

Alumni Newsletter

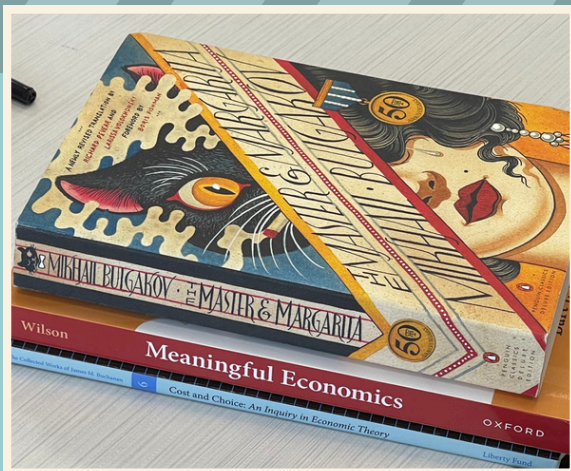
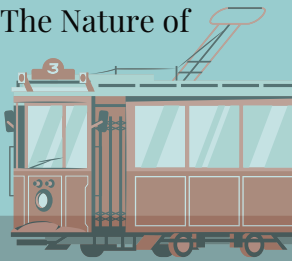
Summer 2025

HUMANOMICS



ALUMNI COLLOQUIUM

The eighth semi-annual Humanomics Alumni Colloquium was held in Orange, California, April 4-5, 2025. Alumni from around the country and representing graduating classes from 2014 – 2024 came to Chapman to participate in a lively discussion exploring “The Nature of Human Choice.”



ALUMNI COLLOQUIUM



A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TEXTS AND READERS

Central to Humanomics is putting texts in conversation with one another, the readers participating in that conversation as we ask questions, make connections, and challenge interpretations. The three texts talking with us and one another were Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Bart Wilson's *Meaningful Economics*, and James Buchanan's *Cost and Choice*.



GUEST ESSAY

Alice in Productland: A Curious Journey through Product Management by Akash Miharia

[CLICK TO READ](#)

Akash Miharia (Class of '21) is a product manager, builder, and curious thinker currently based in New York City. After Chapman and a detour through analytics at ASU, he now leads parts of personalization and search at Walmart eCommerce. He writes Product Rookies, a newsletter at the intersection of product, creativity, and human behavior with a splash of wit, a dash of systems thinking, and more than a hint of Humanomics.

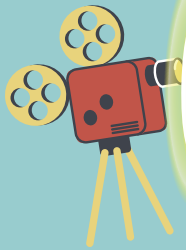
Check out the newsletter  productrookies.com



We hope the new Guest Essay Column will be a robust feature of the Humanomics Alumni Newsletter. We invite you to submit an essay. We are open to topics of interest to our community (which means there is great latitude). If you have any questions about this process, please email josborn@chapman.edu.

[SUBMIT AN ESSAY](#)

HUMANOMICS IN POP CULTURE



INTERSECTIONS IN POPULAR CULTURE – BOOK/FILM REVIEWS/RECOMMENDATIONS

So often when we are reading books or watching films or series, a connection to ideas in Humanomics comes to mind. If this happens to you as well, please consider submitting a book, film, or series recommendation. There isn't a formula to get this done, so be creative. It will be great to hear what alumni are reading, watching, thinking about.

For now, here are a couple of examples of pop culture connections:

Television commentator and author Chris Hayes has a new book out: *The Sirens' Call: How Attention Became the World's Most Endangered Resource*. As you might expect from the title, Hayes begins the book with Odysseus' attempt to avoid the Sirens in *The Odyssey*, Circe providing him with a plan to hear their call but not fall victim to it. Hayes explores this call in terms of modern technology, the machine in the pocket, calling even if silenced. He cites William James to explore the idea of our attention being "compelled against our will": "My experience" James writes, "is what I agree to attend to."¹ But is our agreement compromised? It is "The



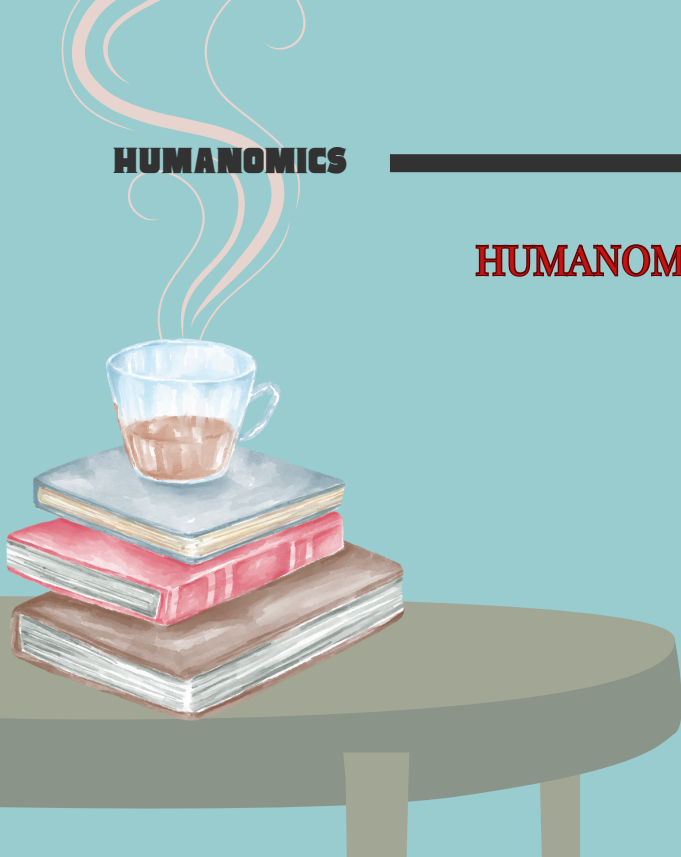
alienating experience of being divided and distracted in spite of ourselves, to be here but not present" that evokes the subtitle: *How Attention Became the World's Most Endangered Resource*. Referencing Henry David Thoreau, Karl Marx, and Jonathan Haidt, among others, Hayes argues that "Attention now exists as a commodity in the same way labor did in the early years of industrial capitalism."²

