Inspire & Amaze

January 2016



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Film reviews , exhibitions

50 Years of British and American Studies in Prešov

Conference, Memories of Presov I, interviews

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Dear readers,

It gives me great pleasure to have to opportunity to announce another issue of our institute's journal Inspire and Amaze. As it was in the previous issues, our team comes with a lot of interesting information about life and events taking place on our Institute of British and American Studies and beyond. Moreover, this issue introduces creative works of our students and colleagues, all worthy of your attention. With a bit of nostalgia, we return to an extraordinary event, the international conference Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic World III, bring interviews with some of our keynote speakers as well as personal letters from the lecturers who have enriched our Institute personally and professionally.

So enjoy the reading.



Janka Ščigulinská,
editor of Inspire & Amaze

Inštitút anglistiky a amerikanistiky



50 Years of British and American Studies in Prešov

Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic World III

Six years ago, in 2009, the Institute of British and American Studies organized its first conference titled *Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic World* that was supposed to be the beginning of a new tradition. September 10th – 12th, 2015 marked the third installment of our conference; however, this year was somewhat special. It was so because our annual conference was carried out in the spirit of the 50th anniversary of founding academic English in Prešov, which has given the event a ceremonious and nostalgic edge.



During these three days, colleagues from other Slovak universities, as well as various esteemed guests from Australia, Switzerland, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland, Albany and Czech Republic were warmly welcomed. On Thursday, September 10th, 2015, after the opening concert performed by the faculty's Department of Music, the conference was opened by the Rector of Prešov University, prof. Peter Kónya who was followed by the opening speeches of the director of the Institute of British and American Studies, doc. Milan Ferenčík, and the Vice-dean for Development and International Relations, doc. Zuzana Straková.

The Plenary sessions were conducted in accordance with the central theme of the conference – language, literature and culture – by prof. Dr. Miriam Locher from the University of Basel (Switzerland), an authority on interpersonal pragmatics; prof. Daniel Z. Kádár from the University of Huddersfield (Great Britain), an authority on pragmalinguistics and politeness theory; prof. Anne Brewster from the University of New South Wales, specializing in Australian Aboriginal literature. Prof. László Komlósi from Széchenyi István University (Hungary) focused on the interconnection among language, literature and culture. The individual presented papers, on the other hand, were delivered on various topics such as pragmalinguistic politeness, lexicology and syntax of English language, the problem of society as reflected in literature, postmodernism, and other aspects of culture. Our PhD. candidates had the opportunity to learn more about Australian literature and culture during the course of the seminar lead by prof. Brewster.



As the Institute of British and American Studies also wanted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of academic English in Prešov with its graduate students working in the field of English teaching at various elementary schools and high schools, a special conference for teachers of English was organized. Nearly 100 teachers came to listen to the plenary

speaker – Peter Prichard (Great Britain) – about the importance of proper motivation for students. Within the scope of this section of the conference, three separate workshops offered were focused on specific problems encountered by English teachers in their practice – teaching students with special needs, the application of the CLIL method, and the specifics of English teaching in primary education. In addition, in cooperation with Oxford University Press, a lecture on an effective way of teaching vocabulary was also prepared.



The reception which took place towards the end of the conference had a celebratory and commemorative spirit, but also one of memories because looking back over the 50 years of academic English in Prešov was an integral part of the reception. We have had the privilege of welcoming not only the conference participants but many former colleagues of ours who have laid the foundation for our Institute, and some of whom were honored by the management of the Faculty of Arts. The highest honor was bestowed to prof. Ľudmila Urbanová (Jan Bayer prize) and prof. Josef Grmela (Faculty of Arts medal).

The third installment of our Institute's conference offered a professional as well as sociable forum for experts in their respective fields. It has brought a dignified end to the commemoration of academic English at Prešov University, and it has also proven, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the Institute of British and American Studies at Prešov University belongs among the nationally and internationally accepted academic departments of its kind.

doc. PaedDr. Alena Kačmárová, PhD.

doc. Zuzana Straková, PhD.

Translated from Slovak by: Mgr. Maroš Buday

Interviews with the plenary speakers of *Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic World III*

In this issue of IAA we would like to present to you the plenary speakers who participated at the third instalment of our institute's conference, entitled *Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic World*. Throughout the whole interview, you will not only learn a lot about their current field of study and research but you will also be given some valuable advice.



Prof. László Imre Komlósi
Széchenyi István University in Győr, Hungary

Prof. L. I. Komlósi's teaching experience embraces the fields of linguistics, pragmatics, philosophy, semiotic studies, and cognitive studies. His research interests fall within linguistics, philosophy, psycholinguistics, and semiotics.

IAA: **When did you realize that you wanted to be an academic in the field of linguistics? Have you ever considered any other field?**

LK: My parents of four children were pretty internationally oriented: German, French, American friends kept visiting us in our family house in Hungary, already in the early 60's and later, which was brave on my parents' side as it was unusual and even dangerous to invite foreign guests to one's house in those days.

My parents insisted that we – children – should not speak Hungarian among ourselves in front of foreign visitors. We ought to try to express ourselves in a language they understand.

Russian was compulsory in our school system and everybody hated having to learn it. My father had a friend, a famous American professor from Cornell University who was of Russian extraction. He persuaded me that Russian was a very rich language and I should not look at the public rejection of the Russian language only.

Thus, after secondary school, I chose languages and linguistics as my majors at Szeged University: English, Russian and General Linguistics. I took Finnish and Norwegian, to some extent, on the side as well.

After graduation I stared my job at the University of Pécs as a TA and kept working on my doctoral dissertation in theoretical linguistics. (Formal philosophy and Montague Grammar). After defending my dissertation at the University of Szeged, I was on the tracks of Linguistics, a point of no return. Later, my "Doktorvater" was Ferenc Kiefer at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

After that I was granted a Humboldt Fellowship in Philosophy of Language with professor Kuno Lorenz at the University of Saarland in Saarbrücken.

At some point I was "dreaming" of becoming an architect. That interest has never ceased in me: I love architecture, whether ancient or avantgard.

At the age of 23, my fiancée asked me what I wanted to be in my professional career (I was a student and she was a TA in linguistics.) My answer was: "I want to be a professor in Lingusitics". At the age of 47 a was appointed full professor of Linguistcs. (My former fiancée, my later (and present) wife is also a professor of Linguistics.)

IAA: **Apart from linguistics, there are also other fields of interest when it comes to your focus as a researcher, such as philosophy, psycholinguistics and semiotics. Within such a vast range of interest, is there any particular issue that you are currently trying to investigate?**

LK: Indeed, this is the greatest reward you can get from being an intellectual. Cognition is something that intrigues me very much. Especially, social cognition in cultural settings. In fact, I believe, there is culture cognition and language cognition that have co-evolved in the history of the human-kind. And currently we realize that the Digital Age with its digital culture imposes unforeseen challenges on human cognition, on human learning and socialization.

IAA: **In the course of your carrier you surely have visited many international conferences. How would you describe your participating at Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic world which took place in September 2015 in Slovakia? Are there any pros and cons you would like to comment on?**

LK: It is nice to be invited to a conference as a key-note speaker. But you should not forget: you go to a conference to learn from others while sharing your own experiences with them. This happened in Prešov by all means and by all measures. I was completely satisfied by great critical remarks to my presentation and excellent discussions all through the conference.

IAA: **What would you recommend to young academics?**

LK: This is not an easy message. The first thing to be considered is the philosophy of education, teaching and learning included. Education is an open process – neither the teacher, nor the student can foresee what may emerge from their interaction. A good teacher admits that their contribution to the educational process is a permanent experiment: they probe themselves in interaction with attentive, critical agents who are partners in this process.

Emergent properties in the educational process – this is the driving force of our activities.

A great Hungarian poet, Attila József formulated a very strange idea: "The younger generations become our elders" (paraphrase). Why? They are in a better position to gain wisdom about experiences commonly shared at a certain point of time. They should see farther, they should have a wider perspective on the future to which they enjoy an intimate vicinity. The other thing is persistence: you must believe in what you are looking for. Your research should not (completely) be externally motivated. You should also develop the capacity to adapt: there are trends and paradigms in the academic world. You should be alert when to follow suit and when to break out of a paradigm. This is probably the greatest enigma for scholars and scientists in the history of humankind. There are no recipes!



Prof. Dr. Miriam Locher
University of Basel, Switzerland

Dr Miriam Locher is Professor for English Linguistics at the University of Basel. Her main publications include Power and Politeness in Action: Disagreements in Oral Communication (2004), the edited collections of papers on Impoliteness in Language (with D. Bousfield, 2008), Standards and Norms of the English Language (with Jürg Strässler, 2008), the Handbook of Interpersonal Pragmatics (with Sage L. Graham, 2010), the collection Advice in Discourse (with Holger Limberg, 2012), the special issue on 'Theorising Disagreement' (with Jo Angouri) in the Journal of Pragmatics (2012), the collection Narrative Matters across Disciplines in Medical Contexts (with Franziska Gygax, 2015). Her focus on digital humanities and computer-mediated communication resulted in work on advice-giving in an American Internet advice column (Advice Online, 2006), two special issues on computer-mediated communication and politeness/relational work for the Journal of Politeness Research (2010) and Pragmatics (2015, co-edited with Brook Bolander and Nicole Höhn).

IAA: **When did you realize that you wanted to be an academic in the field of linguistics? Have you ever considered any other field?**

ML: My university degree contained three subjects (English, General history, British and American history) and I shifted them around several times before settling on English with a specialisation in linguistics as my major. At the end of my Lizentiat degree (an MA in today's world) I did not take a conscious career decision but kept going with a PhD since this allowed me to keep doing what I loved most. I felt there was still too much for me to explore and this couldn't be the end of studying yet. The decision that I wanted to remain in academia was consciously made during my post-doc time when it became clear that the only open positions in Switzerland would become available within the next two years. As a consequence, I wrapped up my second book quickly so that could apply. I was very lucky to secure one of these posts. My position at the University of Basel in English linguistics allows me to work at an exciting research institution and to combine this with teaching. It's a dream job.

IAA: **On the web site of University of Basel, there is a mention of several of your projects which are applying cross-field approach to the issues observed therein. One of such cross-field projects is *Language and Health Online*. Would you briefly describe this project for our reader and comment on its possible outcomes?**

ML: The SNF-funded project on "Language and Health Online" (https://language-health-online.unibas.ch/) is not interdisciplinary in its methodological approach since we draw on linguistic theories and wish to gain insights about (a) how email counselling works with respect to language and (b) how smoking cessation websites and forums use language for persuasive reasons. The research subject, however, is located within the medical humanities and here we are engaged in a dialogue with counsellors and other health professionals. In April 2016, we will round off the project with an interdisciplinary symposium to which we have invited psychologists, health practitioners and linguists who are all exploring how language is used to negotiate health concerns or disseminate health information on the Internet. We believe this research interface has great applied potential and are looking forward to wrapping up the project and disseminating our results.

IAA: **In the course of your carrier you surely have visited many international conferences. How would you describe your participating at *Language, Literature and Culture in a Changing Transatlantic* world which took place in September 2015 in Slovakia? Are there any pros and cons you would like to comment on?**

ML: The longer I attend conferences the more I appreciate small, themed conferences that allow for real discussions and meeting people several times during the conference (rather than conferences with over a thousand participants). In my experience cross-disciplinary conferences work best when people get together on a jointly negotiated topic that they have developed themselves. Presov was a great experience with respect to the size of the conference, the people and the place and many of the papers were stimulating. At times there was not much coherence from one panel to the next, but this cannot be avoided when the topic is so broad.

IAA: **What would you recommend to young academics?**

ML: I was asked a similar question at a doctoral workshop recently and I have summarized my (incomplete) tips in a document that you can disseminate as you see fit. Two of the tips are "Don't be afraid to pursue your research interests and to approach people whose work you are reading and "Make sure your publications can fulfill their function for a career later on: they should be in a peer-reviewed journal or book (series); the publisher has to be solid with a good reputation; 'open access' if possible"

By Mgr. Gabriela Gumanová

Memories of Presov I



Rosemary Park

My first degree was in joint French and German. In the 1960s, the full year abroad for linguists had not yet been introduced, but the summer term of the third year of a four-year degree was available for spending as long as possible in relevant countries. I divided the time between France and Germany, spending about 3 months in Besancon before going on to friends in Germany's Black Forest, followed by a month's German course at Heidelberg University.

Since I had booked the course in German for foreigners from France, my accommodation was not with other British nationals, but in a slightly primitive, multi-national household of French, Italians and the sole Czech on the course. The Czech and I were room-mates in a rather cramped room, in which she arrived at about 2 am! Fortunately, we got on well, to the sound of Lara's theme from "Dr Zhivago" from the café below, and we are still friends today. This was 1967.

Having completed my degree, I trained as a secondary teacher, taught for three years in the UK, and then wanted to spread my wings. For two years I taught English at a secondary school in Bavaria, and, during that period, I visited my friend in Prague – my first visit behind the "Iron Curtain". By now, I had become interested in teaching English to foreigners; so I took a year's TEFL course and then looked to see what jobs were available. Three of the then four posts in Czechoslovakia organised by the British Council were being advertised. I registered an interest in all of them, and, possibly because of my previous experience in a small town in Bavaria, I was offered the post of "anglicka lektorka" in Presov.

I drove all the way from home in my VW Beetle, which proved to be a godsend in the cold climate. It seemed a very long way beyond Vienna, where, conveniently, one of my university friends was working as librarian for the British Council. I arrived via Trnava, Zilina, Poprad and Branisko (still a hill), and right from the start I was very taken with the landscape and such dramatic places as Spissky Hrad. I was immediately struck by the absence of much to choose from in shops and by the window-dressers' ability to make an attractive display out of a few tins of sardines and bottles of oil.

Not very much happened during the first few weeks of term, since the students were all seconded to help with the potato harvest. The room my predecessor had had in a women's hostel was very small, and eventually I was granted a larger room, but in a men's hostel, with only very communal showers. So I managed all that year with wash-downs, the odd swim, and a bath on the staff corridor elsewhere in the building, when there was enough hot water. In the second year, I was moved to a suite of two rooms – normally accommodation for six students – in the new women's hostel, with my own shower. My neighbours were the French and Polish lecturers.

At that time, it was impossible to make phone calls outside the local area. Long-distance calls, even to Prague, had to be booked in advance, and for international calls a wait of about two hours at the post office was the norm to get a line to anywhere. During my second year in Presov, direct calls to Prague became possible and the connection was quite fast until everyone realised there had been an improvement and tried to take advantage of it! In the department, for English and French combined, we were sharing offices five to a room, and there were eighteen of us for one telephone line. Our neighbours were the staff of the Sports department, and we were all far away from the main faculty building in the town centre.

Once teaching started, the initial priority for students seemed to be to shift any classes timetabled for a Friday to another day of the week – to make week-ends away an easier option. So my teaching hours were quite tightly packed, but I was spared the very early start at 6.50 am, since previous British lecturers had proved that this was too early for the British psyche! Teaching involved a lot of rushing about town from one venue to another, this being before the construction of the new faculty building. Working Saturdays from time to time came as something of a surprise, and this could entail picking up stones from the grass around the faculty premises, in preparation for later hay-making.

The official May Day holiday did not provide for a long lie either, because the students all lined up early outside the hostels in readiness for the procession, while appropriate music blared out from loudspeakers! Photocopies barely existed, the spirit duplicator was typically unreliable. A week's annual intensive course conducted in a fairly basic hostel at rural Lipovce was pleasantly relaxed in comparison with regular classes. Sometimes there was a quiz evening, although it was so puzzling that the content rarely referred to anything to do with the English-speaking world. Abba were in vogue – and their songs, like folk songs, were popular with students as language material.

Occasionally, a British Council lecturer passed through, but I shall not forget in a hurry the visit of a Jain Indian professor, who came to see what teaching English as a foreign language (rather than as a second language) entailed. Instead of observing, he found himself giving a lecture; coming to lunch in my flat was nearly a non-starter, since the opposite sex were allowed in the hostel only between 6 and 8pm; and he slipped on the ice and broke his arm, which meant a visit to hospital!

International Teachers' Day was novel for me too. In my first year, the British and French lecturers were somehow left out, but in my second year we found ourselves on the platform with all the other foreign lecturers, with whom we were friendly anyway, shaking hands firmly as an expression of solidarity. Although English-teaching in Presov was reduced rather in 1977, I was involved in the start of the native speaker link with the faculties of Medicine, Science and Law in Kosice, which helped to keep English alive in Eastern Slovakia during a difficult period. Foreign languages could now be studied only with Slovak, not jointly with other foreign languages.

Unlikely experiences for me included British Film Week, when Trevor Howard was among the UK team promoting British cinema ("Aces High", "Gulliver's Travels", and "It shouldn't happen to a vet") and I was invited to join the party for lunch at the Dukla Hotel. There was also a very long drive from Kosice to Bratislava in the company of a German businessman: we were stranded because a flight had been cancelled and he accepted my offer of a lift, although he clearly did not appreciate the confines of a VW Beetle when compared with his own Mercedes! And there was the petition against the neutron bomb.

In some ways, central Europe has been a kind of second home for me since 1964, when I first visited southern Germany, but what struck me very forcibly during my stay in Presov was the fact that the Second World War had really passed through so much of all that area. I could not but notice the bullet-holes in house facades, and students wrote in their essays of human remains found when they played or walked in the forests. There were many more features that have stuck in my memory. What I have mentioned here is just a part of what I have dredged up from the years 1976-78.



Dear Slavka and Milan,

Please accept my sincere apologies for taking so long to respond to your kind invitation to the 50-year anniversary celebration of English Studies in Presov. As you know, since before and after my Fulbright semester at Presov in 1998, I have had very rewarding experiences working with faculties, both in Presov and Banska Bystrica, where I still have an apartment. I'm pleased to say that I have lived in or visited Slovakia every year since our original visit in 1993. My experience at your department is certainly partly responsible for that record.

During my brief stay there I very much enjoyed my students in Modern American Poetry, English Composition for baccalaureates, and the introduction to American Studies, which my colleagues and I at Penn State are proud to have helped develop. High on my list of good memories are the daily pleasantries with my office-mates, Greta and Nadia, the helpful guidance of Slavka Staskova, the friendship of Milan Ferencik, and the very special care and help in all matters provided by Edita Kominarecova and her family. (My traveling companion, my dog, Lolita, benefited, also.) I will long remember the kind hospitality of all of these colleagues, who opened their homes and hearts to me. At the same time I was able to establish friendships with many of our colleagues at the "other" department down the hall.

Speaking of which, I happen to know that one of my dearest friends in Slovakia, or anywhere, is Marianna Prcikova, who at the time was the Head of that department. Her keen intelligence, unpretentious friendliness, and infectious sense of humor are only a few of her outstanding qualities. I have been honored to know her. And because I understand that she is the first graduate of the department you are celebrating, I expect that she will be appropriately honored for her ground-breaking, distinguished leadership. I am only sorry I cannot be there for the occasion. You have my best wishes for a successful celebration.

Sincerely,
Dick Betts

Memories of Presov University (1975-1976)



I was sent out by the British Council as an English Lecturer when Marta was head of the department. At the time I did not realise it was such a new University but there were a lot of young/younger lecturers and there was a lot of enthusiasm and commitment both on the part of the staff and of the students.

It was not an easy time as the Communist system made learning English difficult and I remember it was hard to get authentic texts – in fact any reading material. I have never forgotten the problem I caused inadvertently when I

thought I had hit the jackpot and had managed to bring back some books from the British Council in Prague which they had spare. I jubilantly took them into the department for colleagues to use. It was not until later that I found out that one of the books had been John F. Kennedy's *Nation of Immigrants* which had contained a picture of the Hungarian 1956 uprising. This had been reported to the authorities and the whole of the department was questioned as well as my particular friends and indeed anyone who had been visiting me. Strict warnings were issued and of course all the books were confiscated. For me that was particularly sad as opportunities to get hold of English books was so difficult and since so few people had the opportunity to travel abroad they had to learn a language without any of the vast range of resources we have nowadays and take for granted.

The other memory I have of that year was the great friendship I experienced from both students and staff. They all took me under their wing despite being a political hot potato. The students tried to teach me to skate during their lessons in the ice rink – I still remember the joy of skating on the river outside the students' hostel. I also still have photos of an idyllic walk I had with colleagues in the mountains in the snow – vast vistas of white and absolute quiet. We enjoyed many evenings drinking heated wine and generally chatting. The students were so keen to have any opportunity to talk in English as those opportunities were so few especially with a real English person and at that time I was the only one around. One of the most popular things we did was singing as all were interested in current popular songs and the lyrics were key to vocabulary (*Queen* was rising in the charts then)

I wish all of you well on this special occasion. I am sorry not to be able to join you but do hope one day to come and visit and see all the changes and to check whether they still serve those wonderful pancakes with chocolate sauce and nuts in the central hotel!!!

Lidia Douglas (then Lidia Kubaczka)

A Memoir of My Service

Safarik University, Presov, Slovakia (1993-1994)



I received a Fulbright grant to teach in Slovakia at a dramatic time in the life of Slovakia. It had separated peacefully from the Czech Republic in January 1993; my Fulbright began that autumn. Slovakia's ties to communism were weakening; the culture was changing, rapidly becoming more Western. I witnessed a nation's historic transformation. As a result of the national changes, life in the university energized. The English language and English and American culture came out of the shadows to engage students in new ways of thinking and behaving. What a time to be a University professor there!

I had come from George Washington University's English Department to teach Practical English and American Literature. Added to these were classes on British Literature. My many students ranged from third-year students of language, usage, and writing to 4th-and 5th-year students of literature. I also taught requalifiers, adults I met in Spisska Nova Ves.

From the start I was impressed by my students' interest and ability. Their spoken English ranged from good to great. Their reading and writing needed attention, especially when they were wrestling with innovative fiction and poetry. Academic research was new to them so we battled over quotation, citation, and honesty. Whatever the assignments, I found my students prepared and interested. For me, a great joy came from introducing students to James Joyce or Eugene O'Neill, to Willa Cather and Tony Morrison, Walt Whitman and Robert Frost. Cultural differences faded as human experience found its voice.

This memoir would be incomplete if I concentrate exclusively on my classes, although I loved them. Surrounding it all was the life of the English department, many of whose members became my friends, like Stefan Franko, James Sutherland-Smith, Edita Kominarecova, and many more. Because of them I met families, visited dachas, ate out, hiked, attended concerts and moves, and explored. When my family and friends came to Presov, the friends welcomed them. One last adventure. While I was in Presov, I occasionally attended Sabbath services at the depleted synagogue. The usual congregation was the 10 men necessary for a service and only those 10. The Jewish community had been destroyed in the early days of the Holocaust. The synagogue, however, had been left standing, ravaged by time and neglect, but still there. In my Fulbright year, the Jewish community in Slovakia determined to restore the building as a museum. I was able to be included in a small way in this project as a donor of funds. In the Spring of 1994, when the building had been restored, its hidden artifacts unearthed, and its interior reorganized as a museum, Prime Minister Meciar came to Presov to inaugurate its new use. This moment --- when the remnants of the ancient Jewish community were gathered -- was a moving, memorable event in my stay in Presov.

Although there is much more to say, I will say only the most important: my Fulbright year in Presov, Slovakia, remains precious to me.

Susan Willens

Memories of Prešov in the 1970s



Prešov was an exciting place to come to in 1978 for a young, inexperienced British Council lector. I had never been to Czechoslovakia (as the country then was) before, although I had planned to go to Prague at the end of August 1968 (a visit that had to be abandoned!). Moreover I had not worked for the British Council before.

I remember being met at Košice Airport by Vera (I cannot remember her family name now – recalling names is a problem that has always affected me) and a driver. She gave me some background on the university and the English

department while we travelled back to Prešov, information that I could not take in. I was lodged in what was known as the lectors' corridor in the women's residence. The facilities impressed me: there was a small fridge, even a television, something I had never had before – not that I expected to understand Slovak or Czech at the start!

Vera took me to where the Department was housed although no one was there at the time. At least I knew where to go next morning, when I met the head of Department Dr Marta Šimová, and other members of the team. I can still recall some, Tibor, Štefan, Slavka, Saša, but most names have faded.

I remember feeling daunted by the literary expertise among the staff. I must have seemed quite an ignoramus when I desperately talked my way out of answering questions about Dickens, Thackeray, Jane Austen, and the Brontës. I had not studied English literature. Fortunately I had brought a collection of 'great works' with me, which I proceeded to read over the next year. I could handle questions about language more easily, although I was floored by requests for my opinion about Functional Sentence Perspective and the work of Jan Firbas. There was a whole new world of linguistics to enter into.

My main job was to help the students with practical conversation. Maybe it wasn't called that, but that's what it seemed to me. I would meet the students specializing in English in all the first five years, though mainly years two and three. I was given books which I could use because the students had the same book. I didn't realize initially that the books had usually been written by Slovak or Czech university teachers of English, some of whom were now my colleagues. The books were organized under topics, each of which contained a short scripted conversation and a list of vocabulary plus the translation. The technique was familiar to me from the teaching books in English I had used in my previous work in the 1970s. However, I was frequently surprised by the expressions used. No one would say this today, I used to think. The conversations seemed so stilted. I would try to give the students more modern expressions, the sort young people in England might use. After all, I was not so much older than the students, and could well remember my student days.

Teaching a class at 6.50 in the morning was a surprise. At first I had three of them. I don't think they were that effective. Trying to converse in English with a group of 20 or so students who could barely keep their eyes open, let alone get their brains working in a foreign language, was no one's idea of fun. Although I have rarely had a problem getting up early, it got more challenging as the winter arrived, and I trudged through the deep snow up to the main street where the class would be held in a building where the heating was not yet on. Everyone shrouded in massive winter coats, gloves, and snow boots! And we should talk in English! The very cold weather that winter forced the university to shut for a short while, after which classes never started before 7.30.

Another great memory of the time was the staff weekend retreats. Probably there was only one a year – I can't recall clearly. A magnificent one at Popradske Pleso. I don't recall what work we did, but we did have fantastic walks, even tobogganing in the ample snow left over from the winter. Or when we stayed near a photogenic village behind the Tatras, and visited the old cottages

to see how things used to be. Some people would say, “That’s how my mother/grandmother still makes it!”.

Prešov has remained a moving time which I recall enthusiastically despite the vagueries of memory. It was the place I met my wife Eva of thirty years till she died. It was a delight to take my new wife there in 2014 and show her fond memories of the past. Prešov had changed, but its essence was the same.

It’s wonderful to hear of the 50 years’ celebration of English studies at Prešov. I wish you all a fantastic festivity and conference.

Bob Wilkinson, lector at Prešov 1978-81
Now at Maastricht, Netherlands



I am a historian, and taught at Presov University with the Open Society Foundation from 1997-99. During two years at the university, I presented numerous classes on US history and culture. From time to time, I also appeared as a guest instructor in several other departments, assisted with end of the year state exams, and served as an adviser to nine students for their final thesis projects.

Perhaps my fondest experience at Presov University was the establishment and enactment of the senior year internship program. We managed to place each of our final year students into a variety of interesting work experiences. Many of our grads have gone into into the fields to which they were exposed as interns. Placements included embassies, NGOs, manufacturing, media and other concerns. It was a wonderful experience for all involved, and I was honored to be a part of it.

Thomas Murphy

Thank you so much for inviting me to participate! I certainly enjoyed my time at the University of



Presov very, very much. I wish I could be at the conference in September, but that will not be possible, unfortunately.

But I can write a note about my memories:

My favorite memories of my semester at the University of Presov were when students would come to my office to chat in English. My office had a huge window overlooking the boulevard with the cherry trees, and it was very beautiful welcoming students there to come in and talk. I required every student to come to my office to discuss their papers, and I learned alot about Slovak culture from the students in my composition class who were writing on subjects like Slovak architecture and the national

elections being held while I was there. I taught my graduate students Willa Cather's novel *My Antonia*, about a family of Czech immigrants to the United States in the early 20th century, and my students brought wonderful insights to the interpretation of that novel.

I also enjoyed my friendships with the faculty at the University. I loved eating lunch in the cafeteria and never being quite sure what to expect there because even though I would sign up for a specific meal, I was never entirely certain what that would be. I enjoyed it all. And I would linger over lunch with my colleagues. Sometimes we would go for coffee at the old Ballada Cafe across the street from the University, and to this day I think that was the best coffee I've ever had. I enjoyed observing my colleagues' classes and learning to become a better teacher through them.

All-in-all my semester at the University of Presov was a fantastic experience, and I thank the faculty and students for making me so welcome there.

Tamara Yohannes

Hello Milan and Jaroslava,

I remember fondly my two years at Safarik University in Presov, 1995-1997, as a lecturer in American Studies under the auspices of the Civic Education Project. My Slovak colleagues were enthusiastic and serious participants in the establishment of the new curriculums in British and American Studies, and the students were a pleasure to teach. Their English skills met the many challenges of the demanding texts that I assigned them to read in American literature, history, political thought, and art. I remember especially our slide-based discussion of fine arts, and the ongoing, friendly rivalry with my English colleague, John Braidwood, over the comparative riches of our two civilizations. I still insist, as was demonstrable at the time, that the debunking of royalty was only one of several palpable American claims to superiority. Congratulations on fifty years of English Studies!

Louis Petrich,
Tutor, St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, USA


Pat's Corner

from THE RIVER AND THE BLACK CAT

By James Sutherland-Smith

It's the most baroque of times,
It's the least classical of weathers.
Nobody's been promoted;
some have gone to remote housing estates
to open cardio-vascular fitness centres.
All of us are to lose a belovéd friend
in three subsequent volumes.
In fact it's twenty-six years after
and I walk to my office beside the river.
It's rained and the waters foam with much mud.
I look at the colours and implements on the hillside.
The gardens are empty; a quince tree has been felled.
A plumpness pads past with a stopwatch in her hand.
I want to be challenged by the cardinal's guard.
Opportunity is burly although somewhere
you aren't conducting an intrigue
for the honour of the Queen of France.
Nor will I be your hapless accomplice.

*

The derelicts crowd together on a bench
with cigarettes and a little of what
you don't fancy at all in a brown plastic bottle.
They could be versions of the black cat possessing
a calm as if they'd been cured of something
they can't remember and certainly
the river withholds what it might have been
sidling by, mumbling its secrets.
Up river by the stone cross erected
in memory of Saint Opilec
two police wait beside a corpse
hidden under a blue blanket.
The policeman smokes, the policewoman
flips her pony tail from under her cap.
On the bank opposite to the stone cross
a girl in red pants passes carrying
her baby on her back papoose style.
Her dog runs down the bank and crouches to shit
in that delicate way dogs have
when they must do something sanitary.

*

The morning smells of leather and turpentine.
I hope matters improve towards evening
with a faint whiff of cinnamon.
There's enough of the dawn left to tint
part of the sky with the dark pink of your shoulder.
Later the sky will be a light blue yearning
for the transcendence to which the river whispers.
I kiss your throat.
The black cat chases herself up and down the stairs.
Shall we get up, shower and dress
or otherwise, nakedness being no constraint
on the best or worst we can do?
You hook your legs round my thighs and flay me.

*

Church towers with custard yellow walls,
petrol stations of glass with red panels,
in front of them the black cat, far from home,
minces between lines of stubble
then arches before pouncing and trotting away
with something wriggling in her jaws.
The river is no more than a hairline fracture
in the bones of the day. Silence. Heat.
Your words savoured like mint on my tongue.
It seems I must renounce my impulse
to shape the void, to make something of nothing.
You've told me this simply can't be done.
So I let the void widen in me,
colourless, burning.

*

Mist covers the fields with excuses.
What does the river do
except turn the pages of our dreams,
a rustle that follows us to the grave?
Are there memories which can't be traced back
to blood shed in sacrifice to imaginary gods?
The black cat scampers, a small rain cloud
across the glass roof of the conservatory,
with a thrush flapping in her mouth.
Beneath her a blue vase isn't the opposite
of what she's just refuted.
We're left with clumps of garlic stalks in our hands,
crumbs of earth clinging to bulbs streaked with pink.

*

Now is never the time to delete ourselves.
Sun beams hasten us through a rosy haze
of bitter dust towards midday
when our shadows vanish into our heels.
That's why we need the black cat:
she survives as a bristle of black light
under the hibiscus while the afternoon
recovers us as ghosts of green refusals.
My hands cancel your breasts,
your mouth extinguishes my negatives.
We merge as duplicity
when the river rises from its bed
as a tower of silence and whirls southwards
until the stars decide to come out,
the glitter of what never existed.

Two fragile girls
trying to get some sleep
in a tiny compartment of the train
in the middle of the night
the train stops in the middle of nowhere
and a huge stinking man in shabby clothes
carrying sausages in his bag
appears under the winter sky full of stars.
Tiny compartment becomes tinier
as the man opens the door
sits down right beside one of the girls,
opens his bag of sausages
and asks where they are going.

By Veronika Sulinska

HAIKU
I hear squeaky sounds
As the sign slowly dances
In gentle warm breeze

By Jaroslava Safrankova

SESTINA
Sestina –
They are looking at the sea,
holding their hands gently.
A young strong man.
A beautiful cheerful woman.
As they walk by, wind
is playing with the sand.

She likes the feeling of sand
on her feet, and peaceful waves of the sea.
Leaves bending at vigor of the wind.
Palm trees moving gently
Absolute state of bliss in the heart of the woman
Closing her eyes and leaning to the man.

She hugs the man,
pressing herself hard against him, the sand
still on her feet. She is not just a woman,
she is his lucky charm, she is untamed sea
when he is wrapped around her. Gently,
he puts his hands on her, slowly, like a
subtle wind.

As if the time stopped, even the wind
is silent. It's just two of them, the man
and her. He looks at her gently,
kissing her on the lips, as the sand
is caressing their feet and the sea
is singing the love song. She is not just a woman.

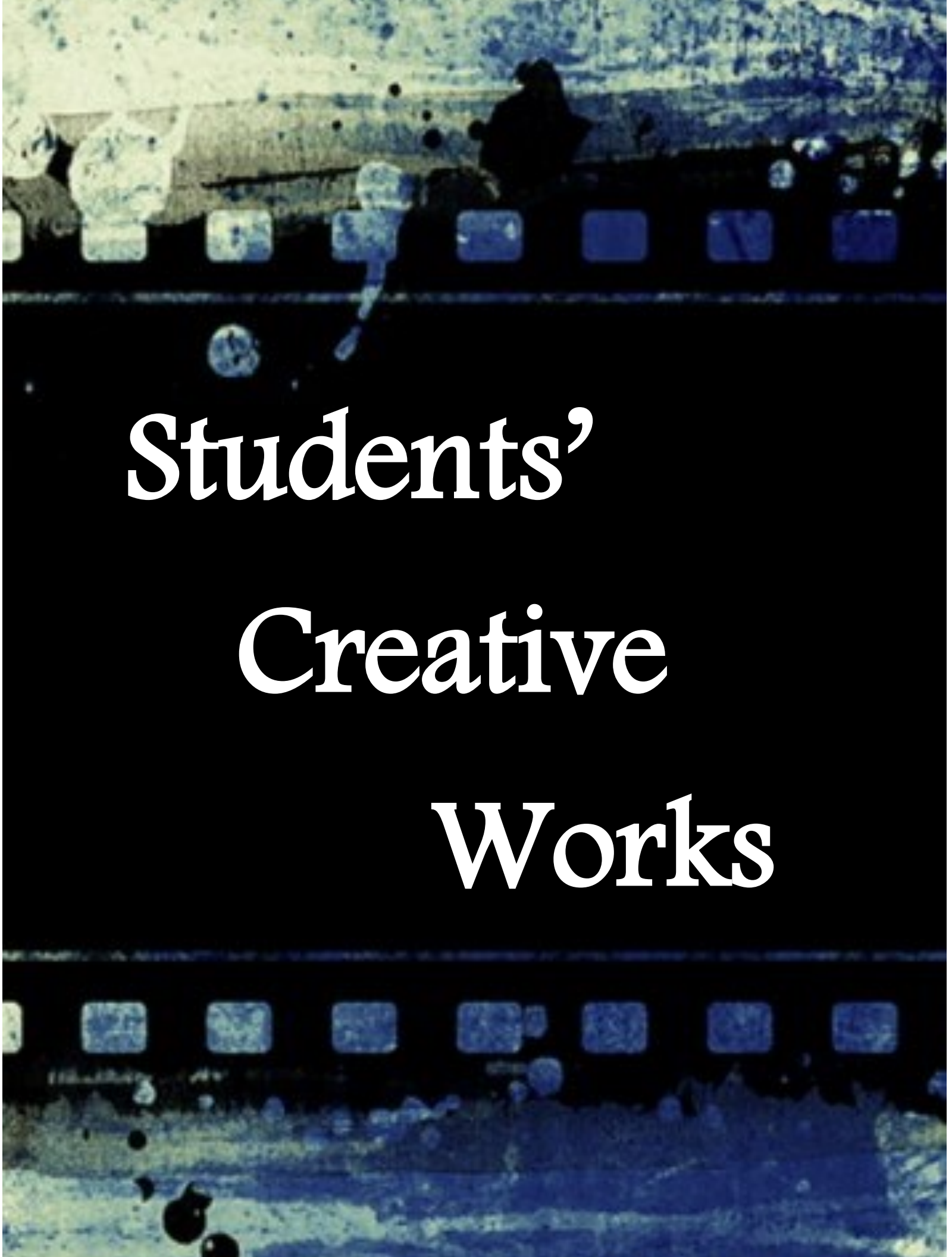
She is more than just a woman
to him. She is the wind
in the hot summer day, the sea
of endless desire. And he, the man,
is like a burning god of sand,
craving her, holding her in his arms gently.

He can't hold her gently
anymore. The woman
makes him hotter than the sand
on the scorching sun, even the strongest wind
wouldn't subdue passion of the man,
nor his thirst for her could be satisfied by
entire sea.

The sand and the wind
play gently together, while the woman's
and the man's desire is wild like stormy sea.

By Peter Rinak

SURPRISE
He came naked
To my room
Without a word
He gave me a smile
Lightning up the room
He looked
At me
And I laughed
...so small!
By Dagmar Estokova



Students' Creative Works

An Easy Way to Become Successful? Folk Dance!

You want to be successful, so you work really hard. You are getting up to catch your bus early, having a coffee at Yogis‘ for breakfast, doing your HW between classes, eating your lunch without a table on a bean bag chair and getting home too tired. Are you already expecting the weekend and it’s only Monday? Don’t panic! You should start to dance.

“I was exhausted by all deadlines and also I wasn‘t comfortable with the way I looked. Everything changed when I become a dancer,” said Miriam (19), a student of the university of Prešov. After she joined a folk group called Rozmarija in 2012, Miriam was surprised by how much you get done when you keep moving. “Before it was difficult to be effective when I have been lying on the couch for hours. Also, I lost 8 kilos in one year!” As Vicki Baum said, There are short-cuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them. Dance has a positive impact on one’s health, brain, muscles, joints, bones and nervous system; it cures the syndrome known as ‘working out is no fun‘.

Are you one of those people who thinks that folk music is for older people? Folklore dance offers insight into your own culture, the wealth of historical differences between regions as well as keeps our cultural heritage alive.

Last year Rozmarija was in India, Poland, Bulgaria, Turkey, and twice in France. Next year, they are invited to South America. The group represents our country worldwide and the organizers of festivals are always delighted by their choreography. Its members could speak foreign languages, taste different cuisines, find international friends, and explore new cultures. “Unlike many folk ensembles we can’t smoke or drink alcohol because our performance depends on our health. Our coach wants us to be the best guest group at any festival.”

Join any folk group! You will gain confidence and the ability to communicate well in a group. You will learn to count on someone else, by dancing in pairs. The skills can be applied to any career path. Have you ever heard that folk dancing helps to fight against racism? Dancers also perform dances of minorities. Miriam, one of the coaches of the Children Folk Group Rozmarija, affirms: “My favourite choreography begins with a dance ‘battle‘ between Slovak minorities but at the end Gipsies, Ruthenians and Gorals dance altogether.”

What would your life be like when your hobby makes you some money? Every weekend there are always weddings or birthday celebrations which are unimaginable without traditional folk music. Of course, you won’t earn a fortune but can a student imagine a better part-time job?

Taking the first step can be the hardest but becoming a member of a folk group can help increase your self-esteem and help you succeed. Don’t you consider yourself ’sporty‘? Don’t worry! Rozmarija accepts members regardless of their age and previous experience. So, what are you still waiting for?

By Sára Capová

Why You Should Strongly Consider Adopting an Animal

Some of you may be planning to expand your family by purchasing a puppy or a kitten as a Christmas present. However, this article is not about whether this is a good idea even though it would also be an appropriate topic. I would like to tell you exactly why the adoption of an animal is better than buying one.



Getting an animal is a long-term commitment which has a lot of pros and cons, and it doesn´t matter whether you adopt it or buy it. Any animal is actually great therapy since it gives you love, joy and maybe even a reason to live. On the other hand, once you have it, you have to take care of it 24/7 and it, of course, costs you money.

My dog from a dog shelter

One of the reasons why adoption is a better option is that some people don´t check the conditions in which a puppy lives and so unconsciously support the cruel puppy mills (a substandard kennel where dogs are kept in horrendous conditions), but if you adopt a dog from a shelter, you don´t pay for those horrible conditions.

Another fact is that it´s much cheaper than purchasing a pedigree dog. Now I would like you to ask yourself, and do be honest, how many of you actually want a dog for competitions and not for pleasure or fun? Prices for purebred dogs range around 200 € in Slovakia, but you can get an amazing dog from a shelter for 50 or 60 €. Moreover, the shelters and rescue groups often include vaccinations, micro-chipping, and spaying or neutering in the adoption fee.

According to the ASPCA, there are 7.6 million potential pets that enter American animal shelters every year, and only 2.7 million of those actually get adopted. If this doesn´t make you think about the adoption then, honestly, I have no idea what will. When you save a life, despite the fact that we´re talking about animals, it makes you feel great. In addition, this feeling comes back whenever you look into those grateful eyes. Remember that the dog shelters are jam-packed with dogs as well as cats, and somewhere among them is an ideal pet for you.

I just hope that some of these reasons I gave you will at least make you think about it and, hopefully, you won´t run to the nearest pet store when you decide to get a pet. I wish nothing more than love for those suffering animals.

Lucia Buhovecká, 3 AjPhB

Why Should We Smile More?

When we walk along the streets, travel by bus, or just sit and watch the world go by, we can very often see frowning faces around us. People are busy; they often rush after something and do not even have time to smile. I bet you have noticed it; furthermore, maybe you are one of them. But one has no idea how good for us the smile is.

At first, smiling is healthy. It can reduce stress and help us feel better. How? When we smile, the message that we are happy is sent to our brain. Then our body slows its breathing and heart rate. Our muscles become relaxed and we feel more relaxed. Moreover, it is proved that smiling can make you happy even when you are not. The simple act of smiling sends a message to your brain that you are happy. Your body thus pumps out feel-good endorphins and that makes you feel better.

"You smile. I smile." In that sentence, there is everything which I want to tell you in the next point. When you see someone smiling, it usually activates your muscles to make the same facial expression. It just works like that. So just smile, and the whole world will smile with you.

A smile on our face makes us more attractive. We usually don't like to speak to people who are frowning. We are somehow attracted by smiling people. So it also helps when you are making new friends. In addition, we tend to trust more people who smile. The bigger your smile is, the more trustworthy a person you are; therefore, a smile helps to build better and closer relationships between us.

And if there is still someone whom I have not persuaded to smile, I have another benefit of smiling. You use fewer muscles when smiling in comparison with frowning. So when we frown, there is a higher probability that we will develop wrinkles on our face, which make us look older.

I have mentioned just a few points, but I know for sure there are many more advantages of smiling. If you want to see the world around you being happier, you can be the one who will start the whole process and just smile whenever it is possible. It will help you as well as the people around.

By Stanislava Kažimírová, 3AjGeB

Why Don't You Become a Volunteer?

Do you know that December 5th is International Volunteer Day? Do you wonder what a volunteer is and how to become one? Have you ever helped your elderly neighbour for no other reason than to feel content? Then you already have what it takes to be a volunteer since the essence of it is based on the idea of solidarity, unselfishness, and the willingness to give free service to others. This means that your motivation comes from inside, but the acquired experience and references for your future occupations are benefits worth the effort. This is especially so with the present situation on the labour market when employers ask you to have at least two years of experience.

You can start to volunteer if you are 15 years old and you have the consent of your legal guardian, or later when you are 18 years old. The best way to go about it is to find some local non-governmental organization (NGO) or a non-formal group of active citizens, both of NGO, you can try the website (www.dobrovolnictvo.sk) where you can find the most-recent requests for volunteer help. Don't forget that you can choose in what way you will help the organizations you want to work with.

As an active volunteer working for an NGO, you may even have the possibility to participate in international projects funded by the EU and to travel abroad. The travel expenses and the accommodation are usually paid for by the NGO acting as the organizer. These international projects can last from 10 days, in the case of the Youth Exchanges (YE), up to 6 months as a part of the European Voluntary Service (EVS). Participating in these enables you to forge global friendships, share your ideas, gain fresh experience, and find fulfilment in working for the community.

So, what are you waiting for? Go and become a part of the international volunteer network, take the opportunity to get amazing experience, and meet interesting new people. However, do not forget that once you commit yourself to some organization it depends on you, and you have the responsibility to fulfil what you promised. Nevertheless, do not be afraid as other volunteers and the NGOs will be sure to help you along.

By Michaela Muránska

Coincidences

Even though I am not a big fan of the theory which supports the existence of coincidences, those unplanned things which we do not expect, pleasant casual random surprises, those are the ones that can sweeten your day.

It's like when you spontaneously meet your friends and you can just enjoy the time you have together. Even if it should only be for few short moments, even if the words wouldn't have any deep philosophical meaning and they wouldn't push you forward in any way of meaning – in spite of it you would be really happy just to spend some time with each other.

It's like when you are really, really tired and after all day you're walking home, exhausted and achy, hurrying home – and the last colourful butterfly of this Indian summer crossed your way. And maybe only after this you realise that you can stop for a second, astonished with the beauty. You pause for a while and you can watch how beautiful the fallen leaves are. After that the gentle wind would remind you – fall is finally coming…

It's like when someone hugs you for no reason. Well, probably you look unwell, but those two hands would hold you together for that moment. They would give you strength, so you can endure everything bad that is happening.

It's like when someone tells you something really nice; that you have a pretty sweater, and that you have a really good hair day, and that you brought much better atmosphere into the room. It's like when all the tension has faded away and that someone made your day only with a touch of a hand or even with a healing smile.

It's like when you realise that you don't have to put a label on everything and define every little thing in your life, because the doubts are sometimes lovely. Even if you don't know how to go on with your life and what would happen, and what is waiting out there for you, however, the uncertainty is hiding all the never ending possibilities.

Seize them if you can.

By Viktória Koósová, 2AjSjB

How Taking a Break from Social Media Can Bring Us Back to Reality

In an age where no major event goes unnoticed on social media, where even the closest relationships are maintained via virtual networks and where there are more likes clicked than said aloud, I suggest we all should take a break.

I am sorry if I am wrongly implying that you show some signs of being obsessed or haunted by endless scrolling through the news feed, but observing today's society even for a couple of minutes can give a good demonstration of its tendencies. Just walk the streets of any given European city and try to count people taking a stroll with their heads up, facing the real world instead of the tiny screens. The result would be, surprisingly, not that many.

Now don't get me wrong. I am not saying looking at your cellphone itself is a bad habit, it's just the ridiculous amount of time spent on influencing our whole lives and making us less present that makes me sad. According to a recent survey, the average person has five social media accounts and spends around 1 hour and 40 minutes browsing these networks every day, accounting for 28pc of the total time spent on the internet. This might not sound so bad, but this number is the average for the whole of society – so the number obviously gets higher among youngsters and middle-aged adults.

So what are we looking at for all these hours? It's not only planning meetings or sharing meaningful articles, is it? Here comes the disadvantage of social media, it can actually make us disconnected and lonely. How many of your Facebook friends are your actual friends? How many people's statuses and pictures would you hear or see in real life if there was no Facebook? Sure, getting lots of “congratulations“ comments after posting an engagement or seeing pictures of a newborn of your long-forgotten classmate that moved to Australia might feel nice, but the majority of time online is spent just vaguely staring at other people's successes (which are often exaggerated or faked). People naturally share the positive parts of their life, the nice selfies (at last, after 20 attempts from each and every possible side), the stylized lunches that often become cold by the time they get eaten, the nights spent out partying and so on. We normally don't read about the boring, lonely or sad evenings spent at home, the moment after failing an exam, pictures of messy kitchens, nor the bad-hair days... It can easily be misleading when we think of other people's lives - we might get the impression that everyone is living this „perfect life“ while I'm sitting here doing not much, feeling not much either.

Taking a break from social media, even if only for a day or for a week can really help. Imagine the extra time you'd have! Imagine not being obsessed with posting about what's just happening, making a delicious dish just for the sake of eating it! Dressing up only for the lucky ones bumping into you that day! Not freaking out about the number of likes or comments! Actually talking to people! Going to bed with a book! (Now isn't that where the truth about “I don't have time to read“ lies, anyone?) Looking at a person as he really is, not being influenced by his or her Facebook profile! If any of this sounds appealing or liberating, give it a try. You never know how rich the world beyond your internet connection might be.

By Natália Grestyová

The Importance of Being Earnest About Your Leisure Time

In today's world full of high expectations about one's skills and achievements a lot of emphasis is laid on reaching our fullest potential. We try to improve our habits and time management, so that we can be as efficient as possible. Workaholism has slowly become a virtue. On the other hand, leisure time is often considered an unnecessary luxury which only slows down progress. Very few people see attentive leisure time as the key to improvement in every area of life.

But what kind of leisure time? According to a statistic by Mary Meeker, an average Slovak spends almost six hours a day looking into screens such as TV, PC, smartphone, etc. Watching TV and using social media are by far the most common leisure time activities. Despite this favoured "relaxation" a tremendous number of people constantly complain about being exhausted. In other words, being lazy does not equate to resting. Let us redefine the term leisure time.

Ask yourself a question: What energizes me the most? Seriously. Stop reading this article right now, pick up a pen and paper and write down a list of activities which bring you the most energy. Is it going for a walk? Reading a book? Spending time with friends? Sports? Social events? Doing DIY projects? Think about it. Imagine all these things happening in one day. If you regularly dedicated one day of a week to this specifically designed day full of active resting, it would have a life-changing effect on your energy tank. You can see this custom being approved by millions of Jews, going back to the Old Testament. This day is called the Sabbath and it is the most important day of their week.

Paradoxically, you must remember to be disciplined in these matters. To avoid feeling guilty, switch off the TV and get out of bed, if there is a better option. Choose one day which suits you the best and try to practise this method week after week until it becomes your habit. Find a sparring partner who will help you in struggles, as you will have the tendency to return to your old ways of inefficient resting. As a result, you will certainly be working much more effectively for six days a week, with the promise of another battery charger waiting for you at the end of it. Better health is also included.

In conclusion, don't rest from your work, work from your rest. And above all remember, we were not created to be human doings, but human beings.

By Lenka Liptáková

Why to Adopt a Car-free Lifestyle?

We live in a time when it is modern to have a car and to drive everywhere. It has become a part of our highly convenient lifestyle. Many people cannot imagine their lives without their vehicles.

According to research from Canada, every day we should walk at least 12000 steps to feel fit. But let´s be honest, how many of us walk this much? Nowadays, it is not exceptional to drive to the local supermarket rather than to take a stroll. In prehistory, our ancestors used to travel a lot on foot. To work properly, our body requires exercise. The cheapest option how to do some exercise is to walk. It not only affects our physical state, but also a 20 minute long stroll a day helps to prevent depression.

Our atmosphere is getting more and more polluted. Many cities are currently veiled in a thick fog that consists of emissions. Traffic is responsible for approximately one fifth of the world's emissions. Every car user adds a little part. When using our vehicles irresponsibly, we create an atmosphere full of particles and gases that cause asthma, cancer, and other diseases. Do you ask yourself before getting into the car if you really need to use your car?

Everybody knows the situation when you are sitting in your car, stuck in the traffic jam and just slowly moving. You are nervous, your leg is shaking, heart beating. You are stressed. Meanwhile, you could have been walking and enjoying the fresh morning air. There are no traffic jams on the sidewalk, so you may be certain that you will not arrive late. Sometimes it is vitally important to be on time; for example, when you go for a job interview or a school exam.

I am sure that you feel lazy and your car provides you with the utmost comfort. The first day when you try not to use your car, you will regret it, but give it a try and you will find your own reasons when you fall in love with the fresh morning walk.

By Tibor Bernát 3AjBiB

Men and Masculinity

Masculinity is a set of attributes, behaviours and roles generally associated with boys and men. It is a combination of socially-defined and biological factors, distinct from the definition of the male anatomical sex. Both men and women can exhibit masculine traits and behaviour. Those exhibiting both masculine and feminine characteristics are considered androgynous, and feminist philosophers have argued that gender ambiguity may blur gender classification. As socially constructed identities, boys and men learn "appropriate" gender roles in accordance to the masculine expectations of their given society. This means that from very early on boys get messages on what it means to be a boy. From an early age these messages work to shape individuals into boys or girls. In addition to external sources, boys and men learn conventional gender roles from family and friends. In most homes, boys are told that "boys don't cry" and to "man up". These colloquialisms are ways of relaying the message that as a member of a certain gender, there are rigid expectations. If these expectations aren't fulfilled, then one will be subject to ridicule and even violence. In many cultures, displaying characteristics not typical of one's gender may be a social problem. In sociology, this labelling is known as gender assumptions and is part of socialization to meet the mores of a society. Non-standard behaviour may be considered indicative of homosexuality, despite the fact that gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation are widely accepted as distinct concepts. When sexuality is defined in terms of object choice (as in early sexology studies), male homosexuality is interpreted as effeminacy. Social disapproval of excessive masculinity may be expressed as "machismo" or by neologisms such as "testosterone poisoning". The relative importance of socialization and genetics in the development of masculinity is debated. Although social conditioning is believed to play a role, psychologists and psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung believed that aspects of "feminine" and "masculine" identity are subconsciously present in all human males.

The historical development of gender roles is addressed by behavioural genetics, evolutionary psychology, human ecology, anthropology and sociology. All human cultures seem to encourage gender roles in literature, costume and song. Ancient literature dates back to about 3000 BC, with explicit expectations for men in the form of laws and implied masculine ideals in myths of gods and heroes. In the Hebrew Bible of 1000 BC, King David of Israel told his son to "be strong, and be a man" after David's death; In Greek mythology, Heracles is synonymous with Apollonian masculinity. *Beowulf* is a tale of medieval heroism. All men are influenced by their upbringing, experience, and social environment which plays a big role in determining one's view of masculinity and manhood. This means that masculinity is going to be different for everyone. Some particularly influential factors in shaping one's idea of manhood are race, class, ability, sexual orientation, and gender**.** Social justice advocates view these social identities as the most salient factors in society that determine who has power and privilege and who faces societal oppression. Men who are oppressed in one or more ways within this structure embody "marginalized (overlooked) masculinities", which are ways of being men that are seen as less than or ridiculed by more privileged men as a means of constructing their own identities as men. Since factors like class, race, gender, sexual orientation and ability have to be taken into consideration when understanding masculinity, it's important to note the complexities of masculine privilege from an intersectional lens. Masculine privilege is the idea that men are afforded unearned benefits, rights, and advantages in society. These privileges are often times invisible to men and can be difficult to notice because they are so normalized. For example, one of the privileges that men have is the ability to take up social space in a room. However, men of colour (in a mostly white space), men with disabilities (in a mostly able bodied space), working class men (in an upper -middle class space), transmen (in a mostly cisgender space), and queer men (in a mostly hetero

space) may not necessarily be afforded this privilege (although it does occur at times).

There are an infinite number of ways to be a man which exist within a hierarchy of manhood. The most dominant form of manhood is called "hegemonic masculinity" which is characterized by several key tenants: 1.) distance oneself from femininity; 2.) restrict emotions; 3.) be tough and aggressive (avoid vulnerability); 4.) Be seen as highly sexual with women; and 5.) Prove one's heterosexuality via homophobia. These conventions exist as part of the normal fabric of our daily lives but when laid out bluntly, it becomes clear why some men are choosing to resist hegemonic masculinity because of the harm it causes not only to others, but to themselves as well. Lots of men feel that being emotionally restricted and having to constantly prove one's manhood are not the most fulfilling ways to live their lives. One of the exciting things about our generation is to see the variety of ways that men from all backgrounds are living beyond the confines of hegemonic masculinity. Whether it's choosing not to prove manhood with violence, affirming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, or challenging the sexism of male peers, the movement to live beyond hegemonic masculinity is finding encouragement in all parts of society. Researchers have argued that the "precariousness" of manhood contributes to traditionally-masculine behaviour. "Precarious" means that manhood is not inborn, but must be achieved. In many cultures, boys endure painful initiation rituals to become men. Manhood may also be lost, as when a man is derided for not "being a man." Researchers have found that men respond to threats to their manhood by engaging in stereotypically-masculine behaviours and beliefs, such as supporting hierarchy, espousing homophobic beliefs, supporting aggression and choosing physical tasks over intellectual ones.

Nowadays, a theory of "masculinity in crisis" has emerged. Australian archaeologist Peter McAllister said, "I have a strong feeling that masculinity is in crisis. Men are really searching for a role in modern society; the things we used to do aren't in much demand anymore". Others see the changing labour market as a source of stress. Deindustrialization and the replacement of smokestack industries by technology have allowed more women to enter the labour force, reducing its emphasis on physical strength, which destroys the role of man of being the breadwinner.

Lukáš Lacko
AJAKM1

Plague Diary

This diary is a private possession of

Mary J. Tomlinson

November 16, 1348

Dear Diary,

Today is just another of atrocious days in the last months. Feels like ages since we all have been happy and healthy. Even more, I still don't seem to have coped with this merciless doom that hit us. Maybe are those people outside right. Maybe this is the way how our Holy Father punishes us for our sins and we should begin to give thanks for his grace we have come by before.

Oh, Lord, please don't take away my kids from me now, not yet. They are my most precious possession. What will I do without them? I'm also praying for my husband John, so you let him stay with us a little longer. How am I supposed to raise up kids alone? I promise to be not sinner more. Just don't let me here alone, or take all of us at the same time. I'm going to kiss my beloved hoping to see them alive in the morning.

November 17, 1348

Dear Diary,

Today's morning is the worst so far. My loved John has died. The stink of his dead body overflowed the whole room and I can't get rid of it. Kids are sleeping downstairs, happily alive, I can hear them laughing. But, what do I do next? What shall I tell them? Oh God, feels like the half of me is gone. I'm aware of my weakness and emptyness, but I need to carry on.

I must take care of my kids. Sweet John, why have you done this to me?

He was sitting in the corner and staring at me. His last thoughts and look belonged to me. Why didn't I wake up? Maybe I could have helped him. His shirt was covered with blood he cought up. And all over the floor around him was dirt as he was vomiting. I had to hoard him up quickly and go to throw him into the pit in the centre, so boys won't see him like this.

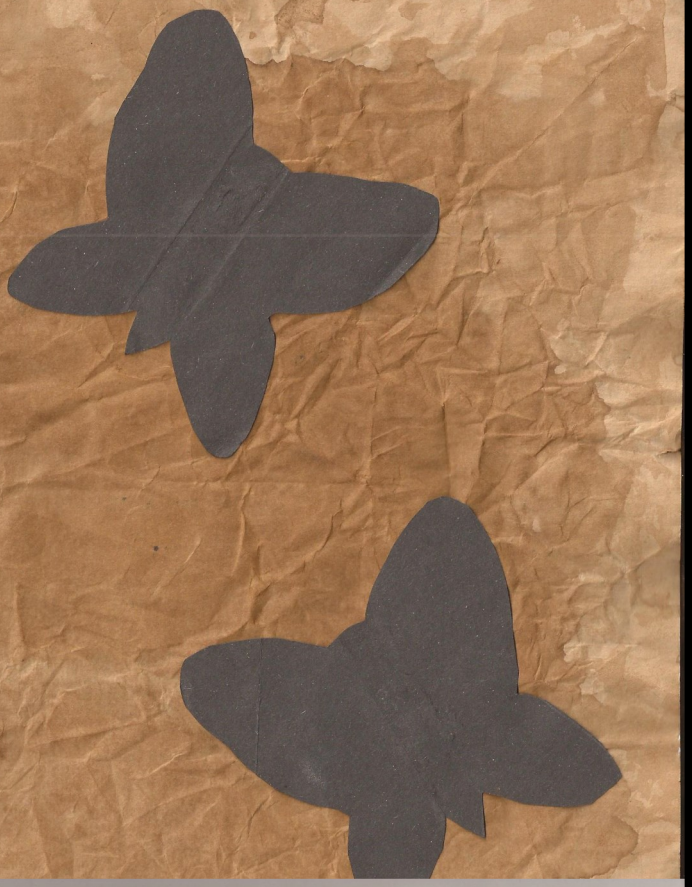
I wonder if he even told them goodbye. When I got to the pit, it has already been full of dead bodies, around forty I guess. The worst sight ever. Just in the morning, the pit was loaded with the bodies of people who have finished their journey this night. Men, women, children, the old and young - all of them put one on another and then shovelled with earth, an enormous massive grave. Oh Lord, be merciful with us.

November 18, 1348

Dear Diary,

It is getting really cold these days. I had to drew the water from the river as our (well) has frozen. As I was walking the street I saw people emptying their chamberpots out of the windows. Damn sucking pigs. They are making this illness spread even faster. And then this stupid rats everywhere. They don't even try to hide from people and are literally everywhere - in the streets, at home, in the river, in the wardrobes, on my bed - just everywhere.

Their fetid dead bodies laying all over the place and them these filthy fleas annoying us all the time. Harry keeps scratching and such ugly dark patches appear. I wish I could suffer instead of him. This is just so unfair. Evermore, both of my boys are continuously coughing up blood and complain about swelling in the groin, armpits and neck. I'm really getting tired of feeling helpless. Hope tomorrow we'll finally see the doctor.



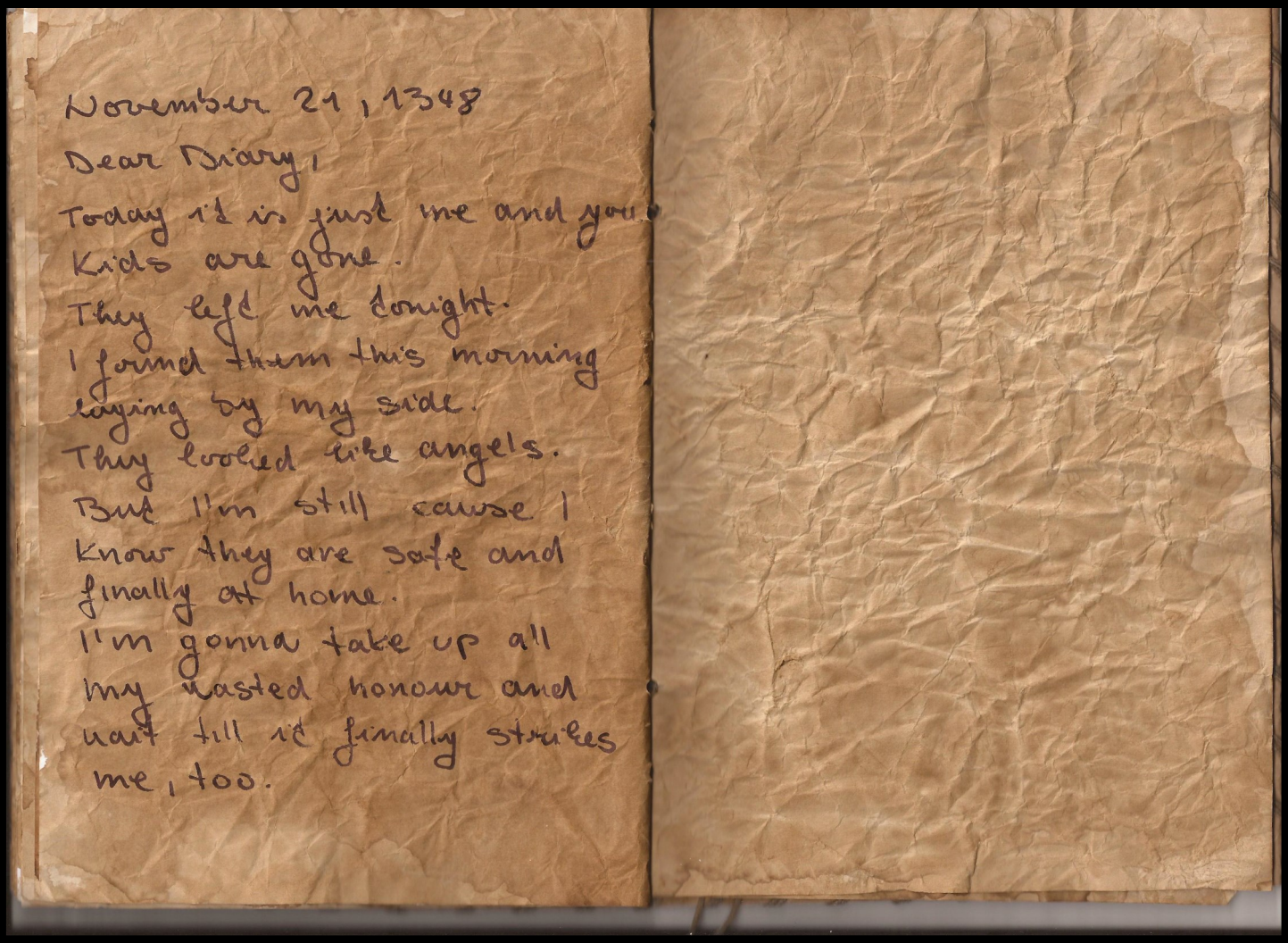
November 19, 1348
Dear Diary,
can you even imagine how much we miss John? Especially in a situation like this one when boys are crying being scared of seing the doctor. He would always cheer them up. On the other hand they appear to be so mature being well aware about what is going on. Such smart kids. As I have predicted the doctor refused to see us trying to protect his own health. What's more, even stores and churches are closed. I haven't seen my closest family for months, even our neighbours don't show themselves up in the street. We are all being ruined and empty-handed.

November 20, 1348
Dear Diary,
Today, we decided to pretend that there is nothing going on and spend a little time enjoying each other. In a basement we found old pictures of my parents, so I made up stories connected why my pleasurable memories from childhood and narrated it to boys.

They looked so laid-back that it made me believe that everything is going to be great. But it won't.
I was always wondering if it was a right decision to let those strangers coming from that far land stay with us, though it hasn't for a long time. But we needed money and John reminded me that these people were pretty well off, so they didn't have any problems with paying us well off. And how was he supposed to know that those men had probably come to hide from that deadly disease flurkin in their mother country.
And maybe I'm wrong.
It could have been all these stupid rat's fault. But it was said that before their coming everything had been great. On the other hand, we have to admit that we were all greedy and wanted to profit from Asians trading in our place. Now, we have to withstand consequences. Thousands and thousands of the dead. Deserted places. Silent streets. Panic hiding inside houses of the survivors.

- Had I known that living in a port would be so demanding, I would have never moved out from our tiny cosy cabin in the suburb of London. But we had a dream - to lead a peaceful romantic life in Bristol, where we could watch the sea every night. We also had good premises to succeed in our bussiness, as John was generally known as the greatest quartermaster in the area. And now everything is gone. John, sailors, money, even my honour.

In this time, the disease everywhere.
It comes by road - from village to village, by river and ships that keep coming at the end of every week.
As they are continually coming, I'm convinced there is no safe place to live in this world anymore.
It has definitely spread everywhere...



November 21, 1348

Dear Diary,

Today it is just me and you.
Kids are gone.
They left me tonight.
I found them this morning
laying by my side.
They looked like angels.
But I'm still cause I
know they are safe and
finally at home.
I'm gonna take up all
my wasted honour and
wait till it finally strikes
me, too.

By Lenka Sčensná 1AJAKb





WHAT'S NEW IN CULTURE







Mad Max: Fury Road (2015)

- Review -

Genre: **Action, Sci-Fi, Adventure**
Director: **George Miller**
Stars: **Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult**

When George Miller started making Mad Max at the end of 70's he could not even imagine how popular will it become in the next couple of years. He created his post-apocalyptic dystopian universe in this pop cultural phenomenon that uplifted him into the hall of the most famous directors of all times. Now the Mad Max franchise consists of four movies, the last one was added just the last year.

The whole franchise basically depicts the post-apocalyptic dystopian Australian wasteland where oil is the most valuable resource. In some cases it is often called the Wasteland with capital letter. Because the image of Wasteland never changes Miller created stories that tell about people living and struggling in it. The first three movies; Mad Max (1979), Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior (1981) and Mad Max 3: Beyond Thunderdome (1985), follow the story of the Australian policeman Max Rockatansky who seeks vengeance and later on is challenged by situations that put him into dangerous decisions of helping those in need.

This review will not focus on the old movies but instead I will make a review of the newest one that without a doubt fulfilled the expectations and met the cinematographic values that were set by George Miller thirty years ago. You can expect some parallels between the new one and the older ones.

Mad Max: Fury Road is set in the Wasteland as its predecessors with one difference. The origin and location of the Wasteland is somehow unknown to us because on one hand it is desolated to much that it is hard to judge where the story takes place but on the other hand we can thank to visual effects and graphic department that they created such a beautiful and vast world of desolation and infinite nothingness of sand, rocks and dunes. Because the production took place in United States and Australia we can only guess and assume that Miller wants to show us again the Australian Wasteland. Nevertheless Miller's Wasteland is rich and vast place of various and unique characters where oil and water became the most valuable commodities and where slavery strives at its best. Human life as such is only meaningful when used as some sort of "blood bag" which serves precisely as it sounds. The fictional community created by miller and called War Boys, lead by Immortan Joe, uses wanderers as slaves and then as blood bags to better preserve in

the wasteland. They are basically connected with tubing where the blood flows between the donor and receiver. When War boys survive their childhood as the so called War Pups they become to have diseases and most of them are plagued by cancer, lymphoma, so they obviously require blood transfusion and that is where the blood bags come in. It is also used as some sort of energy boost to become mad. Another thing is that the War Boys worship all things mechanical and have established the cult of V8, the engine of V8. We can see that the atmosphere that is created here will immerse you and possibly we can find few connections between the harsh environment between the fictitious Wasteland and the real Australian bush. The desolated place that expands into nothingness is hostile to those who want to wander in it. The disgrace and not appreciation of human life, as seen by the blood bag, is what it drives this wasteland. Considering that it is similar to Australian bush where everything wants to kill you counting from animals, insects and even the weather and place itself so that you could serve as the mentioned blood bag but now it is a reality, which is scarier and deadlier. If you start thinking about it you can find those parallels between the barren Wasteland and the bush, the lack of water, vastness and emptiness but also a great isolation from the civilized world. People in the Wasteland are different they are spontaneous and are driven by the nature of self preserve to live survive the moment and live another. The human nature in the Wasteland is free from all shackles of civilized society thus giving them the power to act like savages, brutes and animals. This can be understood as some kind of freedom from the norms of society that we know but they are losing their humanity with every kill and every act of madness. Now I do not want to say that the Australian bush is precisely the same but once you enter the bush you become someone else maybe more wild like or natural trying to get back to your true roots of humanity just like when our ancestors lived thousands of years before. I also mentioned that there is a cult of V8 engine which worships everything mechanical. It is an image of our real world reflected in this movie by the way of showing that we are literally worshiping our technology, our smartphones, tablets and many other things. We tend to go crazy and mad when something is new or if it does not work as we want to. This is another parallel with Mad Max because the War Boys are satisfied when they are driving their four wheels abominations with V8 engine. They feel the action, freedom, they become crazy, pumped and mad but on the other side satisfied just as I see people in this “technological wasteland”. There is one thing that I liked regarding the War Boys and their cult. They honour a good death in a battle and when they die they believe that the gates of Valhalla await them. Obviously this is taken from the Norse mythology where Valhalla represented hall of worthy warriors that died in battles to drink and feast with the gods and prepare for the one last battle called Ragnarok, the end of the world. So Miller made some connections with all those elements and created a very interesting community of these War Boys.

Let's move to characters and story. I mentioned that in the previous three movies the main protagonist was Max, a policeman, who was seeking justice and vengeance. Now, Miller in his fourth instalment chose someone else. It still bears the name Mad Max but the subtitle is on what we should focus. Fury Road has a new character created for this new instalment, character that is similar to Max but surprisingly is a woman. The character of Imperator Furiosa, played by Charlize Theron, is a strong and determined woman that will stand face to face against anybody who will threaten her plan to succeed. Many critics say that she is a good prototypical example of feminist character and I have the same feeling. Charlize Theron's acting is undoubtedly one of the best on screen performance of the year 2015. Her character strikes you back and leaves the mark that you will remember another few weeks of how fascinating was her character. She delivered a character that is determined, driven and self reliable, who can take her fate in her own hands. Her emotions are true as is the image of the Wasteland. Even if she is officially a supporting actor in a movie, where she stands beside Max she overshadows him. I do not want to say that Tom Hardy, playing Max, did not delivered his potential but the character of Furiosa is so unforgiving that you just cannot deny the fact that this is unofficially the main protagonist and leading force of the whole movie. Another thing which is interesting is the cast of actors in the movie, specifically it is the character of Immortan Joe, who is played by Hugh Keays-Byrne, and that is my point. Hugh Keays-Byrne is some sort of a cameo in this movie because he originally played a motorcycle gang leader in the first instalment of Mad Max from the 1979. Now after 30 years, Hugh Keays-Byrne plays similar character that is fearless, has power and willingness to command and eventually conquer the whole Wasteland. It can be seen that Miller paid a tribute to his old movies by re-casting this actor again in the new one.

Another thing that I would like to point out is the music or the original score. It was created by Tom Holkenborg, he goes by name Junkie XL. He composed multiple sets of excellent albums for many movies and Mad Max was not an exception. His music fits into the atmosphere or the barren Wasteland but it also gives it own flavour to it. Every movie becomes hundred times better with decent tracks that go toe to toe with the action that is happening and every movie lover knows that. Junkie XL made aggressive and dynamic soundtrack. He used lots of drums and guitar solos. His music is literally played in the movie by the War Boys and if you consider watching the movie you will see what I am talking about it is a great moment. The music is so great that you wish to hear it even after the movie ends and then you are grateful for those moments when you just add it into your music player and enjoy it on the road.

The use of practical effects and computer generated image is fairly in a good ratio. Miller used lots of practical effects regarding all cars and trucks and some of the explosions. CGI was

mostly used to create some of the Wasteland's mountains and passages and to add visual filters to the screen to emphasize the atmosphere of scorched earth, desolation and vastness of nothingness. Effects are top-notch and it was handled excellent and everything is pleasant to viewer's eye.

Last but not least is the greatest thing that George Miller subtly created in his movie. The camera work and visual clarity are the most important values of this movie. The thing is that he used camera centring and frame manipulation to please the eye movement of the viewer. Basically you do not need to move your eyes or head from left to right when camera centre method is used. All the action is made precisely in the centre of an image. The second thing is frame manipulation. He used it to make a movie coherent so that it will not look like a mess. So if you have action taking on the right of the screen it will move through the centre of the screen to the left side. The trick is that when it ends up on the left side the another action or frame is starting from that side, the left side moving through centre to the right and so on and so on. You can see the system and flow of your eyes subtly directing your vision from point A to point B. Those things are why George Miller has earned his reputation as one of the greatest directors. He is also considering that he will re-release Mad Max: Fury Road in black and white edition to better please the eyes of criticism. He even tried the version without a sound and it worked quite well, more or less the characters do not talk that much after all so it could be acceptable. But in my humble opinion I would be disappointed of not hearing that incredible original score from Junkie XL as I mentioned earlier. As a coincidence there are Golden Globe Awards and later on BAFTA awards where Fury Road is nominated in various categories.

My advice would be, go and see that movie at the cinema or at home it is worth that time. From excellent images and depictions of post-apocalyptic dystopian world in barren wasteland through some really exotic and crazy designs of trucks and cars that you will never expect to see on real roads to non-stop action packed scenes performed by really good characters and acting. I highly recommend it.

By Marcel Nemet,
2AJAKM

Interview with Mr. Kazanevsky

We, students of British and American Studies at Prešov University, asked a well-know Ukrainian cartoonist Mr. Vladimir Kazanevsky these questions:



1. **Where do you usually find your inspiration to draw a cartoon?**
"I was studying Radiophysics which doesn't have anything in common with cartoons. Later, I started to draw cartoons every day and it became my hobby. I trained every day to become better and better in cartoon drawings".

2. **We think, young people are interested in cartoon art and some of them think to become cartoonists, but they don't know how.**
Could you tell us, what are your recommendations how to become a good cartoonist?
"It is very difficult for young people to become cartoonists because it was financed by state before and nowadays, young people don't have enough finance and they wouldn't make a living from cartoon drawings".



3. **What does freedom mean for you?** "My creations".

4. **What is your favourite theme to draw a cartoon?**
"My favourite theme is definitely philosophy. My creations are the 'windows to the world'. I try to utter my feelings through the philosophy that lies within me.

5. **You have done such many lectures about cartoon art worldwide. Which place in the world did you find the most interesting to have a lecture on cartoon art? And why?**
"I consider South Korea as the most interesting place because 50 students were able to draw cartoons during a lecture very fast and all those cartoons were beautiful".

6. **You have won incredibly many prizes in the world. Do you still get the same feeling when you win a prize as you got when you won the very first prize?**
"My wife keeps asking me why I always carry those prizes home and why I don't bring home something else. *laugh* But the prize for me means more than it seems. However, for me, it is more important to have a discussion with people than to win a material prize".

By Mirka Matiová & Marcel Nemet,2AJAKM

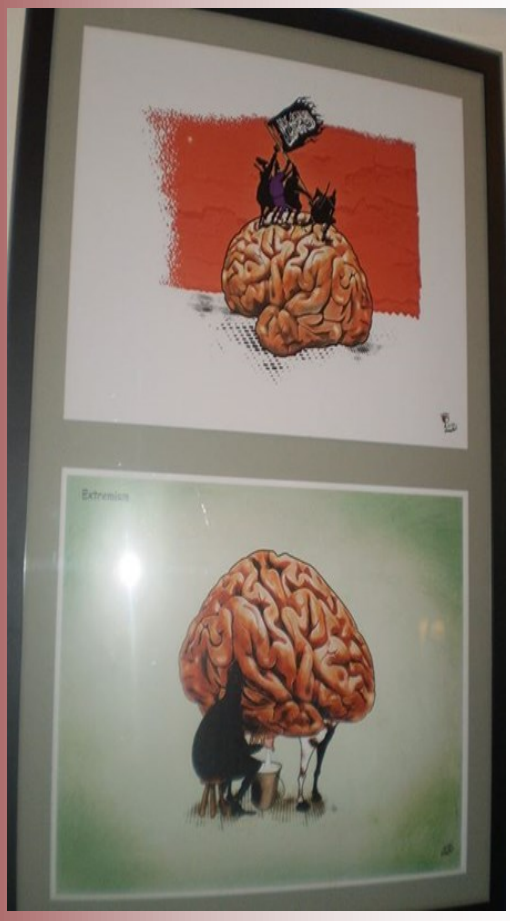
Exhibition Reflections

The ‘’Free Feeling’’ exhibition of cartoons about violence by Fadi Abou Hassan was a deep experience. Fadi Abou Hassan is a Palestinian cartoonist who lived as a refugee in Syria and currently lives in Norway. His cartoons focus on topics like immigration, politics or ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) and the violent means it uses to achieve its objectives. Very thoughtful, reflective cartoons which amaze your mind by their profoundness and the intense feelings of horror they leave in your heart even deepen this awe.

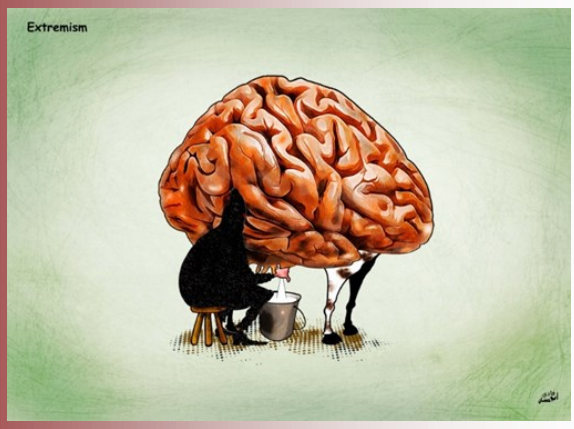
This Gallery of cartoons ‘’Brain Sneezing’’ in the Wave club functions since 2015. On the regular basis, the club organizes either solo exhibitions of significant world-class cartoonists, like Fadi Abbou Hassan, Vladimir Kazanevsky, Raul Fernando Zuleta, Istvan Kelemen or the accompanyng exhibitions of the Brain Sneezing cartoons competition.

For more information you can visit http://www.cartoonmovement.com/, http://www.cartooneast.com/ or http://www.wave.sk/.

The following are some of the reflections written by students of 2. AJAKM who attended Fadi Abou Hassan’s exhibition. Enjoy :)



These brainy pictures indicate the very basic reasons of violence in human society: indoctrination, prevention of education and general lack of reason. These brainy pictures indicate the very basic reasons of violence in human society: indoctrination, prevention of education and general lack of reason. The first picture represents the conquest of human mind, illustrated by the hoisting of Islamic flag on a brain. This is achieved by means of indoctrination using strong faith in the ISIS beliefs, resulting in a blind service of its members and the creation of fear in all those who disagree. The second picture illustrates how ISIS members milk the reason out of human brain, so it would be easier to manipulate the mind and then use the thus indoctrinated humans to achieve their goals. The world would have been a much better place if human education was based less on learning faith, beliefs and ideologies and more on learning science, evidence-based facts and critical thinking. (Matej Hrušo)



„Milking a cow“. The very first impression that came into my mind when looking at this cartoon, and I am sure that I will not by the only one. In recent years, Fadi Abou Hassan has faced many threats from the Syrian government supporters because of his cartoons showing his dissatisfaction with the political elite and terror in Syria. It is a power that is bursting out from this cartoon, isn´t it? Let me take milk as an example of a desired product we want to get when milking a cow. It is exactly the same impression I can get and feel from here. Let me speak metaphorically for a second, we are the milk, we are their product. In a country full of terror, it is not us who have the power to breathe freely, it is them, and it is the war, which has the power and control over us. Whether free or not, whether we like it or not, we are too small to act according to our human´s rights. (Dagmara Eštóková)



These excellent pictures show guns, the symbol and so often means of violence. The first picture shows their effect on innocent people, depicted by a child who is the most innocent of all and how violent society makes people go through hell, even if all they want is to get the basest needs, like food or water. It also points to the suffering of children who have to follow even the cruellest of orders if they want to survive. The second picture shows what always precedes violence. Violence is always preceded by the suppression and destruction of love. In order to pull the trigger and start hell, one must first create hell inside and the only way to do that is to destroy the heart, which is the source of love and innocence. Wherever there is love, there is heaven, wherever there is love not, hell is. (Matej Hrušo)



These pictures point to one of the deepest problems of our society and that is corrupt politics. The first picture, a bullet with control buttons, just like those on a TV remote control, is an incredibly clever expression of how war is nothing but a game for politicians. Politicians don’t want peace in the world; all they want is power, that’s all. And the worst thing is that they would do anything to get it, even start and regulate wars. The second picture shows the substance, which is used to pave ways for politicians to acquire power; all the ways of politics are paved by lies. The long nose is reminiscent of Pinocchio, the ‘’bla’’ sound coming out of his mouth reveals that politicians don’t exactly care what they speak, as long as it allows them to get power. The little man rope-walking the nose of lies, implies that people must be made uncertain and insecure, otherwise they would not give

power to politicians, as they would not need any of the so-called ‘’wise’’ leaders. Only when people will become mature enough to rule themselves and love others, will there be any possibility for peace to be born. (Matej Hrušo)

The picture of a politician speaking to the microphone can be seen as a cliché because it deals with a topic that surrounds us maybe every day. On one hand, it deals with how they – the politicians - affect ordinary people, and, on the other hand, how unstable their promises and words are. They influence normal people because they make the laws for them and many times these laws are made not for the sake of the people but for the sake of some privileged groups. There is a man balancing on the nose of the politician, which depicts the lies, and he really tries hard not to fall down; in other words, he really tries hard to survive. This picture reflects everyday reality nowadays, not only in Slovakia, but unfortunately in most places in the world. (Marianna Kováčová)



War Player - now playing = Death and Destruction
Only the strongest countries have the rights and privilege to possess this player. They can do whatever they want, they can play their favourite tones, share it with others, play it loudly and proudly on speakers or silently and subtly in their headphones. But…
…if only they turned it off. (Marcel Nemet)



Horsemen of Apocalypse
War, Famine, Pestilence (Conquest), and Death; these names should shout and invoke fear in the ranks of people. They were foreseen to come, but now they are just ghosts of the past. The real Horsemen are somehow more real, tangible and are already here. Plagues like Ebola, terrorist cells like ISIS, deceiving corporations and its media and immigration. These things are the real threat to the “promise land” of old mother Europe. They are the Horsemen of the future times. Marching… (Marcel Nemet)



tERRORrist
The free hand of goodwill and progress is struck down from its future. The future that is nearly touched by the finger is now only an ideal, a dream that is cut off by (t) error of those who worship past. (Marcel Nemet)

This image is brutal. So are the actions of the so called ISIS. Expression as such perfectly depicts the actual problem in the world and shows us what is going on in nutshell. We tend to go forward, to go to a brighter future, to lead by the example or at least that is the ideology we believe in. However, this ISIS soldier working for another ideology cut off the index pointing where we are headed. Now it is in the deposit of the ISIS pointing where we are headed if we let it go. To go backwards, to darkest moments of our history as the ISIS brutally operates in the area of Syria and establishes terrorizing medieval laws of life. Are we going to watch and bleed while we are letting it be or we are going to do something about it? (Mário Patlevič)



The first time when I saw this painting I froze because this picture reflects issue on which I think almost every day. For so many people I am ridiculous, when I get mad about the fact that people do not finish their food or when they are throwing food. 11.3% of the world's population is hungry. That's roughly 805 million people who go undernourished on a daily basis, consuming less than the recommended 2,100 calories a day. Nearly 98% of worldwide hunger exists in underdeveloped countries. While hunger exists worldwide, 526 million hungry people live in Asia. Almost 1 in 4 people in this region is chronically hungry. Hunger does not concern only people in underdeveloped countries. Hunger is everywhere around us. Hungry people are around us, just open your eyes. And next time think before you throw food into the trash. (Simona Králová)

The first picture reminds me of the state of many families and individuals in contemporary society everywhere in the world. We can see in this society that hunger does not relate only to African states, but also to modern developed countries. The man on the picture feels like locked out because even the trash is locked and he has to be logged in to be fed. It´s as if though only few selected who have the password and a username can get into that trash. If you are really an ordinary person, without any special connections, you can´t get even the most miserable remnants of food, or anything in this world. I am not sure what the second picture reflects, but to me it seems like there is a big question mark about everything, of which we as people are a part and it leads us nowhere, just drops us into a big black hole or insecurity and uncertainty of our contemporary lives and this society. We cannot be sure of anything these days. We feel like foreigners in our own country, no one cares about us. The government cares even better about the real foreigners, immigrants and Romas than for us. We don´t know if we would have any money when we retire, because the population is decreasing and the economy is very weak. This situation is really insecure, the future is unpredictable and our lives are precarious. (Emília Murínová)

What caught my attention the most is a picture in which brain and heart are fighting against each other. It is a classic symbolism of blind love, heart is telling you one thing but brain is strictly

against. It is a simple picture and idea; however, the portrayal of this conflict of mind and heart as two boxers fighting for their veracity is truly brilliant in my opinion. (Marek Krehlik)

In this picture I see common and everyday fighting of people´s feelings or emotions against brain or reasoning. Heart and brain. Always together, always against each other. Nowadays, it is important to make our decisions carefuly. Many people make serious decisions using their heart. They might end up disappointed or cheated. It is crucial to distinguish between what is nice and what is proper. I find this picture appropriate to show how essential is not only to feel but also not to forget to think. On the other hand, to use only brain and suppress feelings is not the best way. The solution should be in the middle. Many people are too trustful, even naive. The others are incredulous or sceptic which might lead to worse way to build interpersonal relationships. We should use our brain but do not forget our feelings. Our instincts should be useful in resolving the situations or problems. (Simona Görögová)

The picture is concerned with a current topic, the topic of immigration. Whether or not people favor or oppose immigration, refugees have adequate reasons to emigrate from their homeland to Europe. In my opinion, it is not a global issue of this year but a global issue of this century. It has been just more recognized thanks to the boom that media usually made. Europeans become experts on the immigration policy and the right of asylum all of a sudden, however most of them have no idea what is happening in the Middle East at all. They have not been interested in this issue until now. Refugees are not numbers; they are people as the people who share views on them. Can we even imagine an undistorted day of a refugee heading to Europe? Maybe it is a nightmare for a refugee that will never leave him. Maybe it is like a ticking bomb that gives him strength to run away as fast and as far as possible but at the end of this nightmare a little hope may appear. (Mirka Matiová)



Social life of people has been currently changing throughout the years also because of the invention of Facebook. It has some great negative impacts on many people because half of the world's population uses Facebook every day. Some people become addicted and search for recognition through so-called "likes". Basically, Facebook has literally changed the meaning and the definition of word "like". You are showered with "likes" that does not mean the same thing of appreciation, and at the same planet a few more miles, far away from your cozy place, there is a war; threateners who are about to injure or kill innocent people, who are about to drop bombs on hospitals or arrest children. Do we know about that? This picture evokes in me a feeling that most people say it does not concern them as it is not even happening at their continent. They prefer staying in their comfort zone with an online interactive life - with a life of a prisoner in their own social life. However, at the different part of the world, there are real and innocent prisoners kept against their will hoping their family will not experience the same. Occupation, oppression,

violence and tyranny are unfortunately there on daily basis. And this is not what people see in their News Feed on Facebook. (Mirka Matiová)

I have chosen a double picture. In the first picture there is a man standing on the bunch of Facebook like and dislike thumbs. These thumbs are raining from the sky as well. The man with a Facebook logo instead of his head is trying to protect himself from this rain of thumbs by using an umbrella. In the second picture there is a man sitting under warm rays of sunlight. However, he is unable to see anything because his eyes are tied with a black scarf. I can clearly see a connection between these two pictures. In my opinion, the first picture shows a human being frustrated of using Facebook. I personally think that Facebook isn't just heavily sucking peoples' time but also is making people more separated from each other. It is a paradox because it is presented as a social network meant to expand social life but I think that it rapidly takes away an authentic social life. In the sense of talking to each other and meeting each other. The tied man cannot see a sunlight because of the scarf on his eyes. I am seeing it as a metaphor and criticism of today' people using all the social networks that constrain them from seeing all the beautiful things life is giving to them. The painter knows how weird, unnatural and mainly unauthentic is the way of life people live today. Umbrella in the first picture symbolizes non-usage of Facebook as a tool capable to protect against unauthenticity of life behind the computer or smartphone screen. These two pictures attracted me the most because I as a person who keeps himself away from social network, am in a constant confrontation with this topic almost daily because of the reasons mentioned above. It is not always comfortable, but at least it is really real - the life without being always online and connected to something which is hardly important and memorable for all of us. (Július Sancho Salazar)



The picture of a man unable to move and see represents the current state of people and their lives. They are trapped in their problems, incapable of realizing the great things that surround them; and, after all, the sun, which stands for the escape from this life of blindness, is exactly what they wish for. The gloomy background is depicted there because of the contrast - people live in darkness and they dream of light, but they many times do not know how to get to it. And it is so simple. We only need to throw away the stereotypical life, leave our comfort zone and the light at the end of the tunnel will appear… (Marianna Kováčová)

In the right picture, a woman, who is most likely a mother is holding her child, having her mouth wide open. There is a red color spread through the child´s head and body symbolizing the blood. The mother is screaming and is in pain, there is a bubble coming out of her mouth. In comic books in these kinds of bubbles there is a text usually, but in this picture there is just a black splash. The mother is so shocked, terrified and heartbroken, that the words cannot just express her



pain and that is why this black splash is in the bubble. The splash can also be seen as a scar – a scar that the woman´s soul has been seared with after her child has been killed. The black background emphasizes the presence of death and sorrow.

In the left picture there is a wide open mouth of the woman from the right picture. Inside of it, numerous pair of red eyes are staring into darkness. Some people say the eyes are the windows of the soul, these eyes are red, same red as the blood on the baby in the right picture. If the red color should symbolize the blood in the left picture too, then, metaphorically speaking, those eyes represent bleeding soul of the suffering woman. This picture has also black background which represents grief and death same as the right picture, however, in this picture mother´s mouth in darkness with nothing more going on could also represent helplessness of the mother and disparity of the situation itself. The mother who loses her child is alone in the dark, she screams for help, but there is no one to help, nobody can hear her or nobody wants to.

Overall message of those pictures is quite strong if we look at them closer. Everyone can see something different because of its abstract character, but for me personally, these two pictures show that mothers suffer during wars or similar conflicts (civil wars) tremendously. The mothers who lose their children are often not heard or are overlooked, but it is them who see their own children die before their own eyes and bury them with unspeakable sadness in their hearts. (Peter Riňák)



Another brilliant picture is the one involving the tanks firing the shots, a white pigeon feeding the youngling and other pigeons making nests on the top of the gun barrels. The white pigeons are making nests to prevent the tanks from firing so there is a symbolism of a conflict in which pigeons as a symbol of peace are trying to make truce with the tanks which represent war. There is also a lock that represents two things; one of them is the block or some sort of resistance in which the locks are blocking the fire and the second one is love, so I am assuming that the author wanted to express himself in the idea that we can fight the war with love and peace. (Marek Krehlik)

The picture of two fish in a head, in my opinion, depicts the typical human nature when it comes to expressing themselves. People tend to prepare a great speech in their mind; however, when they should say it out loud, it happens to be more problematic than it first seemed. When we take into consideration for example arguments or quarrels, it is just after it has finished when the right

words come to our mind and we really regret that it comes too late. The bigger fish represents our thoughts and ideas, whereas the smaller fish represents our actual utterance. I am sure that it has happened to everybody - we were totally aware of what we wish to say, yet only some sounds or very feeble words saw the light.
(Marianna Kováčová)





The picture of a boy with a bird in his belly can be the representation of desire to be free and independent, but unwillingness or incapability keep him from becoming what he wishes to be. The bird itself is small enough to fly away from the prison, yet he remains there and there is a tear in the boy´s eye, which may signal that he knows about it but does not take any action. Sometimes people are aware that a better door got unlocked for them but they are not courageous enough to take the chance and instead of entering it, they suffer. So their bird will never flap its wings in the heights... (Marianna Kováčová)


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