

Advice from PhD to Early Career

Arun Kumar



UC San Diego

JACOBS SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Computer Science and Engineering

SIGMOD New Researcher Symposium

June 12, 2018

~~Advice from PhD to Early Career~~

4 things I wish someone had told me
bluntly before I started junior proffing!

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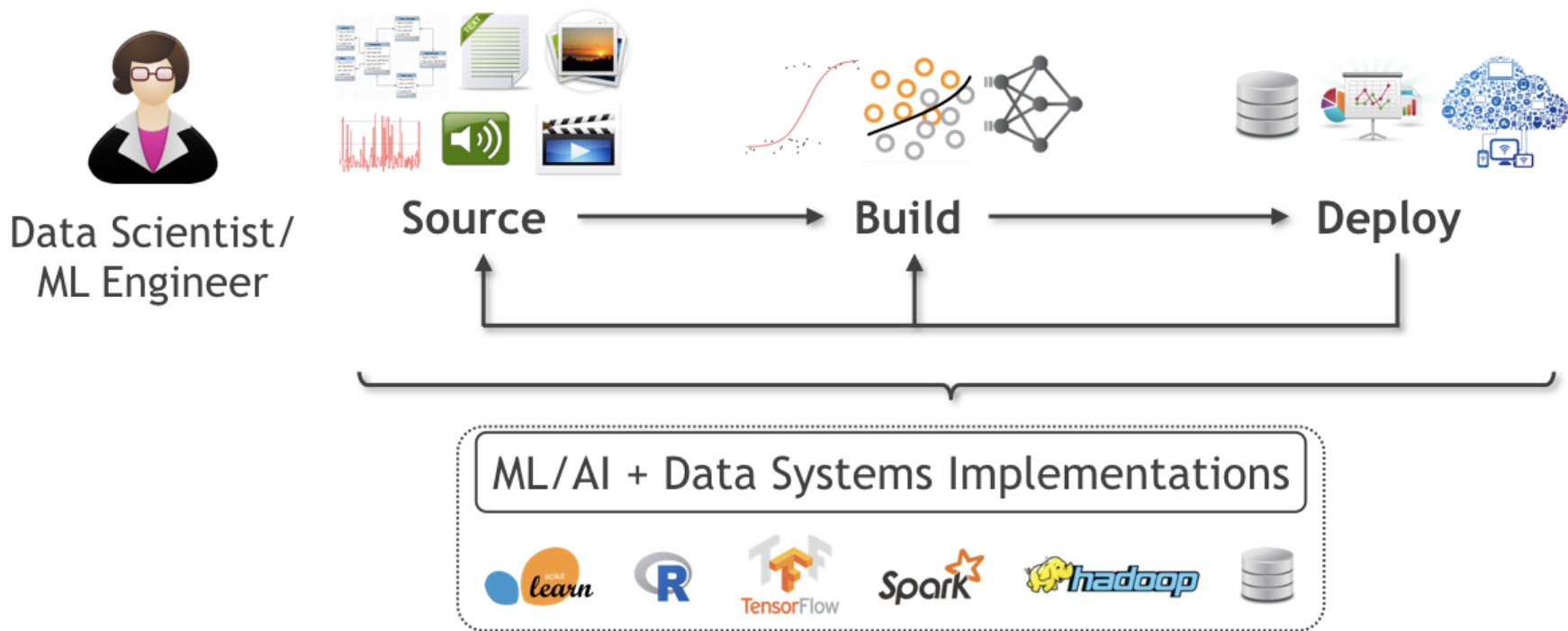
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My Research

Abstractions, systems, and techniques to make the lifecycle of ML-based data analytics easier, faster/cheaper, and scalable

