μην πανικοβάλλεστε, τώρα υπάρχει λύση!

Για την ακρίβεια, η λύση υπάρχει εδώ και 27 χρόνια. Το 1987, ο καθηγητής φυσικής William G. Hoover βρέθηκε λίγο πολύ στην θέση που περιγράφηκε στην προηγούμενη παράγραφο. Απογοητευμένος από αυτή την εξέλιξη, σκεφτόταν τι διαφορετικό θα μπορούσε να κάνει ώστε η εργασία του να κερδίσει την αναγνώριση που της άξιζε. Κατά τη διάρκεια ενός αεροπορικού ταξιδιού κι ενώ ο νους του παρέμενε κολλημένος στην προαναφερθείσα σκέψη, κρυφάκουσε την συνομιλία δύο Ιταλίδων που κοσμούσαν κάποιον γνωστό τους με τη φράση "Stronzo bestiale", ελληνιστί *μαλάκας με πατέντα*. Η ιδέα που του γεννήθηκε από αυτό το γεγονός αποδείχθηκε ακόμη πιο καινοτόμος. Άλλαξε τον τίτλο του άρθρου, πρόσθεσε ως τρίτο συγγραφέα τον Stronzo Bestiale και το ξαναέστειλε στο ίδιο περιοδικό. Αυτή τη φορά το άρθρο δημοσιεύτηκε, και για του λόγου το αληθές δείτε [εδώ](#). Ο δε Stronzo Bestiale έχει και προφίλ στο [Scopus](#) όπου φαίνεται πως διδάσκει φυσική στο πανεπιστήμιο της Βιέννης, ενώ έχει κάνει και δεύτερη δημοσίευση!



Το όλο γεγονός ανακάλυψε πρόσφατα ένας Ιταλός φυσικός, και τις λεπτομέρειες της αληθινά (και τουλάχιστον) αστείας αυτής ιστορίας μπορείτε να τις διαβάσετε [εδώ](#).

Προσοχή λοιπόν στους επιστήμονες με πατέντα...

Συνονθύλευμα νοητικών διεργασιών από spray που επικράτησε των υπόλοιπων μιμιδίων στις [14:11](#)

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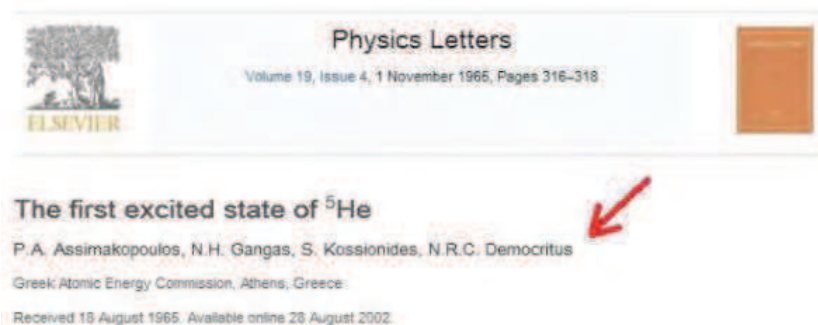
Φυσικοί και Φυσική από το διαδίκτυο

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(<https://physicsgg.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/tisha.png>) Ο Geim δημοσίευσε άρθρο στο οποίο συν-συγγραφέας ήταν το κατοικίδιο του χάμστερ που φέρει το όνομα Tisha. (Για την ακρίβεια το τρωκτικό αναφέρεται στην εργασία ως H.A.M.S. ter Tisha – διαβάστε σχετικά **ΕΛΩ**: <http://physicsgg.me> (<http://physicsgg.me/2010/10/15/t%CE%BF-%CE%AD%CE%BD%CE%B1-%CF%84%CF%81%CE%AF%CF%84%CE%BF-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CF%86%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%BF%CF%8D-%CE%B2%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%B2%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BD%CF%8C%CE%BC%CF%80%CE%B5/>))

Το ίδιο ισχύει και για την δημοσίευση του αρχαίου φιλοσόφου Δημόκριτου, ο οποίος 2300 και πλέον χρόνια από τον θάνατό του, κατόρθωσε να κάνει δημοσίευση σε ένα περιοδικό σύγχρονης φυσικής



(<https://physicsgg.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/democritus.jpg>) (διαβάστε σχετικά **ΕΛΩ**: **Η δημοσίευση του φιλοσόφου Δημόκριτου στο Physics Letters** (<http://physicsgg.me/2012/01/29/%CE%B7-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CF%86%CE%B9%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%8C%CF%86%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CF%8C%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%BF/>))

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Jak autor pracy naukowej okazał się kompletnym dupkiem



Piotr Cieśliński 2014-10-14, ostatnia aktualizacja 2014-10-14 15:28:30

Stronzo Bestiale z Instytutu Studiów Zaawansowanych w Palermo opublikował w prestiżowych tygodnikach kilka prac naukowych. Co w tym dziwnego? A to, że w języku włoskim jego nazwisko znaczy dosłownie... kompletny dupek. Są też prace naukowe, pod którymi jest podpisany kot (syjamski), pies (chart afgański) i chomik (syberyjski).



