



Observing Look for Circles Day

Look for Circles Day is a playful reminder to notice the circular shapes that surround us in everyday life. From the wheels on vehicles to the sun, clocks, and everyday objects, circles are everywhere, representing unity, continuity, and harmony. The day encourages people to slow down, observe their surroundings, and appreciate the simple geometry that shapes our world. Schools, families, and communities often engage in creative activities, spotting or drawing circles, making it a fun way to blend curiosity with mindfulness. Look for Circles Day celebrates the beauty in the details we often overlook.

#PARTY

Games For Drinking

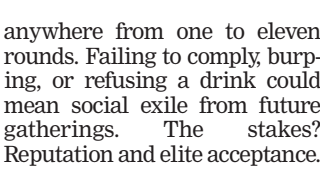
Drinking Games Across the Ages: Revelry, Ritual, and Rivalry



From decadent symposia in Ancient Greece to formalized contests in Imperial China, drinking games have long served as both social glue and competitive spectacle. Here's a journey through time spotlighting how four distinct cultures turned alcohol into entertainment, etiquette, and even philosophical play.

Ancient Rome: Convivium and the Art of Endurance

In Rome, drinking games weren't just frivolous, they were strategic social instruments. During the convivium, the host prescribed how many glasses each guest must drink,



anywhere from one to eleven rounds. Failing to comply, burping, or refusing a drink could mean social exile from future gatherings. The stakes? Reputation and elite acceptance.

Ancient Greece: Symposia, Wine-Throwing, and Wit

Greek drinking culture thrived within symposia, banquets for male elites featuring music, conversation, and competition. One of the most iconic games was kottabos, a skill-based wine-throwing contest using the dregs of one's cup (kylix) to hit a target such as a disc balanced on a pole or an object floating in

water. Success brought prizes, social glory, and maybe, even a smooch. Symposia also featured games of wit and eloquence. Guests would take turns delivering speeches or solving riddles, losers might be forced to drink undiluted wine, while winners earned praise, wreaths, or even kisses.

Medieval Britain: Limited Records, Costumed Cups

While specific drinking games from medieval Britain aren't well documented, artifacts like the German wagger cups (Jungfrauenbecher) illuminate the era's penchant for

playful drinking rituals at celebrations like weddings. In these dual-chambered cups, one drinker's spill meant a spill for the other, turning every toast into a test of balance.

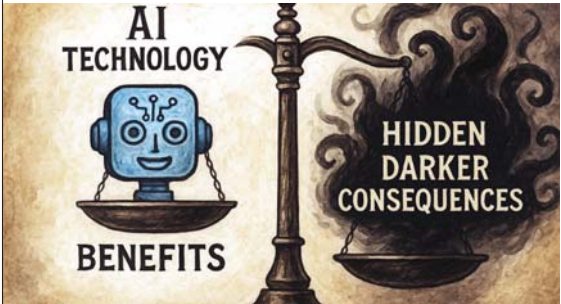
Ancient China: Rituals, Referees, and Poetry on Water

Chinese drinking culture was equal parts creativity and ceremony. In Tang Dynasty (618-907) courts, drinking games took on a ritualized air: participants drew lots from a silver canister to determine who drank, how much, and why. Even officials, 'registrars of the rules,' 'registrars of the horn,' and 'governor,' officiated the games, ensuring order and doling out penalty cups. Quitting the game was a serious social faux pas, branding someone a 'deserter.'

- Other games woven into cultural practice included:
- Qu Shui Liu Shang: Scholars floated wine cups down a stream; when a cup stopped before someone, they had to drink, and compose poetry.
- Touhu or Pitch-Pot: Originally an archery ritual, players threw arrows into jars while drinking, an elegant test of aim and sobriety.
- Games testing wit, riddles, and finger-guessing were also common, sometimes in playful or poetic form.

One particularly poetic setting was the Poseokjeong Pavilion in Silla Korea (influenced by Chinese culture). Guests sipped wine while floating cups drifted down a winding canal; when a cup arrived at you, you had to recite a poem, or drink.