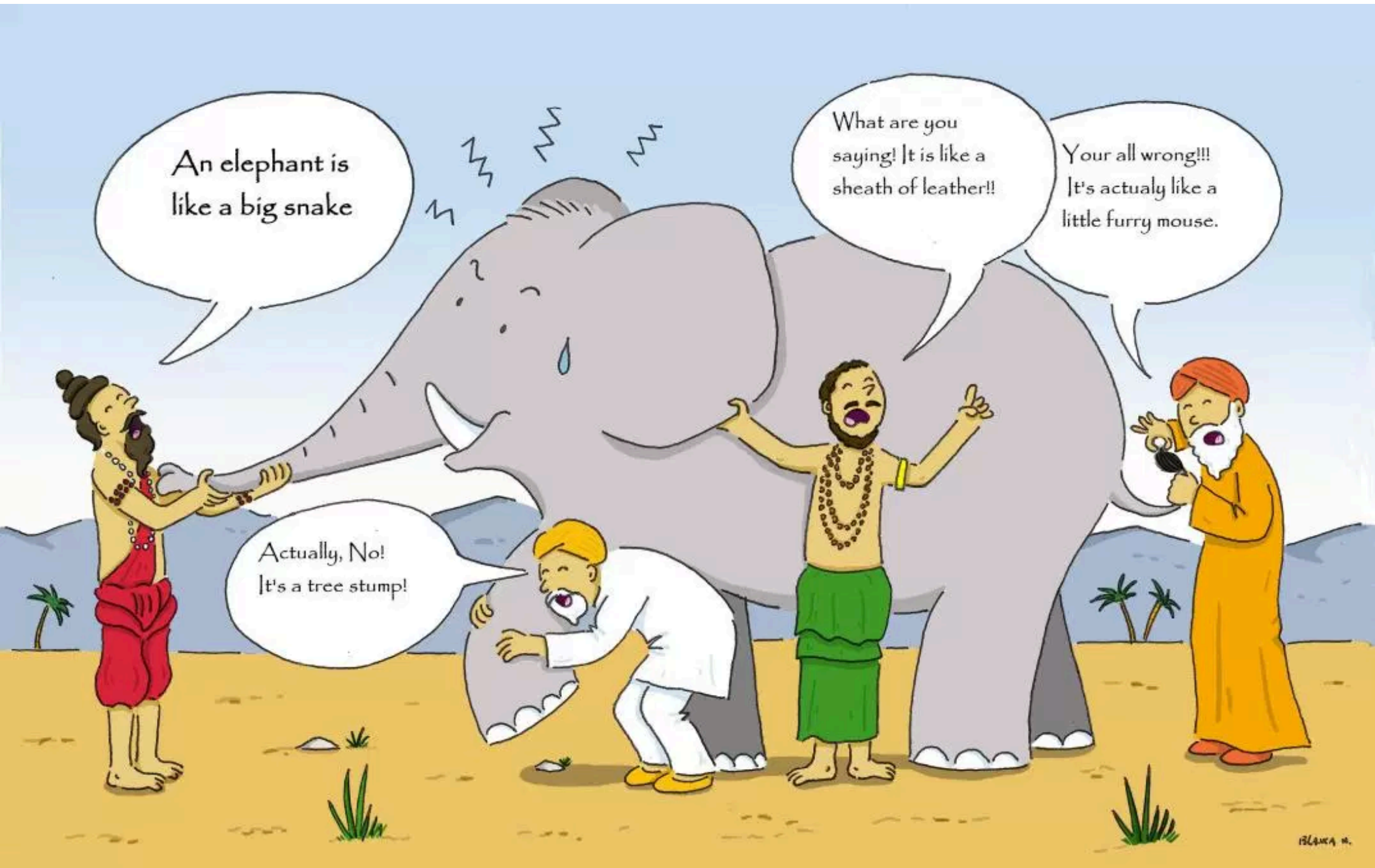


<https://adalabucsd.github.io>

These are the 4 things:

1. How to wage DB research cultural warfare
2. How to suck at proposal writing
3. How to squander time
4. How to become a sorry wreck of a junior prof

The Blind Men and the Elephant



The 4 “Canonical” Cultures of DB

The DB community is NOT a monoculture!

Culture	Main Progress Metrics	Nearest Neighbors in CS
Formalist	Non-trivial theorems	STOC, LICS, COLT, NIPS?
Systemist	System time/space/etc.	SOSP, NSDI, ASPLOS, ISCA
Heuristicist	Accuracy	KDD, WWW, SIGIR, NIPS?
Humanist	Human time/effort	CHI, UIST, VIS, PLDI

From an article on my research blog. 2018.