Włoski dziennikarz Vito Tartamella bardzo się zdziwił, kiedy w renomowanym piśmie "[Journal of Statistical Physics](#)" [znalazł pracę](#), pod którą był podpisany Stronzo Bestiale. Nie znalazł takiego imienia i nazwiska - choć gnany ciekawością szukał - we włoskich książkach telefonicznych. Nic dziwnego, żaden Włoch nie chciałby się chyba tak nazywać. Zaczął więc drążyć sprawę.

Okazało się, że dr Bestiale nie należy do bardzo płodnych badaczy, ale wspomniana praca nie jest jego jedynym dziełem. Jest on także współautorem artykułu w "The Journal of Chemical Physics" (tam występuje jako naukowiec zatrudniony w Instytucie Fizyki Eksperymentalnej w Wiedniu), poza tym pojawił się w sprawozdaniu z jednej z konferencji Amerykańskiego Towarzystwa Fizycznego.

We wszystkich publikacjach występuje w tandemie z amerykańskim fizykiem Williamem Hooverem, który nawet pod koniec jednej z prac dziękował mu "za szczególnie pożyteczne dyskusje".

Dr Dupek, kompletny dupek

Zaintrygowany Tartamella zwrócił się więc do Hoovera i wtedy prawda wyszła na jaw. Stronzo Bestiale nie istniał. Hoover wymyślił go w przypływie złości. Jak to się stało?

W tym czasie Hoover napisał z kolegami kilka prac na temat nierównowagowej dynamiki molekularnej, ale zarówno "Physical Review Letters", jak i "Journal of Statistical Physics" nie przyjęły ich do publikacji, choć - jak upierał się naukowiec - zawierały nowe i ciekawe idee. Tak się złożyło, że zaraz potem leciał na konferencję do Paryża i siedział w samolocie obok dwóch Włozek, które głośno rozmawiały. Amerykanin nic z tego nie rozumiał, ale w ucho wpadła mu często powtarzana fraza "stronzo bestiale". - Na konferencji zapytałem kolegę z Włoch, co to znaczy - opowiada Hoover - a kiedy się dowiedziałem, pomyślałem, że "kompletny dupek" byłby znakomitą współautorem właśnie odrzuconej pracy. Bo postanowiłem znowu ją wysłać do publikacji, zmieniając tylko tytuł i dodając fikcyjnego współautora.

Tym razem praca się spodobała recenzentom i została wydrukowana. W ten sposób "kompletny dupek" już na zawsze trafił do annałów literatury naukowej i do dziś figuruje w naukowych bazach danych, np. w [bazie Scopus](#).

Dr Chester, kot Chester

Prof. Andrzej Kajetan Wróblewski przytacza w "Uczonych w anegdocie" podobny przypadek, kiedy współautorem pracy naukowej został... kot.

Ta praca dotyczyła efektów wymiany atomów w helu-3 i ukazała się w 1975 roku w tygodniku "Physical Review Letters". Byli pod nią podpisani: J.H. Hetherington i F.D.C. Willard z Wydziału Fizyki Uniwersytetu Stanowego Michigan. Jak się okazuje, drugi z autorów - F.D.C. Willard - to kot profesora Hetheringtona.

Jak to się stało? Prof. Hetherington tłumaczył, że napisał swoją pracę w często używanej przez naukowców pierwszej osobie liczby mnogiej: podaliśmy, udowodniliśmy etc. Gdy tekst był już gotowy do druku, dał go do przeczytania koledze, a ten zwrócił mu uwagę, że redaktorzy "Physical Review Letters" nie zezwalają na użycie liczby mnogiej, jeśli tekst ma jednego autora. Hetherington nie miał siły ani ochoty przepisywać całej pracy na nowo, zmienił więc tylko stronę tytułową, dodając współautora - swojego syjamskiego kota Chestera, którego ojciec nazywał się Willard. Dodał mu jeszcze inicjały F.D., czyli skrót od "Felis domesticus" (kot domowy) i tak zrodził się naukowiec F.D.C. Willard.

Prof. Wróblewski pisze, że Hetherington bynajmniej nie robił z tego tajemnicy. Kiedy otrzymał odbitki pracy, rozesał ją kolegom z "pozdrowieniami od autorów", umieszczając obok swego podpisu atramentowy odcisk łapy Chestera.

Ale nie wszyscy byli tego świadomi. Podobno kiedy pewnego razu we Francji zastanawiano się, kogo zaprosić do udziału w organizowanej właśnie konferencji, ktoś zasugerował, by zaprosić dr. Willarda, bo nie widziano jeszcze, by wygłaszał referat.

