englist

The English Students' Newspaper

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Contents

Editorial

Lucija Jezeršek
Editor-in-Chief & Editor of *Language Love*

"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

After a long journey full of high ups and even lower downs, tired of hearts but with light in our eyes, we are able to present to you this year's final issue of ENgLIST. It is dual in character in that between the pages it mourns and celebrates great people. This has been an eventful year so far and not all of it was good.

2016 marks several monumental anniversaries. The main topic of the issue, its glue, and the one who is featured most prominently in it, is the Bard, who remains the archetypal story-teller even full 400 years after his death. He celebrates in the company of some lovely ladies – Charlotte Brontë, who was born 200 years ago, Beatrix Potter, 50 years her junior, and Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-reigning British monarch at 90 years of age – and fine gentlemen – Potter's contemporary H. G. Wells and another beloved story-teller by the name of Roald Dahl. In their honour we invited the professors at the department to share with you, our dear readers, their thoughts on these venerable people. You can even take a sneak peek into the mind of Robin Bates, a Professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

As you know, every coin has two sides and where there is celebration, mourning is never far away. In this issue students remember the professor who had so much love for literature and poetry that it permeated every one of his lectures, and we had the privilege to be enriched by it. We are grateful for all that Professor Uroš Mozetič has left us with but full of sorrow upon his early departure.

It does not do to dwell on sadness so let us remember, mourn, and then rejoice starting with the publication in your hands.

Jure Velikonja
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

Maja Bezgovšek
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

Neža Polanc
Co-Editor of *Writer's Woe*

"He does not despise real woods because he has read of enchanted woods; the reading makes all real woods a little enchanted."

- C. S. Lewis

Urša Bajželj
Editor of *Fruitful Film Findings & Terrific TV Tips*

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

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

Jan Hacin
Editor of *Tricky Tech*

"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

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

Felicitous Feedback

To properly celebrate all the anniversaries of the present year, the ENgLIST team took their chance and asked the professors at the Department of English if they were willing to answer a few questions on William Shakespeare's prolific life, Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, and the beloved legacies of Roald Dahl and Beatrix Potter. Given the preposterous workload they are facing, we should count our lucky stars for receiving such generous responses.

After reading all about their views you can finally find out how you did in our questionnaire and where your favourite Bard's works fall in comparison with your fellow students. To give you a little hint and to pique your interest in the results, let me reveal that the Head of Department, Marjeta Vrbinc, PhD, is not in the majority with her favourite being Macbeth. However, I am convinced that whoever went to see the eponymous film starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard at last year's Liffe feels a little more love towards this particular piece of literature.

Which of William Shakespeare's works do you find the most exciting to research, simply ponder on, or is your personal favourite?

King Lear is a stunning play simply because of its absolute grimness and the inevitability of the plot - from the absurdly theatrical beginning in which Lear demands professions of love from his three daughters, to the heartbreaking conclusion in which Lear's heart bursts "smilingly" (if I remember correctly), deceived for an instant about Cordelia's survival.

What hits me every day, however, are lines like "flies to wanton boys..." or "reason not the need" or Cordelia's foolishly honest "nothing" at the start.

It's one of the few Shakespeare plays I've seen staged a few times. Once with Christopher Plummer (brilliant, etc.), and once in a painfully memorable instance of German Regietheater. There were three Cordelias and, for some reason, a toilet placed centre stage. There was also full-throated hollering of "You are a fucking football player!" for "base football player." To be clear, the second insult is in the play; the first is not. Of such transgressions is Bardolatry born!

Jason Blake, PhD

My personal favourite William Shakespeare's work is *Romeo and Juliet*, because the story of the star-crossed lovers is relevant in every society and culture. Parallels can be found in everyday situations. The brain of a teenager works differently from that of a mature adult. This is reflected in Romeo and Juliet's spontaneous (over) reactions, extreme measures, relentness and passionate nature. As a mother of teenagers I am often reminded of that.

Lara Burazer, PhD

While there is a lot about Shakespeare's work that I love, a particular treasure trove I like to explore would be his history plays. It's always a revelation to find out more about a particular period in English history, especially because the text is interspersed with Shakespeare's witty and insightful comments on life in general. The most recent of these discoveries has been *Henry V*, which also includes a hilarious scene with a French princess learning English.

Monika Kavalir, PhD

"Sonnet 129" on all accounts. Research-wise it is exciting to compare the differences between the original Quarto version and the edited edition (in which the punctuation is significantly altered, and which, for some reason, appears in 99% of anthologies). The underlying point of the original is actually in direct opposition to the message of the edited version. The original version is much more open-ended and complex, and it provides loads of material to ponder on (for example, considering lust as something that is before a joy proposed behind a dream, instead of something that in prospect is a joy proposed, and in retrospect a dream). My ponderings on the sonnet also made it my personal favourite. I also like "Sonnet 116". I'm not really a fan of his plays, but I do have a soft spot for *Macbeth*.

Mojca Krevel, PhD

My favourite play by William Shakespeare is *King Lear*. I admire the artistic way in which the playwright confirms the old wisdom that appearances are deceptive, and makes the reader/ theatre goer arrive at the seemingly paradoxical realisation that a "mad" person may be capable of a deeper insight than a "sane" one: the "madder" King Lear becomes, the more he understands his circumstances and human nature at large. He as a human being develops to such an extent that he has been one of my favourite literary characters since I was a second-year student of English.

Cvetka Sokolov, PhD

There is no simple answer to this question. Odd as it may seem, I do not have a personal favourite among Shakespeare's plays, but I have a few which I find interesting and I enjoy watching. These are: *Macbeth, Hamlet, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Although *Othello* and *Julius Cesar* are not my favourites, they have protagonists (Iago, Brutus, Mark Anthony, for example) whose persuasive and manipulative language skills offer excellent material for linguistic analysis.

Smiljana Komar, PhD

I must admit that Shakespeare has never been one of those authors that I would go back to for guidance or comfort in time of distress. If I had to, I would definitely choose the sonnets over the plays, among those maybe "Sonnet 66". That is as far as "food for soul" is concerned. But there is no end to my admiration of Shakespeare's mastery of the language. He wrote at the time when English had been enriched with more than 10.000 new words, when the old grammatical structures were still holding grounds, but slowly giving way to the new ones. He embraced it all, the old and the new, and played with the language like with a musical instrument, and contributed enormously to its uniqueness by inventing new words and new phrases. A bottomless source of "food" for any diachronical linguist.

Frančiška Trobevšek Drobnak, PhD

It's difficult to choose a favourite when it comes to Shakespeare. Two of his plays that I've always enjoyed are *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. And since Shakespeare's work is almost synonymous with the theatre, I also want to mention a few theatre productions that have stayed with me throughout the years: *King Lear* (1992, SNG Drama/CD), Hamlet (1994, SNG Drama), *Macbeth po Shakespearu* (2009, Mini teater Ljubljana/CD), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (2014, The Globe).

Andrej Stopar, PhD

I've always had a soft spot for *Macbeth*, probably because both the plot and the characters are so wonderfully complex. It is such a fantastically twisted, dark, chaotic, intense and tragic piece that one can read again and again, its many ambiguities and general liminality providing ample food for thought every single time.

Anamarija Šporčič

There have been many theories of the authorship of works attributed to Shakespeare. What is your personal opinion of the authorship question?

I remember reading, decades ago, about the unproven authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Rather than written by Homer, they were apparently composed by another Greek who happened to have the same name and lived in Asia Minor at the same time.

Frančiška Trobevšek Drobnak, PhD

What is the contribution of Beatrix Potter and Roald Dahl to children's and young adult literature? Which one of their works is worth pointing out as most important or influential and why?

I love children's and young adult literature, reading a lot of it. However, I'm no expert researching the branch of literature so it would be difficult for me to evaluate Beatrix Potter and Roald Dahl's contribution to it in theoretical terms. What I can share, tough, is my personal response to their work as a reader.

I find Beatrix Potter's stories sweet and witty at the same time, and feel that her gentle illustrations complement them really well – the narrator tells her stories factually at times whereas the illustrations accompanying them reveal emotion (fear discernible from a frightened rabbit's "face" in "The Tale of Peter Rabbit", for example). I enjoy Potter's irony and sense of humour, too. What did Mother Rabbit say to her children to warn them against entering Mr McGregor's garden?

'NOW my dears,' said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, 'you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.'

What did Mr McGregor do with Peter Rabbit's jacket and shoes? "Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scare-crow to frighten the blackbirds.«

What I admire most about Potter's writing, tough, is the absence of finger-shaking moralizing in spite of the lessons to be learned from it. Peter Rabbit does learn the hard way that trespassing people's gardens is dangerous but not doing what one is told by one's parents is an essential part of exploring the world, of growing up, of becoming independent. Mother Rabbit seems to be aware of that: it is not because of being punished that Peter Rabbit gets put to bed without supper at the end of the story; it's just that he feels sick after having eaten Mr McGregor's jummy vegetables to excess. Another unobtrusive lesson to be learnt.

Admittedly, Roald Dahl's work is not exactly my cup of tea. He is humorous and his characters do get a chance to overcome obstacles, frequently standing up to cruel adults in the process, and he does break taboos (an entire chapter on wizpopping in *The BFG*, mind you!) but I find his humour exaggerated and grotesque for most of the time. In addition, not all kids in his novels make it – in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* four of them get eliminated from the scene in rather painful and humiliating ways such as one of them falling into a hot chocolate river and getting sucked up by a pipe. What's funny about that??

Another one of his novels which I really dislike is *Danny, the Champion of the World*, in which Danny's father does illegal things, blaming it all on the unfairness of the British class-ridden society. To take revenge on a nasty and nastily rich bloke, he and Danny drug over a hundred of pheasants to be able to hide them before a pheasant-shooting party begins – any animal rights activists around?

To finish on a more positive note, I do like Dahl's *The BFG* and also the (hilarious) *Revolting Rhymes*.

Cvetka Sokolov, PhD

The Queen is far enough away to be greeted with bemusement by most Canadians. Her portrait on Canadian money was a fine and illustrative emblem of this mollifying distance from the centre. The Queen, who was over seventy when the old portrait was finally replaced, looked about twenty-five on the nickels and dimes and quarters. It was if some sort of financial formaldehyde or even pickling had taken place.

The first time I was in the UK, it surprised me to see that their money-queen looked different - that is, I was surprised that the Queen's image was closer to the flesh-and-blood reality. That lesser pictorial distortion makes sense, given that she's more of a presence in London, England, than in London, Ontario. Royalty, bloodlines and nobility has a comic ring to it in Canada. A few years ago, some family line in England had thinned out to the point that a Canadian farmer - somehow related to what used to be a noble family - found himself in the House of Lords. There was a front-page picture of the guy in the Toronto Star, up to his knees in manure (though protected by Wellingtons), with a headline reading something like, "The Lastest Proud Member of the House of Lords." Ask anyone over a certain age what the House of Lords is and you'll get a quick response: where metalheads get their hair cut. The point? Though the Monarchy is still linked to Canada in political terms, the local *frizeraj* is closer to our lived reality.

Jason Blake, PhD

Citizens of the UK generally respect and also admire the Queen. They see her as an institution and an important source of tourism revenue. She appears to have earned the respect of the people with her approach to ruling, her diligence and her role during WW2, and even though the number of people in favour of abolishing the monarchy is increasing, a staggering number of UK citizens would like to keep things as they are. Tradition is an important part of British culture and that is also reflected in how the Queen is perceived by the majority – as one of the few reliable constants in these volatile times. Were Her Majesty not so popular with her subjects, arguments against the monarchy (such as the fact that hereditary privilege of this kind should be seen as absurd in this day and age) would probably be brought up more frequently. The Irish, for obvious historical reasons, do not feel the same kind of respect and are more likely to see her as a remnant of a bygone era.
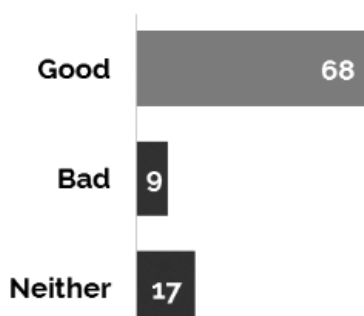
Anamarija Šporčič

The republican movement in Britain does plan to campaign for a referendum on the future of the British monarchy after Elizabeth's death, but I do not think they are likely to succeed. The British monarchy is too strong an institution to be done away with overnight, but we are certainly going to see some changes. The younger generations of royals are expected to rule in a somewhat less ostentatious manner, although the insistence on everything being much more "regal" than anywhere else in Europe is what people seem to find appealing. The public opinion does, however, strongly favour William over Charles as Elizabeth's successor, so we are going to have to wait and see what happens.
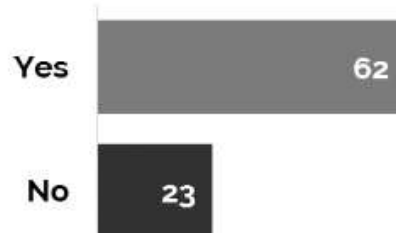
Anamarija Šporčič

In addition to the thoughtful response of Ms Šporčič, the ENgLIST team set out to find some statistics for easier visualization of the support enjoyed by the British Monarchy. The charts below are the result of YouGov research conducted in September 2015.

The Monarchy: Good for Britain

Generally speaking, do you think the institution of the monarchy is good or bad for Britain? (%)

Good	68
Bad	9
Neither	17

The Monarchy: Here to stay?

Do you think Britain will still have a hereditary monarchy in 100 years' time? (%)

Yes	62
No	23

YouGov | yougov.com   Sept 3-4, 2015

Source: yougov.co.uk

Visiting Voice

As a special treat we were able to pick the insightful brain of Robin Bates, a professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland, on the subject of Shakespeare, his works, and his influence. As someone who has continuously drawn inspiration and solace from literature throughout his life and now believes it to be his privilege to be able to lead students towards the same source of life-changing wisdom, we thought him a perfect fit to share with you some of his thoughts.

Reports have it that the love of Shakespeare is worldwide so that one can't generalize about how anyone responds to him. The variety of his characters, the power of his poetry, the depth of his exploration, all combine to find fans everywhere. I'm sending along something I wrote in my blog a few year's back that explain my love of Twelfth *Night.* Feel free to excerpt from it as you will. I'll just add here that the play anticipates the LGBTQ movement here – the acknowledgement that there is far more gender diversity in humankind that the authorities acknowledge. Or as biologist Milt Diamond of the University of Hawaii puts it, "biology loves diversity, society hates it." I have seen lesbian students thrill to Viola's "I would build a willow cabin" speech and gay student recognize painfully the scene where Antonio is denied by (so he thinks) Sebastian. Although Billy Chrystal in *When Harry Met Sally* says that men and women can never be friends, there is indeed such a friendship in Orsino and Cesario's relationship. (Some women love that scene because sex doesn't get in the way.) I guess what I'm saying is that Shakespeare understood gender identity far deeper than the authorities of his time did (so surprise there!) and portrayed it for us. And now, slowly, are certain societies beginning to acknowledge this. Although we're not there yet.

Shakespeare, to be sure, had to hide his observations in a comedy. We can recognize and laugh before we are returned safely to heteronormativity and "the wind and the rain." But for a brief instant we are able to see other possibilities.

Here's what I wrote:

When I was a child, I was fascinated by works containing characters of ambiguous gender. Specifically, I was drawn to images of boys who either looked like girls or who were, unbeknownst to them, actually girls. I was also drawn to images of girls (and women) who passed themselves off as guys. The prevailing culture of southern Tennessee did not admit of such ambiguity, which meant that such fictions were critically important.

I fell in love with *Twelfth Night* when I was a seventh grader. Seventh grade is a tough time for most people and it was particularly tough for me because I had mononucleosis, perhaps caused by stress from the public school battles over racial integration (the year was 1962). The world seemed harsh and I felt I had been given an immense gift when I was confined to bed for a month. I buried myself in books and in some recordings of Shakespeare plays that my father brought home from the University of the South, the college where he taught.

Twelfth Night was my favorite and I listened to it over and over. The scenes that I liked the best were the duels involving first Viola and then her identical twin Sebastian. Not knowing that the other is alive, first Viola and then Sebastian are challenged by Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. Needless to say, Viola is out of her depth. Luckily, she is rescued by Sebastian's friend Antonio (who thinks she's Sebastian). In the second duel scene, Toby and Andrew set upon Sebastian, mistaking him for Viola/Cesario. He is rescued by the Lady Olivia (not that he needs rescuing). WhenAndrew and Toby set upon Sebastian one last time, he beats them both soundly.

I've thought a lot about why I liked these particular scenes and here's what I've come up with. I was a gentle and sensitive boy who shrank from rough and tumble boys' play. I certainly had no interest in playing football, one of the state's religions. I remember thinking around that time that somewhere a mistake had been made and that I was actually a girl in a boy's body. I remember riding my bicycle and imagining the wind streaming through my long hair, even though, like most boys in 1973, my hair was cut very short.

As far as I know, I was not (and am not) gay. But I did idealize what I imagined to be the sweetness and gentleness of girls (I had no sisters to disabuse me of such a stereotype), and I did not act like a "snakes and snails and puppy dog tails" boy. One of the older women teachers at the school at one point called me a sissy.