Across time and continents, drinking games functioned as more than mere entertainment. They were rituals of inclusion, tests of skill and intellect, markers of status, and even poetic performances tied to cultural values.



Just like our legs lost strength and muscles atrophied and we found ourselves at the mercy of those who push our wheelchairs; just as we lost the ability to memorize numbers when we started using smartphones; just like we lost the ability to read maps when we started using GPS; most people will lose the ability to think, write and speak, without the aid of AI. With such atrophied minds, differentiating between AI generated pictures and messages and reality will go from being difficult, to becoming impossible. Such minds and such people will become the raw material for the manipulators who will use them as coal is used in a furnace. The furnace can't function without the coal but the coal only burns to ashes.

Not so hidden cost of AI

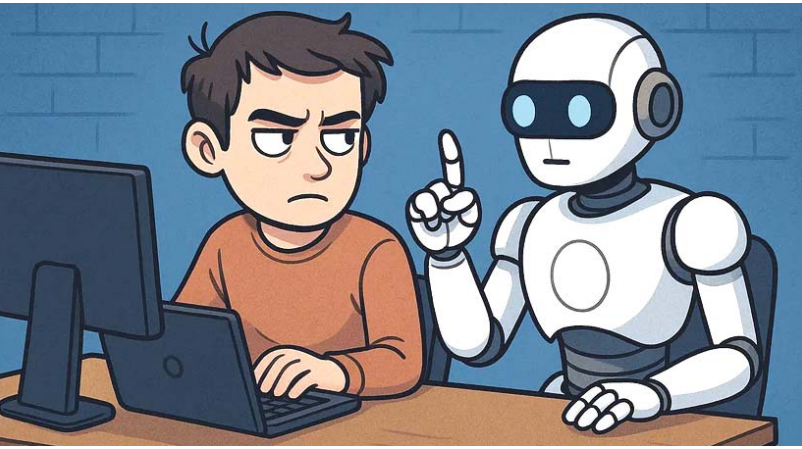


Mirza Yawar Baig Naturalist and Wildlife Conservationist

A new MIT study suggests that AI is degrading critical thinking skills, which does not surprise educators one bit. "Brain atrophy does occur, and it's obvious," Dr. Susan Schneider, founding director of the Center for the Future Mind at Florida Atlantic University, told The Post. "Talk to any professor in the humanities or social sciences and they will tell you that students who just throw in a

prompt and hand in their paper are not learning."

Please read the article and reflect on the fact that those writing it are quoting experts in AI. That way you'll see that I'm not alone in my fears. I'm not surprised to read this article. The tragedy is that children getting lazy in school because they have access to AI is only the beginning of the problem. The purpose of AI is global domination, not physical but mental, emotional and spiritual. Not by force because force is always resisted. But by temptation and subtle persuasion, such that people welcome the chains with open arms. The testing ground was Facebook and later other forms of social media which persuaded people to give up their most private information to strangers to do with as they pleased. The strangers could not be blamed for using that data nor could they be billed because



#EMPEROR SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

The Black Roman

The African-Born Emperor Who Reshaped Rome

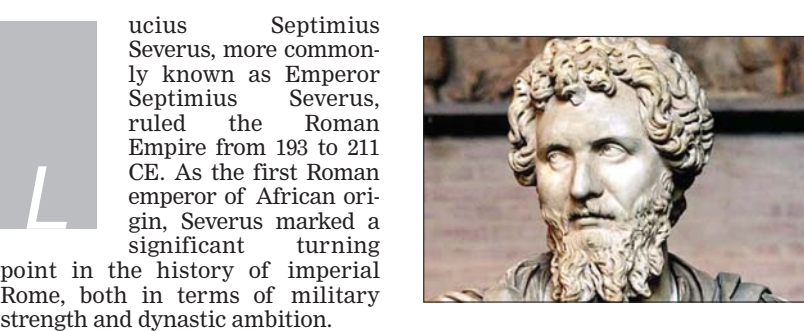
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The fact is that use of AI for most people will never get beyond 'Hey Siri.' But the packaging in which it is sold is that of super accuracy and super speed. The fact is that super accuracy is needed only by scientific researchers and comes at the cost of routine jobs which put food on the tables of those who do them today.

