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Editorial



Lucija Jezeršek

Editor-in-Chief & Co-editor of *Language Love* and *Rhapsodic Report*

"True education is a kind of never ending story — a matter of continual beginnings, of habitual fresh starts, of persistent newness."

- J.R.R. Tolkien

The issue in your hands is the last one brought to you by the very capable editors who were entrusted with this task in 2015 and supervised by yours truly. I am proud of the work we created together and excited that it attracted a number of new editors bringing fresh ideas to the present issue and hopefully many more to come.

This year our focus has been on traveling and the special feature is the report of the translation project our students did in collaboration with Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt together with the superb translations in which the exchange resulted. There is something absolutely beautiful about seeing people go to new places and cooperate with people they meet there. Given the recent events, increase in repressive political movements, and mentality shifts in the Western world triggered by misguided attempts at security in fear of mostly perceived and only sometimes real threats, I can't stress enough how important it is for every one of us to not get stuck in one place neither physically nor mentally. We must not forget that our world is filled with people. We can perceive many of these people as frightening until we remember they are mostly just human beings and make an effort to get to know them as individuals with families, dreams, and worries. The magnificent Kelpies on the front page with a human for scale intend to remind us just how small we are in the grand scheme of things. Compared to all the wonders of the Universe waiting to be discovered, every human squabble seems silly.

Go out there and learn about the world and its people, no matter how little or how far you travel. Just go. Even if only by reading about the experiences of your fellow humans. Expand your horizons, get to know strangers and learn their stories, observe different cultures and by doing so keep evolving into a person you can be proud of; I know I will. Because I couldn't have said it better myself, I leave you with the words of Bill and Ted: "Be excellent to each other."

The Team

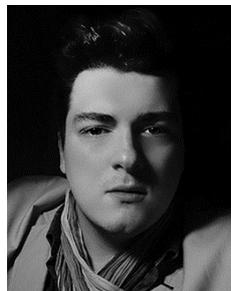


Jan Hacin

Co-editor of *Rhapsodic Report*

"All men dream, but not equally; those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity. But the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes to make it possible."

- T.E. Lawrence



Lev Pavlovski

Co-editor of *Language Love*

"I feel like a mouse in an ever so popular cat drama!"

- Stephen Fry



Jure Velikonja

Co-editor of *Opulent Opinions* & *Lust for Literature*

"Let us go forth, the tellers of tales, and seize whatever prey the heart long for, and have no fear. Everything exists, everything is true, and the earth is only a little dust under our feet."

- W.B. Yeats



Žan Korošec

Co-editor of *Opulent Opinions*

"In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing."

- Oscar Wilde



Maja Bezgovšek
Co-editor of *Exuberant Exchanges of Travel Tales*

"Please be a traveller, not a tourist. Try new things, meet new people, and look beyond what's right in front of you. Those are the keys to understanding this amazing world we live in."

- Andrew Zimmern



Karin Petko
Co-editor of *Exuberant Exchanges of Travel Tales*

"Go out into the world today and love the people you meet. Let your presence light new light in the hearts of others."

- Mother Teresa



Marija Križ
Co-Editor of *Writer's Woe*

"Writers aren't people exactly. Or, if they're any good, they're a whole lot of people trying so hard to be one person."

- F.Scott Fitzgerald



Anja Zidar
Co-editor of *Writer's Woe*

"Whatever it is you're seeking won't come in the form you're expecting."

- Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*



Nina Kremžar
Co-editor of *Writer's Woe*

"The power of storytelling is exactly this: to bridge the gaps where everything else has crumbled."

- Paulo Coelho



Ariela Herček
Co-editor of *Lust for Literature*

"I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it until it begins to shine."

- Emily Dickinson



Marija Jeremić
Co-editor of *Lust for Literature*

"Books, records, films - these things matter."

- Nick Hornby, *High Fidelity*



Žiga Fabjan
Co-editor of *Fruitful Film Findings & Terrific TV Tips*

"If it can be written, or thought, it can be filmed."

- Stanley Kubrick



Urša Bajželj
Co-editor of *Fruitful Film Findings & Terrific TV Tips*

"No good movie is too long and no bad movie is short enough."

- Roger Ebert



Jakob Lenardič
Proofreader-in-Chief

"Your heart's desire is to be told some mystery. The mystery is that there is no mystery."

- Cormac McCarthy



Kristina Nastran
Design Consultant

"The truth isn't easily pinned to a page. In the bathtub of history the truth is harder to hold than the soap and much more difficult to find."

- Terry Pratchett



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Rhapsodic Report

The ‘Neighbours with a Go-Between’ translation project with Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt

by Jan Kontestabile, Maruša Rojc & Petra Prelesnik

Slovene is a language that not many people understand, let alone speak. Therefore, it can get somewhat difficult when we want to communicate with people from foreign countries, even with our neighbours, since their languages belong to different language families (except for Croatian). Luckily, we live in an era when many people know how to speak another language besides their mother tongue, so using a third language, such as English, is a convenient way of interacting with other people.

The “Neighbours with a Go-Between” project was created to showcase this “translation via an intermediary language”. The project began well before our Austrian colleagues arrived, when we were given a task by our Language in Use 2 teacher Monika Kavalir: our objective was literary translation of a poem by a well-known Slovene poet from Slovene into English, and later the Austrian students would translate the poem from English into German, thus employing English as a go-between. Groups of three students were formed and each group selected a poet and their poem to be translated. The only obligation was that the poet should be somehow related to Ljubljana. Having absorbed knowledge of our poet's life and the epoch in which they lived, we first interpreted the poem and afterward, with the guidance of our professors (Monika Kavalir, Anamarija Šporčič and Mojca Kregel), translated it.

and how loss in translation is compounded in indirect translation.

Apart from translating the poem we also had to choose sights in Ljubljana which were important for our chosen poet's life and work. The idea was that we would show the Klagenfurt students around Ljubljana and that the sights themselves and the information we would give them about the poet would aid them in their translation.



Photo: Gregor Chudoba

“We chose Edvard Kocbek's poem ‘Kino Tivoli’, as it seemed to enthral all 3 members of our group. Working alongside Natalija and Metka was easy because we are also friends outside the classroom and get along well. We each proposed different options for translating a given line of the poem and we chose the most fitting proposition together; the same principle was used in deciding which sights connected to the poet we should visit.” – Jan

By the time the Klagenfurt students came to Ljubljana all was prepared – each group had their translation of their chosen poem and an itinerary of important places to visit. We first met with our foreign companions and their English professor on Friday 25 November. After we divided into groups of six using an amusing sorting ceremony involving Merci chocolates, we led our new colleagues through the streets of Ljubljana, showing them the places important to our poems and their authors. Our Austrian counterparts were very friendly and quite amusing. It was most enjoyable walking with them throughout the city and occasionally stopping to show them the sights.

“We acquainted them with several interesting facts about Srečko Kosovel (the poet we chose) and showed them the places which were of great importance to him.” – Petra



Photo: Aniša Vilič

One of our greater concerns was that nuances of meaning would be lost in our translations because our poems would pass through English and only then into German, but we were later reassured that the exact idea behind our cooperation with the Klagenfurt students was not for us to succeed in producing a perfect translation in German, but to observe what is currently happening worldwide

“We found it essential to talk about Kosovel’s life in Ljubljana, as the misery and homesickness he felt while living here influenced his works a lot.” – Maruša



After lunch we escorted the Klagenfurt students back to the Celica hostel, where they were staying the night. Having taken in all the information we provided them with during the day, our newfound friends quickly started work on their translation into German while we had some time off. We returned in the evening to go view the turning on of the Christmas lights in Prešeren square. After we saw the ceremony, all groups – Slovenian and Austrian – assembled again in the hostel in order to answer the questions that emerged while translating. Since translating can be quite tricky because of all the differences between the three languages, our Austrian friends prepared some questions about their interpretations of the poems and a few grammatical issues they had.

“Our group detected trouble especially with the interpretation of the poem. It is an existential text and different readers can view and understand it very differently. Taking into account the interpretation is essential to translating the poem. We realized that knowing the author and the period in which he lived is crucial in order to comprehend the poem’s meaning.” – Petra

“Their translation of Kino Tivoli was excellent, my not knowing German did not seem to be an impediment to understanding their finished work, and I was pleased to discover that their version was very much like our Slovenian original in spite of having passed through English.” – Jan

Afterwards most of us were very tired and so decided to say our goodbyes and retire to the comfort of our homes to get some much needed rest, although some did stay and socialize with the Austrian students for a while longer.

All groups gathered again the next day at 9:30 and headed into town with the aim of visiting the special places we chose and performing our final translations. The day was packed with interesting facts about each of the poets and with each group reciting – in a way performing – their poem in several languages in their respective location.

“I have to admit that was my least favourite part, as I have terrible stage fright, especially when I have to speak in a foreign language.” – Maruša

“In my opinion our reading of the poem was well executed and so were all of the other teams’ readings. A lot of passion was poured into the performances as it was the grand finale of our project.” – Jan

As we concluded our grand victory lap around Ljubljana in Prešeren Square, it was time to say goodbye to our Klagenfurt colleagues, but not before being surprised by our two English professors’ readings of the Slovenian anthem while standing on the Prešeren monument, where each of them read it in the mother tongue of the other professor. While saying goodbye we were invited to come visit sometime and perhaps even stay a night or two, a proposition to be thought about in the future.

“All in all the project was a great success and I would not mind repeating the experience, perhaps with us visiting Klagenfurt next time around. I feel we all gained valuable experience in translation as well as in communication regarding cooperation and coordination with others.” – Jan



“I really appreciate the experience. Not only did I meet new friends, but it also pushed me out of my comfort zone as far as performing in public is concerned and it made me more confident about my knowledge of English. The knowledge and the experiences I gained will definitely be very useful if I decide to pursue a translating career in the future.” – Maruša

“I am pleased to have participated in this project. I have learned numerous new things which I will doubtlessly use in my future.” – Petra

P.S.: *“I also very much appreciated all the thoughtful and practical gifts we later received from Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt and would like to state that they in no way affected my judgement regarding this project or the people involved in it!” – Jan*



Photo: Anamarija Šporčič

Translated Poems

Zvezda

Lili Novy

Nad mano bela zvezda se prižiga,
Svetal je mrak, povsod je topel mir,
Le senčen, ostroroben netopir
kot plah spomin med golim drevjem šviga.

Z rumene zarje se rumena dviga,
še više plava sinji že večer
in zdaj vzplamti nad cesto v daljno smer
velikih luči pravljicna veriga.

Vse sije, a ne jemlje mi oči,
milo, kot za slovo, je vse prižgano,
brez teže, kot prozorne so stvari.

Zakaj, od toliko lepote obdano,
srce nenadoma mi zadržti,
kot da nekdo poklical je: »Za mano!«

Star

Lili Novy

Above me, look, a star igniting
there's peaceful warmth, the day not quite yet dark,
a gloomy bat alone with edges sharp,
like timid mem'ries in bare trees is darting.

From yellow dusk the colour yellow rising
the night now blue and floating up and up,
that's when a row above the road flares up
of fairytale-like lights all brightly shining.

All glares but still my eyes are mine to see,
Aglow as if to bid farewell, and mellow,
ethereal now all appears to be.

But why despite such grace where it could wallow,
my heart begins to shudder suddenly
as if someone had called, "Come, follow!"

*Translated by Anja Bajc,
Tanita Fabjan Demšar & Nika Tomažič*

Nekoga moraš imeti rad

Ivan Minatti

Nekoga moraš imeti rad,
pa čeprav trave, reko, drevo ali kamen,
nekomu moraš nasloniti roko na ramo,
da se, lačna, nasiti bližine,
nekomu moraš, moraš,
to je kot kruh, kot požirek vode,
moraš dati svoje bele oblake,
svoje drzne ptice sanj,
svoje plašne ptice nemoči
– nekje mora biti zanje
gneздо miru in nežnosti –
nekoga moraš imeti rad,
pa čeprav trave, reko, drevo ali kamen,
ker drevesa in trave vedo za samoto
– kajti koraki vselej odidejo dalje,
pa čeprav se za hip ustavijo – ,
ker reka ve za žalost
– če se le nagne nad svojo globino –,
ker kamen pozna bolečino
– koliko težkih nog
je že šlo čez njegovo nemo srce –,
nekoga moraš imeti rad,
nekoga moraš imeti rad,
z nekom moraš v korak,
v isto sled –
o trave, reka, kamen, drevo,
molčeči spremljevalci samotnežev in čudakov,
dobra in velika bitja,
ki spregovore samo,
kadar umolknejo ljudje.

You Have to Love Someone

Ivan Minatti

You have to love someone,
be it a meadow, a river, a tree or a stone,
you have to lay your hand on someone's shoulder,
for it's craving to be satisfied with closeness,
you have to, have to,
it is like bread, like a sip of water,
you have to give someone your white clouds,
your bold birds of dreams,
your timid birds of helplessness
– there has to be for them somewhere
a nest of peace and tenderness –
you have to love someone,
be it a meadow, a river, a tree or a stone,
because trees and meadows know about loneliness
– for footsteps always go on,
even if they stop for a moment –,
because the river knows about sorrow
– if only it leans over its depth –,
because the stone knows about pain
– how many heavy feet
have already gone over its voiceless heart –,
you have to love someone,
you have to love someone,
you need someone to walk beside you,
on the same path –
oh meadows, river, stone, tree,
silent companions of the lonely and strange,
good, great beings,
who only speak
when people fall silent.

*Translated by Kristina Kotnik,
Neža Ržek & Karmen Žnidaršič*

Language Love

The Language of the Colonizer and the Colonized

by Jure Skubic

In the following article I will take a look at the different perceptions of language of the colonizer by the colonized on the example of Africa and its history with the European colonizers. The theoretical basis for the article will be the first chapter of Ngugi wa Thiongo's book *Decolonising the Mind* titled "The Language of African Literature", with some references to the introductory chapter. In addition to that I will focus on the first chapter of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Mask* titled "The Negro and the Language", and the second chapter from his book *Dying Colonialism* titled "This is the Voice of Algeria".

In the 19th century some of the most powerful countries like the United Kingdom, France and Spain faced problems of hyper-production and lack of space. The expansion therefore became necessary and these countries started searching for a means of establishing colonies in various unexplored parts of the world which still had enough natural resources. The race to invade African countries was so aggressive that there was a danger of the invading countries starting the war against one another.

To prevent this, the German chancellor Otto von Bismarck convened a diplomatic summit of European powers in the late nineteenth century. /.../ This conference produced a treaty known as Berlin Act, with provisions to guide the conduct of the European inter-imperialist competition in Africa.¹

Africa was invaded and the colonizers started imposing their own customs and culture to the indigenous people. The colonized were usually seen as backward and underdeveloped since they lived in a much closer symbiosis with nature and environment. The colonizers therefore saw it as their mission to civilize indigenous people and teach them how to live according to European standards. The idea of Eurocentrism helped them justify their activities. The white people appeared in the middle of the indigenous people and interrupted the way of life they were used to. In that way the colonial situation was created.

A colonial situation is created, so to speak, the very instant a white man, even if he is alone, appears in the midst of a tribe, even if it is independent, so long as he is thought to be rich or powerful or merely immune to local forces of magic, and so long as he derives from his position, even though only in

his most secret self, a feeling of his own superiority.²

What Mannoni tries to show is that the colonizer has always thought of himself as superior to the colonised; thus, his culture and language have been considered better than the "uncivilized" culture and language of the colonised.