Back to *Twelfth Night.* In Viola being confronted by bullies, I saw myself, outwardly male but inwardly female. She's supposed to know how to duel, given her gender, but doesn't have a clue how. And then, when Sebastian routes Toby and Andrew, I relished the fantasy of vanquishing those who (as the comic book ads for weights envisioned it) were kicking sand in my face. The play, in other words, first articulated my predicament and then gave me a satisfying, wish-fulfilling conclusion.

One sees from this example just how malleable literary symbols are—a sensitive boy sees himself in a cross-dressing woman. The play is remarkable in that it provides other points of identification in addition to this one. Its subtitle is "What You Will," and the play is magical in the way that it allows readers and spectators a range of fantasies as they interact with it.
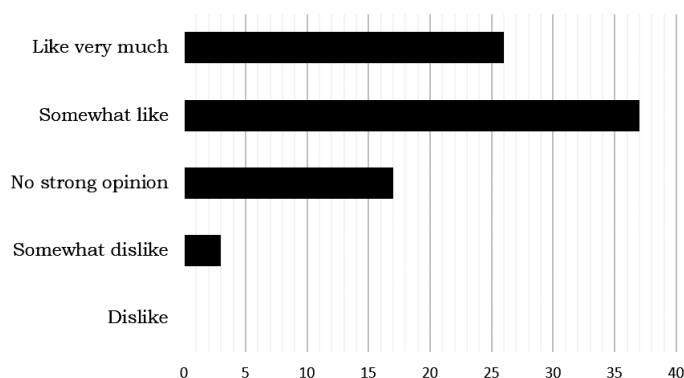
Robin Bates, PhD

SURVEY: ENgLIST wondered how students of English feel about Shakespeare

Almost universally hailed as one of the greatest authors in history, the Bard and his allure have not dwindled even four centuries later; not even at a time when all we know about this somewhat mysterious figure are clues found in history books and his works. Perhaps it is precisely this enigma that fuels his appeal in people of all ages, beliefs, and nationalities.
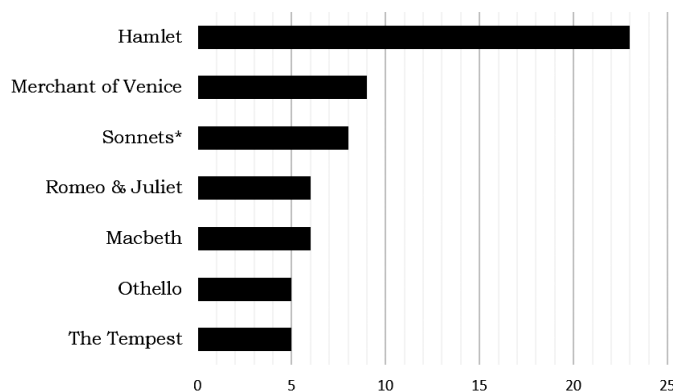
However, there is one group of people who pin back their ears with more delight than others when Shakespeare is mentioned. These are none other than students who reside on the third floor at our faculty. We were curious to find out how exactly they feel about William Shakespeare and his work.

To take a peek into their minds, we have conducted an online survey distributed among past and present students of English and received 83 valid responses. Here are the results:

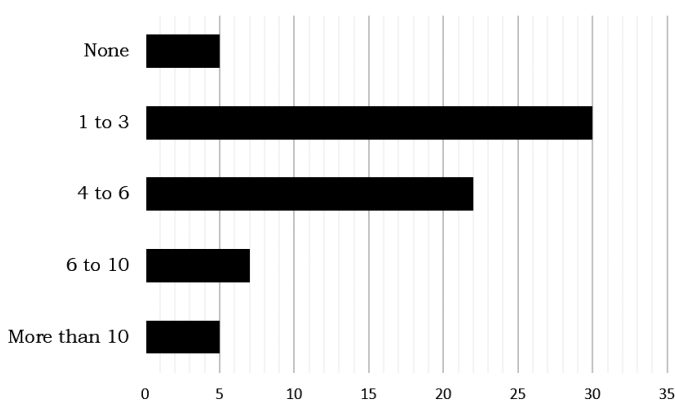**To what extent do you like Shakespeare?**

How many of his plays have you read?

Most read plays by students

Other, less frequent responses: *The Merchant of Venice* (9), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (5), *Much Ado About Nothing* (4), *As You Like It, Twelfth Night* & *The Taming of the Shrew* (2), *Coriolanus, Henry V, Richard III, Measure for Measure* & *The Comedy of Errors* (1)
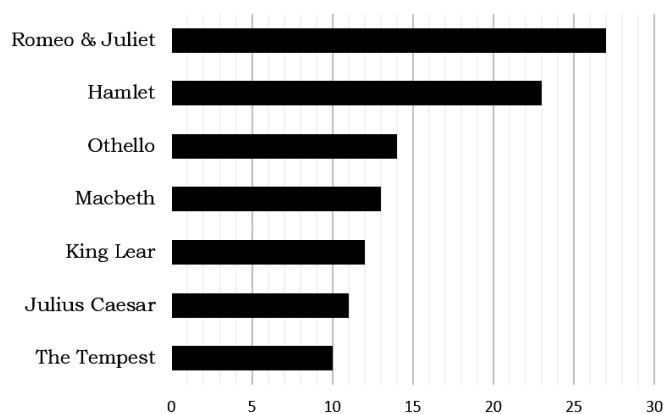
Which is your favourite Shakespeare's work?

Other, less frequent responses include: *Julius Caesar, Much Ado About Nothing,* & *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (4) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (3).

* Sonnets 16, 116 & 130 were singled out. Others favour Shakespeare's sonnets in general.

Have you ever read Shakespeare for pleasure?
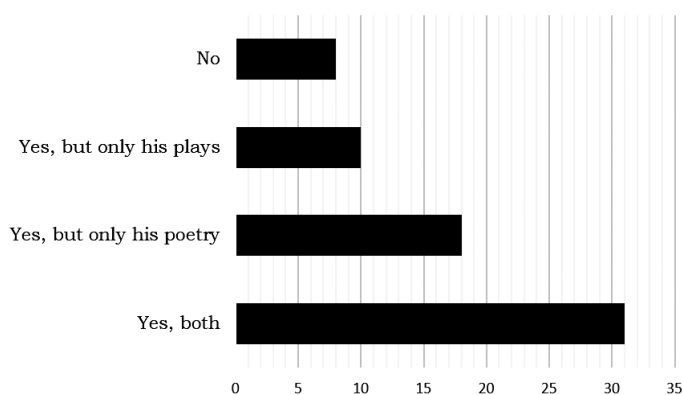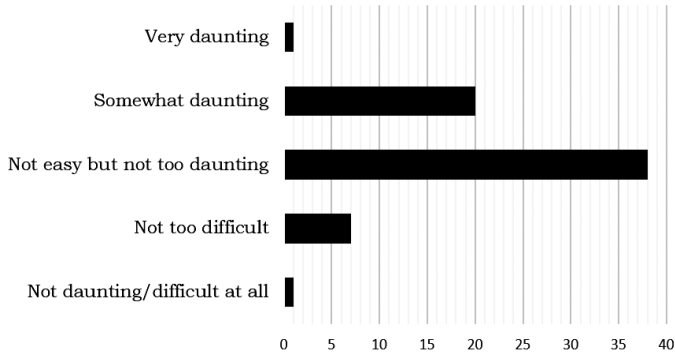

Detailed results of the survey are available on our website. Access them by scanning the QR code or copying the link provided below.
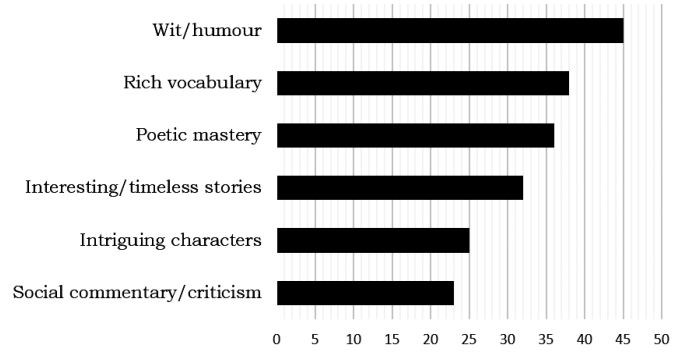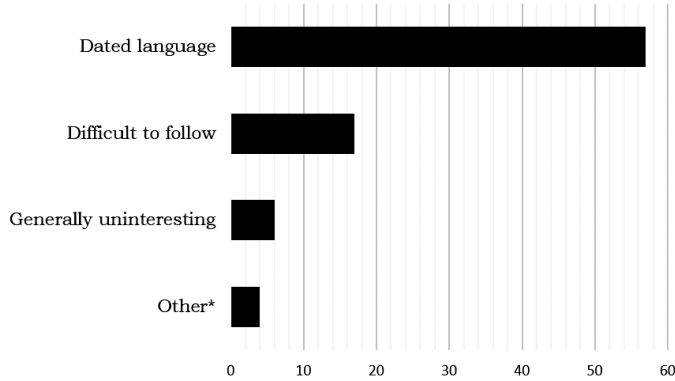
englist.weebly.com/2016-special

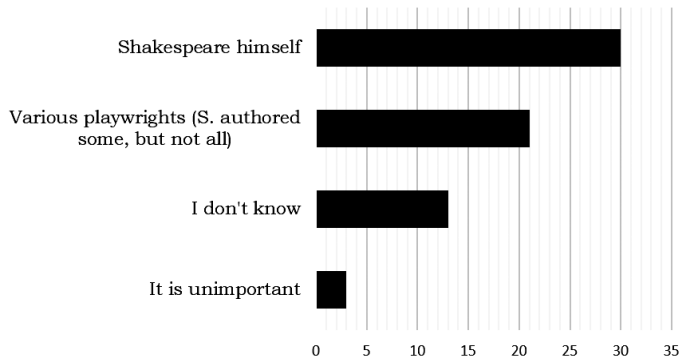## Do you find reading Shakespeare difficult or daunting?

Category	Value
Very daunting	~1
Somewhat daunting	~20
Not easy but not too daunting	~38
Not too difficult	~7
Not daunting/difficult at all	~1

(x-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40)

What do you appreciate most about Shakespeare?

Category	Value
Wit/humour	~45
Rich vocabulary	~37
Poetic mastery	~36
Interesting/timeless stories	~32
Intriguing characters	~25
Social commentary/criticism	~24

(x-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50)

Why do you find reading Shakespeare difficult?

Category	Value
Dated language	~57
Difficult to follow	~17
Generally uninteresting	~6
Other*	~4

(x-axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60)

Who actually wrote the works attributed to Shakespeare?

Category	Value
Shakespeare himself	~30
Various playwrights (S. authored some, but not all)	~21
I don't know	~13
It is unimportant	~3

(x-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35)

* Other answers: Use of literary devices, reading between the lines & knowledge of history is required

Interestingly, no one opted for the names most often associated with the authorship question: Christopher Marlowe, William Stanley, Edward de Vere, and Sir Francis Bacon.

May the conclusion mirror that of the survey – for the end, we asked the respondents to express in a few words what Shakespeare means to them. Here are some of the most memorable responses:

"Shakespeare really is an author that inspired me to pursue a career involving the English language. His plays are captivating and his poems always evoke a lot of emotion in me no matter how many times I have already read them."

"Timeless wit and characters and stories that continue to fascinate and intrigue generation after generation. Master of language and a gentle spirit still felt in London and beyond."

"His plays are sometimes written as a big f you to society, which is very endearing"

"He is one of the most innovative writers in history, he is adept at constructing stories and themes that are applicable throughout different historical periods; moreover, we owe a big chunk of vocabulary to him."

"Shakespeare is an amazing playwright who set the bar fairly high for any other trying to follow in his shoes. His masterful wielding of words is unparalleled."

"Mostly he is fun to read. Also, a useful reference point when studying other authors."

"A name which I am bound to spell incorrectly"

"Hopefully, my bread and butter"

"Daunting fun"

Enthralling Events

Staging a Play: *The Glass Menagerie*

by Maja Bezgovšek

Staging a play: The Glass Menagerie is Matija Ferlin's abstract dance theatre performance based on Tennessee Williams' brilliant play *The Glass Menagerie*. It was first staged late last year and has since received many positive reviews. ENgLIST's team was very fortunate to be able to attend the show for a very affordable price and even arrange a small discussion after the play with Matija Ferlin, the director, main choreographer, and dancer, Maja Delak, a dancer, and Luka Prinčič, the coordinator of music. We are very grateful for this opportunity and would like to thank the lovely Katarina Slukan from Bunker at Stara mestna elekrarna Elektro Ljubljana for making this learning experience possible.

Although I am not very familiar with this type of performance art, I was very intrigued by the premise of this play. I enjoy Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* very much and was very keen to see how the intricate dialogues upholding the play and making it so great would work in a performance with no speech and only movement. I must say, it was quite as I expected it would be (apart from the music, which I will mention later). The dancers are undoubtedly extremely talented and the choreography is complex, yet easy enough to follow the narrative, even if you are not used to seeing performances like this. If you have read the play, that is. I'm afraid that if you are not familiar with the play prior to seeing this performance, you simply cannot follow along with the story as the abstract dance choreography could be interpreted in many different ways.

Yet that, according to Matija, is central motivation that propels this type of theatre. The presentation of the narrative is less important than the emotions each viewer experiences when watching the play. Matija claims that it is crucial for the audience to be open to an abstract showing – open to explore and see what is beyond a traditional interpretation of the classic play. He claims the idea is very simple and it relies on the audience to want to seek uncertainty. The main idea of this staging is that the experience is different for every person and it stirs certain emotions in the viewer that should be used as a sort of port that takes you to a ruminative state of mind.

In a sense, the aim of this play in particular is to reinvent the rules of theatre production in Slovenia. Matija sought to eliminate the main apparatus in classical theatre, which is speech, and replace it with the body, which is traditionally not deemed very important. This is a research of form, not necessarily content, he claims. It explores what the dramatic body is and what it can offer. According to Matija, the choreography does not stem primarily from the text, but from the body and what it can achieve. You might wonder how much of the movement is choreographed and how much is improvised in a play like this. Maja Delak explains that about 80 - 90% of the movement is choreographed and the rest is improvised. She claims it is important for the movement not to be descriptive, so as not to suggest any specific interpretation to the audience, but it should still be sourced in the text. It mainly takes a lot of practice to learn how to translate the actual lines of text to body movement and the correct facial expressions, which should not be too straight forward. Another goal of this play was not to be predictable, but to create tension; not to be obvious, but to break the habits of ordinary theatre.

This begs the question, then, why this play was chosen. It seems that any play could work as a vague platform on which to build this abstract narrative, or indeed, why is a text necessary at all? Matija explains that he wanted to choose a classic play in order to be given a chance to reinvent its staging (hence the title *Staging a play*). The reason he decided on *The Glass Menagerie* in particular is because the play has a lot of stage directions and it gave the dancers much more information on the positions of the bodies than most other plays usually do. Matija also says that he was very intrigued by the fact that within the play, the main character refers to the play as "a memory play" and this was then his inspiration to wave the intended interpretations and stage a performance that would be based vaguely on the play, not concerned with the reproduction of actual words in the text. But, more or less, Matija explains, it is true that this concept of staging plays can be done with any play - that is the beauty of it, in fact. Just like any play can be staged in traditional theatre, the same can be said for this type of abstract art.

Since the performance is so abstract and based on the body and its movement, it is only natural that the music should play a very important part in the creation of the experience as a whole. And to me, the music was indeed the best part of the performance. It reflected the atmosphere of each act beautifully, featuring mainly looped melodies that brilliantly inform the audience of the almost claustrophobic atmosphere at the beginning of the play, changing with each break and reintroduced only more complex with each following act. In fact, Luka Prinčič explains that most recordings were based on the actual records that Tennessee Williams mentions for this play, and they have been backtracked and looped to create and sustain this bleak atmosphere of the play. Luka claims that working with music means working with states and that each scene announces a particular state. Yet even the musical component of this performance is meant to be interpreted extremely liberally. He claims that music only gives a certain direction, but that is it possible and even desired that a

certain piece should be interpreted by one person as sad and extremely optimistic by another. This view, however, challenges the idea that music is universally perceived in the same way. Do minor chords not sound inherently sad and major chords happy to us all? Would narrative-based classical music even be able to build said narrative if such associations did not exist? That being said, the reason the music works so well in this performance is because the looped recordings reflect the anxiety-filled atmosphere that is present in the play very well indeed.

Theatre has long been a space for exploration and experimentation with the new and the unusual, and this performance does just that. So if you are against interpretation and wish to explore other, much more abstract forms of theatre, I truly believe you would enjoy this play tremendously. The staging, set, choreography, music, and most of all, the dancing - all the elements have been clearly meticulously thought out and executed cautiously, yet with unmistakable vigour. Do not go see it expecting to experience a Tennessee Williams play as such, but rather go to enjoy an abstract form of art concerned mainly with itself and the exploration of the unusual in the world where traditional theatre still dominates.

