

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## M-World, S-World: Achieving wisdom in online groups

### Book

How to cite:

Bell, Simon; Collins, Kevin and Cutting, Charles (2019). M-World, S-World: Achieving wisdom in online groups. Milton Keynes: Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2018 The Authors and The Open University

Version: Version of Record

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's [data policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)

**SIMON KEVIN  
BELL COLLINS**

ACHIEVING WISDOM IN ONLINE GROUPS



# WORLD OF M- MONKS



**CHARLES CUTTING**

Copyright Simon Bell,  
Kevin Collins, Charles Cutting  
and Open University

© 2018



Best regards,  
Cass.

Kema

Coba.





Hey Kuma, I'm Coba.

You're doing publishing right?

I saw this on my publishing group

I could help with the techie stuff.


I don't want to be the only other contributor. How about it?

New Message  
To: [Redacted]  
Subject: [Redacted]  
Hi, I'm looking for people to help create a 'how-to' guide about working together. The idea is to provide good practice and encourage the reader to seek out collaborative projects.

send [Icons: Attach, Image, Link, Smiley]



I HAVE  
BEEN STUDYING  
FEAR .

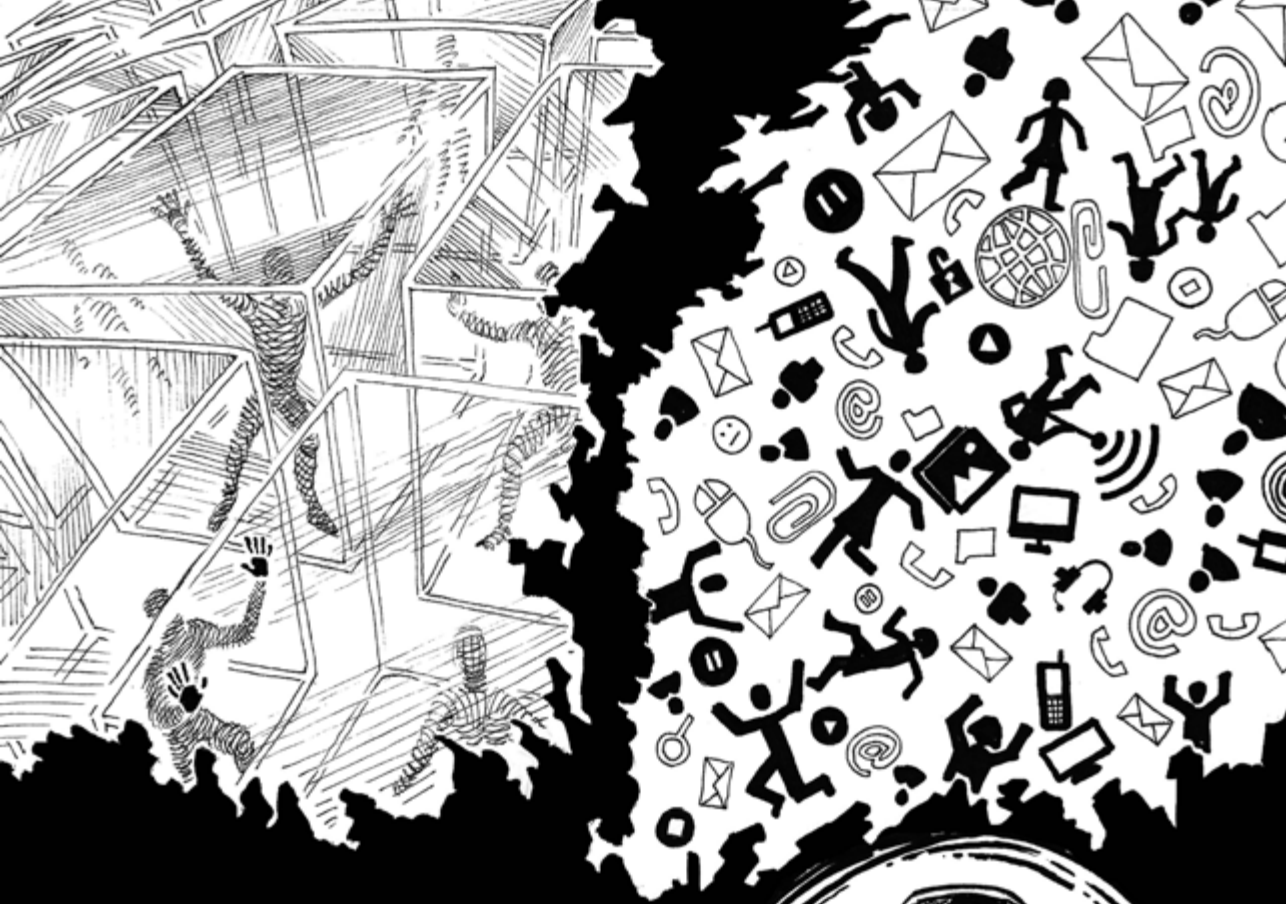


I HAD BEEN STRUGGLING WITH THE NEGATIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE ISSUES WHICH SEEM TO FILL UP MY WORLD.

I CALL IT M-WORLD.

MY WORK WITH FEAR HAD MADE ME REALLY AWARE OF THE WAYS IN WHICH ISOLATED PEOPLE, WITH NO ABILITY TO WORK AT SCALE, GET PICKED OFF BY THE 'BIG SYSTEMS' WHICH SEEM TO RUN THE WORLD.







THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH M WORLD.



THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY BEING INDEPENDENT, SOLITARY AND PRIVATE IS HEALTHY AND POWERFUL.



BUT M-WORLD  
CAN BE  
A PROBLEM.

TRUE. IF WE FOCUS ON  
OURSELVES AND NOT HOW  
OTHERS EXPERIENCE US  
IT CAN MEAN WE'RE POORLY  
EQUIPPED TO WORK IN GROUPS.



I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I AM FREE

can you hear me?  
at 7:00 pm?

didn't i send it?

what about  
i can't  
Monday?

How about this Friday  
make it then

hey hey hey!

THIS CAN LEAD TO UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOUR.



*That will never work, sorry but just being honest.*

*I did get your email but was busy which is why I didn't reply straight away!*

*It would be nice if you replied to my emails once in a while...*

THERE'S LOTS OF WAYS WE HINDER A GROUP EFFORT. I'M SURE YOU'LL RECOGNISE THEM WHEN WE GO INTO THAT LATER.



BUT FIRST LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE PROBLEMS FACING GROUP WORK.

THE SCALE OF THE ISSUES WHICH CONFRONT US WHEN WE SEEK TO WORK WITH OTHERS AT DISTANCE OFTEN LEADS TO US FEELING FEARFUL, DISEMPOWERED AND EVEN LETHARGIC.



FINAL NOTICE

LATE PAYMENT CHARGE

THIS IS LEARNED HELPLESSNESS. IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE AND YET DEFEATING.

WHAT WE WANT TO CONFRONT ON ALL SIDES OFTEN SEEMS TOO BIG OR COMPLEX TO HANDLE.



CHANGE

LEAVE

NO MORE

REMAIN

DESPITE HUGE STRIDES IN CONNECTIVITY, HUMAN BEINGS ARE OFTEN WORKING IN ISOLATION.

