



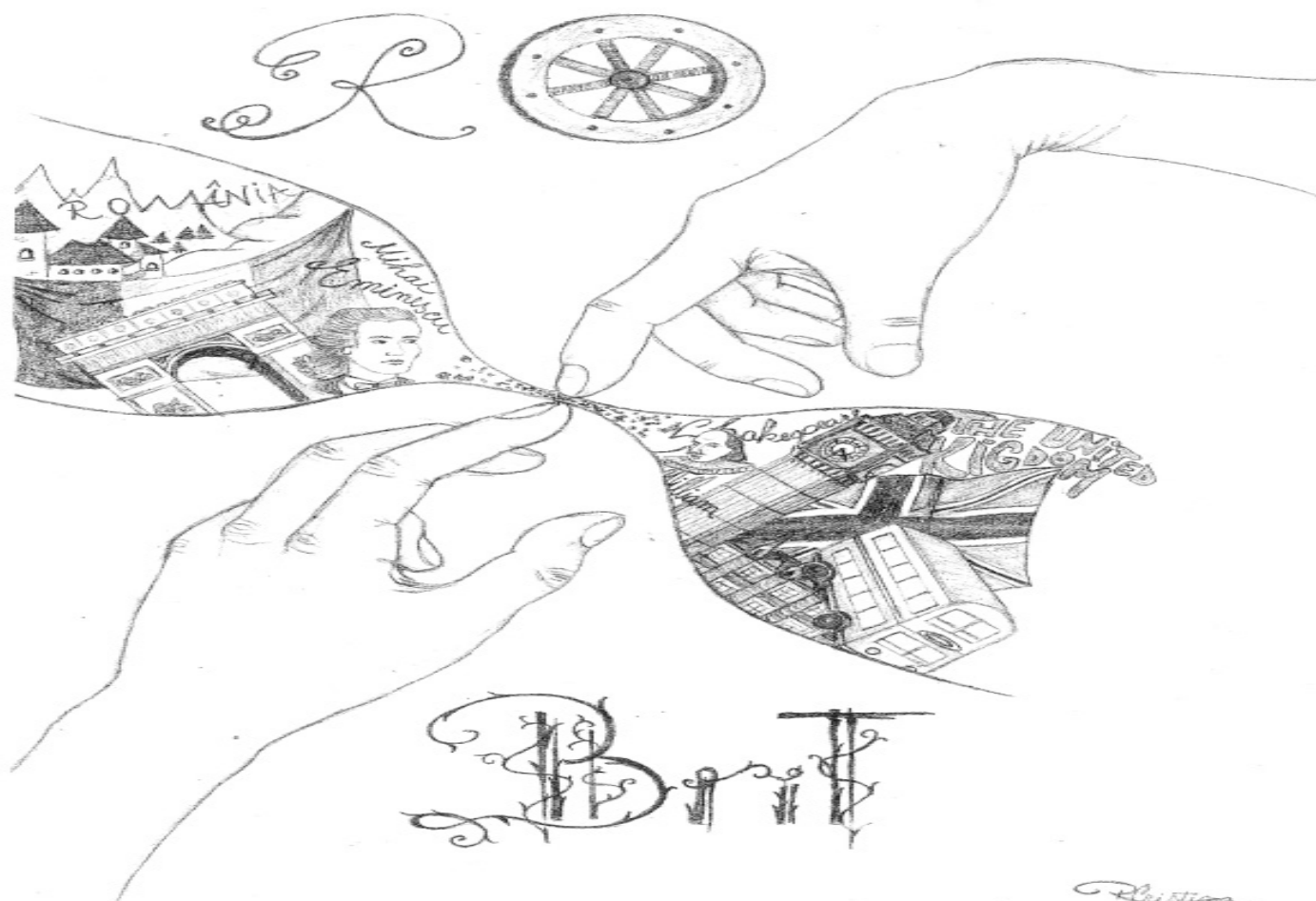
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# RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL

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of the Romanian Students from  
“Vasile Alecsandri” University  
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## EDITORIAL

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL is an annual English journal dedicated to publishing papers written by students in the Faculty of Letters (and not only), under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures from “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău. This journal intends to encourage students to take more initiative in engaging in the English studies, providing at the same time the opportunity for them to have their research and creative writing published. Thus, RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL invites English-speaking students to contribute to the journal through submitting original articles. The journal welcomes submissions on English language, literature and culture, its purpose being to provide a channel for the publication of original work by Romanian students who love the English language. This is an excellent opportunity for students to allow their research to be seen by their colleagues and to participate in a promising endeavour.

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL este o revistă anuală în limba engleză dedicată publicării lucrărilor scrise de către studenții din cadrul Facultății de Litere (și nu numai), sub auspiciile Departamentului de Limbi și Literaturi Străine de la Universitatea “Vasile Alecsandri” din Bacău. RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL intenționează să încurajeze studenții vorbitori de limba engleză să scrie și să publice în limba engleză articole cu privire la limbă, literatură și cultură, scopul principal al revistei fiind acela de a oferi un canal pentru publicarea de lucrări originale de către studenții români care iubesc limba engleză. Aceasta este o oportunitate excelentă pentru studenți de a permite ca cercetarea lor să fie văzută de colegii lor și de a participa la un efort promițător.

# A JOURNEY THROUGH THE VICTORIAN AGE

Adina Antal, EF, II

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu

Motto: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity...”

(Charles Dickens)

## I. Why the best of times?

The period of Queen Victoria’s reign, from 1837 until 1901, was a time of enormous changes in the British’s lives, marked by ingenuity and progress in domains such as: industry, sciences, territorial expansion - the colonies, literature.

### I.1. Industry



A new way to produce steel was discovered, which made it easier to manufacture the machines for factories or even build factories. The railway engine - built of iron, fuelled by coal, powered by steam, revolutionized the industrial economy. Railways had a major impact on farming, as perishable goods such as dairy products could now be moved long distances before they were inedible. Also,



industries like the one of textiles expanded thanks to the inventions of machines by taking less time to produce which led to mass production, a key factor in the Industrial Revolution.

### I.2. Sciences

Various forms of communication appeared in the Victorian Era: the telegraph, the telephone, the typewriter, etc.



### I.3. Territorial expansion

By the end of the century, Britain became the most powerful country in the world, with the largest empire ever, ruling a quarter of the world’s population.

I.4. Literature, in Victorian times, knew a great evolution mostly in the prose area. Novelists like Charles Dickens, the Brontë sisters or William Thackeray managed to reflect in their works the



reality of their times.

## II. Why the Worst of Times?

Major class divisions and poverty appeared due to people transgressing from the rural areas to the cities.

Child labour – children toiled in factories for meagre wages to support their families and get little schooling.

Lack of hygienic conditions: houses were overcrowded, most people lived in miserable conditions;

Epidemics like Cholera or Typhoid fever led to high mortality in towns. This aspect is known as “The Great Stink” as the Thames spread that terrible smell;

The “Miasmas” from the decaying matter poisoned also the air.

## III. The Age of Wisdom vs the Age of Foolishness

Victorians had a certain set of moral values, based on: respectability, stability, elitism, religion. This specific code included ideas like: the patriarchal society, the superiority that men had over the women, the importance of maintaining the appearances.

### III.1. *The patriarchal society*

A patriarchal society, family, or system is the one in which men have all or most of the power and importance. Why can this concept be considered FOOLISH? Within marriage or in the society, women were deprived of decisiveness and were not respected. As they were very religious and obeyed the rules written in the Holy Bible, they had to love and treat their fellow (women and children) the same they expected to be treated.

### III.2. *The discrepancy between the 2 genders*

The women of the Victorian age did not enjoy the same liberties as men did. For instance, men were allowed to have access to good education, high qualified schools, while women were, for most of the times, home schooled, prepared in few matters (reading, writing, manners).

### III.3. *Maintaining appearances*

Despite the fact that sometimes housewives were sexually and physically harassed, they posed, when they were out in the society, as happily married women.

## IV. The epoch of belief vs the epoch of incredulity

Towards the second half of the 19th century, the population's belief in the Christian doctrine was heavily shaken. Advances of science put pressure on the traditional beliefs which somehow turned into a period of doubt in search of faith.

## Conclusions

Despite its rationalism, the Victorian Age was labelled as the Golden Age and it remained in history as the zenith of the British Empire. It provided us with important works of art, of literature (the novels which we are studying today) and it can be considered the engine which started the modern evolution.

Food for thought: “Behind every great fortune lies a great crime.” (Honore de Balzac)

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# KING HENRY VIII AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN

**Miriam-Carla Calapod, EF, I**  
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## I. Introduction



Probably the most controversial ruler in the history of Great Britain, Henry VIII was born in a glorious dynasty, the Tudors, in 1491. As most people know, he was not actually supposed to be a king, but the fact that his brother, Arthur, died at the age of 15, gave him the privilege of being an iconic king, whose perception on culture, education, religion and politics shaped Britain and helped it become as it is today. While his father was a cruel, sort of hated or unpopular man until his death, Henry VIII had better times when he became king as he turned 18. Everyone was excited, for he proved to be the diametrical opposite of Henry VII. Lord Mountjoy was as elated as can be: “the sky is rejoiced, the earth is delighted... Selfishness is thrown out of the country, extortion is over, generosity splashes richness with a noble hand. And our king doesn’t wish for gold, diamonds or precious metals, but virtue, glory, immortality”<sup>1</sup> (my

translation). In other words, this new king was a refreshing touch to the court and people in general, though this would have been proven to be an underappreciation of Henry’s thirst for power and control. In reality, he loved being the centre of all things and having the entire power in his hands, although the Parliament seemed to rule in his place sometimes. He is believed to have been “a devout believer that broke the Church”<sup>2</sup>, “a man of learning who executed scholars”<sup>3</sup> and “a king that brought stability to the throne but used it to promote his own glory”<sup>4</sup>. One of the most disputed aspects, however, remains the fact that his marital relationships were quite unusual, as we have read in the major sources consulted in order to write this article.<sup>5</sup>

## II. Six marriages, the three d’a and the reasons

The story began when Henry’s brother, Arthur, passed away due to a deadly episode of influenza. The fact that Catherine of Aragon, his wife, was now a widow was dangerous for the diplomatic relationships England had with Spain. In order to save this alliance and because it was practically his duty (divine law said that if one’s brother died, they had to take care of the widow, this practice was popular in the royal families), Henry married his sister-in-law. After the Archbishop of Canterbury granted a marriage license on the 8th of June 1509, the couple united in front of God on the 11th of the same month and year, at Greenwich Palace. At first, the couple was very happy, but their marriage would come to an end that changed history forever and would be known as “the king’s great matter”.

<sup>1</sup>Alison Weir, Henry VIII, cited by Tracy Borman, *Viața privată a dinastiei Tudorilor*, Polirom, Iași, 2017, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>TED-Ed documentary: History On Trial – S1, E10 – History vs. Henry VIII; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdZcqAss92w>, access date: 16 December 2019.

<sup>3</sup>Idem.

<sup>4</sup>Idem.

<sup>5</sup>Tracy Borman, *Viața privată a dinastiei Tudorilor*, Polirom, Iași, 2017, Mihaela Culea, *The History of English Culture and Civilisation*, Alma Mater, Bacău, 2009, [www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk): Historic Royal Palaces official site, TED-Ed documentary: History On Trial- S1 E10- History vs. Henry VIII

Henry desperately wanted a male heir in order to secure the throne for the dynasty that Henry Tudor had begun. Catherine of Aragon miscarried no less than five children and the only living heir was Mary I, the future “Bloody Mary”.

Henry was not happy because his wife did not produce a boy and wanted to divorce her, but since the Catholic Church did not grant separation unless a partner died, he tried to prove in court that when Arthur married her, they consummated their marriage. The king also tried to convince himself that he was not blessed with sons because his marriage was against the Bible. With the help of Thomas Wolsey, one of his trusted counsellors, he appealed to Rome for a declaration of annulment. Of course the Pope refused, because of two reasons: one is that he would have declared illegal a previous exercise of papal power and the other is that he was controlled by the king of Spain, Catherine’s nephew. Henry was angry, so he initiated a revolution based on the idea that the English Church should be separated from Rome and his subjects should be freed from the corrupt Roman-Catholic establishment.

There were two reasons involved: a political one that dictated the king should not be submitted to other countries, and a religious one that involved the need of the English Church to become a department of state. In 1531, Henry persuaded the bishops to make him Head of the Anglican Church, thus passing the Act of Supremacy in 1534. The Anglican belief combines the need for clerical celibacy and man’s ability to seek salvation without the need of priests.

The religious reformation was very important economically as well. Henry VIII and Cromwell destroyed more than 500 monasteries between 1536 and 1539. This action concluded with a lot of money and influence on landowners, to whom the lands were sold and who used the stones of the monasteries to build their houses. This is why the dissolution of monasteries was not only an advantageous act from the king’s part, but also one of the greatest acts of destruction in Britain’s history<sup>6</sup>.

The next wife (for whom Henry divorced Catherine) was **Anne Boleyn**. She was the daughter of Thomas Boleyn and Elizabeth Howard (whose father was a very influential man) and was born in (cca.) 1500. Henry may have first encountered her when she took one of the lead roles, ‘Perseverance’, in a court masque in March at Thomas Wolsey’s residence at Whitehall<sup>7</sup>. Henry VIII was practically infatuated with Anne Boleyn, since he dismissed the princess of Aragon for her. It is generally believed that the king had a more peculiar approach to this relationship because he did not want to marry Anne, but to keep her as mistress (the connection between them evolved from what we call “courtly love”). In November 1532, he even took her to Calais, where he met his rival, Francis I of France at a summit, as his official consort. They got discreetly married on the 25th of January 1533, in the private chapel at Westminster. Anne soon fell pregnant, which was a good sign. Her family was very fertile, and there was no doubt that this time, finally, the male heir was on the way. This marriage was the source of plenty of gossip around Europe, where Catherine had always been a lawful and legitimate queen, very dear to her subjects, unlike Anne. All the prophets but one had predicted that the couple would have a son. The brave man was William Glover.

And he was right! On the 7th of September 1533, the ginger-haired Elizabeth (I) saw the light of the day. However, Anne’s miscarriages in 1534 and 1536 had Henry in doubt: did he make the right choice? In 1536, Queen Anne was accused by Cromwell of adultery and plotting against the king.

<sup>6</sup> David McDowall, *An Illustrated History of Britain*, Longman, London, 2003, p. 70 cited by Mihaela Culea, *The History of English Culture and Civilisation*, Alma Mater, Bacău, 2009, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/anne-boleyn>, access date: 16 December 2019.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/history-and-stories/jane-seymour>, access date: 16 December 2019.

She was taken to the Tower of London and awaited her execution in the same room she awaited her Coronation. Henry was already in love with one of her ladies-in-waiting, Jane Seymour (his future third wife) and ignored her explanations of innocence.

Jane Seymour had appeared at court as early as 1529 and acted as a lady-in-waiting for both Catherine of Aragon and later Anne Boleyn. Her family was rich but not powerful; this could have been a motif that made her want to marry Henry, but we do not actually know much, besides the fact that she at first refused his advances. She wasn't an unusual beauty, as we can deduce from the Spanish ambassador's assertion: "of middle stature and no great beauty". Henry courted her in 1534 and in 1535 started sending her letters and gifts. This laid a foundation for the wedding that took place only 11 days after Anne Boleyn was beheaded.

She is referred to as "Henry's favourite wife", because she provided the male heir that Henry VIII had awaited for so long. Prince Edward was born at Hampton Court, on October 12th 1537. Jane Seymour was able to attend her son's christening service, but passed away just two weeks later, due to post-natal complications and was genuinely mourned by the king.

King Henry married Anne of Cleves because, in those times, he felt an alliance with the House of Cleves was necessary for a much bigger influence in Europe. He also knew the importance of a spare to the heir, since he, himself, was one; he sought for another legitimate heir. When Anne arrived in England, the political reason that this marriage was considered for had already almost disappeared. As an addition, the two had too many language, cultural and personality barriers.

There was an embarrassing moment, in particular, that pretty much announced how the couple would have gotten along. On her way to London, Anne was taken aback by a group of men, led by a tall, middle-aged man who tried to kiss her. She pushed him away in bewilderment, not being aware at first that it was her groom in disguise. The custom of meeting your disguised betrothed was meant to demonstrate true love, since the bride would have recognized her future husband, but in turn, Henry was not impressed by her lack of sophistication. Later, Thomas Cromwell wanted to find ways to send Anne back to her country, but the marriage went ahead after all, the wedding night being a reported disaster! It is said that the combination between Anne of Cleves' innocence and Henry's intermittent impotence led to the marriage not being consummated. Moreover, after four nights of "struggle" in bed, the ruler blamed her ugliness for not being able to fulfil his duty and the union was annulled after half a year. Anne never protested against his decision, so they stayed on good terms, concluding with her reputation as "The King's Belov'd Sister".<sup>9</sup>

The most beautiful wife of all, Catherine Howard, was chosen after the disastrous situation with Anne of Cleves. This time, he was eager to choose his own wife like before. The two married in July 1540, almost a month after the annulment of Henry's previous marriage. She was two years younger than Mary, Henry's eldest daughter, and that made her role as a stepmother extremely difficult. Not much time after the wedding, there was a lot of gossip about Catherine's past and upbringing. Her mother died and her grandmother had brought her up. She was subjected to sexual advances from her music teacher, Henry Manox, twice her age. Then, it was found out that she and her friends were "entertaining" men and that between 1537 and 1539 she had a sexual relationship with a young nobleman called Francis Dereham.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EGzHsye71c> (Henry VIII, "Money, Money, Money" by ABBA)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/history-and-stories/catherine-howard>



The king was unaware of her past and she would have been able to hold it a secret if she hadn't had another affair, this time with Thomas Culpepper, Gentleman of the King's Privy Chamber. The rumours of the affair reached the Archbishop of Canterbury, who quickly found out through an investigation about Catherine's past and announced the king. Catherine was taken to the London Tower on 10 February 1542 and on the way she may have seen the rotting heads of Culpepper and Dereham. On the morning of 13th of February she was beheaded and she may have been as young as 17 when she died.<sup>11</sup>

The sixth and last wife was Katherine Parr. They met when Katherine was chosen to be in Princess Mary's household in 1542. She was what the sick king needed: a nurse, as much as a wife and a peace maker. They got married on July 12th 1543, at Hampton Court Palace. She was a patron of arts and a scholar, the first queen to write and publish her own works. She brought unity and stability and loved Elizabeth (who was most fond of her stepmother), Mary and Edward as her own children. This queen supported the English Reformation and had a tendency of pushing her beliefs too far when talking to her husband about religion. As her religious opponents plotted against her, they told the King she might be dangerous; as a result, she begged Henry to believe her and for the very first time, he left down his guard and forgave her. Katherine Parr also shaped who Elizabeth I was to be as a queen, inspiring her strong nature and love for arts, as well as ideas of female leadership.

After Henry VIII died on the 28th of January 1547, at the age of 55 and after being seriously ill for a prolonged period, Katherine took custody of the 14 year-old Elizabeth. She then married her sweetheart, Thomas Seymour and fell pregnant. After delivering a healthy daughter, she caught puerperal fever and passed away in 1548, outliving the king by one year!

It seems that at least five of his wives were divorced, decapitated or deceased, these making up a rule called the three d's<sup>12</sup>. The order is the following: Divorced, Decapitated, Deceased, Divorced, Decapitated and Deceased.

### III. Conclusions

From what we have presented so far, we can conclude as follows.

1. Henry's obsession of having a male heir cost six destinies, which could have been better if the wives had not chosen this life;
2. Although he did not give attention to his wives at the proper time, he can still be considered a lover of women, as he courted them, wrote beautiful, passionate letters to them and gifted them objects. This could have originated in his upbringing, which was shadowed by women in his life, especially his mother.
3. Grandiosity was extremely important, for the king had to be a model to his subjects; it is, thus, understandable why he could not admit his sexual or behavioural flaws and insisted on blaming women in his life, either for not being able to reproduce or for immoral deeds that he was engaged in. However, he could have appeared as more relatable and closer to his subjects if he had admitted these flaws.
4. His love life may be the valid proof that women will always start big conflicts, just like Helena from Troy did in the Greek mythology. This idea of powerful Troy which is later destroyed by war can be, by analogy, associated with the grandeur of the Roman-Catholic Church from which Henry VIII wanted to split so badly.

<sup>11</sup> Idem

<sup>12</sup> Mihaela Culea, op.cit., p. 46.

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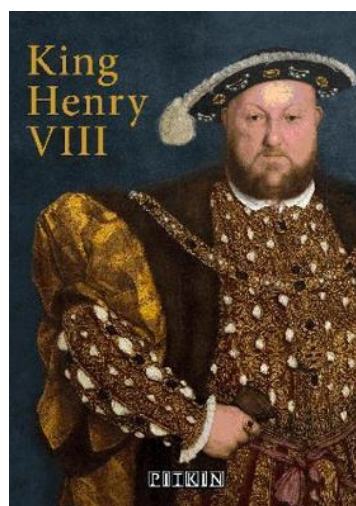
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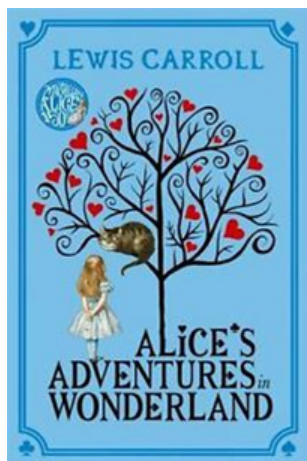
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**Raluca-Andreea Donici, EF, II**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu



We all know that the novel entitled “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” has become an important part of the popular culture all around the world. It has also been translated in almost every language, being known as the third most read book in history, after the Holly Bible and Shakespeare’s works. And though, why is it this book so special? We are about to find out by decoding some parts, key-elements of Lewis Carroll’s secret world!

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, by his real name, was a British mathematician, logician and clergyman, known at the Oxford Deanery for almost half a century as Lewis Carroll, he was also the author of two well-loved novels, especially by the children: “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” and “Through the Looking Glass”. He did not create only a book, but also a culture, by enhancing its mystery through metaphors, symbols or anagrams, which



we are about to discover.

Let us take a look at the source of inspiration, the basis of this book, that in fact, was just a little, real-life, ordinary girl, named Alice Liddell. Being a close friend to the Liddell family, Charles Dodgson acknowledged from the very beginning the huge influence that little Alice had upon him. This influence materialized one day, at a picnic, when Lewis Carroll went out with the three Liddell girls: Lorina, Alice and Edith. That day, he was asked to tell them a story, and this is how the primitive, first version of this novel was born, with the name “Alice’s Adventures Underground”, which, later, was given to Alice as a gift. A simple version, constructed by only four chapters, without many characters, such as: the Mad Hatter, the March Hare or the Cheshire Cat. Later, this version suffered a series of modifications, and, even after its date of publication, the “Alice controversy” still did not end; in his article “Alice on the stage”, published in 1887, Lewis Carroll describes his “dream-Alice” ideal as being a dual creature, soft and gentle, but also grotesque, “both King and Caterpillar”<sup>6</sup>. This association of terms exists because he often glues two different worlds one to another, like different dimensions of himself, such as: Lewis Carroll, the writer and Charles Dodgson, the mathematician. As for his novel, the “upside-down” version of reality is Wonderland and vice-versa.

<sup>1</sup> <https://metro.co.uk/2015/07/04/25-things-you-never-knew-about-alice-in-wonderland-5267597/>, “25 things you never knew about Alice In Wonderland”.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, best known by his pseudonym, Lewis Carroll, was born in the village of Daresbury, England, on January 27, 1832. The eldest boy in a family of 11 children, Carroll was rather adept at entertaining himself and his siblings.

<sup>3</sup> Alice Pleasance Liddell (1852–1934) was the middle daughter of Henry George Liddell, Dean of Christ Church at Oxford. Alice, along with her sisters Edith and Lorina, first met Lewis Carroll on April 25, 1856, as he and a friend were setting up to photograph Christ Church Cathedral from the garden of the Dean’s residence.

<sup>4</sup> Charles denied that any of his publications were based on a real child, but there are hints hidden within the books. For example, there is the poem, ‘A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky’, at the end of the book ‘Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There’, where if you take the first letter of each line of the poem, it spells out Alice’s full name: Alice Pleasance Liddell.

<sup>5</sup> The first version of the story of “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” appeared on July 4, 1862. Charles Dodgson, his friend reverend Canon Duckworth, and the sisters Alice, Lorina and Edith Liddell were on one of their boat trips on the river Isis (the local name for the stretch of the Thames that flows through Oxford) from Oxford to Godstow. Alice grew restless and begged Dodgson for a story “with lots of nonsense in it”. Dodgson began, and, as usual, invented the story while he was telling it. Much of the story was based on a picnic a couple of weeks earlier when they had been caught in the rain.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.alice-in-wonderland.net/resources/background/alices-adventures-in-wonderland/> “About the book ‘Alice’s Adventure in Wonderland’”;



The title reflects exactly what this book is all about: a series of unusual, wacky adventures of a dream-ideal Alice, a blond one, not a brunette as the real girl, whose adventures take place in a fantasy-like realm, called Wonderland. The readers have a heroine unwittingly engaged in a satire which concerns most of the social, political and economic events of the Victorian Age: the Darwinian Theory<sup>7</sup>, the Liberal Education Reform<sup>9</sup> and Spiritualism<sup>9</sup>.

If we understand the real-world Alice's influence, we can also observe the existence of several sources of inspiration related to old mythologies or sacred cults. For example, the prelude poem of the novel depicts the three Liddell sisters as the Three Fates<sup>10</sup>: the imperious "Prima" (Lorina), the gentle "Secunda" and the present "Tertia". Because Alice is his main source of inspiration, Lewis Carroll views Alice as the element which "determines the contents". Furthermore, Charles Dodgson was strongly intrigued by the Greek mythology, the Underworld is defined by the two ancient wells: Lethe, the Well of Forgetting and Mnemosyne, the Well of Memory, element related to the Three Fates.



From a mythological point of view, the novel is based on several myths from different cultures, all representing the same thing: a female protagonist's journey to the world below the surface – Inanna's travel to the Underworld (from the ancient Mesopotamia), the myth of goddess Ish-tar (from Babylon) or Isis' journey, in order to find her deceased husband in the world of the Dead (Egypt). It is important to mention that these female heroines from different mythologies are guided by mystical, spirit animals, in our case the White Rabbit, which guides Alice to the Underworld. But why did Lewis Carroll use the White Rabbit?

In the Victorian Age it was quite common to encounter allusions to an ancient pilgrimage, named the Mysteries of the Goddess, in which a white rabbit appears as guide. If we study Phooka's origin, the trickster animal spirit from the Celtic mythology, we will observe that his most used form is that of a white rabbit. Derived from Phooka we also have Puck, a character in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer's Night Dream", a guide for fairies and spirits.

<sup>7</sup> The theory of evolution by natural selection, first formulated in Darwin's book "On the Origin of Species" in 1859, is the process by which organisms transform over time as a result of the changes in physical or behavioural traits that allow an organism to better adapt to its environment and help it survive and have more offspring. Charles Robert Darwin (1809 – 1882) was an English naturalist, geologist and biologist, best known for his contributions to the science of evolution. His proposition that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors is now widely accepted, and considered a foundational concept in science. In a joint publication with Alfred Russel Wallace, he introduced his scientific theory that this branching pattern of evolution resulted from a process that he called natural selection, in which the struggle for existence has a similar effect to the artificial selection involved in selective breeding. Darwin has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history, and he was honoured by burial in Westminster Abbey.

<sup>8</sup> By the 1880s education had become compulsory for children aged 5 to 10, and the school leaving age has progressively raised since then.

<sup>9</sup> The belief that living people can communicate with people who died.

<sup>10</sup> The Moirai, usually also known as the Fates, stand for the idea of destiny in the sphere of Greek mythology. It was common for the ancient Greeks to give shape to deities and gods that would represent and explain abstract ideas. The three Moirai names were Clotho, Lachesis, and Antropos, and each of them was the owner of a distinctive character which turned them into unique beings.

<sup>11</sup> For spiritual pilgrims, the goal is a place said to be a "sacred" because healing or revelation occurred there through the intervention of a deity, saint, or spirits. The place is often on a mountain, in a cave, or near a spring. Along the way, pilgrims meet and share stories as in the Canterbury Tales. Some pilgrims say that the experience of sharing with the others is as important as the revelation gained at the destination. When the pilgrim returns home, s/he must re-integrate into the community she left behind or find a new one.

<sup>12</sup> The Pooka or Puca is one of Ireland's most ancient fairy creatures, known also as Puck or Pook. In some places it is feared and in others respected. It can take many shapes, most commonly that of a wild horse wrapped in chains with sulfurous or blazing crimson eyes - or a huge dog, a raging bull, a handsome young man or lovely woman often with an animal's tail or hooves, but it could always speak with a human voice, and it is said that in old civilizations people used to seek advice to Puca's wisdom at the tops of hills and high places.

<sup>13</sup> Puck is the mischievous sprite who serves Oberon, the Fairy King. In Elizabethan folklore, Puck (a.k.a. Robin Goodfellow) is a household sprite who, depending on his mood, plays annoying tricks or helps people out with their chores. This explains why Shakespeare's Puck brags about all the times he has been a pest to local villagers by sabotaging vats of ale or by ruining the batches of butter that housewives spent all morning churning.



But where did Carroll take this idea of representing a spirit guide as a mixture between Phooka and Puck? From his dairy we found out that he inspired his character from a painting which presented Shakespeare's play of Edwin Lanseer.<sup>14</sup> In this particular painting, he represented Puck standing next to a white rabbit, next to Phooka. But this rabbit, from Wonderland, has an outstanding appearance due to its waistcoat, golden watch, fan and gloves. This character definitely impersonates a real life human, Alice's Liddell doctor, Sir Henry Acland<sup>15</sup>, who is believed to have brought Alice 'back to life' many times before.

Being in real life a mathematician, Charles Dodgson introduced many mathematical theories and formulas into the story, such as one of his own theories, the Telescoping series Rule, used in calculating the changes occurring in Alice's height. After chasing the White Rabbit down the

hole to Wonderland (the hole was built with the use of the Fibonacci sequence<sup>16</sup>), Alice finds herself in a hall – an image inspired by the Great Hall at the Christ Church in the real life. She finds a door and tries several times to open it, but she realises it is locked. She finds the key, a bottle filled with an unknown liquid with a label saying "Drink me!", then a little cake, also with a message, an order: "Eat me!". As we know from the story, these two elements help Alice change size in order to fit the measurements of certain rooms, houses and doors. It was quite common for a Victorian girl to receive orders and to be asked to do or learn certain things in order to fit the society's doctrine<sup>17</sup>.

Succeeding in exiting the hole, Alice encounters the Truculent Mouse, during a flood, an allusion to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus<sup>18</sup>, who stated: "You can never step twice into the same water."<sup>19</sup> The mouse impersonates the three Liddell girls' governess<sup>20</sup> because it was very hard to have a full, peaceful conversation with her, due to the fact that she got easily upset, just like the Truculent Mouse does.



<sup>14</sup> Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802 – 1873) was an English painter and sculptor, well known for his paintings of animals – particularly horses, dogs, and stags. His best known works are the lion sculptures in Trafalgar Square.

<sup>15</sup> Sir Henry Wentworth Dyke Acland, 1st Baronet, (1815 – 1900), was born in Killerton, Exeter, and educated at Harrow and at Christ Church, Oxford. He then studied medicine in London and Edinburgh.

<sup>16</sup> Fibonacci numbers are strongly related to the golden ratio: Binet's formulae expresses the  $n$ th Fibonacci number in terms of  $n$  and the golden ratio, and implies that the ratio of two consecutive Fibonacci numbers tends to the golden ratio as  $n$  increases. Fibonacci numbers are named after Italian mathematician Leonardo of Pisa, later known as Fibonacci.

<sup>17</sup> During the Victorian era, men and women searched for an ideal relationship based on the expectations of a demanding society. If a man or woman did not possess the qualities desired by the Victorian society, the opposite sex may have dismissed the person as an unsuitable mate. Women in the Victorian society had one main role in life, which was to marry and take part in their husbands' interests and business. Before marriage, they would learn domestic skills such as weaving, cooking, washing, and cleaning, unless they were of a wealthy family. If they were wealthy, they did not learn these tasks because their maids took care of the household chores. Women were also not allowed to be educated or gain knowledge outside their homes because it was a men's world.

<sup>18</sup> Heraclitus of Ephesus ( c. 535 – c. 475 BC) was a pre-Socratic Ionian Greek philosopher, and a native of the city of Ephesus, in modern-day Turkey and then part of the Persian Empire.

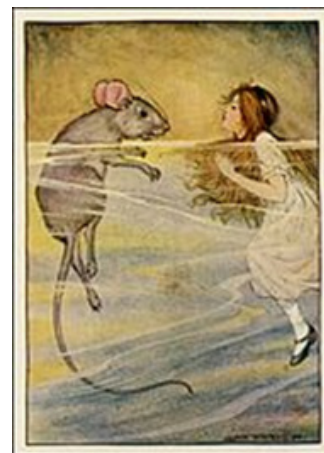
<sup>19</sup> Quote by Heraclitus of Ephesus.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Prickett (1832-1920), who served the Liddell family from their first arrival in Oxford in 1856 until 1870.



As Alice reaches the bank, she finds there a group of different animals and birds who engage themselves in an absurd race, the Caucus Race, alluding to the Greek ancient race between Achilles and the Tortoise<sup>21</sup>, a race during which even though you start by following a set of rules, you can change them whenever you please, just like in the Wonderland race. Other important elements worth mentioning are the Dodo Bird, the Lorikeet and the Eaglet, three characters who represent three real persons. The Lorikeet represents Lorina, Alice's elder sister, the Eaglet refers to Edith, Alice's younger sister and the Dodo Bird to Charles Dodgson, because he referred to himself many times as "Do-do-dodgson".

Furthermore, Alice encounters once again the White Rabbit, and he mistakes her for his maid, Mary Ann<sup>22</sup>, a very used name for the maid during the Victorian period, and he gives her orders. Once she entered the rabbit's house, Alice begins to change again her size, growing and growing until she fills up the whole house. The White Rabbit sends in one of his servants, Bill the Lizard, an anagram for one of the most important Prime Ministers during the reign of Queen Victoria, Benjamin Disraeli<sup>23</sup>. During his role as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he established a reform which led to the exclusion



from the Parliament of the former Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone<sup>24</sup>. He was "kicked out" of the Parliament, just like Bill the Lizard was kicked out by Alice from the White Rabbit's house. The whole scene is borrowed from an old tale "Lover of Lies", adapted by Johann Wolfgang Goethe<sup>25</sup> in 1797 and entitled "Der Zauberlehrling", known as "The Sorcerer's Apprentice".



The journey continues, and Alice, even though she has an unusual size, just three inches, she reaches a big mushroom<sup>26</sup> on which the Blue Caterpillar stays smoking. Trying to understand this scene, we go back to Lewis Carroll's dairy in which we find lots and lots of information about different types of narcotics, one special type being the mushroom on which the Blue Caterpillar is staying, a Psilocybin mushroom, ingested in Ancient Greek by the priests<sup>27</sup>, in order to induce hallucinations, so that people could believe they really see the future. This is the reason why the Blue Caterpillar might represent the Greek philosopher

<sup>21</sup> In a race, the quickest runner can never overtake the slowest, since the pursuer must first reach the point whence the pursued started, so that the slower must always hold a lead – as recounted by Aristotle in *Physics*, IV: 9

<sup>22</sup> The British census of 1891 found that 1.3 million girls and women worked as domestic servants in Victorian England. They were usually recruited between the ages of 10 and 13, after they had gone through some elementary schooling. Many employers hoped for their servants to have at least some elementary literacy and numeracy. It was difficult to get in the 1850s, but by the '80s and '90s it had become a more realistic expectation.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804 – 1881) was a British politician of the Conservative Party who twice served as Prime Minister of the British Empire. He played a central role in the creation of the modern Conservative Party, defining its policies and its broad outreach. Disraeli is remembered for his influential voice in world affairs, his political battles with the Liberal Party leader William Ewart Gladstone, and his one-nation conservatism or "Tory democracy". He made the Conservatives the party most identified with the glory and power of the British Empire. He is the only British prime minister to have been of Jewish birth.

Pythagoras of Samos<sup>28</sup>, who had the ‘gift’ of fortune telling. As for the hookah-smoking<sup>29</sup>, these devices were freshly introduced in Europe during the Victorian time from the Orient, along with the use of opium<sup>30</sup> and other narcotics. Lewis Carroll dedicated a lot of his time and many pages from his dairy to this topic.

But in 1859, Charles Darwin introduces his ‘odd’ theory to the British people, and it was a great success, unexpected even by him. The evolution theory is used even in this text, in this part because, even though Alice experiences many bodily transformations, she is not pleased with them. On the other hand, the Blue Caterpillar, which is a key element for Darwin’s theory, does not have the same feelings about its metamorphoses, because it is in the nature of a species to evolve.

After Alice meets the Blue Caterpillar and the Ugly Duchess, she arrives at a “Mad Tea Party”. This tea party is seen by Lewis Carroll as a “Socialist Tea Party lacking in spirit”<sup>31</sup>, composed by three characters who have the role to satirize three members of the Socialist Party. The Mad Hatter portrays Charles Kingsley<sup>32</sup>, a Cambridge Christian Socialist who also worked in clothing trade. Why the Mad Hatter?



<sup>24</sup> William Edward Gladstone (1809 – 1898) was a British statesman and Liberal politician. In a career lasting over 60 years, he served for 12 years as Prime Minister of the British Empire, spread over four terms beginning in 1868 and ending in 1894. He also served as Chancellor of the Exchequer four times.

<sup>25</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832) was a German writer and statesman who wrote “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” (German: “Der Zauberlehrling”) in 1797. The poem begins as an old sorcerer departs his workshop, leaving his apprentice with chores to perform. Tired of fetching water by pail, the apprentice enchants a broom to do the work for him, using magic in which he is not fully trained. The floor is soon awash with water, and the apprentice realizes that he cannot stop the broom because he does not know the magic required to do so.

<sup>26</sup> A psilocybin mushroom, also known as magic mushroom or psychedelic mushroom, is one of a polyphyletic group of fungi that contain psilocybin and psilocin. Biological genera containing psilocybin mushrooms include Copelandia, Gymnopilus, Inocybe, Panaeolus, Pholiotina, Pluteus, and Psilocybe. Psilocybin mushrooms may have been used in ancient religious rites and ceremonies. They may be depicted in Stone Age rock art in Africa and Europe, but are most famously represented in the Pre-Columbian sculptures and glyphs seen throughout Central and South America.

<sup>27</sup> In ancient Greece, religion was central to every aspect of daily life. Priests and priestesses played a crucial role in ensuring the peace, health, and prosperity of the state by intervening with the powerful—and often capricious—gods on behalf of human beings. The responsibilities of priesthood were taken very seriously, and priests and priestesses were important and highly respected individuals in Greece.

<sup>28</sup> Pythagoras of Samos (c. 570 – c. 495 BC) was an ancient Ionian Greek philosopher and the eponymous founder of Pythagoreanism. His political and religious teachings were well known in Magna Graecia and influenced the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and, through them, the Western philosophy. Knowledge of his life is clouded by legend, but he appears to have been the son of Mnesarchus, a gem-engraver on the island of Samos.

<sup>29</sup> A hookah (Hindustani: (Devanagari), قلیان (Nastaleeq), also known as the qalyân (Persian: قلیان), is a single- or multi-stemmed instrument for vaporizing and smoking flavoured cannabis, tobacco, or sometimes opium, whose vapour or smoke is passed through a water basin—often glass-based—before inhalation.

<sup>30</sup> Soldiers returning home from the Crusades in the 11th to 13th century brought opium with them. Opium is said to have been used for recreational purposes from the 14th century onwards in Muslim societies. Ottoman and European testimonies confirm that from the 16th to the 19th centuries Anatolian opium was eaten in Constantinople as much as it was exported to Europe. In 1573, for instance, a Venetian visitor to the Ottoman Empire observed many of the Turkish natives of Constantinople regularly drank a “certain black water made with opium” that makes them feel good, but to which they become so addicted, if they try to go without, they will “quickly die”. From drinking it, dervishes claimed the drugs bestowed them with visionary glimpses of future happiness. Indeed, Turkey supplied the West with opium long before China and India.

<sup>31</sup> According to his dairy.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Kingsley (1819 – 1875) was a church priest of the Church of England, a university professor, social reformer, historian and novelist. He is particularly associated with Christian socialism, the working men’s college, and forming labour cooperatives that failed but led to the working reforms of the progressive era. He was a friend and correspondent with Charles Darwin. He was also the uncle of traveller and scientist Mary Kingsley.



Because, back in those days, the ones who made hats were shaping them by using mercury, a toxic substance that induced dementia, along with the same symptoms that we can observe in the Mad Hatter's behaviour: trembling, sudden episodes of personality change, etc. From here the expression: "Mad as a hatter"<sup>33</sup>. The second guest to the tea party is the March Hare, portraying Julius Charles Hare<sup>34</sup>. They both had a problem with hair-splitting. And the last but not least, the Dormouse portrays F. Denison Maurice<sup>35</sup>, described as a narcoleptic animal, whose sleepiness is contagious and it appears in the animal's name: Dormouse comes from the French verb "dormir"<sup>36</sup>, which means to sleep.

When Alice finally finds her way into the beautiful garden of Wonderland, she finds some of the royal gardeners painting some of the white roses red, allusion to one of the Victorian principles: the importance of main-

taining the appearances. As for the King and the Queen of Hearts, they portray real Alice's parents, Henry and Lorina<sup>37</sup>. While the King of Hearts is depicted as being vague and indecisive, a pale, weak character, the Queen of Hearts is very impulsive and violent, verbally violent, shouting every time "Off with his/her head!" She is seen as a Fury<sup>38</sup>, a servant of Hades<sup>39</sup>, King of the Underworld in the Greek mythology, a vicious avenger.

There are many other elements worth mentioning during this part of the novel, such as: the Queen's Game of Croquet, the Cheshire Cat's floating head, the Trial of the Knaves of Hearts.

There are many other elements worth mentioning during this part of the novel, such as: the Queen's Game of Croquet, the Cheshire Cat's floating head, the Trial of the Knaves of Hearts.

The Queen's Games of Croquet is the representation of dystopia, as Alice must learn how to play Croquet with hedgehogs as balls and flamingo birds as mallets, in a grotesque, cruel way and for a ridiculous fashion. This game represents Lewis Carroll's beliefs about the chaotic nature of existence and the submission regarding personal principles of ideas.



<sup>33</sup> "Mad as a hatter" is a colloquial English phrase used in conversation to suggest (light-heartedly) that a person is suffering from insanity. It is believed to emanate from Denton, Tameside in the North of England where men in the area predominantly worked in the hattery business which used mercury in the hat making process. Dementia causes symptoms similar to madness and death often occurred with the accumulation of mercury in the body. The earliest known appearance of the phrase in print is in an 1829 issue of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine

<sup>34</sup> Julius Charles Hare (1795 – 1855) was an English theological writer.

<sup>35</sup> John Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872) was an English Anglican theologian, a prolific author, and one of the founders of Christian socialism. Since World War II, interest in Maurice has expanded.

<sup>36</sup> The verb dormir, meaning to sleep, is considered a regular verb because it follows the same pattern as the verbs sortir, partir and servir.

<sup>37</sup> Henry George Liddell (1811 – 1898) was dean (1855–91) of Christ Church, Oxford, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University (1870–74), headmaster (1846–55) of Westminster School (where a house is now named after him), author of "A History of Rome" (1855), and co-author (with Robert Scott) of the monumental work "A Greek–English Lexicon", known as 'Liddell and Scott', which is still widely used by students of Greek.

<sup>38</sup> The Erinyes, also known as the Furies, were female chthonic deities of vengeance, sometimes referred to as "infernal goddesses" (χθόνιαι θεαί). A formulaic oath in the Iliad invokes them as "the Erinyes, that under earth take vengeance on men, whosoever hath sworn a false oath." Walter Burkert suggests they are "an embodiment of the act of self-cursing contained in the oath."

<sup>39</sup> Hades (Ἅδης Hádēs; Ἀΐδης Háidēs), in the ancient Greek religion and myth, is the god of the dead and the king of the underworld, with which his name became synonymous. Hades was the eldest son of Cronus and Rhea, although the last son was regurgitated by his father. He and his brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, defeated their father's generation of gods, the Titans, and claimed rulership over the cosmos. Hades received the underworld, Zeus the sky, and Poseidon the sea, with the solid earth, long the province of Gaia, available to all three concurrently. Hades was often portrayed with his three-headed guard dog Cerberus.



As for the Floating head of the Cheshire Cat, this appears at the Croquet ground, where the King and Queen demand it be beheaded, a ridiculous order because the Cheshire Cat has been, somehow, already beheaded. It is believed that the floating head is the representation of the Reverend Edward Pusey, viewed by the all spiritual Conservatives<sup>40</sup>, as Lewis Carroll, the guardian of the Oxford Deanery. It is also believed to be the haunting spirit of the founder of this church, named Cardinal Thomas Wolsey<sup>41</sup>, who lived in the 15th century and who was threatened to be beheaded.

Lastly, the trial of the Knave of Hearts is mentioned. Even though its name is very pompous, it is just a game, based on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*<sup>42</sup>. Alice has to discover the rules of this games which are the premises used in constructing arguments, vital for a trial.

All that being said, I can say that around the world, no other person has ever written anything similar to this beautiful novel until now.



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<sup>40</sup> The Conservative Party was founded in 1834 from the Tory Party—the Conservatives’ colloquial name is “Tories”—and was one of two dominant political parties in the nineteenth century, along with the Liberal Party. Under Benjamin Disraeli it played a preeminent role in politics at the height of the British Empire.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Wolsey (1473– 1530) was an English archbishop, statesman and a cardinal of the Catholic Church. When Henry VIII became King of England in 1509, Wolsey became the King’s almoner. Wolsey’s affairs prospered, and by 1514 he had become the controlling figure in virtually all matters of state.

<sup>42</sup> It is an ancient Greek treatise on the art of persuasion, dating from the 4th century BC. The English title varies: *Rhetoric*, *the Art of Rhetoric*, *On Rhetoric*, or *a Treatise on Rhetoric*.

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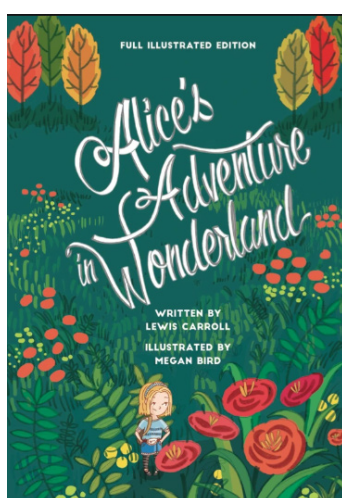
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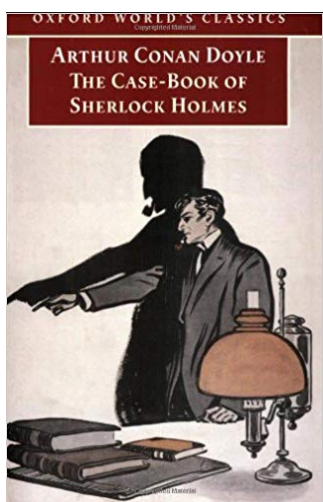


## THE VICTORIAN DETECTIVE. THE CASE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

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William Sherlock Scott Holmes is one of the world's greatest contrivances of fiction, representing the embodiment of a 'consultant detective'. The character was created by the British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in 4 novels and 56 short stories, all these place Sherlock in a Victorian setting of crime-solving adventures.



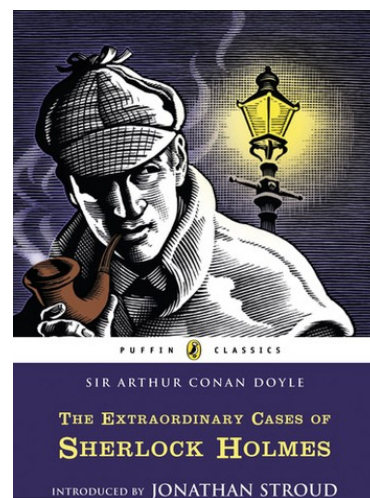
This character was created out of Doyle's admiration for a person he had met in his life. It is about Joseph Bell, who was a surgeon at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. The author met Bell in 1877 and he was amazed by the surgeon's ability to draw correct conclusions from minute observations. Just like Bell, Sherlock's most fascinating trait is making 'educated deductions'. Arthur Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, was originally published in 1887. After that, starting with 1891, a series of detective stories began to appear in "The Strand Magazine", and because of their success, Doyle was able to give up the medical practice and fully devote himself to writing.

When Sherlock Holmes first appeared as a character in 1887, he was mostly liked by the British audience because of his brilliant detective skills and for his ability to solve the most difficult and odd cases. Sherlock usually worked with Scotland Yard. It was more of a partnership in which the police would offer him confidential details about new cases

and in exchange, Sherlock would provide them with help and guidance whenever they hit a dead-end in their cases. Police Inspector Greg Lestrade trusted Holmes and consulted with him at difficult times, regarding work.

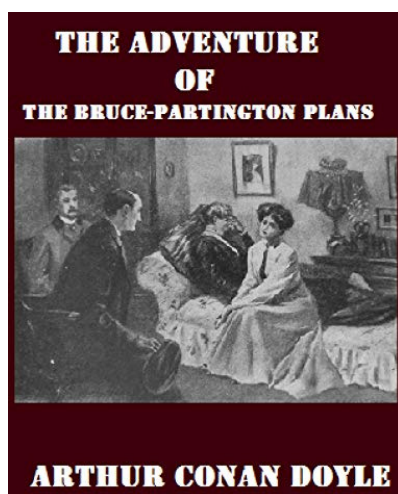
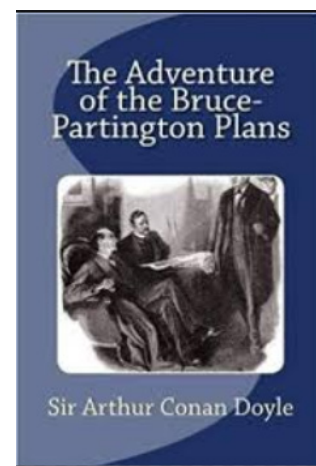
Sherlock Holmes is a character of his time and place, mainly grounded in the Victorian London. Back in the Victorian era, the social class represented an important aspect of identity along with ideals such as: respectability, economic stability, happy family/ marriage etc. Everything the Victorians did (for instance: the way they spoke, their manners, their education, the way they dressed etc.) was based on the class they belonged to. Even though Sherlock Holmes was a man of a totally different perspective, having a different manner of handling situations and of perceiving the world (in comparison to other characters of his time), he made no exception to the class consciousness principle. Holmes cannot be classified as an upper-class aristocrat or a veritable gentleman.

In the first novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, the readers are informed from the start that Mr. Sherlock is in need of a flat mate, simply because he could not afford to pay rent on his own. This leads to meeting his future best mate, Doctor John Hamish Watson. The two of them are going to share a flat in London, at 221B, Baker Street. Furthermore, because of how impressed John Watson was of Sherlock's detective work, he joins him in numerous cases and he also starts writing and publishing stories about their adventures (the author uses the story-within-a-story technique).



Sherlock Holmes was neither a rich, nor a poor Victorian, facts that place him in the middle-class. In *The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington*, Sherlock scolds the murderer he arrested because of his social class: “How and English gentleman could behave in such manner is beyond my comprehension”. (p. 211). Being a gentleman in the Victorian Age was a respectable and honorable achievement. Also, the clothing was a very important aspect for a gentleman who respected himself and his most desired title. Holmes styles his appearance alike a veritable gentleman, but, on the contrary, he is not one nor does he consider himself one. On the one hand, even if Holmes was not an official gentleman, he maintained an impeccable, flawless look of himself. On the other hand, there is quite a discrepancy between his surface and essence. I have several reasons for stating that.

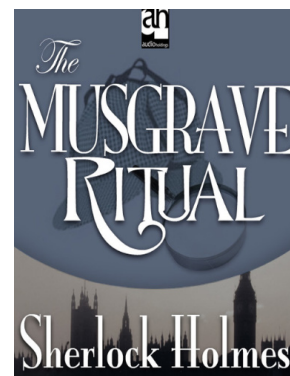
First of all, the flat, Holmes and Watson lived in, turned out to be a complete mess most of the times (at least the main sitting-room). This was the outcome of Sherlock’s chaotic process of cracking a case. Secondly, he would do things such as: pinning papers on the walls (creating a crime-wall that helped him better visualize the issue at hand), he would have books, newspapers and other diverse belongings scattered all over the place, making walking through the room quite impossible. He used to keep his tobacco in a Persian slipper. He even turned the kitchen into his personal small laboratory. Whenever he got really bored, one of his most alarming bad habits was to shoot up the flat’s walls (boredom due to the lack of cases), scaring almost to death his landlady, Mrs. Hudson. Another terrible habit of his was the usage of narcotics; in Watson’s words: “I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic.” (*A Study in Scarlet*, p. 5).



However, with all of Sherlock’s eccentricity, strange flaws of his behavior and complex personality, Watson managed to put up with him and accept his weirdness. As John Watson noted in *A Study in Scarlet*, Sherlock was not always so impossible to live with: “Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways and his habits were regular. (...) Now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle from morning to night.” (p. 15).

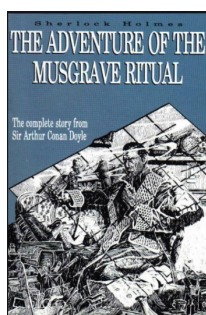
During Victorianism, education was another key element of one’s status. Sherlock Holmes was a highly intelligent man, very passionate about science and mostly inclined to subjects that would help him in his cases. He refused to memorize information which he considered out of his area of expertise and that would cloud his detective knowledge. Watson enlightens the readers by writing an accurate list of Sherlock’s knowledge in *A Study in Scarlet*, looking like this (p. 65): Sherlock Holmes – his limits.

1. Knowledge of Literature. - Nil.
2. Philosophy. - Nil.
3. Astronomy. - Nil.
4. Politics. - Feeble.
5. Botany. - Variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poison generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening.
6. Geology. - Practical, but limited. Tells at glance different soils from each other (...)
7. Chemistry. - Profound.
8. Anatomy. - Accurate, but unsystematic.
9. Sensational Literature. - Immense. He appears to know every detail about every horror perpetrated in the century.
10. Plays the violin well.
11. Is an expert singlestick player; boxer, and swordsman.
12. Has a good practical knowledge of British law.



The domain of politics was of high interest for the Victorian gentlemen. Sherlock Holmes seems to have a different perception of norms in politics, except in a few ways. He manifests his patriotism within the limits of his class. For example, he marked the sitting-room wall with the initials V.R. (which stand for *Victoria Regina*), described as such in *The Musgrave Ritual*.

Speaking about Sherlock's relationship with women, the detective strikes to be emotionless, not showing importance to ideals such as happy marriage or family (promoted as values in the Victorian era). Holmes says, in *The Valley of Fear*: "I am not a whole souled admirer of womankind." (p. 45) He



was neither an idealistic person nor a hopeless romantic, in fact, he was actually cold, calculated, distant, thoughtful and absorbed with his detective job. He dedicated his life to his work; an interesting, captivating case was more than enough to satisfy him and cast away the boredom of the quotidian life. The detective even admitted to Watson that he is married to his work.

In *A Scandal in Bohemia*, the only case he could not solve, there appears the only woman he considered his feminine intellectual equal and she was the only person who managed to defeat the great detective, Irene Adler. Because of Miss Adler's fierce personality, Sherlock comes to the conclusion that: "women are never to be entirely trusted – not the best of them." (p. 181).

As every memorable fictional character, Sherlock Holmes also had an archnemesi, who completely matches his wits and abilities. Holmes's most extraordinary rival was Professor James Moriarty, a criminal mastermind described by Sherlock himself as the *Napoleon of Crime*. Moriarty's first and only appearance is presented in *The Adventure of the Final Problem*. A violent encounter took place on the top of the Reichenbach Fall, apparently ending tragically with both characters falling to their deaths. After those events, the public was tricked by the author into believing Holmes's death. Only later, the readers learn that the detective managed to survive after the final fight against his archenemy. In *The Adventure of the Empty House*, at the beginning of the story, Watson was all alone, convinced that Holmes was gone forever and that the career of the great detective reached its dramatic end: "I moved my head to look at the cabinet behind me. When I turned again, Sherlock Holmes was standing smiling at me across my study table. I rose to my feet, stared at him for some seconds in utter amazement, and then it appears that I must have fainted for the first and last time in my life." (p. 2).



One of Sherlock's iconic catchphrase, game is afoot, meaning the situation he expected is happening. Besides the mentioned quote, there is another one that became the detective's characteristic catchphrase: *Elementary, my dear Watson!* Addressed to John Watson, Sherlock notices that his friend's conclusions are elementary. Despite the popularity of this quote, it has never been uttered by Holmes in any of the books. It gained a lot of fame due to TV adaptations. The closest version of the phrase appears in *The Adventures of the Crooked Man* as: "'Excellent!' I cried. 'Elementary', said he." (p. 38).

In conclusion, Arthur Conan Doyle's character, Sherlock Holmes, is the embodiment of a Victorian 'consultant detective' (a job considered to be invented by Holmes himself), belonging to the middle-class. Holmes seems to believe in some of the Victorian norms and values, which offers the audience the freedom to label him as a Victorian man. Sherlock Holmes is presented in a Victorian environment as the controversial detective because of some of his habits, reactions and peculiar personality. Throughout the English literature, Doyle's detective made himself remarked because of his wits, his fascinating set of skills, correct deductions and his way of solving many dreadful crimes.

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Motto: **“I think the King is but a man”**

## I. Introduction

We are about to enter the life and also the body of one of the most controversial figures of the entire British monarchy, namely, King Henry VIII<sup>1</sup>. Behind this name was a man that suffered from certain medical problems. These medical issues did not affect only his personal life, but they also had a great impact on his political life and decisions. We will discuss each one of them, but first, let us see who Henry VIII was.

King Henry VIII ruled England in the Renaissance period, more specifically between 1509-1547, and is known as a very powerful figure that turned in his late years of reign into a despot, or a tyrant. Despite the fact that in his early ages he was described as a cultivated, athletic and courageous man, who had a big interest in sciences, later on, due to some apparently unknown causes, he turned into a different man, hence a different king for England: a paranoid, cruel, obese figure, who, of course, ruled the country in a different manner than before. Apart from this, he is best known for reasons like: he married six times because he was obsessed with getting a male heir for the Tudor throne<sup>2</sup>; he became the head of the Anglican church and he dissolved the monasteries; he is responsible for more than 70,000 deaths during his reign, from which we can mention persons close to him: two of his six wives: Anne Boleyn<sup>3</sup> and Katherine Howard<sup>4</sup>, who ended by being beheaded, and Thomas Cromwell<sup>5</sup>, his trusted advisor, leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace<sup>6</sup>, and many others.



<sup>1</sup> Henry was the second son of Henry VII, first of the Tudor line, and Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, first king of the short-lived line of York. When his elder brother, Arthur, died in 1502, Henry became the heir to the throne; of all the Tudor monarchs, he alone spent his childhood in calm expectation of the crown, which helped give an assurance of majesty and righteousness to his wilful, ebullient character, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> House of Tudor, an English royal dynasty of Welsh origin, which gave five sovereigns to England: Henry VII (reigned 1485–1509); his son, Henry VIII (1509–47); followed by Henry VIII's three children, Edward VI (1547–53), Mary I (1553–58), and Elizabeth I (1558–1603).

<sup>3</sup> Anne Boleyn, Boleyn also spelled Bullen (born 1507?—died May 19, 1536, London, England), second wife of King Henry VIII of England and mother of Queen Elizabeth I. The events surrounding the annulment of Henry's marriage to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and his marriage to Anne led him to break with the Roman Catholic Church and brought about the English Reformation, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Howard (born c. 1524—died February 13, 1542, London, England), fifth wife of King Henry VIII of England. Her downfall came when Henry found out about her premarital affairs, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Cromwell, in full Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, Baron Cromwell of Okeham (born c. 1485, Putney, near London—died July 28, 1540, probably London), principal adviser (1532–40) to England's Henry VIII, chiefly responsible for establishing the Reformation in England, for the dissolution of the monasteries, and for strengthening the royal administration. At the instigation of his enemies, he was eventually arrested for heresy and treason and executed, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Pilgrimage of Grace, (1536), a rising in the northern counties of England, the only overt immediate discontent shown against the Reformation legislation of King Henry VIII. "Part of the resentment was caused by attempts, especially under Henry's minister Thomas Cromwell, to increase government control in the north; there was an element of agrarian opposition to enclosures for pasture; and there was a religious element, aroused especially by the dissolution of the monasteries, then in progress. The arrival of commissioners sent by Cromwell to collect a financial subsidy and to dissolve the smaller monasteries triggered the rising.", according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.



Clearly, there must have been something that triggered this transformation, but what caused this cruelty and this taste for blood-shedding? Pride? Power? Lust for glory? Or disease and accidents? After all, King Henry, behind the role of a Tudor Monarch, was just an ordinary man, a person with private life and intimate thoughts and wishes. So, let us find out more on this *man*, in order to understand the king. The motto for this paper is in fact one extracted for William Shakespeare's play, entitled "King Henry V" and it says: "I think the King is but a man".<sup>7</sup>

## II. The cruel king enigma

Henry VIII, the second Tudor monarch, who faced a big transformation from the young prince to the obese tyrant, faced many events during his reign, which happened to be the reasons why he had this unbelievable personality transformation. In order to prove this dramatic change, historian Lucy Worsley, biographer Robert Hutchinson and medical doctor Catherine Hood studied the Tudor monarch's symptoms and established some great mysteries (or questions) about him, presented in the BBC documentary entitled "Inside the Body of Henry VIIIth"<sup>8</sup>. Did his faults cause him troubles with his wives or was it syphilis<sup>9</sup>?



As we have mentioned before, he was married six times during his life, desperately trying to have a male heir to continue his dynasty, and he had failed so many times before he succeeded.

A.) Why did he turn incredibly fat? Overindulgence or diabetes?<sup>10</sup>

We will analyze also his diet and his medical record in order to find out why he developed into an obese person.

B.) What was the element which started his personality transformation which he experienced? Hormonal disorder, diseases or injuries?

C.) Another important element in solving this puzzle refers to these events and their effects on his physical and psychological status.

D.) What killed him?

This is one big question that will end our doubts. After establishing the answers to these four big questions, we will discover if Henry the king (Henricus Rex) was negatively affected by what happened to Henry the *man*.

<sup>7</sup> Scene 1, Page 5, Act 4, Henry V, by William Shakespeare, Penguin Books Printing Press, London, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> See the BBC Documentary "Inside the Body of Henry VIIIth" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN\\_M&t=185s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN_M&t=185s), accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Syphilis is a bacterial infection usually spread by sexual contact. The disease starts as a painless sore — typically on your genitals, rectum or mouth. Syphilis spreads from person to person via skin or mucous membrane contact with these sores. After the initial infection, the syphilis bacteria can remain inactive (dormant) in your body for decades before becoming active again, according to medical reports found on <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Diabetes mellitus refers to a group of diseases that affect how your body uses blood sugar (glucose). Glucose is vital to your health because it's an important source of energy for the cells that make up your muscles and tissues. It's also your brain's main source of fuel, according to medical reports found on <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

The underlying cause of diabetes varies by type. But, no matter what type of diabetes you have, it can lead to excess sugar in your blood. Too much sugar in your blood can lead to serious health problems.

### III. Life periods, diseases and accidents



On 28 June 1491, Henry VIII was born, who is described being a healthy and well-built child: “A graceful little boy, his bearing so gallant, his skin so fair, his smile so frank...” as the historical reports say. Due to his father’s infection with Tuberculosis<sup>12</sup>, his elder brother, prince Arthur<sup>13</sup> dies, along with Henry VII<sup>14</sup>. This time, aged 17, the newly named king, Henry VIII escaped this disease, but later, after only five years of reign, at the age of 23, the second Tudor monarch contracts Smallpox<sup>15</sup>, another infectious disease, caused by the lack of sanitation and the presence of rats, specific to that time. This event is also written in the historical reports also because the King’s health impacted on the health of England: “The king is indisposed with a fever- opinions are divided as to what caused the ailment...”<sup>16</sup>

Smallpox was an infectious disease caused by one of two virus variants, Variola major and Variola minor. The symptoms were fever, vomiting and mouth sores, as well as pustules full with liquid, which usually left scars. Luckily for the young prince, he also escaped from this disease and he was, again, described as strong and healthy.

Unfortunately for him, he was stricken six years later (aged 29) by Malaria<sup>17</sup>. “The king caught a fever which grew to two tertians- and paroxysms, he is also troubled by the pains in the head...” Even though Malaria is an infectious disease associated with the tropics, in the Tudor Age, it was an endemic illness for England<sup>18</sup>. Malaria comes from the Italian word for “bad air”, because this is the mechanism through which this disease was considered to be transmitted, along with the bite of the mosquito. In 1521, the King’s Malaria becomes chronic, so this is the moment when he became paranoid. Because of the fear of getting ill, he constantly moved the court and expelled the sick people. He became hypochondriac.

<sup>12</sup> Tuberculosis (TB) is a potentially serious infectious disease that mainly affects your lungs. The bacteria that cause tuberculosis are spread from one person to another through tiny droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes, according to medical reports found on <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Until his death, he had been married to Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of Henry VIII.

<sup>14</sup> Henry VII, also called (1457–85) Henry Tudor, earl of Richmond, (born January 28, 1457, Pembroke Castle, Pembrokeshire, Wales—died April 21, 1509, Richmond, Surrey, England), king of England (1485–1509), who succeeded in ending the Wars of the Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York and founded the famous Tudor dynasty.

<sup>15</sup> Smallpox is a contagious, disfiguring and often deadly disease that has affected humans for thousands of years. Naturally occurring smallpox was eradicated worldwide by 1980 — the result of an unprecedented global immunization campaign. Samples of smallpox virus have been kept for research purposes. This has led to concerns that smallpox could someday be used as a biological warfare agent, according to medical reports found on <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> See the BBC Documentary “Inside the Body of Henry VIIIth” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN\\_M&t=185s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN_M&t=185s)

<sup>17</sup> Malaria is a disease caused by a parasite. The parasite is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes. People who have malaria usually feel very sick, with a high fever and shaking chills. Each year, approximately 210 million people are infected with malaria, and about 440,000 people die from the disease. Most of the people who die from the disease are young children in Africa, according to medical reports found on <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> See the BBC Documentary “Inside the Body of Henry VIII” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN\\_M&t=185s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN_M&t=185s)

Being known as an intelligent and handsome man, King Henry suffered two major injuries, which later had a powerful impact on his physic and his mind. The first one was in 1524, when he had a head injury, during a tournament, and the second one happened to be during a match of royal tennis<sup>19</sup>, in 1527, when he wrenched his foot. If the first injury caused him horrific migraines that he had for almost the rest of his life, the second one affected the part of the body from which he gained his popularity as a strong and handsome man: his calves. Later, at the age of 36, he suffered from Varicose ulcer, apparently caused by the constructive nature of the garter he was wearing. Because medicine was not very developed at that time, it was a great risk for the King to experience blood poisoning. This caused him major problems for the rest of his life because of the lack of sanitation, and we will discover why.

#### IV. Medical care

This Tudor monarch was well-known for his interest in science, geometry, astronomy and, of course, medicine. What is less known is the fact that he did try to make some cures for a couple of illnesses, such as Varicose ulcer. He even made the “King’s plaster”, a treatment which was composed of 25 ingredients, some poisonous, such as lead. It is believed that the lead in his “treatment” damaged even more his leg condition, or it even contributed to his death.

At that time, the principles in medicine were very simple, borrowed from the Roman physician Galen, who said that the human body is composed of four fundamental humors: blood, spit, bile and black bile, and if their quantities are not the ones desired, an illness occurs. So, the 15 physicians supervised and even tasted the King’s humours in order to discover his state of health. One bizarre treatment and method for collecting the blood necessary for the analysis was the use of leeches<sup>20</sup>, put on the 55 bleeding points.

#### V. The acceleration of his moral degradation

Let us also study the motherhood of Henry VIII’s first wife. She had 7 pregnancies in total, but only the fifth was successful, leading to Queen Mary<sup>21</sup> the first. The rest of them were miscarriages. But, if we think about them, Catherine of Aragon<sup>22</sup> was able to get pregnant, so it was not her fault for not bearing a child. All this situation and its symptoms led to Syphilis.

<sup>19</sup>” From the royal courts of England and France to centre court at Wimbledon, from Henry VIII to Federer the great, the game of tennis is steeped in history and tradition. The precise origins of tennis are disputed, with some historians dating it back to Ancient Egypt. According to the official Web site for “Royal Tennis,” the game was played in fifth century Tuscany in Italy when villagers struck balls in the street with their bare hands.”, according to the article published on <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/SPORT/tennis/04/14/history.of.tennis.federer.henryIII/index.html>, accessed on December 14, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> The practice of bloodletting began around 3000 years ago with the Egyptians, then continued with the Greeks and Romans, the Arabs and Asians, then spread through Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It reached its peak in Europe in the 19th century but subsequently declined and today in Western medicine is used only for a few select conditions, according to <http://broughttolife.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/techniques/bloodletting>, accessed on December 12, 2019. Mary I, also called Mary Tudor, byname Bloody Mary, (born February 18, 1516, Greenwich, near London, England—died November 17, 1558, London), the first queen to rule England (1553–58) in her own right. She was known as Bloody Mary for her persecution of Protestants in a vain attempt to restore Roman Catholicism in England, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

Catherine of Aragon, (born December 16, 1485, Alcalá de Henares, Spain—died January 7, 1536, Kimbolton, Huntingdon, England), first wife of King Henry VIII of England (reigned 1509–47). The refusal of Pope Clement VII to annul Henry’s marriage to Catherine triggered the break between Henry and Rome and led to the English Reformation, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

In conclusion, the Tudor King had Syphilis in latent condition. But he was obsessed with the thought of getting a male heir to the British throne, so he divorced from Catherine, and the British church<sup>23</sup> from the Catholic rule, and he became the head of the Anglican church, at the age of 40.

At the age of 44, in 1536, when his second wife, Anne Boleyn, was pregnant with his child, a boy, he has another accident at a tournament, where he wanted to show his strength and the power of the country he was ruling. He was crushed by his horse, and he was unconscious for two hours. This event made his wife miscarry the baby boy. As a result, this accident caused severe damages to his brain and also to his personality because the area affected the most by the impact was the frontal lobe<sup>24</sup>, the centre for personality, behaviour and emotions.

Because of his severe accident, his ulcerated legs had to suffer a lot, their condition became worse. This is why no one could approach the King without noticing his smell of rotten meat. "The King has the worst legs in the world. Those who had seen them are astonished that he doesn't stay in bed, and judge that the least exertion could be dangerous to his life, yet no-one dare tell him so..."<sup>25</sup>

Even though the solution was to amputate his legs, no one dared to tell that to the King, because only 10% of the people of that time survived this method, and also because he became a tyrant who had more than 70,000<sup>26</sup> subjects killed by his hands or his rules.



## VI. His Diet

From 1536 on, because of his ulcerated legs, he could not exercise anymore, so he piled on the pounds, to a dramatic change. The measurements are completely opposite from 30 to 50 years of age: waistline - 32 inches/52 inches; chest - 39 inches/53 inches. As for the weight, he started in his 30s from 70- 80 kg, and at his death he had between 150-160 kg, almost double the weight. No wonder, because his meals consisted of 13 dishes per day, one of them entirely from pork. He ate a lot of meat, such as beef, pork, chicken, rabbit, exotic birds, no vegetables and he ate only strawberries from among the fruits. Again, he was a big fan of white bread, which caused him constipation repeatedly

<sup>23</sup> Anglicanism, one of the major branches of the 16th-century Protestant Reformation and a form of Christianity that includes features of both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Anglicanism is organized in the Anglican Communion, a worldwide family of religious bodies that represents the offspring of the Church of England and recognizes the archbishop of Canterbury as its nominal head. It prizes traditional worship and structure but operates autonomously and flexibly in different locales, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> The frontal lobe is the part of the brain that controls important cognitive skills in humans, such as emotional expression, problem solving, memory, language, judgment, and sexual behaviors. It is, in essence, the "control panel" of our personality and our ability to communicate, according to medical reports found on <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>, accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> See the BBC Documentary "Inside the Body of Henry VIII", [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN\\_M&t=185s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=845SszVoN_M&t=185s), accessed on December 12, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> "It is estimated that anywhere from 57,000 to 72,000 people were executed during Henry's 37 years' reign, but this is likely to be an exaggeration. Henry's break with Papal authority, and his second marriage – which was not sanctioned by the Pope – caused a rift between Henry and certain individuals at court, many of whom he knew well, and in some cases was close to", according to the article published on <https://www.historyextra.com/period/tudor/how-many-executions-was-henry-viii-responsible-for/>, accessed on December 16, 2019.



If that was not enough, he drank 10 beers (strong ale) per day and one to two bottles of sharp red wine. He did not bother if the wine was sharp because he drank it with a lot of sugar. His meals per week cost approximately 500 pounds and his salt intake was 20 g<sup>27</sup> per day. This explains his high blood pressure.

## VII. Autopsy. Conclusions

Finally, we can formulate some conclusions and put together some pieces of this complex puzzle.

Henry VIII suffered from multiple infections which caused him issues even with his wives (Syphilis), and which made him paranoid, obsessed and hypochondriac (infectious diseases such as: Variola, Smallpox and Malaria). He was bulimic, he was overeating and he also had type 2 diabetes from the big sugar intake (bread, strawberries, wine with sugar, etc). His personality mood swings were caused by a head trauma. This particular head trauma affected his frontal lobe and this is why he experienced personality alteration more intensively than other persons. The killer disease was diabetes, due its catastrophic effects and complications.

In my view, and I think it is a common view to us all, when speaking of a personality, a renowned man or someone holding an important function, we only judge the facts or their deeds just from the historical, objective point of view. However, as in the case of this man, Henry Tudor, and later this King, King Henry VIIIth, they had a story behind them, a personal life and an intimate environment which contributed to and influenced the decisions and measures that he/she made.

Henry VIII was the King of England, but before being the head of state, he was just an ordinary, complex man, who also happened to suffer physically and mentally because of many medical problems.

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<sup>27</sup> The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting sodium to less than 2,300 mg a day

## WHAT EVERY GIRL SHOULD LEARN FROM JANE EYRE/JANE EYRE

**Tadeea-Agneza Roca, EF, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Have you ever felt, while reading a novel, that you really like it? Being a big fan of the Victorian literature, I love the way in which a lot of female thoughts and inner feelings are expressed and exposed in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Moreover, Jane isn't the kind of woman resembling the Disney princesses: she isn't beautiful at all, but fights every trouble with dignity and self-confidence. If you haven't read the novel yet, there are some things that you may find useful:

### **1. You have the power to overcome any negative situation in your life, even if you had a difficult childhood or have a shady past. You always have to hope for the best.**

Our little Jane had a difficult childhood. Being an orphan, she was raised by her uncle and her aunt. After her uncle's death, she was treated like a servant. Mrs. Reed was very cruel to Jane, blaming her for everything wrong happened in the house. Her cousin, John, was the worst. He constantly reminded her that she was an orphan, excluding her from his and his sisters' games. She was punished and locked in the room that her uncle died in. She learns many lessons at Gateshead but the most important one was that she could control her temper. Jane never lost hope. When she was sent to the charity institution by her aunt, she hoped that no matter what, any place would be better than her aunt's house. When Jane came to Lowood Institution, the uneatable food and bad conditions did not frighten her. She learned a lot about letting go from Helen who presents her Christian outlines of forgiveness and endurance: one must bear the sins of others, turn the other cheek, and love thy enemy. She strived to have a better future, studied well and had a respectful occupation: a governess.

*"If all the world hated you, and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved you, and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends."* (Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p.78)

### **2. It is very important to be an educated person in order to succeed in life. Have confidence in your capabilities and believe in yourself. Dare to dream and pursue your goals outside of your comfort zone.**

Jane was missing all of the things which we expect to have normally in our lives. She had no family or money, not even a person whom she could call a friend, after her only friend from Lowood Institution had died in her arms. While living with her cruel aunt, books were her only caress and consolation, books which she read secretly completed by the stories Bessie told her. Jane focused on her studies and became an educated woman. After six years as a student, she became a teacher at Lowood. Then she got a job as a governess at Thornfield and lived a respectable life. She succeeded in saving some money and travelled away from Thornfield after the unsuccessful wedding. Through the help of her relatives, Jane became a teacher again. Throughout most of the book, only bad things happen to her, but she still goes on and lives happily even after all of these. We can see the importance of culture in someone's life, the way in which you should always strive to try something new in order to improve your life.

*"I remembered that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, awaited those who had the courage to go forth into its expanse, to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils."* (Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 98)



### 3. Don't ever let anyone tell you can't do something just because you're a woman.

Even though the novel was published in 1847, there is a new view on woman's importance in society: "Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags." (Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 130). Jane wanted freedom and equality between male and female and hated not to be treated equally. She was the woman who dared speak out for herself, showing her independence as a woman, by not relying on a man to survive. Things changed and nowadays women are free to express their own opinions, to become whatever they want to be. So...What stops you, ladies?

*"I am a free human being with an independent will."* (Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 307)

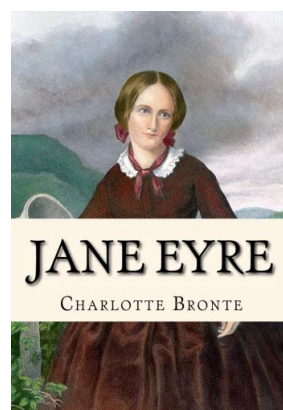
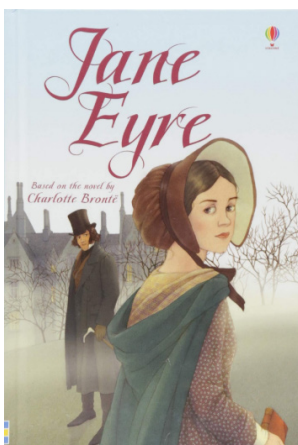
### 4. Marry only for love.

Jane's love life is as complicated as everything else in her life. She falls in love with Mr. Rochester, her employer, who is also in love with her. Their wedding is interrupted because Rochester has another wife which makes Jane break off the wedding because of her principles. She is proposed to by St. John, but she refuses since she knew that it would be more like an alliance, not true love, so it would be just a meaningless marriage. The fact that one should always marry for love can also be seen in Mr. Rochester's life. His first marriage was more of a business deal, because he cared more about his father-in-law's wealth, without knowing that his wife had an abnormal mental condition which ruined their marriage.

*"I have for the first time found what I can truly love – I have found you. You are my sympathy – my better self – my good angel – I am bound to you with a strong attachment. I think you good, gifted, lovely: a fervent, a solemn passion is conceived in my heart; it leans to you, draws you to my centre and spring of life, wraps my existence about you – and, kindling in pure, powerful flame, fuses you and me in one."* Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 384)

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## CHARLES DICKENS'S *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* - PIP'S BECOMING -REWRITING-

**Tadeea-Agneza Roca, EF, III**

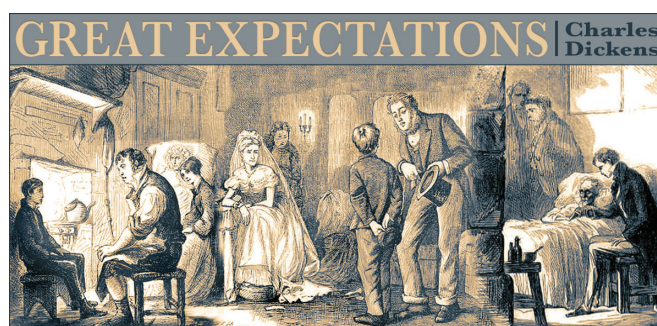
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciu

Hi. My name is Pip, Philip Pirrip. Let me tell you about the struggle of living in a poor family in the 21st century and more than that, in Romania. Isn't it a big challenge? Well, I'm seven and I live in a small village near Bacau. I have no parents, so I live with my bad-tempered sister and her over-calm husband. You don't know how many times I thought to call for the Child Protection Services, but I was absolutely sure that I would see Tickler more than I would like to. On the Christmas Eve, I was in the cemetery, putting a candle at my relatives' graves, when a convict came to me and asked me to give him some Wi-fi because he had no signal. Job done. A year after, I am learning how to crack a Facebook account from Biddy. One evening, while teaching Joe how to text messages, my sister arrived home with some news. It is about what I thought it would be the key element of my life, an invitation to meet Mrs. Havisham, a rich, old lady from my neighbourhood who wore her nasty wedding dress everyday. I guess it had been a bad break-up... Well, the strange lady told me to play some puzzle with her annoying adopted girl, Estella. The trick was to make me fall in love with her as I grow up, the girl being raised to be a heartbreaker. But the foul was I, because I was hoping to melt her heart.

Time passed by and a kind of secret benefactor made me a gift: the latest BMW model and a lot of money to make my dream come true: I wanted to be a cool guy and to go studying to Bucharest. So I went to that big city where I met my BFF, Herbert Pocket. I had a really wild night-life out there: clubbing, drinking, smoking, but when I wasn't doing these things I was only thinking about my Estella. Then troubles began: I started to spend too much money and Estella showed-up again more gorgeous than ever. She might have changed the foundation or the mascara, I guess, but nevertheless, she looked better than ever.

Now I'm 23 and a stranger shows up: "Can I lie down on your couch?". Guess who's back – the convict I saw when I was seven, Magwitch, saying that he's my bank. It's like the horoscope told me: Sorry, Pip, the mysterious helper is not the old lady you thought. I had to hide him from the cops because his ex-partner-in-crime, Compeyson, had come around in order to attack. He was, by coincidence, Miss Havisham's ex-lover. Magwitch was put back in jail and died, but not before Pip told him the ugly truth: Estella was his daughter. Meanwhile, Estella married the ugliest guy ever. I moved to London, worked with my BFF and many years after, I came home. While hanging around, I saw Estella, she came to me and said: "Pip, I've had a hard life: my husband was very abusive, and when he died, I married a poor doctor. Now I have to sell my Range Rover." We had 2 shots together and then I blocked her on Facebook.

I've had only two dreams in my life: to marry Estella and to be a cool guy. But do you know what I've learned from all that stuff? Keep it cool because not everything is going your way and you can't gain the love of someone who isn't feeling it. Oh, and don't be too reckless, the sun does not revolve around you and don't party too hard. You will still remember the girl that broke your heart 10 years ago, but you can always move on.





Have you ever read *Little Red Riding Hood*? (N.B. THE ORIGINAL ONE). Well, my story resembles her story. I met the wolf in the forest – and, tragically, I didn't manage to escape from him. And this is how my life changed. I gave birth to a child whom I named Sorrow, the Victorian society considered me an outcast, the man I loved abandoned me when I needed him most in my life and I ended up with Alec, the wolf – because he had the means to help my family.

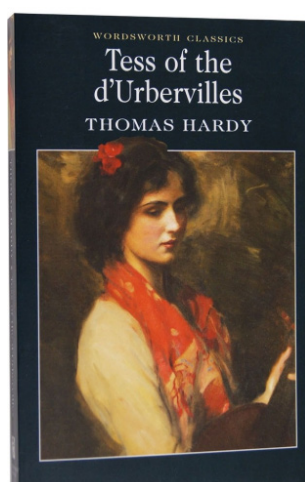
I suffered a lot when Angel, my true love, left me. I endured it with the hope that he will come back to me. Indeed, he came back to me. But it was too late. I was so shocked when I saw him that I simply lost myself. All the fury, the suffering that had darkened my soul in time overwhelmed me and, instinctively, I killed the wolf. I killed my life's torturer. I put an end to my suffering, but unfortunately, I put an end to my life too.

I didn't have a man in my life, to help me, to guide me, to protect me. My father wasn't involved in our problems. He only cared about his ancestors – that “the greatest of them was a knight, and his name was Pagan”. I didn't care about the ancestors. Our condition was bad anyway. When my parents sent me to Alec, I considered that I had no other choice. I killed Prince (the horse), I had to help my family somehow. And this is how the fact that I had no male-protector, in that society, made me become an outcast and I had to do things on my own. Somebody had to revenge me, hadn't they? Why not me?... Why could I not take my own vengeance? The only doubt that still haunts my thoughts is... what if I hadn't killed Alec/the wolf? He was sleeping. I could have run with Angel. Maybe I would have made it, to get far away from there. But, when I'm thinking better about it, I conclude that I didn't want Angel to get involved with my past; he might have killed him and might have paid for this with his life. If I hadn't killed Alec, I'm sure that he would have searched for me anywhere, he would have found me anyway. I loved Angel, and I still love him. I'm sure that he took care of my family. This is what he should have done from the beginning.

Now I'm a teacher. I've got the chance to start over in this world, but with one condition – while keeping the memories from my past life. I was born in a warm family. Now, from time to time, I suggest to my students to read a novel: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. They don't know that this is the description of my past life, nobody knows. Uncle Hardy made a really incredible job while writing, with a lot of details, some of which I myself don't remember too well. But I love how creative some of the students can be. They write on the sheets of paper things such as: Tess wasn't able to be an angel in the house – I love how it sounds, ANGEL in the house. I usually laugh about it: Tess wasn't an angel in the house, and also she didn't have an Angel in the house. She was doomed to pay for the mistakes of her ancestors, while being ruined.

Some of them insist on symbols. Which is the meaning of Pagan, my ancestor? Why was I wearing the red ribbon? Why the scene with Prince, my horse, with the crimson blood? They keep thinking about the

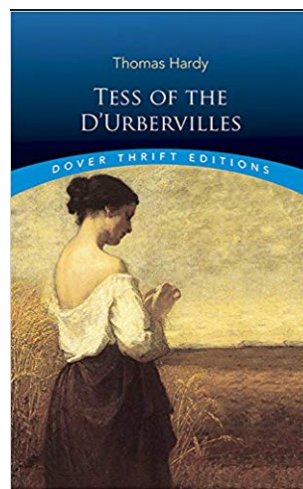
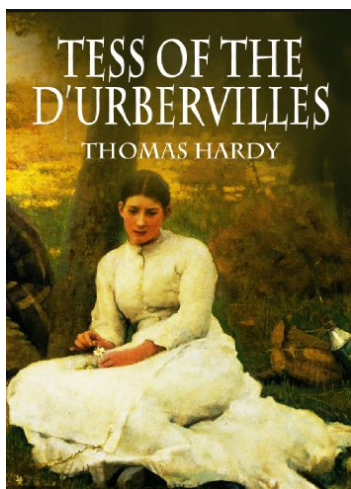
fact that this intense red, which kept appearing in my life, was in fact outlining my personality of *femme fatale*; well, I was fatal for Alec. He had always seen me as extremely seductive, but I wasn't even trying to be so.



Then I was also placed among those people who belong to the decadent period. I had embraced the decline of my social status (which was indeed in decline, to be honest) while accepting Alec in my life again. “An innocent victim of sexual violence”, Alec might have seduced me before the act, I might have had a subconscious attraction towards him. Well, as Hardy exposes me, I was curious, I was analyzing his “lip-shapes that had meant seductiveness”, Alec was “my weakness”. But even though it seems so, Hardy failed to represent me as “a desiring or speaking subject...” I was simply a “passive object of seduction who repeated the passive object of rape” (Rooney 1991: 96).

To be honest, I really like how some of the readers suffer with me, while reading my story. And how they are trying to give a meaning to my suffering, sticking with the idea of *Pure woman*.

However it may be, I didn't choose to come again in this life, with my memories, in order to reveal the reasons behind my actions. I wanted to see how it is to live in another society, another one than the Victorian society. God needed to send somebody who would be able to become a real teacher (He told me that this society will need many more good teachers to inspire the students), and I simply raised my hand. He was a little bit doubtful, but he remembered the fact that, even in the Victorian Era, I wanted to teach. So now I'm here, hoping to inspire my students, not giving too much attention to my past memories, but embracing the moment, the present. I advise you to do the same!



Dana-Iuliana Alupei (Tiliță), LEPC, I

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

*My loving people,*

*We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people.*

*Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust.*

*I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm: to which rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.*

*I know already, for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and We do assure you on a word of a prince, they shall be duly paid. In the mean time, my lieutenant general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.<sup>1</sup>*

## I. Becoming a trustworthy woman monarch

Choosing to analyze Queen Elizabeth I's Speech at Tilbury, made me think and realize at the same time how powerful her words can be when used wisely. In the present paper I will analyze one of the most famous speeches ever rendered in history by a woman monarch. The speech, held by Queen Elizabeth I at Tilbury on the 9th of August 1588, is but a sum of various tactics, called persuasion strategies that the Queen appeals to when she wants to gain control of her soldiers' minds as well as hearts. Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII with Anne Boleyn and Queen of England reigned in a period which was famous for the flourishing of drama, led by playwrights and poets, such as William Shakespeare or Edmund Spenser. Her forty-four years on the throne provided welcome stability for the kingdom and helped forge a sense of national identity through pride.



Even the political context is worth mentioning here as it stands for the entire ideology of the Renaissance, as the Queen is like God, a woman-king, worthy of being King of England. She was called Gloriana, just as the protagonist in Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene*.

The **authoritative source** is **the power of God**, the King, standing for the throne = the stomach, used here connotatively: as we know, the stomach is the organ responsible for digesting the food, but here, it is used with the meaning of **strength and vigour**.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/tilbury.htm>.



The metaphorical signification of this paradigm within the contextual frame of her speech supports and enhances the true message of her discourse: that of fostering courage and valience in the hearts of her subjects before the grand battle awaiting them. She acknowledges that her body may not be that of a king, but that *she feels* inside *like a king*. By differentiating between a *king* and a *king of England*, Elizabeth puts herself above the other princes of Europe, but, at the same time, her decisive intention is that of making the people of England feel superior to the other nations overseas. Elizabeth breaks the pattern of what a woman should be, and sets a precedent for female monarchs. She admits the lack of a king in England, but sees herself as both king and queen, being “married” to England and her people.

The entire discourse marks a gradual transition from *weakness* (the former part) to manliness (the latter one) through the word *daring*: the King of England, the very symbol of *courage*, whose embodiment is the Queen herself, is the symbol of the Renaissance<sup>2</sup>, bringing to mind Hamlet’s soliloquy: “What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties...” (II, 2, 303-307/310). What a grand image of strength and courage the woman-monarch created both in the minds of her subjects and of nowadays’ readers!

## II. Different approaches to analyzing Queen Elizabeth I’s discourse



Fig. 1 – Elizabeth I glorious speech at Tilbury<sup>3</sup>

*Linguistically* speaking, the words she uses and especially the ways in which she exploits their contextual meanings in this discourse are really artful. The paradigms *tyrants*, *fear*, *weakness*, *glory*, *valour* come to bring consistency to the discourse as they represent the ideology of the entire era.

The deictics that are used (the personal pronouns *we*, *I*, *you*) and the possessive adjectives which are employed (*my*, *your*) reinforce the idea of national identity.

This discourse foregrounds a wide range of lexical items carrying modal meanings, from the classic epistemic modality concerned with degrees of certainty and possibility: *shall*, *should*, to the root modalities, showing permission and volition: *let*, *will*. By using the imperative “Let tyrants fear”, she wants to emphasize that she is not a tyrant as she is not afraid of anything.

<sup>2</sup> The Renaissance man aspiring towards the heights of nobility and yet, touching the ground when confronting the reality, but all in all, *daring* and *valiant* when defending his national land. Such a Renaissance woman monarch does Elizabeth I’s speech portrays. A portrait reminding of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Vetruvian Man* (~ 1492), where the principles of proportion and beauty are explored, having as model Marcus Vitruvius’s *On Architecture* (a book explaining the perfect proportion in both architecture and the human body). It is this idea of connection between parts for a strong architectural design to last, which seems to coherently link the *bricks* of the queen’s discourse, where “everything is connected to everything else”.

<sup>3</sup> <https://minervacasterly.tumblr.com/post/126265458346/elizabeth-is-glorious-speech-at-tilbury-on-the>



Analyzing this particular discourse from a *rhetorical* perspective, there can be observed several macrodiscursive levels, displayed by:

- **contrast**, by means of the conjunction *but*, that discloses the yet unseen/unknown side of the sender: she is weak *but* through GOD, she is King; being used for five times, this conjunction juxtaposes the ideas in order to heighten the effect of greatness, of courage, of being the King of England and to focus on that specific aim: declaring that she is the one leading them to glory;
- another device, used in this discourse, is **gradation**, meaning the arrangement of ideas in such a way that each succeeding one rises above its predecessor in order to put forth the idea of impressiveness or force: she admits her *weakness*, because she is aware of it, but she stands in front of such weaknesses just to prove that she is there, for her people, to fight for them and with them;
- **repetition** means a reiteration of the same word or phrase in order to offer expressiveness to the discourse. This way, she uses the word God to let her troops know that she is under God's power and at the same time that she is God;
- **parallelism**, which is of two types: **lexical**: "to live and die amongst you", these two verbs used here have an antithetic effect, and also render the paradoxical or opposing-nature of life; and **syntactical**: it is shown at the level of the clause, where both main and subordinate clauses are linked by semicolons:

*Let tyrants fear, I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust.*



### III. Persuasive strategies

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned the fact that the Queen uses a sum of tactics in order to make her soldiers trust her and she brilliantly manages to do so. One of these persuasion strategies is subsumed to *ethos* as throughout the entire speech, she tries to compare herself to the people, she wants to be **reliable**. Regardless of her being anointed by God and placed above them, she still makes ongoing comparisons, especially when she says “live and die amongst you all”. She walks among her people before she speaks, making her a tangible presence, rather than a faraway head of church and state. Not just talking about life, but death as well, keeps Elizabeth close to the people because it reminds them that she is as mortal as they are, making herself **credible** in front of them. Moreover, Elizabeth I talks about “my honour and my blood”, referring not just to her physical person, but also to her royal status. No doubt, Elizabeth I sees honour as her innermost core as a monarch, and so she is willing to sacrifice herself, body and soul, to England, to protect her country and her people.

Appealing to strategies subsumed to *logos*, making her soldiers aware of why they are on the battlefield, Elizabeth I’s speech is founded on her refusal “to distrust my faithful and loving people”, meaning that she trusts her soldiers as representatives of her valorous subjects to defend her, and defend England. She believes that her people really do love her and would lay down their lives for her. This idea of protecting Elizabeth I and England is carried on when she says “I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects”. This suggests that Elizabeth believes in the people and she wants them to follow her to glory.

In building her discourse, Queen Elizabeth I resorts to *pathos* as the very first line suggests. The opening of the discourse with “my loving people” shows a bond between Elizabeth and the people of England, which proves to be appealing to the hearts of her soldiers. Her speech marks a transition from an apparently calm tone to a passionate unfolding of power or thrustworthiness, focusing on the sense of duty and of national pride.

### Conclusions

To conclude, we can say that while analyzing this political discourse, seeing what Queen Elizabeth I meant by the very special choice and organization of her words and what she was trying to get by delivering such a wonderful speech, the reader can observe that the message of the speech/discourse, masterly “woven” out of some important lexical threads, had a huge impact on her soldiers, leading them to a “never-fading” **glory** and building the feeling of **national pride** that the United Kingdom has inherited and handed down up to nowadays.

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## THE *HOWL* OF THE AMERICAN 1950S

Denisia-Maria Pleșcău, RE, III

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Elena Ciobanu

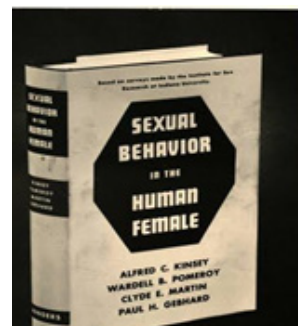
“America is not yet the kind of nation that needs or wants a homogeneous people, accent, culture or religion.” (Sirs, 1947:11)



*The image of the ideal American family in the 1950s*

Soon enough Levittown, through its concept, outlined the new American dream and the image of the ideal family (see the image on the left)<sup>1</sup> was promoted. "The ideal 1950s man was the provider, protector and the boss of the house. The middle-class, white suburban male was the ideal" (*Life Magazine*, 1955). A common stereotype stated that women were going to college to earn their MRS Degree. In 1957 a baby was born every 7 seconds (the baby boom) and family values seemed to dominate the Americans' perspective. This was a world where there were "no prior marriages, no children from prior relationships, no threat or even thought of divorce, no infidelities, no drinking problems, no drugs, a world where the father was the breadwinner and the mother the breadmaker". (Pitcher, 2019).

Can we imagine such a perfect world, where harmony dominated the whole America? Was there everything only peaches and cream? Of course we can imagine it, but this realm which the American Government tried to create never existed. If we have the courage to dig more, we can notice that during the '50s a significant number of legally married people lived separately, half of the marriages that began in the early '50s ended in divorce and the number of illegitimate babies put up for adoption rose by 80% from 1944 to 1955. One of the people who dared to outline a wake-up call is the sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, the author of *Sexual behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual behavior in the Human Female*<sup>2</sup> (1953). Because of these books he was accused of promoting licentiousness, but in fact everything that he had written was true: premarital sex was common, extramarital affairs were frequent among married couples and one in ten of the US population was gay



*The manifest of the real America*

<sup>1</sup> Image available at <https://envisioningtheamericandream.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/american-dream-swscan06818-copy.jpg>, accessed on 18th of December, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> The image on the left represents the manifest of the real America; available at <https://ro.pinterest.com/eyezen/dr-alfred-kinsey/>, accessed on 20th of December, 2019.



The Gay Rights Movement, named Mattachine Society, was founded in 1951 by Harry Hay. The so-called 'Seeds of Revolt' were spread everywhere. People woke up and realized that nothing was as they thought it was and began to reject the rules imposed upon them: "Obey authority, control your emotions!", "Don't make waves, fit in with the group!", "Don't even think about sex!" (Pitcher, 2019). Thus, they became sympathizers of ROCK'N ROLL and THE BEAT GENERATION.



Ginsberg among American young people

The Beat Generation is a group of post-WWII American writers who came to prominence in the 1950s. Central elements of the Beat Culture included experimentation with drugs, alternative forms of sexuality, an interest in Eastern religions, a rejection of materialism and the idealizing of exuberant, uncensored means of expression and being. Beside Jack's Kerouac *On the Road*, with its sublime use of language, Allen's Ginsberg *Howl* brought to Americans' attention the true part of their world.

Deciding that he was not going to publish any of his writings (as he said in one of his interviews), Irwin Allen Ginsberg<sup>3</sup> chose to unleash his imagination and the result of this action was *Howl*, the poem that made him one of the most renowned poets of the 1950s. Why did not he publish it immediately? He had read it in front of a small public and in front of his friends, Jack Kerouac and William Seward Burroughs, in an art gallery, and everybody liked it. But Allan was still hesitating. He was afraid that his father would not like it, because of the explicit gay imagery. At one point he decided to send it to his father, an American born from Russian parents and a lyrical poet, who answered him through a letter: "This is a poem full of energy! Do you need all those blue words?" (Ginsberg, 1994).

After his father's answer, he decided to give it to Lawrence Ferlinghetti, to publish it. Ferlinghetti was arrested for publishing a poem in which licentiousness dominated. At that time, Allan was in Tangier, with Kerouac and Burroughs, who needed help to assemble the manuscript of *Naked Lunch*. This was more important than going back to fight a temporary local trial. Experts' testimony was accepted and the result was favorable for Allan. Through this trial, the attention of readers was directed towards this creation and gave it the power to surpass the immensity of time.

What is so interesting about *Howl*? Whitman's writings inspired Ginsberg to bring American poetry, step by step, to the stage of the so-needed candor. What is this so-called 'candor'? It is the "inadvertent, un-manipulative, spontaneous frankness, making the private world public"(Ginsberg, 1994). He also thought that ordinary speech was the highest speech, because its sentences penetrate in every direction esthetically and intellectually, but are also commonly understood. Through poetry he could express sincerely his opinions regarding everything that surrounded him:



Moloch, the demon who brought the American society down on its knees in the 1950s

<sup>3</sup> Image available on <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/allen-ginsberg>, accessed on 20th of December, 2019.



“I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked...  
What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?

Moloch! <sup>4</sup> Solitude! Filth! Ugliness!

Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks! Moloch the vast stone of war!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery!

Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo.” (Ginsberg, 1953:3)

According to de Plency, “Moloch was the god of the Ammonites, portrayed as a bronze statue with a calf’s head adorned with a royal crown and seated on a throne. When a child was sacrificed to Moloch, a fire was lit inside the statue. The priests would then beat loudly on drums and other objects so that the cries would not be heard.” (1863:470)



The Moloch of the ‘50s, even though he was not literally killing children, took over the American society by automatizing its soul. Everyone had to fit in with the group, the creative child within each individual was becoming, step by step, dull and in search of a hiding place, a place where he could use the bright colors of his childhood without being noticed. The ones who could not find a refuge were “destroyed by madness” (Ginsberg, 1953:3), being caught by Moloch in the pure machinery of His mind, a machinery which started to function following a certain rhythm which led to (self-) destruction. Moloch was “the vast stone of war” (Ginsberg, 1953:21) because of the chaos created by the Vietnam War. Young boys were sent to fight, in vain, without a certain aim, in a place which became well-known because of the futile massacres which took place there. Ginsberg’s *Howl* is meant to wake up the people’s conscience, it is the encouragement for each individual to go in search of his soul, which got lost inside of the big machinery.

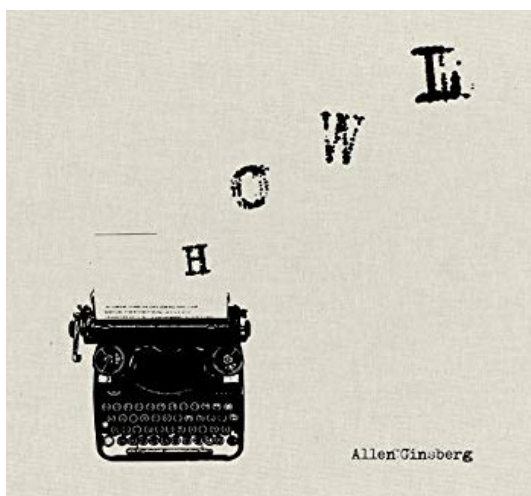
The new universe created by people, as a sign of revolt against machinery, the realm of psychedelic drugs and eccentric behavior was really well understood by Ginsberg, who had to face the reality of his mother’s nervous breakdowns. She was a refugee from Russia and spent her life in mental hospitals. Having seen his mother in such a state, he developed a great tolerance for eccentric behavior and a kind of understanding towards the misery that people go through. He felt the spirit of the time at its strongest intensity, and the love that he should have received from his mother, but had not received, brought him to a stage in his life where he was just longing for feminine bliss, but at the same time was afraid of it, as he states in his interviews. He chose to embrace a gay identity, as a compensation for the love that he had not received in his childhood.

<sup>4</sup> Image available on <https://babylonbee.com/img/articles/article-4289-2.jpg>, accessed on 21st of December, 2019.

The beauty of the 1950s is given by the strength with which people from that time fought against the Government's will to impose its values on its people. With a lot of courage, the American society started to know what brought its soul to life and, through Ginsberg's *Howl* and other creations belonging to the members of the Beat Generation, the seeds of a new direction, of a new way of perceiving life in its essential beauty, were created. *Howl* had just outlined the fact that people should not lose their souls in the agony of routine, they should search for their true selves while discovering new aspects of life and society.

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## I. Find yourself and your origins

When it comes to being yourself it is a difficult and endless process. You think about yourself like a small universe with all its history, the past that you have and the new beginnings that will start with tomorrow. Living in a society is the first of all the necessary stages. You have to learn how to develop yourself just looking back to all the people before you that already built all that you have and see around you; you have to learn how to love yourself just the way you are just looking at all the treasures that your predecessors gave you when you were not even born.

Every country is like each of us. Unique, trying to develop every day, every year, with a personal, rich history behind, with good and bad parts or moments but, no matter what, trying every minute to move forward, trying to make the best choices for a 'perfect' future. Its people get imbued with everything that represents the identity of that nation. They are born in a family that keeps and shares traditions and, after years, they combine what they learned and saw for a great purpose: a new family.

## II. A new place to discover

Romania is a small country in Eastern Europe. When we talk about it, we seem to know all about our country, but it takes time, energy, effort and love to see the 'real' face of it. Romania has a long, interesting and complex history with difficult moments to gain and maintain its independence, but every time with its people trying hard to keep all that is unique and alive. This is the reason why this country looks like an endless treasure, always having something new to give to those who are really interested in seeing, believing and keeping memories and unforgettable moments in their minds and souls.

This country is perfect for so many people because it suits many needs. If you love to travel or to enjoy some fresh air you will love all the beautiful places that are here because the connection with nature is so powerful and unique. If you like history and all its mystery, then this country will look like a magnet for you because its history looks so close and it looks like it will start afresh every time you find out something new about it because its people keep it alive every day.

It is just so easy, being a tourist, to realize that no matter how much you know about Romania, there will always be something new to see, to understand, to discover, to share and to keep in your heart. That is why it is never too late to start that adventure. Romania is my beloved treasure and I am proud to mention a few of its most interesting places to visit. Those amazing places will show that you can find beauty even in small things and you will find and enrich yourself over and over again.



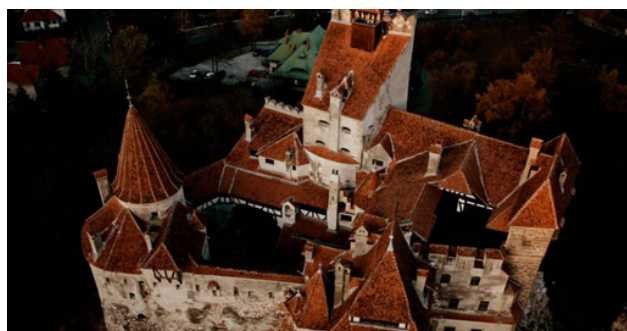
### III. Amazing places you must visit

Nature has an important place in my country and a very beautiful and unique place where people can find amazing landscapes is Transfăgărășan. It is an amazing road with an interesting shape. Driving there will give you the best feeling, making you feel free and you can disconnect from all the thoughts and worries you may have. You just need to unwind and open your eyes to see how beautiful the nature here can be and how much you can be amazed by that.

That road was finished on 20 September 1974 and became popular when the presenters of the *Top Gear* car show called the place the best and the most spectacular mountainous road in the world. In an article, the presenters announce that “Romania’s highest road has all the ingredients in the Perfect Road recipe. But can it live up to the hype?”<sup>1</sup> Thus, after describing all the experience, the presenters conclude that it is “a great driving road, then? It’s got most of the right ingredients: a string of great corners, draped over a mountain. Scintillating views as you ascend or descend. And a nice, remote location. But you’ll only ever get to fully tap into your car’s potential for a precious hour or so. The lesson? If there’s a road you adore, only tell a select few people about it. And certainly don’t announce it on a British motoring TV show.”<sup>2</sup>

Another amazing place where nature and, this time, history also are perfectly combined is The Peleş Castle. It was built for Carol I, the first king of Romania, between 1873 and 1914, and was inaugurated in 1883. Now it represents an important monument for the culture and the history of our country. More information and audio-video promotional materials can be found on the official website - <http://peles.ro/>.

Another castle, but this time a little bit different and maybe more interesting for those who really like seeing history in a ‘bloody’ way is Bran Castle. A lot of people come and visit it because of all the mystery and the legends about Dracula (Vlad III, known as Vlad the Impaler, was voivode (or prince) of Wallachia three times between 1448 and his death) that are well known by the tourists all around the world. Those two castles are so different but unique when it comes to the message that we get and the feeling that we have when we visit them. The first one shows life in a royal way, with all its small details, an expensive living now and then. The second one shows the dark side of life, and it is focused on your worst fear: death.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.topgear.com/car-news/big-reads/transfagarasan-highway-worlds-best-road>, accessed January 17, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.





An amazing way to go back in time and become a part of history starts with Maramureș. It is the perfect place where you can find out many things about the origins and traditions of Romania. Time stops there because people keep history alive and still they give to their children, piece by piece, every detail, to make sure that Maramureș will be all the time a little but important piece of history that people will never

forget. The costumes, the food, the way people interact there, everything is so authentic and unique. For example, as in other parts, there is a bridal dance, a special dance that they celebrate in a very special and unique moment. The church represents one of the most important places for them. When it comes to food, on “Palm Saturday, women from Maramures bake small loaves of bread for each member of the family. This bread is called ‘Wheat flower’ and tradition claims that those eating it that day will see each other in Heaven.”<sup>3</sup> The cuisine in this area will definitely attract any visitor.

Even the way in which people from Maramures think about death and what comes after that it is so unique and funny. A good place to visit and see that is The Merry Cemetery of Săpânța where every tomb tells a story. There are short funny messages or poems where people express their feelings or thoughts about the person that just passed away. We find out that “each grave is marked, not with an austere, cold stone, but with a lively, beautifully carved wooden cross, painted in the radiant blue of heaven and decorated with a painting and an original poem that disclose a little something about the life and character of the plot’s eternal inhabitant. Some of the verses are wickedly funny, others are more whimsical. Some are heartbreaking, telling of lives tragically cut short by accidents or illnesses”.<sup>4</sup> On the same site we find a funny one that will make your day a little better:

*“Here I rest.  
Stefan is my name.  
As long as I lived, I liked to drink.  
When my wife left me,  
I drank because I was sad.  
Then I drank more  
to make me happy.  
So, it wasn’t so bad  
that my wife left me,  
Because I got to drink  
with my friends.  
I drank a lot,  
and now, I’m still thirsty.  
So you who come  
to my resting place,  
Leave a little wine here.”*<sup>5</sup>



<sup>3</sup> [www.visitmaramures.ro/index.php?task=category&category=cuisine](http://www.visitmaramures.ro/index.php?task=category&category=cuisine), accessed January 20, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> <http://romaniatourism.com/press-the-merry-cemetery.html>, accessed November 25, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

#### IV. Keep memories that will make you feel complete

Every detail of the place we inhabit and all the history that we keep inside make us see the world in a personal way and help us develop every day, more and more. The most important thing is that we can, any-time, discover new places and share all that we have with the people around. Being a tourist is a gift that we should take advantage of because it will give us the feeling that we can collect memories and try new ones but, at the same time, keeping inside all our past and expanding our small universe. We have our personal history with things that we have learned and kept deep inside our souls, but blending it with our collective history by visiting historical places will strengthen our roots. That way, we can learn to be curious find out more and visit new places, it does not matter how far they seem to be or get.

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# THE IMPACT OF AUTOMATION AND A.I. ON THE ECONOMY

**Cristian Vlad Pirvu, Business Management, I**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

For as long as humanity has existed, labour and hardships have been unfortunate and inescapable constants in everyone's life no matter how rich or powerful someone happened to be. Primitive hunters were forced to track and kill animals in order to survive, medieval peasants had to toil in the fields from dawn until dusk to prepare for the winter and even successful CEOs in the 21st century report working up to thirteen hours a day as the threat of being replaced by the board of directors looms over their heads.

Another inescapable truth, however, is the fact that humans can be very smart and incredibly lazy. As a result, we made tools to make our work easier, from spears and ploughs to huge tractors and complex industrial machinery. Generally speaking, the creation of new tools and advancements in technology has a positive result. Machines tend to increase productivity, free up labour that is then used in other sectors and also boost efficiency. One good example is the Agricultural Revolution that took place in western countries during the 18th century and early 19th century. While agricultural output grew tremendously (which led to a rapid increase in population size), the share of people working the land went from 40% to just under 15%. Much of this progress can be attributed to inventors such as Jethro Tull or Edmund Quincy, who worked to improve antiquated agrarian practices by applying science and technology.

Contraptions such as the threshing machine or the seed drill were just a taste of things to come. As time went on, automation revolutionized industry as well as the service sector, often causing mass social upheavals due to the thousands of people that were fired from their jobs as a result of being rendered obsolete. The solution to the unemployment problem was free public education. By investing large sums of money states could ensure that the average person was educated enough to be hired not due to his or her muscle power but for knowledge and skills that could not be replicated by cold, unthinking and unfeeling machines.

However, in the 21st century, it appears that machines have started to outcompete humans in the brainpower department, too. Teams of talented computer scientists have created software capable of surpassing humans in chess (AlphaZero has an Elo rating of 3750 while Magnus Carlsen, the current world champion has an Elo rating of "only" 2861), Go and even online real time strategy games such as Starcraft 2.



These advancements do not only threaten the careers of a few professionals but have also begun to endanger the future of the 13 million people that work in the transportation industry in the USA alone. Companies like Waymo and GmCruise have already begun testing self-driving cars.

They expect them to appear on the open market in less than a decade. Another important thing to mention is the fact that self-order kiosks have already been implemented by McDonald's and KFC and could potentially cause over 5 million Americans to lose their jobs.

As machines and A.I software advance, people will have to learn how to use their social skills to their fullest extent because jobs that require human interaction will largely be spared by automation. Another way to remain competitive might be to invest in higher education, especially in STEM fields. A study realized by researchers at Pennsylvania State University showed that while even careers in this field might be affected, STEM graduates have every chance of finding a job in the coming decades.

This does not mean the future needs to be a battle of man-versus-machine. Rather, there is the opportunity for humans to work with machines, as suggested by Thomas W. Malone, a professor at MIT Sloan School of Management and co-director of MIT's Inventing the Organizations of the 21st Century initiative. As machine co-workers grow increasingly competent, human-to-machine collaboration technologies will make organizations more intelligent and will greatly improve overall human work performance.

In conclusion, recent advancements in automation and A.I promise to radically change our way of life once more. We have an incomplete picture of what the future holds for us so it is crucial that we keep an ear to the ground so that we can better prepare for any sudden shifts in the job market.

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## WESTERN WOMEN DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

**Cristian Vlad Pirvu, Business Management, I**  
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Martin Luther once said that “War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity, it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families. Any scourge is preferable to it.”<sup>1</sup> While his words are true, it is important to understand that conflicts can have far-reaching effects, some of them going beyond the clearly detrimental results of deaths, destruction or dislocation. Such is the case of the Second World War and the way it changed the status of women all across the western world.

Before World War II most women could only work in “traditionally female” professions such as typing or sewing. Furthermore, it was considered normal for young women to leave the workforce forever after they had their first child. The war changed both the type and volume of work women were allowed to do. As the Nazi war machine grew ever stronger and threatened to conquer Europe, the United States military was forced to conscript more and more young men into its ranks. This unsurprisingly led to a labour shortage which women were expected to fill. Over five million women started working in defense plants and factories around America. It soon became clear to them that the departure of the soldiers was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Although women earned more money than before, it was not as much as men could get for the same jobs. Nevertheless, many of them achieved a degree of financial self-reliance that was unheard of before the war.

While they gained greatly from being able to work in factories, women also had to contend with a hazardous work environment. The chemicals used in munitions factories were known to turn their hair and skin yellow (which led to the nickname of Canary Girls). The hours in factories were long, the commuting tedious, and the work itself monotonous, factors which led to many workplace deaths as even a momentary lapse of attention could prove to be disastrous when working with heavy machinery and explosives that could level entire bunkers in seconds.

Another “slice of life” that was forever changed by the war was women’s fashion. Due to the fact that western nations needed to stockpile as many raw materials as they could, some textile materials such as silk (needed for the making of parachutes) were taken off the market entirely. Furthermore, the remaining ones were carefully rationed. With these limitations placed on clothing manufacturers, high fashion took a backseat to more utilitarian garments. This led to the blurring of the lines between different social classes. Perhaps for the first time in history, a woman with a meager budget could buy the same type of clothes as one from the upper crust.



<sup>1</sup> [https://i.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin\\_luther\\_138206?src=t\\_any](https://i.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin_luther_138206?src=t_any)

Race relations also improved in this time period as all Americans had to put away their prejudice and hatred in order to work together and win the war. An all-black battalion of the Women's Army Corps had the task of sorting and delivering the letters of American soldiers that were stationed in Europe. Their motto was "No mail, low morale." During the conflict they kept 7 million identification cards with serial numbers to distinguish between soldiers with the same names. They investigated incomplete addresses and also had the regrettable mission of returning mail addressed to men who had been killed in action.

A few brave and ambitious women even managed to have an active and direct role in the defense of their homes. In Great Britain they worked as searchlight operators, illuminating the German military aircraft flying during night-time so that the men operating the anti-aircraft guns could shoot them down before they had a chance to drop any bombs on the British population centers. According to the historian Gerard J. De Groot, one newspaper reported that "Many men were amazed that women could make adequate gunners despite their excitable temperament, lack of technical instincts, their lack of interest in aeroplanes and their physical weaknesses".<sup>2</sup>

However, after all these accomplishments the end of the war threatened to undo the progress women had made in affirming their rights and independence. Social commentators were worried that when men returned from military service there would be no jobs available for them, and admonished women to return to their domestic responsibilities as soon as the war in Europe was over.<sup>3</sup> Even though as many as 75% of women said that they wanted to continue working after World War II, women were laid off in large numbers at the end of the war or were delegated to degrading "pink-collar jobs".

Despite this setback, by 1950 over 30% of women were working in the private sector and were earning their own salary. The events of the war had cemented the notion that women were as capable and as diligent as men were.

#### *Webography:*

<https://www.womensmemorial.org/history-of-black-women>, accessed 17 December 2019

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-clothes-rationing-affected-fashion-in-the-second-world-war>, accessed 19 December 2019

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24423575?seq=1>, accessed 19 December 2019

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/rise-to-world-power/us-wwii/a/american-women-and-world-war-ii>, accessed 21 December 2019



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24423575?seq=1>, accessed 19 December 2019.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/rise-to-world-power/us-wwii/a/american-women-and-world-war-ii>.

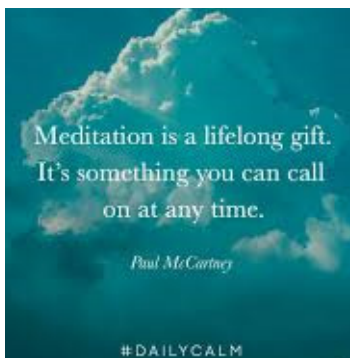
# THE POWER OF THOUGHTS

**Amalia Bucurel, Gabriel Bugiuianu, KMS, II**  
Coordinator: PhD Professor's Assistant Gabriela Andrioai

Relaxation techniques have been practised for many years now and researchers find them effective. The human body is a perfectly structured machine with different functions. The body's computer, the brain, is, by far, the most fascinating, sophisticated and efficient computer that has ever been designed. Our mind cannot be confined to what is inside our skull or even our body, because it extends beyond our physical selves. Thus, our mind is not simply our perception of experiences, but the experiences themselves. When we look at the body, mind and spirit, what we are really seeking to understand is the energy of our feelings and emotions. All that we experience in this "subjective world" is part of the mind. That is why through meditation, our mind can achieve evolved states. It is only by the power of thoughts that we succeed awakening the consciousness and spread energy into the whole body. It all happens for a reason and we attract everything by simply stating our inner thoughts.

To effectively battle stress, you need to activate your body's natural relaxation response. A good technique is to slow down and try a deep breathing exercise. This is a type of meditation that focuses your attention on various parts of your body from head to toes.

## How to practice breathing



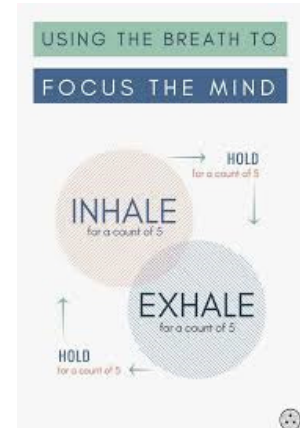
Find a comfortable place where you can sit or stand and try to relax your body by breathing in through your nose then, let your body fill with as much air as it can noticing the sensations you get from the action. Hold the air and then slowly exhale it through your mouth. Let your jaw relax, feel the tension leaving you and continuing to leave you. Repeat the action! This will soothe the immediate feelings of anxiety that can help you focus on your next step. While you relax lay focus on only one thought: express your appreciation for everything that exists in your life!

Next, imagine a peaceful place with sunny weather and fresh air. Inhale the fresh air and feel it into your abdominal cavity. Continue to relax; imagine a light sphere above your head, let it enter and while it does,

feel how it removes all the bad energy inside you! Feel how the tension disappears!

Play with the sphere: place it inside your chest, near your heart, feel it vibrating and flowing white rays of bright light touch all your vital organs. The sphere becomes a lotus which blooms inside you. Enjoy every moment of peace! Continue playing! Place the sphere near your lumbar area, towards your kidneys, they symbolise vitality, the secret of eternal life. Feel how your kidneys absorb the colour of the sphere.

Give thanks to the sphere of energy for cleaning and washing the negativity in you. Push this negative energy down through your feet towards the earth beneath you. When you feel you are ready, open your eyes, your body feels lighter, you feel like flying as a feather.



You have attained a state of deep rest that put the brakes on stress, slowed your breathing and heart rate, lowered your blood pressure and brought your body and mind back into balance. Now you can enjoy the rest of the day and remember that being positive is the key to success!

Don't forget that we are all different and that are many relaxation techniques. What fits you might not fit somebody else. Most relaxation techniques can be done by you but you may also pay for a professional massage or an acupuncture session. With regular practice you can reduce everyday stress and anxiety and improve your wellbeing. Your health depends on your wellbeing so practice progressive relaxation.

*Webography:*

<https://www.kenshowellness.com/blog/2018/10/20/what-is-the-body-mind-spirit-connection>

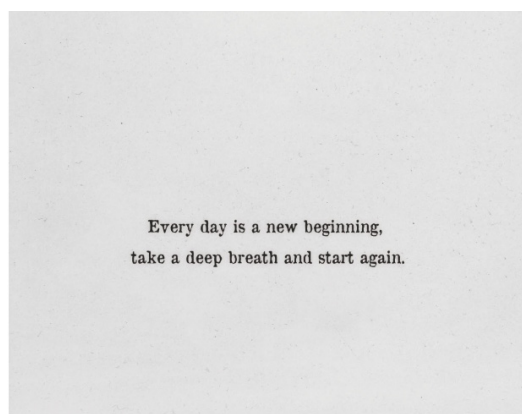
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3096191/>

<https://qz.com/866352/scientists-say-your-mind-isnt-confined-to-your-brain-or-even-your-body/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/290974825919224360/>

<data:image/jpeg;base64>

<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/mindful-breathing/>





**Cătălin-Andrei Savin, TI, I**

Coordinator: PhD Professor's Assistant Gabriela Andrioai

Technology is very important nowadays because it gives us constant and universal accessibility. Media advertises technology's advance every day. We follow tutorials on YouTube or any other social networks on technology topics. Technology employs new thinking and it is the innovation brought by the new technologies that have changed our world forever.

The history of technology has transformed from the Industrial Revolution along with the appearance of Artificial Intelligence. The aim of this wide-ranging branch of computer science is to mimic human cognition and focus on complex problem-solving. Some of the activities computers with artificial intelligence are designed to, include: speech recognition, learning, planning and problem solving. Research associated with AI includes programming computers for certain traits such as: knowledge, reasoning, problem solving, perception, learning, planning and even the ability to move objects.

Artificial intelligence software is used in many real-world applications. With a simple search for an Internet item, we get all possible results related to it. Search engines have the ability to provide highly accurate predictive technology based on our searches or online behaviour. It is as if all the search engines can read our minds. In fact, in pattern recognition, AI programs look for repeated or known occurrences of data as in the case of artificial vision and speech recognition. With a simple voice recognition system we can make a phone call without touching our cell phone and while we are driving our car. Even applications like word processor and e-mail make use of AI concepts. The grammar checker for example, attempts to understand and correct a language concept that most users cannot fully explain themselves.

Many companies from USA and China wanted to integrate artificial intelligence in their computers. Nowadays, this technology has already been incorporated in our computers and smart TVs, portable speakers, vacuum cleaners, led strips, peripherals and even in the electronic devices with which our cars have been provided.

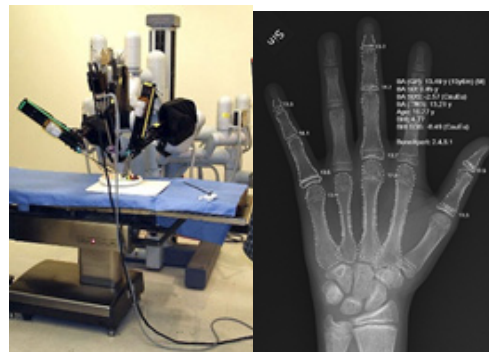
Along with the development of technology more companies are investing resources in machine learning, indicating an increase of Artificial intelligent products and applications such as Siri - which offers a faster way of getting things done on Apple devices; IBM's Watson - which predicts and shapes future outcomes and automate complex processes to optimize employees' time, or Amazon Alexa - a virtual assistant capable of voice interaction, music playback, streaming podcasts, playing audiobooks or provide real-time information.



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Apart from all the amazing things based on AI technology we are using today, Artificial Intelligence is progressing rapidly. In the field of medicine for example, AI is useful for diagnostics, drug development, treatment personalisation or gene editing, having the potential of revolutionizing the way surgery is being taught and practiced.

Artificial intelligence also contributes to the help and growth of car industry, companies build cars like Tesla with autonomous driving capability. Tesla vehicles have the ability to take action and form networks with other Tesla vehicles in order to share local information and insights. Tesla's algorithms can spot the drops of rain on a windshield or, follow the lines on the road. It becomes obvious that an AI system does what you want it to do; it may control cars, airplanes, pacemakers, automated trading systems or even power grids.



In video games AI is used to offer responsive, adaptive and intelligent behaviours similar to human-like intelligence, improving the players' experience rather than machine learning or decision making. Even business enterprises enter a new era ruled by technology and data. Companies use machines algorithms in order to identify trends and insights in reams of data facilitating competitive decisions. Exchanges are faster especially with the internet, while sales and purchases are facilitated and possible worldwide. All these prove that Max Tegmark was right when saying that *"Everything we love about civilization is a product of intelligence, so amplifying our human intelligence with artificial intelligence has the potential of helping civilization flourish like never before – as long as we manage to keep the technology beneficial."* Thus, to understand technology, one must know what it provides in terms of advantages, but also in terms of disadvantages and choose to use it wisely.

#### Webography:

<https://builtin.com/artificial-intelligence>

<https://assistant.google.com/>

<https://www.apple.com/homepod/>

<https://developer.amazon.com/en-US/alexa>

<https://www.brooklyngynplace.com/robotic-laparoscopic-surgery-obgyn-physicians-downtown-brooklyn-nyc/>

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[https://www.reddit.com/r/YangForPresidentHQ/comments/d1swi3/today\\_purdue\\_university\\_in\\_west\\_lafayette\\_in/](https://www.reddit.com/r/YangForPresidentHQ/comments/d1swi3/today_purdue_university_in_west_lafayette_in/)

<https://www.extremetech.com/extreme/265216-think-one-military-drone-bad-drone-swarm-terrifyingly-difficult-stop>

# AN ERASMUS EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

**Diana Pușcașu, CRP, III**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

Erasmus is a powerful experience that can change your life completely. Living abroad and studying something different or in a different way is something you will never ever forget.

At first you might regret leaving home a little bit. The distance from home and friends might be overwhelming. But trust me, you'll fall in love from the very first day. Being abroad as a tourist is completely different from being abroad as an exchange student, and once you get immersed in the local lifestyle, everything immediately becomes easier. Making young Europeans fall in love with each other's countries and people, day after day, is one of the Erasmus wonders.

I am one of the thousands of students who enjoyed this Erasmus experience. I studied for one semester at the "Charles-de-Gaulle" University in Lille, France. Here, I had the opportunity to improve my French language and I managed to better understand the French society and culture.

This experience, as the title says, is once in a lifetime: therefore, I took advantage as much as I could: I visited France but also a few other nearby countries like Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy. At the end of the article you will find some pictures of the places and the specific dishes that fascinated me.

If you were worried before that you could not link your friends abroad, find out that it's easier than you think. Foreign students will come to you from the first few minutes of your arriving in the campus of the university.

Despite what others say about French people - that they are cold-hearted and arrogant people (which is mostly true) - I made some good friends with whom I laughed and walked in different places. This is what made my Erasmus experience more enjoyable. It is important to be open to any small opportunity that could bring you benefits.

Moreover, this experience gives you the chance to bring out the best version of you! Why? Because you take it from scratch and nobody knows you. You can make things slightly different, so you can enjoy all the little gestures.

## Tips for future Erasmus students:

If you want to have the experience of your lifetime as an Erasmus student, try to immerse yourself in it from day one to get the most out of the country's culture. It may also be good to have the Google Translate app ready on your phone. Also, there is the ESN programme, which offers help, guidance and valuable information to both exchange students and students doing a full degree abroad.

Take advantage of student prices and discounts, then team up with friends and visit as much as possible in your new country! And of course, bring something special back at the end of your Erasmus programme. Memories, first of all. But also one or two bottles of that typical drink, a piece of local cheese and perhaps some sweets from a typical restaurant you and your new local friends visited some time ago.





## LIVING MY AMERICAN DREAM

**Victor Bulhac, CRP, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

My *Work and Travel* program is an interesting experience. I was introduced to this program by my friend, who had already experienced it and had had a great time. After much discussion with my best friend, we decided to live the moment and throw ourselves into this adventure of a lifetime. Three months of freedom, in a land of freedom.

I believe that my life can be divided into before and after my trip to the United States, because I matured a great deal in this period of time and I learned many things.

Me and my friend decided to choose South Carolina as our future home for the summer, because it was near the ocean. There I worked as a cook helper in a seafood restaurant named Duffy Street Seafood Shack, a beautiful and peaceful place, full of delicious food and good people. Soon I realized that I needed a second job and started working at South Beach Sweets, a candy and icecream shop. In addition to serving customers, I was given the opportunity to get some hands-on experience in making chocolate-covered strawberries, gourmet apples and marshmallow men!

Settling down in this foreign land was not as easy as we thought. From day one, we realized that we were on our own. We had freedom! Freedom which came at a price. We soon discovered that cooking our own food was not going to be as economical as we had thought, as the prices of the groceries in our town were much higher than expected.

I thoroughly enjoyed my 9 weeks of work there. One skill I had to acquire was patience. As the weeks passed, I became more efficient and confident in serving these 'foreign' customers. It was really heartwarming to receive tips and compliments from customers who would sometimes initiate conversations with us. Having these short cultural exchanges at work was something I looked forward to.

After four months of almost non-stop working, there came the time for a well deserved holiday! Consequently, we went on an East Coast tour which covered the major attractions in Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Boston and New York, the concrete jungle where dreams are made. In New York we started with my most wanted place to visit, Rockefeller Center, we went up 70 floors in one of the most famous buildings in the world. It was awesome! We spent half an hour on each side of the roof, to see every detail of the buildings and the cars that seemed so small from where we were. In the evening, we went to the Empire State Building. The next day we went to see the Statue of Liberty! After a pretty big queue of people, we went by boat to the statue island, we climbed only at the base of the statue, but that was enough. After that, we went to the 9/11 memorial, where there are two huge pools, with the names of the deceased people on the sides. Our next stop - Brooklyn Bridge: impressive! A truly giant piece of architecture! And the way the lights fall on it, wonderful! On the side of the bridge there are written all kinds of little stories, names, quotes... At the end, we managed to go for a short walk in the Central Park.

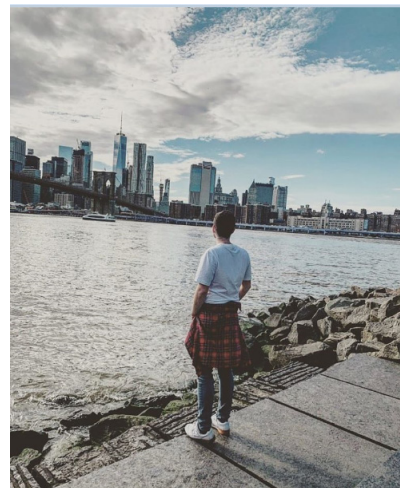




I was so fascinated with this City that I decided to stay more, so I applied, with a lawyer's help, to extend my visa and I got approved. So, I stayed 6 more months.

If you have any doubts or you think if it is worth or not, I can tell that it is!! Of course that it depends in which region you go, why you go there (for money or for fun) and also the people with who you go! If you go with friends, the work becomes easier. It's worth going there, for the feeling you get when you first step on the American land, for the feeling you get when you receive the first paycheck. It's worth going, because you'll do new things, because at the end of the period, you'll go on a trip, and it is worth going for what you will see in that trip! It's worth going, because after this experience, you'll be a stronger and a more organised person.

This trip was a test of my independence, survival skills and of course patience.. The USA is a place to experience how interesting life can be. Don't think twice - take heart and live this experience. Take the leap and travel, see the world. This experience is incredibly beautiful and will make you free.



## MY LOVELY ERASMUS EXPERIENCE

**Hilal Yantur,II**  
**Ataturk University, Erzurum (Turkey)**  
Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

Erasmus is an important experience that everyone should enjoy once in the whole life. It brings people and societies closer together and teaches new things. Erasmus is to feel that you have grown up after a long process. Finding out where you are happy means ordering your own life. Erasmus is to come to a completely different country and culture, and fight with life in your good way.

During my Erasmus stay in Bacău, I made new amazing friends and got to know a beautiful culture. In fact, I realized that people are not that different from one another, that the family in another country was the same as in mine. I understood that I had the same dreams as my friend, who had a completely different culture, and we developed the same way of thinking.

I had the opportunity to travel around the world and have good experiences for myself. I was so shy before coming here, but now I feel great confidence inside. It was a really good period to improve my skills, to develop and have a funny break for me. I know, sometimes bad things happened, sometimes I felt lonely, but all these helped me to grow up. There was always someone to support me, I had great teachers, I had great friends.

After Erasmus, I want to attend the ESN in Erzurum because I want to help the other students, just like the ESN members in Bacău did. I like the Romanian people. They are helpful, cheerful and most of them have a good heart. Their way of life is so amazing!

Until the Erasmus ends I intend to visit many more places. I hope the rest of my stay here will be amazing, too.

I am really happy and thankful to have come to this country and I will cherish all these beautiful memories. I will encourage everyone to visit Romania in order to see its historical places and to meet its lovely people.





## MY JOURNEY TO AMERICA

**Andreea Huşanu, Biology, II**

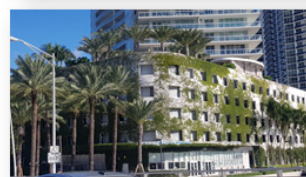
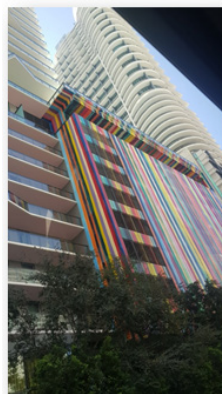
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Last year, in October, I had the opportunity to visit America, Florida and The Caribbean. It was like a dream come true...

Despite the long flight (almost 12 hours by plane) the trip was amazing. When I arrived in Miami, I had to immediately change my warm clothes with a T-shirt, skirt and a pair of flip flops... it was almost 32°C there, extremely hot!

Firstly, I was impressed by the huge and magnificent skyscrapers from downtown. There were so many architectural styles that you couldn't take your eyes off of them, colourful buildings, symmetrical or asymmetrical, each one had something special. In my view, the most beautiful and interesting blocks of flats were "the green ones". It was delightful to see entire vertical and horizontal gardens with trees and flowers, on the buildings in such a crowded city.

Another fascinating place that I visited was Ocean Drive, the most iconic street in Miami. That place is almost alive – music, dance, concerts and people everywhere! You can really have a great time, visiting Ocean Drive at night. Almost all the movies that were filmed in Miami, have a scene on that street. (For example: "Dexter" and "CSI: Miami") Even Gianni Versace's house is there, and tourists can visit it.



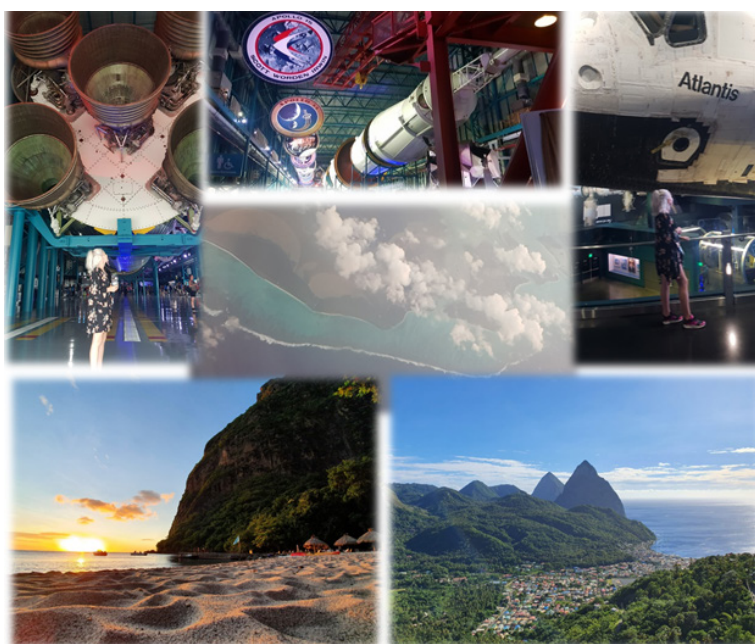
I was also impressed by the hospitals and research centres from Miami. I saw a lot of them and they looked very modern and well organized. South Beach was on the list too. It's a huge beach, where you can relax lying in the sun and swimming in the cool water of the Atlantic Ocean.

After a week of adventures in Miami, I went to Orlando at Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure, 2 huge theme parks. I don't have enough words to describe exactly what I felt, when I arrived there... I think it was the most incredible experience of my life! I have never seen something like that before! Marvel Universe, some of the most beautiful cartoons, like "Shrek" and "The Simpsons", movies like "The Mummy", "Transformers", "Jurassic Park" and my favourite one, "Harry Potter", all of these and more were converted to reality. "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" made me cried twice. It has been my dream to go there, since I was 14. This park is very complex, because you can find there classic rollercoasters, 3D and 7D rollercoasters that can create various sensations such as fear, dizziness, laughter, joy, unforgettable moments

The last amazing place that I saw near Orlando was Kennedy Space Centre, the only place from America where NASA launches rockets and organizes space missions. It was an honour for me to see launch ramps, the Space Shuttle Atlantis that went to space in 1985, and learn many things about all the Apollo missions. I've also tried the "Zero-G simulator" that made me feel like I was travelling through space.

After the American dream, I wanted to live the Caribbean dream too, so I travelled there, to St. Lucia, an exotic island, with amazing views, a lot of rituals and traditions, a rich fauna and flora and very tasty food. I did snorkelling and scuba diving, to admire the incredible underwater gardens. I fell in love with that island because of the azure water, white sand, volcanoes, mysterious jungle and all the beauties that you can find there.

After all this adventure, I felt very lucky but also a little bit sad, because I'd have wanted all my friends to see these amazing places and enjoy them with me. But I hope that one day everybody will live these experiences and share them with other people. I think this is the most beautiful part when you travel that far away: you can learn about other cultures, their home, religion, history, traditions, rituals and see how similar we are, despite the differences from the surface.





## MY EXPERIENCE IN THE UK

**Georgiana Savin, Accounting and Management Information Systems, I**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, known as the United Kingdom of Britain (UK) is an island located in the North West of Europe. The United Kingdom is formed of four countries: England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, which are united under one monarch and government. The main cities in the UK are: London (the capital of England and the UK), Manchester (the second largest city in the UK), Edinburgh (capital of Scotland), Belfast (capital of Northern Ireland), and Cardiff (capital of Wales). The main language is English but every region has his own dialect.



Living standards in the UK are generally quite good, being above the average for personal security, environmental quality, social connections, health status, jobs and learning.<sup>1</sup> The cost of living is high compared to other European countries, with everything from food to drinks, housing and rent to transport. British people seem reserved and cold at the first impression, but they are not like this, they are friendly and helpful to everyone.

The UK class system is made up of the middle class, working class and upper class people. The middle class people form the most common class in the UK, the working class people are the low earners and in the upper class are the aristocratic and royal lineage.



People in the UK have to pay tax on their income, which includes: wages from paid employment, profits, profits from self-employment, pensions, income from property, savings and dividends. Money raised from income tax pays for government services such as roads, education, police and the armed forces. Through the system “Pay As You Earn” (PAYE), the income tax for employees is automatically taken from their income and paid directly to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), which is the department that collect taxes. If you are self-employed, you need to pay your own tax through a system called “self-assessment” which includes completing a tax return. For all of this you need to have the National Insurance Number. Your life in the UK depends on this. A National Insurance Number is a unique

personal account number. It makes sure that the National Insurance Contributions and tax you pay are properly recorded against your name. To get a National Insurance Number being a non-UK national living, you need to call the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to make an appointment. If you get the National Insurance Number, you must pay the National Contributions. Employees have their National Insurance Contributions deducted from their pay by their employer and self-employees need to pay the Contributions themselves. If you do not pay the National Insurance Contributions, you will not be able to receive contributory benefits or a full state retirement pension. Because of the Brexit the foreigners, if they wish to continue to live in the UK, they will need to apply for this right, through a “pre-settled status” or “settled status”. If you wish to drive in UK you must have valid motor insurance, the annual vehicle tax paid, and the annual MOT certificate (Ministry of Transport).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/united-kingdom/>

When you move into a new house, it will be nice if you introduce yourself to the people who live near you. Getting to know your neighbours can help you become a part of the community and make new friends. To prevent any problems with your neighbours you need to respect their privacy and the noise limit.

The education system in the UK is divided in four main parts: primary education, secondary education, further education and higher education. Children under the age of 5 have a limited number of hours each week in pre-school and nursery. After pre-school and nursery, children go to primary school and then they start the secondary school. Students are assessed at the end of each stage. To graduate secondary school, students need to pass the state examinations named GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). After this examination, students can choose to leave school or continue their education at colleges or in a university.

In order to be a student in the UK, the Government helps students to borrow money by means of different loans programs. The loan is paid directly to their university or college and they have to pay it back. They have to start repaying the loans when they earn over £18,000 a year. This amount changes every year, and every month you will pay 9% of what you earn over that amount.<sup>2</sup>

During the college or university students can get a part-time job. The most popular jobs for a student are: after school tutor, driver, pet care, barista, cashier. Students have the opportunity to choose to study online and they can save money and fit their studies into their schedule. The British education system is based on long-lived traditions and follows a strict code of rules.<sup>3</sup>

As far as my personal experience is concerned, I really enjoyed my life in the UK, both studying and working in my part-time job as a nanny so I could gain some extra money for the holiday periods. Before my part time job I would often go for a walk in the park, which gave me a lot of clarity seeing the flowers and listening to music and refreshing my mind for the day. Sometimes I would stop by the local coffee shop and have a cappuccino or a latte and catch up on my revision for that day's lesson. Lectures in general were fun, lots of new ideas and different ways to learn. There were lots of group activities which helped us collaborate and get the main concept or idea and I made a few friends this way whom I still speak with. After my lectures, me and my friends Maria and Kathy used to go shopping on Oxford street in the center of London. This street hosts some of the top brands in the fashion industry. Even if you are not a big fan of fashion you will still find something to like in one of the countless shops that fill this city. I always found the UK life busy, people tend to work longer hours, with men and women working in their offices and wearing suits and looking very stressed.

Overall, I enjoyed my time in the UK and I would go back there for a holiday one day!



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.expatica.com/uk/education/children-education/the-uk-education-system-106601/>

# SOME THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT LIVING AND STUDYING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

**Alin David, Accounting and Management Information Systems, I**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

The well-known United Kingdom is one of the most desirable countries when it comes to emigration. English, multiculturalism and, in the recent years, the labour rights of Romanians, are just some of the reasons that make them choose this country when analyzing the job offer abroad.

These are advantageous factors, but relocation to the UK also includes less advantageous details, such as very high costs of living, very high prices of rents, compared to those found in Eastern Europe, high costs in the field of entertainment and transport. This article aims to give readers an overview of the costs of living in the UK, so that those who want to get a job there are psychically and financially prepared.

In the UK, rents are some of the most expensive, both in London and in the rest of the big cities. However, comparing the capital of England with Birmingham or Southampton, there is a difference of 100-500 pounds, depending on the neighbourhood, the area and the quality of the house. The studios are in great demand in London, considering the acceptable surface area and the lower prices than in the case of apartments or houses. The studio is the equivalent of a studio in Romania, with a more compact design, with prices from 500 pounds per month on the outskirts of the city to 1400 pounds / month in its centre. In contrast, a one-room apartment in Birmingham has prices starting from 400 pounds on the outskirts and 800 pounds in the centre. Those who want to invest much less in rents can opt for smaller town homes in the north of the UK. For those who have a limited budget but do not want to leave the city centre, a very popular option is renting a room in a house.

In terms of utilities, they are not a major stress factor for those who choose to live in the UK. They can be paid quarterly or semi-annually and cost between 200 and 280 pounds per month. The inhabitants of the United Kingdom have to pay electricity, gas, water and sanitation, the internet where the case is and Council Tax, the local tax.

Transport in London can be done by personal car, bus or subway. Prices for the subway transport in the capital vary between 3 and 4 pounds, and the price of the bus ticket is 2.30 pounds. In the case of personal cars, the expenses include the annual inspection which costs about 55 pounds a year, the road tax, depending on the routes travelled, which costs between 100 and 500 pounds per year and the compulsory insurance. Of course, fuel is an additional expense, costing about 1.30 pounds.





Although the costs of maintenance and transport can be very high, the food can be found at very good prices, about 30 percent more expensive than in Romania. Moreover, Romanian food and ingredients can be found in shops with a traditional specificity. In terms of clothing, the UK offers very good prices, constant discounts and offers in stores. Also, the return policy is very well developed. Consumers of cigarettes and alcohol will find that the UK is one of the most expensive countries in this regard, many of them preferring to buy from Romanian traders or refrain from consumption.

How do I know all these things? Well, because I have been there myself. The experience I had at the English school in Weybridge<sup>1</sup> was one of the most interesting events for me in my 3-month stay. Since the people participating in these studies were foreigners, I had the opportunity to interact with people from different countries of the world such as Venezuela, Sweden, South Africa or India. The activities and courses involved in this summer school were aimed at helping us interact more easily with the native people and increase our main vocabulary. The main activities consisted of discussions about the passions and the specifics of the countries from which we came. The teachers focused on the correct use of the verb tenses and on the correct grammatical forms of sentences. After completing these courses I can say with my own words that I have developed an oral expression that is lighter and more accurate than before this pleasant experience.

Therefore, we notice that a person who wants to live in the UK must be prepared to face the costs of living, which are much higher than in Romania. However, the quality of the services and the standard of living is directly proportional to the prices.



*Pen y fan<sup>2</sup> , Brecon Beacons National Park*

<sup>1</sup> In case you are interested to get to know more about Weybridge visit <https://www.visitsoutheastengland.com/places-to-visit/wey-bridge-p1251741>.

<sup>2</sup> The highest peak in south Wales, see <https://www.visitwales.com/things-do/adventure-and-activities/walking/crowning-glory-4-ways-walk-pen-y-fan>.



**Valentin-Adrian Ionicel, EF, III**

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu

Why you can have a drink but you can't have an eat?" (the words a teacher muttered on my very first class). These words still echo through my memory. Everything related to my time spent as an Erasmus student is still so fresh in my mind that I feel like a part of me it's still there. Even though my body is here, my mind, definitely, still lingers there, embraced in those memories.

If you ever had a summer love than you would know the feeling. I went naked and empty, afraid and hopeless, a non-believer waiting to be disappointed. The perfect Erasmus student would be someone who loves to travel, to meet new people, who is open-minded, who is easily excited, well, I am none of these things. In fact, now that I think about it, it makes no sense how I managed to enjoy it so much.

I arrived in a cold night, but I couldn't feel the cold. That's how overall all things went, they might have been some unpleasant things but I was blind to them. Academic knowledge is important and I was struck to find so soon and so harsh that I have none. As a great writer once said "It's better to be in the mud than hold on a pedestal", I soon discovered that my English knowledge (and I purposely chose this word because before I was pronouncing it wrongfully), as for most words, well, this knowledge was shameful, I was for the first time the worst at something. This feeling woke me up. It hurts to be the last, to be so behind in everything that there is no race to be even considered. I took it as a challenge, I was a nobody, nobody had expectations from me. Somehow, everybody knew things about the place where I came from, how for example, we have the worst education system. Still I managed to amaze everyone, with how little I knew. The teachers were actually amazed in the end by my spirit, for what I lacked in English skills I made up for with passion. They loved, I think, to see me getting better by the day. I learned to be as humble as my teachers. I learned that having answers is useless if you don't have the right questions. I was given so many things that I barely managed to hold on to some of them. But there is an awful thing about Erasmus, besides all the superficial details, a thing that makes me wish I never went, if only a warning was named.

But first, let's start with the basics. We all know that Erasmus is that thing where people go to better themselves, to not only improve their specific faculty studies but also their English level, why not even learn a new language, at least this is what we tell our teachers, the reality is that we love to have a new huge group of people, to drink, to have fun, to not care for half a year and just enjoy ourselves.



There was order in this chaos and there was time for all. Narrating the entire experience will take too long. It was early morning and I was late for an elementary school presentation one of my teachers asked me to do. The amount of effort that entire school put into receiving was above any expectations, they impressed me so much that I knew from that moment that I have to do something in this life in order to change our own schools, education. As I said before they gave me so much, there is much to share therefore. Teachers always had time, eyes and ears, patience and respect for everyone. This trust and respect, was given by default, not to be earned or judged by appearance.

Concomitantly, students had so much respect for their teachers. As unique as the students were the teachers methods of scaring information. They seemed little if not bothered at all to spend most of their free-time preparing for a class or meeting the students in order to help them in need. What is clear is that the relationship student – teacher was somehow as important as relations in general for teenagers. Some of our teachers even took their time at the beginning of the semester to spend 10 minutes with every student in particular to find out what they lack, what they would love to improve and so on. Beautiful classes are not what we care about, it never bothered us that we write our thoughts in chalk erased with some dubious piece of cloth, as I said so many times in the past. Never have I heard someone complaining about something material in our university. However, this is not about our university, I'm just caught comparing the two and it's not fair since you can't compare intelligence with stupidity. Stupidity not of the mind, but of the ways, old ways that still chain us. For those that consider my words too harsh or to be wrong I apologize. For those who don't know if Erasmus is worth it, or are scared of it, take a leap of faith and you will see that it's financially and academically achievable with little to no effort. For those who think that I sound like a preacher right now, that makes two of us. The flaw. That huge detail I said I wish I would have known before jumping on the Erasmus train. Once you go, you can never come back. Maybe I am here right now, but, after all of that, coming back feels so bitter. The only reason I wish I never went, as a man who always lived in darkness and was given light, I am now in darkness again. Here and there sparkles of light, some hope now and then, enough to keep me going. These words splashed on a page I would summarize like this: Fear, comfort, laziness are the things that can steal your whole life and everything you might have loved in it, whatever you do with your time, please remember, we only desperately regret the things we didn't do, the chances we never took.



## UNITED INTO/WITHIN AN ERASMUS EXPERIENCE OR ME...A LIVING BOOK

**Miriam-Carla Calapod, EF, II**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

*Before I start, I'd like to express my gratitude. I would like to thank, so very much, the Europe Direct (Bacău) Center, the organizers of the "United by zeal in Erasmus+" project: Mrs. Nadia Morărașu and Luminița Drugă, and, last but not least, our hosts from the library of Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacău. THANK YOU for giving me reason to write and for having given a youngster like me an occasion to share all the beautiful things that happened in Poland last year, during the Erasmus+ Programme by means of the Living Book Project!*

Hi! I am Miriam-Carla, and I was once a living book, full of soul and wish to dance in the challenges of the world!

I remember it as if it were yesterday... it was the 26th of September 2019, I was very young and it was my very first European Day of Languages. I've spent my whole life with The Elder Book (my former English teacher, Mrs. Ana-Maria Andrioaie, from whom I first learnt about the Living Book project) in order to learn and be ready for this day! Everyone wanted to read my story at the University's library. I felt very shy at first, because I am more of a socially awkward kind of book... but I felt extremely happy when someone opened me for the very first time!

To be fair, I thought I would lose all my pages (or, you know, most of them!) because I was so shy and that my writing and fonts could get messed up from the way people handled me, but it turned out to be fantastic, and if I can say so, so was I! I was very afraid, I didn't know how I was supposed to be handled (spoiler: WITH CARE!).

I later found out that only people with permits could discover my secrets, that I could only be borrowed once by a group of people, that I couldn't be reserved like a table in a restaurant (which made me so terribly joyful!) but the thing that amazed me the most was how my wishes were so prized! If I wanted to, I could leave a reader that would make me feel a certain way or hurt my dignity. I was so touched by this and no one had warned me about this during our training!

Now that I think about it and reminisce, I know why readers felt so attracted to what I entailed. First of all, I had a very big smile, my cover was very nice and freshly polished and it was blue and teal, which is a very nice colour combination. I was also doing a lot of small talk and got to know the reader better before I'd gone down... to business. Another thing that had a lot to do with it was my exact name! Human beings tend to associate interesting names with cool personalities, I suppose that's how they work.

I was very lucky to be chosen by variously aged readers, I was happy kids and teenagers knew how to appreciate books and not even one of them made me feel like I wasn't enough. I had the chance to say how this amazing story had started, where and when, how many places I'd visited and how each one of them changed my thickness and my ink... and relive all that happy, exciting, phenomenal vibe of a cold weather that became hot with the presence of those warm hearts that surrounded me.





The organization of my first event was hard worked on, I am sure! Everything was perfect, millimetric, from the water bottles to the chairs. I was elated by the fact that the Master Book (Mrs. Nadia Morărașu, one of the organizers) knew who I was and even said she knows I am a part of that specific library since I graduated from my primary one. This made me feel like I was very well talked about. Her smile was the epitome of a very big pride when she knew everything had gone so so well. Through those smiles of hers, I saw the world revolving around the idea of unity and for once I felt like we stood up for one common love: Languages. The very characteristic thing of people and difference between apes and humans made us come closer and laugh, the same tone!

Our happiness came from being in the moment, from assuring ourselves we hadn't forgotten what was crucial and, most importantly, it came from an endless fountain of memories that have been interchanged, which will travel through time!

For me, the best feeling was not to want to go. I forgot what time it was, what place I was in and once I opened up, I struggled to actually close back in! I was searching avidly for more questions to answer, for more faces to lighten up and for more minds to open towards everything good that Erasmus+ can bring into a life. Because, in my case, it changed the colour of my ink, the thickness of my cover and the number of my pages...





## SOMETIMES... AND ME OR THE PANGS OF A YOUNGSTER'S LIFE

**Miriam-Carla Calapod, EF, II**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Sometimes, you just feel hopeless. Whether you know precisely why... or not.

Sometimes, you feel pain or loss. It could be coming from utter(ly) bad luck.

Other times, you just feel lonely. And misunderstood... and maybe confused as to why *you*.

Most of the time, you hide your sadness through a comedic self. You know you want to hide something from the world, but everyone laughs! Win-win!

In other circumstances, you feel the urge to protect your feelings, be it from your family or people you've just met.

After all these, all that comes through your mind is the treason, the disappointments that you can't put away in order to move on like everybody else.

And there's me, who knows all these too well. Today, the 6th of October, I feel very hopeless. I just can't seem to figure out why exactly. Is it because my family hasn't been together, truly, for a long time? I just have no idea.

*Why me?* Why did I have to go through everything I did? Why have I been judged to filth and carried through mud when all I did was care so much for everyone? Why did I have to endure the worst of disappointments?

I love making people laugh, especially if I'm going through a situation. I mean, no one has to know that I may be dying inside when I am trying to make them feel more alive than ever!

Yes, I am not able to physically talk about my own feelings. I know that I'd become a burden and I can't handle that. My parents? Won't understand. They think depression or anxiety are just fiction. Why would I tell them I was suicidal or "mildly depressed"? I am afraid...

Of course, the disappointment of being left alone at your most important events. I know how painful that is! Think about a graduation ceremony. I cried, I just sat down and cried. I broke down severely (still haven't recovered from it) and I always go back to that very day to remember everything: the sheer, unfiltered sadness when I saw flowers everywhere, but not my own hands that craved so much after their colours. The hours that I sat alone as can be, when my friend had been taken out by her family to celebrate. My friend's mom... who maliciously said "Well, I was sure no one would come for her!" What about a birthday? My 19th, waking up in my empty, cold house with no family to hold and laugh with. No home-made cake... I am around the corner of being 20. It's going to be the same, I just know that. The anxiety before exams that I had to hide because there was no family to talk about it. The breakdown I had between my language and history exam, because I felt so desperate... The tremendous joy that I felt because I found out I'd been doing so well on those tests but there was no one to celebrate them with. My happiness became a depression attack that was worth crying into a pillow. Once again, the conflict between the pride of being the head of that dang college admission list but... no one to hug.

The pressure that your parents put on you when they want you to be always so perfect and know everything! The disappointment of the moment when you cried because you wanted them to be home... but then they hate whatever you do and always put you through garbage for it, so you have to put up a cold wall between you and them. The unusual joy you feel when they go where they came from and you can stay in peace is unmatched!

Something to remember is that feeling empty or emotionally distressed is never beautiful or easy, but it develops many of your senses and the way you approach people. And although I may be sad or angry, I regret nothing. You and I are the survivors of our own mental struggles! But we only get to know that... sometimes.



## THE ART OF LETTING GO

**Denisa Popa, EF, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

### *Holding on...*

The steady, rhythmic beep of the medical apparatus is the only sound in the room. Jane watches her sister's chest rise and fall, silently trying to match her pace. But it's too slow, not even nearly enough oxygen for her. She wants to get up from the chair in which she had been glued for the last two or three hours. Maybe more than that, she isn't sure. There isn't a clock in the room and she hasn't bothered to check her phone. The needles in her legs are not the reason why she wants to get up. Nor the fact that she hasn't had dinner yet or that she has to go home.

She wants to start pacing around, she feels that she could process the news better she'd got if she moved. But she doesn't want to let go of her sister's cold hand. They had fought the disease together, just like they had fought every fear before, like the darkness of a blackout during a storm or the monsters under the bed. Later on, they had confronted bullies and every other challenge life had thrown their way. They had always been by each other's side. It felt wrong to part ways now.

She's aware that Mary doesn't feel it, doesn't even know that she's here and that her staying here doesn't help anyone, especially herself. She is tired, so tired, she has barely been home this week and has slept for about 10 hours in total. She probably looks like a corpse, but she can't bring herself to care. Her sister looks worse. She is so pale, her eyes are too sunk in their sockets and are surrounded by deep purple circles. Her cheekbones are so prominent, actually all her bones are like that, she has lost a lot of weight in such a short time that she is unrecognizable. She looks like a stranger. She looks like a ghost.

The thought unsettles Jane and she raises her head to look at her own reflection in the door's window. Echoes of her sister's disease could be seen in her as well, she wears the fatigue of too many sleepless nights. She had lost weight too, people at work congratulated her for that and she was pretty sure she would never see it as good thing again.

She has to let Mary's hand go. She has to go home, get some sleep so she can function tomorrow.

She knows it. Then, why does it hurt so much to do it?



### *... Letting go*

She was the only one left in the cemetery. Even now, she couldn't bear the idea of leaving, as much as she knew that staying served no one. She laughed humorlessly, thinking about how, during the day, she had heard countless whispers about how much of a complete heart of stone she was. The sheer irony of it. It was true that she hadn't shed a tear. Just because she hadn't howled her pain in front of them, just because she hadn't felt like showing the broken, bleeding mess her soul was now that a part of it had been ripped away. Because she hadn't made a spectacle of her pain. And they thought that gave them the right to judge her.

She was aware that she made a sound, maybe she had laughed again. Or it had been a sob. She felt a hot tear sliding down her cheek. As if they knew anything... and even if they knew, they had no right to judge her. She was spent. Not even one of these so-called relatives and friends had been there for them. She had given them the chance to say good bye. If they were too busy gossiping about her to do it properly, it was not her fault. She didn't owe them anything. She didn't owe them anything. Not even this funeral, but she had known that Mary would have disapproved. Jane wondered if it would have made a difference if there had been anyone else. Probably not.

Hell started with a cold and a bad cough. Mary hadn't shown real concern about it. Not when the cold had passed... but the cough remained. Not even a few months later when the cough was just as present as before, even more so, with fits so strong that left her exhausted. Only at Jane's insistence she had agreed to see a doctor. The next few months were a blur of tests and investigations, a series of coming and goings to different laboratories. All of them with the same result, it was too late. The disease had set in and there were very few remedies for it, and those were for the early stages. So they tried the experimental ones and everything in their power and means. Too soon the disease had advanced so much that Mary lost her hope, she had said then that she just wanted to stop fighting. Jane never gave up, she searched for other treatments, insisted until her sister tried them. Again and again.

Even now, Jane could still hear her sister's voice telling her that her efforts were useless. "Giving up is the best thing I can do before it ruins the both of us." Not that Jane had listened... for her that idea was unconceivable. For her, it felt like her sister was hanging over a black pit and the only thing still holding her was Jane's will. She could not, would not let go. Even if it meant that she would fall into that pit herself. At least then they would be together. So they kept on fighting.

Now who could blame her that she did not have any tears left, not enough energy to spend on crying?... She had cried when she found out about her sister's disease. She had had a full hysterical fit the week before, when she had been told that her sister had at most two more weeks to live. She had cried then. Cried and screamed and accused the doctor of being an insensitive pig, of not trying hard enough to save her sister. Lucky for her, the doctor was used to seeing these kind of scenes, so he didn't take her seriously. Because she hadn't really believed that. She had cried at the foot of her sister's bed when she had told Mary the news. She had cried on her way home, tears sliding silently down her cheeks, blurring her vision. She had cried herself to sleep that night. And every night after that. Now she didn't have any tears left and she had had to keep her composure so she could go to work and organize her sister's funeral.

Even now, when Mary was underneath the cold earth, she couldn't bring herself to leave. "I'm sorry, little sister, I've done everything I could. I'm sorry it wasn't enough. There will not be a day when I won't think about you and miss you. Bye bye, little sister."

# THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND ALWAYS OPERATES IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Alexandru-Rareş Stanciu, Biology, I

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

*“The unconscious mind always operates in the present tense, and when a memory is buried in the unconscious, the unconscious preserves it as an ongoing act of abuse in the present of the unconscious mind. The cost of repressing a memory is that the mind does not know the abuse ended.”*

(Renee Fredrickson)

Over the past centuries, one of the main concerns that our society kept having was: “How does our mind work, and how can we study it?”. To that effect, many great neurologists and psychoanalysts, like Sigmund Freud or Max Eitingon, tried to find ways of understanding the human mind, publishing many books and articles. Due to this great effort that people made during those years, we can now affirm that the “human mind” can be divided in three parts: the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious, each contributing in their own way to the survival of the human being.

The unconscious mind is a very vague and interesting subject to talk about. In our contemporary society the syntagm “unconscious mind” has often been associated with “the great weapon of our brain”, and so it is. Our mind is capable of accomplishing incredible things, but the difference is made here in this little chamber of our mind.

We have surely heard about the phrase “Think positive and you will attract positive things in your life”, but not many have really understood the message behind this aphorism. The main idea here is to actually trick your unconscious mind. Think as if our consciousness acted as the captain of a boat and the unconscious mind can be regarded as the crew. Their power lies in their alignment and co-operation. They have different roles and tasks, and they greatly rely and depend on each other. It takes conscious effort and concentration, for example, to learn a new task. The interesting part about this is that the crew will execute any command given by the captain without having seconds thoughts, even if it means to crash into an iceberg, for example, – the crew will execute it.

So, this is what happens in our mind when we think about positive things or good things – it is like giving a command to our own crew, and automatically the crew executes the requisition, attracting more positive things in our life. And the same rule is applied when we think about bad things. This is how we can control the power of our unconscious, by simply “tricking” it, and so unleashing our true potential.

Although some people do not comprehend the concept of “positive thinking”, many studies have shown that the thoughts in our head, and the words we use on a daily basis, can affect our body directly by releasing a various number of hormones.

Dr. Joe Dispenza speaks in many of his famous books about the impact of stress, for example, on our body. Short-term stress can be benefic for our health in a few cases, but on a long-term scale, the hormones of stress downregulate genes and create disease. The solution here lies in our own mind. Humans, thanks to the size of their neocortex, can turn on the stress response just by thinking alone; by that we can oppress the setting off of the stress hormones that can affect our body negatively.







But what do we mean by thinking alone? Well of course by “thinking positive” but this time we’ll call it the “language of change” (Watzlawick 1993). The “language of change” implies a neuropsychological strategic reformulation of a problem, an adaptation: by rephrasing a negative thought that we are having, using some key words, our mind will unconsciously respond, therefore activating our endocrine glands which give birth to the “feel good” hormones like serotonin, oxytocin, dopamine, etc. Each one of these hormones have a strong impact on our own physical well-being, and of course on our health. For example, a study carried out by See Suzanne and C. Segerstrom has proved that: by taking 2 groups of students, one group being more optimistic and the other more worried, they found out that the optimistic stu-

dents had a better functioning of the immune cells system than the worried ones. (see Segerstrom et al. 1998.)

Often, most of the people have the tendency to do the opposite of thinking positively, and that process is called AIN (Auto Ipnosi Negativa: Negative Self-hypnosis) consisting of negative words and images that interfere with our moods. This mental process characterizes people that are locked in a negative loop of dysfunctional behaviors, habits, fears, reactions etc. However, there is the possibility of making a change: the highway that leads to these results is the value of the words we use.

Us, humans, tend to despair and lose all hope when we encounter a problem; this a normal reaction, but every time we can use our pain for good. Many people who have suffered from life-threatening and incapacitating illnesses – including cancer, heart attack, and the like – say they consider their illness to be “a gift”. The illness taught them to value each day, appreciate the moment, and get their priorities straight.

Now, I am not saying that we need to get sick a state of wellbeing – the point here is that we must value each day of our lives, and be thankful for who are so that our body could thrive as a result from a signal from the brain. Each of us has a gift that they just need to discover, hidden in all that pain and effort that we go through each day, as Joseph Murphy would say “Busy your mind with the concepts of harmony, health, peace, and good will, and wonders will happen in your life.”

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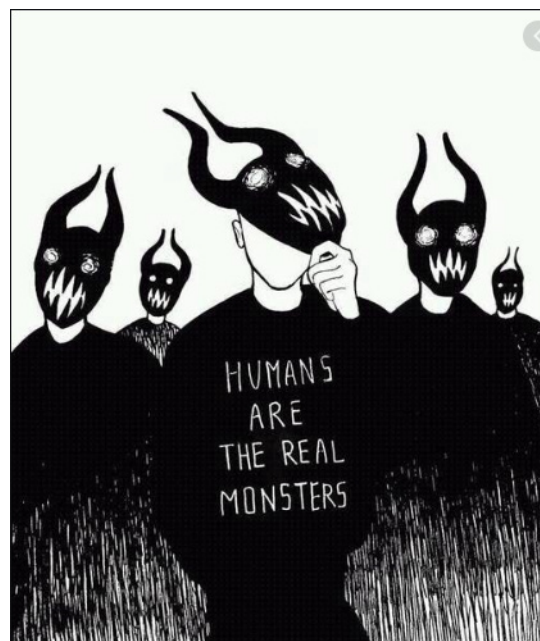
## LETTER TO THE LOST EONS

**Alexandru Roman, RE, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Dear universe, I am trapped at the edge of your cosmic oceans, on a barren rock, with millions of tormented sights that struggle to feel and reflect back the light of your eternal sparks. I feel lost, and threatened amongst the ones in whom I am seeking a trace of “humane” conduct, since I had already met many beasts down here, and those are nothing alike to the ones from our fireside gatherings. Definitely, the fierce creatures forged as mere products of our deeply flawed imagination in those laid-back surroundings and “summoned” in order to satisfy our thirst for a supernatural presence in our mundane existence are not so distant. All of those demons with blazing bodies, the appalling anomalies or the cold specters with daunting whispers are not from a remote space that only dwells beyond thousands of eons. Those cruel creatures are lurking from within our own hearts, because, in our effort to avoid being abducted by the demeanors of a damned realm, we have managed to mirror it in our earthly lives. Now, it is time to cease looking for those rather gruesome entities in books or under our beds. It is time, to take a look in the mirror, so we can witness both the dark shadows and the gleaming flames.

Unfortunately, things have changed a lot down here. We are not “humans” anymore, and maybe I am too daring while I am using the word “anymore”. Maybe, we are just trying to emulate what we would want to be, while we are dealing with the hardships of what we actually are, in a dimension where simulation overwhelms the natural flow of events. It is, indeed, outrageously difficult to be a “human being”. It is, truly an industrious task to conceal and dissimulate even the faintest sign of our real thoughts and visions so we can generate a pleasant illusion meant to sustain our own nightmares and to further enhance this loss in this shattered dream that we mildly call “life”. A savage thirst, fueled in a wild rush, and soaked in millions of pointless thoughts and cascades of colorless blood. This is how our mindset works, after ages of breeding flames and tears in a cold and dark machine that was meant to symbolize the cradle of peace and quiet.



Now, we are machines, programmed to overrun and overwrite our initial aim in favour of some hellish demeanors, along which our hearts reverberate in a grim creed. Our minds are now purely “write-only” devices, that cannot keep the ancient marks of our bright past. We are so determined to erase our roots and to join the countless hordes of dead souls that we eviscerate every single reminiscence of hope and noble feeling. I can just hope that a glimmer of light is still being sheltered in a lost record, in the heart of a reckless entity that tries to cheat the system in order to break this Hadean algorithm. We have ruined even those minute elements that brought us closer to a “humane” behavior to the point of no return, where the tears became signs of weakness and the colorless hue from our veins a symbol of strength, a symbol of the newly forged human.

Colorless blood, flowing through countless vessels, cloaked in optical fiber and cold pieces of shattered glass, with clockwork devices announcing, every second, our doomed destiny. We are mechanical beasts, hunting each other for resources and glory that is deeply immersed in the severed remains of our “foes”. That’s how, we have accepted, to become relentless mechanical beasts. We were eager for more, we were craving for another drop of blood, and in the end, we just wanted to witness the noble tears as they were slowly flowing from a pair of crimson eyes, outraged by this fathomless brutality.

Dear Universe, we had enough of ourselves and of our own desperate wish to devastate this corner of serenity. For ages, we were safeguarded by your kind will to protect our fragile species from the harm that ravaged the other galaxies. Now, your creation goes rogue against its creator, scorching the Earth beneath a rain of torrid upheavals. I am uttering these words, in the shy embrace of the night, as a representative of my species. I am, just the same: a flawed pattern of ambiguities and mixed thoughts, but I crave, with the fiery lights from the skies reflected in my frostbitten eyes, for your forgiveness, towards our lives.

Sincerely,  
The Wanderer





## **HOW TO OWN THE ROOM: WOMEN AND THE ART OF BRILLIANT SPEAKING - VIV GROSKOP**

**Mădălina Maximciuc, CRP, I**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

“How to own the room” is a nonfiction book about the way women can express themselves more easily in front of an audience. It is an in-depth analysis of the best speeches given by the most impressive women in recent history. From Virginia Woolf and Gloria Steinem to Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama, this is an indispensable guide to how women can command power using the strongest tool in their arsenal – their voices.

The first topic the author, Viv Groskop, approaches is body language. She says that people who are in front of TV are paying more attention to how you look or how you feel than what you say. This does not mean that the text of the speech is irrelevant, but attention is drawn to the fact that body language is just as important as the verbal one.

“The professor Albert Mehrabian, psychologist and communication theorist, made a famous study in 1971. He concluded that 93% of communication is nonverbal. Only 7% are based on the content of the speech. From nonverbal communication, 55% represent body language, and 38% the tone of the voice. “

In the same order of ideas, the author tells us about the fear of speaking in public, which cannot be avoided but can be endured. She tells us that a good way to put up with that fear is to speak in public as much as possible and to think that even the best speakers can have emotions when there are in front of an audience.

“The main factors that influence the success of the public speaking are: commitment, exercise and courage.”

Just to give you one example, I focus on a single personality from the ones mentioned in the book. I read about this personality before read Viv Groskop’s book, and she caught my attention. In the chapter about Michelle Obama I read about the notion of ‘the happy world of those with high status’. Michelle Obama perfectly embodies the image of such a world. In contrast to her husband, she needed to learn to integrate in this happy world. Michelle Obama was judged and her first speeches were misinterpreted because she did not work at the body language. Her ability to support speeches in front of an audience of tens of thousands of people has been practiced and improved. “Great speakers are formed, not born”. In the First Lady’s book (“Becoming”), you can find a lot of evidence that she worked a lot to reach the current level of self-confidence.

“To be a part, like Michelle Obama, of the happy world of the high status ones, means to feel like at home having the greatness at your disposal, whether you want it or not.”

In addition to the examples provided by the author, at the end of each chapter you will find tips and exercises that are the basis of a memorable speech, and don’t forget: “the only way to do something is to do it”.

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# *SIX OF CROWS*

BY LEIGH BARDUGO

Denisa Popa, EF, III

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Before anything else, I'll start by giving a few details about the author of this amazing book. Leigh Bardugo is an American young adult and fantasy author. The *Six of Crows* duology is her best-known work so far. Her other works include the *Grisha* trilogy, a prequel to *Six of Crows*, but they can be read separately (the *Grisha* trilogy will be adapted by Netflix in an eight-episode series), the *Nikolai* duology (a spin-off to the *Grisha* trilogy) and the short story collection titled *The Language of Thorns*.



Okay, enough about the author, now let's get down to the real business – *Six of Crows*. No spoilers, but the action is nonstop and just the right amount of badass. The novel is the story of a heist, or at least it pretends to be. I'll explain that later. The story is set in Ketterdam, a bustling hub of international trade, based loosely in seventeenth century Amsterdam. There anything can be bought or sold for the right price. No one knows that better than criminal prodigy, Kaz Brekker. He is offered a chance at a life-threatening heist that could make him rich beyond his imagination. If he survives it, that is. To achieve that he needs a crew, but not any crew.

*A gambler, a convict, a wayward son, a lost Grisha, a Suli girl who has become a killer, a boy from the Barrel who had become something worse. (Six of Crows, chapter 28, p. 512)*

The action follows six main characters (out of which only five have a point of view in the first book), each with alternating narrative chapters, each with their special set of skills, quirks and baggage. I would say that the characters are the best part of this story. Longer novels or series have trouble fleshing out more than one or two characters, let alone six of them. Now, let's meet them.

**Kaz** – a thief with a gift for unlikely escapes.

*A liar, a thief, and utterly without conscience. But he'll keep to any deal you strike with him. (Six of Crows, chapter 6, p. 145)*

He is the hero of the story. Actually, no, he is not, don't ever dare call him that, he is quite the opposite, his nickname is Dirtyhands because there isn't a crime or sin he wouldn't commit for the right price. Kaz is someone who prides himself on being pragmatic to the point of being inhumane, as someone who sees people as means to achieve his own ends.

*I'm not some character out of a children's story who plays harmless pranks and steals from the rich to give to the poor. (Six of Crows, chapter 18, p. 314)*



He follows the definition of the anti-hero, he doesn't care about being good, he does not serve a righteous cause, yet his honesty to the point of cruelty, his gallows humor and his extraordinary intelligence make him a very easy to love character. His past also contributes to this, but to find out about that you'll have to read the book.

**Inej** – a spy known as the Wraith.

*Besides, she was the Wraith – the only law that applied to her was gravity, and some days she defied that, too.* (*Six of Crows*, chapter 2, p. 30)

Actually a girl of sixteen who comes from a nomadic people who are mostly known for being carnival performers. She uses those skills to scale buildings and steal information for Kaz, she also has the uncanny ability to “disappear”. Despite being dealt a bad hand in life, she still manages to maintain her belief in fate and “her Suli saints”, for which Kaz mocks her mercilessly.

*She knew how she sounded – stern, fussy, like an old crone making dire pronouncements from her porch. She didn't like it, but she also knew she was right.*  
(*Six of Crows*, chapter 2, p. 28)

She also uses Suli proverbs as pieces of advice and general commentary, hence the crone comparison. If Kaz is the mastermind of the group, she is the heart, she tries her best to keep the others safe and to mediate conflicts between them and offers her friendship to those who prove themselves to be good people.

**Jesper** – a sharpshooter who can't walk away from a wager.

*Jesper had always thought of himself as lucky. Happy, easygoing. The kind of guy people wanted around.”* (*Crooked Kingdom*, chapter 24, p. 550)

Jesper is the easiest to like of all the characters, he is the one who makes the most jokes, the happiest and who has the least of trauma behind him, which makes him the best fit for the main comic relief. Don't be fooled, though, he is also a reliable person when things have to be serious.

*When the bullets start flying, you may find I'm nice to have around.*  
(*Six of Crows*, chapter 17, p. 301)

Kaz hasn't chosen him for this mission as entertainment, he is one of the best, if not the best sharpshooter in the Barrel. He seems quite perfect, except for the fact that he loves gambling more than luck seems to love him.

**Nina** – a Heartrender who uses her magic to survive the slums.

*It's just so much easier to kill people than take care of them.*  
(*Six of Crows*, chapter 16, p. 290)

Before I start telling you about Nina, I have to mention what a Heartrender is and before that I have to explain what a Grisha is. Grisha are humans who practice the Small Science and are divided in three categories: Corporalki, Etherealki and Materialki, with each being divided further into specialized types. Most Grisha see their powers as an “extensions” of the natural world, which is why they don't call their powers magic, but the Small Science (small as it happens at a molecular level or something close to that). Nina's order is Corporalki, whose powers allow them to manipulate the human body, either to harm it or to heal it. Guess which one is Nina's. She is a soldier of the second army (an army formed solely from Grisha) before anything else, loyal to Grisha and her country to a fault, anything else comes second. Maybe except for waffles, she really loves those. She also loves flirting, with anyone and anything. She is bold, loud and hilarious.

*Nina fluttered her lashes. 'What would you know about it, Kaz? Take those gloves off, and we'll see what ideas come to mind.'* (Six of Crows, chapter 5, p. 122)

Aside from her battle skills, Nina has a gift for acting and foreign languages which come in handy in the mission; the fact that she has a debt to Kaz doesn't hurt either.

**Matthias** – a convict with a thirst for revenge.

*Not even you can be that foolish, Nina. No Healer can cure that boy. You made sure of it.* (Six of Crows, chapter 6, p. 155)

Matthias is a soldier as well, only he serves another country, one who hates Grisha and sees their powers as an insult to their god. He and Nina have a past together. Not only because he is a witch hunter and she is what his people call a witch.

*'I don't like speculation,' said Matthias.*

*'Of course you don't. You like things you can see. Like piles of snow and benevolent tree gods.'* (Crooked Kingdom, chapter 11, p. 260)

Matthias is seen by the others as backward and superstitious, but his good parts are that he is unwaveringly loyal to his cause and quite honorable.

**Wylan** – a runaway with a privileged past.

*He wasn't much younger than Kaz, but somehow he looked like a child – smooth-skinned, wide-eyed, like a silk-eared puppy in a room full of fighting dogs.*

(Six of Crows, chapter 9, p. 206)

Wylan is the most mysterious out of the group, mostly because he doesn't have a point of view in the first book. He is the baby of the group, the only one who at first strays from the gray morality area in which the others live; no worries though, the other crows will corrupt him soon enough.

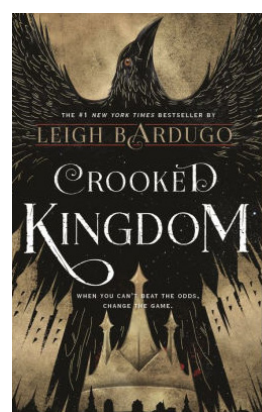
*No one chooses to live in the Barrel if he has another option.*

(Six of Crows, chapter 8, p. 193)

Another reason for which he is a mystery is the fact that, despite being the son of one of the most influential people in Ketterdam, he chooses to live in the worst part of Ketterdam, The Barrel. He is quite the genius, he is their demolitions expert, but also helps with sketches and maps needed for their mission.

And these are the crows.

Now it's time I explained why I said that this novel pretends to be a heist novel. That's because the book focuses more on developing the characters, their stories and the relations between them. Not that I think that this is a bad thing. Actually, I think it's awesome, I got to enjoy a good story and also got attached to six amazing characters. I really love these books from this series, I have already read them six or seven times and I can't seem to get enough of them. I highly recommend this one in particular but not to kids. There are certain scenes that are pretty gory that could make even an adult nauseous. Read it and you won't regret it.



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## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES ON BORN A CRIME BY TREVOR NOAH

Adina Prisacariu, RE, III

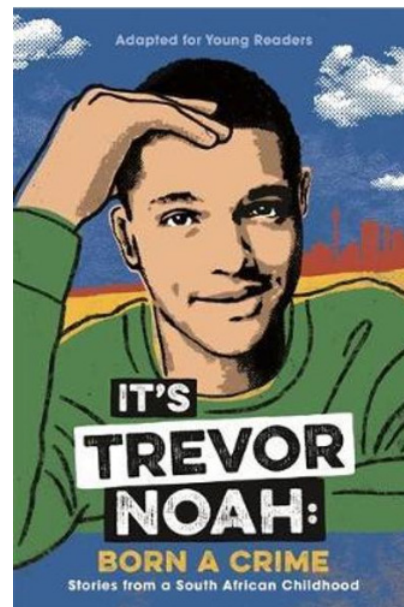
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciuc

I started thinking this essay as something that I would finish in no time. But I came to realize that it requires more than I have expected, because *Born a Crime* has more to offer than anybody could fathom. Going down on the road of reading the book, I fell in love with Trevor Noah's writing so much that I have decided to get a copy of the book as well. And not only the writing charmed me, but also the stories that talked to me about his life, as he was growing up.

Trevor Noah wrote about his life, indeed, and, in the process of doing so, he believed that, like most of the authors of autobiographical books, he was the hero of his story. But throughout the book he came to realize that his MOM was the real hero of his story, because she "had to raise a man and still be a woman".<sup>1</sup> He calls his book his love letter to his mother and considers himself "not lucky enough to share a life with this human being"<sup>2</sup>.

I have chosen five things to talk about in this essay. The first one is about everyone rejecting him, when he was a little boy, because of his skin colour. Growing up, Trevor did not feel comfortable either around colored kids (who saw him as too white for speaking English instead of Afrikaans, but also too black for being connected to his mother's family), or around white kids (who all lived in walled-off mansions where he was never invited). In high school, thanks to his ability of running the fastest, he would be the first in line at the cafeteria. So everybody came to him with the request that he would buy food for them and they would pay him for it. Trevor did not feel popular, but he was not an outcast either: "I was everywhere with everybody and at the same time I was all by myself"<sup>3</sup>.

The second thing that Trevor Noah brings up is that he does not want people to see his work as an act of looking for sympathy, but rather as a way of connecting and even identifying with others. As he says, he knew all too well what it meant in his community for every family to eat caterpillars when facing hard times. He understands them because he has been there, so this is more about empathy. Another good example of a situation when Trevor was empathic is the episode when he got bullied and he came home all covered in mulberry juice. His stepfather, Abel, thought that it would be best if he taught this bully a lesson and he went after him and started whipping him with a switch. At first, Trevor was content with the idea of his stepfather acting like the big brother and defending him, but he notices that Abel was not just getting revenge for the bullying, but was actually beating the boy for his own pleasure. In an instant, he started blaming himself and wanted Abel to stop: "He'd been beaten by a stranger in a way I don't think he'd ever been beaten before"<sup>4</sup>.



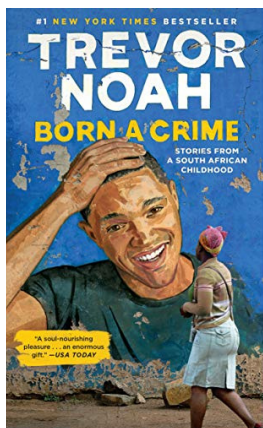
<sup>1</sup> Cory Baker, Interview with Trevor Noah, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEsWOZjjVt8>.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>3</sup> Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime*, Part II, Chapter 11: *Outsider*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime*, Part II, Chapter 9: *The Mulberry Tree*, p. 89.





Looking in that boy's eyes, he realized how much they had in common. They were both just some colored little boys, crying, raised in South Africa and taught how to hate others and themselves. Trevor Noah talks about the difficulty of getting over the need for revenge, as well, and presents the misleading perspective of the majority of people when coming to choosing between justice and revenge – it is very often that the person that hurts others is, in turn hurt: “This moment for me was one where I had to look into the eyes of the person who I was getting my revenge on. I saw a human being on the other side of my revenge. [...] That wasn't me winning”<sup>5</sup>.

The fourth thing I focused on is the lack of the “façade”, as Trevor Noah calls it, in South Africa. We have to face the fact that we live in a world where domestic and sexual violence are not brought up to light, or they are just ignored. Trevor Noah talks about the time his stepfather got so drunk that he almost burnt the house down, in his trying to heat up some food, but falling asleep. When Trevor's mother awoke him up and started to question him, Abel hit and knocked her down for thirty minutes. This was something Noah had never seen before. The ignorance of domestic abuse is clearly shown when Trevor's mother takes him and Andrew, his little brother, to the police station, to press charges against her husband for beating her. There, she received a patronizing answer, that in fact she was guilty for getting her husband angry: [Against] “Your husband? What did you do? Did you make him angry? (...) Go home and talk to your husband. (...) This is a family thing. You don't want to involve the police. (...) maybe you want to think it over”<sup>6</sup>. Trevor's way of seeing the police has changed that day, his admiration for their work was crushed under the lack of urgency that was necessary when it came to protecting women and children who were facing domestic abuse: “There I was standing with my mom whom I had never seen in a weak position. And yet there she was, helpless, for the first time. And those people who were supposed to protect and serve us turned her away because she was causing a fuss and that never left me”<sup>7</sup>.

The last thing I want to talk about is the constant cycle through which an entourage keeps dragging someone in that the author speaks about. This is the reason for which Patricia, Trevor's mother, wanted him to fight and search for more, even if they were poor. Her words made him realize that one has to get out and leave and get to a point where he settles himself and he is old enough to come back and give back: “Hanging out with people who push you to become more than you are. You will see them getting better and I know you won't let yourself behind”<sup>8</sup>. If he were to stay in that “hood”, he would have never gone beyond his condition, but because he left, he managed to bring the world into that place through the knowledge he further shared.

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## WEIRDNESS, AMBIGUITY AND OBSCURITY IN *STRANGER THINGS*, A NETFLIX SERIES

**Raluca-Andreea Donici, EF, II**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci



There are many times in our lives when we encounter “strong” words, such as: “weird”, “bizarre” or, simply “strange”. But what makes us characterize something using one or more of these three words? We say that something is “strange” when we cannot find a proper explanation for it or when it defies reason, right? Well, in this case, we shall dig deeper into this context.

This strangeness is present all around us, whether we acknowledge it or not. Just think about it! We can find bizarre paintings, theories, phenomena, even certain behaviours can be seen as unusual. I am sure that everyone has his/her opinion on what this “weird” means to him/her, but, in this case, I challenge you to talk about a TV series, which is quite controversial at this moment, entitled *Stranger Things*.

For those who do not know, this series appeared on July 15, 2016 and it was meant to have only one season. Due to the fact that people, in general, are attracted by this strangeness of the world itself, they immediately fell in love with the story, the plot and, of course,

the characters. I, myself, am one of these people, who, at the beginning, was not very enthusiastic but towards the end of the second episode, season 1, I was captured in that suspense, between the two dimensions of the same world. Let me explain a bit. The plot takes place in a fictional town, Hawkins, in Indiana, in November 1983, and it presents the story of the disappearance of a little boy, Will Byers, among other unusual events occurring in this small town. These strange events were caused by the government’s experiments regarding the creation of perfect soldiers, telepathy and telekinesis. A little girl named Eleven (neither us nor her know her real name) becomes a victim of their tests after she escapes from that laboratory when, accidentally, the government’s actions open a gate between two worlds, the reality in which we live and the “Upside Down Territory”, a darker, obscure, creepy version of the real world. In this strange realm, we encounter unseen creatures, such as Demogorgons or shadow-monsters like the Mind Player, that, once entering the real world, would not leave as easily and fast. Eleven finds some friends (Mike, Dustin, Lucas, Max, etc.) and, eventually a family (Hopper and Joyce) and she has to face a lot of danger in her way to a normal life. She has to defend her friends and to put an end to these xenomorphs that return several times in Hawkins.



This series contains all it takes to satisfy any taste, I promise you. More important, apart from reviving the 80's and contouring every detail of that decade, this series is embellished with beautiful simple life issues (first love, shared trauma, the gap between the generations) in which I am sure you will find yourself portrayed. In order to understand better the obscure and the ambiguity of this series, I invite you to watch it; I invite you to fight together with El, to find smart solutions to problems with Mike, Dustin and Lucas, and to endure hardships with Joyce. Trust me, it's worth it. You will see that, once you watch an episode, you will not stop until you finish the series. Once you start, there's no holding back. Enjoy!