Shakespeare in Translation

by Gaja Vudrag

2016 marks the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. Though he is long gone, his works persist, occupying a position at the top of world literature. It therefore comes as no surprise that, to celebrate Shakespeare's genius, there are festivals, theatre and cinema productions, and events currently taking place all over the world. Slovenia is no different, which is why, on 8 March 2016, I had (bought the tickets and therefore acquired) the privilege of attending a show in Cankarjev dom entitled *Shakespeare in Translation*. The British actors Julian Rhind-Tutt (Central School of Speech and Drama), Jonathan Slinger (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art), and Angela McHale (Drama Studio London) were joined by the Slovene actor Anja Drnovšek (Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television Ljubljana) in a self-explanatory lecture/performance on Shakespeare in translation. The situation itself was a bit curious – the majority of the cast, three English actors, speak not a lick of foreign language, yet there they were, comparing Shakespeare's original works and their various translations. Of course, the actors acknowledged this whimsicality with a hearty laugh of humble self-irony and, before long, we were on our way.

The show was quintessentially a crash course on Shakespeare. Actually, it was more like a crash course on a crash course – for how could anyone possibly be able to pack everything there is to know about Shakespeare into 90 minutes? The creators were indeed faced with an extremely difficult task. They went about it by first briefly discussing the historical context, mentioning, among other things, Britain's imperialism and Shakespeare's sources (stating, for example, that he probably relied on Holinshed's *Chronicles of England* for his history plays). After that, they embarked upon a short presentation of as many aspects of Shakespeare's writing as possible, providing the public with practical demonstrations. Julian Rhind-Tutt took on the role of lecturer, while Jonathan Slinger, Angela McHale, and Anja Drnovšek played out, for our better understanding as well as enjoyment, monologues and dialogues from different plays in English and Slovene, or in a combination of both. When discussing blank verse and its rhythm, they even resorted to German, which is just about the only language not forced to utterly adapt the glory that is the iambic pentameter to a different type of metrical line (many thanks, Schlegel). We watched Hamlet giving his actors instructions on how to act; we witnessed Romeo and Juliet's first tentative kiss; we saw Henry V's speech on St Crispin's Day; excerpts of the *Merchant of Venice* and of *Macbeth*, parts of *the Winter's Tale* and of *As You Like It*, a bit of *Richard II* and of *the Tempest*. But what stayed with me the most was Angela McHale's take on Constance from *King John;* a mother, recently bereaved, defending herself against accusations of insanity. Never have I ever been thus moved in so short a time, however regular my theatre-going ventures are. I only wish my words could do justice to McHale's brilliance.

I could go on and on about the actors' performance but I think it is enough to simply say that they were wonderful. Let me rather share my view on Shakespeare's texts in translation – an opinion formed both after seeing this show as well as reading Shakespeare in different languages. I do not wish to speak poorly of the translators taking on the immense task of translating Shakespeare's works, for many of them do a very good – and a much needed – job indeed (the non-Anglophone book worms are probably very grateful for these translations). However, though transposing Shakespeare into foreign languages undoubtedly enriches the texts, there also exists, alas, the certainty that these texts will in some way be impoverished. There are always elements lost, such as ambiguities only brought about by the linguistic properties of English words, or poetry, the existence of which is only rendered possible by the natural rhythm of the English language. I therefore strongly believe that Shakespeare's texts are best in English.

Much more could be said both about the great Shakespeare himself and about *Shakespeare in Translation*. However, as an act of solidarity with the creators of the latter, I have decided to end my treatise here, keeping it short and sweet, just as they were obliged to do. If anyone missed the show, or if anyone wishes to either refresh one's memory or to learn more, I strongly advise you to watch RSC's Playing Shakespeare on YouTube. It is a series of 9 episodes from 1984 featuring the legendary John Barton and many world-renowned actors you'll doubtless recognize.

Macbeth—Thoroughly Cursed

by Kristina Nastran

Most people know that Macbeth is often called "The Scottish Play" and most also know that the nickname appeared due to some sort of a curse. However, rare are the ones that actually know the reasons behind the alleged existence of the curse and the discussion I attended in the beginning of the year, *MacBethov čudni sloves gledališkega prekletstva,* was aimed at clearing up just that.

I was quite excited when entering the intimate space of Knjižni klub Lily Novy – the soft lighting, the hushed voices of visitors chatting before the event, it was all very soothing after escaping the harsh wind and February cold outside. I must admit, I also felt a bit proud of myself for finally managing to find the time and will to go to one of the events organised to honour the anniversary of one of the greatest and most influential poets and playwrights in the history of the English language. Coupled with fascinating speakers who were to lead the discussion, Milan Jesih and Marjan Strojan, what could possibly go wrong?

There is no denying it: both speakers were knowledgeable and well-prepared for this discussion – how could they not be, when both their careers and life's work are connected with English literature. It was the first time that I have thought about Macbeth from a perspective not burdened with the content of the play, but rather the reasons why it is the way it is and the effect it had/has on everyone involved in its staging. As Marjan Strojan pointed out, Shakespeare was not permitted to create a historically accurate play due to the current political situation in England. The Scottish threat to English dominance was very much felt in England at that time and writing an empowering and blatantly pro-Scottish play would be an invitation to a swift and painful meeting of his neck and a very sharp axe.

When the discussion finally arrived to the long awaited question – why the name of the character and the title of the play itself should never be pronounced – the answer was downright disappointing: no one knows. There are no sources that would explicitly state why this superstition has come to exist, only that its existence has proven to be true by a few individuals who decided to ignore it. Those who did try to find reasons for the superstition claim that a few words in the play are designed to cast a spell of misfortune, others simply claim that so many accidents have happened before and during the stagings of the play that believing in coincidences would be foolish. Looking at the history of accidents, their theory does seem to be on to something: a stunt blade that was somehow changed for a real one, a theatre that burnt down before the play, a stampede before a production in New York where 20 people were killed and a hundred injured … On the other hand, a curse sure sounds like a handy excuse for human error.

Once Milan Jesih had his chance to speak, the discussion shifted to the field of translation, especially translation of Shakespeare for the theatre. It was refreshing to hear that translations, even when done by such distinguished translators as Milan Jesih, are not always perfect – that even they can struggle, make mistakes and confess to them. Jesih even spoke of having to fix his translations when a play was staged, especially due to actors finding some of his solutions unpronounceable. What I did not expect was Jesih, in a good-humoured fashion, admitting that the actors were usually right and acknowledging his hubris, which occasionally led him off the path of good translation solutions to downright mistakes.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the main topic of the discussion, the curse that Macbeth is allegedly burdened with, did not take up the majority of the time, but was resolved in mere five minutes. Strojan's "introduction" explaining the political and social situation in Shakespeare's times lasted for almost 45 minutes with Strojan talking as if the discussion has caught him off-guard and wholly confused, while Milan Jesih did not get a word in edgeways during his "lecture". But the most memorable statement of the whole discussion, uttered by Milan Jesih, was the following: that a literary translator does not necessarily need to know the historical context in which the work came to be. I was shocked to realise that both speakers, literary translators by profession and calling (or so they claimed), wholeheartedly agreed on this. Just imagine trying to understand Picasso's Guernica without knowing the brutal nature of the historical event behind it – that is how preposterous the world of literary translation without knowing the historical context would look like. I will not lie, at point I was no longer impartial or even favourably disposed to the speakers, but rather began to take their every word not just with a pinch of salt, but a whole bucket of it.

However informative the discussion had been, I do wish I had not witnessed such level of disregard for the importance of historical background for a certain literary work and its translation – it would have spared my classmates from hearing a considerable rant about the future of literary translation. I must admit it has challenged my opinion of the two guests, especially because I strongly believe historical background is crucial when translating works that are representative of the era that prompted and shaped their existence. Disregarding the cultural and socio-political situation of the time might lead to serious translation slip-ups that do not end just in meaning lost in translation, but also in the meaning potentially being utterly misunderstood and mistranslated. Such mistakes are simply unacceptable, especially in the day and age where one can sit on the balcony, sip tea, and access all the knowledge and information in the world with minimal effort.

Language Love

Loving Languages

by Maša Žbogar

"I like learning languages" is a phrase which is tossed about quite a lot nowadays. But learning, they say. Learning. There is nothing wrong with the activity as such; however, that alone is not enough to claim to love languages, which is often associated with the above statement.

Learning is not the same as loving. For example, we have all learned about the *Alien* franchise, but we mostly choose to love only one of the films, and that is the second one – *Aliens* (1986). The same applies to languages, though with less gore. Up to now we have had the privilege to learn quite a few languages; however, it is usually only one we find *fascinating.*

Therefore, to be a language lover, I believe, takes a love-hate relationship with this beautiful human creation that is language. It is like that uncle with a strange fashion sense and even stranger sense of humour. It is when you are pushed to awe when one small grammar rule is explained to you; when a whole new world uncovers in front of your eyes. Life will never be the same for you. But everyone else just shrugs it off and maybe hums as in "I see", and moves on as if nothing really happened. How dare they! The beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Language love is not about knowing how to say *potato* in as many languages as possible. It is about being frustrated and fascinated with the language's complexity. It is finding desperation and delight in trying to see the little nuances between two expressions. As we all already know, there are numerous kinds of language lovers; not all are grammar nerds. However, we all strive toward the same goal – to be on the same level as the native speakers and sound exactly like them.

This is where the learning process comes into play. Good teaching methods may empower our wish to learn more; on the other hand, a teacher's poor performance may discourage us. But not everything depends on the teacher or professor who taught us a foreign language. A big chunk of work must be done by ourselves. It is up to us whether we want to completely submerge ourselves in the language, making it a part of our daily life. Very often small things such as listening to a podcast or a show or even flipping through some pages of magazines or books may aid in expanding one's vocabulary.

Besides learning there is another important thing which is often left out – respecting all languages. How many times have you witnessed someone say: "Oh, this language is horrible!" Unfortunately, it happens more than it should. One cannot and should not label a language with a plus or a minus; they are all beautiful in their own ways. Just because the phonological pattern is different from the languages we know or is completely absent (sign languages), and the orthography is rather odd at first sight, does not mean we must think negatively about the language. If the language appears weird to us, it is so because we do not know the clockwork that makes the system work. Of course everyone has a few languages which sound weird or even harsh to our ears. Nothing is wrong with that. What is wrong is perceiving a certain language as lesser because it sounds harsh or because of a negative cultural association.

One more thing that should not be tolerated among real language lovers is what I would like to call "shaming on mother tongue". *Don't diss it.* It is not the language's fault some of its native speakers cannot realize its beauty. The easiest way is to rant about how this and that cannot be done with our mother tongue. One should look at the merits as well. How many other languages have a word for *surface of the water*? Let's not get started on the inflection. But we will. Inflection in Slovene is just like the Force – it is everywhere; it binds the grammatical universe.

We live in an era where knowing at least one foreign language is an essential skill. However, the knowledge of languages should not be looked upon only as a necessity. The truth is, languages are beautiful. Their uniqueness should be recognized and appreciated. This is not only for those who have a soft spot for languages; it will be much appreciated if the general public chips in as well. After all it is an instrument of communication we greatly depend on. Before I take my leave, my fellow language lovers, I would like to remind you to love thy language(s).

Feeling lucky?

Linguistic Titbits

Language is a living entity, it is always in flux, acquiring new pieces it finds useful, forsaking others that no longer serve their purpose. This section brings you the novelties our colleagues find interesting, amusing, sometimes even irritating. Along with the neologisms comes the student's commentary on the expression itself and the changes in our world that brought about the need for it.

marmite, adj.

by Jure Velikonja

I was first introduced to the salty extravaganza called Marmite by my friend whose mother is from London and who, like myself, is fond of everything British. When she told me what Marmite actually was (yeast extract), I cringed a little, fearing that – despite being a strong believer of pouring milk into tea and not the other way around – I would not be able to like this foul-sounding alien goo. As she prepared the English toast, spreading butter and the mysterious brown paste, she explained that Marmite is something you either absolutely adore, or hate. At that point I started to get a bit nervous. Will my love of everything British be obliterated by a single bite? Will I have to pretend to like it even if it is absolutely repulsive or swallow my pride (along with the vile toast) and admit I can't stand the taste of it? Finally, the time came. I picked up the toast, I opened my mouth, and took a bite. It tasted a bit funny, I'll admit. My first association was a very sharp taste of salt. I didn't really love it, but I also didn't hate it. Was something wrong with me? I was supposed to have strong feelings about it but I didn't. My taste buds didn't reach the state of eternal bliss, nor did I have the urge to spit the thing out. Such was my first experience with Marmite. Since then I've grown to love it; I eat it on toast, put it in sauces for extra flavour, and I have also embraced my role as its ambassador, spreading Marmite love to others. Now, it even reached the laudable status of a buzzword, expressing this very notion of extreme love or hate, or just love, if you ask me.

Image: Publicis Machine Johannesburg

solutionism, n

by Lucija Jezeršek

The solution for most of the everyday situations that used to be problematic or simply time-consuming can now be found in technology. There is an obvious difference from the past, where these very problems were solved using only the mental ability of the people facing them. Solutionism is the notion that everything can be solved with the help of technology. Even though it is difficult to ignore the advantages brought by the advancement of technology, some are beginning to question the belief that technology is the solution to every single issue and rather believe it is actually getting in the way of thinking.

Different *-isms* have always been associated with debates and this one is no exception, providing strong feelings on both sides. Some people are worried that by eliminating problems solvable by technology we would be rendered unable to think in terms of ethics and philosophy. The inability to think for ourselves would harm our own progress. Easily accessible solutions to everyday issues would make us unable to use judgement and willpower. I cannot help but strongly disagree with this ubiquitous belief. Ever since we found out that our opposable thumbs can be used to grab things and then use those things to make a necessary chore easier or get it over with in a shorter period of time, we have been doing so. Using tools to make life easier is not only in human nature but in nature in general. Tools are used by a wide variety of animal-kingdom members from birds to mammals.

Relying on technology does not mean our brain will turn into a puddle. Beside creating different kind of connections in our brains, enabling us different thinking pathways, this gives us the opportunity to use the spare time we get by being rid of menial chores to exercise the brain, thus making it stronger. Whether someone chooses to take or ignore the mentioned opportunity is entirely up to them. And I, for one, am sick of the hypocrites who criticize technology over the internet, using their computers, sitting on a chair in a warm, well-lit room.

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Opulent Opinions

Avoiding a Tempest — The Bard's Way

by Maja Perne

Love is such an abstract concept that has inspired thousands and thousands of *how-to-get-him* or *is-she-the-one?* kinds of self-help books. Even Shakespeare used love as a source of inspiration and conjured up many fictive couples whose actions – one more tragic than the other – work as a cautionary tale to any modern-day lover. With some of these tips your relationship will be nothing but smooth sailing.

Lesson number 1: be reasonable

We all know that young love is the sweetest time in people's lives – butterflies prance around everywhere, birds tweet non-annoying melodies and grass simply seems greener than ever: until it's not. Remember Romeo and Juliet? These star-crossed love birds couldn't keep their hands off each other and all the sweet talk about larks and nightingales made Romeo forget about his unrequited love to Rosaline, whom he loved until he laid his eyes upon Juliet – his truest love. Unfortunately, their bliss didn't last. Once the bad news about Juliet's death reached Romeo, he immediately splurged his father's coins on some poison and rushed to her tomb, where he slew Paris and killed himself – had he only waited a minute. What's the moral of this tragic story? Slow down. Mind the advice that the friar gave to Romeo: "They stumble that run fast."

Lesson number 2: falling out of balance

Once you grow out of the Romeo and Juliet's *we-are-so-blindly-in-love* stage (unless you have already guzzled your monk's poison), then you can notice that every successful long-term relationship is like balanced scales: one person is a bit of this, and the other one is a bit of that. This means that if you have one ambition-ridden partner, who wants to be the Queen of Scotland, and a scared wavering *I-am-happy-with-being-a-thane-of-Scotland* kind of a partner, then the balance is set. But beware when the complacent thane suddenly tops you in this *who-is-more-crazy-and-ambitious* game – you might not handle them slaughtering innocent people and even regret instigating them in the first place. Having one crazy person in a couple works, but having two crazy ambition-hungry people only results in one partner committing suicide and the other one getting decapitated by some man not born out of a mother's womb.

Lesson number 3: don't be such a Desdemona

If your partner has issues (suffering from the *nobody-loves-me-because-I-am-an-outcast* syndrome) and they appear distrustful, make sure you recognize this early on, thus avoid any future drama. Never allow such a partner to linger next to your parents (especially if they don't approve of them), because your father might try to scare him off by saying "She has deceived her father, and may thee". Furthermore, if your suspicious spouse is surrounded by some man who constantly whispers to their ear, despite having the reputation of an "honest" man, check their FB account – don't be gullible. If you still haven't caught on these alarming signals of your crazy spouse, make sure you at least run away once they call you the »cunning whore of Venice« and send your maid away – leaving you two all alone in your bedroom (bad things happen behind closed doors with zero witnesses and lots of fancy pillows).

Lesson number 4: soul food

His great tragedies give us useful tips on how to get along in a relationship; however, his finest advice on love resides in his poetry. It is the sonnet 116 that captures the essence of what love and the search for it should truly be about: "the marriage of true minds". With this line, he emphasizes that the partner-hunt shouldn't rely so much on the exterior, rather than the interior of a person. As one is enticed by the inner jewels of one's lover, then there is no fear of a break up even when the "rosy lips and cheeks" wear off. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the person you covet also thinks so highly of you – even the author of this phrase himself suspected his youth cheating on him, which only proves that life is no perfect love sonnet.