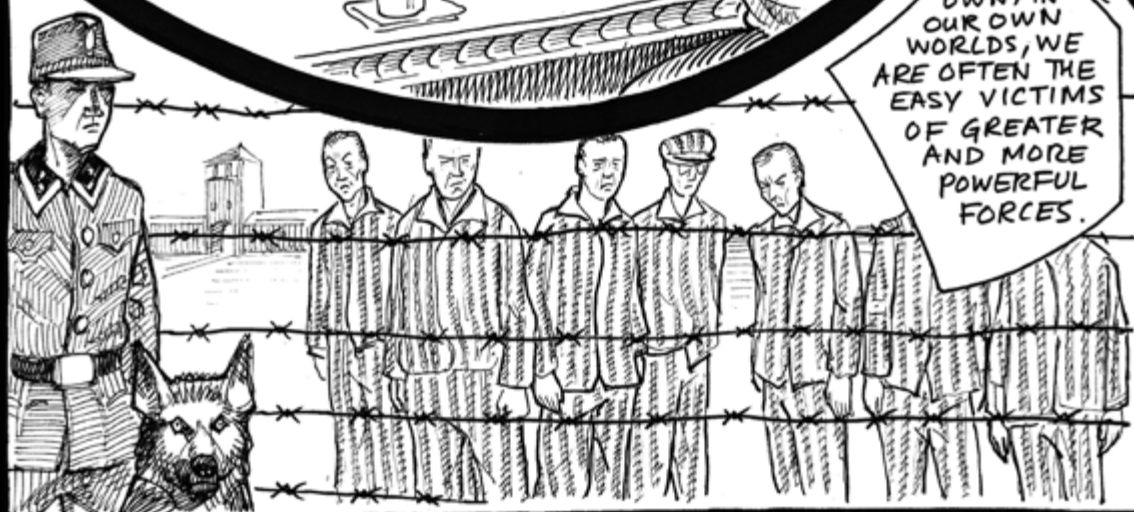


TO WORK TOGETHER  
AT DISTANCE IS A  
HUGE ISSUE FOR US.

LOOK AT  
CLIMATE  
CHANGE.  
THAT REQUIRES  
A GLOBAL  
RESPONSE.  
THE ULTIMATE  
ISSUE OF SCALE.

BUT IS ANYONE  
REALLY DOING  
ANYTHING AT  
THAT KIND OF  
SCALE?

ON  
OUR  
OWN, IN  
OUR OWN  
WORLDS, WE  
ARE OFTEN THE  
EASY VICTIMS  
OF GREATER  
AND MORE  
POWERFUL  
FORCES.





IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD  
NO INDIVIDUAL IS ABLE TO (RE)SOLVE  
ISSUES BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE  
THE TIME ---

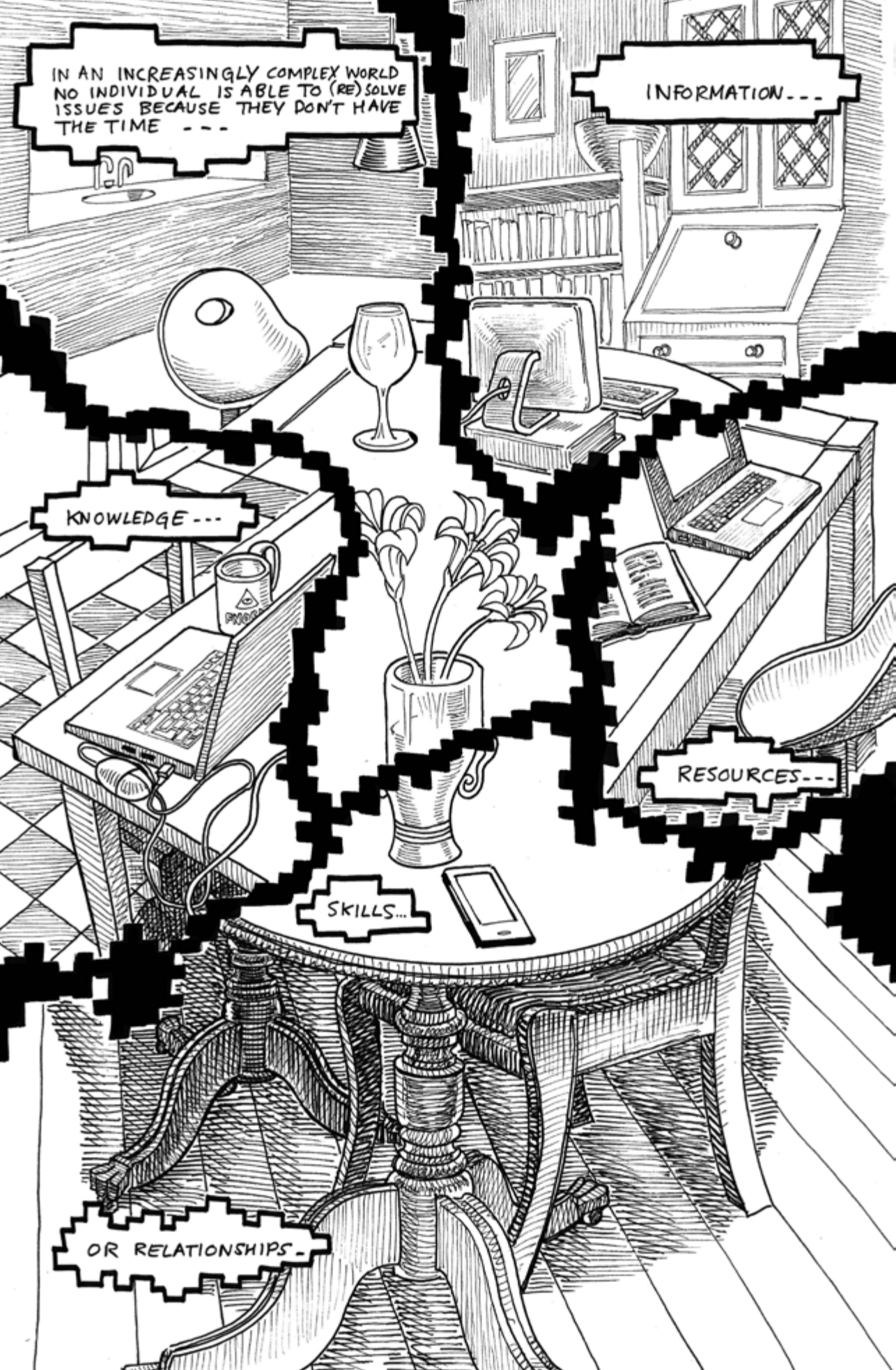
INFORMATION---

KNOWLEDGE---

RESOURCES---

SKILLS...

OR RELATIONSHIPS -



IT SEEMS THAT  
MANY ISSUES CAN  
ONLY BE SOLVED  
IF PEOPLE  
COLLABORATE.



BUT THAT  
IS TOUGH  
TOO.



WHAT IS COLLABORATION ?



COLLABORATION IS:

COMMUNICATING

SHARING AND EMPATHY



PICKING UP LOAD FOR OTHERS



SUPPORTING OTHERS EFFORTS



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS



NEGOTIATING COMMON GROUND



CARING HOW OTHERS FEEL  
AND TRUSTING YOURSELF TO  
TRUST THEM.