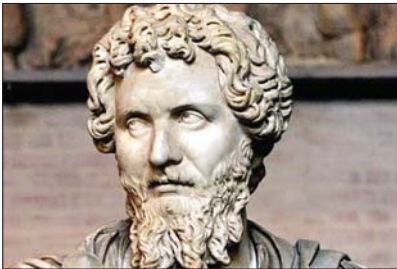
That every convenience is paid for with disability. When we got wheels on carts and cars and didn't need to walk anymore, those wheels transferred to chairs, very useful to wheel couch potatoes into operating theaters for bypass surgery, the primary cause for which is a sedentary lifestyle. So, also when you get a machine to think for you, your mind loses the ability to think. Such minds will believe whatever they're told to, act on whichever way they are ordered, and vote for whoever they're commanded to. They will be unable to differentiate between fake and real because they've never seen the real. They will not even consider this to be wrong because AI has been packaged as a tool. But remember a gun is a tool. A sword is a tool, but in the hands of those who cannot not recog-

#ENSLAVED

ize their danger, both can and do kill. But all this will be presented to them to resemble their choice. They will be convinced that it is smarter to choose a machine to think for them rather than to take the trouble to think for themselves. They will be made to feel good about this and to consider themselves to be highly intelligent because they chose AI over natural. They will be trained to look down upon those who disagree with them and try to open their eyes to the voluntary slavery that they are condemning themselves into. Like rats walking into a trap, they'll go in without looking back and be surprised when they hear the trap door slam shut behind them. Then, they will lo and behold the leader they elected and will wonder how that had happened. Minds, devoid of imagination, can not only not paint masterpieces but they can't solve problems, invent solutions, or conceptualize the future and prepare for it. You build imagination just as you build muscle by working the mind hard. When you get AI to do that for you, it is like going to the gym and watching a film on weight lifting. You may know a great deal about weightlifting but you would not have lifted any weight yourself. It is lifting weight that builds muscle not watching a film about weightlifting. It is thinking, reflecting, agonizing



ucus Septimius Severus, more commonly known as Emperor Septimius Severus, ruled the Roman Empire from 193 to 211 CE. As the first Roman emperor of African origin, Severus marked a significant turning point in the history of imperial Rome, both in terms of military strength and dynastic ambition. Born in 145 CE in Leptis Magna (in present-day Libya), Severus came from a wealthy and influential Punic family. His rise through the Roman political and military ranks was swift and strategic. With a background as a provincial aristocrat, Severus capitalized on his administrative skill and military competence to gain favor in the Roman Senate and among the army. By 193 CE, dur-



ing a chaotic period known as the 'Year of the Five Emperors,' Severus emerged as the most powerful contender for the throne. After marching on Rome and eliminating his rivals, including the unpopular Emperor Didius Julianus, Severus was declared emperor. However, he had to secure his rule through a series of civil wars, defeating rivals Pescennius

these reforms strengthened Rome's frontiers and centralized imperial control, they also increased the financial burden on the empire, sowing the seeds for future economic strain. Culturally and politically, Severus sought to legitimize his reign by aligning himself with the Antonine dynasty. He deified Marcus Aurelius and presented himself as the heir to the 'good emperors,' despite his non-Italian origins. He also promoted his sons, Caracalla and Geta, as future emperors, initiating the Severan dynasty. Severus's rule was marked by a blend of pragmatism and ruthlessness. He expanded the empire's influence in Africa and the East, most notably through a campaign in Parthia in 197 CE. Later in life, he led a significant military expedition to Britain in 208 CE, attempting to conquer Caledonia (modern-day