Language is one of the most important entities of a certain nation or a tribe and presents an entity which forms a culture and the collective national identity of its speakers. Frantz Fanon deals with the importance of language and has a great insight into what was happening to the language of the colonised when the colonizers began to take over. He grew up in Martinique which was under the French rule. He spoke Creole, a language considered subordinate to French, which was spoken by the colonizers. As Fanon realised the ability and availability to speak is extremely important for every human being since "to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization."³ What he implies is that the language creates a culture of a certain nation and if a language becomes extinct, the creation of the culture also stops. The colonized people were usually subjected to the pressure of adopting the language of the colonizers and therefore adopting their culture. With that, the language and culture of the colonized people slowly became of minor importance. Not only that, the indigenous languages were usually forbidden after the colonisation happened. Indigenous tribes usually used only one language, which was used in schools and during their work in the fields. What happened with the arrival of the colonizers was that suddenly "the language of [their] education was no longer the language of [their] culture."⁴ This nicely reflected the idea that the colonizers considered themselves superior to the colonized since their language was of primary importance. Ngugi also reveals that if students were heard speaking in their mother tongue, they were usually punished. With the adopting of the language of the colonizers, black Africans were actually becoming white (i.e. civilized) Europeans. It was as if black people with their own culture were considered children without any knowledge. By adopting the white culture and language, however, they were learning

¹Ehiedu E. G. Inweriebor, 'The Colonization of Africa', African Age (2007) <<http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanage/essay-colonization-of-africa.html>>, [accessed 8 December 2016]

²Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (University of Michigan Press, 1990), p.18.

³Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (Grove Press, United States, 1967), p. 8.

⁴Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language and African literature* (James Currey, Oxford, 1986), p. 11.

how to speak. The idea behind all of it was that the newly introduced language would break the natives' own language and make people inclined to learn the new one.

Additionally, Ngugi noted that the language of the colonizer became the only language of conversation and teaching. In Kenya one was unable to finish their education successfully if they did not speak English perfectly. "English was the language of formal education. In Kenya English became more than a language; it was *the* language, and all others had to bow before it in deference."⁵ Even the highest positions in the society were reserved for those who excelled in English. With forcing children to learn their language the colonizers succeeded in creating a new generation of Africans, who were completely subordinated to the languages and the culture of Europe. Children were alienated from their own mother tongue and culture. Not only English was the language of the colonizers; there were also French and Spanish which were imposed to the colonized. Language and literature were two vehicles which helped the colonizers to draw the colonised further away from their own culture and give them their new identity. This mental supremacy was actually the basis for the successful colonization.

Although colonizers succeeded in imposing their language to the colonized, "the new, imposed languages could never completely break the native languages as spoken, their most effective area of domination was the third aspect of the language as communication, the written."⁶ Children, therefore, were split between speaking their own language at home and writing, speaking and thinking in the language of the foreigners in public. The idea of making the language and culture of the colonizer a primary one succeeded. By abandoning their own language, the colonized forgot about their culture and therefore their national identity. They became similar to the white people so they felt accepted and a part of the newly created society. Children saw the world only through the language and literature they were adopting. The language that was imposed to them created a new culture inside children, who were the most vulnerable part of the society. It even went so far that the colonized people accepted the language of the colonizer as their primary form of communication although they were forced to do so. Sedar Senghor, a Senegalese poet and cultural theorist, said that even though the "colonial language was forced upon him, if he had been given the choice, he would still have opted for French."⁷ The power of the colonizers is clearly visible. Senghor (as well as many others) internalised the language of the colonizer and saw it as the real language which other people can understand. He was even grateful to the French and those who brought the language to him. European languages were adopted extensively in Africa and together with that came the emergence of the new culture and almost a complete loss of the old African culture. One important note to make here is the mentality of the white people who think that with colonization they rescued black people from underdevelopment and backwardness and therefore assume that black people

should be grateful that they were saved and should not complain over the loss of their own language and culture.

Although there was severe pressure from English, French and Spanish colonizers on the colonized, some nations succeeded in preserving their mother tongue and their culture. African tribes are one such example since the "African languages refused to die. They would not simply go the way of Latin to become fossils for linguistic archaeology to dig up, classify and argue about the international conferences."⁸ African tribes did not allow the European languages to uproot their own so they retained them in the spheres of their homes. Those tribes were united and they opposed the colonialist movements and have taken an anti-colonialist position. The peasantry was the one with the most important role in keeping the African languages and culture alive. In their home sphere they retained traditional African customs and languages and were in that manner creating a form of national consciousness, which helped them survive. The importance of African literature was not seen only in the writer being an African, but also in the literature itself being written in genuine African languages. Such literature meant that its authors were not conforming to the colonialist movements and wanted to retain the importance of African languages through African literature.

The problem at that time was that the colonized people who travelled to the countries of their colonizers usually forgot about their own mother tongue and culture. This was due to the fact that they wanted to become more like the white people inhabiting those countries and therefore they tried to adopt not only the general language but also proper pronunciation and manner of speaking. The personality of the colonised people living in the colonising countries changed immensely and the language made a black person feel that they belonged to the white society. The problem, however, was that white people had a very bad attitude when it came to talking to a black person. The tone in which they spoke to them can easily be compared to the tone in which a human being speaks to an animal whereas the tone which white people used with each other remained polite and respectful. Therefore, the desire of a black person to become similar to a white person was even greater. The extent to which the colonized people adopted the language and culture of their colonizers is seen only when those people returned to their home communities. The use of the elevated language style was completely redundant in their home environment, yet they still used it. The two dimensions to which the colonized person is subjected became clearly visible. However, the relationship to their family and the relationship to the white community in which the colonized lived should remain separated. Fanon gives us the following example.

After several months of living in France, a country boy returns to his family. Noticing a farm implement, he asks his father, an old don't-pull-that-kind-of-thing-on-me-peasant, "Tell me, what does one call that apparatus?" His father replies by drop-

⁵Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 11.

⁶Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 17.

⁷Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 18-19

⁸Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 23.

ping the tool on the boy's feet and the amnesia vanishes.⁹

The truth is that the language and the culture of the colonizers became a part of the everyday life of the colonized. Newspapers, magazines and other forms of media ubiquitously broadcasting the language of the colonizer are "broadly regarded as a link with the civilized world"¹⁰ for the settlers. One such example is the presence of the radio. Listening to the programme of the colonizers means inserting their culture into the very soul of the society – a family. In fear of the colonizers destroying the very little of the possibility of preserving their own culture and speaking their own language, the Algerian families long resisted to buy a radio although they were anything but poor. The radio was a symbol of the colonizer and was carrying a negative connotation. Ngugi in one of his interviews clearly shows that the problem with the languages has always been with oppression and hierarchy because some countries have always considered their languages higher than the languages of other countries, or the countries they colonized.¹¹

One important and still unanswered question remains: What is considered a true literature of the colonized people? The fact is that most of the authors from the colonized countries do not write in their own mother tongue but rather in the adopted language, the language of colonizers. Authors are producing literature of their home colonized country in the language of the colonizer because the latter (be it either English, French or any other) is known worldwide and therefore has a higher potential of succeeding. Until a person is a respected and a well-known author, the decision which language to use is obvious. Ngugi gives the reader a nice example of how A Conference of African Writers in English Expression, to which he was invited, proved to be biased against the African writers who were writing in their mother tongue. Even some of the most developed writers of this type (such as Shabaan Robert) were not invited to the conference just because their literature was in their home language. Ngugi on the other hand, who at that time was only a student of English and an author of a few papers in English was invited to participate in the conference.¹² The bias was obvious. African literature written in English was considered proper literature whereas African literature written in Gikuyu or any other native African language was not. Some of the authors abandoned their mother tongue in order to become known in the world and to be able to write about the situation in Africa and other colonized countries. As Chinua Achebe stated in his speech with the title *The African Writer and the English Language*: "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me, there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it."¹³ Even the authors themselves knew that abandoning their mother tongue meant abandoning their

own culture and their national identity. However, the use of the language of the colonizer was necessary for them to be able to write and to be allowed to publish their works. Although they felt guilty about it there was nothing they could do. European languages did present a unifying force.

"To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture."¹⁴ Language is definitely one of the most important human abilities and privileges. Language creates culture and reflects the society in which a certain language is spoken. It belongs to a group of people, identifies them and connects them into a collective consciousness. The ability to speak in one's own language should be considered one of the basic human rights. Even though several instruments protecting linguistic rights are in place now, many times throughout history languages of certain nations were subjected to various injustices and therefore often became extinct and forgotten. Because of the impact of colonisation and colonizing countries, the language and culture in the colonized countries were treated as unequal, backward and even undeveloped while the language of the colonisers was seen as superior. In my article I wanted to show just that – languages should be considered as equal and a certain language should never be seen as subordinate to another.

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⁹Fanon F., p. 13.

¹⁰Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (Grove Press, United States, 1994), p. 72.

¹¹Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *English is not an African Language* (2013) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGoBJphmcd0>> [accessed 10 December 2016]

¹²Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 5 – 7

¹³Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 7

¹⁴Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (Grove Press, United States, 1967), p. 25

Opulent Opinions

Oh, Goddess!

by Maja Perne

“How many of you are feminists?” This was the first question that Jessica Valenti, the author of *Full Frontal Feminism*, was confronted with upon starting her women’s literature class. Take a guess at how many students raised their hands. Zilch. Eager to see for myself how women around me would react if posed the same question, I simply had to put them to this test. So, out of the blue, I asked some of my friends. The reactions were pretty much the same. A horrified “no” and “how dare you”. One friend was aghast that I would even think about accusing her of such a horrendous thing. Their reactions only lead me towards this conclusion: Feminism is completely misunderstood by most.

Firstly, a quick question: How does a feminist look like? Probably one of the images that pop into your mind is one of the same stinky platitudes: a hairy, matriarchy-loving, man-hating, aggravating, plump lesbian listening to Pussy Riot’s *Kill the Sexist*. Was I close? Hopefully not. This is just a one-sided image that the good-old media likes to bombard us with ever since the women’s suffrage movement kicked off. But guess what? Even such afore-depicted women exist – why not? Do we all have to succumb to the same cookie-cutter style? Also there is this thing called freedom of expression. Nonetheless, the problem is not these women per se, but rather that the red-top media – thriving on any juicy story – seems to propagate too many radical acts of feminism, which only scares the majority of people who don’t necessarily understand the entire history and the importance of it. The result? Equating feminism with the radical strand.

The truth is that feminists have never been massively popular. In the eighties and nineties (Reagan era) feminism faced backlash by many women as they didn’t like being called names for actually enjoying their role as a stay-at-home-mom. And men? The majority of men most certainly opposed the whole feminist agenda. In the late 19th century, men still thought that women simply weren’t capable of making any difficult decisions or, god forbid, attend universities. Male doctors would spook women and their parents by saying that too much studying “actually ha[s] a damaging effect on the ovaries, turning attractive young women into dried-up prunes.”¹ Women were restrained to knitting and playing the ninth fiddle to the men; they weren’t given the same opportunities as they had, thus they had to riot and had to be radical to change these embedded roles. What they fought for was simply equal rights and equal opportunities, that’s it – from today’s perspective not radical at all, just common human sense.

In the 60s, during the second wave of feminism, these unruly radicals pushed toward more job opportunities for women – being an office clerk or a secretary simply didn’t

do any more. They started a conversation on abortion, work harassment, domestic violence, divorce, sex! These were all hush-hush topics. Revolutionary books such as *The Feminine Mystique* (Betty Friedan, 1963) or *The Female Eunuch* (Germaine Greer, 1970) further shook the well-trodden biased ground. Stories about unequal pay floated to the fore. Oprah, as a rookie, while hosting a talk show abreast her male TV host, was paid nearly \$30,000 less than her male counterpart. Her boss tried to fob her off by saying her co-host had kids in college and she had none. Hoping to have shushed her, he asked: “So tell me, why do you need the same amount of money?” She briskly retorted: “Well, because we are doing the same job.”² This new-found confidence in women was also one of the results of the three waves of feminism. In the nineties, more job opportunities opened up for women: we get comedians (Ellen DeGeneres), astronauts (Sally Kristen Ride), sport champions (Martina Navratilova), and even miners. Additionally, films and television started to portray more versatile female characters such as in *That Girl* (1966), *Murphy Brown* (1988), or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997).

Furthermore, the limited roles inflicted on women lost their grip. They didn’t want their worth to be determined merely by a husband and some as-fat-as-butter children. No children? Then she must be a spinster, right? Moreover, women started boycotting male-led magazines. They created their own, such as *Ms.* magazine. Prior, men would decide on topics that women would read. They wrote on beauty and how to please them. With *Ms.* topics such as harassment at work, battery of women, abortion, and the famous pill came into the limelight. *Ms.* magazine was a hit simply because this kind of information had prior been swept under the rug. The more hardcore revolutionary feminists (separatists), however, didn’t stop at rioting. With their unyielding belief in a total matriarchy they wanted to completely separate men and women by a gargantuan wall that would run across the equator. In the UK, one of the mottos of these radicals was “Kill men now, ask me how”. They wanted to influence the vocabulary by changing *history* to *herstory*, *women* to *wimmin*, and the exclamation *oh, God!* to *oh, Goddess!*³

Luckily for us, many non-radical, non-man-bashing feminists are trying to destigmatize feminism and show its true beauty. Christina Hoff Sommer, a former philosophy professor and a critic of contemporary feminism, coined the term *Equity Feminism*, which is basically classical feminism or simply humanitarianism as she puts it. This most basic form of feminism simply advocates fair treatment of women, no discrimination, equality of the sexes, and nothing more – no phallus-hate whatsoever. On her YouTube channel she also speaks against the many untrue statistics some more “radical” feminist activists love

to put out and badgers to always prove your sources. So, pretty much, this is feminism: equality of the sexes. No need to fear it. Sadly, nowadays, many still shrug when they hear the word feminist even though they believe in its exact core values. Fortunately, more and more activists already seek to mend the tarnished reputation of feminism – men as well as women: Terry Crews, Aston Kutcher, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Daniel Radcliffe, Antonio Banderas, Prince Harry (and many more): all proud feminists.

Feminism still seems to be massively misunderstood. Many live in belief that feminists are fractious rowdy wenches. It seems that the rebellious past of feminism has tainted its present-day reputation. However, things are on the up and up. More and more equity feminists are speak-

ing out about this trying to destigmatize the term. But don't simply wait around for the celebrities and activists to do all the heavy lifting – pose the people around you this bloodcurdling question and see how they respond. And if they start choking and making *alien-esque* faces, then you know you have your work cut out.

¹ <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century> (Gender roles in the 19th century, accessed 5.1.17)

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOsLjbpHV8M&t=23s> (Documentary on Women's Liberation Movement, accessed 5.1.17)

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCRohDqWDcw> (Lefties: Angry Wimmin" BBC documentary on Radical Feminism; accessed 5.1.17)

The Birth of a Movie, The Birth of a Nation

by Lara Majerle

Most of us like to believe that the time in which we are living is 'modern' and 'progressive' and we often like to forget and turn the other way when we are faced with the abhorrent truth of what is happening in the world today. The media is now almost bombarding us with notions of equality, peace, and justice. Everyone strives towards them — it is the ideal. The problem is that the media holds too much influence over people's opinions. It did in the past and will continue to do so indefinitely. An important factor in shaping people's view of the world through the media are movies. The issue that still has not been completely eradicated but is long overdue to be is the abominable racism. Hollywood has tackled that issue by producing a lot of movies regarding slavery, racial segregation, and the hardships African-Americans had to endure. It deems it profitable, something to exploit because it is such a big part of American history. An exquisite example is, of course, Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave*, which shows the struggle of a free African-American man being sold into slavery. It shows history through the eyes of African-Americans, a race considered in the past by many to be inferior. The problem with history is that it is always written by people in power – they decide to convey their version of the truth.