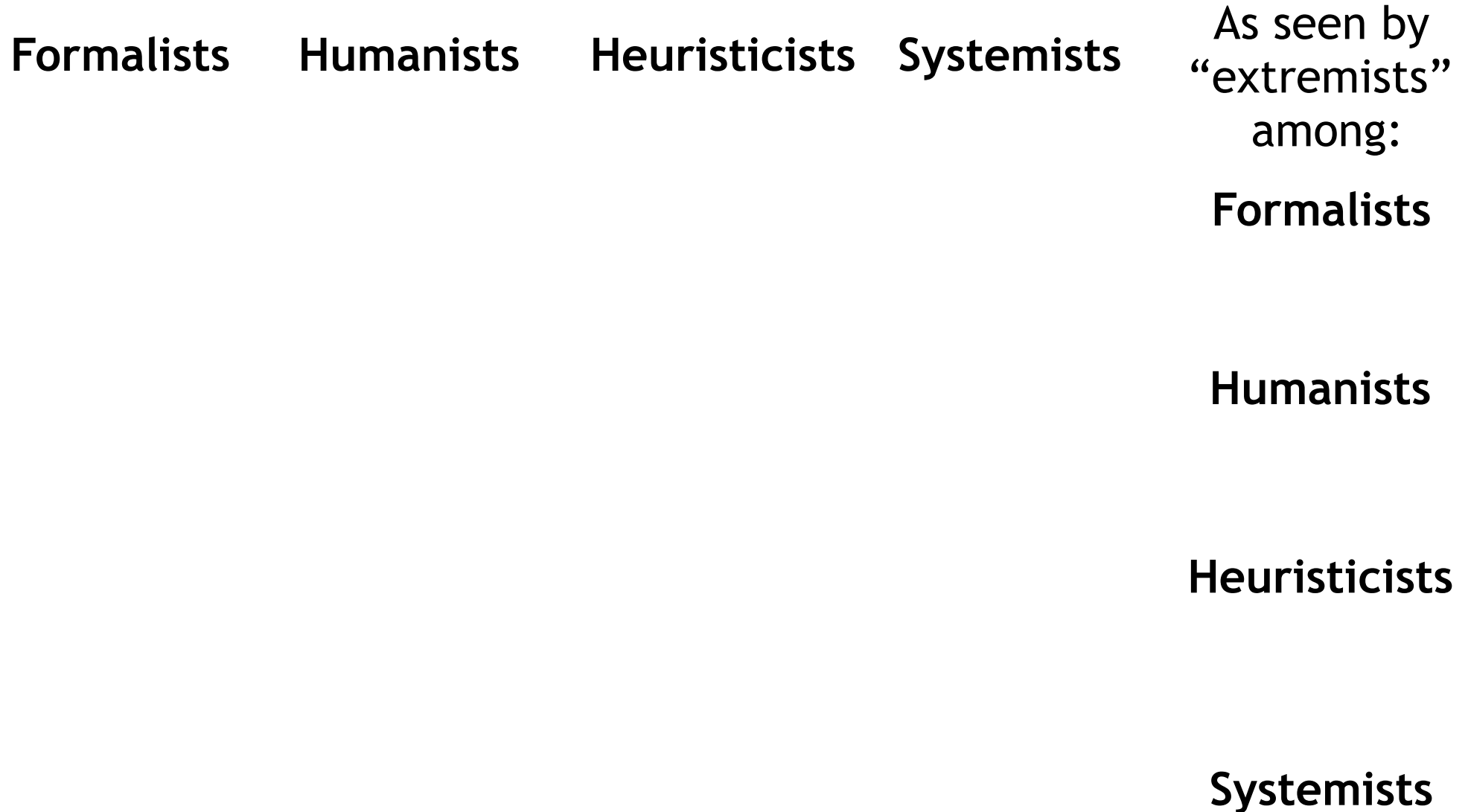
<http://thedadossier.blogspot.com/2018/04/the-culture-wars-of-data-management.html>

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The Tribal Culture Wars of DB

Formalists

Humanists

Heuristicists

Systemists

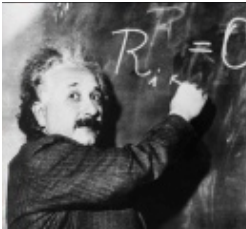
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among:

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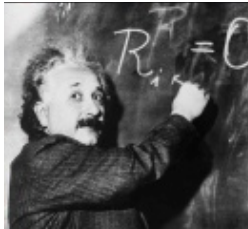


