

# Curating Your Life History

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Are you still recovering from the horror of dissecting, quartering and severing words you single-handedly wrote a few years ago? Do you feel nothing but mortified? Do you not recognise the self who wrote "u 2"? (I mean what were we talking about? The band, or addressing the other person in a tongue unbeknownst to mature human beings?) Great poems may talk about the nostalgia in details and beautiful images causing tears to well up in our eyes but the minute someone likes an old photo on Facebook, allowing you a glimpse of your past, there is nothing but blood rush and shame. Appraising people and frowning at fashion disasters can wait because you have to save yourself from the little embarrassment you used to be. We all used to be. So let's get down to the business of curating our lives. If it is not on Facebook, it never existed, never happened.

The 21st century with its contraptions, Photoshop and deleting options, is not the only age to experience such vigorous self-consciousness. Photos have been tampered with throughout history but only important people had the privilege of exercising *damnatio memoriae* (Latin for "damnation of memory"). Nikolai Yezhov disappeared from one of Stalin's photographs after he fell out of favour



Stalin was an early master of the 'Unfriend' button.

and was eventually executed, later earning the nickname "The Vanishing Commissar" among art historians. Thanks to democracy and technology the common people can now cut out anyone detracting from the beauty of a picture and there is no need of professionalism or access to high-level security. Likewise, words once spoken can now be unspoken and this is not only limited to Facebook.

Strings, another blessing from the high and mighty gods of technology, presents you the opportunity that you have always wished existed. This app

saves your life by letting you take back texts meant for your significant other but accidentally sent to your parents' number or texts you probably should not have sent to anyone in the first place. Desperate as you may be now to get your hands on this spectacular app, hopelessness, however, will not take over your freedom of speech either. This world values human rights. You are only a click-on-the-cross away on Facebook from purging your life of the horrendous orthography and humiliating lines you once thought were part of sophisticated humour; destroying evidence is the only

way to bury the past.

Curating your life by deleting or editing stupidities simply shuts the window to your past but Facebook's edit comment feature prevents the public display of awful typos. To err is human. Typos happen. So do bad photos and a budding distaste for that person smiling beside you in that almost-perfect photo. Were it the 1860s or 1940s, we would have been on the same social status as Lincoln or Stalin with these privileges but now we all have the license to kill words, and people.

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