



PRVA GIMNAZIJA
MARIBOR

HEARTBEAT

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Editorial

What can I say? It's been a rough time and it's hard to deny the chaos that has enveloped us for the past year. Along with losing our everyday routine, our generation, in particular, was robbed of precious milestones. Therefore, we'd love to complain about all our hardships, however, that's not the aim of this year's release of Heartbeat.

Instead of sulking about all the things that have gone amiss, we aspire to stay positive. Accordingly, we intended to create an edition that follows in the footsteps of the previous issues by demonstrating the type of peculiar thoughts solely "youngsters" can envision. Moreover, we prudently express them in a second language.

In doing so, I hope we manage to forge a time capsule of our high school years and the mindsets we bore at the time of writing - one that won't remind us of the days we spent

hiding from COVID-19 in the safety of our homes, but rather the experiences we shared at this school. After all, our transition from adolescence to adulthood is precious and so is this edition.



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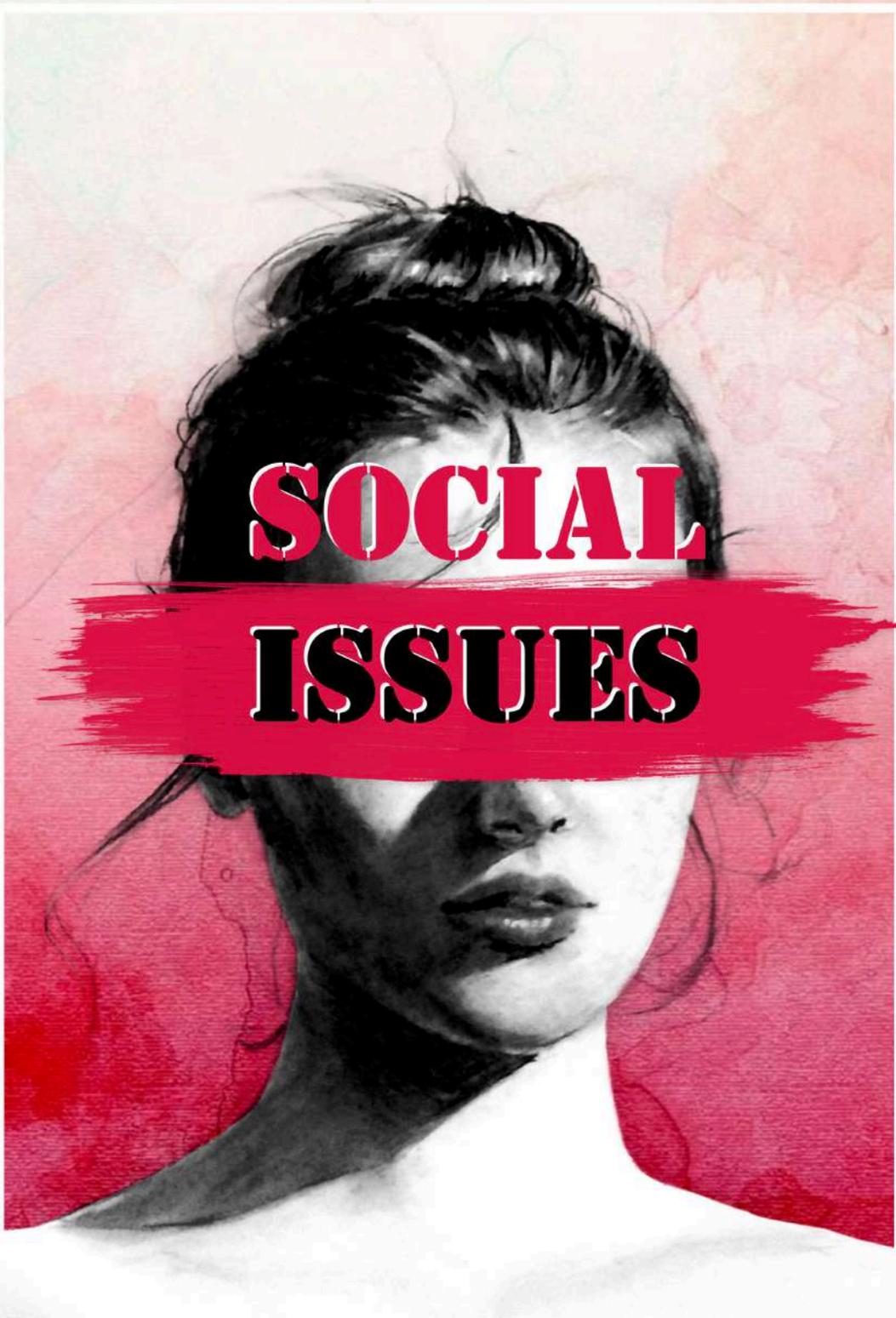
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SOCIAL ISSUES

780 Millions for Welfare not for Weapons!

In November, the National Assembly passed a law that assures financial means for investments in the Slovenian army. But not everyone was sure that such a big investment in the army during a pandemic, when we need to fund the health care more than ever, was a great idea. The Opposition Parties "the Left", "The List of Marjan Šarec", "The Party of Alenka Bratušek" and "the Social Democrats" immediately started collecting signatures to oppose the law, supporting a call for a referendum.

The investment of 780 million would ensure the systemic funding of the army in the next five years, from 2021 until 2026. During that time, the army would receive 100 to 145 million Euros each year, which would go towards buying new vehicles (tanks, helicopters, fighter jet, four-wheelers...), renewing the infrastructure (barracks), buying new weapons and new equipment for



the soldiers. Renovating the barracks and getting the latest equipment for the soldiers is important, but we must realize now is not the right time to give such a large amount of money to one organization. Besides that, most of the funding (about 408 million) would go into buying armored vehicles, which wouldn't even be used in Slovenia. Their usage would be limited to operations abroad.

Of course a lot of people, including political parties, didn't agree with that law so they decided to propose a referendum. The most active party which is still fighting against passing this law is The Left and instead of 2,500 they collected 28,000 signatures against the bill in a few days. Despite all the signatures collected, the National Assembly decided that a referendum is inadmissible, which was supported with Article 90 of Slovenian Constitution. The Opposition then announced they would turn to the Constitutional Court. In the latest news, we can read that it put the execution of a law on hold until they reach a verdict.

Agreeing that we could do better things with that kind of investment arose another question "what could we do with this money instead?" which surfaced in papers and other media. The conclusion was that eight new Departments of Infectious Diseases could be built, 10,000 apartments for the youth, 12,000 beds in senior citizen homes could be secured, and we could invest in Slovenian sci-

ence for three years. If we take into account that we are in the middle of a global pandemic, whose consequences will last for years, we can conclude that financial means should be directed into health care, supporting the economy and the development of the country. Yes, the military is still very important and should get new equipment as soon as possible, but at the moment, this is simply not the right time and the investment is too big.

Slovenia is definitely not endangered and none of the countries around us have interests in our land in which force would be involved. Right now our priorities should be maintaining peace within the country and being more tolerant, caring and kind to each other.

Zala Tepeh

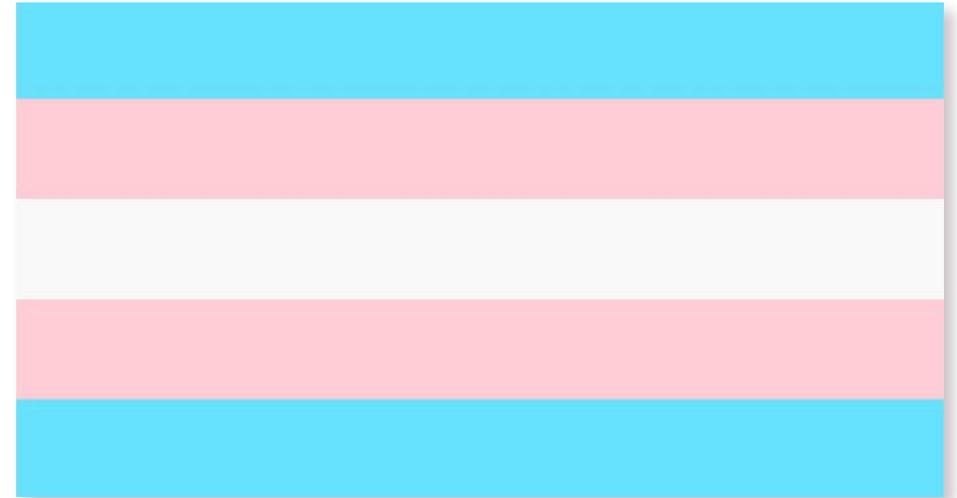
WHAT
IS IT
GOOD
FOR?

Puberty Blockers

At a certain age, every child goes through puberty, the period during which a person becomes sexually mature. In the process, a body goes through certain changes related to their biological sex. For most children that feels natural, but for transgender, intersex and gender non-confirming kids that process can cause extreme distress, since the changes that their body

is going through do not line up with their gender identity. That can cause severe gender dysphoria.

Gender dysphoria is a term that describes a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. By itself that is not a mental illness but it can be the cause of developing one. According to the



NHS Choices, people struggling with gender dysphoria might show signs of discomfort, including low self-esteem, depression and/or anxiety, becoming withdrawn or socially isolated, neglecting themselves, feeling pressure to behave a certain way etc. To help ease those signs, there is a medicine called puberty blockers.

Puberty blockers prevent puberty from happening. They work by blocking the hormones - testosterone and estrogen - that lead to puberty-related secondary sexual characteristics. Researches show that using puberty blockers will improve mental well-being and reduce their

gender dysphoria, thoughts and actions related to self-harm, depression and anxiety (Pubertal blockers for transgender and gender diverse youth, 2019)

"In those identified as male at birth, blockers will decrease the growth of facial and body hair, prevent voice deepening, limit growth of genitalia, decrease broadening of the shoulders and growth of Adam's apple. In those identified as female at birth, they limit breast development, menstruation and broadening of the hips" (Puberty Blockers for Youth, n.d.). Most children start the treatment between the age of 10 and 12. As claimed by Cohen





(2020), in the UK, they tried to move the appropriate age to begin taking blockers up to 16, when more than half of the puberty is already over. That could be extremely damaging to the community, since the puberty blockers cannot reverse the already developed characteristics.

As claimed by the National Health Service (NHS), puberty blockers are considered to be safe, but like every medicine they also have some downsides such as possibility of limiting growth and lowering bone density. Bone density can be regulated with proper nutrition and supplements under doctor's supervision. People who do not support the use of it, are mostly worried about the medication not being reversible and confus-

ing them for hormone therapy, where sex hormones and other hormonal medications are administered to transgender or gender non-conforming individuals, while puberty blockers just block those hormones and prevent puberty from happening and have a fully reversible effect.

One of the ongoing discussions about not trusting blockers is the medication being presented as "new". Puberty blockers have been around for about 30 years, they were just never used for helping trans and non-binary children but for children who started puberty too soon or too intense. As it seems, the problem is not in the puberty blockers alone, since there has never been a problem with cisgender children taking

them. The problem is leaning more towards discrimination against transgender people and transphobia in general.

Some people also show concern about the process of receiving the medicine in the first place, since they seem to think that as soon as their child starts questioning their gender identity, the treatment will be assigned to them immediately. Fortunately, there are certain criteria that must be achieved. For usage of puberty blockers, a person must "show long-lasting and intense pattern of gender non-conformity or gender dysphoria, gender dysphoria being emerged or worsened with the onset of puberty, address any psychological, medical or social problems that

could interfere with treatment and provide informed consent" (Pubertal blockers for transgender and gender diverse youth, 2019).

Letting a child have more time to explore their gender identity, if they consent to it, can overall improve their mental well-being, but delaying puberty can also be extremely stressful, especially amongst their peers. Children should not be forced to identify and act as a sex they were assigned at birth and their questioning of sexual identity should be properly supported, which also means that they should not be pressured into transitioning. It is crucial to understand that taking puberty blockers is equally a medical and emotional decision.

Naja Ledinek



The Significance of Representation in Media

Recently I was re-watching *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* when I had an epiphany. See the protagonist of the series Newt Scamander is socially awkward, to say the least. Throughout the movie he's distinctly shy, finds it hard to express what's on his mind and has trouble holding eye contact. Despite all of



these imperfections, he's the hero of the story. Communicative ineptitude doesn't burden him, if anything it's presented as charming. This comes as a pleasant surprise to me and my social angst, which is usually portrayed as a hindrance in media. Moreover, it sends the message that I can be the hero of my story, not despite, but rather alongside my imperfections. Such messages are powerful and each one of us deserves to receive them. Sadly, not everyone does, which doesn't go unnoticed.

The role models we adopt as kids and even as adults have a considerable impact on our future ambitions. Watching a relatable strong hero on-screen makes you feel like you could do anything. However, consistent representation of a limited crowd (Harry Potter, Indiana Jones, James Bond ...) leaves everyone else feeling the opposite.



Most storylines and characters roughly follow the same outlines whilst only changing the setting. To authors/producers deviating from the standard formula poses a risk as it is unfamiliar to neither readers/viewers nor their wallets. Wistfully, this typical outdated recipe for success caters to a white male audience. Limiting people of colour, women or just about anybody that isn't a flawless male to a side character at most. Consequently, the movies that strive to make us feel as though we could do anything, only reach a handful of people while the rest of us feel inadequate. With

these means movies, books, comics and ads quietly hint at what our role in society is depending on our attributes. All while faintly denying the "anything is possible" slogan they hide behind.

Understandably, people have been exponentially protesting this mindless repetition of obsolete standards. As they often even ruin the work that they're forced into, it's easy to get on board. *Ghost in a Shell*, for example, is a unique Japanese story that was whitewashed and adapted into a movie that arguably nobody liked. Who would have thought taking everything that set a story apart away

would lead to a box office failure?

It is encouraging to see the strides recent films have been making to destroy these norms. Nevertheless, many are far from perfect, as they often focus on the contrast between the depicted untypical hero and the perfect one that we're used to. All while forgetting about the actual plot or quality of the movie/book. This is why I love how endearingly the aforementioned Newt is portrayed. J. K. Rowling merely places an unfamiliar character-type (Newt) into a familiar story and setting

(the wizarding world), only acknowledging his divergence without dwelling on it. This allows for an exciting change without shocking the viewer too much.

So, I'd argue it's essential to keep creating unconventional heroes that young people can relate and look up to. Children are entitled to dream big, regardless of how crucial (gender and race) or trivial (stutter and beauty) the discrepancy between them and the norm in whichever field is. No medium should take that away from them.

Maša Štraus

Future Innovations

Innovation as scientific progress and theoretical research began as early as in the 1950s to as late as the 1980s. Since the 80s and 90s, we had breakthroughs after breakthroughs and the end doesn't seem to be on the horizon yet, if ever. Some think that the 21st century will be the "Grandest Era of Innovation".

Future innovations look to enhance life, to make certain procedures even possible or easier, as the main motivation of current, past and future scientists and innovators is to make the impossible, well, possible.

Most current ideas would be categorized into medical, electrical, robotic, computer and many more categories. Therefore, here are some of those grand ideas that will probably be either theorized, innovated or made by 2050.

The innovations mentioned and explained below are based on an article, published by Science Focus on August 14th 2020 called "Future technology: 22 ideas about how to change our world".

Medical innovations

Heart monitoring T-shirt

It's basically what it says to be – an electrocardiogram (ECG / EKG) would be implanted into the fabric of the shirt, measuring everything heart related and the statistics would be uploaded through Bluetooth to probably their respective application on your mobile phone. These would make recognizing and preventing heart at-



tacks, cardiac arrests and diseases much less of a problem than they already are.

Cancer-detecting 'smart needles'

This is also what it says to be – an injected needle with incredible cancer detection skills and diagnosis times would tell if an individual suffers from cancer and at what stage it is. This would stop the cancer threat and the mistakes doctors and surgeons make either at operations or at analysing what the person is suffering from.

Crowd-sourced antibiotics

Some researchers found bacteria with antibiotic resistance, called superbugs. They are looking to reverse engineer them and make some basic and simple antibiotics out of them, which could be a very efficient treatment against almost all bacteria.

Electrical innovations

Internet for everyone

As of right now, only about 59% of humanity has reliable and stable access to the inter-

net. Some companies are trying to increase this percentage. One company is releasing helium balloons, which beam the internet to usually inaccessible areas of the world, while others are using the help of drones and last but not least with shoebox-sized microsattellites, which are sent into the low orbit of the Earth. The last one has been proven to be the most reliable, efficient and popular.

Car batteries that charge in 10 minutes

Scientists have developed car batteries that increase their internal temperature to approximately 60 degrees Celsius in about 30 seconds, and charge themselves to 100% in roughly 10 minutes and after that cool down in the same amount of time it took to heat up. This removes the problem of prolonged heating up and cooling down, which can cause lithium spikes and degrade the battery. This would make time efficiency with electrical cars much easier to handle.

Self-driving trucks

Some companies have start-

ed to research driverless trucks, which would solve many logistical and life-quality problems, such as speed and the safety of cargo, as the computer never needs a break, and it would be cheaper and less labour-enforcing. They would also drive more safely and use much less fuel, saving the logistic companies much of their precious money.

Robotic innovations

Living robots

These tiny robots, made from stem cells of frog embryos have been created and could be injected into our bodies. They would fight against viruses and bacteria as well as provide cells with their needs. These robots could also be used to gather microplastic pieces in the ocean, cleaning the world in the process. This is one of the biggest breakthroughs as of right now.

The AI Scientist

Scientists have created a semi-conscious computer, which solved the mystery about flatworms' immense ability to regenerate if cut in

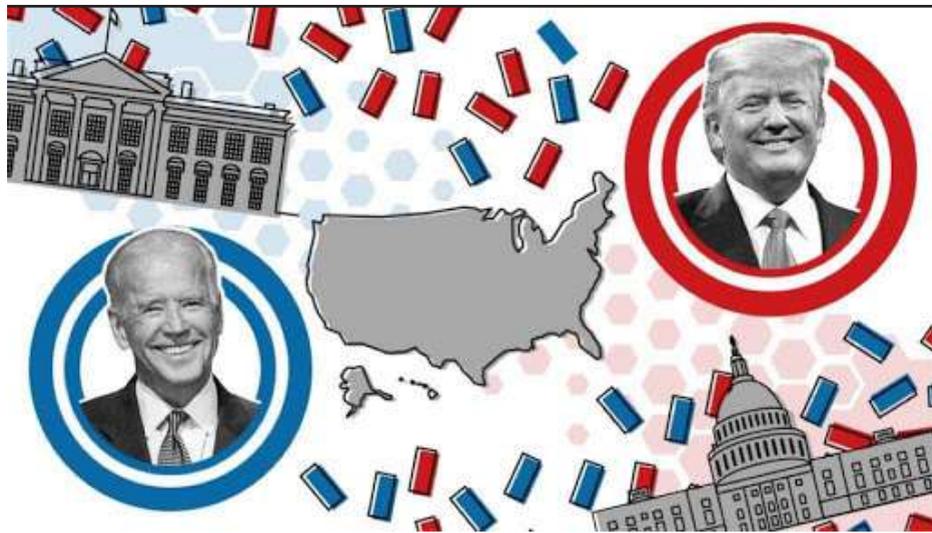


half and reparability under radiation. But that's beside the point – the point is, the computer was able to run scenarios after scenarios, analyse information and come up with a logical theory in only 42 hours. This is a second breakthrough and maybe, the start of conscious computers.

With these kinds of experiments, innovations and breakthroughs, the world's future looks ever so bright and I am sure it will be brighter as the decades go by.

Jaša Igrac

The US Election Protocol



At the time of writing this, the US elections have been one of the most trending topics in the World as the Inauguration Day was approaching and Joe Biden, at that time president-elect succeeded to win over Donald Trump as the 46th President of the United States of America.

The protocol itself

Becoming a president of your own country is a dream goal for many citizens of their respective countries. Some want to change their country for the better (or, potentially, worse) and others for fame,

money, power, or all of them. The election protocol in the United States of America may be one of the more interesting ones amongst them all as it is different from others. For example, in Slovenia, a parliamentary republic, the people elect the Prime Minister or the leader of the government and the President of the country or the Head of the State. Moreover, in the United States, the Head of the State is the leader of the government.

Before the nomination

Before the process even begins, the one who wants to

become the president has to fulfil three requirements – they have to be a natural born citizen of the US, have to be at least 35 years old, and have been a resident of the country for at least 14 years. In the spring the year before the election, people announce their intention to run for the presidency and therefore become presidential party nominees. They can run for one of the major parties – Republicans or Democrats – or as an Independent party. Of those, the most popular is the Libertarian Party.

The nominees then campaign around the whole country, trying to convince people to support their cause and to vote for them. In the summer of that year until the spring of election year, Primary and Caucus debates take place. Caucus is a statewide meeting of party nominees, where they convince the state residents to vote for them. In each state, the amount of support for each nominee grants them delegates. In the Democratic caucus, surpassing 1.991 delegates makes the nominee the presidential candidate for



the Democrat Party and 1.276 for the Republican Party. The process takes place from January until June, and the candidates are nominated from July until early September.

After the nomination

In September and October, the candidates take part in presidential debates. There, the two of them speak about different topics, trends, issues, big problems, and their way of solving them. These give those yet undecided voters a clear picture of what the candidate's goals of the mandate are, what they will focus on during it, and their opinion on the latest issues. The candidates' goal there is, of course, to appease all voters and sway them from their opponent.

The election

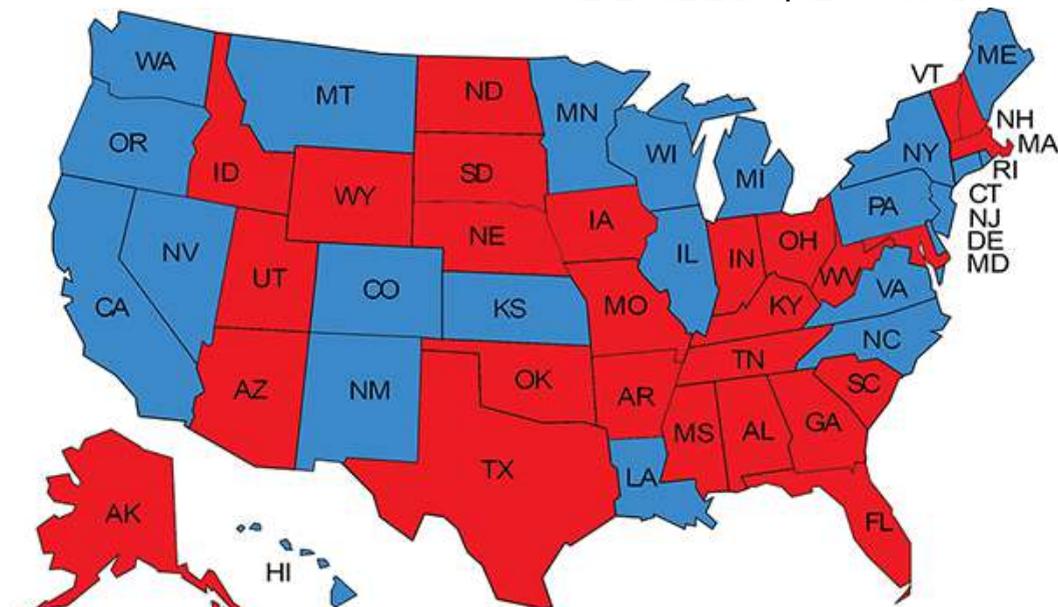
In the first week of November, Election Day takes place. Citizens vote either by going to the polling places and cast their votes, which is favoured by Republicans, or voting with a mail-in ballot, pre-ferred by Democrats. The rest of the week is pretty heated, and the candidates hold speeches ad-dressing the nation, usu-ally with positive words or to increase the morale of their campaign.

The Electoral College

The voting system follows the Electoral College system. Firstly, the votes are count-

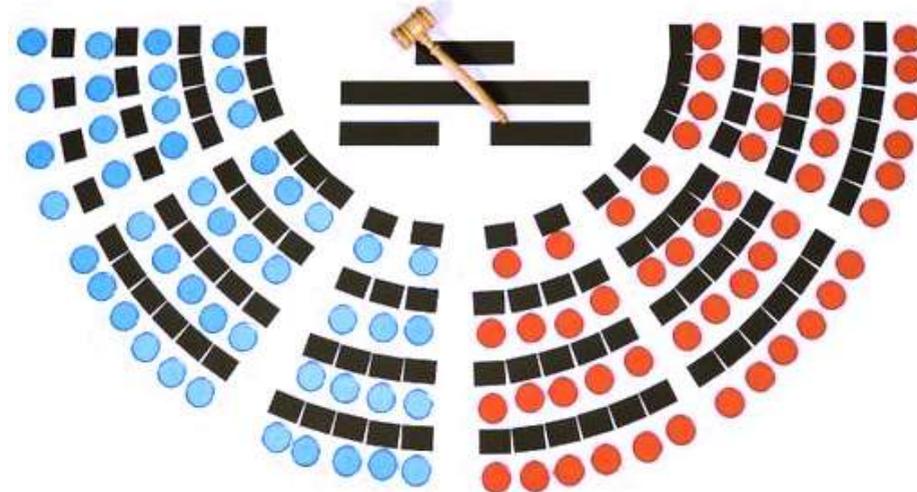
ed by the state and then they become either blue or red – depends on which party got the majority. The party gets “points” for each state they win – these are electors. Each state has the same number of electors as the number of rep-resentatives in the US lower house – House of Represen-tatives, and in the US upper house – Senate. The candidate needs 270 out of 538 electors to win the presidency.

In December, these Electors cast their votes – bearing in mind that they can choose the losing party if they wish to, an event that very rarely oc-curs. After all, electors choose their candidate, the votes are



Democrat (23)

Republican (27)



counted and the one with the majority becomes the President-elect of the United States of America.

The Inauguration Day

The current president, un-less he ran for the 2nd term and won, is president until January 20th, when Inaugu-ration Day takes place. On that day, the President-elect becomes the next president.

A voting tie

Of course, the electoral votes may come to a tie, mean-ing each candidate received 269 votes, then the House of Representatives chooses the president between the candi-dates. The outcome of this sit-uation most of the time lies in which party holds the major-ity of the House unless some

Repre-sentatives decide to go rogue, which happens rarely.

The Senate and House voting

In the same period, States vote for their Senators and House Representatives, who represent their state in the US Senate and US House. Each state has exactly two US Senators, while the number of House Representatives are decided, based on the popula-tion. Alaska has the least with merely one representative and California has the most with fifty-three of them. Both the Senators and House Rep-resentatives are elected based on the percentage majority

Jaša Igrec

Women in the Shadows

We all have heard of plenty of women who changed history like Marie Curie, Rosa Parks, Amelia Earhart, Michelle Obama, Margaret Thatcher, Princess Diana, Mother Teresa, Queen Elizabeth II, Oprah Winfrey ...

Throughout history, women had a big impact on all aspects of public and personal life. They fought in wars, encouraged equality for everyone, and invented things we cannot imagine living without. Despite that, a lot of them were overlooked and are rarely spoken about.

For example, if I asked you who found out that DNA has a double helix structure? Your answer would probably be James Watson and Francis Crick. That is what most resources state. But have you ever heard about Rosalind Franklin? She was the chemist and expert in X-ray crystallography who took pictures of DNA molecules crucial for

their discovery.

What about Hedy Lamarr? Have you ever heard of that woman who played in 30 movies and co-invented an early version of frequency-hopping spread spectrum communication for torpedo guidance?

If you haven't heard of them, perhaps you do know Grace Hopper, United States Navy rear admiral, who created FLOW-MATIC programming language.

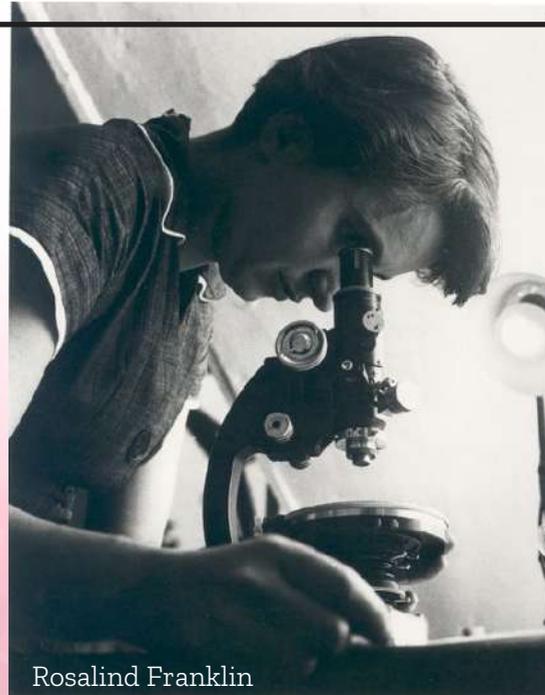
Or maybe you are more interested in planes. Have you heard about Bessie Coleman, the first African-American woman to hold a pilot license?

To continue, if geography happens to be your favourite subject, you might be interested to know that Marie Tharp, an American geologist and oceanographic cartographer, together with Bruce Heezen, created the first scientific map of the Atlantic Ocean floor. Their work led to the acceptance of the theories of plate tectonics and continental drift. Another important discovery was made by Inge Lehmann, who con-

cluded that Earth must have a molten outer core. Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin was another woman responsible for a great discovery that shocked scientists. She discovered that stars are made primarily out of hydrogen and helium.

If you prefer mathematics, you should really know something about Creola Katherine Johnson, whose calculations were critical to the success of NASA's spaceflights.

Of course, we do not think a lot about that, but what if you get a terminal illness? In that case, you can thank Cicely Saunders, who established the importance of palliative



Rosalind Franklin



Marie Tharp



Inge Lehmann



Sarah Breedlove



Beulah Louise Henry

care, hospices, and modern medicine.

On a happier note, let's talk about Mary Anning, who found a fossil, that later became known as Ichthyosaurs, which led to the discovery of the dinosaurs' existence.

If you are interested in business, then you might be interested to learn about Sarah Breedlove, who invented the first line of cosmetics and hair care products for black women and became the first female self-made millionaire in America.

Now, let's discuss female inventors. If you have ever driven a car during the rain, you were probably grateful for windshield wipers. They are the invention of Mary Elizabeth Anderson. She

thought it was very impractical that people had to stop the car or trolley cars to wipe the windows. She patented them even before Ford started manufacturing cars. And what if you live in a building with more than one floor and a fire starts? Well, you can thank Anna Connelly for your safe escape, as she invented it. Another important invention was made by Josephine Cochrane, who designed the first working automatic dishwasher only because she thought washing dishes was boring. If we are already talking about inventions, we shouldn't overlook "Lady Edison" aka. Beulah Louise Henry, who received 49 patents and invented around 110 products, including the bobbin-free sewing machine and

a vacuum ice cream freezer.

If you are interested in World War II, you must learn about the 588th Night Bomber Regiment (known later as the 46th "Taman" Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment) of the Soviet Air Forces. They usually idled the plane engine near the target and, glided toward the bomb-release point, the noise of the wind, according to Germans, resembling the sound of broomsticks. That earned them the nickname Night Witches. Two other important women from World War II were sisters Freddie and Truus Oversteegen, who were distributing anti-Nazi pamphlets, disabling bridges and railroad tracks with dynamite, smuggling Jewish children out of the country and helping them escape the concentration camps. Occasionally, they lured Nazi soldiers into the woods under the pretence of a romantic overture, where either they or anti-Nazi soldiers killed them. Freddie was the first of the girls to kill a soldier by shooting him while riding her bicycle.

Another heroine is Sybil Ludington. During the American Revolutionary at age 16, she rode 64 km on a horseback to alert people of the approaching British forces.

This list could go on for ages. Yet despite all these female historical figures, women are still often seen as less capable than their male colleagues, which leads to new issues, for example, the gender pay gap. Even education is not accessible to girls in some parts of the world. As Gayle Smith, president of the One campaign, said in 2017: "Over 130 million girls are still out of school - that's over 130 million potential engineers, entrepreneurs, teachers and politicians whose leadership the world is missing out on." Thankfully, that's not the prevalent issue in our country, where we all have access to schools. Schools, like Prva Gimnazija Maribor, where those potential engineers, entrepreneurs, teachers and politicians can educate themselves for their future.

Tia Nerat Tomc

Searching for Happiness in an Era of Advertising

Our current reality, compared to all of history, illustrates the most privilege humanity has ever seized. Advancements in medicine and technology make every step of life painless, starvation is at an all-time low, and deaths due to war are declining. On average, we work less and get better rewarded for it. Moreover, anything we faintly crave is far easier to acquire than in the past. All thanks to capitalism which allows for a larger number and variety of products. Yet happiness, or rather satisfaction, is decreasing. It seems to be the one thing we cannot obtain.

What's interesting is the correlation between the rise of advertising and the downfall of general satisfaction. Advertising is presently inescapable, regardless of your lifestyle. It's on your phone, tv, radio and just about anywhere else your attention might wander. It repeatedly promises that this one advertised product will finally make you feel happy and whole. Although we all know it never holds up on the promise, we still buy an abundance of soon to be trash as it gives us temporary satisfaction. We've grown accustomed to this never-ending cycle, often not even realizing all parts

of it were manufactured and paid for by whatever company profits from our newfound misery. And it certainly is newfound misery, as their advertising is what strives to create new social norms. Norms we can only adhere to by using their products.

Perhaps the most damaging widescale case of this is Gillette's shaving campaign for women from around the 1920s. Until the advertising campaign, it was practically unheard of for women to shave, as they had no reason to do so. After all, they didn't grow facial hair that got in the way of things as men did. But Gillette changed that by essentially telling women that they should be ashamed of their body hair and lying about shaving being common practice outside of America. The campaign worked so well, that body hair on women is frowned upon as unhygienic and disgusting to this day. Thus, Gillette singlehandedly changed female beauty standards, all to make a quick buck. Sadly, destroying our self-esteem isn't where companies draw the line.



Believe it or not, proposing with a ring, is far from a tradition passed down through the ages. It only became common practice in the last 80 years because of the De Beers diamond corporation. They began an advertising campaign essentially bullying men into proposing with a diamond ring, as that was what "real men" supposedly did. One of their ads even suggested a man needs to drop a two-month salary on an engagement ring. This unreasonable and redundant expectation



What Does Canada Do Differently

Hi, my name is Patrik and today I will describe to you some of the major differences that I have experienced between Canada and Slovenia. I lived in Canada for 4 years. Now let me fill you in. The lifestyle in Canada is different than here in Slovenia. In general, everything, like houses, shopping malls, roads, airports and just cities in general, is bigger due to the land difference. There's a lot more fast food and chain restaurants, as well as many clothing stores. Canada is also very large and has a huge selection of cool, beautiful and unique landmarks to visit. There is a lot of snow as well. I went to a private school and yes, there are differences between public and private schools. Public schools are free to any Canadian between the ages of 5 and 18, while private schools are quite expensive and are not free of charge. Public schools can be attended by the kids that live in the area around the school.



to acknowledge the origin of social expectations, which makes them less frightening. But most notably, you need to find satisfaction in your current life, the way you look and the things you own. Trying to fit into an unrealistic mould of what a perfect person is and has will never work out. New social norms will keep appearing out of thin air so trying to comply is next to impossible.

The only way you can hope to avoid this is to love yourself exactly the way you are, along with every pimple, stretch-mark and scar. Who said those things aren't beautiful in the first place? I implore you to challenge your beliefs and habits. Don't just blindly follow the rules someone else made up for their own benefit. Begin to romanticize what is and not what could be by only purchasing and indulging in the things that sincerely make you happy rather than what is "necessary" or popular. Then maybe, just maybe, you might indefinitely escape the toxic grasp of advertising and achieve happiness

Maša Štraus



Illustration by The Bay // Jacket for the De Beers Collection by Jan Hoog

May your happiness last as long as your diamond

As shimmering water mirrors the brightness in the sky, your gleaming engagement diamond reflects the happiness in your heart. This fair token of love declares your hopes and desires, and holds them close through all the years for constant recollection. That is why your diamond seems to glow in loneliness. Your diamond, though it may be modest in cost, should be chosen with care, for nothing else on earth can take its place.

a Diamond is forever



1-carat VS1 round \$850 to \$950
1/2-carat VS1 round \$350 to \$450
1-carat VS1 oval \$900 to \$1,000
1-carat VS1 pear \$1,100 to \$1,200

De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.

has stuck around, leaving many men ripped off, without them even realizing it.

Sooner or later we're all exploited in this fashion. Advertising manipulates us into feeling inadequate either because of our appearance or our assets. Furthermore, we're bombarded with it every day, which leaves us routinely troubled. Nevertheless, it is possible to alleviate the damage it causes.

First and foremost, you need



On the other hand, private schools can be attended by anyone from anywhere. All schools vary in size; some have 200 students while others have over 2500. In my school there was a total of 250 students ranging from kindergarteners to high schoolers. Now let me tell you what the differences are.

Firstly, the school system in Canada is way different than in Slovenia. At least in my school the atmosphere in the class felt relaxing and easy-going. I wasn't afraid to ask the teacher ridiculous questions that didn't make sense. While here in Slovenia I rather ask my classmate than the teacher, because I

feel like the whole class would laugh at my question. In private schools, especially small ones, the classrooms are small, therefore the number of classmates too. For example, in my class there were only 10 students. Because the school was so small I knew every teacher and almost every student in the school. But in public schools there can be 30 kids per classroom. In Canadian schools you would never get questioned for a grade, instead you would have to give a presentation, that you had time to prepare for. There were also group projects that I did with my friends that we were graded on. Additionally, teachers never announced our grades publicly in the classroom. In Slovenia it is exactly the opposite. You even have to confirm your grade and I'm probably not the only one who gets unpleasant feelings in case of a bad one. A disadvantage in Canada (at least for me) were exams that we wrote at the end of each semester. For each subject the exam was two hours long, covering topics that we learnt during the whole semester. It

also counted for 30% of our final grade. The exam week was really exhausting, but they made it easier by giving us the study guides three weeks before the exams so we had enough time to study.

We started school at 8:20 am and finished at 3:30 pm. As you can see we were in school for quite a long period of time each day. But this was not necessarily bad. We were able to finish almost all of our homework and assignments in school. And we had gym class every day for 40 minutes which was a lot of fun, since we usually played sports in teams against each other and the gym teacher participated in the games as well.

Secondly, the food in Canada was heavily inspired by American food. Steaks, burgers, hotdogs, fries, Mexican food and ribs. What isn't American inspired is maple syrup and poutine (no, not the president of Russia). Poutine is fries covered with gravy and cheese curds. I also started to love Mexican food, especially the fast food chain Chipotle and their burritos. In my school

there was a food program and I did have it for a few months, but I found it to be repetitive so I brought my own lunch to school from home. Except on Mondays when the school ordered pizza if you paid.

Thirdly, sports were also a bit different. Football as we call it here in Europe is in Canada and America known as soccer, but it's not as popular as hockey, American football, basketball and baseball. In Canada there was a lot of snow during winter and that's why most Canadians would play hockey, go skiing or snowboarding. I feel deeply in love with skiing. I loved skiing through powder snow and



going through glade runs, which were all possible, because of the amount of snow Canada gets. It's the only place I can remember where I skied in minus 30 degrees Celsius. It was very cold, yet very enjoyable. Each Christmas in the last four years was a white Christmas which is something I really miss here in Slovenia. Unexpectedly, I found trampolining which was a great way to release all the energy I had inside of me. You could also train for a sport just for fun, while here in Slovenia everything is competitive.

In general Canada was great yet very different from Slovenia and that's the thing I loved about it. Some things were better and some worse, but overall I enjoyed my stay there.

Patrik Dobaj Matjašec



Nostradamus Legacy

Nostradamus was born in Saint Remy de Provence, France, in 1503. He initially obtained recognition, not for the prophecies, but for his work as a physician, treating patients of the Black Plague, which was ravaging Europe at the time. Later in his life, Nostradamus began writing his predictions for the future. Later in 1555, he published his most successful work, known as *Les Propheties* (The Prophecies). He started writing them using quatrains. This, of course, was very difficult to interpret in today's world as it still has experts baffled. So why did he choose to write his predictions in quatrains? He did this, so he does not get prosecuted for predicting the future, which could be the devil's work. However, there is more to the understanding issue as he wrote his prophecies in several Greek, Italian, and Latin languages.

Firstly, Nostradamus foresaw events taking place in his

lifetime. He predicted that a monk that he met on his travels would be the future pope. He was correct. The monk did eventually become Pope Sixtus V in 1585.

He also predicted the death of King Henri II who ultimately died during a ceremonial jousting match when he was stabbed through his mask, as this quote shows, *"The young lion will overcome the older one, on the field of combat in a single battle; He will pierce his eyes through a golden cage two wounds made one, then he dies a cruel death"*. His opponent was 6 years younger than him, hence *"The young lion"*. However, even though Nostradamus warned Henry, he wouldn't note what the prophet tried to tell him, resulting in his death.

His last prediction happened to be his death. On the evening of July 1, 1566, he reportedly told his secretary that he would not be alive the

next morning. Truthfully enough he was found dead the following day in his bed.

Michel de Nostradamus's most significant predictions occurred centuries after his passing, like the French Revolution of 1789. Of course, this prediction is attributed to one of his quatrains and it states, *"From the enslaved populace, songs, chants and demands while princes and lords are held captive in prisons. These will be in the future by headless idiots be received as divine prayers."* The French Revolution was referred to as "the enslaved populace," which will rise to overthrow the French monarchy and prove the French Republic. People were executed by being decapitated via the guillotine.

Nostradamus may also have predicted Napoleon Bonaparte's rise, referred to by the Napoleon experts as the "first antichrist". In a specific quatrain, Nostradamus used the words, *"Pau, Nay, Loron."* Experts claim this is an anagram for Napoleon Roy, or Napoleon, the King (Roy) of France. Obviously, after this,

Napoleon would go on to conquer Europe and eventually get defeated and die. Nostradamus is also thought to have predicted the rise of the second antichrist, Adolf Hitler. The prophet wrote, *"From the depths of Western Europe, a young child will be born to poor people, he who by his tongue will seduce a great troop; His fame will increase towards the realms of the East."* Adolf Hitler was born in Austria, which explains why Nostradamus stated, "the depths of Western Europe." He persuaded his supporters, the "great troop," to follow him in his conquest campaigns and war crimes, which were mostly committed in Eastern Europe described by Nostradamus as "the realms of the East."

Another event that the French seer potentially predicted was 9/11. This was a catastrophic terrorist attack as having been described by Nostradamus in his quatrain. *"Earth shaking fire from the centre of the Earth will cause tremors around the New City. Two high rocks will war for a long time, and then Arethusa will redder a new river."* Proph-

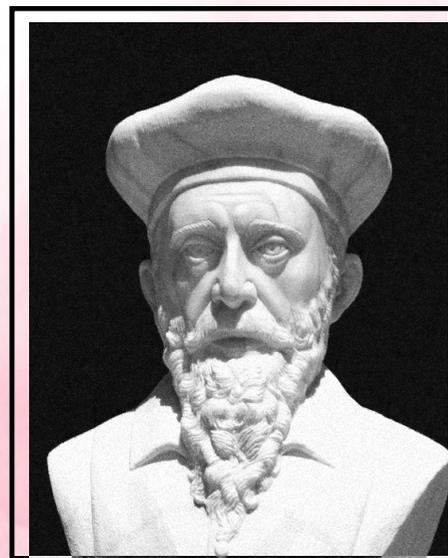
ecies suggest that "New City" refers to New York City and that the "two high rocks" and "centre of the Earth" refer to the two towers that constituted the World Trade Centre.

Another interesting question referring to the current situation in the world would be: did Nostradamus predict Coronavirus? Arguably yes, he did. In the year 1551 the prophet wrote this, *"There will be a twin year from which will arise a queen who will come from the East and who will spread a plague in the darkness of night, on a country with 7 hills and will transform the twilight of men to dust, to destroy and ruin the world"*. We see that it's relatively easy to understand, "twin year" possibly mean-

ing the years 2020 and 2021, "come from the East" implying China and the "plague" meaning virus, the "country with 7 hills" representing Italy and "transform the twilight of men into dust" referring to death. We know this might be true as Italy was in a deep crisis for a while in spring, shortly after pandemic spread all over the world.

The essential predictions of Nostradamus are arguably the ones that have not yet come to pass. Among these prophecies is the arrival of a third Antichrist, a third world war, and the same year the world will come to an end. The story of Nostradamus has many people questioning to the present day how anyone born in Renaissance-era France could have predicted such events that would purportedly occur centuries after his life and passing.

It is definitely true that as long as humanity seeks to know what the future holds, historically impressive figures like Nostradamus will continue to intrigue us.



The Influence of Social Media on Our Lives

Social media has a huge impact on individuals and their lives, and with the growth of modern day technology the impact is constantly increasing. Even though social media brings many positive effects to the human race, it also bears many negative ones. Prior research has shown that the use of social media may detract from face-to-face relationships, reduce investment in meaningful activities, increase sedentary

behaviour by encouraging more screen time, lead to internet addiction, and erode self-esteem through unfavourable social comparison.

The current generation is already so much more affected by global events than past generations. However, the following generations, which will be populating the Earth in about 50-100 years, will feel the consequences of our mistakes. Today we hear a lot about climate change; due to population growth, we satisfy the need for more space in destructive ways, such as deforestation. Thousands of articles have been written about it in newspapers and magazines. Social media has a big role in spreading awareness about global problems.

Through social media, our generation is more aware of the reality of things than past generations have ever been. Because of that, we are all hyper-obsessed with having control over every little event that takes place in our lives. We are overly concerned about what other people think of us. Hence, we pretend everything is glamorous on our social media platforms. We are fixated on the fact that our life has to look perfect on social media, because influencers and celebrities do the exact same thing. Even though our lives seem perfect on social media, our real lives start to drift away from the made-up perfect life that we post. We constantly compare ourselves and, in some cases, our lives become unhealthy and can even lead to mental health issues like anxiety and depression. With influencers and models appearing idealistic, teenagers become more insecure and have lower self-esteem, which can lead to eating disorders. On the other hand, there are many influencers who promote exercise and healthy eating, which is



beneficial. However, there are people who advertise different brands and their products, which may not be as good as they seem. These products can be detrimental to your health and influencers advertise them purely for commercial reasons, which is why people should be wary of social media influencers. Genuine health professionals, who want to help you as well as recommend good products, can be overshadowed by social media influencers and not have as much influence on our lives. Yet without real health experts, our lifestyles would no longer be as healthy and people would not know who to trust or which prod-



ucts to buy.

In the current situation and because of restrictions limiting social interactions in person, social media helps bring us together and preserve our social lives over screens, which is a passable alternative. Social media also makes it easier to make friends and helps build relationships. It connects the whole world and can make it seem small. Additionally, companies utilize it as a channel for advertising, which is environmentally friendly, as no natural resources are used for materials, such as posters and billboards. Finally, some people also use it as an escape from reality, helping them manage stress and discomfort.

In my opinion, social media has a huge influence on our lives and our interpretation of the perfect life many people strive to achieve. I love how easy it makes it to stay in contact with friends and family. On the downside, people don't value face-to-face interaction as much anymore. Social media platforms allow us to share information and

education to individuals in a great capacity and on a grand scale. However, when used negatively, social media can be extremely detrimental to our mental health and has been the trigger for increased anxiety and social problems. It is important to know the dangers of social media and be wary of them, yet if used properly, social media can be a great thing.

Pia Rumpf



Introspection

Motivation is what initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviour. It is also what the majority of us have lost in recent months. But who can blame us? After all, we are witnessing the relentless rampage of a global pandemic in the so-called prime of our lives. What previously brought us joy, like hugging a friend or grabbing some coffee, is unattainable. So it's only natural to reach for the next best thing, which happens to be the quick yet insufficient dose of serotonin the internet provides. To no one's surprise, this is far from the ideal stimulating environment motivation requires to blossom. But don't fret! The heartbeat team is coming to the rescue with all the information you need to remotivate yourself. First off I want to clarify it's perfectly normal to lack motivation at the moment. Nearly

all forms of encouragement that we consistently rely on have vanished. Although extrinsic/external motivation hasn't disappeared, its effect is limited when conveyed through a screen. Additionally, intrinsic/internal motivation, which generally requires a challenging setting, fails to be provided with one. Leaving the likelihood of naturally emerging encour-



agement is remarkably low. Luckily motivation doesn't always spawn out of thin air. If we understand it, we can create it ourselves regardless of how unstimulating our environment is. All it takes is a bit of knowledge and practice, so listen closely. The first component of building motivation is activation, which means signing yourself up for commitment (e.g. buying a workbook). Second is persistence, which is quite self-explanatory (e.g. solving the workbook every day). To help yourself be more persistent, you can plan out your days ahead of time with to-do lists or bullet journals, changing your workspace also plays a considerable role, as our brain tends to get bored with the same old surroundings. Merely working in a different room or tidying up your own can solve this issue. Last, but not least is intensity (e.g. how many pages of the workbook one goes through per day). Intensity is hard to regulate since too little of it produces boredom, yet too much causes anxiety. I suggest breaking up big tasks into smaller

steps to avoid burnout while still feeling accomplished. How we approach the actualization of these components varies from person to person. Something that might motivate me will do the opposite for you and vice versa. However, if you haven't got a clue where to start here are some tips: Eat enough tasty and healthy food and exercise five times a week. This is essential, as it improves mood, boosts energy and promotes better sleep among other benefits. To improve concentration, try listening to classical or low-fidelity music while you work. The Mozart effect suggests such music allows you to relax and absorb more information. Reward yourself after successfully finishing a task. Your brain will begin to associate the assignment with the treat that follows suit. Most importantly stay positive and don't let failure discourage you. You've got this.

Maša Štraus

How to Read More

In March, when the quarantine first began, a lot of us saw that time as an opportunity to improve ourselves in any matter possible. I personally took it upon myself to read more books. Reading has been quite a hobby of mine for a while now, yet I often felt wary of mentioning it, mainly because most people I know don't like it. Some people are simply too arrogant and narrow-minded to try to open a book, while some like the idea of reading but when they actually do start, they get bored and end up giving it up. Although I'm a keen reader now, it hasn't always been like that. From my personal experience, I found three habits very important and sticking to them has increased the quantity of books I've read.

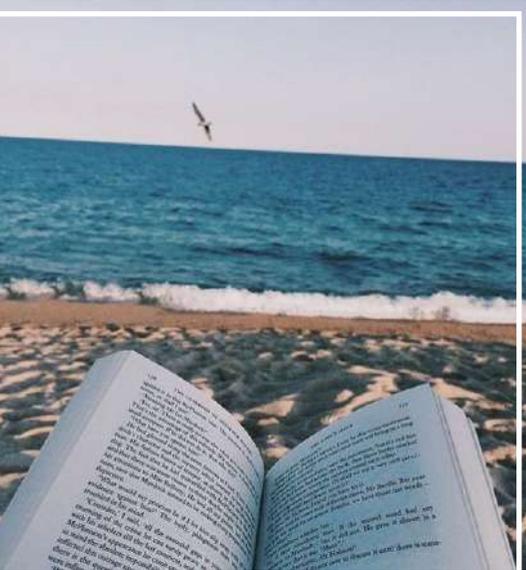
For starters, pick up the reading material that genuinely interests you and appeals to you. Very quickly into our schooling, we're forced into reading books that are



mandatory but boring. While I agree that those books are a must, they tend to reflect badly on reading of all sorts and make us despise reading. The easiest way to find a book to your liking is to simply watch television. If there's a certain movie or a series that you like, enquire if the movie is a book adaptation and read it.

Secondly, take your reading material everywhere you go.

You'd be surprised about how keep-ing a book by your side at all times comes in handy, especially if you find yourself in uncom-fortable social situations. I always bring a book to school as it sometimes makes long breaks between lessons bearable and



entertaining. As soon as you start doing this, you'll find yourself reading more and more, no matter what the situation; whether you read on public transport, at a party or in school – it doesn't matter. As Lemony Snicket once said: "Never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them."

And lastly, don't read aloud

and try not to pronounce words in your head. This might sound silly but it's a big factor for me. For example, when you have to read a fragment of a literary text aloud in school, you tend to focus more on reading it fluently and pronouncing the words correctly, rather than on the meaning of a text. You end up not knowing what you've read or you completely forget the context. Quit the 'inner monologue' and focus on the meaning and the plot of the book rather than making sure you carry it out outstandingly.

I don't think anyone hates reading, they just haven't read the right book yet. You will never catch anyone say they hate watching TV. Why? Because everyone watches movies and series they personally find interesting and fulfilling. Why doesn't the same apply to books then? At the end of the day, the genre, the length or the language of our chosen book don't matter, what counts is that we bother to pick up a book and read it

Neža Malek

Feeling Good Enough

I'm sure we all have had a moment or a period of time in our life when we felt that we were not good enough. Feeling like that can affect our whole thought process and our mindset. The majority of us, teenagers, spend time comparing ourselves to other people, thinking about how other people are way more successful than us and comparing what we look like.

A vast majority of teenagers tend to spend a lot of time comparing their and other

people's appearance as this comes naturally to us. While doing that we usually focus on what the other person has that we don't. We compare our height, body shape, face, hair and even voice and character. We think to ourselves how much better we would feel if we had the qualities the other person has, and that affects our self-esteem the most. We feel that people see us the same way we see us. Every time someone looks at us we think that they are either

judging us or making silly faces to their friend about us. We see how popular someone is, so we start doing the same things they do. It usually turns out that we are not being ourselves, and that we are afraid to show our true colours, because we are afraid of not being accepted. My opinion is that what really matters is on the





inside. Jealousy does us no good. There is only so much you can change about your looks. Your outer appearance doesn't mean everything. What matters is focusing on the qualities that make you unique: self-growth and positivity, which are the key to feeling good enough. When you smile you shine. Be kind to others and kindness will come back to you.

"There is one thing that you're better at than other people: being you. This is the only game you can really win."

What is more, comparing our success to other people's success is also very common. We tend to say that we will never be successful or that we

will never achieve anything in life for numerous reasons. Pastor and author Steven Furtick once said that "The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel." This is especially true in a social-media-driven era when everyone boasts about their accomplishments without revealing the details behind them. We never see the full picture of what someone has done to achieve something. We may have done a lot already and we may not even acknowledge it, because all we are thinking about is that someone has done so much more. We envy the congratulations and applauses. We

think others are disappointed by us. We say to ourselves that they just got lucky as they didn't do anything for their success. Instead of feeling envious, focus on yourself. What can you do to achieve the same goal as someone has achieved? Can you work harder? As humans we are scared of failure. We must know that failure is not the opposite of achieving something, it is part of it. Focus on things you have already done and on things that make you feel over the moon. We excel at things we love doing. The drive for success that we need is pulled from the inside. Who knows. Maybe you will be the next one people will congratulate, applaud and look up to.

I think the main thing with feeling good enough is to really focus on yourself. Why should you focus on yourself? The thing is that when we constantly compare ourselves to others, we waste precious energy focusing on other peoples' lives rather than our own. You are unique and you have a great deal of potential. Maybe you don't immediately feel it or you don't believe me.

But look back at how much you have achieved. Look back at all the things you put a lot of work in and it paid off. Yes, there have been failures, regrets and bad moments, but those helped you grow and be who you are today.

Quotes:

- "The most important things in life come from the inside, not the outside."
- "Comparing yourself to others is a recipe for unhappiness."

Aiša Naja Gerlušnik

Mob Mentality

While there are endless uses of the internet, many would agree that quick research and fact-checking is one of its largest appeals. You can find answers to any questions in seconds, it's just so easy. Whether you were researching topics for an essay or just looking to prove a friend wrong, you probably took the found information at face value. You might think that's no big deal, after all, it's not going to hurt anyone. In

that case, maybe, but there are many cases where such behavior can cause serious harm.

Mob mentality is at its core decision making that is influenced by the opinions and views of others around you. Most often people will discard their own opinions in favor of following the group and fitting in. It's nothing new. We've seen multiple examples of angry mobs and crowds throughout history and even

today, but with the ever-growing usage of the internet, the angry mob is starting to shift to the virtual world. Whenever a new scandal emerges, different news sites and reporters rush to put out an article or statement as fast as possible. They use the situation as a cash grab, caring little about the people involved whose careers might be on the line because of it. Places like Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit are constantly plagued with discussions of all sorts of things, most common certainly being discourse about the latest controversies. It is sites like those where misinformation

appears most often and is consequentially also believed most often.

You see it every day, someone's reputation being tarnished because no one properly does their re-search. Of course, there are some very silly examples of this as well, but each day there are more and more allegations with flimsy evidence put forth by unreliable sources. While the view of the public eye might not affect you, that isn't the case for internet celebrities. One could even say they walk a tightrope every day, having to constantly watch their step to make sure their reputation





stays intact. I shouldn't have to explain why such thinking could go south, despite what we would prefer to believe, social media has a large impact on us and our mental health.

It's extremely easy to get sucked into such a way of thinking, it's hard to turn it down because it's just so convenient. In many cases, it is much easier to follow the majority than follow your instinct. You feel as though you can trust questionable sources for the sake of convenience, so you don't have to spend time researching any topics that are for you trivial. In my opinion, issues such as these need to be addressed and eliminated. There are far too

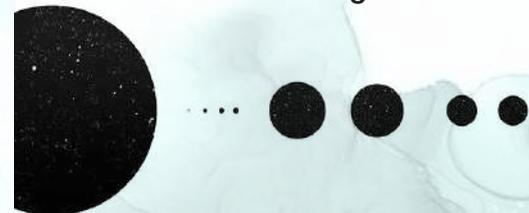
many people taking blatantly incorrect or oversimplified information at face value as well as spreading it. I would like to implore everyone reading this to think critically about the things they see or hear on the internet, and assess by them-selves whether they believe it or not. The available proof should also always be taken into consideration, but its legitimacy should also be taken with a grain of salt. Mob mentality is a dangerous temptation, one that should be avoided and not accepted as much as it currently is.

Lana Tušek

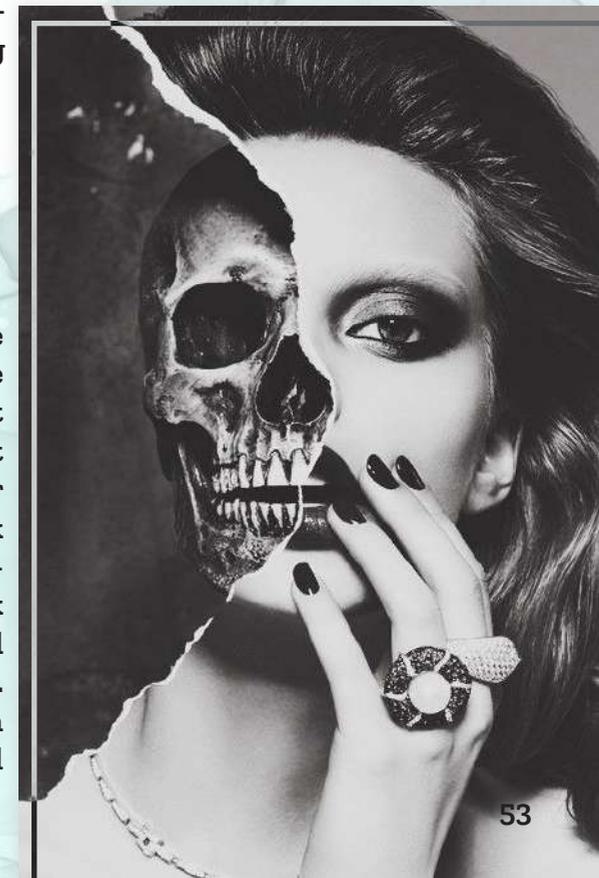
Young Sisyphuses

Not long ago, on a decently sized rock floating through space, life sprouted by pure accident. A little more time passed, somehow the species was given a gift (or a curse) of consciousness and now those tiny little creatures are wondering why. Sooner or later a few of them figure out there is no reason, and yet with no reason to do so at all we persist in absurdity of living without meaning.

meaningless. The little rock we're floating on and all the little creatures on it that could judge you, everything will end and in that their judgment is ultimately meaningless. That shirt won't change a thing, so if it boosts all the right chemicals that make life good - wear it!



Existential nihilism is the philosophical theory that life has no inherent meaning. It sounds depressing, doesn't it? But it is the answer for many people when they ask themselves about the meaning of life. Even though lack of meaning sounds scary and bleak it can also be freeing. Do you want to wear that fun shirt you're too shy to? It's all



Happiness

needed comfort. And so many young people run to nihilism looking for comfort, especially in the form of humour. There is a rise of dark and nihilistic jokes in the media, which brings a sense of not being alone in the meaningless life and it makes light of a dark situation in everyday life of the youth.

So, the meaninglessness of life doesn't crush us and we keep on pushing through the absurdity of life just as Sisyphus keeps pushing the rock up the hill without being crushed. He keeps persisting because it is his fate and we know our fate belongs to us and is ours to forge.

Maša Harl

In a strange way this way of thinking can also be comforting. It can shield from stress and pressure. It's a soft cushion to fall on when our plans and goals get shaken. For example: a student might still pursue the best grades they can, but when they get a grade lower than anticipated or hoped for, a small belief that the grade doesn't change anything because everything is meaningless can bring much

Happiness. We all want her; we all dream about her. From the very beginning, humanity has been dealing with it. Everyone feels it differently, which of course is also logical, given that we are not all just clones. But also, this subjectivity of hers raises the question of what it means to us and how to achieve it. If you

google the word happiness, you will get a huge amount of articles on what it is like to be happy and content in life and so on.

We do not have a clear definition of happiness. It is too subjective a concept and difficult to agree with. Interestingly, 50% of our happiness is inherited from one or both parents. 40% depends on dedicated activities. 10%, however, depends on living conditions. Happiness can only be experienced at the moment, that is, the present. The feeling of happiness is hard to describe, to put it simply, you just know when it hits you. Similar to love, but this is a completely different topic, which is actually somehow related to happiness, but that is a topic for another time.

In his work, Nichomah's Ethics, Aristotle said that people spend their whole lives looking for happiness and that this should be our



life goal. To do this, we are then supposed to make decisions that we believe would bring happiness to us. I agree with this because why would we choose anything else but what we think is the best possible option that will bring us the most happiness and satisfaction? Probably one would not choose the option that will bring him sadness and regret.

The whole thing with happiness is complicated but at the same time, it's not. Happiness can be caused by various factors. But the best, most lasting, and pure happiness is the one we get from small moments, preferably the everyday ones. We just need to be aware of them, so be present in the present. Not thinking about the past, not thinking about the future but living in the moment. This way we will be able to make the best use of it and feel happiness faster. For example, the sky always awakens happiness in me. Always different colors that blend in a different way and always different shapes of clouds. No day is the same, but always so special. I know

this is a very simple example, but when I look at it, it always takes over me, especially in the evening. It evokes happiness, serenity, and admiration. I can simply forget about everything. It's so simple, beautiful, and mysterious. I think most people are too focused on unimportant things and so moments like these can pass them by quickly. One cannot see if one does not look.

Of course, people can also be a source of happiness in us. Sometimes just being close to someone is what we need.



These can be friends, family, a crush, or love, sometimes even strangers. Just talking, spending time, or even just smiling at someone can make us happy.

Material things, such as buying or getting something we want, may also make us happy. It can be the smallest thing like a pen we see in a paper mill that caught our eye. When it becomes ours we are overwhelmed by the feeling of happiness. This happiness, of course, is not as long-lasting as the one we get from events and from people but it is still present, even if only for half a day. The more we want some material things the happier we are when we get them, especially if we have to wait to do so. The longer we had to wait, the longer the feeling of happiness will last.

There is no recipe for happiness, but I'd love to give you tips. All tips won't necessarily work for everyone since a tip that works for one person might not work for someone else. Here are three main ones that I hope will help at least someone:

1. stop thinking too much about every little thing, rather try to enjoy the moment

2. surround yourself with people who love you and in whose company you are never bored

3. no matter how bad a situation looks, it won't stay that way forever, it will be better, as after the rain the sun always rises

We need to realize that it's perfectly fine that we're not happy all the time. No one is, whether they admit it or not. To conclude, let's unplug our thoughts and just enjoy the moment because that's the only way we'll be able to feel that real happiness.

Lara Mavrič

Does Nature Improve Our General Health?

In these dark times, in the middle of a Pandemic and quarantine, we are constantly stuck in our houses. With online school and work from home we spend a lot of time looking at screens. Everybody keeps saying that it is extremely crucial to spend time in nature and so comes the question: Does nature actually improve our physical and mental health?



A very common occurrence in today's society is nature deprivation. This is a lack of time in the natural world largely due to hours spent in front of the TV or the computer screen, but now with the only access to school provided through a screen we are obligated to spend more time staring at our computers. A rapid rise of screen time is highly associated with depression and mental disorders. Some people even connect the lack of altruism and loss of empathy with it.

If we want to answer the question above, a very important term comes up to one's mind: biophilia, a hypothetical human tendency to interact or be closely associated with other forms of life in nature. The theory suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to see connections with nature and other forms of life. This is more than just a philosophy, biophilic design has been found



to support cognitive function, physical health and psychological well-being. It is used in many offices and schools and has given only good feedback. In addition, nature helps us cope with pain. Because we are genetically programmed to find trees, plants, water, and other nature elements intriguing, we are absorbed by nature scenes and distracted from our pain and discomfort.

But what happens to the body after being exposed to nature for a certain amount of time? Some studies have shown that the time for a person to experience the benefits of nature is 2 hours. These 120 minutes are an antidote for stress. The nature can lower blood pressure and stress hormone levels, reduce nervous system arousal, en-

hance immune system function, increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety and improve mood. There have also been speculations that spending a certain time in nature provided a sense of well-being and helped reduce crime and aggression. A study in the UK found out that more exposure to nature translated to lower crime rates.

Nature is a gift that we as humans do not appreciate enough. It is essential to every aspect of human life and well-being. People are taking more from nature than it has to give and as a result, we're putting our own lives on the line. While nature can exist without us, we cannot exist without it.

Kaja Selinšek

Positive Thinking and its Benefits

I'm sure everyone has heard at least one time in their life 'Oh, think about positive things! It will make you feel better!'. But do we know what that really means? Maybe their view of positive things is different from ours. That is completely normal. The meaning of positivity and what is positive varies from person to person. However, there are some things that most people think of as positive, for example getting a

promotion, achieving something and so on.

Is it hard to change our mindset when we are feeling down? I think it certainly depends on the situation. It is harder to think positively when something negative happens in our life. When we feel sad, it's impossible for us to think positively. We focus on the bad impact the situation has on us and how it is never going to end. In that situation it is healthy that we

let it all out, for example by crying or venting. It makes us feel better and fresher. We need time to heal, whether it's 30 minutes, 3 hours or even 3 days. It does not make us weak, it gives us the power to convert our thoughts from sad or angry to positive.

These tips could help you. The first thing you should do is be careful with your words. We tend to forget the impact of words when we are feeling down. Breathe slowly and try to calm down. The words you say have a deep impact on your thinking. Before choosing different words, you need to recognize what words you're already using. Write them down and think about them. Are you really furious? Are you really devastated? Or are you just cross? Writing words down can help us see them from a more logical point of view.

Secondly, take control of the state you're in. When you are in a bad mood, your body language shows it. You walk with your head down, you slouch in your chair and you don't make eye contact. This

kind of body language does not help your mindset at all. Positive thinking is as much about your body as it is about your brain. As you hold your body in a power pose, positive thinking will be able to flow with more ease. The more you portray positivity and others see you this way, the easier it becomes to think positively. That creates a positive feedback loop.

The last thing to do, I also think it is the hardest to do, is adjusting your mindset. The easiest thing to do is to change your behaviour. Imagine that a scenario you don't like occurs, but it turns out well. Are you going to focus on the bad thing that happened or on the good outcome? It is important that we really process the whole situation and not just focus on the negatives. If you choose to only focus on the things that are bothering you, it will negatively impact your life. You will attract more negative things and people won't want to be around you, because they will be able to feel it. Positive thinking helps a person enjoy the moment and be fully present.



'By consciously choosing to focus on positive moments in your life, you'll begin to reframe your thoughts, cultivating a mindset that is grateful and open rather than negative and closed off.'

But can positive thinking really change our life? A study shows that when a person thinks positively and is happy, they see the world as a better place and they are more likely to help others. It also helps you live longer, reduce loneliness and more. Positive thinking is closely connected to the Law of Attraction. It means that whatever you focus on is what you attract. If you focus on the negatives, you will bring the negatives, if you choose to focus on the positives, a whole new world will open up to you.

Practising gratitude is also an important thing. A lot of times we think that we would feel better if we had something more. Maybe it's a new iPhone, a new car or even meeting that special someone. What we often don't realize are the things we already have. Practising gratitude

has been shown to reduce stress and improve self-esteem. Think of the people, moments, or things that bring you some kind of comfort or happiness and try to express your gratitude at least once a day. Even if it's a small thing. Writing down the things that make you feel grateful has also shown to be very effective in improving your mindset and optimistic thinking.

Stay positive!

Aiša Naja Gerlušnik

A Need to Find one's Path

At some point in time everyone faces an identity crisis because it's a natural part of growing up. And as you begin to seek who you are you ask yourself: Who am I? What do I wish to accomplish in my life? What is my purpose?

To ask oneself these questions is completely normal, you could even say that to not ask those questions and seek to resolve this crisis is to not be human, because each one of us is born with a distinct personality and traits that distinguish us from other people and each one of us is like a tree in a forest, searching for its place to reach sunlight. As a famous American astrophysicist, planetary scientist, author, and science communicator Neil Degrasse Tyson said in an episode of Cosmos, Possible worlds: »It may be, that the only thing that makes humans special and different from other living beings is exactly that need to be special«. Your need to



find yourself in the madness of today while tomorrow is unique and a difficult endeavour.

As many of you have already experienced and figured out by now, we live in a world where the only thing that is certain is that nothing is cer-

tain. We live in a world that promises us everything yet presents no actual guidelines of what may occur on that thorny path to stars, in which an uncertain step may lead to ruin. And in all this worrying and navigating these dangerous waters it is important to find a satisfactory answer to those questions for without knowledge of what and who you are you may get lost in the madness.

But what does it mean to find one's true self? In my opinion it is an imperative process of growing up, not just as a human but as a person. It gives you clarity and principles and puts down lines, all of which come in handy in everyday activities, may that be choosing how you dress, what your style is, what your hobbies are, whom you let into your life, what actions you take and most importantly it gives

you answers on why you do certain things. It gives one an understanding of one's origins and roots of good traits and flaws, on which one can work on, to eliminate them or smooth them over.

And what is finding one's path? It is a process of elimination. With trial and error, we learn to which things we respond positively and which ones we should avoid. It is a process of defining your path in the future and understanding that that path may change every moment and that it has twists and turns, hills and precipices, thorns and ice all designed to lead you astray. But the biggest catch is finding the path that makes you happy and satisfied. Once you achieve this, success, comfort and everything else will follow.

I too have sought answers to this question, and I think I have found mine, for now. But how may you find yours, you ask yourself? Experiment, push yourself and your limits, analyse yourself, do not be afraid to receive a harsh assessment of your actions

and self, try to understand where your problems and personality traits come from, read as many books as you can find, whatever genre they may be, travel, face your fears, research, help others, make friends but the most important ones that many tend to forget are learn to love yourself, to forgive yourself and to be forever curious and adaptive.

My final advice would be to live a life you want and will remember, and once you do find yourself and your path, never lose yourself again.

Jure Kovačič



What if

My questions often start with »what if«. It's a type of a question, which presents some kind of a condition; if something happens, things might change, but if they don't, they'll be the same. So ... on that note ...

What if ...

... we stepped together and helped people around the world, who have no food, no clothes, no homes, no medical care and absolutely no money? Do you know what would happen? We could stop poverty on our planet, or at least re-

duce it. Why? Because we all deserve to have decent lives. We are all equal so we should also live equally.

What if...

... we started treating others like we actually want to be treated ourselves? There would be less heartbreaks, less miserable and desperate people, less suicides. It's so sad how your own mind can make you feel so worthless, but what is the main reason for thinking that you are worth less? Does it really start with your own mind, or is that just a consequence of someone else's mind? I think that if every single one of us treated people around us right and if we accepted everyone, things would start to change. If we showed each other how perfectly awesome we all are, everyone would love and respect themselves more.

What if...

... we started hanging out? Like for real, not on social me-

dia. We'd have a drink, without posting a picture of drinking it, but live in the moment, enjoying it. We'd create memories, we'd remember them without taking selfies. We'd appreciate the time we spend with someone more. It would be precious.

What if...

... we stopped for a few moments, look around us and become aware of life that is going past us? We would live more relaxed and happy, we would know what we're living for, we would live and not only exist. Because I think that we all just move so fast, we barely know what's happening around us. We do what we have to do, what we think we have to do; we go to school or our job and work very hard to get somewhere, but the truth is, we are not getting anywhere. We only exist. We go from day to day, week to week, month to month, year to year. We don't even notice how insanely quickly time passes by and we're wasting it.

But of course, if we only think about all those »what if« questions that are in all

of our heads and the better future those could cause, we will stay where we are and not change a thing. So what we really have to do, is to make things happen, take risks and be that type of a person we want around us, the person who makes others' lives wonderful - the person who makes their own life wonderful. Because the truth is: you don't need the whole world to be complete. But the world needs YOU to be complete!

Žana Hočevar



Fashion is Our Passion

We live in a world where we express ourselves by covering ourselves in what we think is a great match for our personality. These things can be tattoos, piercings, make-up... but the major factor that expresses our personality is our style-clothes we choose to wear.

It takes time to truly find yourself and when you do, you start finding new ways to show your true colors. Even if you do know how you want to dress, it's hard to live up to the expectations we have from social media platforms. We see all of those amazing

outfits on Instagram, worn by models and celebrities, but we rarely realize how expensive they can be.

Yet social media can also be very helpful. I learned a lot about fashion during this quarantine when I spent hours on my phone. You can read a lot of blogs and watch a ton of lifestyle YouTube videos and TikToks. A lot of teenagers, this year, started going to thrift shops and designing outfits from thrifting sprees (and of course clothes they already bought in other stores). I think that this is

a great mindset and it's also considerate towards our environment. A significant social media platform for finding inspiration is Pinterest. Pinterest gives you many options after you search for what you're looking for.

When you start dressing exactly how you want to, you feel so much better about yourself. There will be people who won't like your style and will judge you, maybe even make some unnecessary comments. The important thing is that you feel good in your skin and never care about others, as they might just be jealous of you.

Rock your look and be yourself!

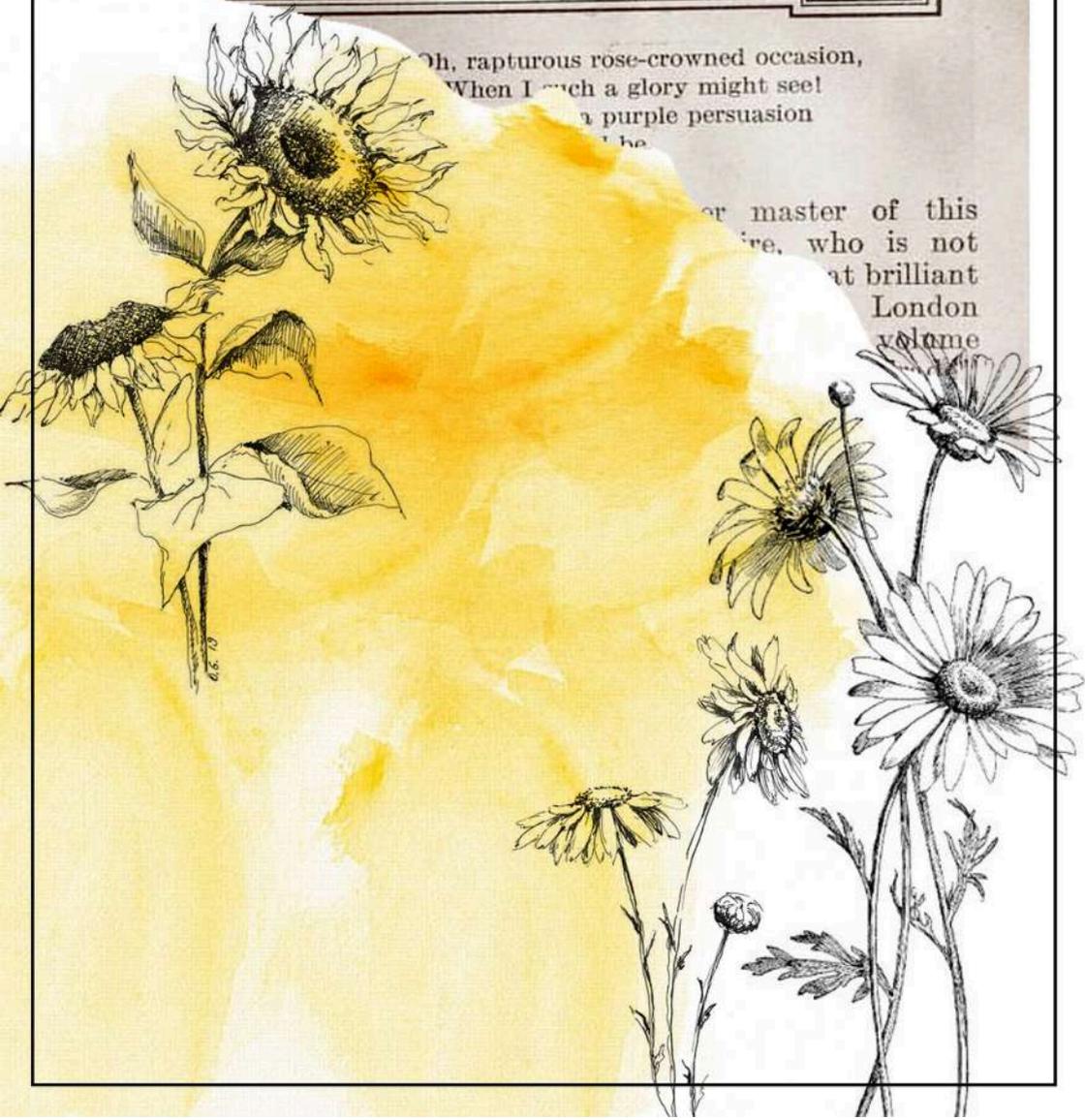
Tajda Pec



POETRY

Oh, rapturous rose-crowned occasion,
When I such a glory might see!
A purple persuasion

er master of this
re, who is not
at brilliant
London
volume



Down the Milky Way

Down the Milky Way I will go
to that magical land.

I will wave you goodbye
as I head towards the moon.

And I will not lie
promising I'd see you soon.

Down the Milky Way I will go
And I shall never turn back.

Tanaja Čeh

Nothing

Nothing.
I feel nothing,
and nothing more.
If only, I could describe that nothing.
But I can't.
I can't find the words.
But I guess all I can say is ...
- NOTHING.

Happiness

Happiness.
Something that cannot be seen,
and something that cannot be forced.
Happiness is something that defines us as a person.
Something that gives us the strength to be alive,
something that makes us feel alive.
Happiness can be found in money,
beauty, health or a person.
For every single one of us, happiness is different.
But what isn't different is the way it makes us feel as a whole.
- And that is happiness.

Replaced

Replaced.
All the memories seem erased.
Didn't assume that was possible,
didn't assume I was possible;
To be replaced,
To be erased.
Didn't assume that all I had given can be forgotten.
So, I just wonder...
Is there someone not able to replace me?
Is there someone whose intentions are not to erase me?

If not;
Do it.
Leave me.
Hurt me.
Replace me.

Žana Hočevar

To find what is yet not found

I need to find my way,
I am lost and not yet found.
I need to find my path,
to be myself to no-one bound.

I reach for inspiration
to find a better future me,
me that would not dread
that what is yet to be.

I seek to find my style,
glamorous or not,
to show the world:
»THIS IS ME!«
Yet a style that I would find
really hot.

I seek my unique voice
which would exert confi-
dence and command respect,
and yet a voice
that would speak truthfully and
show my emotional aspect.

Preferably I would like to
choose a road less walked on,
to enjoy every step and trial
and I hope that along the way
I will find a worthy lifestyle.

The search is wearisome
and the world around is mad,
but I do not intend to give up
and to find my true self, my will
is ironclad.

But one thing I
know for certain,
that to be normal is boring
and that I will live my life
like tomorrow morning is my
last morning.

Live a life you want and will
remember,
find your true self and not lose
it in the madness of tomorrow

Jure Kovačič

Something

It's something I can't escape,
it's something I didn't plane,
it's something unpredictable,
it's something magical.

Tell my please what it is,
'cause I can't figure it out,
and I feel so dumb.

Because it's something unbreakable,
it's something I can't describe,
it's something I don't know,
it's something beautiful.

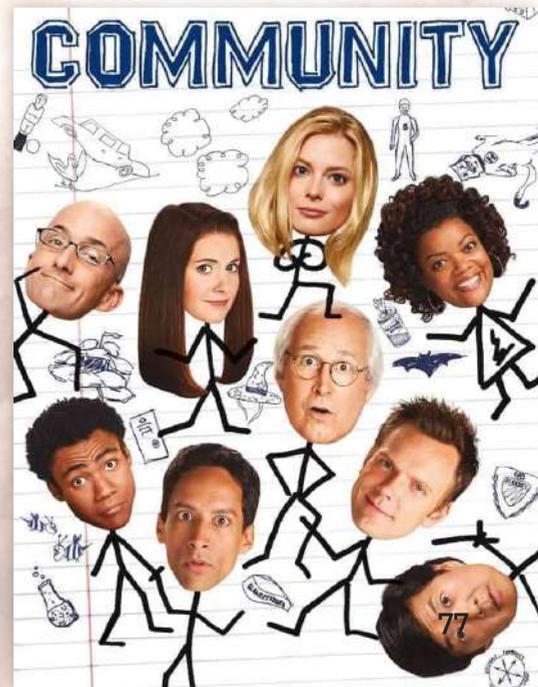
Lara Mavrič

Meta and Ridiculous, yet Sincere and Heartfelt

Community is a sitcom, created by Dan Harmon (who you may already know as co-creator of Rick and Morty), that aired on NBC from 2009 to 2014, with its sixth and final season airing on Yahoo Screen.

It's set in Greendale Community College, Colorado and follows a study group comprising of seven people: Jeff Winger, an aloof ex-lawyer, who faked his degree and "leader" of their group; Britta Perry, college dropout and struggling social justice warrior, who, in an attempt to get with, Jeff creates said study group; Abed Nadir, a neurodivergent nerd, obsessed with movies and TV, often using them as an escape mechanism; Troy Barnes, a former high school quarterback, that starts off cocky and disingenuous, but later, after becoming best friends with Abed, embraces his goofiness;

Annie Eddison, a goodie-two-shoes, who had to drop out of high school because of her Adderall addiction; Shirley Bennett, a middle-aged Christian single mother, hoping to start her own business; and last, and certainly least; Pierce Hawthorne, a racist, sexist, homophobic elderly millionaire, trying to relive some of his youth by attending community college. Quite the group.



Book, Movie and Show Interpretations



Now, why am I even writing an article about this TV series? Sure, at first glance, the setting differs a bit from the generic sitcom, where the main characters have relatively average lives in order to seem more relatable to a wide array of viewers. But once you actually watch some of the episodes, you'll probably come to realize that this show is something completely different. Why? Well, for starters, the characters and show itself are aware of the many tropes and cliches of TV and cinema (usually because of Abed's vast knowledge of them), commonly paying homage, while still making fun of them. Another reason why fans love it so much is its

concept episodes, ones like "Modern Warfare", "A Fistful of Paintballs" and "Modern Espionage", where the campus takes part in hostile games of paintball; "Epidemiology", in which the students get infected with a zombie-like virus during a Halloween party; "Geothermal Escapism", where the entire school plays The floor is lava and Abed has to come to terms with the idea of Troy leaving to sail around the world with LeVar Burton (courtesy of Pierce); "Dungeons and Dragons" and "Advanced Dungeons and Dragons", which are pretty self-explanatory, they play DnD; episodes like "Digital Estate Planning", "G.I. Jeff" and "Abed's Uncontrollable

Christmas", where the characters are turned into animated versions of themselves for one reason or another; and many others that I haven't mentioned. I mean, if you search up the term "concept episode" on Google, chances are, you're probably gonna get bombarded by articles and posts about Community.

The last and certainly most important part of this series is the cast of characters. Not only do they work incredibly well together and make every joke and running gag seem funny and believable, they also have sincere and heart-warming interactions, where they let themselves be vulnerable, even Pierce has moments, where you can't help but feel some sort of empathy for him. The show follows the study group as they discover who they really are—flawed individuals, who are still capable of change and growth. Jeff realizes he doesn't have to always put up walls around people and act like nothing bothers him. Britta, that she needs to tend to her own problems before trying to fix everyone else's and that constantly

virtue signaling doesn't help anyone. Abed learns to be more present in the real world and decides to use his extensive movie knowledge to work in Hollywood. Troy realizes it's okay to be his childish and nerdy self, not just some overconfident jock others expect him to be. Annie is able to focus on her academic achievements and career with a more relaxed approach, getting a job in the FBI. Shirley realizes she's more than just a mother and wife and starts being her own person, somehow becoming a TV star. Pierce, while still a prick, learns to be more accepting and appreciative of others. The fundamental moral of the show is that everyone has flaws and it's okay to be yourself, because we are all constantly changing and becoming better people.

Community is now available to watch on Netflix, so I highly recommend you check out some of the episodes. I doubt you'll regret it.

And as Abed once said: #six-seasonsandamovie

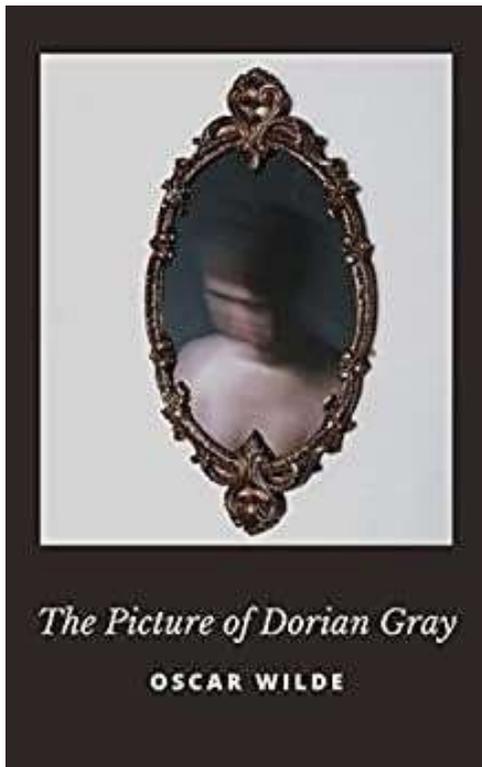
Tinkara Praznik



The Picture of Dorian Gray

The reflection of one's morals

Irish author Oscar Wilde found himself in a major scandal after he had published his Gothic and philosophical novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde's only novel was first published in 1890 in Lippincott's *Monthly Magazine*. The work received criticism for its 'immoral' contents, especially for the novel's homoeroticism, with reviews calling it 'mawkish and nauseous', 'unclean', 'effeminate' and 'contaminating'. However, most criticism was personal, attacking Wilde for being a hedonist with values that deviated from the conventionally accepted morality of Victorian Britain.



The story is set in Victorian England, where sensitive artist Basil Hallward is painting the picture of young and beautiful Dorian Gray. Despite Basil's objections, Lord Henry Wotton – an imperious aristocrat and painter's friend, decides to meet the young boy. While sitting for the painting, Dorian listens to

Lord Henry's hedonistic world view, which makes him believe that beauty and sensual fulfillment are the only things worth pursuing in life. Looking at the painting he prays that the picture would grow old and ugly while he would remain young and beautiful. Little does he know he just sold his soul to the devil. After realizing his wish was granted, Dorian locks up the portrait and pursues, under the influence of Lord Henry, an amoral lifestyle filled with sensual pleasures, which leads to his tragic end.

As I was thinking of the moral of the story, there was a thought at the back of my

mind that wouldn't leave me alone. It was something I had read at the beginning: »There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.« But what is then the idea of the book? Well, in my opinion the book's purpose is to shine light on the importance of art, make a person question the meaning of life and most importantly reflect one's values and morals. In Wilde's words: »It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.«

Tanaja Čeh



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*Per aspera
ad astra*