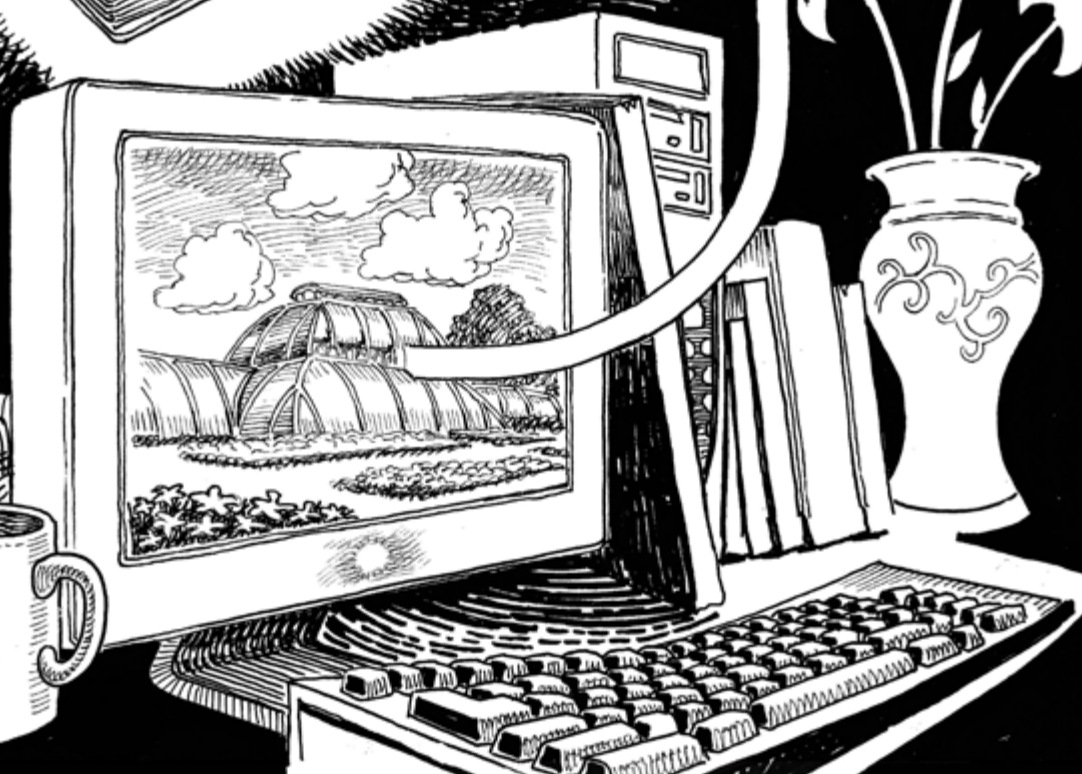
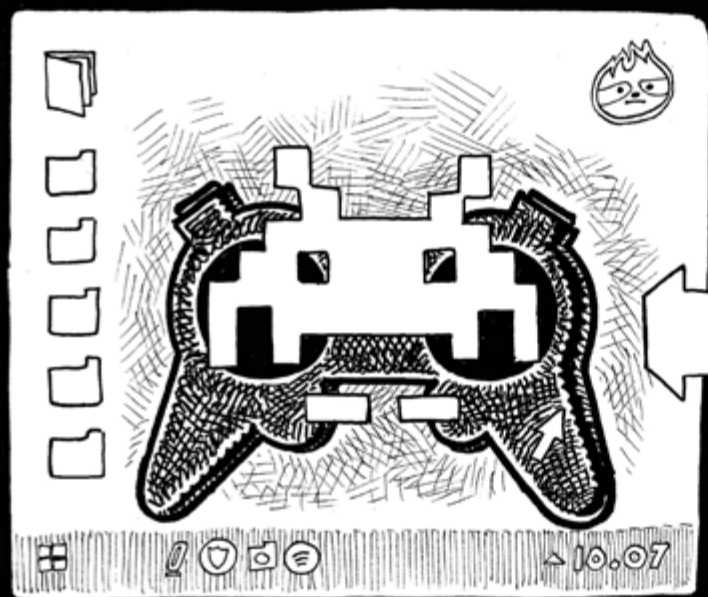
Kuma can't join  
the conversation

OK, lets try  
again tomorrow.



I can see you  
but i can't  
hear you and  
i don't think  
my microphone  
is woeking

working, sorry.



WE KNOW THAT COLLABORATION IS POSSIBLE BUT HOW POSSIBLE AND FOR WHO ?



CITIZEN CONTROL

DELEGATED POWER

PARTNERSHIP

CONSULTATION

PLACATION

SHERRY ARNSTEIN CAME UP WITH A LADDER TO SHOW HOW PEOPLE CAN WORK TOGETHER AND HOW THEY DON'T.

INFORMING

THERAPY

MANIPULATION









THE WIERD THING IS THAT SOMETIMES A GROUP OF PEOPLE CAN LOOK LIKE THEY ARE COLLABORATING BUT ACTUALLY IT IS CONTROLLED BY SOMEONE ELSE .



LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES OF M - WORLD.



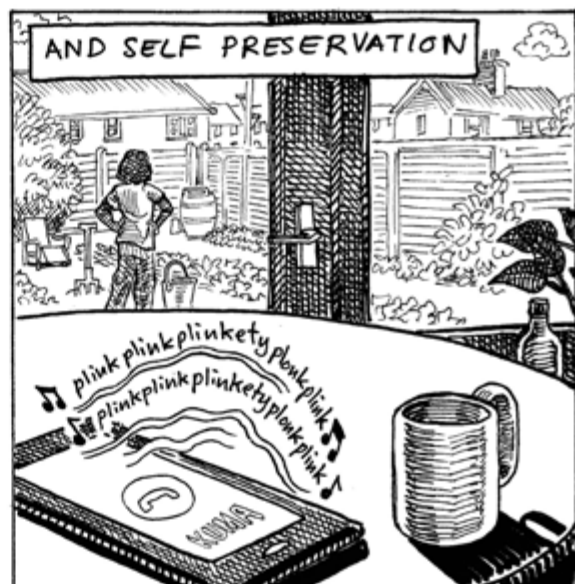
MY WORLD IS MINE



IT IS THE WORLD  
YOU EXPERIENCE TOO  
BUT MINE LACKS  
ME.



A WORLD BASED ON  
'ME' MIGHT HAVE THE  
FOLLOWING  
CHARACTERISTICS.





A WAY OF KNOWING INSTINCTIVELY WITHOUT REFLECTION OR REFERENCING WIDER DATA.



*Sorry this folder are a little broken & as you know.*

metview || cat -f301

shred -uz 3 update

creating partition esat\_h1\_bck on slot 2.

Available HSMs:

@HSMAdmin V2.1.1-

Good signature from "Eliot Alderson"

mimi.exe "privilegeddebug

wget -q http://192.251.68.

login as : upsd min

||



intating : dpc\_hw05\_aos\_640\_patch.bin

copy y:\hsm\c:\temp\sc

dsquery computer ou = esat, dc = mirror, dc = vrvdc=cm

admin@K6F241:~/ups\_updates \$ 978

intating : dpc\_hw05\_aos\_640\_patch.bin

SHARED WORLD IS SHARED



HERE WE MAKE  
THE EFFORT TO INCLUDE  
THE VIEWS AND ASSUMPTIONS  
OF OTHERS.



A WORLD BASED ON SHARED  
VIEWS MIGHT HAVE THE  
FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS.

EMPATHY



LISTENING



MUTUAL SUSTAINABILITY







IN THEIR OWN WORLDS THEY WERE ORDINARY  
PEOPLE, BUT WHEN THEY MEET THEY BECOME...

# THE FORCE



THE DRAMATIC DEBUT OF A STARTLING  
NEW BREED OF TEAM, BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

**SIMON BELL** • **KEVIN COLLINS** • **CHARLES CUTTING**  
AUTHOR      AUTHOR      ARTIST

EDITED BY: FRANCESCA BENATTI,  
KAREN KEAR, LARA PICCOLO  
AND IAN JOHNSTON.