A movie that made a tremendous impact on people when it was released in 1915 is *The Birth of a Nation*. It shows a perverted version of history. One of the key differences between these two influential movies is the portrayal of races. *The Birth of a Nation* is now considered one of the most controversial and racist movies; nevertheless, it is regarded as the epitome of the early Hollywood feature film.

It had distorted the public's view on reality. It's a frightening thought how easily we can be manipulated. We succumb to the most popular belief. To understand the reason for making a movie such as *The Birth of a Nation* we need to take into consideration the historical, social and political background which it depicts and in which it was created. There is no denying that *The Birth of a Nation* is an explicitly racist movie. The racial issue has existed in America ever since America had been discovered.

The first ones to undergo exploitation from white men were the Native Americans. Death and destruction are the only things they brought with them. It was nothing less than a genocide. They also imported slaves from Africa and used them as their own property. The South was desperately dependent on African-American labor force, they relied mainly on agriculture as opposed to the more industrialized North. It took an all-encompassing war to end slavery – the Civil War. The Reconstruction Era followed, which left many people feeling disconsolate and generally unsatisfied. Former slaves began to exercise their newly gained civil rights, some of them even held office. The atrocious Ku Klux Klan emerged (Howard Zinn, 171-185). When the movie was shown in 1915 the political and social consequences of the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period were still very much visible. Caucasians wanted to secure their dominance over African-Americans in the political, social, and economic spheres. They wished to achieve that by bribing the judicial system, establishing racial segregation, and generally displaying unparalleled levels of violence towards people who they deemed inferior (Leon F. Litwack, p.138). This was the time in which *The Birth of a Nation* was created.

The Birth of a Nation takes place during the Civil War but it also shows the aftermath of it all. Therefore, the plot is divided into two parts: it revolves around two families – the Camerons of South Carolina and the Stonemans of Pennsylvania. The Stonemans represent the North and their abolitionist ideas whereas the Camerons represent the South. The movie depicts the tragedies Caucasians seemingly had to endure because African-Americans came to political power after the Civil War. Their goal was to assure black despotism in the South (Leon F. Litwack, pg. 138). It gave the idea that Caucasians in the South lost the Civil War and were being oppressed by African-Americans in power. Social equality was considered an absolute nightmare and marriage between the two races simply unfathomable. African-Americans were portrayed as mindless brutes who tried to force themselves on Caucasian women. The main characters are Elsie Stoneman, Flora Cameron, Ben Cameron, Austin Stoneman, Silas Lynch, and Gus. Silas Lynch is the main antagonist in

The Birth of a Nation. He comes to power during the Reconstruction Period and becomes the lieutenant governor. A lot of African-Americans were elected during that time and the audience's hatred towards them was fueled by the inappropriate behavior they displayed: they took off their shoes while in the office, drank alcohol at work, demanded to be saluted by Caucasian civilians, and so on. The main event that sets things in motion is the death of Flora Cameron. Her untimely demise is due to Gus, an African-American, trying to propose to her. He pursues her into the forest where she chooses rather to end her life than to spend it with a person of a different race. All of this leads to a confrontation between the Ku Klux Klan, who try to have revenge for Flora's demise, and Silas Lynch and his followers. Lynch is defeated and 'white supremacy' restored.

The Birth of a Nation generated a lot of controversy and protests because of its narrative even in the nineteen twenties. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) fought against the movie with the utmost ferociousness but their endeavors were mostly unsuccessful. They achieved censorship of some of the most unsavory scenes involving rape but that was the extent of their achievements (Leon F. Litwack, p. 139). The movie's depiction of African-Americans is horrendous and appalling, to say the least. Even with all the erroneous and misguided notions this movie tries to sell us on, it can be considered a monument amongst movies – the predecessor to all great movies that we had the pleasure to see. It had set standards. But to appreciate it we have to effectively detach ourselves from its story and view it strictly from the film industry's point of view.

Richard Maltby states in *Hollywood Cinema* that Hollywood functions within the commercial aesthetic which is largely driven by its economy. Hollywood movies influence its audience to such a degree that it even tries to imitate them by dressing accordingly, speaking in a different manner and so on. He even goes as far as to claim that "movies are manufactured to bring forth a sequence of predetermined responses in its audience" (Richard Maltby, p. 15-16). That is exactly what occurred with the audience of *The Birth of a Nation*. The audience was ecstatic and absolutely thrilled by it. The critics held it in high regards and could not stop praising it. It was nothing they had seen before. The aesthetics of the movie was undeniably appealing to them.

What makes *The Birth of a Nation* so different from anything that audiences had been familiar with before? When it first came out in 1915 it was like nothing the American audience had experienced before regarding entertainment. It lasts approximately three hours and it is twelve reels long. For the sake of comparison – most of *The Birth of a Nation's* antecedents consisted of one reel and ended within 15 minutes. The cost of making them was a few hundred dollars and they were shown in low-budget theatres known as nickelodeons. The making of *The Birth of a Nation* was reasonably more expensive compared to that. It cost 100,000 dollars to produce and promote which is understandable taking into consideration the scale of it all. The mass of people who watched it and even re-watched it was enormous for that time. It is estimated that it reached around 200,000,000 views and was even the first movie

that was played to the President at the White House. The thing that distinguishes it from all the others is that it has a fairly complex plot. 15-minute-long movies were severely limited with the narrative they wished to convey. Compared to that, *The Birth of a Nation* is clearly a step forward. These short films were normally accompanied by piano music and at first, they showed no relation to the moving pictures, but that gradually changed. The director D. W. Griffith certainly took into consideration the effect of music on its audience and implemented it into his movie accordingly. This movie finally enabled the film entertainment industry to be put toe to toe with theatre. The influence it had on its audience is undeniable. It gave them a greater audio-visual experience than the theatre performances (Melvyn Stokes, pg. 3-5).

The battlefield scenes definitely provided the audience with excitement. It is said that Griffith studied the maps of battles beforehand to make it believable and gave instructions through a megaphone from the top of a tower. But that did not actually happen: Griffith created a system involving flags to communicate with the extras. Before every sequence shot, there was a meeting which gave an outline of how the scene was going to take place. He made excellent use of the morning light by filming with cameras turned towards the north. To help the audience differentiate between the armies he went as far as making the Confederate forces enter from the left and the Union army from the right. The man behind the camera was Billy Bitzer and for all the shots he used a hand-cranked Pathe model camera which had a wooden frame. Since it was really light, it could be easily moved forward and backward for close-ups or longer shots. The Pathe camera was extremely important for the cinematographic effects called fades and dissolves (Melvin Stokes, p. 92-95). The aesthetics of the scenes, the accompanying sound of this silent movie, the various colours, and the spectacle of the grand battle made Griffith a virtuoso in the film industry. His use of various cinematic techniques made this movie into a classic. As Michele Faith Wallace says in her article *The Good Lynching and "the Birth of a Nation": Discourses and Aesthetics of Jim Crow*, "This film's continued notoriety challenges all our most beloved notions of the intrinsically moral character of aesthetic masterpieces." It was all because of a man with a vision.

To understand this pioneering movie, we have to understand the man who created it. The director David Wark Griffith certainly had a turbulent life. His early career days are marked by failures as a playwright and an actor so he decided to test his fortune in the film industry, as the man pulling the strings behind the camera. He was an innovator and his ideas contributed immensely to the film industry. D. W. Griffith introduced Close-Up shots; something we can see in *The Birth of a Nation*. The viewers finally had the opportunity to see actors' facial expressions – something that now seems utterly mundane to us. In addition, he even introduced two parallel stories to the movies, something that was unthinkable before. Many believed that the audience would not have been able to follow parallel stories to which he simply replied, "Well, doesn't Dickens write that way?" He drew his inspiration from famous authors. *The Birth of a Nation* is based on a book called *The Clansman* which was written by Thomas Dixon

Jr. Born in Kentucky in the year 1875, Griffith consequently grew up feeling the repercussions of the Civil War. His father was a Confederate officer, which made quite an impact on Griffith and his view of the world (Robert Sklar, Pg.49-52). He began shooting *The Birth of a Nation* on 4th of July, America's Independence Day, which definitely holds symbolic meaning. That D.W. Griffith was an acknowledged, respected and overall ground-breaking persona proves the following quote, "Griffith convinced thousands of wealthy and educated Americans that movies could appeal to their emotions and please their aesthetic tastes. As an entrepreneur as well as a director he completed what others had begun: at last the movie audience came from every segment of American society" (Robert Sklar, pg. 58). As much as D.W. Griffith did not trust the businessmen and capitalism, he created a movie with the commercial aesthetic in mind. He combined art with money. He created a movie that got people into the cinema, a true spectacle.

There is another movie which came out this year and shares the same title as *The Birth of a Nation*. The title is deliberate and it tries to follow in the footsteps of its iconic predecessor. The impact D.W. Griffith's movie left on the film industry is remarkable. It marked a transition from entertainment to art – it meant a breakthrough in the film industry. Nonetheless, as much of a novelty as it was, we

simply cannot disregard the complete dehumanization of African-Americans and the fallacious portrayal of American history. We must not forget the circumstances in which it was created and the repercussions it had on its audience. It can serve as a warning to us all not to be blinded by the spectacle Hollywood provides us with. Movies have cultural influence and the first two decades of the twentieth century had definitely had a decisive impact on the film industry and we have *The Birth of a Nation* to thank for that.

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The Illusion of Competition

by Klemen Bobnar

We - meaning puny little human beings - have trouble comprehending large numbers. Take this number for example: seven billion. It is the number of people living on planet Earth and to our brains, it is quite unimaginable. It is mind-bogglingly large, but it does have an interesting consequence on the world we live in. As I write this, I'm flying from China to London: a trip that will only take me about 13 hours. For less time and money than ever before, anyone can go or move anywhere. But that also means that you may be in contention for your new job, apartment, or that girl you like with a number of people larger than ever before.

That is a scary thought. How can one hope to excel at anything, when there are seven billion of potential competitors waiting to tear you to pieces like a pack of starved piranhas? It seems like no matter how hard you try, there will always be someone better – probably much better. Someone who has been doing it for longer, was born in a richer family, has better looks, and probably better and/or bigger reproductive organs as well. Applying for a job nowadays means being one of hundreds, if not thousands of applicants. The housing market is overpriced and oversaturated. Ask a girl how many times she gets approached during the day or when she goes out at night.

The task at hand truly seems daunting. But what if I told you that all of that is just a lie, an illusion? What seems to be a competition with many players is really an exclusive game. Not exclusive in terms of money or status you need to get in, but the amount of effort you have to give. Everybody wants the "good life" (whatever that means to you personally), but few are willing to do what is

necessary to achieve it. And what is necessary is - more often than not - scary, tedious, and unpleasant in general.

How then can we overcome this problem? The first step, obvious as it may be, is to simply be in the game. To simply try. If you do, you will be surprised at the opportunities which become available to you. A lot of what is blocking us from doing that is our own self-image. No one is confident poking their head out of the pack, risking failure and humiliation. But it is crucial you do so, because that is how you get those opportunities. That is how I, despite being a complete newbie to the field, landed a book ghostwriting contract: even though there were more experienced writers available, the client was looking for someone young with a fresh outlook. If I hadn't said "Screw it, let's do it," I would never have gotten the chance.

The second is to work volume. If you write a book and pitch it to one publisher that rejects you, the immediate conclusion would be that you failed. However, if you pitched it to a hundred publishers and the last one gave you a chance, did you fail? Your success-to-failure ratio is abysmal if you look at it from a mathematical perspective, but you only ever need one. Were the previous interviews rejections or just stepping stones to success?

Thirdly, be courteous and make an effort. As a social experiment, I registered a fake female account on OkCupid, a popular dating site, and added a picture of an attractive female friend. Out of the hundreds of messages I received in a week, only a handful were anything more than one-liners like "Hey gurl!", devoid of common

courtesy, any sign of effort, or anything that could possibly spark attraction. You'd be surprised at how many job applications land in the trash bin without a second glance, because they are visibly copy-pasted, feature no originality, or are just plain weird. To someone who sees hundreds of emails, applications, or people every week, all of which want the same thing from them, real effort quickly becomes extremely easy to spot.

Lastly, offer value. But... didn't I say before that there will always be someone better than us? Therefore, the question is: what value can we provide to the world? What can we offer that is truly ours? At what can we best everyone else? The answer is (as cliché as it may sound): being ourselves. The only thing that we can offer better than anyone else is our own uniqueness. But, as I detest fluffy terms with no substance, let's take a look at a few practical examples.

There are two things that we value above all else and require no capital to give: good emotions and realness.

Good emotions have no extrinsic value. They are just - good emotions. A compliment, a laugh, a joke, all serve no other purpose than to make us feel good. They wouldn't be important if feeling good wasn't close to 90 percent of what

we search for (I might have made that number up). Next time you walk down the street or take a bus, count the people who look like they don't need more fun in their lives. I think fingers of one hand will suffice.

Realness is connected to being yourself. Think about a job interview: let's say that there are ten candidates. All of them are qualified for the job. However, nine of them are very similar to each other while the tenth candidate is completely different from the rest. The employer will narrow the selection: he will choose the best four of the nine and the one that is completely different. In the next step, he will choose the best two and the one that is unique. In that way, just by the virtue of being different - or "real", your chances of success increase from 1 out of 10 to one in two (and probably more).

If you are nearing the end of your school days, you might be thinking about the future a lot. You might have a lot of anxiety about finding a job. Sooner or later, we all have to face the "real world". But know that you aren't different. Everyone is tired and scared. It is normal to feel that way, and it should be expected. We all fear the unknown. However, if you just apply these simple tweaks, you will already be ahead of the competition and, maybe, the world will be a little nicer.

More People Should Smoke Weed

by Luka Kržišnik

This is not what you might think, so just to clear a few things right away, I am not a "proud stoner", advocating any health-related benefits of marihuana, nor am I choosing a side in the currently extremely popular legalisation row. I am also not in favour of over-using anything and am hereby distancing myself from Dr Dre & Snoop Dogg's "smoke weed everyday" slogan. I am but a simple student of English who takes interest in his surroundings and too often notices people who look tired, stressed out, nervous, and angry at the world.

I understand how this comes to be, as most people are overwhelmed by the modern world where we need to constantly hop from one place to another, are always running late, have too many things to do, and even more things we need to think about. This is why I am advocating taking some time off once in a while, living in the moment, and just appreciating everything we are given, everything we have but are not grateful enough for, and keeping in mind that the world owes us nothing - when you run into a streak of red lights while running late it is not the worst thing that has happened since the plague but simple bad luck that everyone experiences.

This is where the controversial green little plant comes in - helping people unload some stress and not spending the only life they are given (with no offence to Buddhists, Hindus, and cats intended) living bitterly and complaining about the weather and the traffic. There are of course other ways of relaxing: some people do yoga, drink beer and/or wine, play computer games, browse cat memes, some read, some smoke. However, a small dose of marihuana once or twice a week can also do a quality job

as it can help you sit down and relax, maybe even contemplate and help you to an outstanding revelation or two, while the high you get from it is also not that bad at all. And to be honest that high is usually what it comes down to, as it is most often used as a simple recreational drug, very much like alcohol.