So what to do to get your happily-ever-after? Who knows; but some of the Bard's guidelines might help, so just remember – be reasonable, don't be too naïve, anticipate your partner's changing nature and base your love on their spirit and not solely on their perky cheeks (things do sag in time).

Exuberant Exchanges of Travel Tales

Greetings from Glorious Ghent

by Marija Križ

September 14, 2015. My 23rd birthday. Instead of a cake and a party, a one-way ticket to Ghent in my hand and an airport full of my favourite people, the people I had never spent a day without and was about to leave for half a year. So my journey started off with an emotional roller-coaster that turned out to be the best birthday present I could have received. Here is just a tiny little insight into my Belgian adventure.

Photos: Marija Križ

I fell in love with Ghent instantly. How can a person not fall in love with a city like Ghent, anyway? It is the city of three and a half towers, a golden dragon, a castle, a riverside where people chill in the sun (yes, there's sun in Belgium), a green city, a city where a former leprosy shelter is turned into the coolest bar, where the ruins of an ancient abbey are restored and opened to the public, where almost every pub offers free live music daily, where giant toilet paper rolls make great statues, where you can have a drink in the smallest bar in the world, where alleys are turned into graffiti streets, where museums are cheaper than coffee, where second-hand shops are more popular than H&M, where bikes and trams share the same path, where you can go to a bar in which you have to give a shoe as a guarantee that you will not steal the

special beer glass – in a city like that, days are anything but boring.

If by some chance you still manage to get bored, there's another advantage of studying in Ghent. Belgium is a traveller-friendly country, with major discounts for train tickets and various possibilities of travelling to the neighbouring countries. The semester definitely satisfied my wanderlust (at least for a little while), since one of the toughest "concerns" of my exchange was whether to visit Bruges, Antwerp, Paris, Amsterdam or Brussels first. Not to mention the many small, tourist-free places I randomly discovered during my stay.

My home for the semester, the neighbourhood where streets are named after spices, was just a few minutes away from the glorious city centre of Ghent. I found myself living in a student house at Komijnstraat ("cumin street") which might have had a few doors too few, but certainly did not lack character. Plus, I was lucky enough to live with the three nicest Belgians in the country. Together with them and other Erasmus students, I quickly found out why Belgium is considered to be one of the most appealing countries in Europe. No wonder the things they boast about the most are beer, chocolate, waffles and fries (which are as French as I am). Beers are an acquired taste – considerably stronger and very peculiar – but once you start to like them, you like them for good. Belgian specialties do live up to their expectations.

I guess I should mention the academic part of the exchange, which is, after all, the reason we all take part in exchanges. The programme at the department of English requires a lot of reading and work. Taking only 5 courses in Ljubljana would mean a stress-free semester, since we are used to having up to 15 different courses. In Ghent, it meant reading at least one book per week for literature courses, tests in Generative Grammar, and weekly projects in English Business

Communication. The grading system is a bit different – the grades go up to 20. However, it takes a Chomskian

brain to actually get a 20 there – you are more than lucky to be awarded a 16. Still, the hard work paid off and I had the chance to take some very interesting courses, learn a lot from great teachers and work with memorable classmates.

Half a year went by and before I could even realize what was happening, I was on the flight back to Ljubljana. It was time to face reality again – the semester of continuous adventure had come to an end. There were moments when not everything was perfect; moments when I wished I was home, moments when I had to test myself and my own resourcefulness. Nevertheless, I landed in Ljubljana with a bittersweet realisation that from that point on, I will always miss Ghent, always feel homesick, even when at home. And then, as I walked through the gate at the airport, I experienced another

wonderful aspect of taking part in an exchange – the moment of happiness when I saw the same faces I had left half a year before, peeking nervously from the crowd, waiting for their girl to come home.

The Seoul for Your Soul

by Ajda Rozina

Now, my journey to a year abroad got off to a rocky start. After everything was settled – my freshman year at its end, exams over and done with, the acceptance letter from a Korean college received, and plane ticket bought – my mother informed me she had lost her job of 25 years a month before my departure. It seemed my experience of studying abroad was over before it even started.

I needn't have worried, though. While I was wasting my summer vacation by having a part-time job – by choice, mind you – my mother was spending her days of unemployment exploring Croatian camps with her RV. Two months after being made redundant – and a month into my living in Seoul – she had a job again. And I had no financial worries, because every time I mentioned to her on Skype that I was reluctant to treat myself to something because a pizza cost more than I expected or the clothes I instantly liked were above my self-imposed budget, she would look disapprovingly at me from her

perch on the couch back in Slovenia and sternly tell me that it was not my job to worry about money; She said the reason she agreed with me going to Korea was for me to have fun.

And that's what I've been doing ever since – having fun. Well, mostly. I may be an exchange student, but that doesn't mean I can slack off for a whole year if I plan to graduate on time. How does four hours of Korean five days a week sound to you, along with four other English courses, each two hours long? Oh wait, the Friday class is from 3 to 6 pm, silly me. Many professors – unfairly, I believe – think exchange students do nothing but party all the time and show up to class hungover. As a double major I really couldn't afford to do that. So I buckled down and did what had to be done – studied when the approaching exam period demanded it, all the while living the life in the metropolis that is Seoul.

My first weeks here were spent like a man lost at sea in a tiny boat. I let the current take me along, not knowing whether what I was to encounter next would be pleasant or not. Along the way, I discovered I could actually stomach Korean cuisine – a big relief, since I hadn't tasted much Korean food before arriving – and that Korean

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trains are the bomb since if you miss one, the next one will come by in the next five minutes. I also learned that sometimes an older man will ask if you are Russian and you should say no lest he think you're a lady of the night, that visiting museums and galleries and palaces is really cheap – a *Gorenjec*-would-pay-for-this kind of cheap – and that while elders are sometimes unaccustomed to seeing foreigners, they are mostly awkward in their inter-actions with us and not intentionally racist.
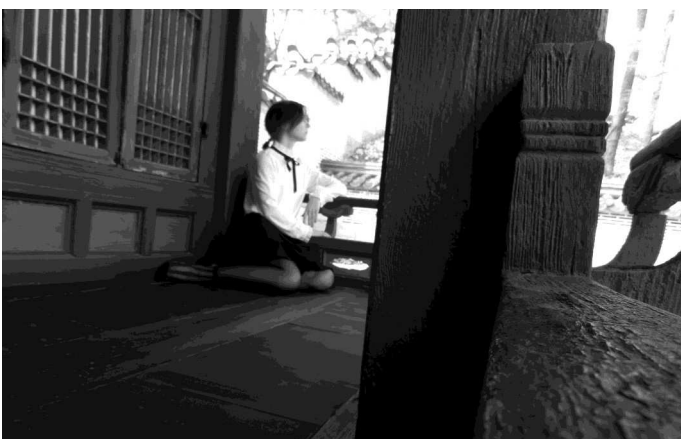
One cannot live in a foreign city for a longer period of time and not get to know it well. Some parts of it, at least. You learn pretty fast that Hongdae is the club district and that they have unique fashion stores that tend to be on the expensive side. Myeongdong is a tourist trap with street vendors in two rows in the middle of the street and makeup shops sharing walls. Gangnam is the rich dis-trict and if you're lucky strolling down Garosu-gil in your best attire, you just might get pulled aside to take some photos with a famous k-pop star. And for a shopping ex-perience catered to a student's budget, Idae is your best choice. There is much to do and see in Seoul, and even the slogan is inviting: *I Seoul You.* Okay, maybe not so much. I mean, how could they have passed up *The Seoul of Asia* or *The Seoul for Your Soul* I have no idea. So many great word plays!

My favourite place in Seoul is where tourists linger the most. Well, not the Chinese tourists – those like Myeong-dong for the makeup since they can sell it for a higher price back in their home country. It's ingenious, really. But back to the big hubbub of the city – Gyeongbokgung. I must admit that I had to Google just to see if I have spelled it correctly; always better to double-check. Gyeongbokgung is one of the four palaces of Seoul – five if you count Jongmyo Shrine – and is the biggest of them all. I have visited it four times already and one more visit is in my itinerary before I have to depart for Slovenia. No matter how many people there are, everyone tends to get lost in the vast open spaces and numerous tiny court-yards, they disappear behind the many corners or mean-der to a seemingly unknown spot, they take long detours and are swallowed by the monstrosity that is Gyeong-bokgung Palace, only to be spit out by the relic at the end of opening hours. Or maybe that is just what happens to me.

I know I'm going to miss Korea terribly when the time comes to pack my suitcases – all three of them. I arrived with two, but my fashion taste gradually changed during this year, which required a whole new wardrobe. Living in a capital with ten million people has also given me a taste for large cities – not necessarily for the crowds, which I

still dislike with a passion, but for the sheer number of restaurants to eat at, sights to marvel at, festivals to par-ticipate in, people to meet, friends to make. I might have doubled my Facebook friends while being here, which is great because it means someone is always doing some-thing interesting. Oh, there's a party tonight? Let's go together! Wait, EXO is performing at Kyung Hee this weekend? We must get tickets! I have two hours, wanna go for a walk along the Han River? Sure! There's this chicken restaurant I know of, you hungry? Starving! You're doing laundry right now? Wanna do mine, too?

I feel that this account of mine hasn't even scratched the surface of everything there is to experience in Seoul, let alone Korea. But maybe next year or even next semester, a student better versed in the art of travelling, partying and socializing may fill my – admittedly tiny – shoes and the gaps I have left to fill and write an in-depth contribu-tion, because Korea is so much more than Psy's *Gang-nam Style* and *kimchi*.

Writer's Woe

Fire Days, Our Ways

by Borja Ožbolt & Tina Lovka

Stardate: 30164495 > Starfleet time travel dept. > Home > News

Press release:

The Time-Travel Dept. has successfully carried out a sample-collecting mission. The samples of what was at the time called river algae from the 15th century contain 70 - 75 % more trihythamyde-dipenthanite than the ones we have been able to grow in our labs. Furthermore, with new sample cells we shall be able to replicate the original values of the abovementioned chemical in any of the current-time vegetation.

Charlotte Bronty, media officer

Stardate: 30164495 <Transcript> Witness statement

Officer: I want you to give a clear, short and concise description of the events. Begin by stating your full name and mission.

Welless: My name is Charles William Welless, and - aw, do we really have to, I mean, you were there too, man. You saw what happened yourself.

Officer: First warning, Trainee Welless. Please, continue your statement.

Welless: Okay, okay. So, my mission was to travel to 15th century London to explore and collect samples of a certain kind of algae. The mission went wrong: my partner, Porter, who is a complete nuke-waste, refused to obey a direct order. I was the appointed leader of the operation, and I hope she feels the consequences.

Officer: So you are saying that it was all your partner's fault?

Welless: Well yeah, obviously. The whole neighbourhood burned down because of her, couple of hundred people in for a memory-wipe, I mean; I think you should suspend her. At least.

Officer: You are not entitled to an opinion here, just finish your statement.

Welless: Yeah, that's all I've got. By the time the special force arrived, I'd already concluded the mission. Oh, by the way, is it possible to file a complaint? Those guys from Spec-

Officer: That will be all, Trainee Welless. You will remain in custody for now.

Stardate: 30164496 > Academy, HQ, office of Lt. Bor Oswald

While I sit here, wondering how in Hell I am going to phrase the report for my boss, the oh-so-great Colonel Hunter, I busy myself reading through the statements again. The reports coming in are confusing, to say the least. I may or may not have to go there myself and find out the truth about that mission. I mean, how hard can it be for two trainees to go through and find some bloody algae? Tossers. For all we know at the moment, they *started* the fire, instead of *investigating* it. I also have to figure out whose bright idea it was to send two trainees. God bless time-travel, no more unsolved crimes and mysteries, just an awful lot of leg-work and calculations. Right. Hunter will want a full report by the third hour so she can order sanctions. I'd better get going.

Stardate: 30164495 <Transcript> Witness statement

Officer: I want you to give a clear, short and concise description of the events. Begin by stating your full name and mission.

Porter: Alright. I am Beatrice Elisabeth Porter, trainee. My mission was to collect algae-sample in 1666 London. I had been appointed the leader of a group of two people. My partner was William Welless. We were sent through an hour-gap, meaning we had 12 hours to conduct the mission. Our side-mission was to gain possible knowledge about London before the Great Fire. We located a ... we started collecting samples and I ordered my partner to signal the return team so we would be beamed back up. That was when he rebelled. He demanded I yield control immediately. You could say he'd really lost the plot. Before I could signal for backup, he fired at me twice, missed and hit a nearby building which erupted into flames. Again I tried calling for backup, but the disturbance in the time-stream the fire created made it impossible for me to contact any support. Welless had by then caught up with me and held me at gunpoint when the operatives arrived. My partner and I were taken back to base and that's all there is to it.

Officer: Thank you, Miss Porter. That will be all.

Stardate: 30164496 > Report by Lt. Bor Oswald to Col. Tina C. Hunter

As previously discussed, I investigated the London incident myself and found out the following:

The taskforce was a team of a male and a female trainee. Trainee Welless got infected when mishandling the sample. In the process of collecting the samples in containers, trainee Porter followed prescribed precautions, avoiding direct contact, while Welless didn't. The infection was instantaneous so neither of the trainees was aware it happened.

The fire burned for three Earth-days (2.-5. September in their time measurements) before the operatives were able to bring it under control. 194 people needed varying

degrees of memory wipe.

The algae samples contain a virus which only affects people with a certain genome. The technicians were able to contain the infection and are currently both studying the virus and developing a vaccine. It seems the people of the era had been immune to the virus, so a second mission has been proposed in order to investigate tissue samples of the indigenous people.

<div align="right">- Oswald out</div>

Stardate: 30164497 <Transcript> Colonel's log

The reports just came in and I am about to murder somebody. What were they thinking, sending two trainees out like that? I cannot even charge that idiot Welles or demote him because as it turns out, he got himself infected with some shyte that "clouded his mind" as he claims. While on a basic mission. Seriously, how daft are these newbies!? Neither can I give the girl, Porter, a promotion she obviously deserves for saving the day and calling backup at gunpoint. They are both responsible for the fiasco. And now I have to deal with this mess first thing in the morning. Praying that no smart-aleck from the press finds out what a failure the mission was or some heads will fall. I really *am* about to demote someone and it never ends well if I am deprived of my morning coffee.

<div align="right">- Hunter out.</div>

The Blue Blood Ballad

by *Tina Radaković*

A white-haired woman walked about
her sprawling palace with unease.
She added gin to tea and sighed,
"Oh, Arthur, help us, please.

The Mayan timeline's end is nigh,
I reckon we are done.
The Daily Mail says we should hide,
that Doomsday's just begun.

There's nowhere we can run away,
the world has lost its track.
Recession, wars, uprisings, death,
I beg you, please, come back."

Thus thunder roared in Scafell Pike,
the mountain tumbled down.
A lake divided, making way
for Him with golden crown.

His ancient beard outgrew the throne
and circled it throughout.
As tall and proud as kings should be,
King Arthur strutted out.

His sword was rusty like his bones,
his eyes, two glowing gaps,
but off he strode with sacred step
towards his own collapse.

It came disguised as four young boys
who stopped him just to ask
if he had dressed for Halloween
and where to buy his mask.

His royal highness scratched his head.
"Just what is Halloween?
It's Avalon I left," he said,
"I came to see the Queen."

The boys let out a mocking laugh,
but Arthur's anger grew.
"I fought in battles, wars, you see -
I'm fine with killing you."

He slit the throats of all but one
who got to run away.
What happened after no one knows
to this very day...

Yet, legend goes about a man
in a highly guarded wing
who whets his sword on prison bars,
proclaiming he's the King.

Poem

by Ariela Herček

1. You touch my cheek and I feel a surge of rapid fire inside my cells, threatening to eat me from the inside out. You have such warm hands.

2. I've been learning to love and you've been learning to harden yourself. I want to tell you that you are enough but there is a mountain range of things we don't talk about.

3. I have been thinking about your lips and dreaming about your smile. You are not here but it feels like you are.

4. You appear in front of me like something made out of fairytale dust, all glittering and magic, magic: you are magical.

5. I am different, and I am unforgiving, and I can't see how much you're hurting, so forgive me if my words seem too rough. I didn't know you have carried my burdens, too.

6. I find it terrifying how much potential energy we are wasting with trying to keep our heads above the water.

7. (I have loved you for a thousand years.)

8. My arms wrap around your singularity like lightning. You speak like thunder crashing through my brain.

9. I am silence in the hush your lips give me. For the first time in months I am close to being okay.

- how we learned to be soft with each other

Ferns and roads

by Nik Košar

With ferns at the side of the road
and little pebbles beneath my feet,
I haul myself, foot by foot, further,
I carry my ideals into the deep forest

I search for holes in the sky
above pines, there, above clouds
where minds are lost and found
and still I dwell as dwellers do.

Hot pockets and cold breeze
surviving on thin tears of tulips,
bites of fears from furrowed bark
feed the landing of each step.

And no yells of life leave me here,
oh, no one tells me I am alone,
roads and ferns, pebbles and steps
my foot is on the path I know.

Haiku

by Karin Vegelj

Clinking of the chain
cold, grim presence lurks in the dark
Death approaches.