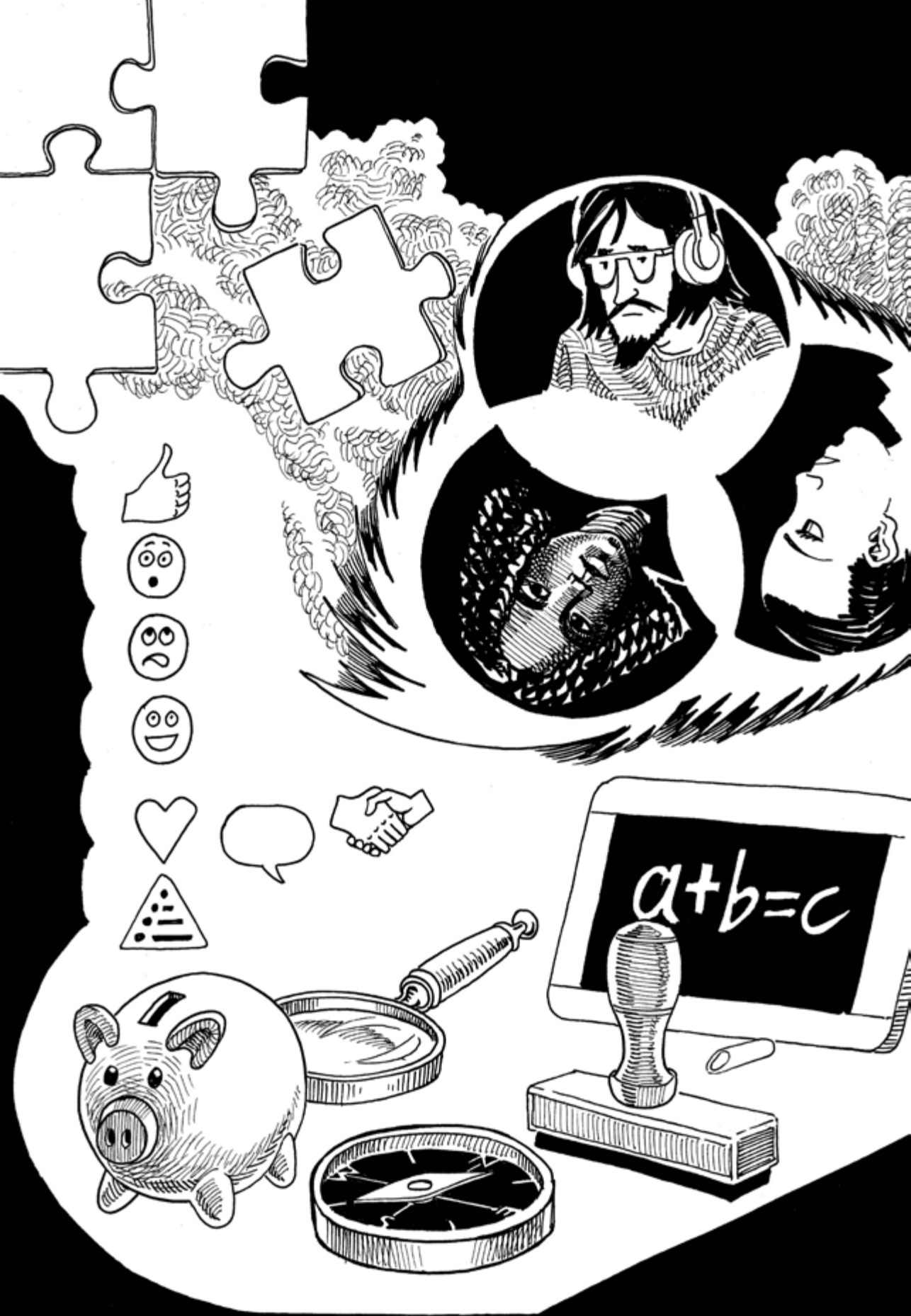
THAT SOUNDS LIKE  
AN OPPORTUNITY NOT  
TO BE MISSED...



AND CAPABLE OF DELIVERING  
SERIOUSLY POWERFUL RESULTS.


BUT WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN ONLINE GROUP WORK?









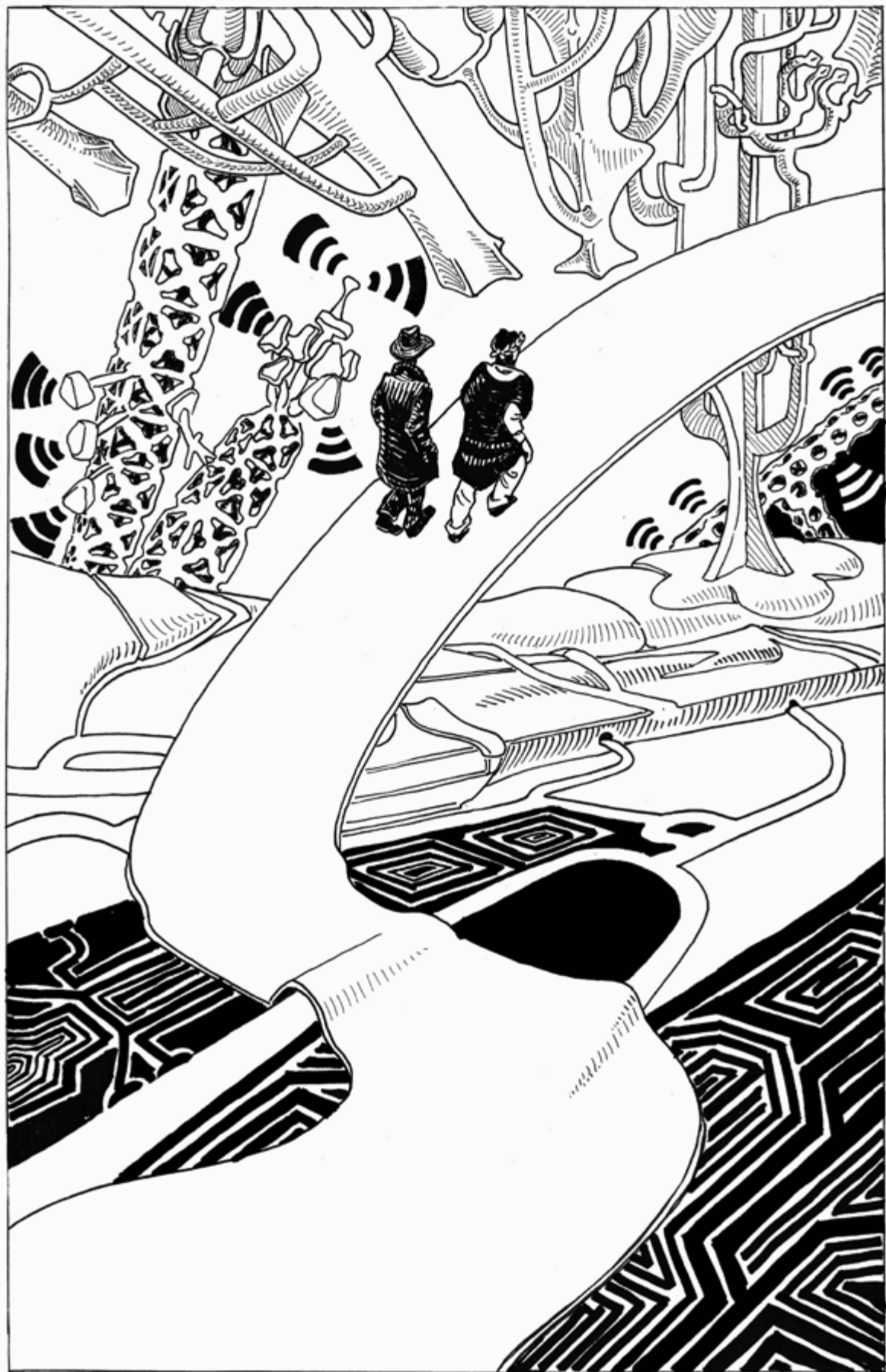


IT'S DIFFICULT TO  
EMPATHISE WITH  
STRANGERS -  
TRUST IS KEY.