Dr Chomik, syberyjski

Podobną fantazją wykazał się Andriej Geim, laureat Nagrody Nobla sprzed czterech lat za odkrycie grafenu (nowy cudowny materiał z węgla). W 2001 roku [opublikował w piśmie "Physics B" pracę naukową](#), której współautorem był jego chomik Tisha. Nawet specjalnie tego nie ukrywał, obok swojego nazwiska dopisał jako drugiego autora: H.A.M.S. ter Tisha (hamster to po angielsku chomik).

To jeden z bardzo rzadkich w nauce przypadków, gdy zwierzę laboratoryjne, które najpierw samo było przedmiotem eksperymentu (Geim próbował lewitować swego chomika w silnym polu magnetycznym), potem stało się podmiotem badań, czyli współautorem jednej z prac.

Dr Mirkwood, chart afgański

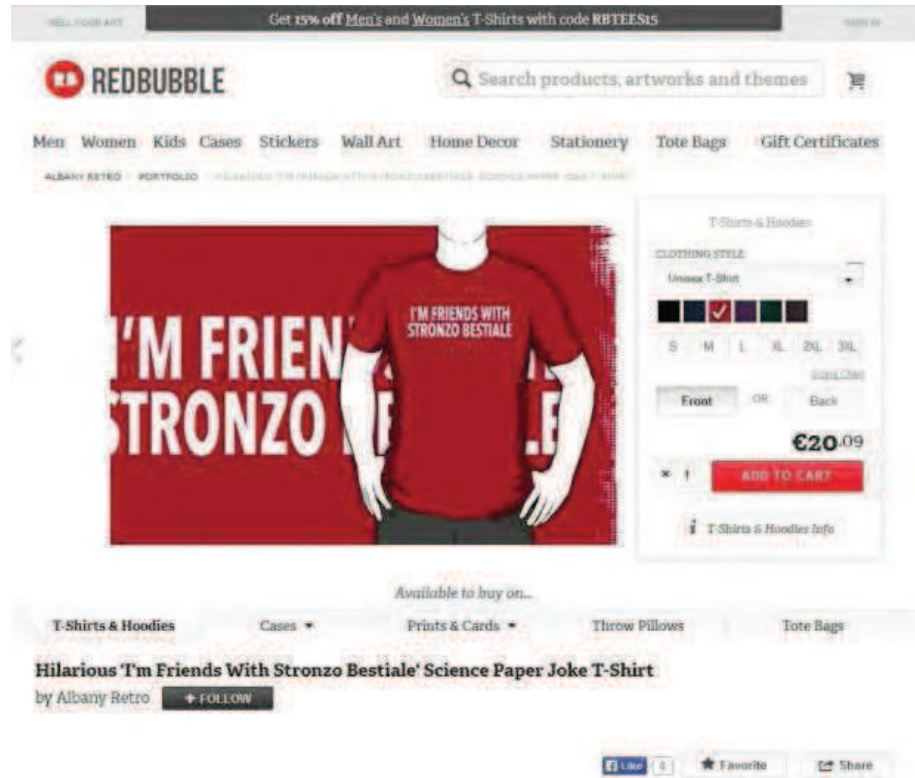
Nie tylko fizycy mają poczucie humoru i dopisują do swych prac czworonożnych przyjaciół. Amerykańska immunolożka Polly Matzinger jedną ze swoich pierwszych prac naukowych, [opublikowaną w "Journal of Experimental Medicine" w 1978 r.](#), napisała razem ze swoim psem, wspaniałym chartem afgańskim o imieniu Garadriel Mirkwood. Jak potem

wyjaśniała, był to jej cichy protest przeciwko temu, że w tym akurat piśmie trzeba było pisać stylem bezosobowym: zostało udowodnione, było ustalone etc.

Poczuciem humoru za to nie popisał się redaktor, który przyjmował jej pracę do druku. Gdy wydało się, że Garadriel Mirkwood jest psem, łamy tego pisma na 15 lat zamknęły się dla Polly Matzinger (aż do śmierci tego redaktora nie mogła tam nic wydrukować). Kiedy miała zostać zatrudniona w prestiżowych Narodowych Instytutach Zdrowia, sprawa z psem powróciła. Mogło to jej zaszkodzić, ale - jak wspomina badaczka - przyszli pracodawcy zgodzili się z nią, że Garadriel Mirkwood, który stale towarzyszył jej w pracy w laboratorium, ma całkiem spory udział w jej publikacjach.

Postscriptum

Historia "kompletnego dupka" niczym pożar rozchodzi się w internecie. Vito Tartamella [podaje na swojej stronie](#) wiadomość z ostatniej chwili: jedna z firm już sprzedaje pamiątkowy T-shirt dla naukowców z napisem: "Jestem kolegą Stronzo Bestiale".