¹ As quoted by Hayes, 3.

² 23.



HUMANOMICS IN POP CULTURE



If you want to read about this topic more deeply, here are a few books that preceded Hayes' take on the subject: Graham and Smith, eds., *12 Theses on Attention* (2022), Jenny Odell's *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* (2019), Davenport and Beck's *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business* (2002), and Johann Hari's *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention—And How to Think Deeply Again* (2022). If you have been reading about the attention economy, send us a recommendation.



On another topic, *Severance* has been in the Zeitgeist since Season 2 dropped in January. Film critic Lisa Schwarzbaum in a *New York Times* guest essay – “I love ‘Severance,’ Which Is Why I Don’t Want to Watch Any More”³ – could have been talking about Humanomics when she said, “The devoted fan (including this one) is left with many unanswered questions, as well as that greatest of adult freedoms: the space to think through multiple meanings for ourselves, with no answers imposed on us by the storytellers.”⁴

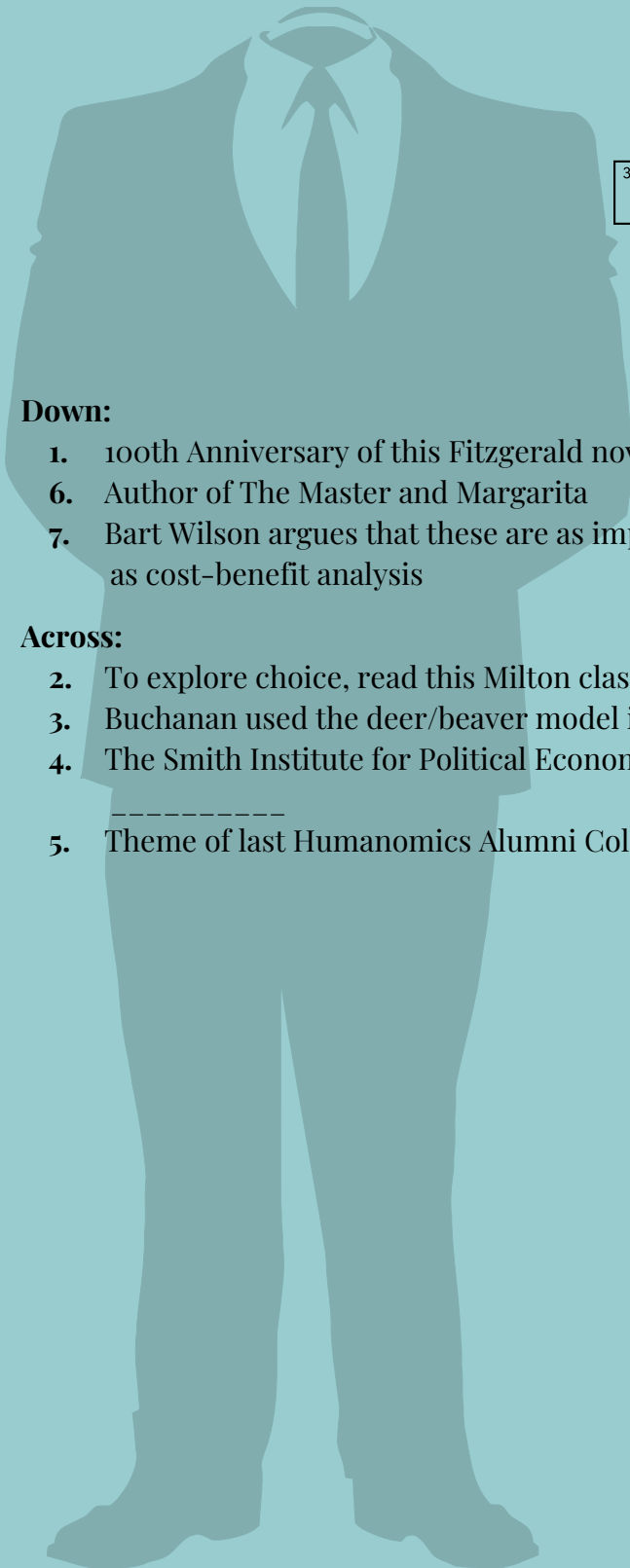
³ Spoiler Alert – Schwarzbaum discusses the last episode in some detail.