Fists clutching the sheets
through cries of pain, drops of sweat
a new life is born

The smell of rotten meat
worms feast upon the flesh
decomposing corpse.

Poem

by Maruša Romih

all I ever wanted
was to sleep with Mick
Jagger
and I bet I would
were I not born a bit too late
and I think he – God forgive me –
will die a bit too soon
but
I love
I love Mick Jagger

Bang Bang

by Tina Bašić

Marla had always been a peculiar woman. She was an individualist and a typical wallflower, which is also why people were left flabbergasted when they found out she had married Patrick, a white-collar man. They had decided to move to New York together, so Patrick could pursue a career and Marla – well, she would just be Marla. She had always been a mystery to everyone.

Cheerfully, Marla strode around the apartment, making her way to the kitchen. Patrick and her had agreed that Wednesdays were to be lasagna nights. Alas, some of the ingredients were missing. In the past, Marla would have gone berserk over this, but she was a changed woman. Acting as if she had no care in the world, she turned on the radio and – by chance – her favorite song came on. *Bang Bang* by Nancy Sinatra. She inaudibly sang along and stepped in front of the liquor cabinet. Baffled by all the choice she had, she stood there for a while, as if contemplating some existential dilemma. In the end, she picked a 1974 Johnnie Walker, still unopened.

She ambled towards the dining room, picking up two glasses along the way. Upon entering it, she was met by a strong light shining through the curtains. Her fiery red hair seemed like it would burst up in flames any second.

"You know, Patrick," she said, "there will be no lasagna tonight. How do you feel about that? I bet you'd have some heavy complaints about that."

Her tone was concernedly devious. She licked her lips and slowly shifted her gaze to the figure already sitting beside the dining table.

The man had his eyes closed and was covered with bruises, red and blue marks, his jaw disfigured and nose sunken deep in his face. Positively lifeless, he was sat in the very small space between the table and the velvet chair. He would've had no breathing space, if he hadn't already been dead.

"I was a fool," Marla continued, "we both were. I for marrying you and you for thinking I wouldn't exact my revenge on you some day. I may have been naive enough when I was younger, but no more."

She poured herself a glass of whisky and stretched her petite legs on the table.

"Marla, no legs on the table, you'd say. Marla this, Marla that," she said while playing with her glass of liquor.

"You know, thank god for that baseball bat you brought with you. Who would've thought it would have led to your own demise?"

She took a sip from the glass and snorted.

"Oh Patrick, my dear Patrick. And they thought baseball was just for boys."

The Morning After

by Vid Koritnik

Nights I'd lie on my side in my bed, awake, my eyes closed, thinking of nothing. Nothing at all. And at the moment a thought would pop into my mind, I'd open my eyes and see her lying next to me. And then, despite her being nothing but my imagination, my mind would be at ease again. And I'd close my eyes again and I'd think of nothing. Until another thought popped in my head. Then I'd repeat the process.

Not this night. This night I'm laying on my back, awake, my eyes opened, my head resting under my left arm, my right arm holding a woman, her head resting on my shoulder, her left arm on my chest. We're naked, sweaty, exhausted. We are satisfied. Some would call me a heartless jerk. Some would judge me, look at me in harsh criticism. Not true. I consider myself a heartless jerk, I judge myself, I can't stand the man I see in the mirror. I'm standing in the bathroom. Naked, shivering. Her apartment isn't heated, the sweat is cold, it's making me colder. I look away from the mirror, back into the bedroom. She's asleep, I can see her figure under the covers. She's a brunette, I'm surprised.

In the morning, she's the first out of bed. I wake up in an empty bed, to the smell of coffee. I put my pants on, I leave the briefs on the floor. It's too early to care. I walk into the kitchen and no one is there. There's a white cup on the table. Next to it a white bowl, a grey spoon, a carton of milk, and a box of cereal. The cup is filled with fresh coffee, black. I hate black. But I water it down with the milk. I put the milk back in the fridge. I don't know where she keeps any of it, so I leave the rest on the kitchen counter. It's too early to be hungry.

I drink the coffee staring out the window. I can see over most of the rooftops. It's bright, but dull. Autumn in the city is cold and grey. Anywhere else it's whatever warm colour you can think of. I feel like I might die. I hate mornings. Especially this one. I don't know what to make of it. I've never had a one-night stand before. What's the code of conduct, what do I do? Do I stay, wait for her to come back? Do I leave? If I leave, do I call her, text her, e-mail her, write her a fucking postcard? I finish my coffee and put the cup in the sink. I decide I'll leave. Or go downstairs for some fresh air at least.

I go back to the bedroom. On the way I notice boxes. Moving boxes. She must've moved here just recently. I

take my pants off and throw them onto the bed. Using her shower seems rude, so I don't do it. I put on my briefs, socks, shirt. The pants come last. I start putting my shoes on, it's always a hassle, and I notice a piece of paper on the nightstand. It's a note. It's addressed to me.

Morning, honey :)

Honey?

I didn't have time to make you breakfast, so I just made you coffee and left your favourite cereal on the table for you.

She's right; that is my favourite cereal. How does she know that?

I'm off to the meeting, I think they might pick me for the project :D I'm so nervous :S Keep your fingers crossed :) Have a great day!

I love you :*

Yeah, I love you too. Wait... What?! Honey? Your favourite cereal? I love you? What the hell?

I think of something. I go back to the moving boxes. I open one, the one furthest away, the one that seems emptiest. I find a shirt in it. It's familiar. Wait a minute. It's mine! And another under it. There's a leather jacket, a denim jacket, and a pair of slacks. This is all my stuff! She didn't move in here recently, I did. What's going on?

Anna Christ

Anna darling, there is no doubt

you are a goddess

within and without

a pointy devil would partake of you

heed him twice, yet

be with it through

like your shivers, it will be not

but all need love

spikes black or doves

to my mind, it is all but fun

rivers of barley

fields of rum

fields are barley

rivers are rum

by Vanja Premuž

Lust for Literature

H. G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia*: A critical analysis for the contemporary reader

by Lan Jenull

In this 1905 philosophical essay/science fiction novel hybrid, H. G. Wells carefully outlines and vividly describes how his "Modern Utopia" would look and function through the voice of an unnamed fictional narrator who, along with his companion, the botanist, imagines himself transported to a parallel utopian version of planet Earth. During the course of the novel, the voice of the narrator slowly pieces together the various elements of his imagined utopian society, from the economic system to race relations and marital law. So how does this century-old fantasy hold up against the scrutiny of a cynical 21st century reader? Let's take a closer look.

Firstly, Wells wants the reader to be fully aware he thinks his utopian dream is realistically implausible, but not entirely impossible. He concedes that for it to function, society would have had to have developed a completely different set of ideals, traditions, ideas and purposes. The narrator surmises that for a perfect society to exist, the entire world would have to share one governing body, a World State, if you will. Such a state would share one world language (an amalgamation of a dozen different pre-existing ones), one economy, one currency and would be heavily connected by high-speed electric trains. Though the advent of new communication technologies during the last century has made the world ever more connected and sped up the ongoing process of globalisation, we are seemingly not much nearer to Wells' World State; the closest thing to it would be the comparatively weak and ineffective United Nations. He does, however, also make a compelling plea for at least the European nations to stop waring one another and form a united economic area with common laws and economic policy which has now come to fruition in the form of the EU, a fact that would probably please him immensely.
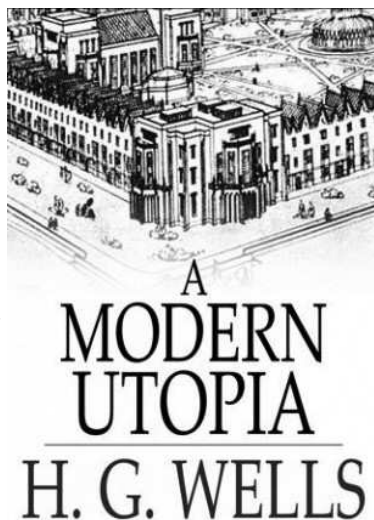
From our current perspective, the author's World Government seems quite authoritarian and frightful in nature: having full control of the planet's natural resources, a complex and expansive bureaucratic system, being the sole arbiter of what's moral and good, etc. Though we are assured that the State is entirely benevolent and utilitarian, providing the maximum possible amount of freedom (one's freedom ends where another one's begins), while minimising suffering and security risks, it's easy to be cynical and dismiss those notions as a pipe dream of a raving lunatic. But let us, for the purposes of this analysis, entertain the idea that such a governing body can exist; so how does it balance freedom with security? You would not think it, but this utopian society is very pro-individual, in fact, Wells at many points expresses distain against placing people in categories and shares the belief that everyone is unique. His society would have free individuals working together as a community through a transparent political system, achieving technological, artistic and societal progress through global cooperation. That, in my opinion, sounds like an idea that wouldn't be out of place in today's world.

But who really runs this World State? Well, in the Utopian version of history, global peace and unity was achieved when several centuries prior to the narrator's "visit" a then militant organisation calling itself *The Samurai* took charge of the world. They hold all positions of relative power from doctors to judges and teachers. Also referred to as the voluntary nobility, they have to strictly adhere to a long and from our perspective absurd list of do's and do not's such as having to go on yearly meditation trips into the wild and not being allowed to drink alcohol, trade for profit, play sports, sing or act. The latter three were included seemingly because the narrator has a lot of disdain for cults of personality, which paints an amusing picture in one's mind of a time-travelling H. G. Wells arriving in the year 2016 and with a horrified look on his face observing the culture of celebrity worship which has only grown since the rise of social media.

The next issue which gets addressed is what is to be done with the poor, the lazy, the criminal and the disabled members of society. If they can't be reintegrated back into society, they are banished to various islands, where they can live out the rest of their lives in relative freedom without "mudding up" the gene pool by reproducing. Amusing suggestions, such as sending all the alcoholics to an island where they are allowed to get drunk with one another and all the compulsive gamblers being sent to some sort of Las Vegas island full of casinos, are given as examples. There is no death penalty or torture in Utopia, even for murder. What seems at odds with the maximum freedom supposedly provided by the state is that they have the exclusive power when deciding who gets to reproduce and enact strict population control. Criminals, the disabled, people living on minimum wage and anyone who is deemed not moral or contributing enough to society is banned from

producing offspring. Utopia has a very novel idea of ensuring economic equality for women by making motherhood a paying job subsidised by the government based on how good of a parent the mother is. Looks like the idea that women could hold full time jobs for which they get equal pay was too fantastic even for Wells to imagine.

Since he is famous for his many accurate (and some inaccurate) scientific predictions, let's examine where Wells hit and missed. Though in this novel he didn't include wild things such as time machines and laser weaponry, he did give Utopians some technological edge over the Earthly residents of 1905. Automated soap dispensers, ground cleaners and towel dispensers are now finally a reality, as well as "floor and wall heating" and electric kettles. Unfortunately, bed sheets still require being hung by hand, fingerprints have not made written signatures obsolete, pneumatic pipes never took off of due to being highly inferior to computers and crop harvesters need steady human hands to guide them (though with self-driving vehicles being in the testing phase that could change soon enough). The previously mentioned trains have been realised as running on electricity rather than steam and can reach speeds beyond 300 km/ph, but are much smaller and look less like a gentlemen's club than he imagined. All in all, a pretty good job as far as prophecies go.

Finally, a quick look at the general social structure of Utopia. As said before, the narrator has a major dislike for human categorisation, be it by race, nationality or social class. Despite that, Utopians are still culturally divided into 4 distinct groups: The Poietic (people who create – artists and scientists), The Kinetic (people who maintain –judges, doctors, politicians), The Dull (the poorest, the less intelligent) and The Base (immoral, evil, corrupt people who otherwise describe themselves as belonging to one of the previously mentioned groups). Besides the consumption of meat, society in Utopia has also abolished poverty, war, disease, obesity and slavery. With everyone starting on equal footing, all races have the same opportunities to succeed and the world seems to enjoy universal tolerance. When discussing this, the narrator exposes the racial theorists and eugenicists of his time for misusing Darwin's theory of natural selection to spread aggressive nationalist rhetoric, which he believes will lead to racially motivated wars in the near future - a prediction that came true only decades later in the most horrific way imaginable. It is my belief that he needs to be commended for sticking to a progressive position which at the time seemed quite radical.

To conclude, *A Modern Utopia* is an interesting peek into the mind of a highly imaginative turn-of-a-century progressive who was one of the defining creators in the genre of modern science fiction. But before picking up this novel to experience it for him or herself, the would-be -reader should keep in mind that parts of it (as Wells kindly warns in the introduction) do read more like a philosophical essay rather than a straight up sci-fi adventure. Nevertheless, I would highly recommend it to anyone who has an interest in the utopian ideas of the past and is open to philosophical and political discussion. Otherwise, I'd suggest taking a look at some of the other works by Mr. Wells, which are less taxing on the mind and more focused on the fiction aspect of his writing.

A Book That's Not

by Maša Rebernik

This is not for you.

These are the words we're greeted with upon opening *House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski. The chilling dedication adds to the disconcerting feeling of the book, whose cover is slightly smaller than the pages it's holding. The further we go, the more we realize that this is no ordinary book – the eerie warning is there for a reason. As soon as we start reading, we become a part of it – we're suddenly trapped inside a maze that consumes its victims, and we can't leave undamaged.

Johnny Truant, a young tattoo shop employee, finds a collection of notes and critiques, assembled and written by a recently deceased old man by the name of Zampanò. The manuscript is about a documentary titled *The Navidson Record,* which was made by the Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer William Navidson. Initially, Will wants to document his family's fresh start in their new suburban home. But after some strange happenings inside the house, he bases his documentary on those. After the family moves in, he notices that the house is slightly bigger on the inside. Soon after the first discovery, a door appears in their living room, leading into dark hallways and stairways that stretch for miles and miles and seem to change in size depending on the visitor. The film footage mostly shows his team of amateur explorers advancing through the constantly changing maze as they're trying to reach the end of it. We can tell from the main premise that there are three narrators: Will Navidson, the filmmaker, Zampanò, the writer who analyzes Navidson's documentary, and Truant, who comments both on the film footage and on Zampanò's review of it. Each of the narrators brings his own view and ideas to the story, which is why it can get confusing for us, the readers. At first, we tuck these bits of information into our memories. When they start piling up, we begin to scribble them down on pieces of paper we find within our reach. We're more than halfway through the story before we finally give in – we start writing directly into the book. It takes us some more time and a few more flips through the pages before we realize that there's one narrator we have missed: us. With our own comments written on the sides of the pages we've built another layer around the text, our ideas becoming a part of the plot. We've become the co-creators of the story we're reading.

As we read further, there's a point where the walls of text start resembling actual walls. The pages are corridors,

and every chapter is a new room for us to explore. The book itself becomes a maze. And as it is with mazes, some of its paths mislead us. Truant's prolific footnotes draw us away from Navidson's trail and into tales of Johnny's late night adventures, full of drug abuse and gratuitous sexual endeavors. And he's not the only one diverting us from the central plot: Zampanò leaves his own footnotes, many of them referring to past footnotes or even non-existent ones, essentially leading us to a dead end. He challenges us to find clues, sometimes hidden in plain sight: the check mark in the corner on page 97 is a hint for us to pay close attention. Other times, we have to step away from the words in order to find their meaning: on the same page, the shorter and longer blocks of text represent dots and dashes, respectively, spelling out "SOS" in Morse code. Furthermore, a part of the manuscript consists of also multiple "exhibits" – chapters that should contain more data concerning some claims made in Zampanò's main text. But instead of any new information we're left with the writer's reminder to himself to complete these exhibits. What we thought was a path promising a way out, is yet another dead end. Just as Navidson gets lost within the maze inside his own home, so too our own frustration grows as we're trying to navigate through the layout of *House of Leaves*. At times, the text can no longer be read from left to right. Instead, a part of it is written inside an enclosed square in the middle of the page. Some paragraphs are mirrored and can't be read without an actual mirror, and some parts are crossed out, as if not intended to be read at all. We're trying to decide if reading these obscure, sometimes almost completely illegible paragraphs is worth the time, just as Navidson is weighing the options of going down one hallway or another. Will is lost, and so are we.
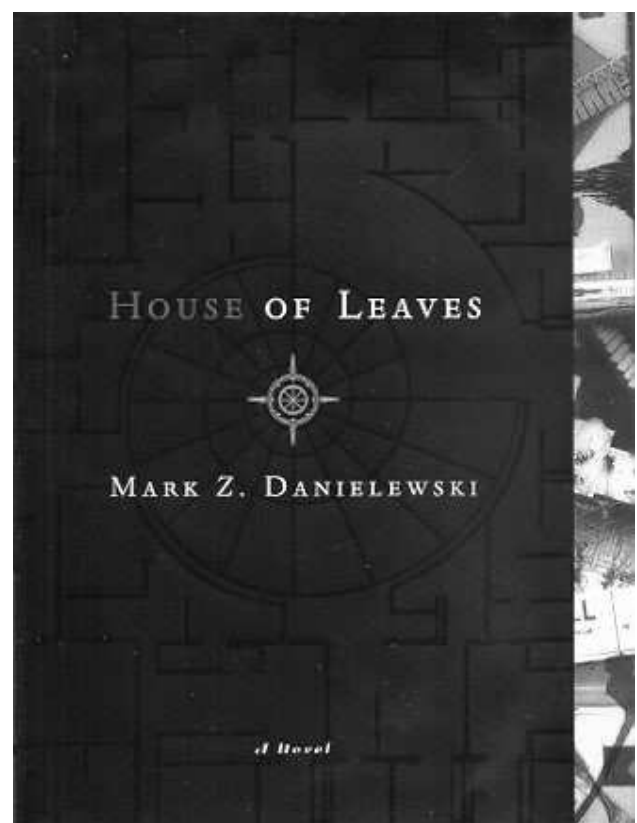
Once we become a part of *House of Leaves*, we're subject to the influence of the house. The first warning is the size of the book itself: the cover is too small for the content, indicating that what awaits inside might be more than we can handle. We hesitate even more after reading Truant's dedication: the book is not meant for us. If we intend to read it, there will be consequences. Truant, upon deciding to study and annotate Zampanò's manuscript, starts spending the majority of his time in his apartment, getting progressively obsessed with the book. At the onset of his paranoia, he starts seeing shadows and hearing voices where there (supposedly) are none. Eventually, he slips into madness. This is evidently the mildest effect the house has had on a person. Before Johnny's discovery of the manuscript, Zampanò, the author, had been found dead in his apartment with mysterious nail marks carved into the floorboards. Neither he nor Truant were ever directly in contact with the house; the only people that were are the Navidson family and the small group of men that helped Will explore the maze. As a result of this contact, they had to face the biggest consequence: many of them never made it out of the maze – one, in his delusions, tried to kill the others; and others simply disappeared. The effect on the readers may be the least detrimental of all, but it's far from insignificant. In Johnny's words:

> For some reason, you will no longer be the person you believed you once were. You'll detect

slow and subtle shifts going on all around you, more importantly shifts in you. Worse, you'll realize it's always been shifting, like a shimmer of sorts, a vast shimmer. (Danielewski xxii-xxiii)

After finishing the story, the world around us is just as we left it before losing ourselves in the book. *We're* the ones who have changed, and we can't view our surroundings as we did before. We start to notice little inconsistencies – a book falling off the shelf seemingly on its own; a walk down the hallway that feels slightly longer than usual. Whether these odd occurrences are real or mere figments of our imagination, we'll be reminded of the book again and again, constantly returning to it and never completely evading the feeling of restlessness it stirred within us.