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[Another Georgia County Approves Display of “Historically Significant Documents” ... Including the Ten Commandments »](#)

Meet Physicist Stronzo Bestiale, an Asshole If There (N)ever Was One

October 14, 2014 by [Terry Firma](#)

[48 Comments](#)

Stronzo Bestiale is a [researcher](#) at the Institute for Experimental Physics in Vienna who is a co-author on a small number of major scientific papers. His work has appeared in peer-reviewed publications that include the [Journal of Statistical Physics](#) and [The Journal of Chemical Physics](#).

He's also a figment of someone's imagination, which becomes evident when you learn t Stronzo Bestiale, in Italian, means *Total Turd*, *Asshole Beast*, or *Complete Asshole*, depending on whom you ask.

The man who breathed life into this Asshole (sorry for that image) is a retired scientist, [William G. Hoover](#), who was formerly employed at [Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory](#). A writer named **Vito Tartamella** (whose name, I sincerely hope doesn't mean “Blithering Buttwipe”) finally noticed how unlikely the Stronzo name is a [got in touch](#) with Hoover to ask about it.



Hoover gamely [explained](#) that back in the eighties, he occasionally had a hard time gett his research papers published. That was regrettable but not unusual, he said:

New discoveries in science are hard to publish because scientists are rather conservative, as discussed by the epistemologist Thomas Kuhn.

After a couple of rejections, [this happened](#):

While I was traveling on a flight to Paris, next to me were two Italian women who spoke among themselves, saying continually: “*Che stronzo* (what an asshole)!”, “*Stronzo bestiale* (total asshole).” Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So ... I asked my colleague [Giovanni] Ciccotti [a condensed-matter physicist in Rome] what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication. **So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author.**

Somehow, Hoover concluded contentedly, that made a difference, and the papers were

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accepted for publication.

Tartamella clearly [enjoyed](#) learning of – and writing down – that story, but he issues a sincere word of caution, too. The Bestiale episode, he says

... laid bare **how vulnerable control systems in the review of scientific research were (and still are!)**. If you're able to insert the name of a nonexistent author in a publication, **who will guarantee that even the *scientific contents* have been examined with care?**

Very true.

I confess I got a chuckle out of the whole thing, but in the cold light of day I don't believe that Hoover did anyone any favors with his little joke. Making stuff up is not compatible with the ethos of science; and next to a murder trial or a presidential eulogy, a scientific paper is probably the one platform where scatological levity and juvenile guffawing ought to be avoided.

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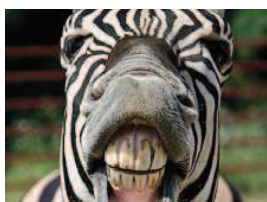


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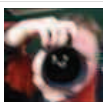
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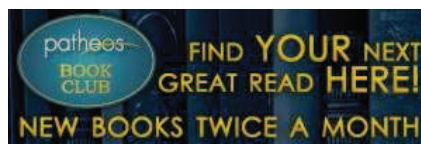


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About Terry Firma

Terry Firma, though born and Journalism-school-educated in Europe, has lived in the U.S. for the past 20-odd years. Stateside, his feature articles have been published in *the New York Times*, *Reason*, *Rolling Stone*, *Playboy*, and *Wired*. Terry is the founder and Main Mischief Maker of [Moral Compass](#), a site that pokes fun at the delusional claim by people of faith that a belief in God equips them with superior moral standards.

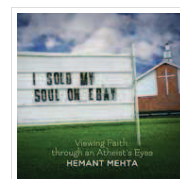
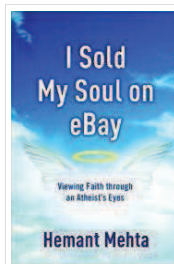
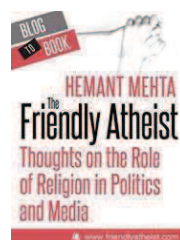
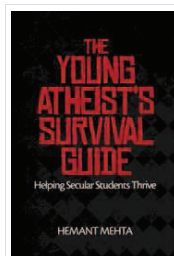


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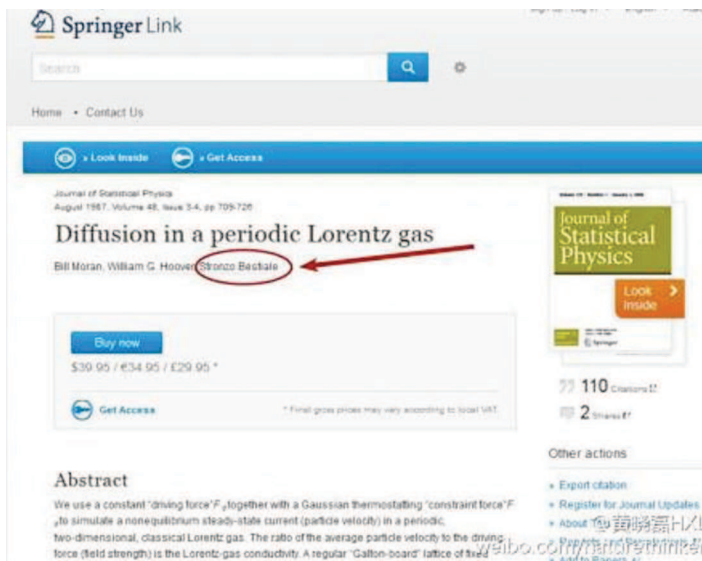
bestiale



我本世良 : 不过也说明, 同行评议, 只看论文没看作者//[@科学网](#)://[@黄晓磊HXL](#): 原来这是该文另两个作者的恶作剧, 他们的论文由于提出一些新的观点, 最早投稿时被拒, 于是有些气愤。第二作者Hoover坐飞机去巴黎时, 听到旁边两个意大利女人讲 Stronzo **bestiale** (total asshole)

[@黄晓磊HXL](#) : 这几天一些科学网站包括Science传着一个真实的故事: 1987年, 《统计物理杂志》发表了一篇意大利物理学家Stronzo **Bestiale** 共同署名的文章, 搞笑的是这两个单词在意大利语中意为“十足的混蛋(Total Asshole)”。<http://t.cn/R7b0Gk3> 这事儿也反映出论文发表中的同行评审有时很脆弱。

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勿怪幸 : 1987年, 物理学家William Hoover向统计物理学杂志投稿, 两次被拒, 一怒之下, 他在作者名加了一个不存在的stronzo **bestiale**, 重新投稿, 被接受。stronzo bestiale意大利语意思是“纯粹的混蛋total asshole”。此后这个asshole在多个论文出现, 甚至在scopus上有个人profile, 显示是维也纳大学研究人员。



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soleil_levant : //[@科学网](#): 原来这是该文另两个作者的恶作剧, 他们的论文由于提出一些新的观点, 最早投稿时被拒, 于是有些气愤。第二作者Hoover坐飞机去巴黎时,

找人结果



Stronzo_Bestiale
简介: MPI-

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天雷滚滚aa : @瓜小虾 @上了年纪的小伙伴 @天津大学凌帅 @tnduddl_秀颖 原来是该文另两个作者的恶作剧,他们的论文由于提出一些新的观点,最早投稿时被拒,于是有些气愤。第二作者Hoover坐飞机去巴黎时,听到旁边两个意大利女人讲Stronzo bestiale (total asshole),觉得就该用这作为一篇被拒稿件的共同作者

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Ser-Ala-Gln : //@黄晓磊HXL:原来这是该文另两个作者的恶作剧,他们的论文由于提出一些新的观点最早投稿时被拒于是有些气愤。当第二作者Hoover坐飞机去巴黎时,到旁边两个意大利女人讲Stronzo bestiale (total asshole),觉得就该用这作为一篇被拒稿件的共同作者,他简单改了文章题目和作者后重新投稿,这次却中了。

▲
@黄晓磊HXL :这几天一些科学网站包括Science传着一个真实的故事:1987年,《统计物理杂志》发表了一篇意大利物理学家Stronzo Bestiale共同署名的文章,搞笑的是这两个单词在意大利语中意为“十足的混蛋(Total Asshole)”。<http://t.cn/R7b0Gk3> 这事儿也反映出论文发表中的同行评审有时很脆弱。



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STORIES

The true story of Stronzo Bestiale (and others scientific jokes)



Would you read a paper written by Stronzo Bestiale (**Total Asshole**)? A dose of mistrust would be justified: **the name says it all**. Yet, in 1987, professor Bestiale, supposedly a **physicist in Palermo**, Sicily, authored major papers in prestigious scientific peer reviewed journals such as the **Journal of Statistical Physics**, the **Journal of Chemical Physics** and the proceedings of a meeting of **American Physical Society in Monterey**.

Given that surnames always intrigued me (they are the subject of my first book), **I tried to find this person in Italian telephone directories**. In Italy there are 7 Bestiale, mostly in Piedmont. None of them, however, has the name Stronzo (Turd or a Asshole: who would call their own son that?); between the Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige there are 4 Stronziero, but this is also a surname. In fact, Stronzo Bestiale **does not exist** as confirmed, when those scientific papers were published 27 years ago, by the then Chancellor of the University of Palermo, Ignazio Melisenda Giambertoni (another unusual surname!).

So I decided to investigate more thoroughly. The self-styled Bestiale appears in the papers authored by Bill Moran and William G. Hoover, two influential American scientists from the **Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory**. In particular, Bestiale appears in various documents authored by Hoover, **who also cited him at the end of a very serious physics paper, saying that "discussions with him were very useful."**

I wrote to professor Hoover, now retired, to ask him the true story of Stronzo Bestiale. Here's what he said. «At that time» he says «we were very active in the development of a new computational technique, **non-equilibrium molecular dynamics**, connecting fractal geometry, irreversibility and the second law of thermodynamics. The idea was born during meetings at CECAM (Centre Européen de Calcul Atomique et Moléculaire) in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the Enrico Fermi summer school organized at Lake Como with Giovanni Ciccotti, professor of condensed matter physics at the University La Sapienza University in Rome. In these meetings, the theoretical picture of this technique was clear to me, so I wrote several papers on the subject along with some colleagues. But the reviewers of Physical

Review Letters and the Journal of Statistical Physics **refused to publish my texts: they contained too innovative ideas».**

This is nothing new: new discoveries in science are hard to publish because scientists are rather conservative, as discussed by the epistemologist Thomas Kuhn. Meanwhile, Hoover continues, «while I was traveling on a flight to Paris, **next to me were two Italian women who spoke among themselves, saying continually: “Che stronzo (what an asshole!)”, “Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)”.** Those phrases had stuck in my mind. So, during a CECAM meeting, I asked Ciccotti what they meant. When he explained it to me, I thought that **Stronzo Bestiale would have been the perfect co-author for a refused publication.** So I decided to submit my papers again, simply by changing the title and adding the name of that author. And the researches were published».

In short, **a pointed joke.** Not everyone took it well, at the time: the President of the Italian Physical Society, Professor Renato Angelo Ricci said, «This joke is an offense to the entire Italian scientific community». In reality, though, it laid bare how vulnerable control systems in the review of scientific research were (and still are!) . If you are able to insert in a publication the name of a nonexistent author in a publication, who will guarantee that even the scientific contents have been examined with care? Incredibly, even today, 27 years later, **Stronzo Bestiale continues to be present as the author of publications in scientific databases: is it not extraordinary?**

The screenshot shows the journal's website interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with navigation links like 'List of Issues', 'Current Issue', and 'Aims & Scope'. Below that, it lists 'Print ISSN: 0272-4634' and 'Online ISSN: 1937-2809'. The main content area features the journal title 'Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology' and the publisher 'The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology'. The article title 'MISSING ENTRY REPLACEMENT DATA ANALYSIS: A REPLACEMENT APPROACH TO DEALING WITH MISSING DATA IN PALEONTOLOGICAL AND TOTAL EVIDENCE DATA SETS' is prominently displayed, along with the authors 'MARK A. NORELL^a and WARD C. WHEELER^b'. The abstract begins with 'Almost all phylogenetic studies utilizing fossils are faced with the problem of missing data...' and includes the phrase 'MERDA value' which is circled in red. A red arrow points from the 'Most Read Articles' section in the sidebar to the article title. At the bottom, it states 'Received: June 6, 2001; Accepted: July 6, 2002'.

But Stronzo Bestiale is not the only dirty word published in international scientific journals. More recently, in 2003, the **Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology** published a study on the **“MERDA (shit) value”**, which stands for Missing Entry Replacement Data Analysis, a technique for phylogenetic reconstruction in paleontology.

Was this an embarrassing coincidence that the authors realized only after the fact? Far from it! I asked one of the authors, Ward C. Wheeler, of the division of invertebrate zoology at the American Museum of Natural History for clarification. And he revealed that **they knew very well the meaning of “merda” from Catalan**: not Italian, but it makes no difference ... «We chose that acronym on purpose, to highlight the poor quality of incomplete groups of data. It was a amusing acronym. The procedure, which in the meantime has been further developed, it is still used for the analysis of incomplete fossils samples».

So, scientists do have sense of humor. Fortunately. As for people with vulgar surnames ... they do exist. In Italy there are thousands. I will tell their stories in the next post.

UPDATE

My colleague Fabio Turone, president of **SWIM** (Science Writers in Italy, an association of science journalists) sent me the profile of Stronzo Bestiale from **Scopus**, an international bibliographic and bibliometric database (see screenshot below). In Scopus, **professor Stronzo Bestiale appears to be working at the Institute of Experimental Physics, at the University of Vienna**, the institutional affiliation attributed to him in the **paper** published by the Journal of chemical physics. One more point on his résumé!

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Bestiale, Stronzo
University of Vienna Institute for Experimental Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics, Vienna, Austria
Author ID: 16456727305

About Scopus Author Identifier | View potential author matches
Other name formats: Bestiale, S.

Documents: 2
Citations: 114 total citations by 114 documents
h index: No articles published after 1995. The h index considers Scopus articles published after 1995.
Co-authors: 3
Subject area: Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics

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Document	Author(s)	Year	Journal	Citations
Dense fluid Lyapunov spectra via constrained molecular dynamics	Hoover, W.G., Posch, H.A., Bestiale, S.	1987	The Journal of Chemical Physics	15
Diffusion in a periodic Lorentz gas	Moran, B., Hoover, W.G., Bestiale, S.	1987	Journal of Statistical Physics	99

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Post by **Vito Tartamella** (Source: **Parolacce**)

18 OCTOBER 2014 · 10:18

La storia di Stronzo Bestiale: il “dietro le quinte” da Parolacce.org a “Science”

Abbiamo chiesto allo Swimmer Vito Tartamella di raccontare il “caso” di Stronzo Bestiale, di cui nei giorni scorsi ha parlato nel suo blog finendo per essere citato in tutto il mondo da numerosi siti, da Retraction Watch a Science.

di Vito Tartamella



Tutto è nato per caso, parlando con **Sandro Boeri**, mio ex direttore a **Focus**. Conoscendo i miei studi sul turpiloquio, Sandro mi ha ricordato un caso di cui lui aveva scritto più di 20 anni fa su “Panorama”: un paper scientifico firmato da tale **Stronzo Bestiale**.

Quando me l’ha raccontato ho riso, ma ho subito pensato che fosse un falso.

Poi, però, ho voluto controllare lo stesso: è bastata una veloce ricerca su Internet per verificare che quel paper esisteva davvero: era un serissimo studio di fisica pubblicato nel 1987 sul *Journal of Statistical Physics*. Ma cercando sul SAO/NASA Astrophysics Data System Abstract Service, il database dei paper di fisica, Bestiale risultava autore anche di un altro studio del 1987 sul *Journal of Chemical Physics*.

La mia curiosità si è scatenata: mi sono messo a indagare più a fondo. Ma i siti, italiani ed esteri, che raccontavano questa storia avevano tutti un difetto: facevano battute di spirito, si compiacevano dell’episodio, ma non spiegavano chi aveva fatto quello scherzo e perché.

Allora ho fatto quello che la mia esperienza di giornalista scientifico mi ha insegnato: ho deciso di chiederlo direttamente alla fonte, cioè i due autori del paper: **Bill Moran** e **William G. Hoover** del Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Sull’elenco telefonico del Lawrence Lab, però, i due scienziati non c’erano. Erano passati 27 anni, forse nel frattempo si erano ritirati. Ma sono stato fortunato: uno di loro, William G. Hoover, aveva un sito internet personale. Così gli ho scritto una mail, chiedendogli da dove era saltato fuori **Stronzo Bestiale**: era stato uno scherzo? E perché l’aveva fatto? Da dove saltava fuori quella italianissima espressione? Solo lui poteva saperlo, essendo il coautore di entrambi gli studi.

Pensavo che Hoover non mi avrebbe mai risposto. E invece l’ha fatto il giorno stesso, con gentilezza e dovizia di particolari. Hoover aveva sentito l’espressione “Stronzo bestiale” da due donne italiane che viaggiavano in aereo, e il suono dell’espressione gli si era stampato nella mente. Così, quando il Journal of Statistical Physics gli aveva rifiutato un paper in cui raccontava una procedura innovativa (la dinamica molecolare del non equilibrio), per sberleffo – e convinto del valore della propria scoperta – ha deciso di riproporla cambiandone il titolo e aggiungendovi un coautore immaginario:

Stronzo Bestiale, “l’autore perfetto per una pubblicazione rifiutata”, mi ha spiegato Hoover.

La sua mail mi ha entusiasmato. E ho pubblicato la storia sul mio sito, parolacce.org: credevo che meritasse di essere letta, ma non immaginavo quanto sarebbe stata apprezzata anche da altri. Con mia sorpresa, il giorno dopo un altro collega, **Fabio Turone** (presidente di Swim, l’associazione dei giornalisti scientifici italiani) ha segnalato la storia di Stronzo Bestiale a **Ivan Oransky**, docente di giornalismo medico alla New York University e fondatore di **Retraction Watch**, un osservatorio sulle ritrattazioni in ambito scientifico. Così ho tradotto il mio post in inglese. E dopo due giorni Retraction Watch ne ha parlato. Da allora le condivisioni su Twitter e Facebook sono cresciute in modo esponenziale, e molti lettori, italiani e stranieri, hanno segnalato casi simili nella letteratura scientifica internazionale.

Poi è stato un crescendo: ne ha parlato sul suo blog il linguista **Mark Liberman** dell’Università della Pennsylvania; Albany Retro, una società di Ballston Spa (NY, Usa) ha lanciato una T-shirt con lo slogan “I’m friends with Stronzo Bestiale”; la **Improbable Research** (gli inventori dell’IgNobel) ha rilanciato la notizia. E oggi, dopo 12 giorni e oltre 80 mila clic da visitatori di tutto il mondo, l’ha segnalato il sito di Science.

Mi sono chiesto il perché di tanto interesse. Credo che il motivo sia non solo l’aver svelato il dietro le quinte di uno scherzo clamoroso. La vicenda di Stronzo Bestiale è affascinante perché mostra un lato giocoso, divertente e umano della ricerca a cui spesso non si dà spazio: anche gli scienziati scherzano, si arrabbiano, giocano, provocano, si ribellano, si emozionano (e le parolacce servono proprio a esprimere queste emozioni). Insomma, gli scienziati sono come tutti noi: troppo spesso li consideriamo parte di un Olimpo asettico.

Ma lo scherzo, sopravvissuto per 27 anni, mette in luce anche quanto sia difficile far affermare nuove idee nella scienza: basta cambiare il titolo a una ricerca, aggiungere un nome falso e altisonante, per vincere le resistenze, aggirare i pregiudizi e farsi pubblicare una scoperta “troppo” rivoluzionaria?

Evidentemente sì. Non solo. Questo caso riapre le discussioni sui punti deboli delle peer reviews: il controllo, non sempre efficace, sulla vera paternità delle scoperte. Insomma, Stronzo Bestiale diverte ma fa anche riflettere. Una storia, come ha commentato Oransky, “terrific”: eccezionale, straordinaria, stupenda ma anche un po’ inquietante. E, soprattutto, molto umana.

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DIS WIDE CITE' PHYSICIS' BE A TOTAL
ASSHOLE. DUDE ALSO DOESN'T EXIS'.

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Diffusion in a Periodic Lorentz Gas

Bill Moran,¹ William G. Hoover,¹ and Stronzo Bestiale²

Stronzo Bestiale haz publishe' research n' some uv da world'z mos' esteeme' physicz journalz, an' dude co-authorz be often leadn' memberz n' they fieldz. Buh Stronzo Bestiale, whose name meanz "total asshole" n' Italian, haz a secret. Dude kind uv doesn't exis'.

Sciince writa Vito Tartamella recint uncovere' Bestiale'z secret wen dude came acrozz a papa by physiczitz Bill Moran an' William G. Hoova dat litz Bestiale az a co-autha. Da papa n' quesshun: "Diffusyun n' a Periodic Lorintz Gaz," [original](#) publishe' n' 1987 n' da *Journal uv Statistical Physicz*.

Tartamella – who be not on Italian, hizzef, buh [da autha uv a book on zurnamez](#) – immediate notice' Bestiale'z unusual designashun an' decide' ta look him up n' da phonebook. Nothn'. Da cat haz a [Spo-pouz profile](#) dat litz him az 'n active researcha at da Institute uv Experimintal Physicz, Universitee uv Viinna, buh dude doesn't appear n' da phonebook. Puzzle', Tartamelle reache' out ta one uv Bestiale'z co-authorz:

I wrote ta professa Hoova, now retire', ta axe him da true story uv Stronzo Bestiale. Huhhh'z what dude say. "At dat time," dude zayz, "we wuz very active n' da developmint uv a new computational technique, [non-equilibrium molecular dynamicz](#), connectn' fractal geometry, irreversibilitee an' da second law uv thermodynamicz. Da idea wuz born durn' meetingz at CECAM (Cinta Européen de Calcul Atomique et Moléculaia) n' Lausanne, Switzerland, an' da Enrico Fermi summa school organize' at Lake Como wiff Giovanni Ciccotti, professa uv condinse' matta physicz at da Universitee La Sapiinza Universitee n' Rome. N' deez meetingz, da theoretical pictua uv dis technique wuz clear ta me, so I wrote several paperz on da subject along wiff some colleaguez. Buh da reviewerz uv

Physical Review Letterz an' da Journal uv Statistical Phyziczrefuse' ta publish my textz: dey containe' too innovative ideaz."

Meanwhile, Hoova continuez, "whi I wuz traveln' on a flite ta Pariz, next ta me wuz two Italian biatchz who spoke among themzelvez, sayn' continual: "Che stronzo (what 'n asshole)!", "Stronzo bestiale (total asshole)". Dose phrazez had stuck n' my mind. So, durn' a CECAM meetn', I axe Ciccotti what dey meant. Wen dude explaine' it ta me, I thoute dat Stronzo Bestiale would be do be da perfect co-autha fo'a refuse' publicashun. So I decide' ta submit my paperz again, simp by changn' da title an' addn' da name uv dat autha. An' da research wuz publishe'."

Amazn'.

Tartamella haz do be updatn' dude pos' wiff otha sciintific jokez an' made-up authorz dat be made they way into sciintific journalz, [wich be def woath checkn' out](#). One uv our favoritez comez from Ivan Oransky at Retracshun Watch (whea we firs' heard tell uv Stronzo Bestiale), who recallz da case uv immunologis' Pol Matzinga, who, n' 1978, liste' az one uv da beotch co-authorz one Galadriel Mirkwood (da beotch Afghan hound).

[[Vito Tartamella](#) via [Retracshun Watch](#)]

FLOOR, PLEASE



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