PEOPLE DO NOT SHARE  
WORLD VIEWS, TIME-ZONES  
OR AIMS & OBJECTIVES

ALL THESE  
THINGS NEED  
TO BE ACHIEVED.

NOTHING IS  
ACCOMPLISHED  
WITHOUT  
TEAM WORK  
AND EFFORT.





HUMAN BEINGS HAVE LIMITED PERSPECTIVES



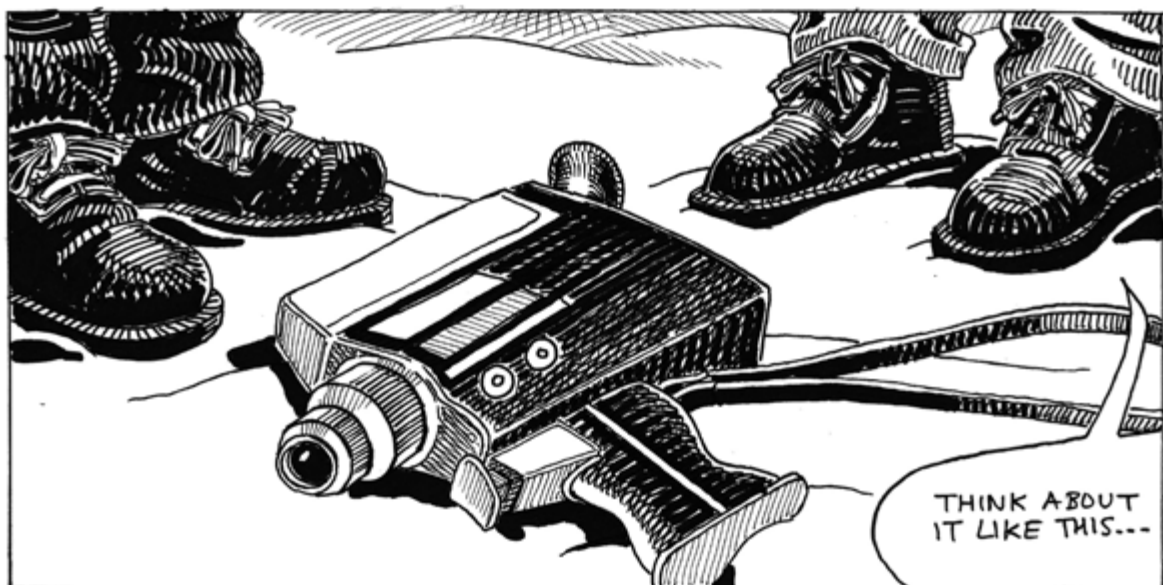
DAVID EAGLEMAN IN 'THE BRAIN' DESCRIBES HOW THE BRAIN PRISONER IS FED FALSE AND LIMITED NEWS.



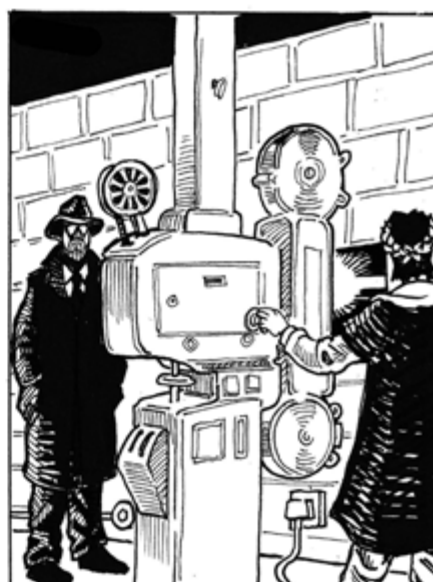
WE ARE INDIVIDUALLY BOMBARDED BY 'FAKE NEWS' FROM OUR SENSES



BUT MORE THAN THIS WE MISS THE FACT THAT WE ARE THE AUDIENCE TO OUR OWN REALITY BUT WE ARE ABSENT FROM IT.



THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS...



LIKE A 'FOUND FOOTAGE' MOVIE WITH A SUBJECTIVE CAMERA, WE TRIP AROUND THE WORLD.



WE PEEK AT OTHERS AND ENGAGE IN ACTIONS BUT WE OURSELVES ARE RARELY TO BE SEEN.



IF WE LOOK IN A MIRROR OR EXPERIENCE OURSELVES IN A SELFIE IT CAN SPOIL THE IMAGE WE HAVE OF OURSELVES.