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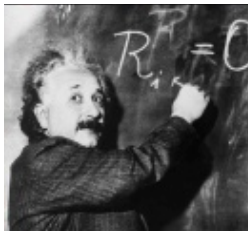
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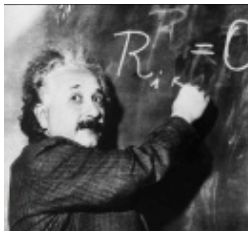
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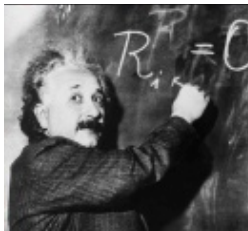
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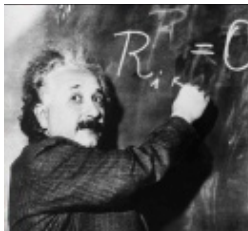
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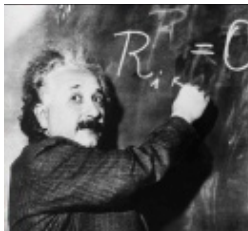
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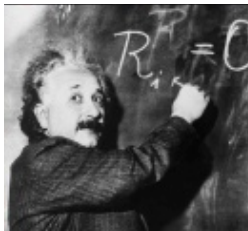
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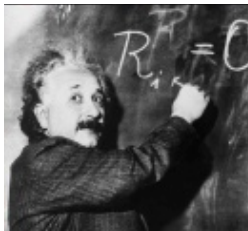
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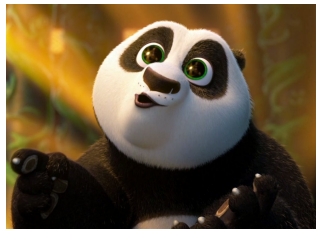


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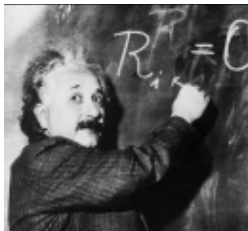
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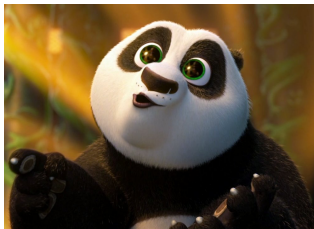


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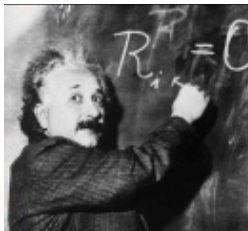
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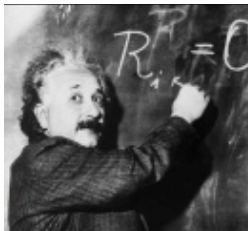
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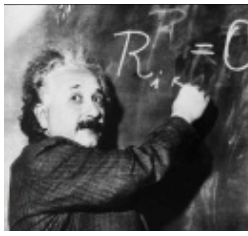
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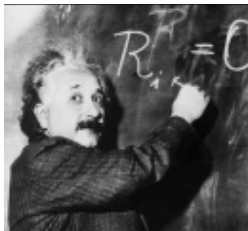
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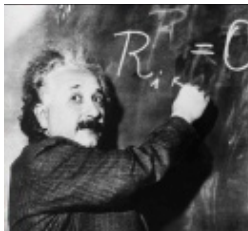
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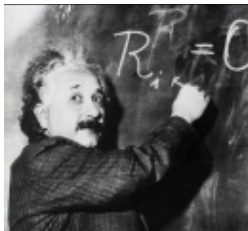
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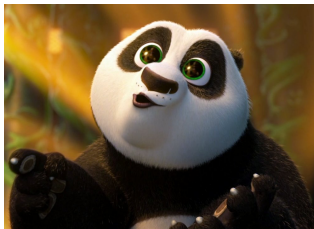


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*SIGMOD/VLDB's out-of-control culture wars are **toxic** and **emotionally abusive** of students and new researchers.
This madness has to stop!*