The thing that sets the plant apart however, is its ability to help one relax; during the high there should not be much stress on your mind, at least not as much as usually. Then comes the "afterglow", which is the mellow feeling that accompanies you the following day and the main reason I am writing this not very opulent opinion - it simply disables one from becoming upset by the little things, such as someone cutting you off, and I think the world would be a much happier place if everyone stopped stressing out about trivialities.

What I've written is of course merely an opinion and if you have something else in your life that does the trick, then by all means stick to it, this is perhaps just an idea for anyone who finds themselves in the shoes of that person who starts swearing at their phone because it failed to load the website in two seconds. I am also not advising anyone to become a drug addict, but to resort to the plant to make your edges a little more blunt. This is it from me, if anybody has been offended or disagrees with my opinion they are more than welcome to rant back and publish their own opulent opinion in the next issue of ENgLIST. Finally, I must disclaim that I do not have any scientific data whatsoever to back me up as this is only a rant, and not one that has been well thought through at that.

Exuberant Exchanges of Travel Tales

The First International Night

By Karin Petko

There is a first time for everything – the first love, date, night out, trip abroad, exchange... Everything has to start somewhere and the question ‘Where shall I start?’ is always answered by ‘At the beginning.’ The department of English decided to follow both pieces of advice and instead of simply introducing an International Night, it went a step further and proudly introduced the First International Night ever. Since the word ‘international’ implied different nationalities and possibly different languages, the consensus was that the spoken language had to be the focus of the English Department - and that meant English, of course!

It took place at the Faculty of Arts, in one of the many large yet plain rooms, in the last few days of foggy November. In spirit, we were sent to 4 different continents, 7 countries and 14 different experiences in 4 different seasons, all with much less annoying weather (judging by the pictures shown). Since we ‘got the plane tickets for free’, we didn’t have to worry about our budget and could let our enthusiasm choose in what order we would visit certain countries.

We crossed the world, first flying to the USA, then back to Europe to visit Germany and France, from where we stepped on the plane towards Asia and landed in South Korea. Such an exotic place made us want to visit Europe again, so we returned to check out Belgium, the UK and Lithuania. To conclude properly, we finished our travel in another Asian country, Malaysia.

I do not want to bore you with the details of how to apply for an exchange program and about how things work once your application has been approved. Bureaucracy was something none of the ‘tourist guides’ wanted to say much about. That being said, we kind of got the picture by seeing them rolling their eyes and sighing. However, I believe that the experience made up for all the technical troubles. Now, leaving technicalities behind, I will try to give you a short insight into the most interesting facts that travellers learned about the countries they visited.

“Dear tourists! Please fasten your seat belts and shut your mouth. If you decide to speak anyway, please talk about anything but your birthday.” It seems that once you admit that today is your birthday, something mysterious happens to you. That is the rule at St. Mary’s college in the USA. Do not ask me what it is because even the tourist guides kept it a secret. However, I guess you can learn to live with constant fear when there are always massage rooms, a gym and a pool at your disposal.

If having a birthday in the USA does not scare you enough, try going to the office hours in Germany. Apparently, it is not the students who get to ask questions, but the professors, who try to satisfy their own curiosity. Thankfully, students can use public transport and get food by using their student ID, so they can quickly recover from the shock. And before I forget! Christmas markets in Germany are always wonderful, so I guess that makes up for the rest as well.

While in Germany the food is something that you can look forward to, I cannot really say the same for France, where even frogs can find their place on the menu. However, the funny but painful part for Slovenes is always the question that follows our declaration of where we come from: “Oh, I went there. Bratislava, right?” Not again!

I guess it is much better not to know Slovenia at all than not to be able to distinguish it from Slovakia. Another set of countries that people sometimes find hard to tell apart are South and North Korea. On our ‘trip’, we visited South Korea, the one where there is no dictator but plenty of spicy food and underground shopping centres. Exciting, huh? You wouldn’t believe it, but South Koreans and Slovenes actually have something in common. We both have special traditions when it comes to drinking. Since you are already familiar with the Slovene ones, let me just tell you about Koreans. Whenever people older than you drink, you have to turn away from them. And whenever you make a toast with someone, you must keep your social status in mind and put your glass in lower position.

Speaking of drinking, we got ‘cold feet’ learning about so many new rules, so we returned to Europe and visited Belgium, the country of beer. Not just beer, but also the country of chocolate, fries and waffles. Food supplies in Belgium are very cheap. However, the most interesting part of life in Belgium is not connected to food. It is the fact that it is the sheep that take care of the parks.

While parks in Belgium are full of sheep covered in wool, it is completely opposite in the UK. Over there, the sight of half-naked people sunbathing in the park on a sunny day is a very common thing. Unlike peaceful sheep in Belgium, British park residents have no problem chasing after you. Terrifying, isn’t it? Anyway, we had to visit the homeland of our studies even if just for the parks. Before we left, we learned another useful tip. Never answer the question ‘How are you?’ It is not meant to be answered. It is just a phrase.

If we stick to nature a little while longer, we get to the hills of Lithuania, where great friendships can begin. Friendships are not the only relationships that can be affected in Lithuania. It is also the relationship that one has with potatoes that can either suffer or grow. Lithuanians love potatoes and they even eat potato pancakes.

If potatoes are not exotic enough for you, perhaps an Asian country could be your choice. Malaysia (where your host can potentially be a princess) seems like a great choice as a destination, but on the other hand, being in danger from a monkey stealing your coconut drink might not sound like a lot of fun. Since monkeys are treated as

pets there, I guess you get used to it, just as you get used to eating with your fingers and covering your skin. However, no matter where you travel, you always learn something new, meet new friends and get new experiences.

The international night gave us the possibility to learn something new. Since first is often followed by second and second by third, third by fourth and so on, let's hope that the counting will continue for the English Department. Hopefully, next year we'll meet again on another unforgettable trip that will take us around the world in one single room.

Europe's Hidden Paradise

By Maja Bezgovšek

I may have just found Europe's most beautiful hidden gem. And you'll never guess where. Ice cream in the shade, wake boarding in the sun, and sunbathing under palm trees. I'd wager that the number of people who would connect those things with Switzerland is indeed tiny. But such a seemingly untouched paradise does exist in the most unlikely of countries. The country mostly associated with picturesque mountains, delicious chocolate, and smooth cinematic roads. Now it should be known under a new name: Switzerland - the land of hidden paradise.

Ascona is a very small town in the Italian part of Switzerland, located on the shore of Lago Maggiore, also known as Lake Langen. Of course, Switzerland boasts many beautiful lakeside towns but Ascona is something rather special. With it being the lowest lying town in Switzerland just north of Italy, its mild climate makes it the perfect summer holiday destination. That coupled with its amazing location in between a glorious lake lined with palm trees and awe-inspiring mountains gives it an almost surreal feel. The nature there truly is breathtaking. And the possibilities endless. Whether it's sailing, surfing, wake boarding on the lake or hiking up various paths in the mountains, only a truly demanding soul would be bored.

But even such a soul would surely be mesmerised by the heavenly old part of town. Aside from the achingly beautiful nature, the town itself is filled with quaint little restaurants, bars, and tiny shops. The town centre is very small but its cobbled roads studded with the type of street lamps one would only encounter in a Harry Potter movie genuinely feels like a setting of a fairy-tale. The type of fairy-tale that features mainly kings and queens of far-away lands.

The catch is that you almost need to be royalty to afford a longer stay in this heart-stealing town. The living cost is definitely its biggest failing. And although it may be its only one, as far as challenges go, this one is a biggie. Switzerland is known for being one of the most expensive countries in the world and Ascona is one of the its priciest towns. You could easily part with 10€ for a single non-alcoholic drink and with a small fortune for a nice dinner. It should be noted, though, that the Italian-style cuisine does not disappoint.

The deliciousness of the food, the quiet charm of the town and the stunning nature of its lush scenery is seriously worth the price-tag. As a weekend getaway in the summer, Ascona can deservedly be called the hidden paradise of Europe.



Photo: Maja Bezgovšek

Ljubljana as We See It

Ljubljana is not only our biggest city, but also the richest in terms of culture, language and experience. Being from different parts of not only Slovenia but also the world, we get to perceive Ljubljana differently.

FAVOURITE SPOT

One of my favourite spots in Ljubljana is the city cinema Kinodvor, located in the city centre (Kolodvorska 13). It offers a diverse selection of quality contemporary films from different countries, bringing joy to everyone who is sick of Hollywood production. It's an important part of film culture in Ljubljana, hosting a myriad of events connected to film every year. The atmosphere of this rather small cinema is lovely and welcoming, it also has a nice cosy café and a bookshop. I've spent many a great evening here, getting lost in the world of film with friends. The last film I saw there was *Paterson*, a beautifully tender story about a bus driver/poet, which I absolutely loved.

Sara Hočevar Mucić, Ljubljana

I am not especially fond of Ljubljana because it seems so cold and distant. However, I must admit that our capital has its perks. In Christmas time after dark, the whole of Ljubljana looks really beautiful because of all the lights. My favourite spot there (besides the sign for Maribor, of course) would be Križevniška Street. It is different from other parts of Ljubljana because of the flowers and coloured benches. It feels more welcoming than other streets, probably because it stands out so much.

Karin Petko, Maribor

My favourite spot in Ljubljana is the Koseze Pond (Koseški bajer). It used to be a clay pit but is an artificial lake located next to the residential neighbourhood in Mostec. This quiet spot offers a little bit of something for everyone: it is a great place to go for a walk or to read a book on one of the benches while waiting for the sun to set over the horizon (hint: the most picturesque sunsets occur in late autumn). It also provides outdoor fitness equipment for those who seek this kind of recreation. During the year, numerous boat model makers' competitions take place there. In the winter, the water sometimes freezes and the lake becomes a popular ice rink. However, one must be careful not to end up swimming in it, as it has happened several times before.

Žiga Fabjan, Ljubljana



Photos: Žiga Fabjan

WHY LJUBLJANA

Well, for me it was not about the city, it was about the university and study programmes. Since the programmes that I wanted to choose weren't available anywhere else in the country, I didn't really have any other option. I could study English practically anywhere but comparative literature is not so common and I had to choose the Faculty of Arts here in Ljubljana. I do not regret my decision, I am happy with both courses and am also slowly starting to appreciate Ljubljana.

Karin Petko, Maribor

Why Ljubljana? That's a question I have been asked many times since my initial decision to study in Ljubljana for the year. I chose Ljubljana for a number of reasons. By the end of the first meeting I had with my Erasmus coordinator, I had already decided that this was the perfect city for me. Firstly, I admired the natural beauty of Slovenia, its stunning mountains and lakes and its refreshing greenery, even in the capital city. I could imagine myself taking early morning walks through its parks and hiking into its impressive mountains. Ljubljana is, to me, the perfect city for an exchange student. It's small enough not to be overwhelming. I found it easy enough to learn my way around the city within a couple of weeks, (even with my impaired sense of direction!). Compared to Dublin, Ljubljana seemed more like a small town than a capital city, with the charm and beauty of a small town but the advantages of a big city. It appeared to me much more laid back than most cities I've experienced.

Another factor in choosing to move to Slovenia was that it is the ideal location for travelling around Europe. Those who do not live on an island most likely underestimate the convenience of being able to take a bus or a train to several other countries. As well as travelling opportunities, I had heard much about the student life in Ljubljana. The idea of living in a youthful city with lots of other



Erasmus students was an exciting one. The Erasmus network parties were almost infamous among students who had studied in Ljubljana in previous years.

With all this considered, I can honestly say, Ljubljana has exceeded my expectations. One of the first things I noticed upon arriving here was that no one around the town seemed to be rushing anywhere. Many people seemed to walk leisurely through the streets, the cafes and restaurants either side of the river were filled with people enjoying the nice weather with a cup of coffee or a glass wine. There always seems to be something happening here, whether it's a party or a trip or some kind of event, and the experience of living in student dormitories with lots of other Erasmus students ensures there's never a shortage of things to do. Ljubljana is a city which I'm glad to think of as my home away from home.

Aoife Shortall, Ireland (Erasmus student)

MOST EMBARRASING MOMENT

It happened on one of the many foggy days. I was at a restaurant with my friends and needed to use the bathroom, which, in my defence, was very little and you could hardly turn around in there. When you opened the door, you basically almost crushed the sink, which was meant to be used by male and female costumers. I carelessly opened that door not thinking that there might be anyone there and totally hit a guy who was unsuspectingly washing his hands. I hit him really hard. We both murmured apologies (I for hitting him and he for standing in my way) and I went to the toilet, where I realised that there was no toilet paper. That meant that I had to go back to the sink and take some paper from there. Yup, you guessed correctly: the guy was still there. If I wanted to get to the paper, my hand had to pass his face. I measured the distance in my head and timed my movement. Then I stretched my hand and...at that exact same moment the guy lowered his head. Of course I hit him. Again. I punched him hard straight in the face. I would not have hit him so perfectly had I wanted to. It was like a scene from a movie. Almost better than that, actually. Of course, I apologised and I am pretty sure he got no serious injuries but I am still embarrassed to be the person who goes around hitting innocent people. I mean... Once, I get it. But twice?! Or maybe it was fate?

Karin Petko, Maribor

BEST EXPERIENCE

One the best parts of my experience while studying in Ljubljana would have to be living in the student dormitories. When I first decided on Ljubljana, I knew moving to the dorms would be the right choice for me. I'd been told that it would be loud, I'd been told that it was crazy, and I can honestly say I was not disappointed. I was apprehensive about moving here because, as someone who enjoys their personal space quite a lot, the idea of sharing a room with some I did not yet know, and living in such close proximity to so many people all of the time seemed a little bit daunting.

But now, the dorms for me have become a large part of what makes the whole Erasmus experience so special. Ljubljana is a beautiful city, there's no denying it, but without good people around to share it with, the adjustment required to settle in a new country, away from friends and family, would have been a very difficult one. I live in a dormitory with a lot of other Erasmus students, and we all arrived in the same position, alone in a new city, wanting to make new friends and have new experiences. Though we all differ in many other ways, we usually share this, and this brings us together.

Through living in the student dorms I have been lucky enough to meet some of the most amazing people, some of whom I'm certain will be friends for life. It's like we have formed a kind of family, albeit a slightly dysfunctional one, (we are Erasmus students after all!). We look out for each other, and there is a real sense of community present, to an extent of which I've never before experienced. Staying here has allowed me to meet a lot of people I may not otherwise have met, and to learn about other cultures, in a completely different way the one can learn in a class or from a book. I've been able to travel to some amazing places and have a lot of fun in my time here of far. I've also tasted a lot of different kinds of food and have learned that some cultures, particularly the Turkish, have a passion for food and cooking which goes way beyond that of my own country, Ireland. The fact that it's possible to visit your kitchen every day for a month and meet a completely new person every day, is, for me, a really amazing thing, and this exposure to so many different people has made a hugely positive impact on my Erasmus experience and on myself as a person.

Aoife Shortall, Ireland (Erasmus student)

LANGUAGE

As a Ljubljana native, I've been surrounded mostly by other Ljubljana natives all my life. There were hardly any people from other parts of Slovenia at my primary and grammar school, so university has been pleasantly diverse for me. I love hearing different dialects in class, some of which I'd never heard before, figuring out where my classmates come from, and – after a moment of misunderstanding – learning new expressions from them. It is one of the reasons I like our language so much – you can never get bored of it. But I do wonder how different foreign learners of Slovenian deal with this and which of the dialects they find most challenging to understand, depending on which country they come from.

Sara Hočevar Mucić, Ljubljana

Feeling lucky?