SO MUCH COULD BE SAID ABOUT HOW WE RARELY EXPERIENCE OURSELVES



UNLESS, THAT IS, WE ENGAGE IN SOME ACTIVE SELF-REFLECTION

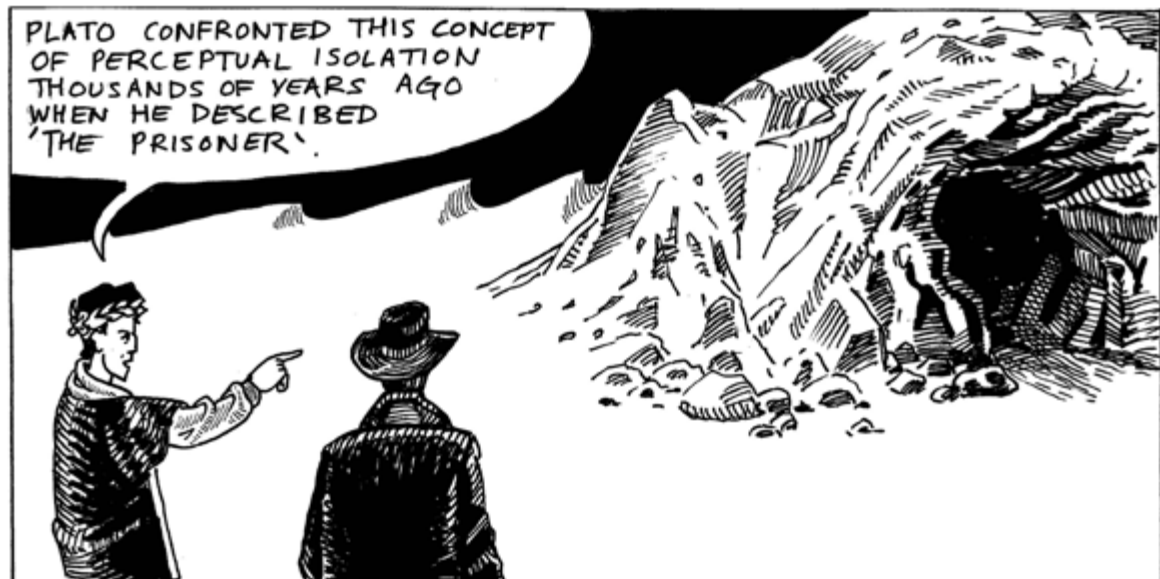


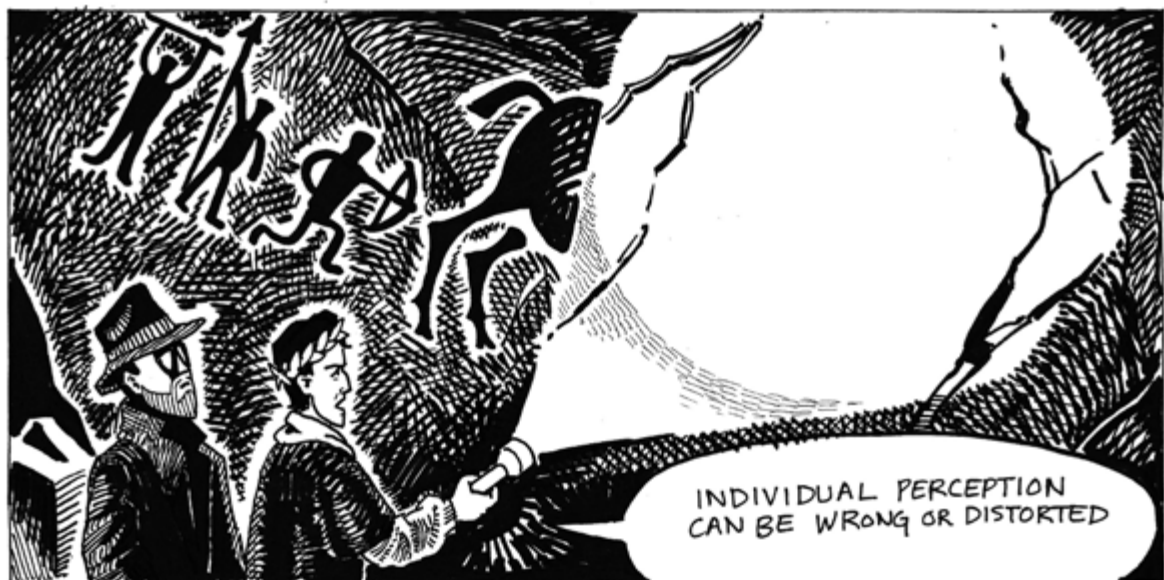
IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE CAN BE OVERWHELMED WHEN WE ARE IN ISOLATION.



ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE DO FIND ISOLATION EMPOWERING, WE ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS AND HAVE A DESIRE TO COLLABORATE.

PLATO CONFRONTED THIS CONCEPT OF PERCEPTUAL ISOLATION THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO WHEN HE DESCRIBED 'THE PRISONER'.





BUT IT SEEMS TO BE THE HUMAN CONDITION .

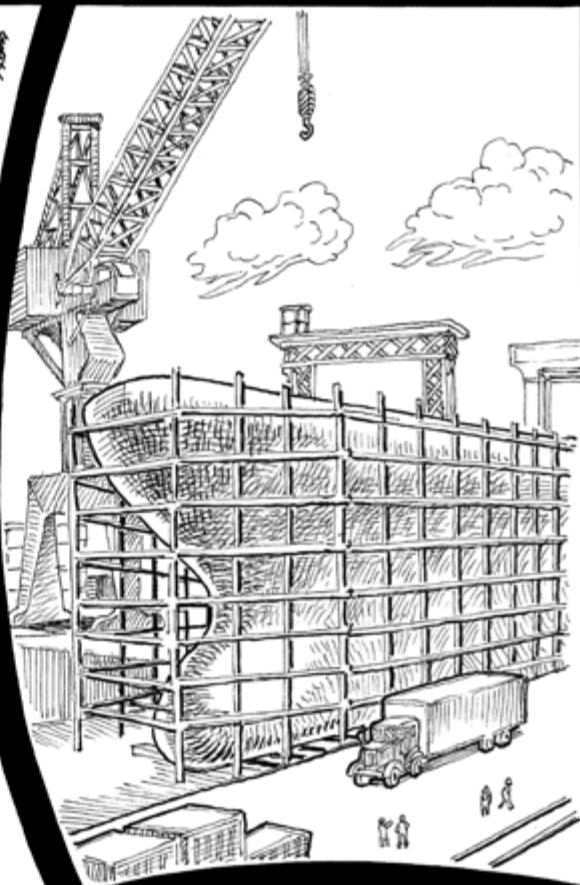
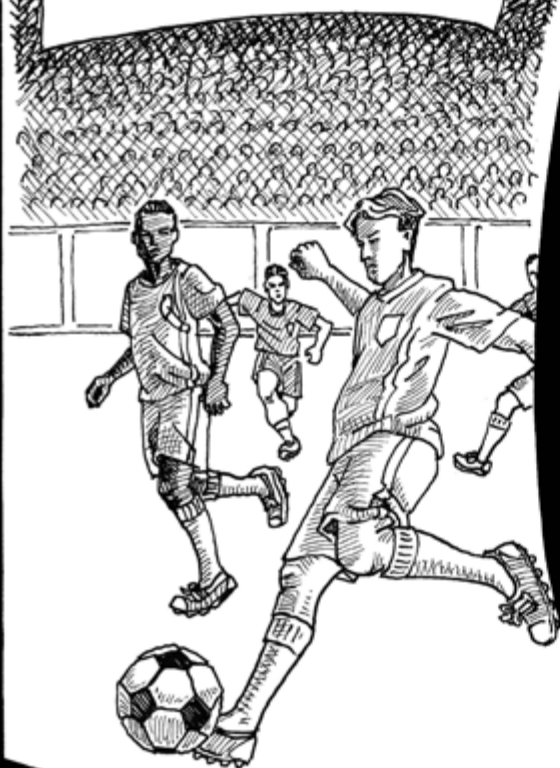
IT CAN BE .

# THE PRENTICE

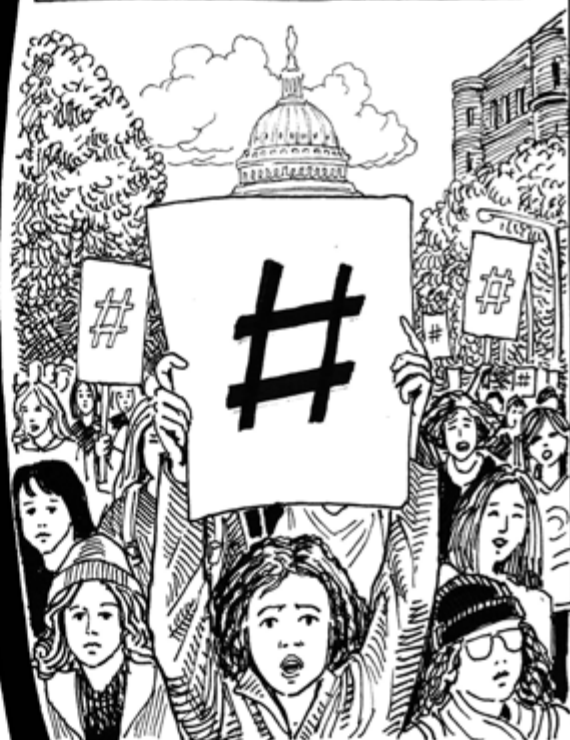
IT CAN LEAD TO SHARED ACTIVITIES THAT APPEAR TO BE COLLABORATIVE BUT IN ACTUAL FACT ARE COMPETITIVE .