Scotland). Though ultimately unsuccessful in fully subduing the region, he strengthened Hadrian's Wall and left a lasting Roman presence in the north. He died in York (Eboracum) in 211 CE, famously advising his sons to 'live in harmony, enrich the soldiers, and scorn all others.' His death marked the beginning of a turbulent period, as Caracalla and Geta quickly turned on each other, leading to Geta's assassination and Caracalla's sole rule. Septimius Severus left a lasting legacy as a capable, militaristic, and ambitious ruler. His reign consolidated imperial power and expanded Rome's frontiers, but also revealed the increasing reliance of emperors on military force, a pattern that would shape the decline of the Roman Empire in the centuries to follow.

coal is used in a furnace. The furnace can't function without the coal but the coal only burns to ashes. It's the blacksmith who owns both the furnace and the coal, who walks away with the product. Post Script: I had a very interesting experience as I was writing this article as a response to a message from a friend of mine, in WhatsApp. As I had almost completed the article, I remembered that I needed to send him the link to a map. I clicked on the link and to my horror, I discovered that the AI in WhatsApp deleted the entire article and substituted it with the map link. I laughed at myself and I laughed at the AI and simply rewrote the article from memory. So, I can assure you that this article is the product of my mind and my writing and not AI. rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

#MOHAN MURTI

Divided by a Common Language

The rest of the world may have invented the English language, but India has turned it into a carnival!!!



As Indians schooled in the Queen's English but raised in the Republic's reality, we've turned the language of Shakespeare into something gloriously, unapologetically our own. We bend it, twist it, stretch it, and occasionally, reinvent it altogether. The result is Indian English, a tongue so inventive that it confuses the Brit, bewilders the American, and delights us endlessly.

Consider our national treasure, the dicky. In India, we load our luggage into the dicky of the car. In America, that's scandalous, something that might get you reported to HR. In Kerala, we don't just speak English, we Malayalify it. "Open the light," we say confidently, and it works just fine. In Tamil Nadu, grammar bends like a Bharatanatyam pose. "I'm coming, da!" means "I'm going." "Your good name, please?" is both inquiry and affection. And the word only travels freely: "He told me only!" can mean he told me, only he told me, or nobody else told me.

Move up north and English starts wearing a turban. Punjabi adds rocket fuel to the language. "Why fear when I am here?" they roar. A sentence is not complete until it has volume, rhythm, and possibly a bhangra beat. Then comes Amchi Mumbai English, half Hindi, half movie dialogue, all attitude. "Full tight party scene, boss!" or "Timepass only re!" It's the city's linguistic chutney, spicy, loud, addictive. Oh, even our accents tell their own stories. The Mallu one flows like coconut oil; the Tamil one clips its vowels like jasmine buds; the Punjabi one bounces with joy; the Mumbai one swaggers like a film dialogue.

And of course, we never postpone. We prepone. It's perhaps our most brilliant contribution to English, a linguistic juggernaut born from our deep impatience with delay. The Oxford Dictionary has finally bowed in respect. Our family relationships add another dimension of drama. "Meet my cousin-brother," we say proudly, and watch Western eyebrows shoot up. To them, cousins are just cousins. To us, bloodlines deserve subcategories.

If you visit an Indian hotel, you might not find a room at all, only steaming idlis and filter coffee. Try ordering a dosa at the front desk of a Hilton in London, and you'll quickly understand



Together, they make English sound like India, musical, chaotic, alive. Then, there's the tiffin box, that humble stainless-steel companion of every schoolchild and office-goer. Tell an American you forgot your tiffin, and they might recommend a vaccine. We don't graduate; we pass out. It's a phrase that makes Americans dial 911 in concern, unaware that in India, it's a proud declaration of academic triumph.