We thought we were opening an ordinary book just as the Navidsons thought they were buying an ordinary house. While *House of Leaves* does hold the form of a book, it's far more than that. It tells the story of a maze and, in the process, becomes the maze itself. With its intricate plot and unconventional style, it keeps us engaged and the effects of it stay with us long after we've read the last page. The effect depends on the person; it might sate your longing for an unconventional adventure of (literally) infinite proportions, or make your world seem a tiny bit less secure (but also more compelling). For me, it's a reach into the unknown. It's sleepless nights long after I've finished it, trying to solve all the ciphers, and with them, the true message behind the story. With its extraordinary format of writing, it spoiled all other books for me. And finally, *House of Leaves* made me realize that not heeding advice (or the dedication, in this case) is sometimes very much worth the risk.

Fruitful Film Findings & Terrific TV Tips

Macbeth: A Film Review

by Žan Korošec

It comes as no surprise that another of Shakespeare's plays has acquired its cinematic representation. The omnipotence and excellence that the English society attributes to their most beloved bard are almost unparalleled. This tremendous appraisal is perhaps the reason why we tend to revisit the timeless writings, syphoning them further into contemporary renderings, whilst paying tribute to the original author. But to do so, one needs to tread cautiously, carefully and consciously in hopes of achieving the brilliance, eluding the unsavoury executions. The elite few who have triumphed in such endeavours have just gained another member – Justin Kurzel, the director of 2015's Macbeth.

The story of Macbeth's downfall is embedded into the very fabric of literature. Both connoisseurs and dilettanti are customarily proficient enough to recapitulate the main notions of this personal cataclysm. Because the movie so appropriately tails Shakespeare's lines, we shall spare no space and give a short plot summary.

The tragedy encompasses the ascension of a Scottish thane, Macbeth, about whom a certain trio of ominous witches make a prophecy. They foretell the protagonist that he will assume the throne but that his reign will yield no lasting outcomes. The pure ambition, which stimulates this central character's actions, eventually verifies the witches' prediction. This inner drive soon becomes responsible for numerous consecutive slaughters, which are in addition to causing evident damage disintegrating Macbeth's psyche.

Justin Kurzel has done beautifully with his vivid capturing of the gloomy and sinister tone that prevails throughout the motion picture. Music consistently amplifies this atmosphere, adding a new dimension to the interplay between characters. Kurzel's sibling Jed, the one accountable for all melodic inserts, has composed the tunes with the utmost attention, ensuring the viewers multiple shivers and horripilation. String instruments, dominating at the forefront, are often pulsating with an intimidating rhythm, which brings forth various sensations of timidity, tremor and terror. Even the rare tranquil harmonies soon transfigure into sounds of a twisted nature, which contribute to the overall escalation of tension. In a way, the music correlates with the motifs of violence and the supernatural, which might cause pleasant anxiety on the part of the viewer. Jed Kurzel has truly remained true to Macbeth's framework of a foul, vicious and crime-infested world that is moving towards its termination.

Another outstanding feature is revealed via authentic portrayals of scenery and drapery. *Prima facie*, it seems to be excessively minimalistic and rudimentary, yet this improper perception perseveres only to the point of realisation that this is 11th century Scotland. This recent blockbuster diverges from the standard clichéd depictions of royal life, introducing nothing else but what existed in that specific period. Surprisingly, this decision does not hinder or prevent any detailed efforts, which are still suitably incorporated into every frame. Because of this historical accuracy, the methods used subtly and gradually immerse the spectator in the action that is developing on the screen. The only noted embellishment to the style is possibly the exaggerated usage of contrasting, which occasionally reminds the viewer about the artificial origin of the adaptation. The initial battle is an adequate example that demonstrates the latter, since the interchange of slow motion and normal frame rate appears disproportionate (yet, this is only a minor blemish).

Kurzel's Macbeth proves its worth. The discussed feature-length film is a marvellous illustration, especially if considering that the level of Shakespeare's designs is tremendously difficult to reach. Optimistically, this will not deter people from old-fashioned reading, but provide a concluding extension to the topic of Macbeth.
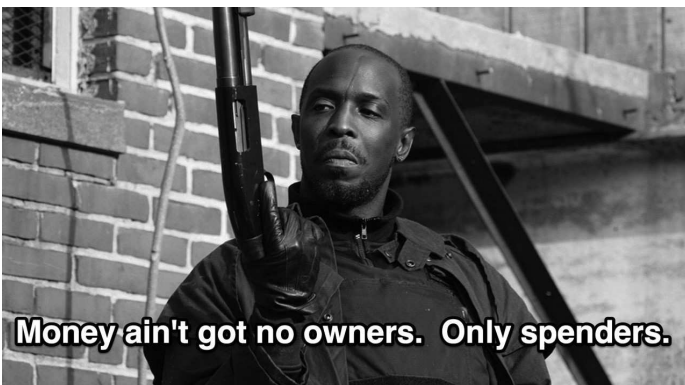
"This game is rigged, man. We like the little bitches on a chessboard." - Bodie

A review of the TV series *The Wire* (2002–2008)

by Jan Hacin

Let me be perfectly honest with you: when I tried watching *The Wire* for the first time, which was several years ago, I wasn't drawn into it very much. I'd found it after scanning a few lists of the best rated shows in the history of TV – *The Wire* remains at the top of most of these even though more than a decade has passed since it premiered. With a 96% score on Rotten Tomatoes and a 9.3 on IMDb, the series is considered to be one of the best pieces of TV drama ever created. Of course, I wanted to see what all the fuss was about. Yet, after I'd watched the pilot episode, I didn't feel the urge to keep on going. From what I remember, it felt a little too slow-paced, and I didn't understand some of the things that were going on, especially due to the amount of police jargon and street slang used from the get-go. It definitely helps to use English subtitles, at least until you get used to the specific type of language used by the characters.

Images: HBO

Money ain't got no owners. Only spenders.

I gave the series another shot this year, when I had finally run out of ideas on what show to watch next. In retrospect, I regret not being a little bit more patient on the first attempt. *The Wire* is, without a doubt, one of the most gripping, intelligent, well-written, and well-acted out drama series I've had the pleasure of viewing. It does need some initial effort on the part of the viewer, but the payout is very worth it.

The scene is set in Baltimore, which is known for being one of the most dangerous cities in the US. The premise of the plot seems fairly simple: we follow the thread of a police investigation into the activities of a drug dealing gang group. However, once the series starts developing, we realize that it is much more than just your usual cop show. *The Wire* doesn't examine the crime and drug scene of Baltimore merely from the point of view of law enforcement, but hits it from every angle and presents it as it is – a complex, well-oiled system. For this reason, there are no main characters to speak of. The series couldn't work as well with just a few of them, much like the previously mentioned system couldn't be maintained

or changed by only a few people.

Throughout the five seasons, we meet individuals from all corners of Baltimore's society, and learn that it takes much more than just criminals and dirty politicians to maintain a system of crime, corruption, and exploitation. We take a look at the lives and work of police officers, lawyers, politicians, workers, children, gang members, teachers, drug addicts, and so on, and see that most of them contribute in one way or another to the state of their society, either because of their own, selfish reasons, or because they see it as the only way to survive in the established system.

The Wire's agenda is not to offer a solution. Unfortunately, a city such as Baltimore cannot be saved by a lone hero, or even a group of them. I suppose it is futile to expect any society to be completely free of crime, corruption, and inequality, since people have and always will be selfish creatures, and some of them will go to great lengths in order to achieve their individual goals. But although such situations may never be completely resolved, some of their aspects can definitely be improved. The first step in improving any social system is to recognize how it functions as a whole and point out its flaws, and that is what *The Wire* does; it begins by focusing on the sphere of law enforcement and illegal drug trade, then moves on to the city's working class, the political scene, the school system, and finally the media. Bit by bit, we realize how these areas influence one another and keep the status quo. Police lieutenants, majors, and captains falsify their statistical reports in order to please their superior officers or the mayor, and are thus able to climb the career ladder more quickly; the inner city school administration demands that the teachers drill their pupils only to perform well on the standardized national tests, ignoring the role education is supposed to play in the lives of children who spend most of their days on the streets and have no true aspirations,
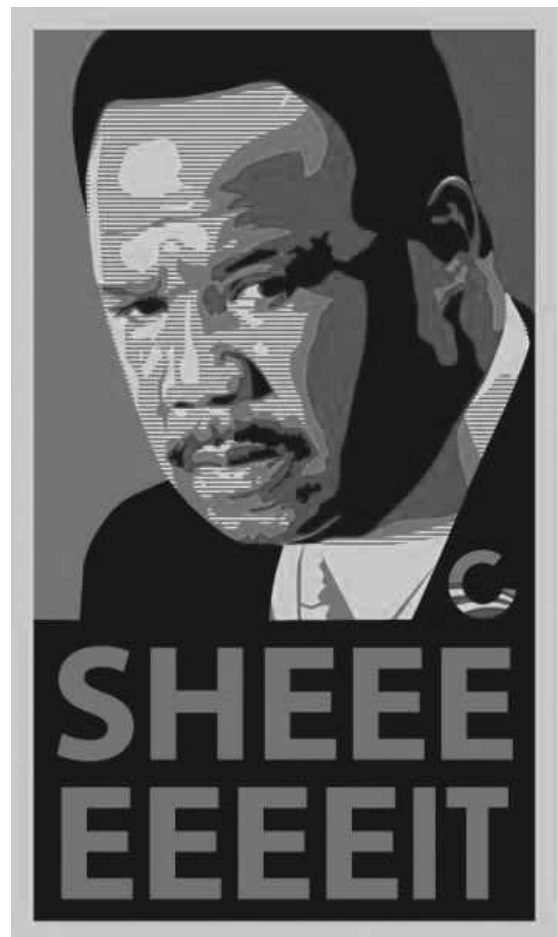
other than joining one of the gang groups. Once again, this is done in order to meet the expectations placed upon them by the people in politics; in journalism, reporters and their bosses give prominence to sensationalist and emotionally charged stories, even making some of them up as they go, so that they are able to keep their viewership up and perhaps win a Pulitzer or two in the process. On the other hand, the politicians rely on all of these areas to maintain a good image, which is what they need to climb their own ladders. In the end, sergeants become lieutenants, lieutenants become captains, and someone becomes the new chief of police, whereas mayors become governors, but nothing really changes. The remaining part of the population is either not aware of the way the system functions, or is, but feels that any attempt at changing it is futile. Hence, they do what they feel is needed to survive in the circumstances. Of course, many of them turn to drugs, because they think it will make their lives less miserable, or to crime, because they see it as more manageable than leading an "honest, working man's way of life".

Do not expect a predictable good-guy, bad-guy story. Expect to become actively involved as a viewer, and don't be surprised to find yourself rooting for characters that would normally be seen as "the bad guys". Expect to become furious as you see perfectly reasonable actions blocked by bureaucratic limitations or the fear of retribution from superiors; expect a momentary feeling of satisfaction as you see justice delivered to those deserving of it, then expect to be disappointed once again, as you realize that removing one character out of the equation hasn't improved, and has perhaps even worsened, the situation. There will always be someone to fill in that gap, and that someone will usually have been trained to be very much like their predecessor. No wonder so many of the police officers in *The Wire*, especially the more experienced ones, act as though they really don't give a damn about what they are doing – they must have realised a while ago that their actions do not really influence the big picture at all. But of course, expect to be entertained as well. Even though the series is somewhat of a mixture between a documentary and a TV drama that touches upon serious and often depressing topics, it maintains a light-hearted attitude and manages to incorporate a great deal of intelligent humour.

Although the series has always been praised by critics and viewers alike, it has never received as much attention as, for example, *The Sopranos* or *Breaking Bad*, both of which are very similar to it. I believe the main reason for this is the fact that *The Wire* starts out much more slowly than the other two. It's hard to become really engrossed in it until after you've watched at least a few, if not several episodes. Once that is done, you realize that the slow pace at the beginning was very much needed in order to present the circumstances to us as clearly as possible. Also, it very much mirrors the speed at which things are solved in reality. There are of course many crime shows in which the whole process of identifying and catching a criminal, and thus restoring everlasting peace and love, is presented to us over a period of less than an hour (most of the work actually being done in the last ten minutes), but in reality, criminal investigations take much, much longer than it may seem.

Anyhow, if you're not bothered by the fact that you'll probably never be able to watch another crime show without comparing it to *The Wire*, then give the series a try.

Intrigued? For more details, do not miss out on *The Wire*'s wery own Wikia page:

http://thewire.wikia.com/wiki/The_Wire_on_HBO

10 Cloverfield Lane: A Film Review

by Vid K

It came out of nowhere and it's considered by some (mostly those who've only read rumors about it online, like me before I saw it) as the so-so-not-really sequel to 2008's *Cloverfield: 10 Cloverfield Lane.*

Images: Paramount Pictures

It's a fairly recent thriller directed by Dan Trachtenberg, produced by JJ Abrams, and starring John Goodman, Mary Elizabeth Winstead and John Gallagher Jr.

The focus of the story is Michelle (Winstead), a young woman who is in a car crash and wakes up in a bunker built by John Goodman's Howard. The majority of the film's events are set in the bunker and that majority is actually quite fantastic.

The whole thing is told from Michelle's perspective and the storytelling effectively extends her feelings onto the viewer. That's done by way of clever little hints suggesting what is going on and some clever obvious-but-not-really foreshadowing.

What the film does extraordinarily well is keep the viewer guessing – it's nothing if not unpredictable. There were numerous scenes where I was 100% sure of the outcome only to be smacked in the face with a good old "Sike! You know nothing, Jon Snow!" (ah... tired joke). What stands out the most is how the film (on at least two occasions) builds up to revealing a terrifying piece of information then does a 180 putting you at ease regarding a certain plot point. It's all just a way of lulling you into a false sense of security just to throw another horrifying twist at you. Ah, lovely.

As much as I loved the hugely unpredictable aspect of it, though, the final twist was so stupid and out of nowhere that I felt as if delivering something unexpected at every turn went to the creative-powers-that-be's heads. I'm not saying what it is, but the last twist is so damned out of place it severely brings down an otherwise amazing thriller.

As I've mentioned, despite the arguably shit final twist, the majority of the film is really good. The storytelling is masterfully subtle about delivering information like, for example, the passage of time via the healing progress of Michelle's injured knee or Howard's wound. The film also employs the (much-loved-by-me) golden rule "show, don't tell" when delivering some information, while at the same time delivering other information the other way around, but in a way that doesn't treat the viewers as idiots.

John Goodman is freaking amazing in this film, portraying the disturbed, creepy and mysterious character that is Howard. There are constant teases and suggestions as to what exactly his intentions are, while the film feeds you information to the contrary. There were moments when I legitimately thought one thing, despite a number of times Michelle's suspicions suggested the other thing quite strongly, even backed by some evidence. Again, wonderfully unpredictable.

Mary Elizabeth Winstead is also great as Michelle, who could potentially be the next Sarah Connor or Ellen Ripley in terms of strong female characters if not for the really stupid twist at the end (getting a bit repetitive, I know). Winstead does a wonderful job nevertheless, delivering a relatable character easy to root for.

John Gallagher Jr. is mostly just there. Though I did feel for his character and I honestly cared about what happened to him, he provided what felt as a pretty standard job. A good standard job, though.

Now, about that final twist. I said plenty already, but it really is jarring how much it ruins the overall impression the film had on me. While it does offer a nice little "Wow, the crazy guy isn't that crazy after all moment," it feels completely out of place to a point that it felt it's actually

too unpredictable (never would've thought it was possible). I envy those who see no fault with the ending, but I do feel the need to shake my head in disappointment and disbelief at the sight of them.

All in all, this is still a good film. To address what some might be wondering since reading my intro: it's not really a sequel to *Cloverfield*, although I can see it being an alternate take on the initial pitch for the franchise or something. There are bits that seem to have a few things in common with the 2008 film, plus some Easter Eggs that sort of put this film in the same universe.

The stupid ending aside, it was wonderful watching Goodman do a creepy antagonist, and the story is masterfully presented. It leaves nothing unanswered and it feels very intelligent up until that.dreadful.final.twist.

The twist aside (some might actually like it) I recommend this film, no question. Give it a watch if you get the chance.

[If you like this review and would like to read more like it from the worlds of film, comic books and video games, check out my blog at criticvid.wordpress.com. Cheers!]

Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa : A Film Review

by Liza Stana

After being bought by a large media corporation, the Norwich-based radio station North Norfolk Digital is forced into downsizing its staff. The radio host, whose show has the lowest ratings, Pat Farrell (played by Colm Meaney) is the one made redundant. Enraged, Pat takes vengeance on his former colleagues and employers. The only one with whom Pat is willing to negotiate is Alan Partridge (Steve Coogan's long-time alter ego), the sarcastic and politically incorrect host of *Mid-Morning Matters*. He becomes a mediator between Pat and the police so as to prevent an escalation of violence. Alan, however, owes an explanation to Pat, since he plays a role in his dismissal.
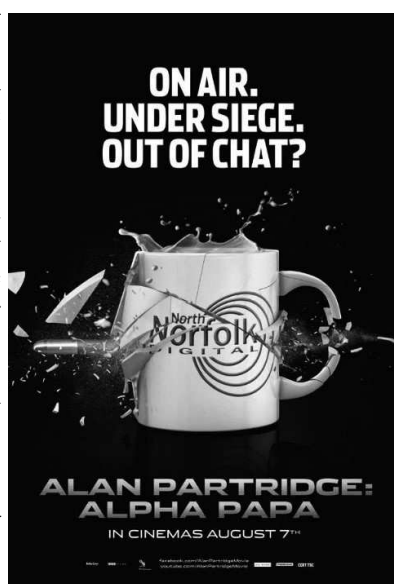
Alan Partridge is a confident and somewhat pretentious host, who, along with his co-workers, does not shy away from slightly contentious remarks. Albeit with uneasy conscience, he casually makes fun of Pat, comparing his role in Pat's dismissal to "an assisted suicide". He also jokingly alludes to Pat's nationality several times throughout the film, comparing Pat's shouting to the "honking" of "a mad Irish goose". He undoubtedly has "a way with words". In an attempt to impress his crush Angela, who is complaining about moths, Alan quickly makes a clever allusion to Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", changing the lines to, "I wandered lonely as a moth / to eat some jumpers in a drawer."

Alan's pretentiousness, however, nearly alienates his colleagues, such as his assistant Lynn Benfield. After becoming a mediator, Alan finds himself in the public spotlight and hopes that his position with the police will help him in taking over the morning show. While daydreaming about the skyrocketing fame that this show would earn him, he chooses a nickname he would use there: "Morning Rooster" or "Talking Cock". Lynn tells him to stop taking advantage of a dangerous situation only to be sarcastically dismissed by Alan.

Alan's composure and inventiveness in dangerous situations produce a few memorable scenes. Alan and his colleagues have to record a jingle for Pat in one hour *or else*. To appease his colleagues and to prove it is possible to achieve anything in such a short time, a deadly calm Alan erupts into babble about once making a rendition of Bryan Adams's "Summer of '69". He turned it into the "Summer of '29", with the lyrics reflecting the Wall Street Crash of 1929. His colleagues initially annoyed, they manage to get the work done. Alan's casualness amidst tense situations is displayed in another scene when Alan walks out of the radio station to negotiate with the police. He is "in both senses" (with a rope and via headset) tethered to Pat, who is inside the building. Alan talks to the police in a relaxed manner, demanding they drop their weapons; the police oblige. Communicating with Pat, Alan transmits Pat's message to the police, which is a simple "Hi", while the police return the same greeting.

The film kept me in suspense, while making me laugh throughout. In addition to the aforementioned, it contains quite a few highly amusing scenes. One of the examples is an exchange between the two policewomen, who in a matter-of-fact voice read a transcript of the conversation between Alan and Pat, making references to what is probably the show *Banged Up Abroad*. These references run about a page and a half long. On another occasion, a policeman is reproached with having found the wrong image of Pat Farrell. He defends himself claiming that he found it on Google Images. Last but not least, Alan's naked behind is featured on TV as a breaking news item.

Interspersed with genuinely funny exchanges and plenty of action, the black comedy, directed by Declan Lowney, is the one to watch. Having particularly enjoyed the witty dialogues with a myriad of puns ("Yesterday's meat at today's prices") and the references to the popular songs, such as Sting's "Roxanne", I am already looking forward to the sequel.

Tricky Tech

Web Development: A Dummy's Guide for Dummies

by Jan Hacin

Perhaps I'm just feeling a bit nostalgic at the moment, but when I was in the final years of primary school, our attitude towards the web was much different than it is today. To me, it was a thing of wonder, and since I was at the age when my curiosity levels were at their peak, I wanted to know how it works. Of course, the place I started with was the web browser, and the pages on it. The idea of being able to put pretty much anything I wanted up there on the web seemed incredible to me, which is why I started learning how to make my own websites. This was my first encounter with programming of any sort; basically, what I did was go to websites whose design appealed to me, and looked at their source code. Not much of it made sense to me, but then I copied the code somewhere else and started changing it, line after line, to see whether anything would happen, like a kid taking apart a toy – and it did. Bit by bit, things were becoming clearer. After some time, I realized it might be a good idea to check up on some tutorials, and I did manage to find some that helped me learn things in a more organized manner, although web resources at the time – let's just say it was many, many years ago – were much more scarce and not as newbie-friendly as they are now. Anyway, this article is not trying to become my life story, so let's just say that I managed to create a few of my own websites. They were decent-looking, I suppose, although the content was somewhat silly. Nevertheless, I remember feeling very proud about creating something on my own, building it from scratch, block by block, and being able to see my own progress. However, it seems that I lost my interest for web development over the course of the next few years. Other things seem to have taken my interest.

Back to the present: a couple of months ago I started dabbling in programming—more specifically web development—once again. For now, I see it as my side-activity, but I feel enthusiastic enough about it that I do not exclude the possibility of it becoming my main one someday. Programming is something that nearly everyone could benefit from learning, since it's intertwined with almost every aspect of modern society. Besides that, learning how to write and understand code helps you develop an organized, logical way of thinking. It makes you adjust your mindset when you encounter a complex problem, one that is out of your comfort zone; instead of retreating, you learn to take the problem, pick it apart, plan the steps you're going to take, find a solution for each part, then put the parts back together. This way, it all becomes much more manageable. In the final part of the article, just to show you what I'm talking about, I've included an example of a programming problem I encountered recently, and the approach I took to solving it. Understanding it does not require any specific knowledge, just the ability to recognize logical connections.

This very long introduction is nearing its end. As I am but a young grasshopper coder myself, I realize that I am light years away from knowing everything about web development, if such a thing is even humanly possible, but I'll try my best to tell you as much as I can about what I've learned over the past couple of months. I'll begin with an overview of the three core web development languages, then move on to some of the questions I think are most frequently asked by new people entering the field, and conclude with the example of "programming logic" I've mentioned — a "How To" on building a browser-based game of Tic Tac Toe.

So, where should I start?

Whether you'd like to become a web developer or some other type of programmer, your first questions will probably be something along the lines of:

- What language should I learn first?

- Which one is the best/most powerful?

- What if I don't like a language or realize that I'm better suited for some other type of programming?

- Is it still worth it to learn X, or is there a more modern, better developed language that will eventually take over?

- Which type of programming would suit me best?

These types of questions are common. It's what happens when you're offered too many options at once – a very "first-world" problem, as you can see. But the good thing about programming languages is that they share many similarities. They might have varying syntax and capabilities, but they are all built on the same kind of logic. This means that if you manage to learn one of them, learning any other becomes much easier. Of course, some are more suitable for beginners than others, in that their basics are easier to pick up, but none of them is easy to master.

The three "core technologies" of modern web development are claimed to be HTML, CSS, and JavaScript:

HTML

Strictly speaking, HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) is not a programming language. It's a **markup language**, meaning it's used to add content to and describe the structure of static (as opposed to dynamic) websites, but it does not include any logical constructs. If you ever want to jump into website development, HTML is definite-

ly the place to start. It's used as the structural backbone of every website. However, if you want your websites to be more than just a couple of paragraphs of text with some very basic styling, you will want to learn some other language in addition. HTML will not teach you any sort of programming logic, but it's still a very friendly introduction into the world of programming (one that you should not be fooled by).

```
<html>

<head>
    <title>My First Web Page</title>
</head>

<body>
    <h1>My First Web Page</h1>
    <p><b>Hello World Wide Web!</b></p>
    <p><i>Hello World Wide Web!</i></p>
    <p><u>Hello World Wide Web!</u></p>
    <p>This is my first web page.</p>
    <p>HTML tags can give <b><i>various</i></b>
    <u>looks and format</u> to the content of this web page.</p>
</body>

</html>
```

Image: datemplate.com

As for where to learn it: Googling "learn HTML" nowadays will provide you with countless options. What has become especially popular in recent years, not just with HTML, are online courses that guide you step-by-step throughout the basics of a language, and provide exercises along the way. Most of them promise to be the "best and quickest" way towards mastering a certain language, so you might find it difficult to pick one out. To be honest, it does not matter that much which one you pick. Most of these courses will introduce you to a language and its syntax, provide you with some basic exercises so that you can get used to the language, but beyond that you will have to find your own way. My advice is to use it in practice – after you've grasped the basics, you should start working on a project. If necessary, simply make something up – it does not really matter what you're working on, and no one needs to know about it (for now!); what matters is that you set a goal for yourself, one that will motivate you to keep on learning. You will understand and remember various concepts much more easily if you use them in practice. And, just to be clear, what I've said here applies to learning any programming language.

To refresh my knowledge of HTML, I went through the course on **codecademy.com**. It's a fun little interactive course, aimed at complete beginners, so I can definitely recommend it as a starting point. I can also recommend the "XHTML and CSS" video series at **thenewboston.com**. For a more to-the-point approach to learning, look up **w3schools.com**.

CSS

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) is also not a "true" programming language. It's a style sheet language that we use to describe the appearance of different website elements. In other words, it's the language that people use to make their websites look good. You will want to learn it along HTML. As for learning it, you can use the same resources as the ones for HTML.

```css
1  /* GENERAL STYLES
2   *-------------------------------*/
3  html, body, form, fieldset, img, img a {
4      margin: 0;
5      padding: 0;
6      border: 0;
7  }
8  body {
9      color: #414141;
10     background: url(../images/bg.jpg) repeat-x #ebe8df;
11     font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
12     line-height: 120%;
13     font-size: 12px;
14 }
15
16 a:link, a:visited {
17     color: #685966;
18     text-decoration: underline;
19 }
20 a:hover {
21     color: #2b212c;
22 }
23 .article_separator {
24     line-height: 5px;
25     height: 5px;
26     font-size: 5px;
27 }
28 /* SITE WIDTH
29  *-------------------------------*/
30 .rht_container {
```

Image: Wikimedia Commons

JavaScript

Since it is embedded in most modern web browsers, JavaScript is the most widely used programming language at the moment. It's used to make interactive websites and web applications, and if that is what you're interested in, look no further, because you don't really have a choice. It's the language I've been learning recently, and the one I used to create the Tic Tac Toe game.

Even though the web offers about a gazillion resources on it, some people still prefer good old books, and there's nothing wrong with that. If you'd like to give one a shot, I can recommend *Eloquent JavaScript* by Marijn Haverbeke, *You Don't Know JS* by Kyle Simpson and *JavaScript: The Good Parts* by Douglas Crockford. Be warned, though: books on programming might provide the most rounded, comprehensive approach, but you will also need to practice alongside them. Doing nothing but reading will bore you out eventually, and you will find it much more difficult to remember what you've learned. From my experience, starting with an interactive course is better for a complete beginner.

If you choose to go with interactive online courses, it does

```javascript
<script>
    function processClick() {
        var response = confirm("What do you say?");
        if ( response == true ) {
            console.log('Okay was clicked');
        } else {
            console.log('Cancel was clicked');
        }
    }
</script>
</head>
<body>
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.
cursus venenatis porta. Sed molestie imperdiet consequat.
porttitor, tellus id cursus rutrum, sapien enim tincidunt
fermentum pellentesque lorem arcu elementum nibh. Ut ultric
pretium lacinia. Donec facilisis suscipit erat, id cursus
<button onClick="processClick();">Click me</button> bibendu
neque. Sed aliquet fermentum nulla, id malesuada eros fauc:
sed. Mauris nibh elit, ultrices faucibus luctus non, vehicu
```

Image: learnwebtutorials.com

not really matter which one you pick. **Codecademy**, **Code School**, **Udacity**, **Udemy**, and many others provide free courses aimed at beginners. You can try them out and see if any of them works for you. Also, I can once again recommend **thenewboston.com**, as it provides free video tutorials on pretty much every modern-day programming language, at a pace that's very easy to follow. At this stage of the learning process, you'll want to grasp the basics and complete as many exercises as possible, so that you can get used to the syntax and the purposes of each part of the language.

After that, move on to something a bit more challenging. You can start working on your own projects already, but before you do that, consider taking a look at **FreeCodeCamp.com**. I believe it is very good for transitioning from introductory courses into the reality of the programming world. You will be able to refresh your knowledge of HTML, CSS, and basic JavaScript, but you will also be given small projects to complete, with which you will no longer be guided by the hand. The first time you see many of these projects you might think something along the lines of "What do I do now?" You'll be thrown into the wild and you'll have to figure out what to do on your own, without someone providing you with a specific set of sub-tasks arranged in a logical order. Programming often functions that way in practice. However, Googling can make your life bearable, and once you complete these projects, you will feel a sense of accomplishment that the introductory exercises could never have provided.

I am currently working on my very last project before I am able to claim my front-end development certificate at FreeCodeCamp, so I am not able to provide much more information as to what the best approach is from here on, but from what other people (with much more experience) have told me and others, the best way to improve yourself is simply to find projects you can work on. This keeps you motivated, it provides the very much needed practice, and it allows you to have something you can show to other people later on, in case you want to pursue a career in the field.

Are these three language all I need to become a web developer?

They are enough to get you started. Once you're comfortable with them, you might want to take a look at learning a query (database) language such as **mySQL**, and a server-side language that can interact with databases, such as **PHP**. Using these two, for example, in combination with the aforementioned ones, will allow you to create and manage much more complex and much more dynamic websites. It will allow you to retrieve and store user information, and make changes across multiple pages with ease.

F.A.Q.

Do I need a computer science (or related) degree to be able to work in the field?

Not at all. In a recent survey on one of the websites most frequently visited by programmers (Stack Overflow), nearly 70% of the respondents claimed that they were self-taught. What many employers value just as much, or even more than educated people are self-driven, passionate people who have something to show in terms of the projects they've worked on – and finished. If you have a degree in an unrelated field it can only be a plus, since it shows that you've managed to complete something in your life, and, besides, having knowledge from an unrelated field might come in handy someday.

Do I need to be good at mathematics to be a good programmer?

In most cases, no. Programming has more to do with logic than mathematics. It certainly helps if you were born with the "mathematic mindset", but you can easily manage without it as well. It also depends on the type of programming; web development, for the most part, does not include any too-advanced mathematics. On the other hand, if you were interested in developing 3D graphics engines, then your knowledge of mathematics (and physics) would be a basic necessity.

Is it ever too late to start learning programming from scratch?

Of course not. Especially since the resources available right now are so many. It only takes about a year or two of learning (on average) to become a decent programmer. With web development, it might take even a shorter amount of time. There are examples of people who've managed to secure a job after less than a year of learning from zero. Besides, the trends in programming are constantly changing; whether you're a complete newbie or someone who has been in the field for a while, you shouldn't avoid learning new things every day, unless you want to be left behind. If you're interested in programming, you have to know that it's something you will never stop learning. In addition, it helps if you come to terms with the fact that it's impossible to know everything about programming. Even those who have been in the field for decades tend to experience the feeling that they don't really know that much about code.

How do I know if programming suits me?

If you really don't like dealing with logical problems, or don't imagine spending your entire life learning new concepts and keeping up with new technologies, or if you prefer easy-going, relaxed work to work in which you have to challenge yourself on a regular basis, then it may not be for you, from what I've heard. It doesn't hurt to give it a try, though. Start with the online beginner courses. If you're not enjoying them after a few hours, then that's fine. But you might be surprised at how engaging it can get.

Programming can be quite frustrating – at the time of writing this article, I've just finished a project after having spent an entire afternoon debugging a malfunctioning piece of code. In the end, it turned out to be a silly typo. I still feel like a complete idiot, but at the same time it feels great to overcome such a frustrating problem.

First, solve the problem. Then, write the code.

Recently, I was assigned with the task to create a web page on which a user could play a classic game of Tic Tac Toe against an AI (the computer). The rules of the game

are known to us all, and it wouldn't be that hard to write up code for two human players. The problems, however, emerge when we try to define how the AI will function:

- How will it know when its turn is?

- How will it figure out what the best move in a specific situation is?

- How will it try to prevent the player from winning?

And so on. The average beginner can easily become overwhelmed if they simply jump into coding. Before they do that, they need to take a step back and think about how they will divide this problem into segments, then arrange the various pieces of code into a logical sequence. Although the appearance of code (its syntax) might seem to be the hard part of programming to a beginner, it's usually the logic behind it that causes trouble.

The first step will of course be to create the basic appearance of the page. In this case, all we need is a 3x3 set of clickable blocks.

The second step will be to define the various functions that the program will use. In programming, a function is a named section of a program that performs a specific task. Whenever the program calls ("activates") it, the function does the task it was assigned with. I will now list the names of the functions I used and the tasks they perform:

- **getLetter** makes the player choose between X and O. Based on their choice, the other letter is assigned to the computer.

- **whoGoesFirst** randomly chooses who goes first.

- **makeMove** takes the player or the computer's move and alters the state of the playing board. It also disables the areas that have already been taken, so that the user cannot "cheat".

- **isWinner** checks if the current state of the board means that someone has won. It either returns "true" or "false".

- **isSpaceFree** is used by the computer when it needs to figure out which moves are possible.

- **makeRandomMove** is used by the computer to make a random move among the possible ones.

- **computerMove** is the first function the computer uses on its turn. This function does a few things:

  - It checks whether the computer can win on this turn. If it can, the computer does this move and stops executing the function,

  - if not, it checks whether the player can win on their next turn, and if they can, the computer blocks them,

  - Otherwise, the computer randomly takes one of the remaining fields on the board by invoking the *makeRandomMove* function.

- **isBoardFull** checks whether the board is full, meaning there's a tie.

- **resetGame** resets the board.

We will also define a variable called **gameIsActive**, which is pretty self-explanatory. It will hold the value of either "true" or "false" – it will be used to prevent the computer from trying to make any further moves once the game has finished.

Now, we have to make the program run in a logical order:

1. We ask the player to choose their letter by invoking the *getLetter* function. Based on their choice, we assign the other letter to the computer.

2. We make the program decide who goes first by invoking the *whoGoesFirst* function.

3. We set the *gameIsActive* variable to "true".

The execution of step 4 is based on whose turn it is. The first execution depends on step 2.

On the player's turn:

4. 1. 1. The player clicks a certain block (button).

4. 1. 2. The program registers the player's move.

4. 1. 3. Check if the player has won (*isWinner* function).

4. 1. 4. Check if there is a tie (*isBoardFull* function).

4. 1. 5. If this step is reached, begin the computer's turn (go to step 4. 2. 1.).

On the computer's turn:

4. 2. 1. Confirm that the *gameIsActive* varible equals "true".

4. 2. 2. Get the computer's move with the *computerMove* function.

4. 2. 3. Check if the computer has won (*isWinner* function).

4. 2. 4. Check if there is a tie (*isBoardFull* function).

4. 2. 5. If this step is reached, end the computer's turn (allow the player to begin step 4. 1. 1.)

Step 4 repeats itself until the game is over. If we want, we can include a fifth step into our program:

5. Ask the player if they want to play again. If they do, empty the board and repeat step 1.

It's much easier to deal with multiple little bits of a problem one after another, rather than deal with an entire problem at once. I've tried to capture the gist of the actual code I used, to show you the type of logic that you might meet if you ever embark on the same journey as I have.

This article has tried to explain some of the basics of web development to beginners from the perspective of someone who's still a beginner himself. If I have managed to convince someone to at least give programming a shot, well, knowing that would make my day. I may write another article of this sort in the next year's issue of ENgLIST, either on some other type of programming language, or some more advanced aspect of web development. But, for now, I have to stop writing. If you have any questions on the subject, you can always contact me via Facebook and I'll be happy to respond.

In Memoriam

It was a day in March just like any other, yet not completely the same. It was the day that changed all days to come; the day we learned of Professor Uroš Mozetič's untimely passing. As students of English, we were in awe of his vast knowledge, passion, and that iconic voice, which transformed literature from text to otherworldly experience. Words can hardly express how grateful we are for everything Professor Mozetič has given us; yet our shared love of words is precisely what brought us together. For this reason, we have invited students to pay their respects and received the two wonderful contributions you can read below.

Yes, Professor Uroš Mozetič may never again walk the halls of our faculty, but he will forever remain alive in the hearts and minds of all of us who had the privilege of sharing those very halls with him.

In Memoriam

by Nadja Jukič

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark.
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Now Earth receives another honoured guest
The one who proved poetry can never die:
(Because Auden says)
The words of a dead man are modified
In the guts of the living
And carried on by mourning tongues.

Photo: Filozofska Falulteta UL (Facebook stran)

"Mom, I think the Professor of English Poetry is Awesome!"

by Liza Stana

Still sulking over the fact that my illness back in April prevented me from paying my respects to our Professor Uroš Mozetič, I pay tribute to him in this article.

The devastating news of the Professor's passing reached me two days after the MA students of English, of whom I was one, had been presented with their BA degrees. I was thinking of the Professor at the ceremony, remembering all the Mondays and Wednesdays I was always eagerly looking forward to. Mondays and Wednesdays will definitely never be the same for me.

It was the late Monday night of October 2012. My mother called and asked how I'd found my first Monday at the Faculty of Arts. All I could do was shriek with joy: "Mom, I think the Professor of English Poetry is awesome!" The Professor read us a poem "When You Are Old" by William Butler Yeats and I clearly remember being mesmerized by his wonderful diction. In the years to follow, my comment from the phone chat proved to have been correct in more ways than one.

At the BA level, I took six classes with Professor Mozetič in the span of three years. What characterized his lectures was his zest for literature, engaging lecturing, and witticisms. In his seminars, he always encouraged us to take a stance on literary works. When faced with the frequent unresponsiveness of the first year students, he always tried to soothe our fears by saying that literature allowed more than one interpretation if we provided some arguments to back up our claims.

One couldn't help but chuckle at his occasional well-meaning criticism. The Professor once noticed the class didn't know the meaning of one particular word from a poem. Telling us off for not using our dictionaries, he said that, as a student, he had more than 10 dictionaries in a very poor condition with the covers loose and scribbles all over the place. This stands in contrast to today's students who want to sell their dictionaries in mint condition by the end of their studies. Dear Professor, I could clearly tell you ruined your many dictionaries with all the usage because you were able to express yourself in such a way that would probably make film and stage actors jealous.

Professor Mozetič liked to spice up his lectures with entertaining bits of trivia and humour. He, for example, quoted Oscar Wilde's famous jab at Alexander Pope: "There are two ways of disliking poetry; one way is to dislike it, the other is to read Pope."

When preparing for an exam in New English Literature, one had to learn a huge amount of data. While I was trying to memorize the long list of the authors and their works along with all the themes, symbolism and whatnot, I noticed that I had written down one of the Professor's many puns under the name of the 17th-century playwright. Below are the two lines exactly as they appear in my notes:

George Farquhar (1677– 29 April 1707) / ˈfɑːkwə/

Professor M: "Someone who cooks from a distance."

I was blown away by his ability to find a literary allusion for every occasion in a split second. When he once tried to move a projector, the wheels made a screeching sound, making the Professor quote T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men": "This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper" (97–98). On a not-so-related note, Professor Mozetič brought to my attention Eliot's brilliant collection *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, a must-have for crazy cat ladies and crazy cat gentlemen alike.

I remember how we all laughed in the American poetry class when listening to Billy Collins's hilarious poem "The Lanyard", which is about a son who wants to thank his mother for all the love and care she gave him by presenting her with a "[...]useless, worthless thing [he] wove out of boredom" (41). I think no one laughed more than Professor Mozetič. It was a moment of pure joy. Our eyes met several times and I could tell how much he enjoyed that moment.

My text is slowly drawing to a close, but still I want to share with you two very lovely anecdotes. In May 2013, as Professor Mozetič and I were coming out of Room 308 after his office hours, he asked me how I was doing at other subjects. As there were so many rumors circulating about the English Verb and English Morphology, I told him I was a bit worried about the exams. The Professor kindly answered: "Don't pay any attention to that, you'll pass everything because you work hard." His words sprang to mind before every single exam in all three years.

There was another lovely moment I have frequently shared with my friends in the last two months both via the social media and in person. During my presentation in American poetry class, I asked the Professor to read one of the poems I had selected. He was happy to do it, but wanted to know why. Joyfully shrieking once again, I let it slip that "I've been waiting the entire academic year to give [him] this opportunity."

Well, I suppose I should be going back to reading the text for Monday's literature class with my dictionary at the ready.

Works Cited

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Eliot, T.S. "The Hollow Men." *All Poetry*. Social Design, Inc, n.d. Web. 5 May 2016.

And Now for Something Completely Different ...
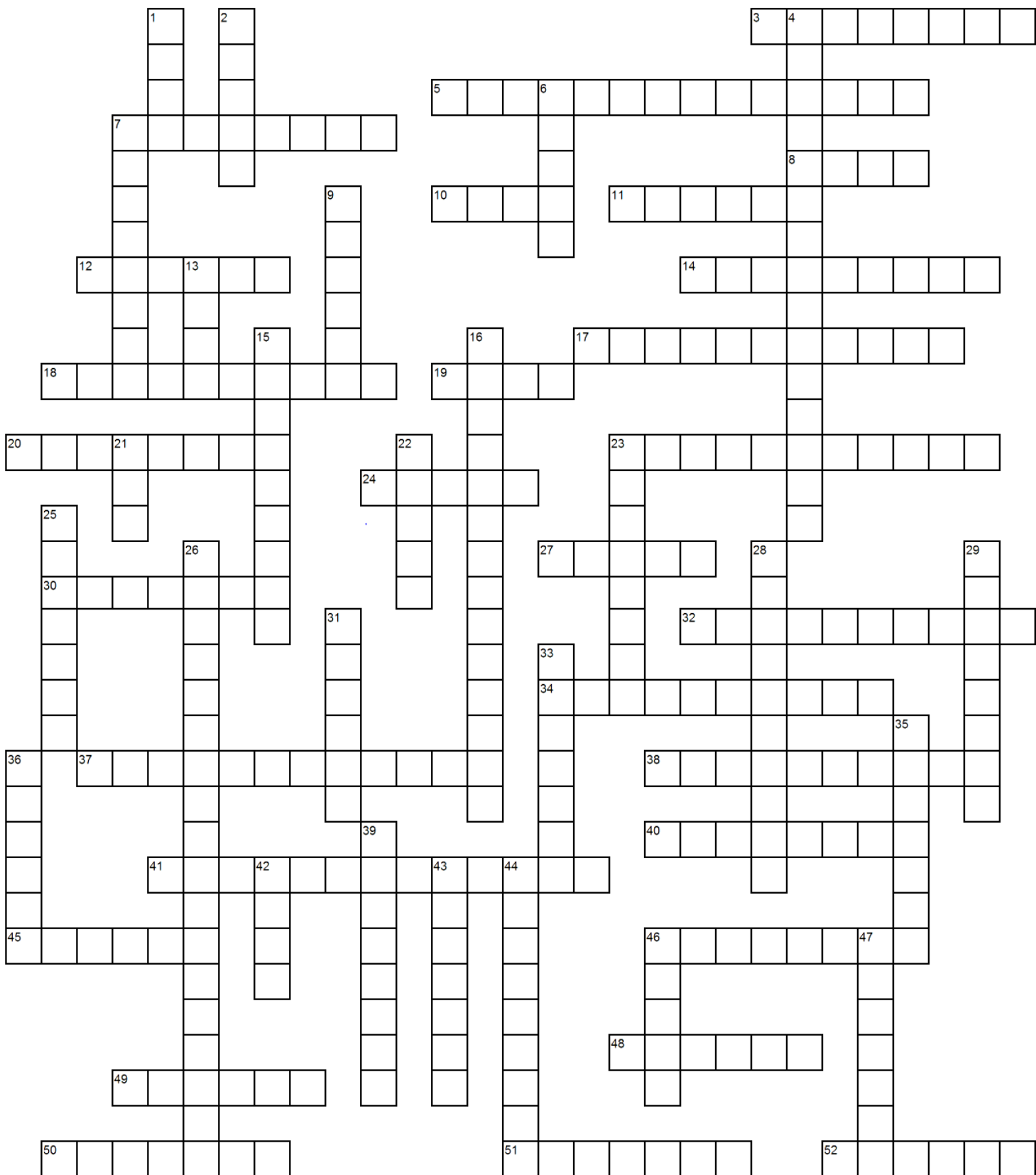
Precocious Puzzle

by Jure Velikonja

DOWN

1 In *Matilda*, this is what Matilda's friend, Lavender, puts in Miss Trunchbull's jug of water

2 In *The Tempest*, this is where Prospero is originally from

4 Elizabeth II: "*1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure. In the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents, it has turned out to be an __?__.*" (2 words)

6 He played Commander Spock in the original *Star Trek* (Leonard)

7 Jean Rhys novel, prequel to *Jane Eyre*: *Wide __?__ Sea*

9 Shakespeare's children were Susanna & twins Judith and __?__

13 Shakespeare is known as the __?__ of Avon

15 A fictional H. G. Wells appears in this famous BBC science-fiction series (2 words)

16 Village where Roald Dahl spent most of his life and died (2 words)

21 Children's book by Roald Dahl, adapted into film by Steven Spielberg in 2016 (*The __?__*)

22 Sonnet 138: "*When my love swears she is made of __?__*"

23 Younger sister of Queen Elizabeth II

25 The title of A. Huxley's novel *Brave New World* comes from this Shakespeare's play

26 Queen Elizabeth II's preferred dog breed (3 words)

28 Charlotte Brontë published *Jane Eyre* under the pen name... (2 words)

29 In *The Time Machine*, the light-fearing, cave-dwelling creatures

31 Roald Dahl's parents were originally from...

33 Pioneer of the blank verse in Elizabethan drama & Shakespeare's contemporary (last name)

35 In Act 3, Hamlet tells Ophelia to go there

36 H.G. Wells: *The Island of Doctor __?__*

39 Charlotte Brontë studied at a boarding school in this European city

42 The youngest Brontë sister

43 H. G. Wells' first name

44 Shakespeare's birthplace: __?__-upon-Avon

46 King __?__ I was Shakespeare's patron

47 Charlotte Brontë's second novel (published 1849)

ACROSS

3 Shakespeare's wife (Anne)

5 Director & star of several film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, also portrayed Gilderoy Lockhart in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2 words)

7 The *__?__ came early in February, one wintry day, through a biting wind and a driving snow, the last snowfall of the year, over the down, walking from Bramblehurst railway station, and carrying a little black portmanteau in his thickly gloved hand.* (H. G. Wells: *The Invisible Man*)

8 The actor who portrayed Spock in *Star Trek* based the Vulcan salute on this Hebrew letter

10 This person utters the following lines from *Othello*: "*But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at: I am not what I am.*"

11 Queen Elizabeth II is fluent in English and this European language

12 This animal is the protagonist of several well-known Beatrix Potter's works

14 Beatrix Potter was interested in all branches of natural science except for...

17 This person portrayed both Queen Elizabeth II in the 2006 film *The Queen* and Prospera in the 2010 film adaptation of *The Tempest*

18 Mayor of London at the time of the Great fire (Sir Thomas)

19 Famous British architect, designed the Monument to the Great Fire of London (Sir Cristopher)

20 Apparently Queen Elizabeth II and her mother's favourite cocktail: gin and __?__

23 Shylock's occupation in *The Merchant of Venice*

24 "*Et tu, __?__.*"

27 King Lear's second daughter

30 The line "*Fair is foul, and foul is fair, hover through fog and filthy air*" appears in this Shakespeare's play

32 The term for (excessive) worship of Shakespeare, coined by George Bernard Shaw

34 In *Jane Eyre*, the middle name of the "madwoman in the attic"

37 This controversial car-melting building (constructed in 2015) lies in proximity of the Monument in London (2 words)

38 "*Don't __?__ around with words.*" (*The BFG*)

40 "*Double, double, toil and trouble; / fire burn, and __?__ bubble!*"

41 Shakespeare's poem "Venus and Adonis" is based on passages from this work by Ovid

45 British astronomer William Herschel named two moons of this planet after the two fairy protagonists of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

46 The "*green-ey'd monster*" (*Othello*)

48 "*Two households, both alike in dignity / In fair __?__, where we lay our scene, / From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, / Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.*"

49 "*Alas poor __?__! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy*"

50 Street where the Great Fire of London started (__?__ Lane)

51 Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her __?__ Jubilee in 2012

52 This illness causes the death of Jane Eyre's parents

by Vid Koritnik