Štajerci in Ljubljana

By Karin Petko

When I am asked about Slovenia, there are a few common questions that pop up: "Where can you find it on the map?" "Which language is spoken there?" "What is your capital?" I feel rather tempted to answer the latter one by saying: "Maribor!" I know it is not the biggest or the richest, much less a capital, but to me it feels like the warmest, friendliest and comfiest city. It feels like home.

Do not get me wrong, I quite like Ljubljana - it is beautiful and ancient, but I am no exception to the rule that in each person there is a little patriot, preferring their hometown. Therefore, I keep missing cleaner air, sunnier days, emptier streets, not being in danger for wearing purple and having conversations without being bound to explain every tenth word.

Being from Styria, a part of the country with its own not only special but also the most beautiful dialect, I really do not have to say much before people point at me and say: "Oh, you're from Maribor!" The realisation is occasionally accompanied by laughter, sometimes a grin and always, *always* by an exclamation of: "Čuj!" It happens every single time. However, it is not just meaningless words such as *čuj*, *ne* and *te* that make the Styrian dialect special, it is also our intonation, which can (if one of my friends from Ljubljana is to be trusted) also be recognised when I speak English. So, if anyone wants to learn Styrian English, let me know!

If the dialect in Ljubljana sounds a bit posh, then the Styrian one sounds totally countryside. It seems like the people in Ljubljana lost many wide /e/ sounds in the development of their spoken language, while on the other hand, people in Styria deliberately started emphasising them. That is all fun and games until a phonetics test, when those /e/ sounds from Styria really make some words sound different. Too bad Styrian English is not an option for phonetic transcriptions /tʃu:ɔj/.

However, it is not only the spoken languages that differ amongst each other. Some of us tend to use some dialectal words in our notes as well without even realising it. Getting a text message asking what a certain word means can be quite a surprise. Unfortunately, the scale of problems does not end there. No! It goes on to the point where Styria inhabitants, *Štajerci*, cannot seem to find the grammatically correct substitute for a dialectal word. Laugh all you want but it happens more often than you might think.

Anyway... Here's a little tip. Whenever you walk around and suddenly hear a loud exaggerated *čuj*, it is probably just some poor person from Styria being greeted by their friends.

Another thing that has an impact on *Štajerci* in Ljubljana (beside the lack of hearing the good old *čuj*) is the appreciation of St. Martin's day. It is a very important day for *Štajerci*, especially if St. Martin is your patron saint or the patron saint of one of your relatives or friends. In contrast, people from Ljubljana could not care less. Do

you want to know what makes me say that? While in Maribor the main square always gets very crowded and St. Martin's day is hugely celebrated, in Ljubljana they treat it as just another normal day. Plus, I seemed to be the only person who would wish someone named Martin a happy name day. Well, at least someone thought to do that, right?

Not thinking of each other's special days or just each other in general might be considered rude and impolite elsewhere but in Ljubljana it seems to be completely normal. Is it just me or are people always really surprised when they are helped? I've helped out one of my classmates by lending him my homework and he was totally confused. Why on earth was I helping him out? Well... Because that's what people do! At least in Styria, we help each other out and even though we are totally jealous of our neighbours, we are always there for each other in time of need. I haven't yet quite noticed that in Ljubljana. It is probably just that people here are not as open as *Štajerci*. I guess that they simply need more time to get comfortable around others, especially foreigners, such as us, *Štajerci*.

Another thing that I have noticed so far is that there are many citizens of Ljubljana who seem to be bored and annoyed most of the time. That quite often gets on my nerve, especially when I get sort of told off for being in a good mood. A friend once said to me: "I just cannot look at you on Monday mornings. You are way too happy!" Here goes my good mood... Goodbye happiness! Yet another form of rudeness in Ljubljana that I cannot help but find annoying is when the phone rings during the lecture and some people actually look in the direction of the person whose phone is *the perpetrator*. Why would you do that? If a phone rang in my high school, the entire class would instantly get an allergic reaction to...well...something and we would all start coughing until the ringing stopped. By doing so, we would hopefully drown the ringing out. But not here, in Ljubljana. I guess I am not saying that the good citizens of Ljubljana are bad people. Far from that. It is just different from what I am used to.

Yes, I might be exaggerating a bit here, but the difference is still very obvious. It may not be so big had I come from any other Slovenian town. But being from Maribor, the hometown of the Football Club that is Olimpija's biggest rival kind of makes the experience more special and the difference bigger. Like it or not, the rivalry is present everywhere - not only in terms of football matches - and therefore I get to be the target of lots of jokes on account of belonging to *Štajerci*. Since my friends don't seem to be holding back with those, I don't either and I gladly return the favour. Our conversations in the coffee shop therefore very soon become a football field and the derby is played between me and well, everybody else. So far I've been told that I need to make sure my phone operator offers free calls into other countries, meaning that Styria is basically an independent unit. I have also been made privy to information that most of Ljubljana people have never been

to Maribor because travelling abroad is apparently expensive and it requires a non-expired identity card. And the reason why I occasionally talk to my friends in English is because they would not understand me otherwise – apparently it has nothing to do with all of us studying English. It is so much fun having friends who can also function as your enemies. Two in one – quite an advantage. Even people from Upper Carniola would be proud of me and would want the same offer.

One of the very few things I actually prefer in Ljubljana over Maribor are Christmas decorations! I just love Christmas time and everything connected to it – lights, snow and the festive spirit. It makes me really happy seeing those wonderful lights every evening when I walk home. However, when it comes to all the other aspects of life, Maribor is still number one for me. Home is where the heart is and my heart is definitely still in Maribor. Although, I think I might learn to love and cherish Ljubljana more as well. Just give me some time.

Santa, Where are You?

By Maja Bezgovšek

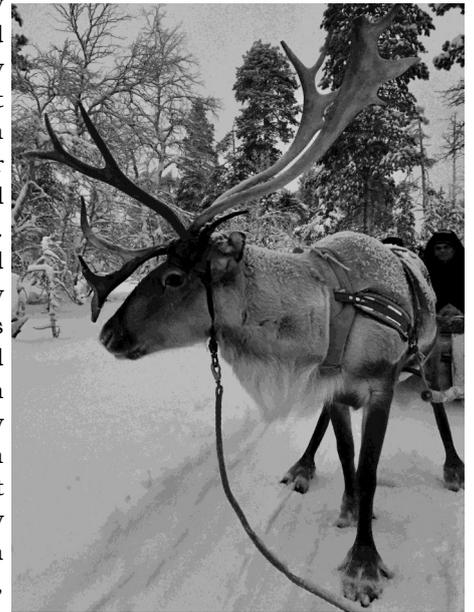
Imagine being a child and finally paying a visit to dear Santa Claus. Trembling with anticipation, every fibre of your being brimming with excitement, you fly to his home in the very north part of Finland only to be left in the dark. When imagining Santa's home, one tends to forget about a particular feature of the North Pole: the constant darkness. Or constant light if you happen to visit in the summer. I would warn you that you will not be able to encounter Santa in the summer but I've since realised that you cannot find him in the winter, either.



Photos: Maja Bezgovšek

On the bright side, though, the feeling you experience when standing in the middle of a snow-covered minuscule town lit up by a thousand Christmas lights in the dark is nothing short of magical. Even the least festive of people would have their inner child light up with excitement. And really, there is more to do in the northern towns of Rovaniemi and Saariselkä than one might realise. The first thing to notice in the North Pole is the glorious nature and the diverse wildlife. And the Finnish definitely make use of that in every way possible. Everywhere you go, you are inundated with wildlife safaris, husky farms, reindeer farms and countless organised hikes in the wilderness. If it's outdoor adventures in the snow that you love, Finland is the place for you!

But be warned. You may not encounter said wildlife in nature only. It may very well be found on your plate. Very frequently, for that matter. The Finnish really do love their reindeer - in all ways possible. Reindeer rides and farms are very popular but no less so than hunting and preparing them in various everyday dishes. The food in Santa-land is not very varied, to say the least. If Rudolph is not to your taste, you can choose between a variety of fish and seafood. And that is about it.



Do not worry, though. If the food leaves a funny taste in your mouth, at least you will have something good to wash it down with. The amount of delicious warm drinks on offer in virtually every bar is astounding. Amazing mulled wine, mulled liquor and an array of different hot chocolates are only a few of them. Just be aware that when you order a hot chocolate with rum, the amount of rum you receive might be significantly larger than expected!

So though you may need a hot drink to keep you warm in Finland's north pole, the adventures in the snow with Christmas lights shining brightly in the dark will make your Christmas experience undoubtedly one you will not forget.

By following the link below you will find a treat that can only be properly admired in colour. This year's Newcastle report came in the form of a visual story and is available as a web exclusive.

Erasmus + Traineeship at Holystone Primary School in Newcastle
by Nina Gorkić

<http://english.weebly.com/exuberant-exchanges-of-travel-tales>



Writer's Woe

Midnight Thoughts

By Ina

In a daze

lost
in my thoughts
feeling blue
trying my best
not to think about you

yet
here you are
still on my mind
the thought of you
stronger
than others combined

I am a train wreck
and my love – like a credit card –
declined

On a quest

we are lost
searching for meaning
at any cost

we want to believe
our lives have a purpose
before we leave

we fail to realize
it is our love
that never dies

R.I.P

By Katja Stojić

I feel your heartbeat in my chest.
Blood is circulating through my veins.
The pain is almost sweet.
Lying on the cold-hearted ground
I can feel life slowly leaving me behind.
Every breath I take is like
glass breaking in my lungs.
Tears are blurring my sight.
I can only see the dark, not the stars.
Wishing to stop death
I scream in my head
Saying to blood not to leave my bed.
Fear is making me numb.
I cannot push through the pain.
They say when you're dying
you see your whole life on a tape.
Wrong.
What I see is pitch black.
What I hear is silence.
What I feel is nothing.
But I still somehow know
That your tears will be on my grave.

Silence

By Aleksandar Jovović

The day was not negative or sad, it was filled with something, like the clouds are filled with rain before the sky becomes more open and starts to cry.

My inner self became like a time bomb, filled and ready to explode.

When I realized what began to happen, I took my aunt's car keys and drove.

I drove and drove till I saw water coming out of the ground and trees everywhere.

I stopped.

The engine was shut off and there was silence.

The rain slowed down.

I sat on the hood of the car which was poured with slow rain and lit a cigarette.

There was complete utter silence and the only sound that was heard was the movement of the cigarette, which was dying out like every soul in this clueless world of wonder.

The cigarette ends quicker and what would people say is that my life simultaneously becomes shorter.

Seven minutes they said.

You know what, I'm a rebel so I lit 7 cigarettes.

Now, thinking for fifteen minutes and staring at the woods, my mind opened to the nature around me and silence made everything easier.

After that time had passed, I turned on some chill music and put the phone on the wet hood.

I'm smart ain't I?

Sitting there between the trees, in wetness and surrounded by incomprehensible silence.

One hour passed.

The thinking was over and the silence was lost the moment I turned the engine made by us, the artificial; the plastics.

I drove and put the music to the maximum level of 30 and began to scream. To scream for my life, to scream for the meaning, to scream for fear, for nothing.

Goodbye.

What many people do not realize is that peace will open a jungle and your mind will finally flow through the beauty called a dream.

Death

By Luka Šturm

Oh, stupid people, when will you
find truth that's here to stay?
That only those unlucky ones
still walk this hopeless way.

That only those who go away
will find the end of sorrow,
and those who breathe this toxic air
will find more pain tomorrow.

The death is just new start of path,
it starts with shiny spark,
don't be afraid of something else,
all lights began in dark.

So walk and walk it till the end,
the end of all in time,
until the start forgotten is
as my pathetic rhyme.

Kim

By Anonymous

This is a poem of a boy christened Kim,
nightmarish to mind, to heart a daydream.

Famed for his wit and his subtle physique,
man, sure knows to speak, he's ever so sleek.

What deity brought me in his life is unknown,
to shatter his being, the cover is blown.

A thank you's in order, a lovingly cheer,
from a beer drinking queer, you slept with last year.

If this is a love poem, I'm yet to decide.
Should I keep it all in? Should I swallow my pride?

We both are traversing this misty a dream,
one reading, one writing of a boy christened Kim.

Just Another Day of Not Being Rich and Famous

By Dragonfly

I woke up to the sound of closing doors. It was probably my roomie leaving our room, which meant I had a few more minutes before hurrying off to my English lectures. It was still quite dark and the rain was heavily beating on the roof of my dorm. I sighed, buried myself deeper in my blankets as if I could hide from the grey mundane day before me.

Just as I closed my eyes, a knock sounded at the door. A few more impatient ones followed seconds later. As I sat up in my bed, the door flew open.

"Here you are! Hiding in such an obvious place. It took me just a few minutes to find you. Come on, get up. We have to move before the Stalkers find out where you are."

I stared blankly at the tall sarcastic man in tight dark trousers and a magenta shirt. "Wh- what's going on? Who are you?"

He opened the closet and his brows rose at the sight of its contents. "Stop fooling around. I know you're a good actress but you can't fool me."

"What are you talking about?"

He turned his head and looked at me, crossed the space between us and put his face just inches from mine. "You're not acting. Truly. What did you drink last night? Pure vodka? Or have you taken something else?"

He started touching my face. I can't stand people with no feeling for personal space so I pushed him away. "Back off. I would never do drugs. I hardly even drink!"

He stepped back laughing. "Now that's a good one! All famous people throw parties with gallons of alcohol and other restricted substances just because they don't know where to put all the money. You're just as anybody else in this world." "What *world*? I'm not famous! I'm just a - an ordinary, mundane college student-" He burst out laughing again. "It's not funny!" I yelled at him over the laughter, "I have no idea what you're talking about. In one minute I'm peacefully enjoying myself in my warm cosy bed and in the next you burst in uninvited and start bossing me around like a child-"

My indignation speech was interrupted by a tall muscular man in a black suit with an earpiece. "Excuse me, but the Stalkers have found your location and are moving in fast. I suggest you leave at once." He then went out just as silently as he came in.

"Shit," said the man in the purple shirt and went to the wardrobe. "And who was *that*?" I asked. "That was your personal bodyguard. Now put these on. We really have to go. Like *now*." He threw a pair of black leggings and a green tunic in my lap.

"I'm not going anywhere until you at least tell me who the hell you are and who are these stalkers you're so afraid of." I narrowed my eyes. "Is that glitter on your eyelids?"

"There's no time for-" He broke off as he saw the stubbornness on my face. "OK. I'm your personal assistant Marc. Marcus Bainner. And the Stalkers are the crazy lunatics, who are obsessed with you and want a piece of you - literally."

I stared at him, "So they want to *kill* me?" "Well if you put it like that-" Screams exploded outside. The guard opened the door and yelled: "We have to go. Now! Follow me."

Marc grabbed my hand and we ran after the guard. Another one followed us. Then the shooting started. "Are they-" I screamed to Marc. "For whatever cost," he replied over his shoulder. The cold was biting at my bare feet. When we came to the stairs there was a bloodied man clinging to the fence at the top.

I said, "What are you waiting for? We have to help him!" At the sound of my voice the man looked up and grinned. His eyes glittered with madness. He roared and threw himself at us. I screamed - there was a loud bang and he fell down. The bodyguard aiming at the stairs said, "There's another set of stairs down the hall - behind the steel door on the right. There are more of them coming this way, I'll buy you some time. Now go!"