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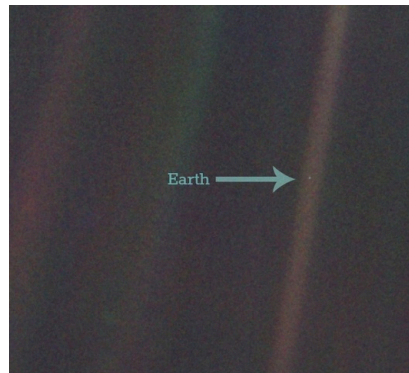
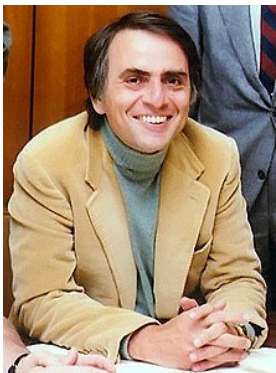
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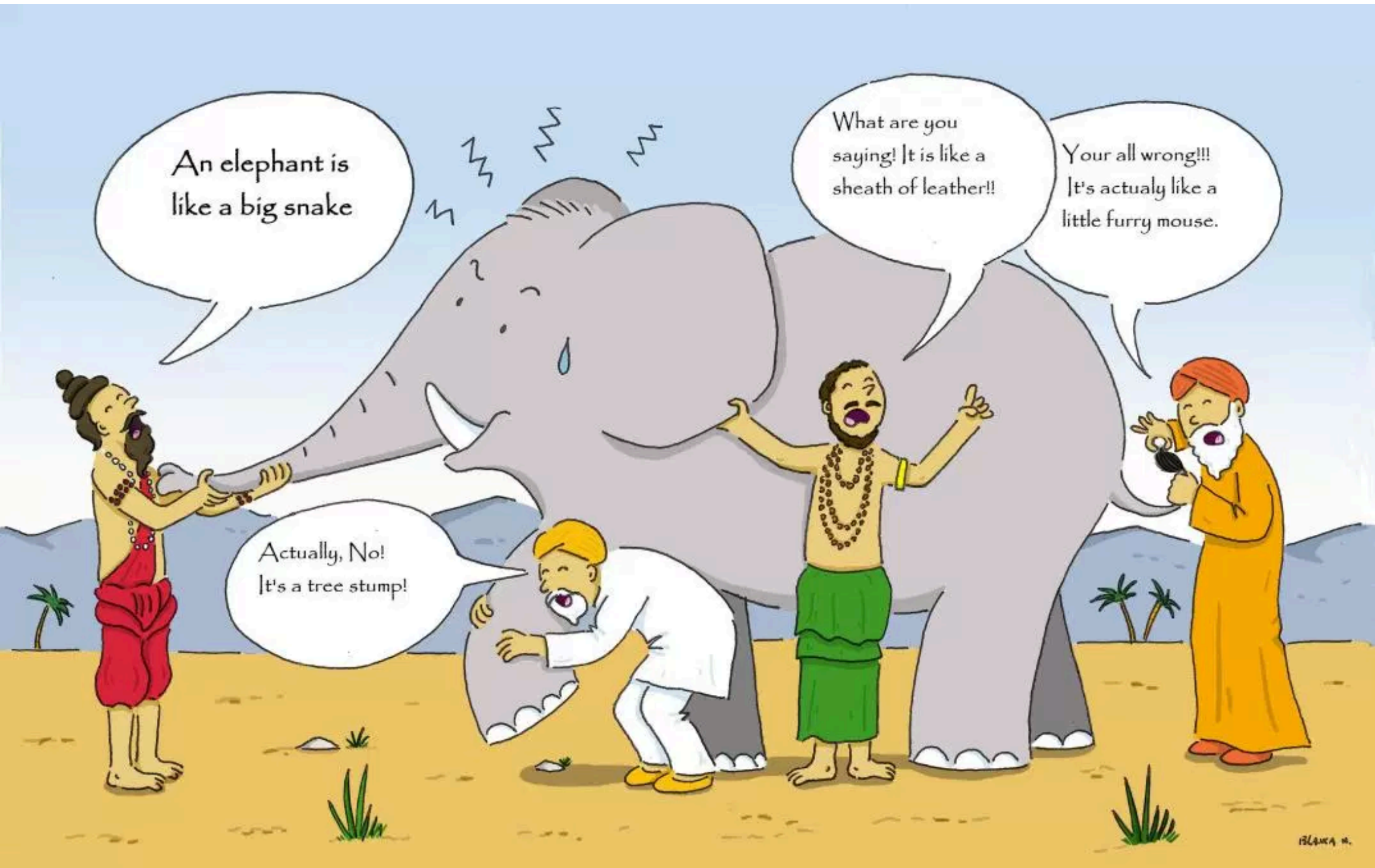