BUT WORKING HARMONIOUSLY  
TOGETHER WE CAN REALLY  
MAKE THINGS HAPPEN



GREAT TEAMS, GROUPS AND  
COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN  
THE BASIS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

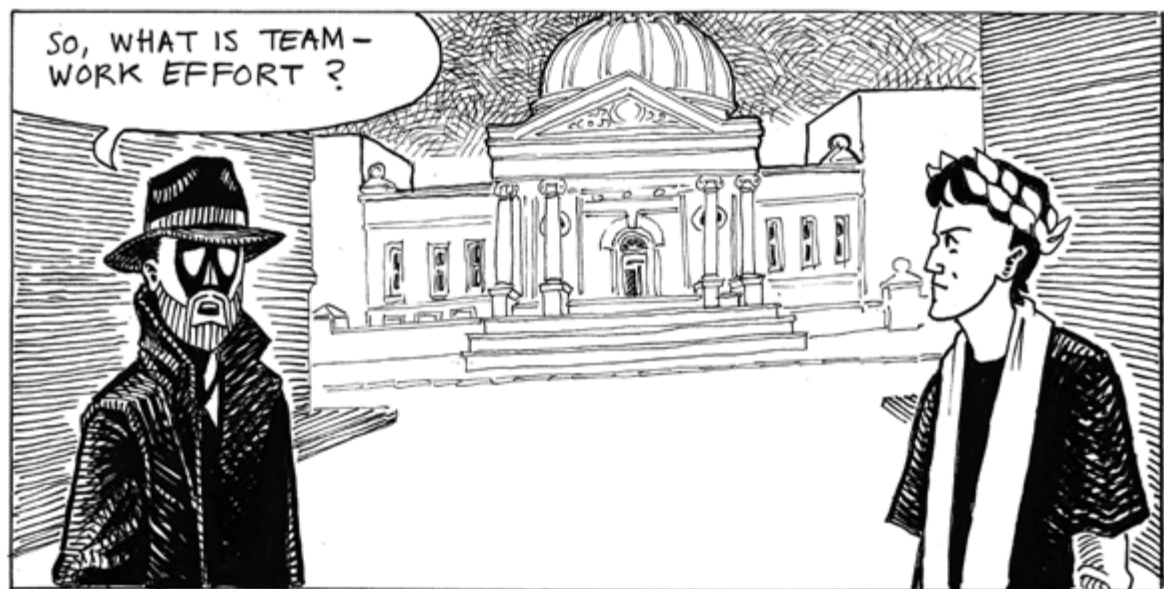




IT'S JUST THAT  
S-WORLD MAY  
NOT LAST TOO  
LONG

PRETTY SOON  
S-WORLD BREAKS  
DOWN AND M-WORLD  
TAKES OVER AGAIN.