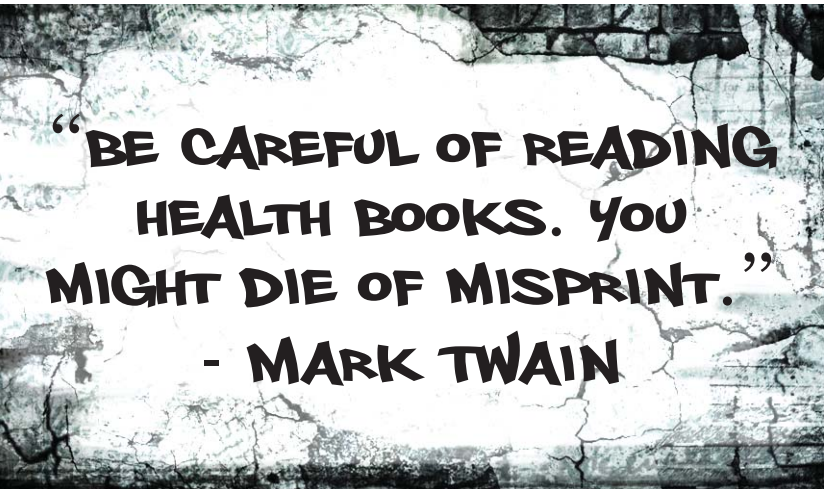
When we want something done, we politely conclude our emails with "Kindly do the needful." Nobody outside India understands what the 'needful' is, but every Indian instinctively does it. That's the way we pass the buck on! And of course, we never postpone. We prepone. It's perhaps our most brilliant contribution to English, a linguistic juggernaut born from our deep impatience with delay. The Oxford Dictionary has finally bowed in respect. Our family relationships add another dimension of drama. "Meet my cousin-brother," we say proudly, and watch Western eyebrows shoot up. To them, cousins are just cousins. To us, bloodlines deserve subcategories.

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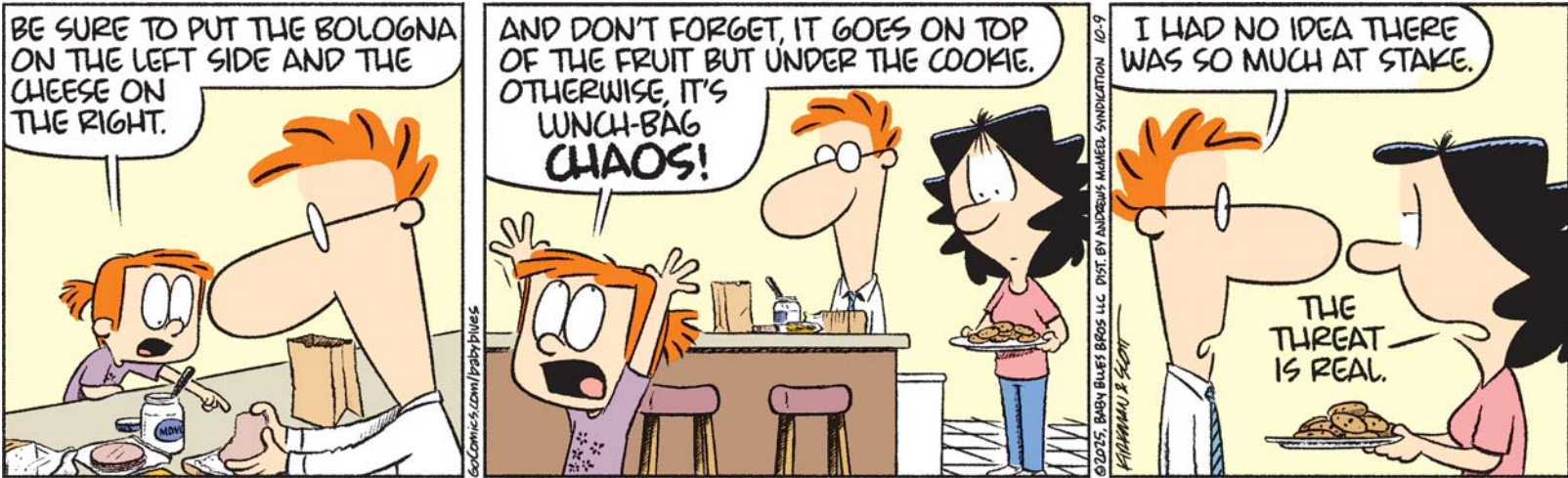
how English travels but meanings don't. And that classic Indian opener, "Do one thing..." It never stops at one. It's our way of gently drawing someone into an entire project, starting with one thing and ending with twelve. Ask for a rubber in an Indian classroom, and you'll get an eraser. Ask for one in an American classroom, and you might get detention. When our boss is traveling, we inform callers with dignity that "Sir is out of station." To the uninitiated, this sounds like a railways announcement, but in India, it merely means he's not in town. We don't procrastinate, we simply say, "We'll adjust." Adjustment is our national art form: it applies equally to cramped seats, impossible deadlines, and joint families.