We ran back and down the hall, leaving the sound of guns and screams behind. The door of steel was on our right just as the guard said. Marc pushed at the door handle - but nothing happened. He pushed again - nothing. "Let me," said the other guard and threw himself at the door. Still nothing. He did it again and again - the door didn't move an inch. "Dammit! Do you happen to have the key?" Marc asked me. "No, I don't. I didn't even know the door existed!" He gave me an incredulous look. "How the hell-"

"Shh, listen," said the guard. We listened. The shooting stopped - there was only a murmur of voices coming closer and closer. I shuddered and Marc cursed fiercely. He started throwing himself at the door but the guard stopped him. "Stop it, you'll just hurt yourself and attract their attention. Go on and try to find another way out," He pulled out the gun. "I'll stay here and distract them."

"But we can't just leave you here alone," I said, "You'll die!"

He looked at me and smiled wickedly. "Don't worry. I'm planning to take them with me."

Marc and I moved quietly as we could down the hall. There was a loud scream, followed by even more screams and gun shots. We started running.

"Look!" Yelled Marc. Just a few steps ahead was a window. I was already out of breath when we reached it. "You go first, then you'll help me up." I just nodded. He opened the window. The sill was slippery because of the rain and I couldn't find a grip to pull myself up. "I can't pull myself up, it's too slippery," I yelled at Marc. "Hold

on, I'll lift you up." He put his arms around my thighs and lifted me up. Fresh air filled my lungs and raindrops cooled my hot face.

I was halfway out as Marc's grip suddenly loosed. I heard him scream. Hands grabbed my legs and started pulling me back inside. I gripped the window frame and kicked away the hands. But there were too many of them and I lost the grip on the frame – the hands were suddenly all

over me and I screamed and screamed, I couldn't breathe. I woke up. The blankets were on the floor. The room was still quite dark but I could make out the silhouettes of the furniture. The sound of rain was filling the room as I got up to embrace the day before me. It's going to be just another day of not being rich and famous ... right?

Heaven

By Jure Velikonja

It was one of the dullest winter Thursdays when all went completely Pete Tong. I took a bath in the hopes of forgetting about the stress of work and the fact that my annoying uncle Christopher showed up on my doorstep since he was 'in the neighbourhood' and refused to leave for hours, telling me for the millionth time a tiresome story about the week he spent fishing (and, obviously, drinking) with his mates. When finally he left, I filled the bath with hot water, immersed myself in it, and closed my eyes. But the thoughts wouldn't get out of my silly brain. The promotion I was denied, the shape of the trout's head, which was unusual, but only slightly – a layman wouldn't be able to notice it, my uncle, however, he noticed, and he made sure to tell everyone with functional ears.

To banish these thoughts, I decided to put some music on. My favourite CD, Satie's calming *Gymnopédies*, which was conveniently placed on the top shelf in my newly carpeted bedroom, should do the trick. I got out, hastily wrapped myself in a towel (which did not really prevent my dripping everywhere), grabbed my CD player that I nowadays use almost solely for playing the aforementioned CD, plugged it in next to the bath and got back in. The music was even more divine than the steaming water. But of course, my elation made me completely oblivious to the fact that the blasted CD, due to extensive use, stops about ten minutes in unless I skip the track. Stupid old thing. (Don't ask me why I don't simply listen to my favourite music on my smartphone or iPod, because I have no appeasing answer.) Anyway, lazy as I am, I thought I could press the bloody button with my eyes still closed, but instead what I did was somehow manage to pull on the cord, destabilise the player and, well, I think what happened next needs no explaining.

I never thought classical music could kill anyone, but here we are. I saw the light, got up there, entered through the golden gates in the clouds (no St Peter, though – perhaps he was on his lunch break), and embraced my friends and family who had already died – pretty much as expected. To my surprise, I found grandpa Joseph there as well. I guess his frequent racist remarks, brazenly expressed behind the dinner table, did not reflect his true sentiments; or perhaps God's standards aren't very high. He does, after all, work in mysterious ways.

The thing about Heaven is that everyone expects it to be a

place of eternal happiness, a reward for the hardships of earthly life, where you live forever perched on a cloud, occasionally looking down towards the Earth, fulfilling your only duty – that is, clearly, looking after your loved ones who are still waiting for their ticket to the afterlife. In all honesty, for quite a while I could not argue with that logic. The first few decades (maybe even centuries, counting days is not a terribly popular activity up here, unlike bingo) were divine. Well, at least for me. You see, dying in your thirties does come with a few advantages. Unlike my great grandmother, Theresa, who died aged 95, I can still walk around, bend my back, and enjoy surfing, skydiving, chewing on my favourite food with my perfect set of regularly flossed teeth, and do all the other activities my mind can conjure. She, on the other hand, is mainly confined to her armchair unable to as much as scratch an itch on her arm, watching her favourite soap opera over and over again, her poor memory making the clichéd plots and twists exciting every time. Then there's our neighbour's baby, who sadly passed away just a few months after birth. Real life is no *Twilight*, where aging stops when most convenient. That poor baby is still just four months old, sleeping and giggling and in need of fresh diapers every few hours. I spend my days here watching films and stuffing my face with microwave popcorn (can't die twice); little Danny laughs at whoever is sympathetic enough to make funny noises and play peekaboo.

One day, just as I finally set out to watch every single episode of *Doctor Who* in existence (1224 by then), uncle Christopher showed up uninvited (as he does). I knew this day would eventually come and that despite his insufferable personality, he is a decent enough man to end up here. After some time, not even Satie could calm me down enough to be able to live through another of his overstuffed tales and invitations to join him on his heavenly fishing trips, where he would walk on water and muse on the quality of God's chosen fish. I don't even know if it was he who pushed me over the metaphorical edge, or if it was the constant presence of my family, or my friends who entered Heaven in their 70s and 80s, incessantly talking about their grandchildren and religiously watching darts on TV, or the fact that I listened to all of my favourite music time and time again, read all of the books and watched every film ever made, tried the food of every culture, memorised *Beowulf* in Old

and Modern English, forwards and backwards, and learned how to play the *Gymnopédies* blindfolded. Perhaps it was the fact that because I died so young, I had no children and therefore every new generation of arrivals was less and less related to me, making me all the more apathetic about their petty life stories. Or maybe I just didn't think the concept of eternity through while I was still occupying my mortal body. If only I could go back to that bleak Thursday evening and die again an atheist.

The Traditions and Customs of the Nainevols

By Lev Pavlovski

Adventurers who have traversed the lands of the South-Central part of Eporue have told incredible stories of the industrious people of Airtsua or perhaps the more temperament-driven Ylati tribe. The appeal of the unadulterated forests and its inhabitants is becoming something of a hit amongst the keen explorers of the West, which only makes me even more astounded at the notion that none of them has ever written about a small clan encircled just between the two larger tribes. They go by the name of Nainevols and have customs and culture that beggar belief of even the most prolific a dreamer.

This primarily agrarian community of a few thousand families has many points-of-interest to boast about, but by far the most astonishing collection of dwellings lies in the very heart of the nation. It is a place renowned for its obsession with the dragon, now presumed dead, but still pretty much alive in the heads of the native population. Any traveller who stumbles upon the small capital is, in exchange for a rather gracious tip, taken on a sightseeing excursion along the local river. It seems that might and opulence in this part of the world are measured in the number of bridges, for there are more than twelve available in the walking distance of a mile. One in particular catches the eye, adorned with four green effigies of the aforementioned dragon. Similar symbolism can be observed in the regional coat of arms as well. This almost sadistic fascination with the murderous beast is most shocking, but nevertheless makes for a great piece of rustic decoration.

For those more interested in natural wonders, there is a small settlement worthy of visiting not an hour's drive from the capital, famed for its misty body of water – a lake with an island on it. Upon arriving, aborigines are quick to offer an exchange of goods to the famished visitor. A great selection of foods is available, the most popular of which is a bicoloured gelatinous cube, sweet and creamy to the taste, covered with a thin layer of crusty bread. According to the cooks and servants preparing it, only the cubes of their own devising are to be safely eaten, whilst all counterfeits are probably poisonous and should be avoided at all cost. The dish is eaten in strict accordance with an ancient ritual. The diner is positioned so as to admire the natural panorama that the lake has to offer and soon enough their attention is drawn to the island that can be seen lurking through the misty surface of the water. The tribal members are, upon recognising the visitor's intrigue, all but hesitant to offer a boat ride to the location – for a handsome fee, of course. To commemorate

what seems to be the only island of any kind in the land, some audacious individuals even built a multi-storey temple on it. In it, ringing the conveniently situated bell brings good fortune to the fervent visitant; I am yet to stumble upon it.

If you are interested in quintessential Neinevols' cuisine, it is best to turn away from the avaricious attractions of the lake and continue the way to the outskirts of the countryside, where the people seem to follow a more close-fisted way of living. Especially compelling are the hilly regions to the northeast and southwest, where, around the time of September, the available men and women start gathering berries for the winter. As is the custom, the clustered berries are almost never eaten raw, but rather processed in large pots. Small children are summoned to dance vigorously on the tiny fruit to extract the nectar. The pots are then sealed and hidden until the juices inside turn sour, at which point they are ready for consumption. This potent elixir is drunk during formal and private rites by older children and adults alike and is especially popular because of its almost hallucinogenic properties. It is said to go splendidly with 'ottuicsorp', which can only be described as a crude variety of pork jerky. Hunters and farmers, rather than process the flesh in the safety of their huts, hang the legs of boar around the windswept valleys to dry them out in the open. The result is a plain and simple dish of salty meat, thinly sliced, and eaten with bread; an acquired taste for most Westerners, I'm sure.

The Nainevols are a simple people very much in love with the land they live in. They have been blessed to be situated in a fruitful environment that provides good enough sustenance for their society to flourish. Though not as renowned as their neighbours, it would be a shame not to visit these noble savages, as they give an excellent insight into what the Western civilisations might have looked like back in the day. Suffice it to say, with the way they run their tourism they will be a worthy capitalist ally in no time.

NOTE: In case of confusion, the author suggests reading the foreign expressions backwards to discover their true denotation.

I Ain't Got Nothin' But 7 Dollars To My Name

A song inspired by the Monopoly game (and sung by the Dog)

By Ana Marija Flek

I ain't got nothin' but 7 dollars to my name.
A few houses, some estates and an old hotel.
Just 1 crumbling hotel;
(but besides that I ain't got nothin' but 7 dollars to my name)
One that's dirt cheap and about to crumble,
but it still is my 1 hotel,
that I got on that poor estate.
But besides that I ain't got nothin' but 7 dollars to my name.
And I stop at houses to rest my aching paws,
and when I smell fresh biscuits I can't help it,
I just wander into the fancy hotel.
And they charge all too much,
because they know I can't count with my claws
and I don't know how to save money.
So I'm left digging in the trash for a biscuit or 2.
Because I ain't got nothin' but 7 dollars (to my name)
and a collar on my neck.

And how I dream of inviting everyone
to a biscuity feast ...

If only I had a bit more than 7 dollars and a worn-out
collar to my name.

...

Oh, how I like riding on the train,
giving my whiskers to the passin' wind!
Knowing I own every track and all the blazing trains ...

It feels so great knowing it's all in my paws,
knowing it's all mine!

Walking past the water station,
knowing I can wet my tongue
and drink the whole bowl
with no bills chasing my dusty tail.

And when I go past "go",
the salary
feels like charity,
especially when I see the others' prosperity.

But how it makes me smile:
when I stop by the light bulb factory
seeing it's all satisfactory.
Knowing they all pay me rent
for my power plant;
so they can have light
and need not fear the dark.

When I stop at "jail"
I send them a friendly bark
in the mail;

But they just turn away ...
And I lose the courage to ask
if I can stay.

And when I see how they all bask
and swim in all that cash,
... (pause)
It really hurts in my furry chest ...
And it really hurts to know:

I ain't got nothing:
but aching paws
and a worn collar.

And I howl
to the moon
about my troubles
in this little song.

I ain't got nothin'
no, nothin' in this world;
no, nothin' but 7 dollars to my name.

Poems

By Andrijan Tasevski

Atheist

Your prosaic flesh,
your innocent blood,
your wrinkled brain,
your breath,
just like Jesus,
never smelled, nor felt.

Untitled

And when I saw you,
I saw the moon,
I saw you as intimate as the moon,
I saw you as pale as the moon,
and yet I looked in the moon,
and saw the reflection of me,
a lunatic.

Poetry

By Ariela Herček

ancestoring

everything is sound light
everything dense
matter decompressing
oceans annihilating the sea-monstrous
things
that claw
say i don't know how we came to exist
but we are
we are
we are
holding onto this origin
onto where our faith lies
hidden beneath
dark yellow
smudges and smidgeons
of scary bits
lying dormant
in this bed
this house these trees
waving their tiny hands
into constellations
until even this body of salt
becomes rainwater
fit to bathe in
the stardust like weaving strands
of blue hair
everything fading out
even this pale old moon
growing backwards into the
abyss it used to call home
we are all here from the
dirt that's under our nails
in our hair
something too soft to contain.

elevation

there is no reason
why you shouldn't touch
the treetops
with their dark green
birdbeaks;
everything casting shadows
on this cracked concrete,
almost like a lullaby,
except without the calm.
there's no reason why
you couldn't let the sun be
the blood inside your mouth,
these hills stretching your body wide awake.
you are always half-dreaming
about the moonlight and
all the ways our ancestors
tried to survive:
this building bridge,
this campfire with sparks
cackling loudly,
this sweat these teeth these bulletproof
believings.
this is the way
you accept you're not limited
to the ground;
you can live among the clouds if you wish so.

bare skin

sometimes you will
be brave. out of spite
because nothing can be light enough
soft enough. gentle.
sometimes you will be
courage trapped in an empty body
like terrible loneliness
you feel when you're (not) alone
.
sometimes you will
be brave
because you have
nothing else left.
but your skin.

Lust for Literature

A Job Right Up My (Scotland) Street

by Jure Velikonja

In January of this year I was fortunate enough to start working as an Erasmus+ intern at Scotland Street Press, Edinburgh's newest independent publisher. The Press, established only three years ago, was founded by Jean Findlay, a playwright and author of a biography of C. K. Scott Moncrieff, the first translator of Proust into English.

Coming in I knew the Press was small, as it had only published four titles until then, but I hadn't anticipated that our entire staff would consist of just three people (including myself). I thus became part of what I can describe more as a family than a company and was given the opportunity to familiarise myself with nearly all aspects of publishing; something I would most definitely not be privy to in a large publishing house. As I am writing this in mid-February, I am about halfway through my 4-month internship and have already helped with the design and management of the website and social media, the creation of the Spring & yearly catalogues, and, what is perhaps most satisfying for a person with an immense lust for literature, the copyediting and proofreading of manuscripts. There is something almost ineffably fulfilling about holding a printed document of what will one day be an attractively designed, pleasantly-smelling book stored on the shelves of numerous bookshops in the UK and beyond, and being among the first to uncover what riveting story lies within its pages.