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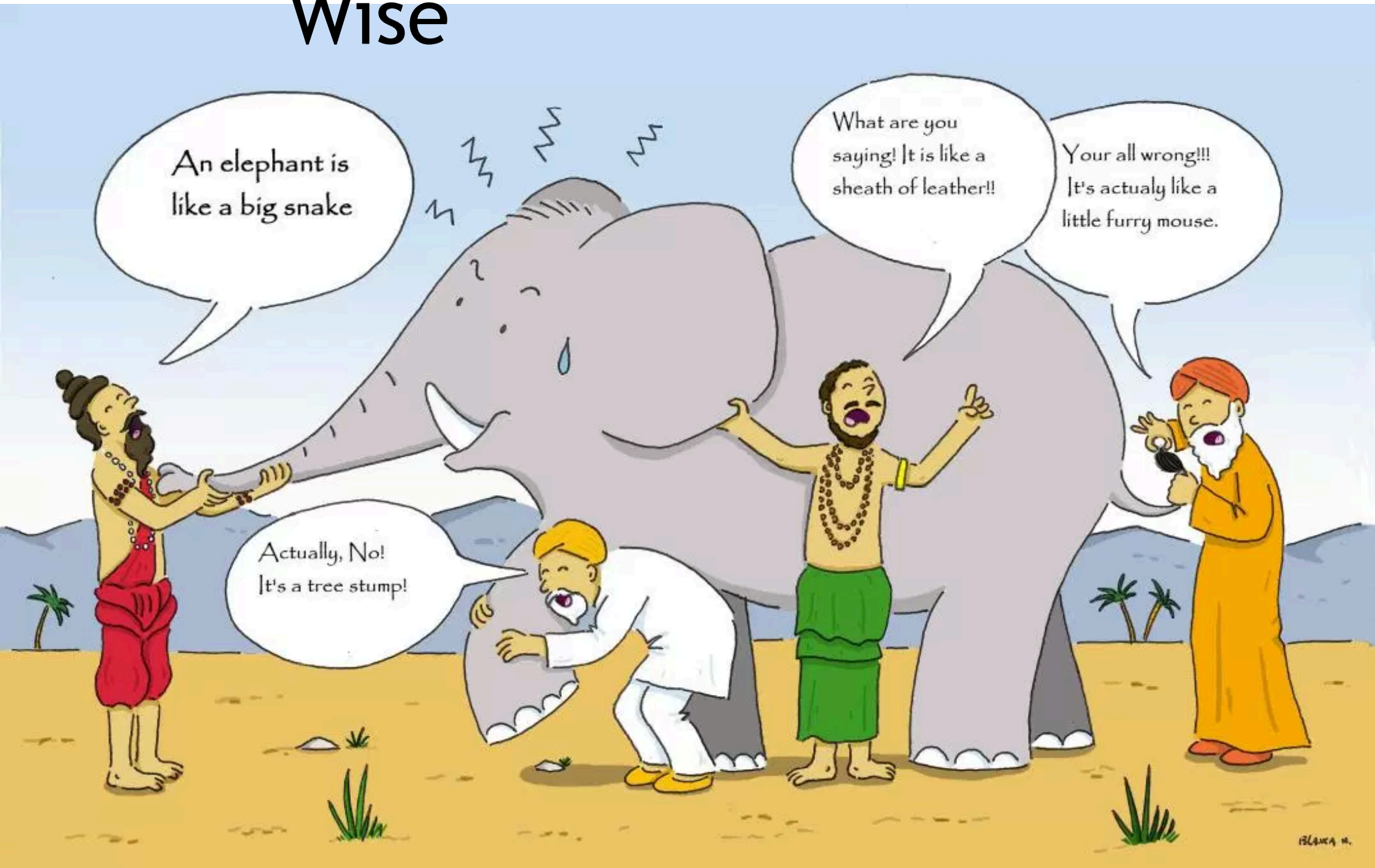
Pale Blue Dot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wupToqz1e2g&t=11s>

