Severance and academic incentives

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I see interesting connections between the work of the severed employees of the "macrodata refinement department" in Severance (Apple TV+) and academic research.

I see parallels between how both the severed employees of MDR and many academics attach meaning to what they do.

Mark suggests that the work is "mysterious and important" but one can't tell if he believes this, or is just fulfilling his role as a leader. (In the first season, the MDR employees have no idea what their work is about.)

Irving definitely seems to want to believe that "everything we do here is important", though Helly asks a good question: "It's important because it actually is? Or because you're saying it is?"

Dylan is all about the incentives, including erasers and finger traps for productive employees: "I'm smart. That's why I have three times as many finger traps as you guys." Replace finger traps with "top-tier publications" and many academics probably know the type.