To my elation, I arrived at Scotland Street Press at a time when I would be able to get my hands on not one but three such manuscripts, two of which are to be published in March, while I still work there. The first one, a memoir titled *Freedom Found*, was written by Sara Trevelyan, a psychotherapist who in the 1980s famously married a convicted murderer turned artist, Jimmy Boyle. The appeal of a small, friendly publishing house convinced Sara to share what she views primarily as personal liberation with the world. This brave recollection of her marriage attracted heaps of media attention and is likely to be the Press' biggest commercial success, with an initial print run of 2000 copies (to put this into perspective, the previous publications had a print run of 500 copies each). Working for Scotland Street Press allowed me to take part in nearly the entire process of publishing this book, from copyediting it, participating in various meetings with the author and PR consultant, helping to market it, picking up the manuscript from the printer (at which point Jean jocularly said I should be wary of the tabloid journalists lurking in the shrubbery waiting to snatch it out of my hands), to even suggesting the colour for the back cover. The other book we have been working on for the past month is *Errant Blood*, a literary crime thriller by C. F. Peterson set in the Scottish Highlands. Reading this manuscript made me go giddy with excitement, and, an

avid consumer of nearly all types of fiction, I was itchy to share my reading progress on Goodreads, despite the fact that the novel had not yet been published, nor had it had a Goodreads page until I, in another burst of ardour, created one.

Spending days indoors, sticking one's nose in books fresh out of the authors' 'oven' is not the only rewarding task a publishing intern gets to do. One of the most pleasant experiences had to have been the Scottish Book Trade Conference. Speakers included Barry Cunningham, the publisher who first signed J. K. Rowling, Suzanne Dean, head of cover design at Penguin Random House (who revealed that behind each unique cover there may be 70 or more rejected ones), and Steve Bohme, who masterfully presented key retail market trends using David Bowie album covers. I will also have the privilege to attend the London Book Fair in March, where we will be exhibiting alongside other publishers from all over the world, exploring their publications, and meeting with representatives interested in purchasing the rights for our books. This will undoubtedly be a one-of-a-kind experience for me both personally and professionally and one I am very much looking forward to.

The fantastic year for the Press will continue with the publication of a history book about an Orcadian man named Joseph Clouston, who was a gold dealer in West Africa in the 19th century, a medical book on delirium, a collection of contemporary poetry in Scots, and a number of children's titles. Although I will most likely have to leave before any of these books materialise in their final form, knowing I contributed to their creation will give me great contentment.

Scotland Street Press may not be the biggest or most successful UK publisher, but it has an immense heart and a burning passion for literature. I am thoroughly enjoying my time here and am already dreading the fast-approaching day when I will have to say goodbye. As for anyone else with a soft spot for literature and who might be considering applying for an Erasmus+ internship, try emailing a few publishers; I can assure you it will be worthwhile.

Learn more about Scotland Street Press by visiting their website & social media sites:

www.scotlandstreetpress.com
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Fruitful Film Findings & Terrific TV Tips

***Loving*: a Film Review**

by Vanja Rakuša

She was completely overwhelmed with the feeling of exhilaration and the sense of belonging as the wind kissed her cheeks and her pores soaked up the refreshingly sweet and almost forgotten essence of nature. “I will raise my family here. I don’t care what they do to us.” She simply wanted to be married to the man she had chosen to raise her family together with in their home. This scene gives us a taste of what the tone of the entire movie is; emotionally poignant, intense and eye-opening. *Loving* (2016) is a movie about a courageous young couple whose relentless struggle to win their small battle against a trial judge escalated into a Herculean fight against the United States Supreme Court. A masterpiece, shot in the American South, Virginia, by Jack Nichols, who, in the absence of flashy filmmaking and the presence of muted performances of Australian Joel Edgerton as Richard Loving and Ethiopian-Irish Ruth Negga as Mildred Loving, unfolds a grand story of the endeavour to invalidate some of the most odious of the segregation laws nationwide: anti-miscegenation laws.

Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter are a young enamoured couple. There is nothing unorthodox about their relationship, only that he is white and she is not. As the pair is expecting a baby, they get married in Washington DC, hoping to lead a tranquil life in a house they constructed in their rural hometown in Virginia. Nevertheless, their post wedding bliss is cut short. They are arrested for marrying “against the peace and dignity of the commonwealth” and exiled for 25 years — instead of being imprisoned, which is the most common form of punishment in the US at this time — because of their interracial marriage. Their ten-year battle for equality that begins in the trial court of the Carolina County goes all the way up to the Supreme Court Justice of the US. A lawyer, who is appointed to them by the Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy after receiving Mildred’s letter, sees their case as a potential contender to repeal the anti-miscegenation laws coast-to-coast. He is proven right as he wins the *Loving v. Virginia* case and makes the prohibition of marriage based on race unconstitutional. The Supreme Court, thus, as late as in the year of 1967, states that marriage is an inherent right.

Musical accompaniment to specific circumstances undertones the movie, evoking a variety of emotions. Joyous tunes complement Richard’s romantic gesture of proposing to his soulmate, as well as the sculpturing of their new lives, creating a veil of magical mist wrapped around their comfortable co-existence. Contrary to the presence of music, silence followed by high-pitched tones announces the danger on the horizon; the Lovings are being woken out of their dreams and taken to prison like criminals. Exciting melody erupting out of Mildred’s heart when she receives a call from an ACLU’s (American Civil Liberties Union) lawyer, who promises to provide them with free help, brings a wind of change after much

of the insecurity they experience living unlawfully in the state of Virginia. The visual characteristics, in the same manner, contribute to the general mood of the movie, as the dividing line between the grey urban cage and the endless country plains, exuberant with life, is carefully drawn by contrasting bleak and vividly luminous colours respectively.

If we direct our gaze towards the protagonist of this narrative, we should stress that Mildred Loving, a fearless mother and wife determined to march to the beat of her own drum without tuning her inner melody to the voice of the nation, is a remarkable real-life figure whose yearning to go back to the place of her upbringing causes the society to abandon their backward views and pushes it into progress. Not everyone is out of their mind enough to return to the lair of the beast after they have barely saved themselves from the clutches of that monster. Nevertheless, to our heroine (reluctant to be called so) “the specificity of that place is really, really important” as Nichols would phrase it (in Harris). It defines who she is: a free spirit, staying true to and standing up for her own ideals, that is her home, her husband and their children. Her actions show that, as Ruth Negga asserts, she firmly believes that “it’s just wrong to feel that you could dictate or legislate or even have an opinion on who someone chooses to love and the folly of that” (Hall). In other words, she perceives the right to her own felicity as a personal decision intrinsic to her, and to her only. And why shouldn’t we claim what is rightfully ours?

We can, and should, all act dauntlessly like Mildred as she is the living demonstration of the glorious deeds that a minute human being is capable of achieving — overcoming state-sponsored terror, white supremacy and imposed rules and regulations that restrain our liberty — if only our will is unyielding enough to put all our fears aside. For that reason precisely, the movie should serve as a reminder to all modern humanity of the oppressive atmosphere widespread in the days of old and the fact that especially with the extremist ideologies on the rise those seemingly distant times can return in full force, supposing we choose to ignore our inner moral compass.

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Paterson: a Film Review

by Vanja Gajić

Jim Jarmusch's latest masterpiece, *Paterson* (2016), is a film about life. It is a survival guide for introverts and a hymn for the misunderstood. With Adam Driver (*Girls* (2012–2017), *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015)) in the main role, Jarmusch takes a seemingly typical millennial and converts him into the analog format, his character's lifestyle being best suited for a dyed-in-the-wool traditionalist. But what seems as premature apathy at first proves to be the resilience of a brilliant and curious mind.

The narrative follows a week in the life of Paterson, a bus driver who also happens to be a poet. His days form a consistent, repetitive pattern that could easily come across as uneventful but instead seems melodious. Like the bus Paterson drives at work every day, turning the tedious route through the city into a character study of the passengers, the film turns the seemingly boring into the fascinating. Jarmusch presents us with the same angles and shots time and time again but shifts the characters' perspective. With each morning walk to work we get another glimpse at the people Paterson meets, the way they interact, the things he notices. He treats the city like a gallery, observes human interaction like a play, perceives poetry as ever-present and as vital as air.

The key moment of the story happens when Paterson and his girlfriend Laura return home from an evening out, only to find his notebook of poems chewed up and torn apart, courtesy of the dog, Marvin. What makes it even more heart breaking is that Paterson intended on copying it just the following day, meaning that his understated but deter-

mined rebellion against the world, which initially fuelled his poetry, is precisely what has now ruined it. This unfortunate coincidence makes Paterson re-evaluate and question the tightly sealed bubble that forms his world. We see him shrinking. The loss of his poetry, be it a sign from the universe or simply the real world, equals the loss of himself and he seems to be too saddened to build himself up again. But with the help of a sort of guardian angel Paterson finds his way and triumphs. Recognising the lost poet in him, a stranger gives him a new notebook with decorated covers and blank pages, encouraging him to pick up a pen and carry on instead of wallowing. Paterson realises that what is lost cannot be recovered, but also recognises that could be an opportunity and not just mere tragedy. It is his final and most prominent act of dismissing the materialistic, result-oriented mentality. He is a poet and needs no proof of it. The poetry is inside him, not on paper, and the aim of it is salvation not legacy.

The feel of the film is much like the main character. It is poised and meditative and ever so delicate with any changes of pace or manner. However, its slow and steady rhythm does not bore the viewer for even a moment. It is harmonious and carefully put together, offering us a new world to hide in. We flow in Paterson's current, cut off from the pointless, frustrating rush of our own reality and open our eyes to the completely realisable, although seemingly impossible option to tailor our lives to fit our needs, one morning at a time, verse by verse and step by step.

Lo And Behold What?

by Maja Perne

It all started small – with electrons running down the entwined wires, all neatly stashed in a gigantic impact-resistant metal box, transmitting a very simple message: LOG-in. This was the first message ever sent, in 1969, by a group of American programming buffs. This process was the beginning of what we now call the internet. Werner Herzog's documentary *Lo and Behold* (2016) digs deeper into the whole notion of the internet. It shows an interesting take on how the ever-changing technology has and will impact our lives – for better or worse.

Firstly, some protruding visual characteristics: watching the documentary one can't help but notice Mr. Herzog's childlike enthusiasm about robots and other similar state-of-the-art technology. The prolonged shots of robots playing football, mimicking human movement, and cars driving on their own prove it. The people, on the other hand, are somewhat negatively if not even eerily depicted. In the first encounter with the members of the Catsouras family, victims of a heinous internet misuse, they are depicted as the Addams family – the children all in black sit stiffly behind a most perfect muffin stand, gazing emptily in the camera. The frequent silence surrounding them only adds

up to the eerie effect. Another example would be the interviews shot with the scientists. When the scientists comment, many of them seem stiff and discombobulated, gazing dozily in the camera as if caught off guard with the questions.

A bigger nightmare than these strange murky scenes are some of the issues that the documentary stresses. The members of the aforementioned Catsouras family are among the victims of cyber abuse. In 2006, Nikki Catsouras suffered a severe car accident. Even the coroner didn't have the nerve to share all the gory details with her family; still, the family found out about their daughter's head having been ripped off her body via an anonymous email. The rescue worker took a picture at the scene of the accident and sent it to some of his friends, which ended with the picture going viral. The family was devastated. Unfortunately, there are more such instances in the documentary of the internet/people going awry. There was an Asian couple who was so fixated on playing online games that they had forgotten to take care of their own baby, who had starved to death. Ironically, the game was about taking care of a cyber-baby.

So, what's the message of this documentary? Is it that the internet and robots are the "manifestation of evil"? Or perhaps that we – the internet's (ab)users – are to blame for letting it influence us? Herzog presents this dilemma to a scientist and according to him, it's people who are the manifestation of evil for sure. Moreover, the overall stance present throughout the documentary is that people are practically dumb. This scientist even jokes a bit, by saying that when a computer makes a mistake, it will get reprogrammed and no other computer will ever repeat the same mistake, but this simply doesn't work with people. Kevin Mitnick, an infamous hacker, said it's difficult to hack a computer, but with some help from an unaware-yet-well-

meaning secretary, it's "easy peasy". When Herzog tries to defend the Homo sapiens' by saying that robots can't love, a programmer enthusiastically replies "good!" as he wouldn't want his dishwasher gabbing how it hates the dryer for not hanging out with it.

As funny as some of the scientist's arguments are, the film is no comedy. The questions it addresses are topical, at times even difficult to discern. However, despite the severity of the film, it is enjoyable to observe some of the eerie visual characteristics and to discern the documentary's overall message. All in all it's an informative documentary to watch.

The British Benefits System - The Benefactor Who Lost His Way

by Lev Pavlovski

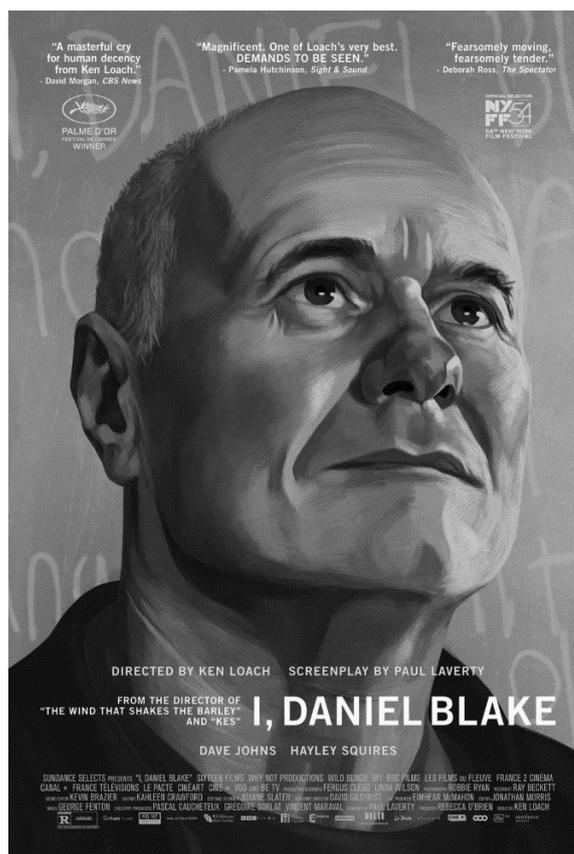
We live in a society driven by Darwinist values of survival. Capitalism with all its riches and technological advancements has also brought with it a mentality of hatred and disgust towards the individuals at the lower end of the wealth pyramid. A helping hand provided by the government in the form of social benefits is nowadays seen as a depletion of the country's resources and is, by some, strongly frowned upon. The movie *I, Daniel Blake* is a great example of the struggle that a person fallen from economic grace has to endure just in order to survive.

The social benefits system should be, at least on paper, available to us all, but in reality, the system is made difficult to understand in order to benefit as small a number of individuals as possible. It seems that the politics of today are all about saving money through the so-called austerity measures, and there is no better way for a governmental body to be economical than by limiting the amount of money that it gives away for free. Convolution is the key. With a complex set of bureaucratic paperwork, pointless visits to the benefits office and uptight social workers that reside there, the government does everything in its power to keep the needy away. The conduct of the benefits officer has to be strictly professional and there is no place for sympathy in the office cubical. To eliminate the liability of an officer becoming too emotionally involved, digital technologies are now being increasingly implemented. Probably the biggest demographic of the people living on the dole is seniors and pensioners, who find the new online forms and applications difficult, if not impossible, to follow, and the office spaces where a paper form can be submitted are fewer and fewer.

The benefits system is also blatantly unfair. In order to get the unemployment benefits on the basis of his bad health, the applicant must achieve a certain amount of points on a generic questionnaire, as is brilliantly illustrated in the aforementioned movie. These inquiries are overseen by the so-called healthcare professionals, who assess if a person is "ill enough" to be given social support. Besides the over-generalised conditions that a patient has to meet, a valued opinion of a genuine doctor on the patient's health is often discarded. The future well-being of a person is reduced to

a number on a piece of paper. And if this is not dehumanising enough, the system has another ace up its sleeve – benefit reductions. If an individual fails to come to a benefits meeting on time or behaves in an inappropriate manner with an office worker, they can be given a penalty that results in up to a 40-percent reduction in the amount of the benefit. Men and women, young and old, are in the hands of the system demoted to the level of five-year-old children.