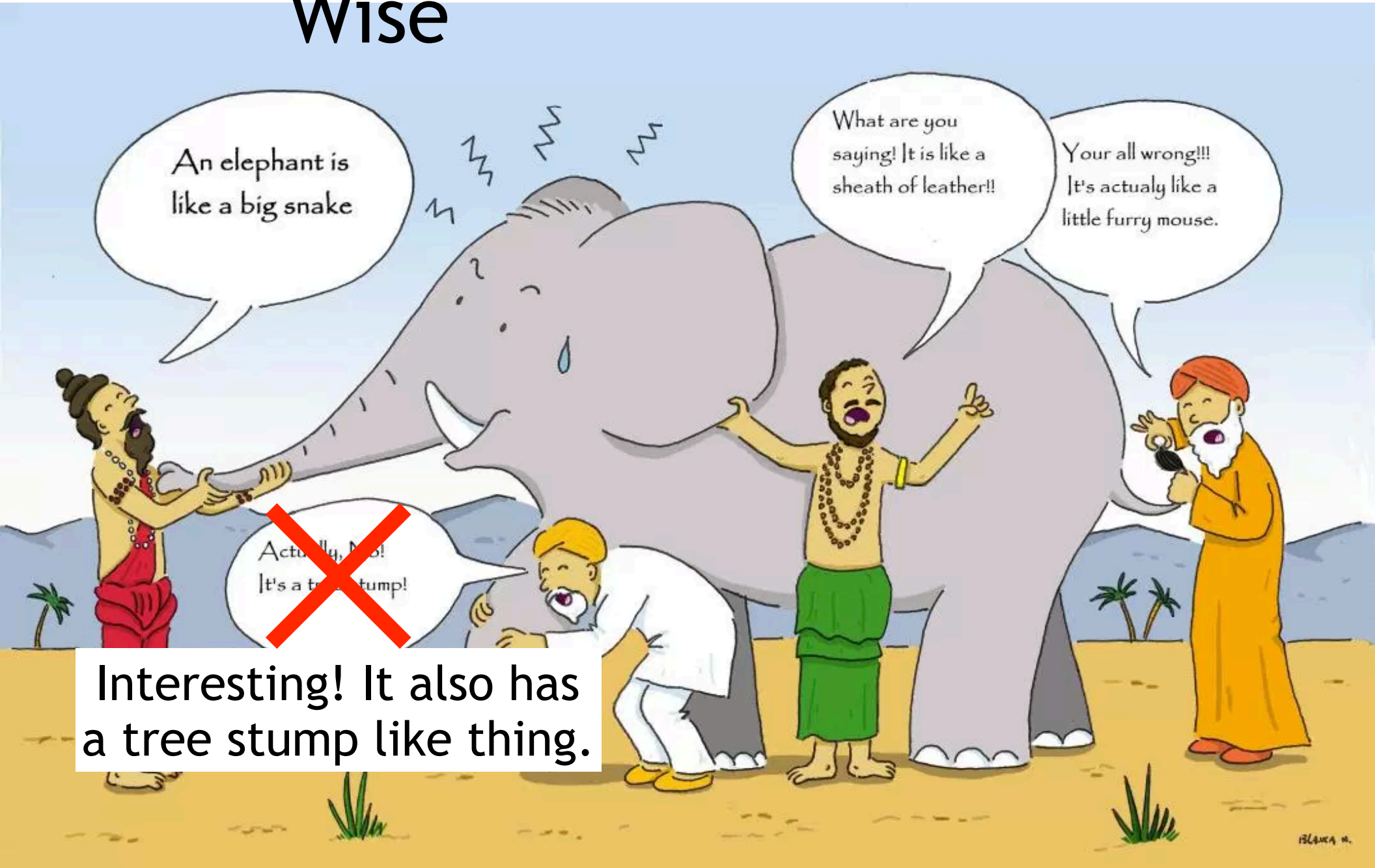
The Blind Men and the Elephant



The ~~Blind~~ Men and the Elephant Wise



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The ~~Blind~~ Men and the Elephant Wise

An elephant
like a big

Wow! I find it also feels
like a sheath of leather.

What are you
saying... it's like a
sheath of leather!!

You're all wrong!!!
It's actually like a
little carry house.

Incredible! We are
all learning so much instead
of abusing each other!

Actually, No!
It's a tree stump!

Interesting! It also has
a tree stump like thing.

2. How to suck at proposal writing

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early-ish (2 months before deadline)
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specific and explain technical depth and novelty clearly

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Seek straight-talking mentors at various levels that care

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Or else, they might mis-route proposals from newbies!

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Or else, they might mis-route proposals from newbies!

NSF: Do ~~not~~ contact the program officers a priori

Industry is more competitive and narrow

Industry: Propose stuff ~~not~~ on company's critical path

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*Learn to say **NO** unequivocally but diplomatically*

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Pick carefully; have “filtering” projects; let go if needed?

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only most visible and impactful (likely)

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4. How to become a sorry wreck of a junior prof

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4. How[^] to become a sorry wreck of a junior prof not

Ramp up comfortably; 1 great student > 3 mediocre ones

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4. How [^]to become a sorry wreck of a junior prof not

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Schedule everything, including leisure time

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Meditate, exercise, read, hang out, de-stress, have fun!

