

The affective tones of academic life

Rojas Gaviria, Pilar Ximena

DOI:

[10.1362/147539222X16620495972455](https://doi.org/10.1362/147539222X16620495972455)

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Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Rojas Gaviria, PX 2022, 'The affective tones of academic life', *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, vol. 21, no. 1-2, pp. 11-14. <https://doi.org/10.1362/147539222X16620495972455>

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The Affective Tones of Academic Life

Pesante

*Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.*
—Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*

Symptomatic of

meritocratic

mythical chimaeras,

the unmerciful drought

pushes you out

of *la crème de la crème*.

In tranquil detachment,

your tortured soul

agonizes, expressing

the unwanted effects

of a mistakenly prescribed

pharmaceutical paraphernalia's bravery.

The fluorescent infections,

a colony of uncomfortably seated

strangers.

You, one more, invading

invisible privileges.

Naïvely,

vainly

battling the storm

before the harvest.

As pain writes your obituary
with pieces of your skin
and punctuates it
with your coagulated blood,
you, the impostor, meet
the *Inferno* Game.

The game board assembles
as a snow-capped triangle.
Like many other colourful climbers
desiring to partake,
you take your chair
and look out
for any future dice swing prayers.
Pointless to persist. . .
Don't you dare!
You'll soon burn out of favour.
The game's overwhelming fire
uses you to praise
its legitimate heirs.

Trionfante

Congratulations!

A thousand citations,

a milestone!

The unhappiness machine,

through its incomparable puissance,

suits you well,

wishes you well,

creates miracles for you.

In a delicate extract of guilt,

the machine's expertise restores vitality,

combining your choice of shameful,

gentle exfoliation

with a cooling gel of *not good enough*

for an instant light

of burnout suffocation.

Resist, resilient, above and beyond.

Work hard. Unlock your talent.

Invest in yourself.

Yes, you can achieve

a better you,

sleepless and restless,

la crème de la crème,

one step away

from the restorative

summit of success.

Eroico

But the scar is a sign of the injury: a good scar allows healing, it even covers over, but the covering always exposes the injury, reminding us of how it shapes the body.

—Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

An unconcerned driver,
caresses his narcissistic thoughts,
challenging the gloomy
winter landscape.
His priority is disrupted,
glorious interruptus,
‘what is wrong with you?’
as he creates another roadkill.
Oops, one more female deer.
A doe dressed in wonder, *fille*
of nature,
her gaze distilling her innocence,
exhibiting,
without hesitation, her female power.
She risks the dangerous highway
And her courage meets a lethal,
last humiliation.
Oh, dear sister,
dear deer.
You don’t stand out.
That’s weird.
Barely noticeable,
Smashed and overlooked,
inaudible
is the deer’s agonizing voice.
Her flesh in the snow, her weakly kicking legs, chilling the air

squeezing out those feminist
raindrops of *killjoy*.

Andante

Therefore, dear Sir, love your solitude and try to sing out with the pain it causes you.
—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

Beauty spots

hold an open question,

a mysterious enigma,

a visceral connection.

Beauty spots

keep secrets.

They unleash your intuitive being,

the divergent understanding from the margins,

the treasures of uncrowded metaphors.

Wondering beauty—

alive,

in deep appreciation

of collective discomfort

and normalized ignorance—

makes you surrender

to the astounding.

Beauty spots,

which, out of sight

in pure nothingness,

are what joy is all about.