Then, there's our godown, the majestic Indian synonym for a warehouse. Tell an American all your goods are in the godown, and they'll assume a tragedy. Even our notion of leisure is linguistic genius. Where others waste time, we call it timepass. It's a philosophical acceptance of existence itself, why lament unproductive hours when you can elevate them to the status of a pastime? So yes, we may live in a world where chips are fries, crisps are chips, and cookies are devouring biscuits. But no one can deny that the Indian variant of English is not merely a dialect, it's a declaration of cultural independence. It's English spoken in 1.4 billion accents, spiced with Hindi, marinated in nostalgia, and served with grammatical improvisation. The rest of the world may have invented the language, but India has turned it into a carnival!!!

THE WALL

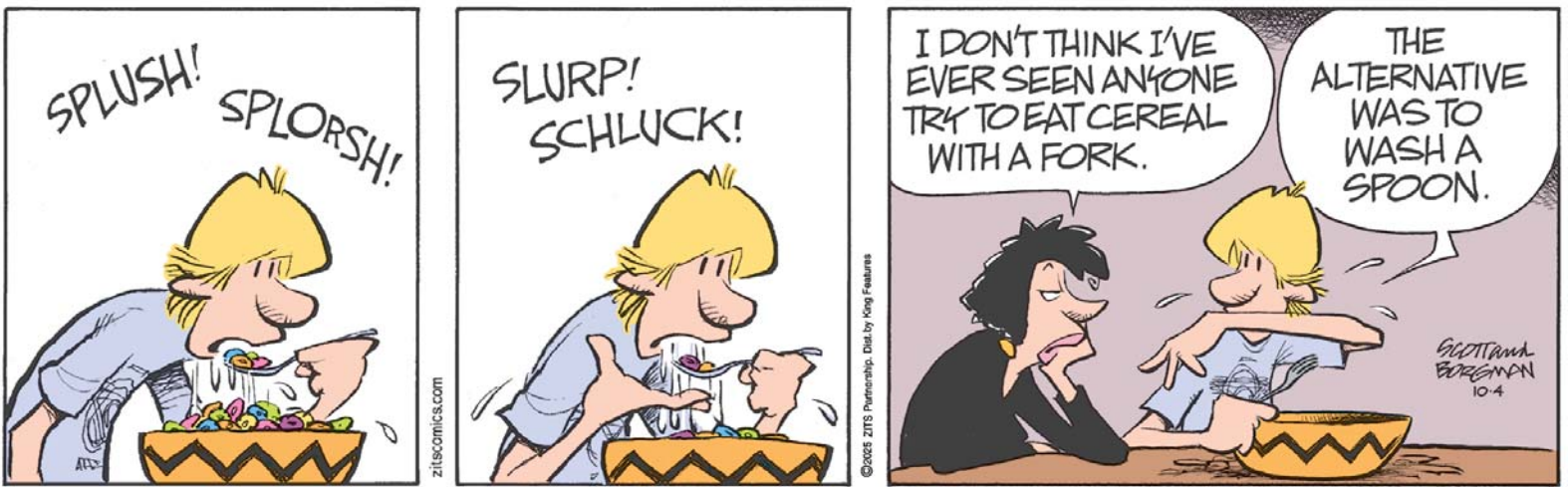


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman