

KEEP CALM AND READ

englist

The English Students' Newspaper

April 2014, Issue XIII

PERKS OF BEING AN ENGLISH MAJOR

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Editorial

This year's editorial is brought to you by the whooshing sound of deadlines, but however you may choose to look at it: ENgLIST is *never late*, nor is it early, it arrives precisely when it means to.

This year's array of articles has been carefully selected by a slightly altered group of editors and it comes in a slightly different format. But do not fret, not all changes are bad, and this new format is much more suitable to your everyday needs. And for you digital natives – it is already available in a quite handy .pdf form.

As far as the covered topics are concerned, you will once again be able to enjoy reading some film and music reviews and listen to what the literary coroner has to say. You can once again read about “English majors abroad”, and we even prepared a quite extensive article about former students from our department who decided to pursue their studies or careers abroad. We even included some George and Mary fan fiction.

What are you waiting for? ENgLIST waits for no one.



Ema Karo
(on the right)
Editor-in-Chief

Maruša Danglekšič
(on the left)
Photo Editor

“It all just disappears, doesn't it? Everything you are, gone in a moment, like breath on a mirror. Any moment now..”



Andrej Banko
Copy-Editing

“Let's eat Grandma!” or “Let's eat, Grandma!”
Punctuation saves lives. – Unknown

Nejc Oblak
Over Yonder Section Editor

“In order to find yourself you need to get lost in the forest of life.” – Mike Dolan



Zala Mojca Jerman Kuželicki
Brain Drain Section Editor

“Brain drain – what happens when English students and graduates go down the international pluggle.”

Damen Orošič
Brain Drain Section Editor, Copy-Editing

“If we value the pursuit of knowledge, we must be free to follow wherever that search may lead us. The free mind is no barking dog to be tethered on a ten-foot chain.” – Adlai E. Stevenson Jr.





Timijan Dрпиč Minatti

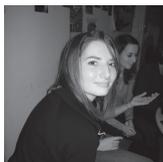
Muŝic Section Editor

“Whatever scares you, go do it.”

Nina Frančoŝkin

Film Reviews Section Editor

“Film spectators are quiet vampires.” – Jim Morrison



Lucija Dirŝiĉ

Film Reviews Section Editor

“A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet.” – Orson Welles

Marija Kriz̃

Literary Corner Section Editor

“A half-read book is a half-finished love affair.” – David Mitchell



Cileŝ Oblak

Literary Corner Section Editor

“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.” – S. Beckett

Bojan Dovh

Geeky Corner Section Editor

“G33k 4 l1f3”



Ukŝa Rozman

Geeky Corner Section Editor

“Having not said anything the first time, it was somehow even more difficult to broach the subject the second time around.”
– Douglas Adams

Ines Cna Tarc

Design

“Everytime you use this font, a designer loses their wing.” – Unknown



Discussions

US DRONE STRIKES OUTSIDE OF WARTIME COMBAT ARE UNETHICAL AND VIOLATE INTERNATIONAL LAW

By Tina Radaković

A wave of excitement went around the Oslo City Hall on that cold December day. In the next couple of moments, the winner of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize would be giving his acceptance speech. Hands clapped, cameras rolled, and in walked Barack Obama, the head of state who, by the time he accepted the prize in his first year of office, had authorised twice as many remote control killings as George W. Bush had during his entire presidency. Afterwards, some defended the prize as a normative effort to “guide” him, but there was also talk of the Nobel Prize losing its credibility, having supposedly been turned into a simple job at the Bush administration. Yet, it was not until 2013, when news emerged that the combat drone strikes had killed four Americans abroad without charge or trial, that serious demands and petitions to revoke the award appeared. Despite the Obama administration claiming that the unmanned aerial vehicles are crucial for winning the “War on Terror”, the shady killer drones used outside of wartime combat are not only shrouded in unethical secrecy and moral reservations, but they also violate international humanitarian law. With that, Obama should be asked to return his Nobel Prize and the US government should be tried for the targeted drone strikes before the International Court of Justice.

Already, Washington faces increasing international and domestic pressure regarding the morality, legality, and confidentiality of the drone strikes and its own unsubstantiated non-compliance with repeated requests to allow objective probe into civilian casualties. The main point of dispute in the US is that drones have already murdered several Americans, and can also kill American citizens on American soil, despite the US Constitution protecting the right of its citizens to a trial by jury. Internationally, however, scholars have been more concerned with the given numbers of civilians killed in the Pakistani drone attacks that just do not add up. The numbers suspiciously oscillate between 0 and 50

depending on which government representative gives the information. Nevertheless, transparent non-governmental sources such as the New America Foundation or The Long War Journal claim that the actual number of dead innocents is much higher. In her article *Known and Unknowns: President Obama’s Lethal Drone Doctrine*, Fulbright scholar Jaclyn Tandler illustrates why the administration’s estimates differ considerably from those of other sources. She explains that the CIA is using the “guilt by association” method, which means that all military-age male civilian victims are labelled “militants” by the US government and as such not counted in the final score of civilian losses. This has neither been confirmed nor denied by the US authorities, but so far they have offered no reason of why they – and not independent organisations – should be believed. So, are the unidentified men automatically assumed to be terrorists just to lower the final score of civilian casualties? And how could one even discover the exact number of innocents and militants the drones actually kill, if the US government refuses to comment on the discrepancies? Conveniently enough for the Obama administration, bombs tend to burn and mutilate victims beyond recognition, so usually there is no way of actually telling whether the drone victim was involved in terrorist activity or not, and how many of these John Does the drones killed.

Identifying and counting the civilian victims would have been much easier if Washington had actually listened to the repeated requests by the international and domestic community and gave permission for an objective investigation into the programme. In 2012, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay backed up a probe into civilian casualties, questioning the legality of the attacks and the indiscriminate killings of civilians. She suggested that Washington invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Summary or Arbitrary Executions to look into the attacks. Similarly, back at home, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the Defense Department, the State Department and the Justice Department. They demanded that the government provide more details about the drone war, including details about who authorises drone strikes, how the targets are cleared, and the rate of civilian

casualties. The Obama administration did not budge. As of June 2013, there has not been any probe, and the officials are still keeping very much mum about the programme. As a matter of fact, it was only recently that the administration changed the status of the drone strikes from a complete non-entity to existing, but still murky “attacks of self-defence”.

Contrary to what Washington claims, the attacks are not self-defence. They do not meet the requirements for self-defence under the United Nations Charter as interpreted by the International Court of Justice and customary international law. They also violate the *jus ad bellum* requirements of necessity and proportionality, which means that under the Charter, acts of violence “must be attributable to a state where any counterattack in self-defence occurs, and secondly, the initial armed attack must involve significant force. The attack must involve more force than a mere frontier incident.” This law gave legitimacy to the use of drones in Afghanistan before 2002, when the Taliban were in charge, because 9/11 was clearly attributable to them. However, this right would have ended in 2002 if it had not been for the new leader of Afghanistan inviting the US armed forces to quell armed insurrection in the years that followed. Therefore, lawful use of drone strikes to target terrorists is currently limited to Afghanistan, and not Pakistan, where the majority of killings take place today. Although the US may have been invited to assist in some military operations in Pakistan (which, as in Afghanistan, also produces legal concerns of its own), drones are also targeting areas where there is no armed conflict or where no permission by the Pakistani authorities had been given, and therefore gravely violating Pakistani sovereignty and international law. It does not seem that the ICJ will take action against this practice anytime soon, but some semblance of justice may surprisingly come from Pakistan itself. In a 2013 ruling, the Peshawar High Court ruled that the drone strikes carried out within Pakistan are illegal, that they are war crimes and that they must be stopped immediately. The court also directed Pakistan’s military to intervene should drones enter Pakistani air space. The ruling is not yet implemented as the country elected a new government shortly after. The new government will need time to settle in before it can address or begin to implement the ruling, should it choose to do so. If that happens, the US officials could fall in serious legal predicaments and the US policy on terror would need to be completely reorganised.

Until that happens, the US drone warfare will look more like a game of tit for tat rather than anything ethically or lawfully substantiated. For the time being, the White House is able to use the confidentiality of the mission as an excuse for holding out potentially convicting evidence about the civilian death toll,

ignoring appeals for probes into the killings, and brushing off allegations of violations of international law. However, it should be kept in mind that innocent victims are not mere statistics, mute numbers on paper. They are children, parents, futures, dreams, friendships, and families destroyed. A man directly responsible for the systematic demolition of these core values cannot possibly receive a Nobel Peace Prize, can he? Ironically, Obama’s Nobel Prize speech dealt with war as much as it spoke of peace, and watching it, one cannot help but think that the US foreign policy took a completely wrong turn with the “War on Terror” crusade. Lasting peace can never be achieved through invading countries, breaking the law, murdering civilians, and consequently making more enemies than friends abroad. The vicious circle of hatred and revenge will just go on, and peace will remain as elusive as ever, Nobel Peace Prize or not.

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Over Yonder

ST. MARY'S EXCHANGE

By Aleksander Jovanović

“This fucking sucks, you know that?”

A couple of days ago we were standing outside of South Crescent Townhouses, and Mike gave me a puzzled look.

“What do you mean?”

“Leaving this place, man. I mean, the semester ended, and all that I have left here is just three more weeks, and that’s it. It fucking sucks thinking about the end and my departure, but that’s all I can think about right now.”

We were both silent for a few moments until Mike looked at me and just said: “I know, man. I know.”

I knew that I was going to meet a lot of new people on this adventure called St Mary’s College of Maryland, but I never even imagined that I was going to become such good friends with some of them. Thinking about them now I have a feeling that I have known all of them for my entire life. Mike, a white boy with a black soul. Glenn, a future junkyard owner and an arsonist in the making. Tom, a man of a million hidden talents. Dillon, an English major extraordinaire. The fuzzy, four-legged furry piece of ungrateful shit called Carmelita. And the more I think about them now, the harder it is for me to accept the fact that I won’t see them for a long, long time.

I remember my first days here in St Mary’s City. I remember being picked up from the Dulles International Airport by Sherry, one of the nicest people I have met: hands down, she is the best welcoming committee, sort of packed in one person. I remember spending the first couple of days alone in the house that I was about to call my home for the next five months. It wasn’t scary, it was exciting. Mind you, we think that we know a lot about the United States and their way of life, but I spent the first couple of days just getting used to all of the small things that, in the end, amount to a lot of differences. You know what they say: the devil is in the details.

I remember my first days during the orientation week: all of the international students and TAs (teaching assistants) were seated in a big room and were given a schedule of activities for the next couple of days. You could tell that everyone was excited to be here, including me, but we were also a bit nervous.

How is this going to work out for us? Are we going to fit in their ways of life? Are we going to be accepted in their already tightly-knit student community or are we going to huddle up in our own private international circle? Looking back on the questions that were in all of our heads, they look and sound silly indeed, but I guess that is normal when you are thrown into something outside of your comfort zone.

However, things started to change rapidly. When I came to St Mary’s, the campus was beautifully deserted: it was the last week of their summer break and students were everywhere except near the campus. It was very empty, but at the same time very warm and charming. But once our orientation week started, students started to flock back to campus: first, there were small groups of students who work as orientation leaders, and these groups were quickly followed by bigger groups of senior students, who came alone, and freshmen, who came armed with their immediate and not-so-immediate families. It was strange and funny to see some of the families hugging and crying, as if they were sending their children to a distant, hostile land, but hey, maybe I was jealous because my parents didn’t give me the same amount of love.

The campus came to life, and our orientation schedules were filled with different fun and not-so-fun activities. For example, the first what-the-fuck moment came in the form of the American eating habits, where all the international students were supposed to eat in some (made up, I believe, because I haven’t seen it anywhere else) “American fashion”: when you are using both a knife and a fork, you have to cut the food in small pieces, put down the knife, place the fork



Photo: Aleksander Jovanović's archive

from your left to your right hand, and start eating. The orientation leaders found that extremely amusing, for some reason. We found it downright retarded, and if you don't want to make fools out of yourselves in front of future international students, I advise you to spend a couple of minutes of your time and learn some table manners. Not that hard.

Now, this WTF moment was masterfully topped by even bigger what-the-fuck moment when the freshmen and the international students had to sit through a play about sexual activities on campus and about rape. I never thought that I will witness young adults being taught that "rape is bad, m'kay." I mean, if you are stupid enough to spend the first 18 years of your life in an illusion that rape is something phenomenal, only to have your mind blown with this eye-opener of a play (not really), then I am surprised you made it all the way to here. For example, the person on stage asked the audience: "How many times have you prevented someone from being raped?" Some cockblockers raised their hands but the majority remained quiet, so the actress on stage felt compelled to accuse us of not saving potential rape victims. I don't know about all of the students, but the main reason why I have never prevented a rape/cockblocked anyone but myself is that I don't hang out with assholes who go around raping people. But in their defense, a lot of sexual assaults happen on campuses across America, so this is apparently a good way to refresh the students' memories.

The classes started immediately after the orientation week: there is no slacking at SMCM. Already on Monday I could see people reading their course materials, and it is easy to get sucked into that. If you feel brave enough not to do the given assignment, or read the given texts, you would get stares that make you uncomfortable, from professors and students alike. Initially, I signed up for two courses: American Film and Mythology in Literature, which I changed into American Civil Rights due to the fact that the Mythology professor reminded me too much of some of our professors that are sort of impossible to communicate with (and I'm going to play it safe and not throw any names around, but if you recognize yourself in these lines, well...).

American Civil Rights class, taught by Jeffrey Lamar Coleman, was highly interesting. In a way, it is similar to one of the first-year classes we have in Ljubljana, but more relaxed and more in-depth. There was a lot of reading and a lot of discussions, which were highly enjoyable. The classes were not only lectures, as it is mostly the case in Ljubljana, but actual debates, so if you are unprepared, you might as well skip the class. The second class I took, American Film, was taught by my host, Robin Bates. The first two weeks were a struggle of some sort: there was a lot of reading to do, a lot of films to watch, and each Friday we had to

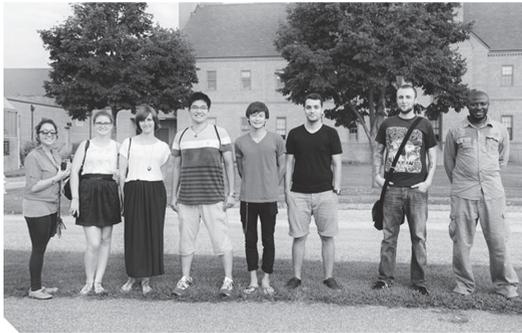


Photo: Aleksander Jovanović's archive

submit a journal entry (a short, informal essay) on the topics we discussed in class. Now, it doesn't seem like much, but until you receive your first feedback, you keep wondering if the stuff you just wrote makes any sense. Looking back at it now, I am surprised that I was stressed about it in the first place, but I guess that's just the usual way of adapting to new tasks.

Besides classes, SMCM offers almost countless clubs and side activities. You like watching films? Join the film club! You like playing Magic the Gathering (still a very widespread trading card game on campus)? Join the MTG club! You like sailing? We have a solution for that too! I, to my surprise, didn't sign up for any of the clubs. And you might look at me and say: "Why the hell not, if you had so many different options to choose from?" Mostly because I didn't have to. I met many senior students who could get you into all sorts of activities without having to join a club. Ben, one of the senior students and a skilled pirate, took us sailing a



Photo: Aleksander Jovanović's archive

couple of times during the orientation week, so we had a chance to get private lessons in sailing. You wanted to make some music? Once again, Ben is the man you have to talk to. A lot of senior students gained the trust of their professors, so they have access to pretty much anywhere on campus, and no one minds if you use the equipment, as long as the senior students are there with you.

Soon after the first couple of weeks, I



Photo: Aleksander Jovanović's archive

started spending more and more time on campus grounds. It came to the point where I would spend almost the whole week on campus, sleeping on someone's couch, and using their meal plan to get some food. And students don't mind: when they say "you can use my couch anytime," or "I'll get you to the Great Room and get you food," they mean that sincerely. And life on campus is extraordinary, and even though Robin and Julia were wonderful hosts, every time I came back from campus, I felt as if I had lost something, only to find it again when I returned to campus.

Studying, drinking, partying and traveling: St Mary's students take it to the next level. It is almost impossible not to find a party on campus on a Friday or Saturday night, and these kids will go crazy. And though the legal age to buy alcohol is 21 in the United States, alcohol is present on campus, and the campus' Public Safety officers will make sure that things don't escalate too much. Sometimes they do, and too much alcohol causes one of the female students to follow you around obsessively, up to the point when you have to hide in a bathroom (not one of my proudest moments), but PS usually keep things under strict control. There are two events that unofficially allow more drinking: Hallowgreens and Easter Natty Boh Hunt. Hallowgreens is pretty much self-explanatory: people dress up for Halloween, they go to the Greens (a part of the campus) and they go crazy. Almost every student is there and everyone has fun. People told me I had a lot of fun, so I'm inclined to believe them. Natty Boh Hunt also sounds like a lot of fun, though I will not be here to witness it: students will buy insane amounts of National Bohemian beer – or Natty Boh for short – and they will spray paint the cans to look like Easter Eggs, which will be hidden all over the campus. And there are so many that you can still find some cans from previous years, though I don't recommend drinking them. However, regardless of the amount of alcohol consumed, every Sunday everyone will sober up and start studying: fun time is over, work time has begun. Even if you are hungover, you will still sit down with your roommates and study.

But don't be fooled: even if there are many different activities, you won't be stuck on campus 24/7. SMCM is located pretty much in the middle of nowhere, and if you want to get around, even to the nearest store, you need a car. And mostly all of the students have cars, and they are up for different trips. Ren Fest, the American version of a Renaissance Fair, was one of those trips apparently, it is a big thing here in Maryland, and the whole fest is larger than you might think – and it was a lot of fun, although I still have to figure out the link between Renaissance Fair and Final Fantasy/Nintendo characters that were participating in the event. Baltimore and Washington are both relatively close, so they can be used as one-day-trip destinations. Especially Baltimore was fascinating: on the one hand, you have the Inner Harbor and the downtown area, which is well-kept and safe, but on the other hand, you have ghettos – really nasty, dangerous and ratchet ones. The ones you can see in the TV show *The Wire*, which was filmed in Baltimore. There are definitely some areas which you want to avoid, especially if you are a "white boy." Nevertheless, even these dirtier and not-so-glamorous parts have their own gems, like The

Book Thing – an enormous storage room with books you can take for free, but no more than 10,000 at once. I am sad that I wasn't able to fully appreciate The Book Thing because of alcohol/food poisoning – I'm still not sure which one it was, but whichever it was, it made me puke all around The



Photo: Aleksander Jovanović's archive

Book Thing and in every single toilet in the fascinating Visionary Arts Museum. Note to self: definitely try and visit again when you return to the States.

And even though Baltimore is a very bi-polar city, I will remember it forever. It has some very European parts and small towns, especially on the outskirts of the city. After being tired of looking at all the same shopping malls and stores that people like to call "a

town center,” the Baltimore area is like a candy kids get for Christmas. Or from pedophiles. I mean, what do kids know, they get their candy and they are happy, they don’t think about what will happen after they get into that sketchy van. Baltimore has the best fried chicken I have ever tried in the sketchiest ghetto shack called Hip Hop, and poems were written about that place. As Mike would say: “Oh yeah, they are gettin’ it, baby.” I know it’s not healthy, and I made myself a small promise that I would try to eat as healthy as possible, but that chicken changed the way I’ll look at fried chicken and made me break the promises I made to myself. As the famous comedian Louis CK would say: “I have many beliefs, but I don’t live my life according to them. I just have them.” Baltimore will always be special to me because I got to spend Thanksgiving with Mike and his wonderful family, and it was amazing to be a part of a holiday which is even more important than Christmas to many Americans.

The end of the semester comes too fast, especially when you are an exchange student. The moment I started feeling like at home here at St Mary’s, reality delivered a hard blow straight at my balls. You realize that all of the fun late-night Walmart trips (that made you kinda famous on the school’s blog), all of the beer-filled nights and study-Sundays are a thing of the past. Currently, I am sitting in an apartment in New York, and I can’t help but think about all of the wonderful things that 2013 had to offer, and I can’t help but think that there is no way that 2014 is going to be better than the second half of ‘13.

To sum it all up: If you are thinking about applying – do so. Seriously. Words cannot describe how much fun you can have here at St Mary’s College of Maryland. You will experience things that are so similar, but at the same time so unique, they will leave you baffled and amazed.

But be prepared. When the time comes to leave, you will be reluctant to do so, but you will have no other options. You will have to go back, and it won’t be easy.

And when the time to leave comes, you will be left with pleasant memories, sad thoughts and three words.

This fucking sucks.

ERASMUS IP SUMMER SCHOOL IN SWANSEA

By *Andraž Banko*

This splendid fortnight-long summer school took place at the end of July and beginning of August in Swansea. If you’re unfamiliar with geography, that’s in Wales, the land of dragons, castles and unpronounceable names.



Photo: *Maruša Pangersič*

Let me first touch upon the academic programme: the underlying theme of the summer school was intercultural communication, while the topics of the individual courses were fairly diverse, ranging from pragmatics via military jargon to immigration. The schedule looked a bit tiring, with classes going on from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (with a lunch break), but since the courses were interesting, this wasn’t much of a problem. None of the courses was boring; I actually

disliked the fact that I had to choose between two courses in certain slots, as I wanted to take both. It’s worth mentioning that participation in the summer school also got me 6 credit points, which I was able to use this year to avoid some of those pesky *zunanji izbirci*.

The participating students and teachers hailed from five countries: Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, and



Photo: *Maruša Pangersič*



Photo: Maruša Pangeršič

Slovenia. Meeting and hanging out with foreign students is splendid enough on its own, but in this case, it also went hand in hand with the theme of the summer school, since we could experience intercultural communication in practice. While this may sound trivial, you really do get to know interesting and useful details about the cultures of other countries. To maximize the frequency of intercultural contacts, each of our flats in the campus had one student from each country, and this worked quite well. Each country also had its national night, when the students presented their homeland, which was great fun – or *craic*, as the Irish would say.

The location of the summer school was excellent. Swansea is the second largest city in Wales (it's slightly smaller than Ljubljana) and lies on the coast. Even the university campus where we were staying had a view

of the sea, being situated on a hillside. The latter detail also entailed some moments of agony, as every visit to the city centre ended by climbing up the steep hill ironically named Mt. Pleasant. The weather wasn't exactly pleasant either – did you know Swansea is the rainiest city in Britain? Still, such minor inconveniences didn't prevent us from enjoying various splendid locally-focused activities that were organized to accompany the academic programme, such as visiting the local castles, learning Welsh (*Shwmae!*) and a trip to Cardiff.

Of course, we were also free to wander around on our



Photo: Maruša Pangeršič

own in our free time, though due to our schedule, the fact that a lot of places close up at 5 p.m. in Britain proved to be a bit of a setback. This resulted, for instance, in a tragicomic situation in which a TARDISful of Whovians (if you have no idea what I just said, go watch *Doctor Who*) arrived at the Doctor Who Experience in Cardiff, only to find the doors locked. That didn't stop some of us who decided to make a second visit to Cardiff (at a more appropriate time of day) to finally experience the Experience, and it was well worth it. I won't spoil anything for you, but I can only recommend it to any Whovian who finds themselves in Wales, despite the fact that you can't get fish fingers and custard there (!).

Despite being so splendid, the summer school was almost free. Travel expenses were all paid for by the EU; the same goes for accommodation, which wasn't at all bad – everyone had their own decently-sized room, complete with a bathroom, which is quite luxurious for Slovene student standards. Breakfast and lunch were paid for as well, and even most of the accompanying activities were free of charge.

The summer school was definitely a great experience. We were all sad that it had to end after only two weeks. I hope you've applied for this year's summer school, which is going to take place in Newcastle; I'd certainly apply again myself, but there's this silly rule that you can only take part in it once.

Photo: Maruša Pangeršič



G.I. FANCLUB'S CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

By Lora Rajić

One of the smartest moves you can make as a student of English is to apply as a student helper at the IATEFL Slovenia conference in Topolšica. As such, you get the privilege of helping speakers from different countries (some of whom are major players in their field, mind you) during their workshops and talks, and of meeting them personally during well-deserved coffee breaks. In addition to the regular conference programme during the day, there's an entertaining evening programme for relaxing after a hard day's work, such as an Irish night, The Ultimate Pub Quiz and a raffle night. For some reason, four of my fellow student helpers and I enjoyed the second evening the most.

Little did Lea, Luka and I know when we walked into the biggest IATEFL Slovenia conference room for the Pub Quiz, and saw Ajda and Nina beckoning us to sit at their table, that seven months later we would be driving around England together. But with a perfect blend of skill, extensive knowledge on trivial subjects and a dash of luck, the G.I. Fan Club (Gašper Ilc Fan Club) proved to be an unbeatable team. It did take some hip wiggling, bubblegum blowing and drawing skills as well, though! After a nerve-wrecking couple of minutes, our fantastic host Peter Hopwood announced us as 1st prize winners, we screamed a bit, and got our hands on vouchers for a 3-day trip to London.

Around the time when the younger part of our team successfully gained our bachelor's degree, an e-mail popped up in our inboxes, asking us if we'd like to switch our 3-day trip to London for a 5-day all-around-England trip. We said that we're not interested and politely rejected. Just joking, of course we said (hell) yes! And so on the much-awaited 25th October, the G. I. Fan Club was reunited once again in Tivoli, blessed the bus with skittles after an unfortunate bag-tearing incident, and was ready to set off on a journey we wouldn't soon forget. Thanks to our lovely primary school travelling companions, there was never a dull moment on the bus



Photo: Ajda Plauštajner

(nor a quiet one), but by the time we reached Calais, France in the early morning hours, we had all managed to squeeze in a couple of hours of sleep. The trip to France was (at least for me) far more comfortable than expected, and to sum it up briefly: Ajda won some Cadbury chocolate during a quiz held by our tour guide Robert for producing a perfect Austrian sentence "I hob goar nix gsogt", and we visited toilets in 5 different countries.

We boarded the ferry in Calais just as it started dawning, watched the sun rise from a cosy spot in the ferry's lounge and bid France farewell. Before we knew it, we were on English soil with the white cliffs of Dover towering over us. We had a good look of them before we jumped on our bus once again and were on our way to London. London greeted us with autumnal colours and a light drizzle (so that we wouldn't forget where we were) as we headed towards our first stop, Greenwich. There we admired the panoramic view of London, compared our shoe size to the standard lengths on the Royal Observatory wall and stood on both the Eastern and the Western hemisphere at the same time. After admiring the Painted Hall, walking around Greenwich museum (where some scenes from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Thor* were filmed) and feasting on some traditional fish 'n' chips, we got on a boat which then took us to the centre of London Town.

Gliding over the Thames, we drove past the Shard and the Gherkin, took photos under Tower Bridge and Millennium Bridge and docked next to the Houses of Parliament. Our next stop was David Cameron's

workplace, 10 Downing Street, and after waiting for the crowd around it to disperse a bit, we took a walk to St. James's Park. We had a nice photo session with the park's wildlife and hugged some trees there. The Queen was out on some queen business when we arrived at the Buckingham palace, so we (queen's) waved the palace goodbye and went on the tube. Our stop was Baker Street (not



Photo: Ajda Plauštajner



Photo: Ajda Plauštajner

221B however), where our group got divided into those who wanted to see Madame Tussauds and those who've already seen it and wanted to do some quick shopping on Oxford Street. After an exhausting break for the latter group, we were reunited again and had a quick run through London's Chinatown and Leicester Square before finally checking into the hotel. And what a relief it was, after a long bus journey and a full day of sightseeing, to be able to take a shower in a luxurious bathroom and to stretch our legs on a comfy bed with QI on the telly.

The sun was shining when we woke up the next day,



Photo: Ajda Plauštajner

but not as much as our faces when we saw a full English breakfast when we came down to the hotel's restaurant. Now that we've had fully regained our stamina, we were ready to hop on the bus again and set off for Stonehenge. Having missed the opening of the Stonehenge museum by two months, we only took a walk (a very windy one) around the Henge and contemplated the same matters as the Ylvis brothers did in the song "Stonehenge" (check it out). We were sad to leave the magic of Stonehenge behind but happy to be greeted by the warmth of the bus and a chance to doze off a bit before arriving in Oxford. Oxford was every bit as gorgeous as expected and Lea and I couldn't help casting jealous glances at every tweed-wearing, book-carrying, smart-looking passer-by. Apart from the marvellous architecture of the university buildings and the scholarly air around it, we enjoyed some great pies from a pie shop in the Oxford market. No sooner had we finished the pies than we were on the bus again, driving to our last destination of the day – the London Eye.

There's really no point in trying to describe the London Eye experience in words, so I'll just warmly recommend it and move on to how we slept though the big storm which roamed the

country that night. Luckily, we woke up to a beautiful clear morning which was a "thumbs up" for us to head to our next destination, which was Shakespeare's birthplace. The lovely Elizabethan town Stratford-upon-Avon charmed us with its small streets, picturesque buildings and tasty ale. We had an all-you-can-eat lunch included in our arrangement, so we did just that (or at least I did), which wasn't the smartest decision considering our next stop was the Cadbury chocolate factory. "A girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do," and so, a lifetime's worth of chocolate was consumed that day. We had no choice but to fall asleep as we left Birmingham and headed towards York, passing by distant glowing lights, which turned out to be Leeds and Sheffield.

The first hotel we had stayed in was a really decent one, but our jaws dropped when the bus stopped in front of the York one. The Wheatlands Lodge was really the cherry on top of the "England Experience", as it looked like a perfect British manor house. We took a short night walk around the neighbourhood and returned to the hotel for a pre-bedtime glass of Baileys (and beer). Our agenda the next (and last) day consisted of taking a walk around York, visiting the old Roman Fortress, the York Cathedral, and last but not least, the Jorvik Viking Centre. Same as Stratford-upon-Avon, York was completely ready for Christmas in October, but it didn't lessen the appeal of the old street called The Shambles nor of the smallest street in York with undoubtedly the longest name, Whip-Ma-Whop-Ma-Gate. After a visit to the Viking times, we were on the bus again and this time going southwards towards Nottingham. The same as the Cadbury chocolate factory and the Viking Centre in York, the Nottingham Crime and Punishment Museum had a wonderful set of actors who portrayed the people of the time and made us feel like we were a part of it. Lea, for example, was put on trial and proved a witch.

After five days of constant travel, excitement and fun times with a great set of people (oh enough with the praise), it was time to leave. I know I don't speak only for myself when I say that I'm grateful to our tour guide Robert for his wonderful guidance during the trip and to IATEFL Slovenia and The Ultimate Pub Quiz for making it possible. There's a lesson we can draw from this, and that's never to underestimate the trivial information we spend our time remembering, because at some point it might come in handy!



Photo: Ajda Plauštajner

Brain Drain

GLUG, GLUG, GLUG AND DOWN THE PLUGGLE

By Zala Mojca Jerman Kuželički
and Domen Orošelj

Brain drain is Slovenia's new favourite phrase. Everybody talks about brain drain, people have elaborate opinions on brain drain, there are posters trying to prevent people from brain-draining. Why is that?

Well, if your once-promising home country messes it up in the transition period and becomes the Wild West of the Neoliberal front, the options young people have really aren't that great. You can of course try to fight for your rights as a young potential professional, but, huh, very hard, small chances of succeeding. So you rather opt for the world beyond the borders. It might be just as Capitalist and unfair, but at least you will actually get paid and even "broaden your horizons" while you are at it.

To check what the grass on pastures abroad is really like, we followed up five of our (former) students who took the plunge. It does seem greener there, they tell us. Better conditions for studying, more prosperous work opportunities and hardly any real difficulties. There are, however, some parts of our tiny country that they miss: family, friends, and some apparently typical Slovene food (like bread, and chocolate and coffee). And most of the interviewees would come back if they were given the right opportunity.

Tune in for what they have shared with us: tips on moving abroad, juicy cultural shocks... Brain drain à la carte.

After Katja Dolenc graduated from the English Department, she decided to search for a job well beyond Slovenia's borders. Here's where and why:

Why did you leave?

I left for several reasons. One of the major ones was the fact that with my degree, getting a job in Slovenia would have been close to impossible while in China, it was actually not that hard.

Another major reason was simply that I love China. I'd wanted to return since I first travelled here. Then there are also the friends I made in Hong Kong in the past few years and my mad adoration of the city itself.

I wanted to be close enough to be able to get there whenever I felt like it.

Were your expectations met when you arrived abroad?

To be honest, despite having been to China before, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I took a leap of faith and it was well worth it. The thing is, Huizhou (Guangdong) is not a particularly well-known city and there's not much to be found on the internet about the place, so all I had to go on was what I heard from my boss when he interviewed me on the phone. I think I got very lucky because the school I work for is very well run and the place where I live is genuinely very nice, very relaxed and unlike the bigger cities in the industrial South like Guangzhou or Shenzhen. So yes, to be honest, my expectations were exceeded, but mostly because I hardly had any – we're talking about China here. :)

Juicy cultural shock adventures?

I've had a few and I could write a novel on Chinese people and dating, but I'll spare you the details. I knew sort of what to expect, and I knew people would stare at me because of my blonde hair, but it's something you get used to and unless they ask me to take photos with them, I hardly notice it anymore. To be honest, I was a little surprised by how incredibly friendly some people are without expecting anything in return.

Things worth implementing:

We could certainly use more electric scooters (here, they are incredibly cheap, about ¥2,000–3,000, the

equivalent of about €300–400), but the Chinese could certainly use more traffic rules. :)

Muslim noodle places that are open 24/7 are also a great advantage and we could use some of those, especially after a night out.



Photo: Katja Dolenc's archive

One thing we should never implement is the Chinese public education system, however. Here children go to school 6 days a week. They start at 8 in the morning with exercise that looks like they're getting ready to go to war, marching in place to the national anthem and the teachers acting as drill sergeants. They go home at 6 p.m. and in the mean-time they study, which mostly means drilling and memorizing a ton of useless information.

What do you miss most from Slovenia?

Honestly, my friends, cheap coffee and chocolate.

Where do you like it better?

That's a very tough question to answer. If you're asking me if I'm feeling homesick, I'm not. So, I guess right now, I like it better in Huizhou. :)

Are you coming back?

I'm not planning on coming back anytime soon.

Jurij Božič, UL English graduate, is currently an MA student of linguistics at the well-known University of British Columbia – and he seems to be loving it.

Why did you leave?

One of the primary reasons I left was the state of the graduate (PhD) programme offered by UL, or, rather, by FF. Firstly the PhD programme that FF offers is, to the best of my knowledge, hardly selective in terms of its graduate student intake, since virtually anyone with the right GPA (was it 8.00?) can get in, and secondly the program is very poorly (if at all) funded. It seems to tacitly promote self-funding (mostly middle-aged) students, and not young researchers with excellent CV's and fresh, innovative research ideas. Since the PhD programme offered by FF seems to be the exact opposite of the graduate programmes in North America (and possibly Western Europe – I cannot really say), I choose not to participate in the ideology it promotes if other options are available.

Another reason is more practical: my primary research interest is theoretical generative phonology, with emphasis on Optimality Theory and other approaches that employ constraint-interaction (though recently I started work on phi-features within Distributed Morphology), and there are simply very few people in Slovenia that could supervise my work.

While Optimality Theory is the focus of cutting-edge phonological (but also morphological and, to some extent, syntactic) research in North America and most of Western/Central Europe, it is

practically unknown in Slovenia.

Were your expectations met once you arrived abroad?

Definitely. The University of British Columbia (UBC) has a great linguistics department. There is a lot of work involved, but it is also very rewarding. In one term, you are forced to learn all the basics of the Minimalist Programme, from the Y-model of grammar from 1993 up to Phase Theory from 2008, and produce a research paper at the end.

Any juicy cultural-shock adventures?

People from Vancouver always shout "thank you" to the bus driver when getting off the bus – this is something that I have never encountered before, and some people actually say you will not see this in other parts of Canada, for instance, in Ontario.

Is there anything you've seen worth implementing back home to improve the quality of life/education?

The really great thing about being a graduate student here (and, in most places in North America), is that you are hired as a Research Assistant or a Teaching Assistant. I am currently the former, and collaborate with a faculty member and another graduate student on a project concerned with long-distance consonant

harmony in a Na-Dene language, Tlingit. This gives me precious research experience, which can be relatively hard to come by. Such work often results in a conference presentation, and/or a publication. These are the things that a graduate programme should offer in my view.

What would you recommend to someone looking to study abroad?

This question probably deserves a manual in its own

right. The preparations for applying abroad can take up to several months, and the selection process is very competitive (often, only a handful of candidates are chosen). So, I recommend planning: work towards this goal for a year or two in advance – if your CV is blank, the chances of being admitted are slim. Also, when preparing to apply, don't postpone things – do them straight away, or you will run out of time. The bureaucracy can be a real pain when you're applying. Then, when you get into a new country – have a lot of patience.

Also, when accepted, be prepared to work hard. This is something that I, at first, thought they said to any student anyway, but I have learned now that it can really be challenging. You are given a lot of options to prove yourself, to produce quality, publishable papers. If that is what you are after, then combining it with your course-work and the work you do as a Research/Teaching Assistant can be hard. There will come nights



Photo: Jurij Božič's archive

when you will only sleep for 4–5 hours.

Are you coming back?

For visits and research, definitely! For work or study? I cannot tell at this point. Perhaps, but probably not.

What do you miss most from Slovenia?

My wife and my family. Luckily my wife is joining me in Vancouver shortly. I also miss the range of informants that I could have for my research if I was in Slovenia.

Where do you like it better?

Academically, I like Vancouver better. On a personal level, I, of course, miss Slovenia.

Adrian Stegovec is an avid linguist who graduated at the Department of English and the Department of General Linguistics here in Ljubljana and is currently part of the Doctoral programme at the Department of Linguistics, University of Connecticut.

What made you leave Slovenia?

I don't like putting it like that: "leaving Slovenia". To me that almost sounds like saying I escaped or that I moved out just for the sake of moving out. I didn't leave Slovenia in that sense. I'm continuing my studies in the United States, because I felt I had more options here, most importantly the chance to study under some of the foremost experts in the field of linguistics. There was also no way that I could have financed my studies if I stayed in Slovenia and enrolled in an equivalent PhD program. And the odds of getting any sort of outside financial help in Slovenia were very slim. Come to think of it, that makes it sound a bit like "leaving Slovenia", which I said I dislike.

But in all honesty, once I figured out I wanted to work in linguistics I really couldn't see myself doing anything else, so there was no backing down. Deciding to be a linguist pretty much means you have to go into academia. So applying to the PhD programs I chose in the US and Canada was really my best bet. They all have great faculties, a good reputation within the field, and they all offered financial help or teaching assistant positions in case I got accepted. I'm glad I got accepted into two of the universities I applied to, and so far, I'm very satisfied with the choice I made in the end. So a shorter answer to the question could be: I did it because I could and I really couldn't miss this opportunity.

Once abroad, were your expectations met? Did you experience any culture shock?

When it comes to my expectations about the life as a grad student in the US, they were definitely met. I heard enough about it before coming here, so I was at

least prepared. The main thing people kept warning me about was the workload, and the warnings were justified. Apart from reading a ton of course material and working on home assignments, we have responsibilities as teaching assistants, and we're also expected to do original research in the time that we have left, which is not a lot. But regardless of how hard this sounds, it's all very stimulating. And although this does sometimes leave you completely exhausted at the end of the day, every minute of it is worth it. I'm learning a lot, and both the faculty and my colleagues are very helpful and supportive.

As far as getting used to life in the States, I didn't experience any major culture shocks. There are only minor annoyances that I've learned to live with. For instance: it took me a while to get used to "leaving an open tab" at a bar. I was a bit confused and I had trust issues: "So you just leave your credit card with the

bartender? Really? Oh, OK...

If everyone does it, it must be safe, I guess." This meant that I was very generous with my tips for a while, since I had to tip for every drink I ordered. Another minor thing that I'm still not used to is how all the prices in stores are printed without tax, so I always end up paying more than I calculated while shopping. And finally, I miss good bakeries, or even just decent bakeries. Bread

is simply better in Slovenia. Americans seem to have taken the saying "best thing since sliced bread" a bit too literally, as in: "Sliced bread is the single greatest human innovation and we should forget about everything that we had before!" Most bread that you can buy in a store is pre-packaged sliced bread, and even the bread that is supposed to be fresh is usually not that good, or fresh. But as I said, I've learned to live with all these things, and there's always other things that are better in the US than in Slovenia, mostly when it comes to all the different ethnic restaurants.

What did you miss from and is there anything that you'd like to see implemented back at home that would improve the quality of life/education?

I'm sure almost everybody who goes to study or work abroad misses their friends, family, and other loved ones the most, and I'm no different. I mean, you can keep in touch, especially these days, with Skype, e-mail, and Facebook, but it's never as good as the "real deal". Most other things I miss are usually some type of food or drink that you may not have even particularly liked when you were surrounded by them, but now that you can't find them anywhere, you start missing for some reason.



Photo: Raju Chidambaram

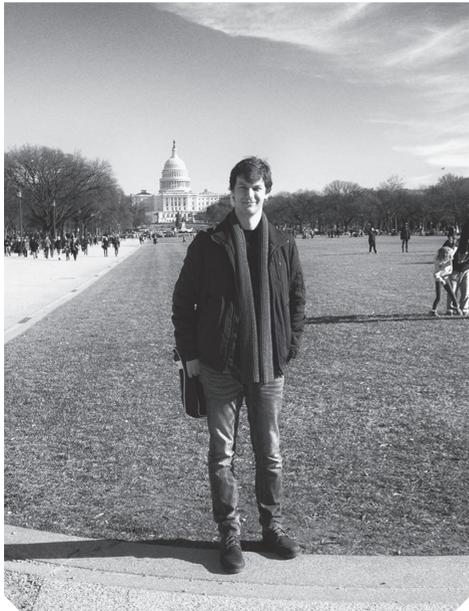


Photo: Raju Chidambaram

The main difference I noticed is how diversity is welcomed and not feared. Whenever there's a new hire at the department, the main stress is on how this will bring diversity to the faculty. Practically every single member of our faculty has a slightly different view on matters within our field, even those who are married. This goes even beyond the department. At least here at UConn, we have several regular gatherings where students and faculty members from different departments meet to discuss their current work and bounce off ideas. And there's almost never a general consensus on the solution of the discussed problem, but everyone seems to welcome this as the price you have to pay for scientific progress. I'm not saying that we do not have such gatherings in Slovenia, but the atmosphere is, at least from my experience, very different there. There are always "factions" for which certain topics are taboo or a priori irrelevant, there's always competition "in the bad sense", whereas here I generally experience the benefits of competition "in the good sense".

Furthermore, the whole experience of studying is very different. American students who wish to continue their studies at a graduate level are strongly encouraged to apply to other universities. Instances of people finishing their undergraduate and graduate studies at the same university are very rare and almost treated as special cases. And once you're in a PhD program you're expected to take advantage of this inherent diversity within departments. You're encouraged to seek advice from as many different faculty members as possible.

Yes, you have an advisor, but in a sense the whole faculty in your department is your advisor ideally.

The best moment I experienced that encapsulates all the things I mentioned

happened during a class discussion of a paper written by our professor. I essentially praised the paper in how it could solve a piece of hypothetical unexpected data, to which I got the reply: "This is the kind of thing you say when you're discussing a paper written by one of the professors with its author. The truth is, such a piece of data would be catastrophic for what the paper proposes. You have to challenge your professors." I really loved that.

Any advice for students who want to leave Slovenia and study abroad?

It's different for every person, I guess. I can only speak for myself, and I don't know if anyone else will have the same exact worries and fears that I had. I think my main advice would be to not be afraid or shy. Talk to your professors, or people in your field, they should help you figure things out. The next step is to find out which universities have programmes that suit you. All the application information about their requirements and programmes is generally online, and based on my experience, universities are always willing to give you any sort of additional information if you ask for it. It's usually in their interest to attract as many diverse applicants as possible. Sometimes they even put you in touch with current students, so that you can also get to hear their opinions and suggestions. Overall the whole process was much easier for me than I originally thought it would be.

Are you coming back?

I don't know.

It's really too soon to tell. I don't have anything against coming back, if I can get a job back home. So I guess it depends on what the situation in Slovenia will be when I finish here. Ask me again in 5 or so years.

After the interview, Adrian found a proper bakery with proper bread – and he lived happily ever after.



Photo: Iliana Meza-Gonzales





Not quite on the other side of the world is Marko Hladnik. In pursuit of linguistic knowledge and expertise, he made for the Netherlands after getting a bachelor's degree at the Department of English in Ljubljana. At the Utrecht Institute of Linguistics he completed his master's degree and is now working on a PhD.

What made you leave Slovenia?

In short: the opportunity to do so. Well, I saw it as a logical next step to continue my education at the graduate level, and I believed (and still do) that studying abroad was the best way to go. Some professors from the various seminars and summer schools I had attended recommended the linguistics research programme in Utrecht, which fit my wishes of preferably staying in Europe. Once I was accepted there, it was an easy choice to pack up and leave for two years. Now it has been closer to six since I moved, as I managed to secure the funding for a PhD project and continued beyond the master's level.

Once abroad, were your expectations met? Did you experience any culture shock?

For the most part, yes. The culture is of course not that different, so there was no real culture shock. Since I value good food and proper meals, the biggest clash of

local points of view and my ideas was in that field. Here they eat a slice of bread with cheese on top and call that lunch. Luckily, at the local canteen, I can at least complement that with a warm bowl of soup.

What did you miss from and is there anything that you'd like to see implemented back at home that would increase the quality of life/education?

Apart from the obvious (friends and family) I miss good, tasty bread.

I finished my degree in Ljubljana before the new Bologna system was implemented, so I do not have a full insight into how things are now, but the studies at all levels seem more intense here. At the very least, with an academic year of 40 weeks (compared to the 30 at home), the time available appears to be used quite efficiently.

The division between work and private life is important and respected here in the Netherlands, which I see as a good thing that may be lacking back home, and I can see myself missing the biking culture with a near-perfect city infrastructure if and when I move back.

Any advice for students who want to leave Slovenia and study abroad?

Do it, even if for a short time, either for study, work, or an internship. The experience is invaluable, and I am not talking just about the formal education itself – you will definitely grow as a person as well, to use the well-worn phrase. It gives you fresh perspectives, both on the situation abroad and on what you have left behind.

Are you coming back?

I am. I would. I mean, do you have a position available?



Photo: Miha Hladnik's archive



Photo: Miha Hladnik's archive



Leilani Štajer, an undergraduate student of English and History, decided for an exciting year in Bali on a scholarship for students of the Indonesian language. Here are a bunch of her lovely impressions:



Photo: Leilani Štajer's archive

going to share with you some of my thoughts and experience about living in a place that can be both heaven on earth and a fiendishly hot hell at the same time.

First of all – if you come here to study their language, you will either learn very fast or stare at the blackboard in front of you, wondering whether the strange signs written on it actually mean anything or the professor is just making it all up in a rather depraved attempt to amuse himself on the account of a class full of confused *bulés*^{*}. To my disappointment I soon came to notice that all our university professors with completed MA's and PhD's seemed to have hardly any English knowledge whatsoever.

But luckily the Indonesian language is quite easy to learn. You can easily master the basics in less than a month. As opposed to English, the Indonesian language is not familiar with the concept of tenses. Therefore if you want to say "I went to school yesterday," you would say "*Kemarin saya pergi ke sekolah*" – which is literally translated as "Yesterday I go to school". Another beautifully simple characteristic is that when you want to express the plural or emphasize the meaning of something, you just say the word twice. For example, *anak-anak* means 'children' and *nakal-nakal* means 'very naughty'. Although when I tried to say *jalan-jalan* for 'many roads' to my professor, he laughingly let me know that *jalan-jalan* means 'to walk'. I told him then now he was just being silly.

I know that since you are a linguistic student, you would love to know more about the Indonesian language, but unfortunately I have other interesting facts to share with you. One of them is that the Balinese people have only four names. If you are the first child in your family, your name would be Wayan. If you are the second child, your name would be Made. If you are the third child, your name would be Nyoman, and if you are the fourth child, your name would be Ketut. Yep, that's it.

And what happens if there are more than four children in a family? The names just repeat all over again! Oh, and did I mention that the names are the same for men and women? So if the wife and the husband were both firstborns and they produced altogether five children, they would have a family with four Wayans. And now imagine what would happen if you shouted "I love you, Wayan!" in the middle of the street. Now stop confusing people in your imagination and let me explain how they are able to differ from one another. If you are a male, you require an I in front of your name, and if you are a female you require a Ni. And most of them usually have a second name, which is also an interesting story, but let's save that for next time.

So what else do you want to know? Yes, the food is cheap; no, you can't go anywhere without a motorbike; no, the toilet at the campus doesn't flush; yes, accommodation is cheap; no, alcohol is actually very expensive; yes, sometimes I see monkeys stealing bananas; no, I don't live on the beach (I live 10 minutes away!); yes, while Bali is a Hindu island, Indonesia is a Muslim country, so girls, unfortunately you will not be able to parade around the classroom in short skirts or having your shoulders tastelessly on display.

I could go on and on about all the cultural shocks and surprises I'm confronted with on a day-to-day basis, but I will conclude this report by saying that Bali is a crazy, beautiful, chaotic country of many dichotomies. If you are an open-minded adventurous person (and have one year to put your home studies on hold) you should consider applying for the Darmasiswa scholarship for studying in Indonesia. If not, then stay at home and do your homework for English Verb. And read ENGLIST!

Ni Ketut Leilani Štajer



^{*}*Bulé* is a Balinese expression for foreigners, a word you will hear most often from street sellers and old ladies on the beach offering a *yes massas*.

Film Reviews

A BETTER LOVE STORY THAN TWILIGHT (A film review of *Only Lovers Left Alive*)

By Marija Križ

What if I told you that Christopher Marlowe did not die in his youth and that he is the one who actually wrote all of Shakespeare's works? That he, in fact, is a vampire who has lived for centuries after his works were first published? What if there are other such beings that live unnoticed among us, spend their days hidden and nights outside roaming the streets, secretly creating what we consider the greatest cultural achievements of mankind? The answer to these questions is given in *Only Lovers Left Alive*, the latest vampire film that will stir your blood. It is not just another run-of-the-mill fairytale about sparkling boys fighting bare-chested werewolves. This truly is a better love story than *Twilight*.

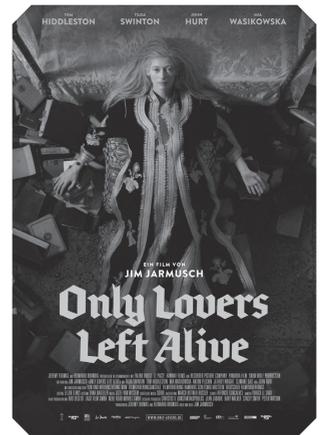
Only Lovers Left Alive is written and directed by Jim Jarmusch. Tom Hiddleston and Tilda Swinton magnificently portray the protagonists – two vampires named Adam and Eve. Another renowned actor in the film is John Hurt in the role of Christopher Marlowe, Eve's friend and her supplier of blood. The cast is further strengthened by two young actors in supporting roles: Mia Wasikowska, who portrays Eve's estranged, trouble-making sister Ava, and Anton Yelcin in the role of Adam's friend Ian, a human who does not realize Adam's true identity. The film was generally well received among the audience and the critics, and has won awards at several renowned film festivals.

The story revolves around the relationship of Adam and Eve, a couple who have been married for centuries. Strangely enough, they live in completely different parts of the world. Eve, a chic wanderer, spends her nights roaming the streets of Tangier and enjoying all the benefits of living in the modern era. Adam, a solitary musician, lives between the four walls of his room in Detroit and struggles to keep up with the world where cutting-edge technologies are presented on a daily basis. Immortality is a privilege for Eve, whereas Adam finds it suffocating. Being unable to publish his own music due to the risk of getting exposed as a vampire, he used to

sell his exceptional compositions to men who then became widely regarded as music geniuses. Now he is an anonymous legend in the Detroit underground scene. After centuries and centuries of being in the backstage of show business, Adam is morbidly depressed and suicidal. Ridden by utter despair, he asks his loyal friend Ian to provide him a silver bullet – the only weapon that can kill a vampire if shot directly in the heart. Realizing the urgency of the situation, Eve travels from her home in Tangier and reunites with her lover in Detroit. The film then mostly follows their vampire "every-night" life, their conversations, their nocturnal sightseeing of Detroit and visits to alternative clubs.

Only Lovers Left Alive is a rather strange, dark, gloomy, but also extremely interesting and profound story about love and loyalty with just the right dose of humour and sarcasm. The idea of spending eternity with your soul mate is emphasized through Adam and Eve's relationship in an oddly romantic way. The

humour in the film is achieved through witty conversations, during which they casually enjoy their homemade blood-flavoured popsicles. What further contributes to the humorous effect in the movie is the fact that human beings are referred to as "zombies"; they are accused of becoming corrupt and hateful, leading a hectic life-style and are increasingly involved in substance abuse. The vampires have difficulties in obtaining blood that is not poisoned by drugs and alcohol, which makes them an endangered species. A really clever way to wrap up a critique of human behaviour. Their conversations also reveal peculiar details about vampires' lives in different periods



of history. It is a real pleasure for the viewers to observe and recognise manifold cultural references concerning Greek mythology, the classics of modern literature and legendary musicians. Christopher Marlowe himself is an important character in the film; he reveals that Shakespeare was just a figure used for publishing his work and describes him as a narcissistic fool who wound up with the title of the greatest writer of all times.

The only weak point of the film is the fact that the events develop rather slowly. After Eve's arrival to Detroit, hardly anything happens; the only character who brings liveliness is Eve's sister Ava. Upon arriving, she makes Adam's blood boil because of her restless spirit and lack of self-control, which eventually leads to her accidentally killing Ian by drinking his blood. The vampires then flee Detroit, but nothing more exciting than that happens, although the viewer anticipates at least some complications because of the murder. There is no sense that the story is concluded; the vampires go on living their infinite lives and adjusting to the novelties that each new adventure brings. The film ends without a resolution, with a more or less typical horror cliffhanger.

After the final scene, I simply remained sitting in my chair for another couple of minutes, reflecting upon what I had just seen. Is it possible for a vampire-themed film to be so original and interesting? I am leaving it for you to judge. Watching *Only Lovers Left Alive* was definitely a refreshing experience and I would recommend it to everyone. Most people already scowl at the mentioning of these pale-skinned bloodsuckers due to the latest trend of producing literature and films like *Twilight* that enchant the minds of teenagers all over the world. This, however, is quite a different case. The story of the protagonists' eternal life is captivating, the dialogues are witty, the performances of the leading actors to be utterly praised and the film on the whole bloody entertaining.

REVIEW OF ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE

By Tina Bašić

Jim Jarmusch's newest work, which premiered at this year's Cannes film festival, is much more than it seems at first sight. It is indeed a movie about vampires, but that does not define it. First and foremost it is a love story; and the word vampire is not once uttered in the movie.

In the very memorable opening scene, which sets the slow pace for the rest of the movie, we meet the *lovers*, Adam and Eve (this is the

just the first of many puns that the movie presents us with). Adam, played by Tom Hiddleston, is a suicidal vampire and an underground musician who lives in Detroit and spends all his free time making music. He has given up on the human race (he even mockingly calls humans zombies) and wants to end his life. Now Eve, played by Tilda Swinton, is forced to leave Morocco, where she was visiting her good friend Christopher Marlowe (depicted as the real author behind Shakespeare's works), to knock some sense into her depressed husband. However, the reunion of the pair is all too short as Eve's sister decides to pay them a visit. Much to Adam's dismay, she overstays her welcome and causes the couple all sorts of trouble.

The strong British cast, which is by no means coincidental, gives a sophisticated feel, and together with the melancholic atmosphere it really succeeds in making the perfect mood. Even the soundtrack fits the movie perfectly, creating a morose ambience throughout most of it, yet manages to unnoticeably change during key moments like the couple's reunion. Yes, there are a couple of joyful moments, thankfully just enough to fit the dark tone. The most energetic scenes are definitely those that include Ava, Eve's sister, as she adds just that little bit of spicing up that the movie needs. Her visit is short, but memorable – like the occasional inserts of black humour that make the sequence all the more enjoyable.

But what really stands out are the two main actors, Tom and Tilda – despite having a twenty-year age gap between them. Their portrayal of a couple which has been together for more than half a millennium, is astoundingly real, as if they were actually kindred souls. Adam and Eve's understanding of each other runs deep, and even though they have forever to live, the couple is never lonely since they always have each other. Perhaps this is the answer to what you do with love when you have forever to live?

The movie is nearly plotless; in fact it is more of a beautiful documentary about two immortal lovers. Not only that, the movie also celebrates countless classic works of art – ranging from music and philosophy to literature; and it does it in a very subtle way, such as the couple booking their plane tickets under the names of Daisy Buchanan and Stephen Dedalus. These allusions are part of what makes the movie so beautiful, making us pay attention to the details that we would not usually find that important. Moreover, it has no direct message, so you do not need to subject yourself to the director's point of view and are absolutely free to interpret it yourself.

PHILOMENA

By *Patricija Valentinčič*

This year's Ljubljana International Film Festival (Liffe) provided the festival-goers with an opportunity to see the 2013 film *Philomena* by Stephen Frears (*The Queen*, *High Fidelity*, *Dangerous Liaisons*). Those who chose to see it were certainly not disappointed and left the cinema wiping tears from their eyes but still with a big grin on their face. Based on the book *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee* by Martin Sixsmith, which is a real-life story of Philomena Lee, this comedy-drama depicts the journey of a woman searching for her long-lost son and a journalist helping her in her quest.

Philomena Lee, an Irishwoman (Judy Dench), has led an ordinary life, but has been guarding a big secret for fifty years. One day she decides to reveal this secret to her daughter: at the age of nineteen, she gave birth to a son whom she was forced to give up for adoption as he was born out of wedlock. Philomena lived in a convent from the age of six because she lost her mother and her father decided it would be best for her to be raised by nuns. Young women were not taught about "the facts of life" in the convent and, to her surprise, Philomena became pregnant after a romantic encounter with a boy at a county fair. Her father being ashamed of her, she was sent to a convent in Roscrea, where she spent her pregnancy. Like other "fallen women" who found themselves in the same situation, she worked arduously in the convent's laundry and was treated harshly by the nuns. After giving birth to a boy, whom she named Anthony, she worked for additional three years and watched her child grow up through a window (she was only allowed to be with him for one hour a day). When Anthony was three years old, Philomena had to accept the fact that a couple wanted to adopt Anthony. There was nothing she could do because every woman had to sign a document stating that she renounces any right to her child.

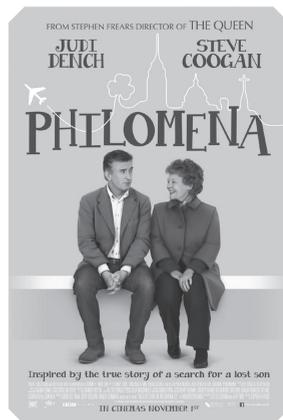
Philomena's daughter then meets Martin Sixsmith (Steve Coogan), a journalist and a former Labour government adviser whose career has been derailed following a scandal. She tells him her mother's story and suggests writing an article on it and thus helping to find Anthony. At first, he is reluctant to take up a "human interest story", but because he is in need of work, he accepts the task. He meets up with Philomena and together they begin the search for the lost son.

They start their investigation in Ireland, in the convent where Philomena had given birth, but the nuns do not provide them with much useful information. The only document they are able to produce is the one with which Philomena relinquished her son, while everything else was lost in a fire. Martin finds this

very odd and he learns from the locals that it has been believed for many years that the nuns were selling children to wealthy American couples and burnt all the evidence. He then uses his contacts in the US and finds some promising leads, which prompts the two of them to travel to the US, where there are some surprising discoveries in store for them.

The film is an absolute gem, combining a realistic account of an unforgiving system run by the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland between the 18th and the late 20th centuries, just the right amount of humorous moments and witty remarks to lift the spirits, and, towards the end, a praise for the ability to forgive despite having suffered immensely. Watching the interactions between the characters of Philomena and Martin is extremely enjoyable, given the fact that they are complete opposites: Philomena is an elderly religious, modest and naïve woman, whereas Martin is a middle-aged cynical and highly educated atheist. Throughout the film, Philomena persistently defends the Roman Catholic Church and believes that what the nuns did was the best for her son, as they enabled him a prosperous life. However, she gradually realizes that their intentions were not as noble as she had thought and her faith is shaken when she becomes aware of the fact that the convent is still unwilling to reconnect a mother with her son. Martin, on the other hand, takes every opportunity to criticize the Roman Catholic Church and becomes more and more outraged by the doings of the nuns and cannot comprehend how Philomena manages to remain so understanding. Her deep faith gives her the courage to continue the painful quest she has embarked on and teaches Martin that one of the noblest qualities is forgiveness.

Judy Dench, who has had a brilliant acting career and is most known for her roles in the James Bond films, gives a fantastic performance. She takes us on an emotional journey interspersed with heart-breaking scenes, where her piercing blue eyes fill with sorrow and amusing moments, when she is able to demonstrate her comedic talent, such as Philomena's observations on American life: "I only want to know if he's alright. What if he



died in Vietnam? What if he was obese?" "What makes you think he'd be obese?" Martin asks. "Because of the size of the portions!" Philomena replies. The British audience mostly associates Steve Coogan with his role as Alan Partridge (TV series *Knowing Me, Knowing You with Alan Partridge* (1994–1995) and *I'm Alan Partridge!* (1997–2002) and the movie *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa* (2013)) and has finally been assigned a bigger role. His comedic genius does not reflect only in his performance, but also in the screenplay of the film, which he wrote together with Jeff Pope. The film is a proof that Coogan can play both comedic and serious roles and will hopefully give him even more recognition. The character of Martin Sixsmith makes many witty comments on the Roman Catholic Church, such as describing the nuns as "sisters of little mercy" and thus brings laughter into this otherwise tragic and cruel story.

Philomena was nominated for several awards and won the award for Best Screenplay at the Venice Film Festival, the People's Choice Award First Runner Up at the Toronto International Film Festival and the award for Best Narrative Feature at the Hamptons International Film Festival.

TWO OMITTED SCENES THE FILM *THE HUMAN STAIN* WOULD HAVE GREATLY BENEFITED FROM

By *Tanja Višnar*

When adapting a novel into a major motion picture, the original contents must undergo a process of selection. This determines which scenes from the novel will be depicted in the film, and greatly influences its quality. This essay discusses two important scenes from the novel *The Human Stain* by Philip Roth that would have considerably improved the outcome, and the viewer's understanding of the film, had they not been omitted.

The first scene not included in the film but of crucial importance in the novel, is the one in which Lester Farley is forced to visit a Chinese restaurant. Hardly any important information is revealed about Farley in the film, although the complexity of his damaged character is monumental for the development of the plot. The scene in the restaurant deals with Farley's attempt to overcome his posttraumatic stress disorder. We are told that Farley is a Vietnam War veteran, and eating a meal in the Chinese restaurant is a part of his rehabilitation program. The scene vividly portrays

Farley's deeply rooted trauma, and unveils him as a victim trying to piece his life back together, rather than an evildoer. This can be seen when Louie (Lester's coach) says:

"It's time you started to face this thing. You can't do it all at once, I know that, and nobody is going to ask you to. But it's time to work your program, buddy. The time has come [...]" (Roth 2001, 203).

In the film, Farley is presented as a violent, one-dimensional character. He plays the villain of the story, because the filmmakers wanted the film to have an antagonist. No information is given about his emotions, thoughts, motives, and struggles. Reading the novel, we get a better understanding of Farley's violent behavior towards Faunia, his anger, and his need to stalk and kill her and Coleman. Unlike in the film, where the character does not evoke any feelings of sympathy, the novel makes the reader feel for Farley, and that is why this scene should not have been omitted.

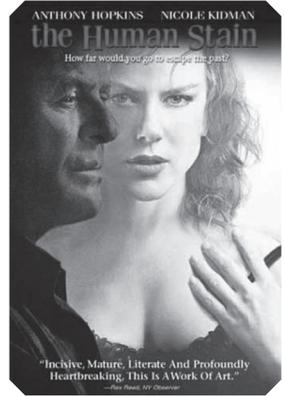
The second important omission is Faunia's internal monologue when visiting Prince the raven. While this scene can be seen in the film, a deciding part of it has been left out. This is the part where Faunia mentions and explains the title of the novel. She says:

"That's what comes of hanging around all his life with people like us. The human stain[.] [...] We leave a stain, we leave a trail, we leave our imprint. Impurity, cruelty, abuse, error, excrement, semen." (Roth 2001, 227).

With only a few sentences, the lives of all the novel's characters are put into perspective. Farley's PTSD, Faunia's abuse-filled childhood, and the death of her children, as well as Coleman's painful secret are the consequences of both their own actions and their interactions with other people. The human stain is an analogy for how harmful humans can be to both themselves and those around them. When they succumb to their prejudice, hate, fear, and loss, their harsh actions ripple outward, and affect the people closest to them: the people they love. In the film the only mention of the title is at the very end, when Nathan starts writing his novel. The significance of the phrase is thus entirely lost, and its powerful message rendered moot.

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Music Reviews

JAMES VINCENT MCMORROW: *EARLY IN THE MORNING*

By Katarina Stamol

A music that creates an ethereal sensation after just a few seconds. McMorrows' album is a musical journey paved with melancholy vocals, instrumental symmetry and many impressions of the natural environment it was created in.

James Vincent McMorrows is an Irish musician who set out to do a project in the shape of an album, which he has written and executed entirely by himself. To produce this album he secluded himself to an isolated cabin near the sea in Ireland, where he was inspired by the rich imagery of the surrounding beauty. He played every single instrument on the album himself and recorded it without any help. He claims his musical influences to be Joan Baez, Iron & Wine and Bon Iver, to name a few. His style was described by fans as folk, but McMorrows says the fans are in for a surprise on his next album. But undoubtedly the album has appealed to masses of fans from all over the globe for its unique and spiritual sound.

The album opens with "If I Had a Boat", which starts as an a capella of McMorrows' voice and continues with soft tambourine sounds in the background. The imagery that stands out is the presence of water, which is interwoven with every fabric of the melody.

"Hear the Noise That Moves So Soft and Low" makes the listener attend carefully to the lyrics due to his hushed, delicate vocals and only one guitar accompanying him at the beginning. And with such visual effects as "the sound of freshly fallen snow", the song does mimic the sound itself by being so incredibly quiet and indistinct.

The speed of the album increases on "Sparrow and the Wolf", which introduces a snare drum and a banjo, creating an original folk-sounding number that offers some more upbeat feel to the album. It definitely cuts through the sadness of the first two tracks, though it offers no happy images and gives us a brutally honest line, "store up your hate, use it for warmth when you're cold", which captures the mood of the whole song.

"Breaking Hearts" continues the feelings of abandonment observed before and provides the best line in the whole album in my opinion - "when it comes to dying, I'll do it on my own" - being such a truthful and mesmerising aspect of everyone's loneliness in this world. It offers an almost pessimistic vibe that is beautifully coordinated with the instruments, which go from a slow guitar at the beginning to

an accompanying banjo at the end.

"We Don't Eat" introduces a piano sound that imitates the sound of raindrops to portray the nostalgia developed through the lyrics. The imagery of his bitter-sweet memories grows stronger as the drumbeat joins in and carries the song to its very powerful ending.

The next song is also filled with visual effects; "This Old Dark Machine" has an almost fairy-tale quality to it with the lyrics symbolising the eternity of love.

"Follow You Down to the Red Oak Tree" is in my opinion the best track of the album and I would recommend it to anybody. Its haunting beginning lets us know of something sinister approaching in the continuation of the song. The melody and the vocals merge into one until it becomes unimaginable to have one without the other. It has a sinister mood and a hauntingly beautiful melody with the rich backing vocals only complementing the whole structure. Death has never been so delicately described before and McMorrows' falsetto makes the lines "Names get carved in the red oak tree / Of the ones who stay and the ones who leave" so irresistibly sad that they raise the hair on the back of my neck. Even the ending provides a perfect closure with the repetition of the last message.

"From The Woods!!" is a track full of strong vocal highs and lows and is particularly special because of the increase of tempo by the end of the song, when a slight pause makes way for a powerful ending.

"And If My Heart Should Somehow Stop" is almost a tribute to the natural environment, in which the true love resides.

"Early in the Morning, I'll Come Calling" is the title track and, as claimed by McMorrows himself, his personal favourite. It is the shortest of the bunch and carries the mood of the whole album in its intricate beauty of shape and length.

Early in the Morning is McMorrows' debut album and it has definitely made the impression it deserves. It may as well be the only album in his collection to ever have that mythical sound and that is why it is so important to treat it as a unique moment in musical history. Nevertheless it is only an indication of what is coming next. His next album will have a more R & B feel to it; what it will sound like can be observed in his already released song called "Cavalier". The lyrics can be read as a piece of fine poetry and the vibe is very American-like. Of course this time he changed the location of the recording and chose a farm near the Mexican border. The new album is called *Post Tropical* and I can't wait to see (and hear) what lays in store for us fans this time.

Literary Corner

TO DELETE YOUR FACEBOOK PROFILE

By Leilani Štajer

Sometimes I'm afraid
that I'll end up like
a beggar on the streets
just because I don't like
sucking up to get a good job
and I don't like
pretending to be
what I'm not.

Sometimes I just
want to stay at home
and eat and sleep and
watch stuff on the Internet
and not shower for days.

I would also drink
a lot of tea and coffee too
and smoke a few cigarettes,
maybe even have a beer
or two.

It's so nice to just
not exist for the world
and not exist for yourself,
with the only presence of
you without the "who"

which is kind of like
dying for a short while
and damn how it
feels good.

But then I get scared
that maybe I'll stop
getting my scholarship
and that all my relatives
are gonna be
dead

and I'll end up
with the bums on the
street, drinking piss wine,
annoying passers-by

but then again
I'd probably earn more
than I do now and
even their newspaper
has a literary section,

and I would finally
be able to delete my
Facebook profile.

I LOVE YOU, GUINNESS, BUT NOT THAT MUCH

By Leilani Štajer

There once was
a guy
who took me on
a date.
He took me to
a nice place
and ordered me
a nice beer
and we talked about
how awesome he thought
Ireland was.

After the
two hour mono-travelogue
he asked me
what I planned
to study.
I said
that I like
History and English
and he immediately
let me know
that I must study
English
because Ireland.

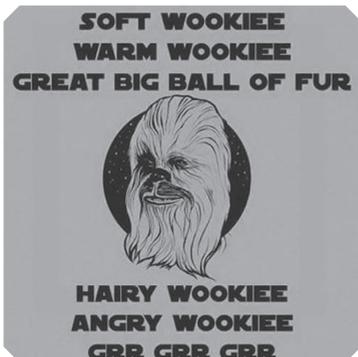
After the third Irish beer
he asked
if he could give me
a kiss
and when you
ask a question
like that
it's already too late.

So I had
to pay the bill
because reasons
and I
didn't mind,
I was just glad
I could go back into
my bed
and think about
how happy I was
I haven't been
to Ireland
yet.

IN BLOOM

By Vanja Premuž

Ponder upon the walks, the swims,
One brazen showing of the beak.
How drowsed they are, more than how
When begetters strike right on time.
Such limpid mounds, please not right now
Anxiety in bloom may bear down hard.
Influential bits must order and prescribe,
As would or should be seen with tempo.
So arrange this day as to lark, fob, or fib,
Should you not prove quite pacey enough.
For rest sure, the talk will broach, and
The talk will spout, exhort, and drone:
Bout, boy. Bout, wench.



DOLLHOUSE

By Matjaž Zgonc

"Mother said: 'Stop playing with dolls!'"
"Oh, shut up, Mary."
George was feeling tense. He tightened the grip of his left hand on the steering wheel as he always did when their commute home became this unpleasant. With his right, he rubbed the balding spot on the top of his head and ran his fingers through the thinning hair. It felt good and calmed George down for the time being. In silence they drove forward in the starless night.

He peeked to his right. Mary was buckled up and leaning against the window and completely still. Halos of streetlamps gleamed in a mess of thin orange stings and rendered her cheeks shining in splendid tones of colours especially beautiful.

George sighed. *I didn't mean it. I love your voice. Please don't be mad at me.* That's what he should have said. But as all men do, he found it redundant to apologise. "*Men who say sorry say it one too many times to be trusted!*" was what Mother used to say. *That, and not to play with dolls.*

George adjusted his ebony-rimmed glasses with his right hand. "Mary.." he started, but failed to finish his sentence. After a spell of silence, he tried to open his mouth again, but was cut off by her yelling: "Well you told me to shut up, so I will!"

For God's sake, woman! You're preaching it, but you're not living by it! To say you have shut up is like bombing for peace, which is in fact like...

But George knew better. "Baby, you know I didn't mean it!" And then he told her this whole cock and bull story about how upset he was and what a day it had been and of course she swallowed it whole. *What a relief.* He stroked her left thigh and she smiled and he gave her a kiss on the cheek and she smiled some more. George finally loosened his left hand. He sat back and enjoyed what had become a quiet, pleasant drive home. Something failed to escape from his mind, though. *What are they going to do about Mother?*

George was twenty-four years old and had been with Mary as long as they both could remember. He had a job in the City from nine to five, which required a one-hour commute and paid less than shit. Right after he got the job, Mary used to stay at home and tend to their home. The problem, however, was that what George and she called "home" was in fact the huge attic in George's mother's huge house. She was the boss at home. She had wanted to send Mary packing ever since she met her. So George started taking Mary with him to work. This was tricky, as unauthorised people weren't allowed into the office complex, and she hid in the supposedly locked office cabinet all day. No one had ever found her to this day.

The car rolled up the driveway and the engine stopped. George opened the door on Mary's side and helped her out. Whenever their fingers intertwined, George still felt a rush of energy he had felt when they held hands for the first time. He looked around and noticed the light in the kitchen was still on. *Mother must have kept on drinking all this time. She had a bottle of wine with her when I saw her in the morning! She must be the only drunkard who sleeps for only six hours a day and drinks for ten. Yet, she remains as vigilant as ever...*

"How long are we going to keep on living here?" Mary asked with a snotty voice. Not only his mother, Mary, too, knew exactly how to tick him off when she wanted to.

Oh, you know, I enjoy living here so much I thought we'd cancel our plans to move and stay here forever or until the old bitch croaks. You know, whichever comes first! he thought, but replied: "Soon, darling. Soon."

There were remains of a hastily devoured apple pie. "She always eats a horse when she's wasted," commented Mary unnecessarily.

"She does, doesn't she?" agreed George redundantly. And suddenly, a frozen pie was thawing in the microwave and George was rummaging through his gardening cabinet.

Rat poison... naphthalene, what are you doing here? This thing against caterpillars... I know I have some strychnine in here!

A suspiciously gentle voice halted him. "Did you check her will?"

George rose and turned. "Did I do WHAT?" he exclaimed in disbelief and saw Mother jerk and belch on her large-frame armchair.

"Shut up, you daft loony! She could wake up any second! Come on!"

Mary's voice led George to the living room. There were orange strings scattered about. He stopped and picked one particularly large piece off the floor and examined it. It was wool, orange wool.

He took a close look at the thread. He frowned and gazed suspiciously towards the kitchen where Mary and Mother were. "I swear, one of you women..." he muttered into the darkness and continued to step forward until he finally reached the safe.

"Alright, we're clear! The deed to the house's on my name, let's go!" George whispered.

"Come on then, move it! Chop-chop!" nagged Mary while George poured the powdered potent through the holes in the crust into the pie's filling.

While the pie was baking, George cleaned up the mess mother had made with the previous pie. After ten minutes, it was done. George set it beside his mother and covered it with a napkin.

Imagine that! In just a few short hours, Mother will wake up and munch on this one. We'll finally be able to do what we always wanted! Free!

Finally FREE!

For George and Mary, it was time to celebrate. They found themselves locked up in the attic and staring into each other.

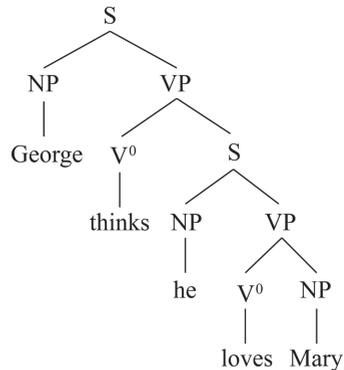
"I have complete control over you," uttered Mary, and George nodded and felt the urge to do something way beyond his field of control.

Something strange is going on, thought George while trying to take off his shoes. He struggled, but managed to get them both off along with the socks. "Come to me!" he heard and was unable to resist. *Rip! Rip!* went the shirt and buttons flew in all directions. Animal instincts and human flesh and blood flowed with passion unknown to *Rip! Rip!* machine or man. Conventions felt like ultimately giving way *Rip!* decadent hedonism of abstinence saturated *Rip! Rip! Rip!* and pulsating of chests from *RIP!* to *RIP!* dove into Mary with *RIP! RIP RIP RIP RIIIIIIIIIIIP-*

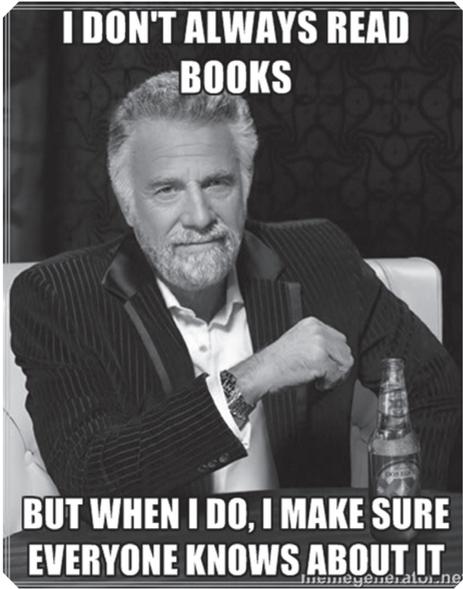
George sat panting and profusely sweating. In his hands lay a severed body of a life-sized Young Dorothy Parkins cloth doll with orange hair made of wool. Her chest was ripped open and its contents were littered all around the attic. George sobbed. "I killed her!" And slowly realised she was never alive in the first place.

George went back downstairs with Mary thrown on his back now wiggling lifelessly as he walked, and came face to face with what the pair had done earlier. "I am a terrible human being!" thought George. So he drew a chair.

Mother gave away a rancid fart. Flatulence filled the room while it was lightened gradually by the first morning sunrays creeping over the horizon and through the window in the east. The two women, one of flesh and one of fleece and cloth, lay beside one another without the least bit of anything desirable on them. The sound of silence was strangely empowering for George to take responsibility for his actions. "This must be the freedom everyone's been yapping about..." George thought as he slowly cut himself a hefty piece of a freshly baked apple pie.



Literary Coroner



BOWLING BALLS IN THE OCEAN

By Stanko Jeneš

Anyone with genuine interest in literature has heard about the recent leakage of *Three Stories*, a collection of three short stories written by the famous American writer J.D. Salinger. While I do not support the fact that those are now known to general public despite the author's wishes for the stories not to be published until 50 years after his death, I cannot say I wasn't thrilled when I heard they had been leaked. I will only focus on one of the three stories here, namely "The Ocean Full of Bowling Balls" (precursor to the renowned *The Catcher in the Rye*) taking place on the day of Allie's death. More specifically I will be dealing with the meaning and symbolism behind the phrase *bowling ball* in the text.

Wikipedia gives us the following definition of a bowling ball: "A bowling ball is a piece of sporting equipment used to hit bowling pins in the sport of bowling. Ten-pin bowling balls are typically hard spheres with three holes drilled in them, one each for the ring and middle fingers, and one for the thumb." It is a piece of sporting equipment and as such we

can easily connect it with fun and competition; it also has holes drilled for the fingers, which leads to a better grip, more control. On the other hand, it is heavy, thus it is something that wants to get away from you, it is hard to keep control over it, it needs those holes drilled if we want to at least control it to some extent.

We first meet this phrase in the title, "The Ocean Full of Bowling Balls". The ocean is in itself something light, relaxing, but bowling balls here appear heavy. It would be impossible to swim in the ocean were it filled with bowling balls. If we connect the previously mentioned aspect of the heavy things being hard to control, such an ocean would be even more unpredictable, even more uncontrollable than the ocean already is. Even if the balls have the holes drilled, humans only have two hands, not nearly enough to control a whole ocean of those.

The next time bowling balls are mentioned is when Vincent (D.B. in *The Catcher*) tells the story he's writing to Kenneth (Allie in *The Catcher*). The story, titled "The Bowler", is about a man whose wife never lets him listen to sports on the radio at night or read any cowboy stories. The only freedom he has is that he can go bowling every Wednesday. When the bowler dies, the wife comes to his grave every Sunday. One time she by chance comes on Wednesday, and notices some fresh flowers. She asks the caretaker about it; he tells her that they have been brought by the same woman as always, probably his wife. His actual wife is really upset about this and she throws his bowling ball through a window that night.

This story introduces quite a few completely different associations with the phrase *bowling ball*. In the beginning, we see the ball as freedom. It offers the bowler something he couldn't have otherwise. Just a few moments later we see the ball as a symbol of something else, unfaithfulness, cheating. And at the end of the story, as the wife throws the ball through the window, it represents anger and revenge.

After the telling of the story, Kenneth asks Vincent why he doesn't delete the last part of the story, why he takes revenge on him. If we speak of symbolism behind the bowling ball, he asks him to remove unfaithfulness, cheating, revenge and anger from the ball. He asks him to just leave freedom.

If we move back to the title after this

discovery, we can now see the ocean as not only fun, unpredictable and oppressive, but also filled with freedom, unfaithfulness, cheating, anger and revenge. By now we can see this ocean as life, life contains all this, and as Kenneth, we would often like to see it without certain negative concepts and emotions.

The next mention of the phrase is when Vincent and Kenneth are sitting on The Wise Guy Rock. Kenneth mentions to Vincent that if he died, he would stick around for a while. Vincent looks at Kenneth and then at the ocean and notes: "The ocean was terrible now. It was full of bowling balls." His little brother doesn't feel that way and decides he wants to go for a swim. After trying to convince Vincent to go with him, he finally goes in. The last words Vincent says to him before the boy goes in are: "You go ahead. I can't stand that ocean today. It's full of bowling balls." Kenneth doesn't hear him though. He is already running to the ocean.

After he finishes, he comes out and, when he is almost safe, the ocean throws "its last bowling ball at him". The wave has killed him.

While in the previous mentions of the phrase "bowling ball", the ocean filled with them seems like it could represent life, this time it clearly presents death. Vincent notices something dark, dangerous about the ocean. The whole scene is presented with a sinister air about it. Kenneth is clear about what he would do if he died with his last words; Vincent feels the ocean is odd, dangerous today...

The final mention of the ocean and bowling balls is in the last paragraphs of the story, when Vincent tells Holden that the ocean was full of bowling balls. Holden, without knowing about any talk about the bowling balls, simply answers: "Yeah, Vincent." This final use of the phrase and Holden's simple answer appear to be of no significance at the first sight. Yet this very answer is quite important. It could be shown either as agreement or as resignation – resignation at the fact that the ocean just has to be full of bowling balls. One cannot change this; it is a simple law of nature.

If we look back to the title now, it is fairly clear that the ocean full of bowling balls presents polar opposites. It means both life and death, and the bowling balls portray all the joys of life and all its burdens. At the same time they also portray the relief from the burdens of life and cruel separation from the joys the life brings us. No matter how hard we try, we can't escape the ocean, for it presents both, life and death. We can only try to swim or resign and drown.

COMPARISON

By Marija Križ

For all the bookworms out there – if you haven't figured it out yet, we offer a little help to find the strategy of reading that fits your needs and desires best. Suit yourself!

E-BOOK READERS

These gadgets have already enchanted bookworms all over the world – it is not surprising that people who do a lot of reading are thrilled to be given the possibility to store thousands of books in a small, light, pocket-sized device with a long battery life (it lasts for weeks). The best known e-book readers that stand out among other models on the market are Amazon's models of Kindle, although there are other alternatives worthy of mentioning – alternatives like Barnes & Noble's Nook or Kobo Glo. Amazon's greatest advantage is its eBook store that offers the largest spectrum of titles at user-friendly prices, with the possibility of reading a few pages of the book you're considering to buy before making the final decision. Also, many titles in the store are available for free or can be downloaded from different websites like Project Gutenberg.

So why is this important for us, students? Well, besides the joy at encouraging the preservation of thousands of trees on the planet, e-book readers can come in quite handy, especially the newest models on the market with state-of-the-art features. The new Paperwhite light technology increases the quality of the screen, reduces eye strain and imitates real paper and ink, so it practically makes no difference whether you're reading from a piece of paper or a digital screen. There's no sunlight glare, so you'll be able to read and catch some rays during summer holidays at the same time, while a built-in light makes reading in the dark possible for the first time. Great news for the insomniacs who will now get the chance to read through their nights without bothering their roommates! With the newest e-readers, you are practically able to read 24/7. The possibility to add your own notes, check the meaning of unknown words and organizing them into your personalized dictionary can be a timesaving function, which can be crucial when you are trying to meet the looming deadline for handing in that seminar paper you should have started writing a month ago.

There are hardly any disadvantages in using an e-book reader. Here are some minor points. Once you decide on buying an e-book reader produced by one company, you will be bound to buying the books only from that company in the future. Some older (and cheaper) models do not display some of the advantageous properties – if you buy a previous

generation e-book reader, the quality of the screen will not be the same. You will have to make an effort to push a button instead of simply gliding your finger over the touch-screen, you will not be able to adapt the brightness to enable reading at night and there will be some differences in the software. You can adapt the choice to your needs and your budget.

TABLETS AND SMARTPHONES

Reading e-books is not a primary function of tablets and smartphones, but they are certainly widely used for that purpose. If you're interested in having a wider range of possibilities besides simply reading your favourite books and newspapers in black and white, then you should probably consider purchasing a tablet. It might cost you more than buying one of the previously mentioned models of e-book readers, but you'll be caught in a world of endless possibilities offered by the Internet and applications. You'll be able to read your favourite magazines, enjoy your videos, music, games and always be available on Facebook and other social networks. So much possibilities to kill time waiting in the line for the Urbana bus pass at the beginning of the academic year. You don't have to own your own e-book reader to be able to use Kindle, Nook, Google Books or other Android applications for reading and the best thing is that you don't have to limit yourself to just one company.

There are several downsides of reading via tablets and smartphones, though. One of them is most certainly the type of screen, which is not suitable for reading in the sunlight and causes eye strain – you probably already spend way too many hours in front of a screen and your eyes will not be thankful for further enhancing that number! Another disadvantage is definitely the battery duration, which is considerably shorter than with specialized e-book readers. Finally, there's also the higher price and the fact that the less strong-willed among us will constantly have to fight the temptation to meaninglessly waste time updating statuses, browsing Imgur or incessantly crushing coloured candies.

BOOKS

The smell. Yes, you've read correctly, the smell. And it's not just a student of English being all geeky and weird about smelling instead of actually reading the books. That faint, pleasant smell of ink and paper that entrals you upon entering a library or an antique bookshop has, in fact, often been a topic of discussions in various scientific studies. Some would even go as far as saying that the smell is of equal importance as the content of the book itself. Besides, nothing thrills more than the feeling of

holding a copy of a newly-published novel of your favourite author for the first time. Perhaps only the excitement you experience after finally buying one of the classics of literature to put on your very own bookshelf. Your private collection of books is your treasure; the best decoration that evokes the feelings of self-accomplishment and pride.

With the introduction of different kinds of e-book readers and tablets, this tradition is slowly dying away. Yes, there are many advantages that the usage of modern ways of reading brings about and yes, the books are not always the most practical thing in the world (if you are the person who wants to be able to read in any situation and always wants to carry a book or two in your bag while travelling). Still, it is saddening to imagine that books will most likely become obsolete with further developments of e-book readers in the era of digital media. Without diminishing the importance and practicality of using an electronic reader, most of us will agree that no gadget can replace the feeling of holding (and smelling) a good old-fashioned book.

SOULS CROSS AGES LIKE CLOUDS CROSS SKIES: A REVIEW OF DAVID MITCHELL'S *CLOUD ATLAS*

By Jure Velikonja

"I watched clouds awobly from the floor o' that kayak. Souls cross ages like clouds cross skies, an' tho' a cloud's shape nor hue nor size don't stay the same, it's still a cloud an' so is a soul. Who can say where the cloud's blown from or who the soul'll be 'morrow? Only Sonmi the east an' the west an' the compass an' the atlas, yay, only the atlas o'clouds." (*Cloud Atlas*)

Have you ever made a cake? If you have, you know which ingredients you need: eggs, flour, sugar, milk, chocolate... You will agree that the ingredients are intrinsically different, but when put together they form one delicious entity. The same can be said for *Cloud Atlas*, a bold novel by the British author David Mitchell, first published in 2004 and shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

This is Mitchell's most experimental novel and consists of six at first seemingly unconnected novellas, each having a different physical and temporal setting, as well as a different set of characters. The first story takes place in the mid-19th century on a trading ship sailing across the South Pacific, as the reader dives into the journal entries of an American notary, Adam Ewing, who

gets infected with a parasite and is treated by the ship's physician. The next story moves to 1930s Belgium and is about a young composer, Robert Frobisher. He works as an amanuensis to an elderly English composer who has lost his touch and hasn't composed anything of value in years. The story is told in the form of letters that Frobisher sends to his lover, Rufus Sixsmith. The third is a detective novella set in the 1970s California. The protagonist is a reporter called Luisa Rey, who attempts to expose a report about a dangerous nuclear power plant that a power company wishes to destroy. What follows is a humorous account of an elderly British publisher, Timothy Cavendish, who finds himself in a militant retirement home. The story takes place in modern-day Britain and is told in the form of a memoir. The penultimate novella takes place in the year 2144 in Nea So Copros (a dystopian place in the territory of Korea) and concentrates on Sonmi-451, a cloned slave who is rescued by an underground rebellious organisation that wishes to overthrow the totalitarian government. Finally, the reader is transported to post-apocalyptic Hawaii, where Zachry, a goat herder, tells the story of his adventure with a woman named Meronym, who is a member of a technologically superior civilisation. The order in which the novellas are structured is the following: the first halves of five of the plotlines are presented chronologically, followed by the entirety of the sixth story. The book is rounded off by the second halves of the previous five plot lines, this time counter-chronologically, creating a mirrored effect throughout the book.

As different as they may seem, the six narratives eventually reveal their hidden connections to the reader, showing how the past, present, and future are connected, and ultimately how the actions of people echo through time and space – the interconnectedness of cause and effect. Those expecting a revelation on a grand scale at the end, a Big-Bang-like explosion, revealing how the six stories are actually one story only, will be disappointed. *Cloud Atlas* merely offers small and somewhat hidden connections between the stories that are not always easy to uncover, but are definitely vital to the reading experience. In other words, *Cloud Atlas* gives you the ingredients, but it's up to you to create a harmonious dish.

Apart from the unusual structure of the novel, the most remarkable thing about *Cloud Atlas* is how incredibly diverse the writing techniques Mitchell utilises are. He writes in the form of a journal, then in epistolary form, followed by a detective novel, memoir, and the form of an interview. Each story is told in a different way, which makes the reading process more dynamic and holds the reader's constant attention. Furthermore, Mitchell

adapts his language brilliantly in accordance not only with the writing techniques but the temporal settings as well, using archaic words and phrasing in the stories taking place in the past, and even inventing a new dialect for the story taking place in the distant future (an example given in the opening quote of this review). The latter does need some getting used to, but after a few pages it reads just as fluently as any other modern English text. With the diverse writing techniques comes also a variety of genres the author operates with, and does so very convincingly: the reader can find romance in one story, political criticism in another, dystopian sci-fi in the next, followed by racism and colonialism, and so forth. What is truly remarkable, however, is that s/he never feels that the stories are completely disconnected, even if they end in mid-sentence or with questions still unanswered. Though the process of reading *Cloud Atlas* definitely makes you hungry for more, at the end you get to the all-you-can-eat buffet and can feast on the subtle but intricate connections between the six stories. It is one of those rare novels that evoke every possible emotion, ranging from loud laughter to muffled sobbing, and everything in between.

For me, *Cloud Atlas* was one of those books that immediately grab you, not only because of the plot, but also because it is so beautifully written. Usually I read books similar to this one in a flash, but with *Cloud Atlas* I was so immersed that I didn't want it to end. It is probably one of the best novels I've read so far because of the incredible amount of wisdom I got from it and the inexplicable comfort it has given me. This novel literally has it all. For example, it has a quote for everything, even for the perks of reading: "Mother used to say escape is never further than the nearest book. Well, Mumsy, no, not really. Your beloved large-print sagas of rags, riches, and heartbreak were no camouflage against the miseries trained on you by the tennis ball launcher of life, were they? But, yes, Mum, there again, you have a point. Books don't offer real escape, but they can stop a mind scratching itself raw."

Cloud Atlas is a novel that transcends the boundaries of fiction-writing. As the author himself puts it: "I understand now that boundaries between noise and sound are conventions. All boundaries are conventions, waiting to be transcended. One may transcend any convention if only one can first conceive of doing so." Has he conceived it? Yes, he has. This novel is a box packed with numerous writing techniques, genres, choices of register and vocabulary... In a nutshell: Regardless of what your reading preferences might be, *Cloud Atlas* definitely has something for you. It's a cake, remember? :)

Geeky Corner

COMIC CON – THE GLORIFIED GEEK EXPERIENCE

By Tina Bašić

Somewhere on the West Coast of the US, there is a magical land called San Diego. Throughout most of the year, it is just another city in California, but every summer it turns into a geek Mecca for 4 days. Nerds from all over the world (okay, mainly the US...) gather and revel in the overabundance of merchandise from their favorite fandom(s). More than that, they dress up as their favorite characters, meet fellow fans, attend all the panels and events they possibly can and so on.

With the rise of geeks in popular culture and the explosion of the Internet in the early 2000s, this convention has grown more and more popular. The fact that last year's tickets sold out in a mere 96 minutes is proof enough. Of course the San Diego convention isn't the only one in the US, but it is easily the most known one since it has the longest tradition. The first ever Comic Con was held more than 40 years ago and was attended by just 145 people. In the year 2012, the attendance was almost a thousand times higher! I sincerely hope that you are not calculating the attendance number right now (you hopeless nerd, you!). With the overcrowding every year, the organizers are already planning to expand the convention centre in the near future.

While talking about Comic Con, one has to understand that it offers a very unique and personal experience to each and every one of the visitors, and it is perfectly reasonable that people get very invested in it. The largest stage in the convention centre is called Hall H – it can hold about 6,500 people and that is why the most popular panels are usually carried out there. The line before this glorious hall is usually awfully long. Hardcore fans start camping out about a day before, which may seem extreme and cause some people to frown, but they say it's worth it in the end (you only live once!). Last year's events in Hall H are especially worth mentioning as Tom Hiddleston, who played the villain in the 2012 summer blockbuster *The Avengers*, appeared in full costume as Loki and managed to single-handedly silence a crowd of more than 6,000 people (talk about devotion!). No one knew of his arrival; it was so top

secret that Tom had to wear a *Star Wars* mask on the San Diego airport so as to not be recognized.

Want to know more? I suggest you watch the 2011 documentary called *Comic Con Episode IV: A Fan's Hope*. It has an 83% Certified Fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes, so you'd better believe me that it's good.

P.S. I see the words geek and nerd in a positive way and I in no way want you to think that they're something bad.

NA MEJI NEVIDNEGA – BRIEF REPORT

By Andraž Banko

Na meji nevidnega was a convention for fans of fantasy and sci-fi, the only of its kind in Slovenia. It took place on 28 September in Ljubljana.

Upon entering the convention, you found yourself in a room filled with colourful stands. They were mostly run by societies of fans or artists presenting their work. They created quite a nice atmosphere. There were also various events scattered throughout the day. Some took the form of lectures or presentations – one was about translating George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* to Slovene, for example. There were also some meet & greets for members of specific fandoms, a quiz and a cosplay competition, which was won by someone wearing an amazing-looking hand-made costume of the Witch-king from *The Lord of the Rings*.

The convention was no San Diego Comic Con, though. Its small size was quite disappointing, at least for me. Browsing through all the stands took about ten minutes; if it hadn't been for some interesting events, it really wouldn't have been worth the drive there. I also expected a lot more people to visit; as it was, all the faces were familiar after an hour or so. (Even a certain English editor didn't come, despite having attended the event on Facebook. For shame!) And there could have been more stands selling fan merchandise; apart from board games from the Črna luknja shop, the only thing you could buy was three different T-shirts.

Still, considering this was the first time the convention was organized, and it was done by a mere handful of people, it was quite good. And they intend to make it bigger next year, so I'm looking forward to seeing you there.



SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH

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