DONALD SCHON,  
CARING

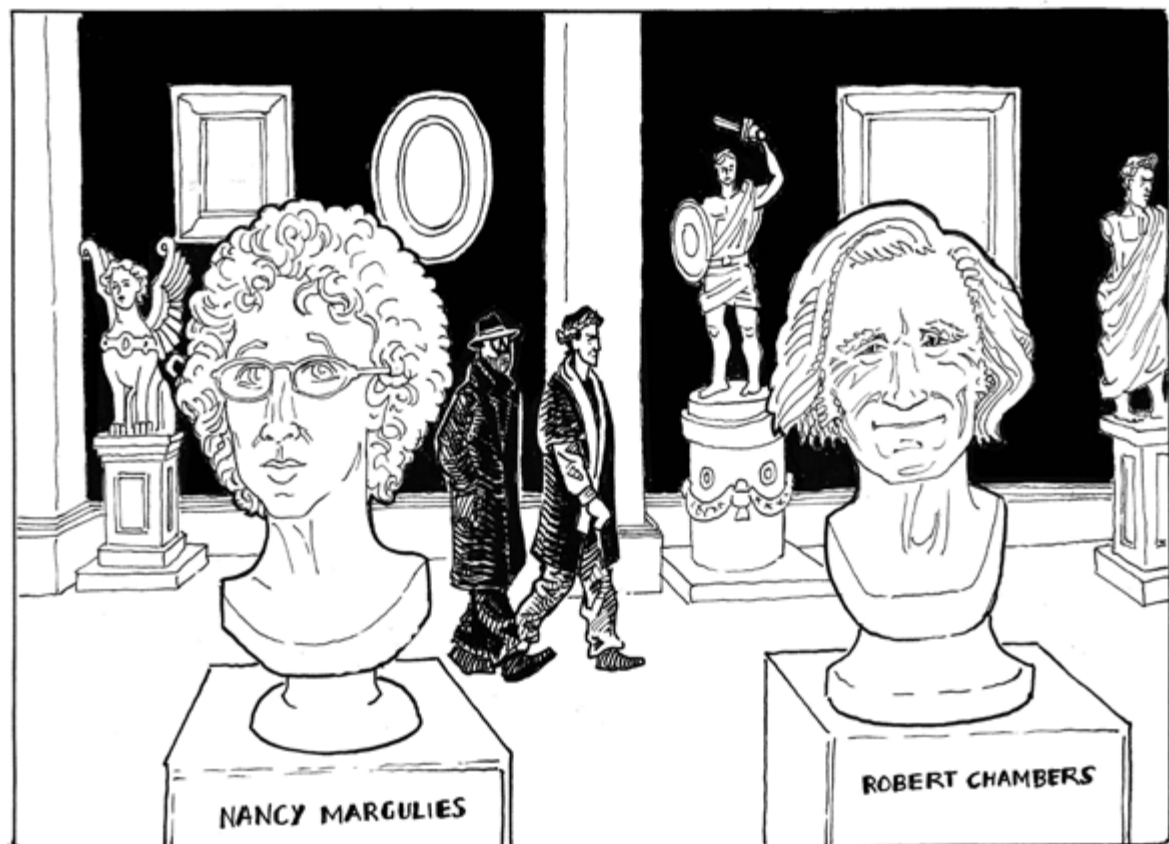


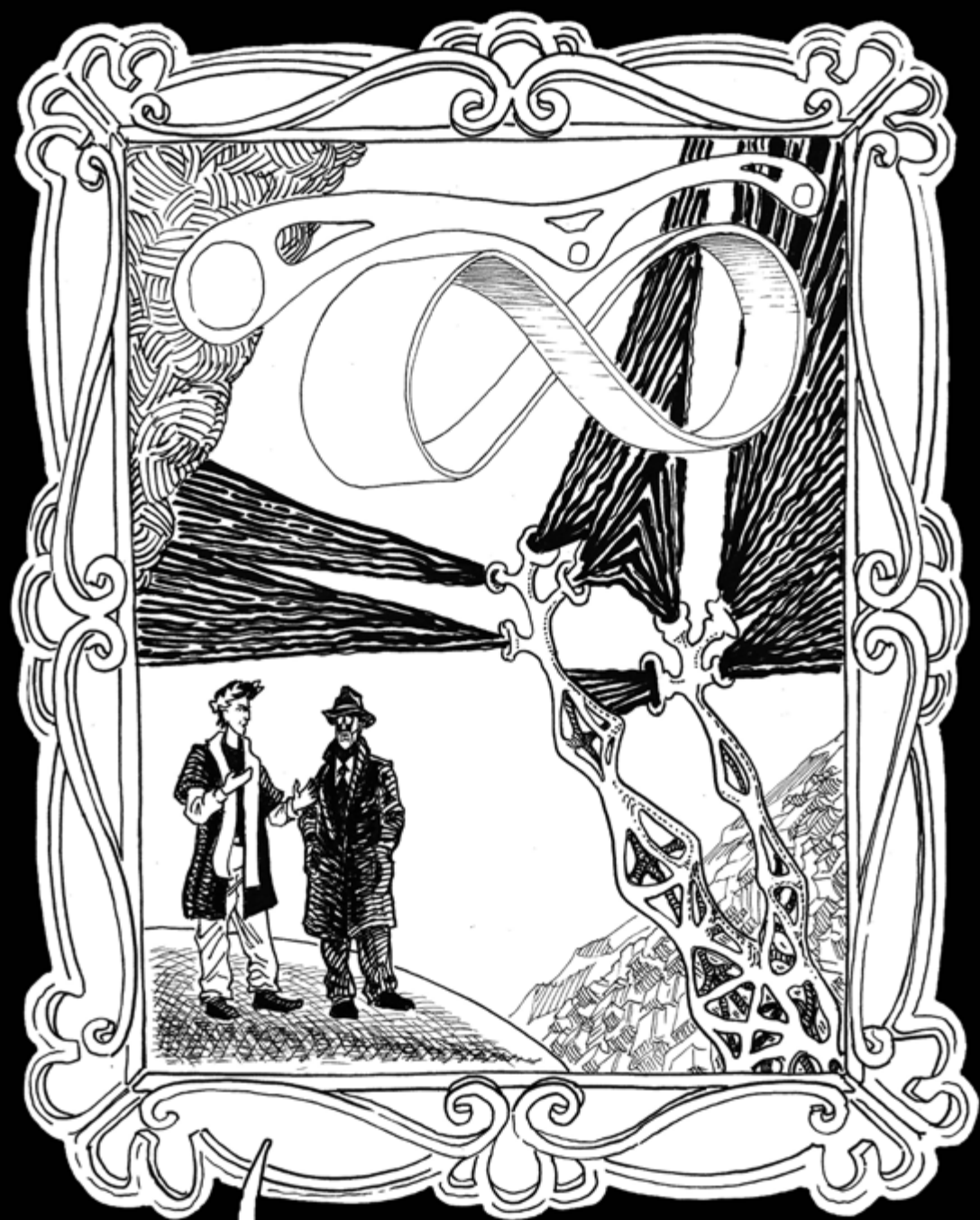
KAREN HORNEY,  
REFLECTION



DAVID  
KOLB, LEARNING  
CYCLE .







THERE ARE  
LOTS OF GROUND  
RULES

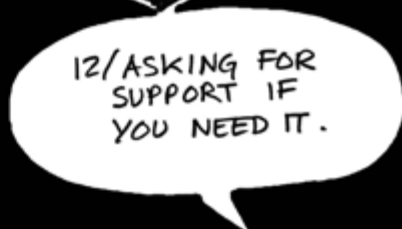
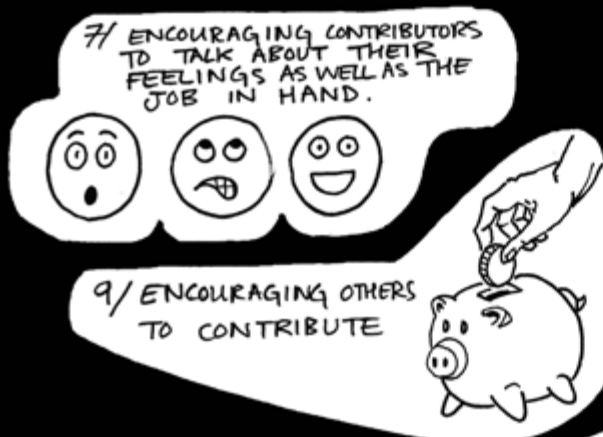
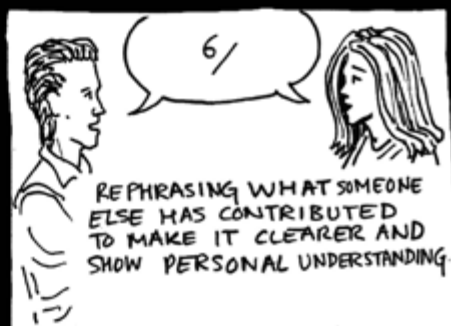
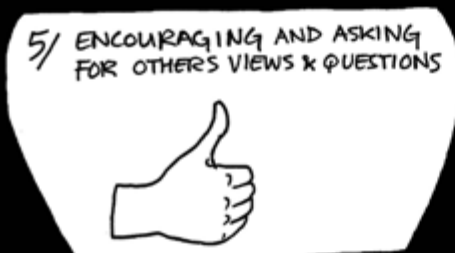
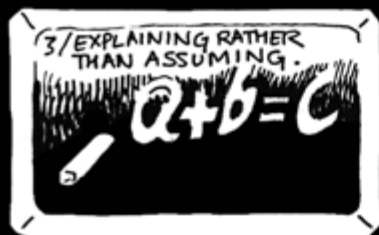





THESE RULES  
WORK AS WELL  
FOR ONLINE GROUPS  
AS FOR FACE-TO-FACE  
GROUPS.

THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF HELPFUL  
S-WORLD BEHAVIOUR FOR ONLINE COLLABORATION.







IF WE  
CYCLE IN AND OUT  
OF M-WORLD AND S-WORLD  
WE GET THE BEST FROM  
OUR SOLITARY TIME...

AND CAN WORK  
EFFECTIVELY IN ONLINE  
COLLABORATIONS.





WELCOME TO  
M-WORLD

I LIVE IN  
M-WORLD

YOU LIVE IN  
M-WORLD TOO

I DON'T MEET ME  
IN MY M-WORLD  
AND YOU DON'T  
MEET YOU IN  
YOUR M-WORLD

BUT I MEET YOU  
ALL THE TIME  
AND YOU REGULARLY  
BUMP INTO ME

WE ARE STRANGERS  
TO OURSELVES IN  
M-WORLD. THAT  
IS JUST THE  
WAY OF IT.

IT'S REALLY, REALLY  
CLOSE. CLOSER  
THAN THE HUNDREDTH  
OF THE WIDTH OF A  
BUTTERFLY'S WING.

YOU COULD NOT PUT  
A PIECE OF PAPER  
BETWEEN M-WORLD  
AND S-WORLD.

BUT THEY ARE SO  
VERY, VERY DIFFERENT  
AND THEY OCCUPY  
VERY DIFFERENT  
PLACES

BUT WHEN WE MEET  
IN S-WORLD I AM  
PART OF A COMMUNITY,  
MY PERSPECTIVE IS  
CONFRONTED AND  
COMPLETED BY YOURS  
AND OTHERS.

MY THOUGHTS ARE  
SHARED AND MY  
JOURNEY IS NOT  
SO LONELY.

THE PROBLEM  
SEEMS TO BE  
THAT S-WORLD  
IS HARD  
TO FIND

WHEN THE NEED IS GREAT, IN AN INSTANT  
THEY ARE ALL MOVED TO AND SHARE  
IN S-WORLD.



IN MY M-WORLD  
I DON'T EXIST

IN YOUR M-WORLD  
I EXIST BUT YOU DON'T

IN YOUR  
M-WORLD  
YOU DON'T  
EXIST.

WHEN YOU AND I ARE AT  
OUR BEST WITH EACH  
OTHER WE LEAVE OUR  
M-WORLDS AND COME  
TOGETHER FOR A WHILE,  
WE MEET IN ANOTHER  
PLACE

LET'S CALL IT  
S-WORLD

S-WORLD IS  
VERY, VERY  
SIMILAR TO  
M-WORLD

THEY ARE AN  
INFINITY  
APART

IN M-WORLD I AM  
ISOLATED, MY  
PERSPECTIVE IS  
STRANDED TO  
ITSELF

MY THOUGHTS ARE  
MY OWN AND MY  
JOURNEY IS THE  
JOURNEY OF THE  
SOLITARY

BUT IS IT?

ODDLY, PEOPLE WHO  
NEED EACH OTHER  
FIND EACH OTHER  
EFFORTLESSLY IN  
S-WORLD

ALL M-WORLD  
SEPARATION  
DISAPPEARS,  
THE NEEDY ARE  
UNITED IN AN  
INSTANT

BUT PEOPLE, EVEN REALLY, REALLY CLEVER AND  
TALENTED PEOPLE WHO DO NOT WANT TO NEED  
EACH OTHER CAN NEVER FIND S-WORLD,  
NOT EVEN IF THEY ARE ALL TOGETHER IN THE  
SAME ROOM, SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO EACH  
OTHER FOR HOURS AND HOURS, LOOKING  
RIGHT AT EACH OTHER.

THEY REMAIN IN THEIR  
M-WORLDS WHERE THEY  
DO NOT EVEN MEET  
THEMSELVES