The *I, Daniel Blake* movie and the two points exemplified in it are a cry against injustice on behalf of the voiceless minority that has been let down by these forces of exploitation. The social benefits system – as the name suggests – was made with the intention to benefit people. Maybe it should start acting as such as well.



It Is a Truth Universally Acknowledged That a Single Woman in No Possession of a Good Fortune Must Be In Want of a Husband.

by Marija Gartner

Piano music? Check. Eighteenth century luxurious garments? Check. Dashing gentlemen and some not-so-gallant ones? Check. Alluring ladies and their shy counterparts? Check. English countryside luxurious mansions? Check! Well, I believe this sounds familiar! Is this another exciting period drama movie? The answer is yes! But oh, does it involve Jane Austen and her works perhaps? Yes, it does. The movie we are about to embark on is based upon Austen's early unfinished novella called *Lady Susan*.

The cinematic experience named *Love & Friendship* was released in May 2016 (in the USA, at least). One would think the plot would be exactly the same as in every Jane Austen movie/novel – featuring a virtuous and independent heroine navigating the bumpy roads of betrothal. However, the situation is quite different. In this story, the leading character, Lady Susan Vernon, is a very cunning seducer of all men. And quite a successful one I must add. Director Witt Stillman (*Damsels in Distress*, *Cosmopolitan*) chose a stellar cast – starring Kate Beckinsale (*Underworld*, *Aviator*, *Pearl Harbor*) as Lady Susan, followed by Morfydd Clark, Chloë Sevigny, Tom Bennett, Stephen Fry and so on. Unsurprisingly, the drama is set in the beautiful English countryside as well as in London.

The recently widowed “Lady Susan Vernon takes up temporary residence at her in-laws' estate and, while there, is determined to be a matchmaker for her daughter Frederica -- and herself too, naturally” (IMDb). She therefore attempts to ensnare her sister-in-law's dashing brother Reginald, while keeping tabs on a married man, Lord Manwaring. At the same time she tries to marry off her daughter Frederica (who is of Reginald's age) to a ridiculous yet rich man called Sir James. The in-laws are not fond of it; they are fonder of Frederica and try to protect her from her conniving mother. It sounds pretty tragic, but since humour is the main trait of this movie, the viewer cannot help but laugh every few minutes. If it is not because of the silly characters it is because of miscommunication or the banality of situations. This comedy-like movie brings some freshness into the already established Austen franchise. Sure, all her stories are witty, but have much more seriousness to them than *Love & Friendship*.

Staying true to Miss Austen's style, the “heroine” is very strong-willed, smart and independent. Still, as I mentioned before, Lady Susan's schemes and especially her ability to turn anyone around with her words and beauty, differentiate her from the typical Austen novel leading character. She uses anyone to fulfil her goals and continually manages to weasel herself out of any situation when it seems she is in a tight corner. In this movie it turns out that no one puts Lady S in the corner! She doesn't even let her

daughter be happy and wants the man that Frederica likes for herself. But not out of pure love or affection but out of vanity, to prove she can win any man, no matter the age. What is even more unfathomable is that not even a single man in her “circle” sees that. They perceive her as an especially good lady who only cares about her daughter's happiness. Ha, the joke is on them, she cares only for herself. And those few people (her sister-in-law, for example) who see right through her are believed by no one. As unnerving as this situation may seem, the film shows that there is always a comic twist to any issue, and the knots eventually untie themselves and all is well.

My stomach hurt from laughter because of a one particular character – Sir James Martin. He is the intended husband for Frederica Vernon. Her mother strongly wishes to witness their union as he is a wealthy and prosperous man. However, there is a teeny tiny problem – his brain is as big as a pea. Tom Bennett truly exceeds in this role despite the banality of it. He breathes comical spirit into this buffoon of a man that is Sir James. Other characters converse in an utmost intelligent manner and he is a total opposite with his simple, hysterical and awkward way of saying things (he once has a whole monologue over peas!). His grins and grimaces and poses bring another level of comedy to the hilarious misunderstandings.

As for the soundtrack, it follows the light texture of the movie – jumping up and down, like a sparrow treading on the ground. What I like about the music is that it is not in any way intrusive. It is present when the characters aren't speaking, as a sort of a break between the scenes. The piano reveries and opera singing are loud enough to hear but not too loud and they make a rather pleasant background for the viewer's listening organs.

The eyes receive an abundance of beauty as well. The visual characteristics suit the movie's English setting. Filmed in wide shots, the characters have enough space to walk around in the garden, room or just to converse. This way, some additional air is brought into the space. The frames are spectacular in colour and quality, along with the wardrobe. Regency period dresses are just stunning (I am thinking of Lady Susan's red little number – see the movie so you'll know what I'm talking about). Basically, the whole setting contributes to the light-hearted tone of the whole moving picture and to the playful topic of love and friendship.

Now, the final question: Do I like the movie? The answer is a big YES. As a gigantic Austen fan yet another movie inspired by her work brought me enormous satisfaction. I believe the role of this motion picture is to entertain – to

show that nothing can be too serious, especially love and friendship. Lady Susan gets on the viewer's nerves most of the time, but it's worth the wait because in the end (as in all Austen novels) the pieces fall together and everybody gets what they deserve. All in all I would recommend this

movie to all audiences, not just Austen-based fans, because it really quenches one's thirst for comedy.

Free Fire: a Film Review

by Tim Blaznik

Ben Wheatley's *Free Fire* offers a refreshing change of pace from your typical serious and gritty action movie by taking a familiar setting and letting it explode into an orgy of chaos and violence that has you laughing until the very end. Although the movie uses a very simple plot, it more than makes up for it by having a cast of unique and entertaining characters that form a complex web of relationships that are gradually revealed to the viewer in a series of shocking twists and surprises. On top of that, the movie features an insane amount of ridiculously loud gunshots that make you feel like you're part of the firefight and help punctuate important events.

The plot is centred around an arms deal between members of the IRA and an eccentric gun smuggler in 1970s Boston. What should be a standard exchange of goods for currency goes hilariously bad when two of the henchmen decide to settle a grudge from the night before. A few punches are thrown and then the first bullet is fired, wounding one of the Irish. After this, mayhem ensues as both sides scramble for cover while firing blindly at each other. To further complicate things, a third side enters the fight, and hidden allegiances are revealed so that we are left with a senseless four-way of gratuitous gun violence. Despite the massive amount of bullets flying around, the main characters are surprisingly hardy and carry on despite sustaining multiple wounds. Instead of dying, they reply by cursing and returning fire, until all of them are crawling in the dirt and trying to survive.

The main source of comedy in the movie lies in the characters themselves and their interactions. Although the characterisation is very brief and superficial, it does a good job at establishing their motivations and goals, and gives us a basic idea of who they are. Among the most memorable are Ord (Armie Hammer), a smooth-talking gun for hire that likes a good joint, Stevo (Sam Riley), a rabid junkie with a lust for vengeance, and Vernon (Sharlto Copley), a self-centred braggart and wannabe gangster. When the bullets start flying, so do the insults, and this is where the characters really shine. Vernon quickly shows his true colours as he hides behind cover while attempting to order his men around in his hilarious South African accent, Stevo smokes some heroin to mourn the death of his friend and is reduced to a laughing idiot, while Ord decides that the best course of action is to sit down and enjoy a doobie or two.

The other source of comedy is in the confusion experienced by all sides of the struggle. Once the fighting starts each of the characters occupies a part of a dark, abandoned factory and fires blindly at unknown silhouettes, often mistaking friend for foe, which is usually followed by a half-hearted apology. When there is a break in the shooting

they try to communicate with each other by shouting in order to figure out who has been hit and what to do next. On more than one occasion they even try to make peace with each other, since they realise the futility of it all, but there's always one person who doesn't want to cooperate and shoots someone in the back.

Another memorable aspect of the movie is the sounds of the guns. The average person doesn't really realise just how loud a gunshot is. What we hear in most movies nowadays pales in comparison to the real thing. An assault rifle being fired in a Hollywood movie sounds like popcorn when compared to the deafening BOOM of an actual revolver being fired. *Free Fire* realises this and employs it beautifully. When a massive firefight ensues and you are bombarded with frighteningly loud sounds it really adds to the experience and makes you appreciate just how intense such a situation would be. And when one of Vernon's henchmen shoots the woman they had all agreed could leave peacefully, the loud, echoing blast really draws attention to his mistake, which adds to the comedy.

All in all, *Free Fire* is a very amusing movie that will have you jumping out of your seat for each shot fired and laughing as people sustain numerous non-fatal injuries while shouting at each other in confusion. It's not exactly intellectually stimulating, but it sticks to a few concepts that it executes well, and delivers them in a short but sweet form so the jokes don't get old.



And Now for Something Completely Different ...

Crossword Conundrum

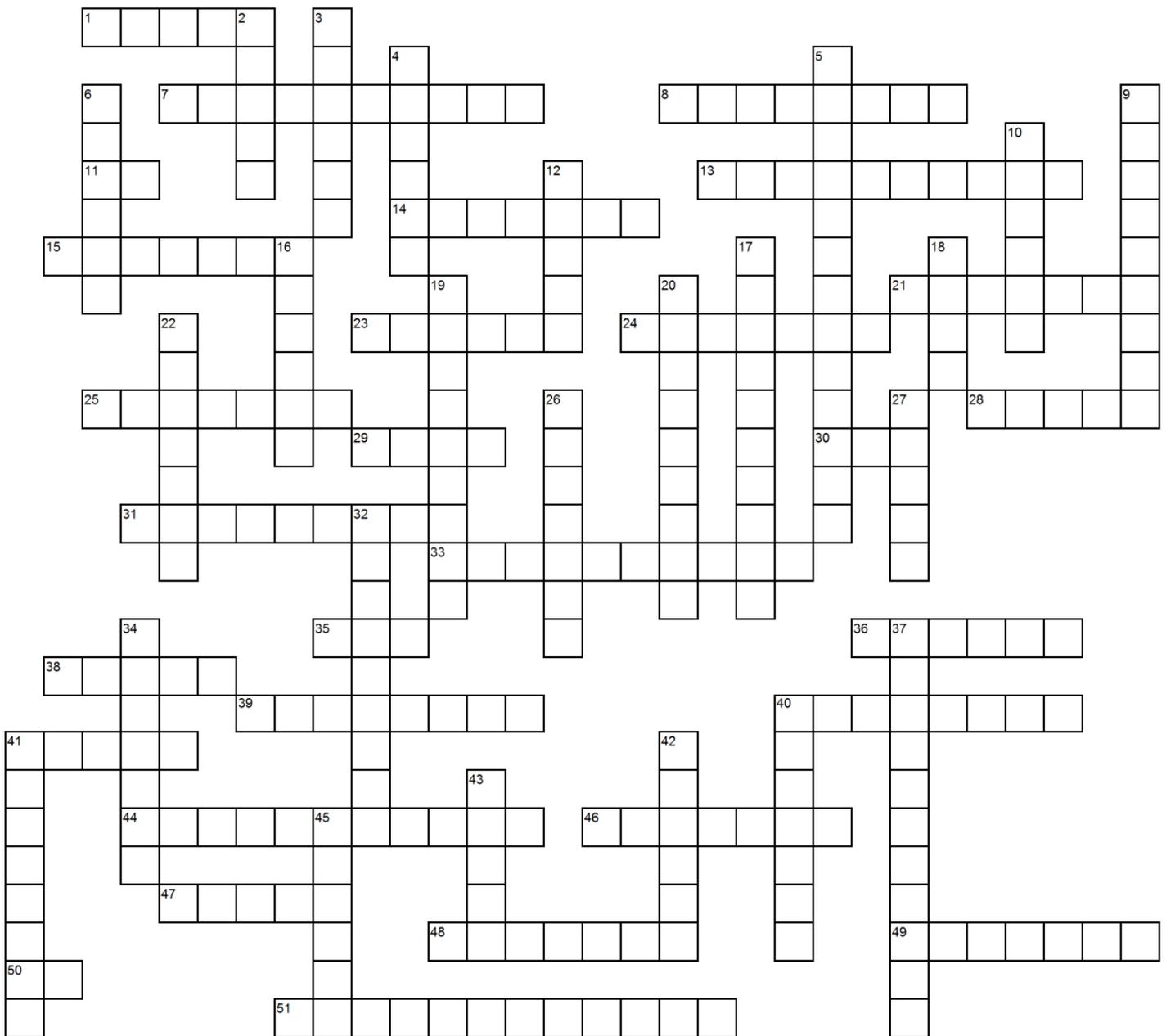
by Urša Bajželj & Lev Pavlovski

ACROSS

- 1 The name of London's first Muslim mayor.
- 7 A verb phrase considered as a constituent of clause structure.
- 8 American author obsessed with whales.
- 11 RP labio-dental fricatives.
- 13 He wandered lonely as a cloud.
- 14 They like to search for rings.
- 15 Daughter of the most luxurious, tremendous, (h)uuuge-handed US president.
- 21 Morrison's remembrance of slavery.
- 23 A group of lines forming the basic recurring metrical unit in a poem.
- 24 A violent windy storm Shakespeare wrote about.
- 25 The game that made me go to a gym for the first time in my life.
- 28 Correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words.
- 29 The Mexicans will build it.
- 30 Iron Lady Mark II.
- 31 I am nobody! Who are you?
- 33 The monster from Upside Down.
- 35 Prof. Lipovšek: "It can be __?__!"
- 36 UKIP's lord and saviour.
- 38 The exclamation that follows the ringing of a bell.
- 39 Gašper Ilc's dissertation topic.
- 40 He won the Oscar^(TM), at last!
- 41 A fiction novel, translated by King James.
- 44 Carlos says so much depends upon it.
- 46 They conquered England.
- 47 He accidentally spent a night at the Ljubljana train station.
- 48 A world renowned Canadian male poet.
- 49 The George whose death Mary shook.
- 50 RP velar plosives.
- 51 The raspy narrator of BBC nature documentaries.

DOWN

- 2 She is saved by god — always.
- 3 He drove a red corvette with the most beautiful girl in the world on a purple rainy day.
- 4 The name of Quixote's little helper.
- 5 A novel dealing with one person's formative years or spiritual education.
- 6 A morpheme added at the end of a word to form a derivative.
- 9 IF Darcy="pride" THEN Elizabeth=__?__
- 10 Greatest Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, and environmental activist.
- 12 Probably the most beautiful of all princesses.
- 16 The colour of Frankenstein's monster.
- 17 The relation between two or more words or phrases in which two units are grammatically parallel and have the same referent.
- 18 He was venerable.
- 19 Margaret Thatcher's favourite South-Atlantic island destination.
- 20 The Raven says it a lot.
- 22 The Scandinavian who became the new QI quizmaster.
- 26 Subject-verb agreement.
- 27 He was like a rolling stone.
- 32 Jean Baudrillard loved them.
- 34 One of the University Wits, contemporary of Shakespeare.
- 37 Five points for Gryffindor for being an insufferable know-it-all.
- 40 Modality expressing duty and obligation.
- 41 Jack Kerouac & Co.
- 42 A verb which functions as a noun.
- 43 He was a starman waiting in the sky.
- 45 The greatest economic mistake a country has ever made.



Struggling to complete the crossword?
Do not fret, we are no monsters. Here
is the key:
<http://englist.weebly.com/crossword-key.html>



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