⁴ *New York Times*, March 26, 2025.

Have a favorite series or book with Humanomics themes? Submit your pop culture pick!

SUBMIT A RECOMMENDATION

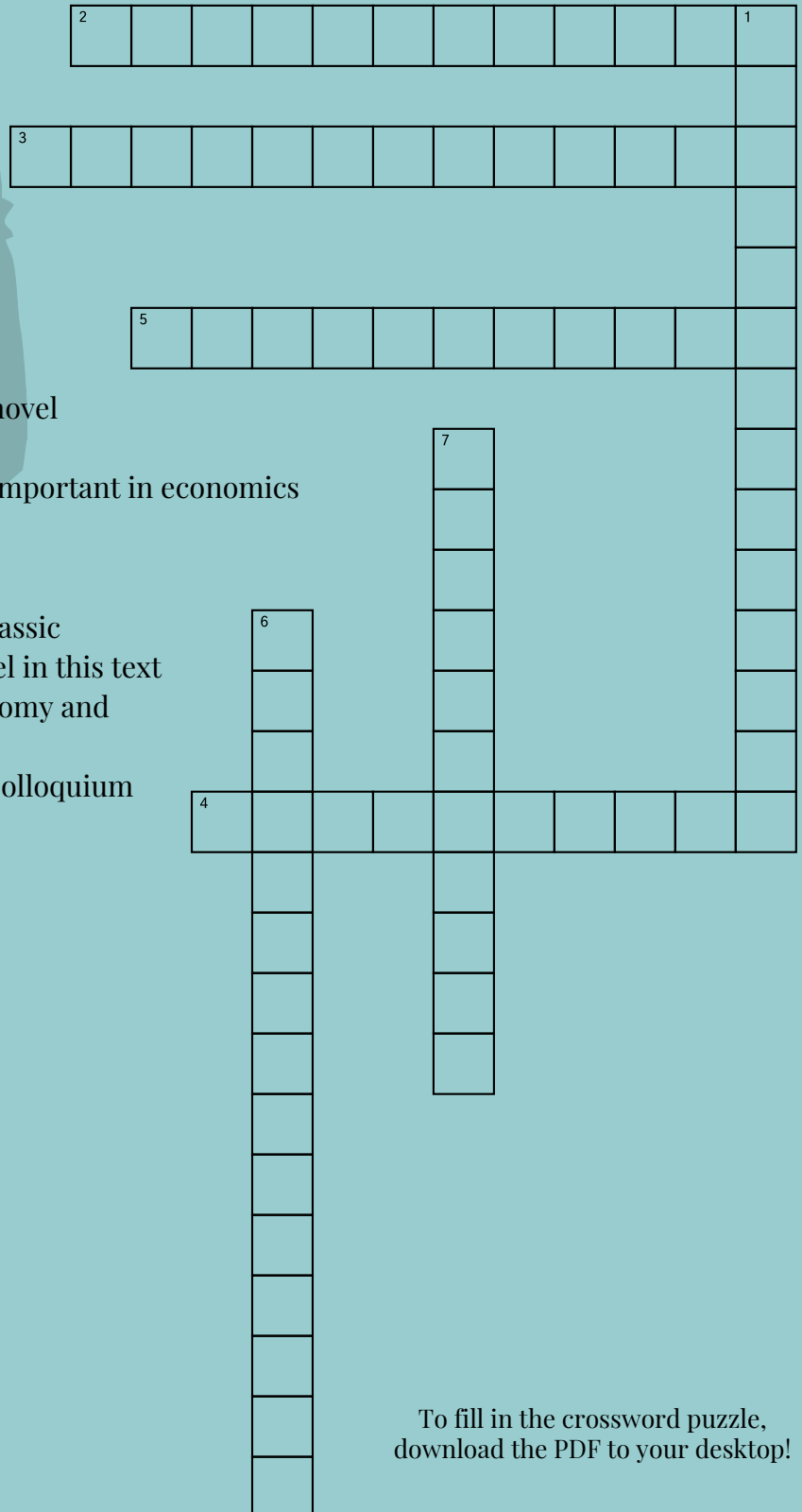
HUMANOMICS MINI

**Down:**

1. 100th Anniversary of this Fitzgerald novel
6. Author of The Master and Margarita
7. Bart Wilson argues that these are as important in economics as cost-benefit analysis

Across:

2. To explore choice, read this Milton classic
3. Buchanan used the deer/beaver model in this text
4. The Smith Institute for Political Economy and _____
5. Theme of last Humanomics Alumni Colloquium



To fill in the crossword puzzle,
download the PDF to your desktop!

MEME ATTEMPT #2



Let's see what you got.

SUBMIT A MEME

THANK YOU FOR READING

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the Humanomics Alumni Newsletter. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to connect with our community.