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Grieve, step away, [^]analyze, tally lessons, let go, move on

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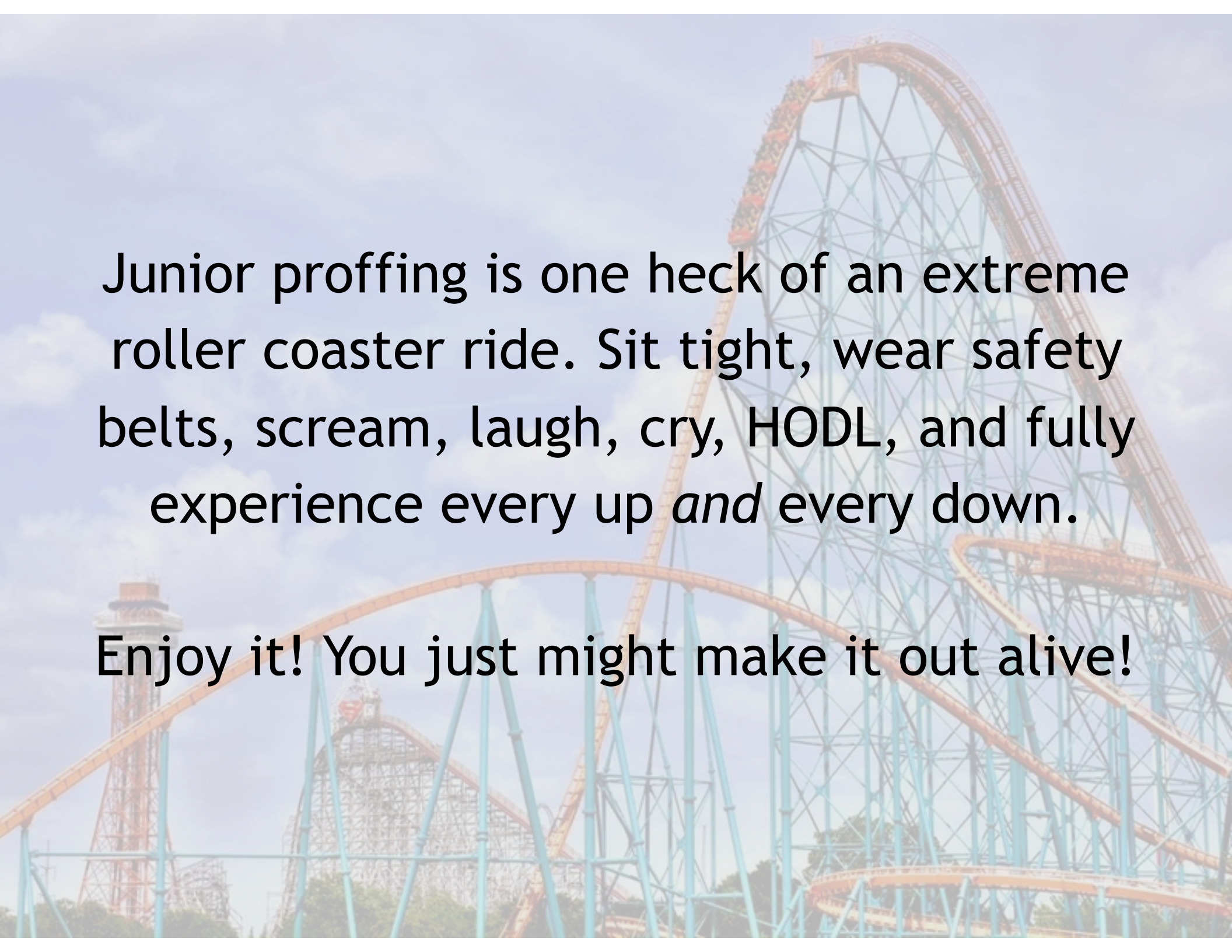
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Cultivate gratitude, equanimity, empathetic joy (“mudita”)

A roller coaster with a large loop and a drop, set against a cloudy sky. The track is orange and the structure is blue. The text is overlaid on the image.

Junior proffing is one heck of an extreme roller coaster ride. Sit tight, wear safety belts, scream, laugh, cry, HODL, and fully experience every up *and* every down.

Enjoy it! You just might make it out alive!

THANK YOU!

adalabucsd.github.io

arunkk@eng.ucsd.edu



@TweetAtAKK

Acks:

