

# *ISSUE 20*

*December 2025*

A woman with red hair, wearing a white headband, black sunglasses, and a black jacket with a white bow, is sitting in the driver's seat of a silver car. The car is parked on a street with a city skyline in the background, including a large dome and several skyscrapers. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with warm lighting.

THE  
AKADEMIA  
POST

# EDITOR'S NOTE

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To be writing this editor's note for the 20th time feels quite monumental. I think it's important to pause and recognise not only the time that has passed, not only the number of articles, the energy that went into editing each issue, but also the sense of tradition and continuity in our community this little newspaper helped to forge.

From humble beginnings with just a few students, when Mr Higgins (who makes a surprise come back in this issue) and I tried to introduce the journalistic spirit of capturing the fleeting moments of our school life, to a busy room of over 20 contributors with an established history of junior and senior editors – the Akademeia Post has provided tangible evidence of the flourishing taking place in front of our eyes.

Sarah Bakewell, in her book *Humanly Possible*, offers a fitting observation: "We can try to make ourselves think as rationally and with as broad a scientific reach as possible; it is a good thing if we do. But we will *also* always live in a world of symbols, emotions, morals, words, and relationships."

The Akademeia Post, at its core, carries the reminder about this synergy of reason and symbols. Through its pages it reveals that we are an academic community who is *also* built by words, emotions, and relationships. I want to thank all those who have been involved in building this space up till now, through writing, art, or design. Let's keep on carrying the visible signs of relating to the world and one another.

As always...read and belong,  
Sonia Blank  
Chief Editor

## MEET THE TEAM!

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**Front Cover:** A. Zeszuta

**Back Cover:** A. Zeszuta

# AKADEMEIA'S DIARIES

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## *A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A STUDENT*

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*Lena Jankowska*

**6:30** The alarm goes off.  
And A, and Akademeia students, begins another day of school.

Quick shower, light makeup and a small breakfast and she's off to school.

She's a Y11 student and she knows how important it is to arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of her first lesson, she can settle in, review her notes, and avoid the stress of being late if there's traffic. Her timetable is packed with lessons reaching from Triple Science to subjects such as Art or English.

To find out how she manages her schedule we asked her a few questions.

**Q:** What makes school fun, even when it's so intense?

**A:** Definitely my friends, or the school lunches. The pizza here or the teriyaki chicken is to die for. It makes the last three lessons survivable.

A's life is a blur of labs, sketchbooks and math equations, she says that taking various subjects helps her keep things balanced and fun. During the breaks, even the short 5-minute ones, she manages to prepare for the next class while catching her breath.

After the last bell she usually escapes to study in Starbucks or any quiet Café. She recommends listening to Lo-Fi, it helps her focus and study for hours and hours.

**Q:** How do you balance it all?

**A:** Planning ahead, like making To-Do lists or making sure to check ASIMS. Spending time with my friends and drinking coffee helps me stay on track too, ensuring that I don't overwork myself.

Although her schedule is almost full, she still makes it for her clubs: Pre-med, Chemistry Olympiad and Basketball (Both at school and outside it). They don't feel like duty to her, they are hobbies, something she enjoys.

On the special and rare free evenings, she heads home, watches a movie or a series to unwind, and finishes any given homework.

A is living proof that with focus and occasional coffee breaks with friends you can do a lot more than you would think!

Until tomorrow!



By Hanna Gołbiowska



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# THE SEASIDE RETREAT

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## *YEAR 12'S JOURNEY TO THE NORTH*

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### *Kesaria Nakani*

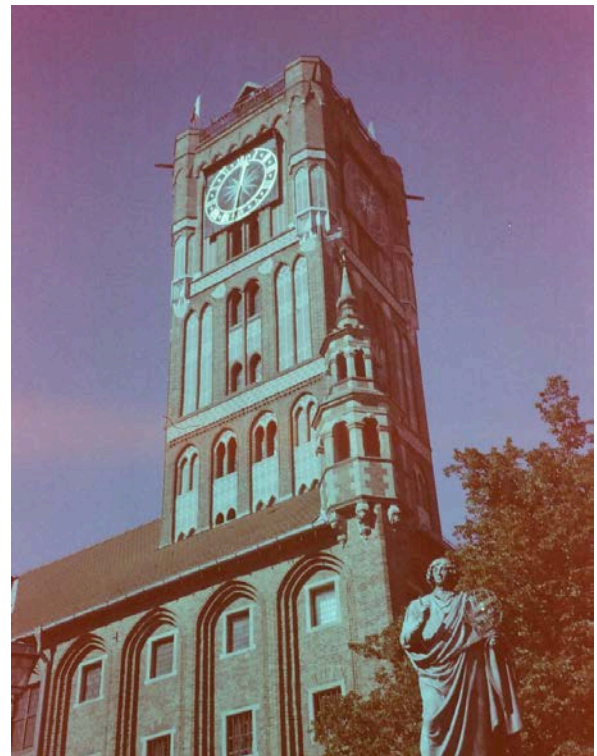
As the end of the first academic month slowly came to an end, Akademeia had its annual school trips to different parts of Poland. For Year 12's, this time the main destination was the historical city of Gdańsk, alongside the cities of Toruń and Sopot.

#### ***The Start: Toruń***

The journey began in Toruń, located in a northern part of Poland. It is a city famous for its gingerbread cookies and medieval charm. With our short-lived stay there we still got to explore the town, enjoy a walk-through historic street, and gather for a big group photo, which marked the beginning of the trip.

#### ***Discovering Gdańsk***

After Toruń we arrived at our destination - Gdańsk. The 3-day stay in the city involved many activities such as: sightseeing, quiz night and city scavenger hunt combined with a creative photocompetition. Upon arrival we kicked it off with the trivia prepared for us by the school's quiz masters (Dr. Anders and Mr. Fränzel), which sparked competitiveness among the teams, ultimately ending in the victory of "Cosine Rule" team a.k.a mentees of Mr. Harris.



Next day began the official exploration of Gdańsk. One of the biggest highlights of the day was visiting the World War II Museum. With the guided tour, we got to explore the main exhibition. Exhibits were captivating, through the tour we got to understand the impact of war further, not only on Poland but on the entire world. The permanent exhibition is huge, covering over 5,000 square meters, while being divided into three main blocks. Anyone visiting the museum will get to see the causes of the war, the devastating effects it had on civilians, and the consequences that were left behind in Europe and beyond.



Exploring these exhibitions gave us a chance to see the original objects, photographs, films, documents, clothes and even life-sized reconstructions of streets and equipment from the wartime period. Walking through a full-scale replica of Polish streets from 1940s, seeing objects and clothes very closely, which were once owned or held by the unknown war heroes, reading real documents from almost a century ago, all of this gave feeling of transporting back in time and seeing the events yourself up close.

Many of the students and teachers described the experience as emotional as well as informative, because the exhibitions show not only battles and politics of WWII, but also the everyday struggles of ordinary people not only in Poland but beyond it. Exploring the museum gave us a deeper understanding of the history we learn in the classrooms and showed us how the events of the past still shape our present.



To balance the seriousness of the museum, the faculty had organized a city scavenger hunting mission for all mentor groups, alongside the photo competition. Groups of students worked together, finding the most creative shots and showcasing landmarks of Gdańsk, which encouraged plenty of laughter and teamwork.

## ***Last stop: Sopot***

On the final day, the group decided to head to Sopot, a seaside town not so far from Gdańsk. It was a great way to end the trip, relaxing by the sea and enjoying the fresh air before heading back home and finishing the annual AHS trip.

## ***End of the trip***

From history lessons to quiz nights through sightseeing and seaside strolls, the three days in Toruń, Gdańsk, and Sopot gave us not only the chance to see new places, but also to learn, reflect, and spend time together outside of the classroom.

# STUDENT INITIATIVE BIRTHS

## EMPATHY

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### *UPDATES FROM THE UNICEF CLUB*

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*Jasmin El Abrashy*

**F**orty lively children running around, while the Akademeia volunteers try and make their day a little bit more joyful. The UNICEF Club was a student lead initiative, created by me alongside my friend and Akademeia student Kexin Shi. Our journey with UNICEF began by pitching our idea to the head of the UNICEF department in Warsaw Ms. Agata Gos.

The centre was created at the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, it was meant to be a centre where parents could leave their kids in the care of UNICEF volunteers.

Together, we brainstormed workshops we wanted to offer the children, this included painting, playing games, different activities related to arts and crafts, as well as easy basic level English lessons. We were motivated to start this initiative as Poland became the biggest host in the EU for people fleeing Ukraine. As students at an international school, we wanted to provide entertainment and positivity in such a dark time.

The plan we settled on with Ms. Agata was to conduct workshops in the UNICEF headquarters in the centre of Warsaw, on weekdays and Saturdays. After Ms. Agata confirmed all our ideas, we presented our idea for a volunteering club during 5th form assembly.

After signups were completed, we ended up with over 20 volunteers who went to the UNICEF Edu centre every week and created incredibly special bonds with all the children. It was a monumental moment for us when the kids started remembering our names and asking us when they would see us again.



Every week the children would greet us with smiles on their faces, proposing different games and workshops they wanted to do. We felt like we were making a difference, like our weekly workshops were bringing some light into these children's lives.

Sometimes, while we were in the middle of a game, the children would start telling us about how the war has affected their life, and how they had to move to Poland and leave everything known to them behind. This caught us off guard, as they were the ones who chose to share these details with us, we tried to make these workshops a positive distraction, not bringing up the situation in Ukraine. The entire experience of hearing about the war from the perspective of a 7-year-old was very eye opening and really showed us what we should consider "important".

Each week we would do something different, from making bracelets with the girls, to playing hide and seek with the boys and sculpting with play doh. One of our most popular activities were boardgames, some of the children's favourites were UNO, Exploding Kittens, and Monopoly. The volunteers' personal favourites were Just dance. Quoting Helena Bruździak, "Just dance brought us closer together as a team and showed us who the best dancer was - definitely not me, maybe Maja", We even ran holiday themed workshops for Christmas and Easter where the children



were able to make ornaments and decorations they could take home.

The volunteering lasted the entire 2024/2025 school year, by the end of which we collectively had over 250 hours spent at the centre with the children. However, despite wanting to continue these workshops the following year due to the most recent presidential elections in the United States, most of the funding for the centre was unfortunately cut off. This resulted in a very limited budget for buying different supplies, games, books etc. for the children. As a club, we decided to step in and create a fundraiser in school where people were able to bring all sorts of different supplies that children would enjoy using and then donated them to the centre. The fundraiser was a great success.



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# TEACHING BEYOND THE TEXT - MR SAM PULHAM

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*THERE'S MORE TO OUR TEACHERS THAN LESSONS AND GRADES — DISCOVER A DIFFERENT SIDE OF MR PULHAM!*

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*Lena Szlaga*

**A**t Akademeia, Mr. Pulham isn't simply teaching English Literature—he's on a mission to revive overlooked stories. A bibliophile, singer of traditional ballads, guitarist, and a host of the Shreds podcast, Mr. Pulham blends his passions to make English an unforgettable lesson for his students.

## **Personal Passions**

1. You're a bibliophile, singer of traditional ballads, guitarist, and podcaster — could you tell me more about these passions?

*Beginning with music, as that was my early love, I recall seeing Johnny Greenwood of Radiohead on the TV playing an electric guitar, and I knew from that moment that I had to play this instrument. My parents promised me they would get me one if I went to guitar lessons for a year. I did, they came through the promise, and as soon as I got it, I quit the guitar lesson and started playing on my own, which I do to this day. Eventually, I got into folk music, as before I didn't realise England had this native working-class tradition of song. I became absolutely fascinated by that, almost as a parallel to the literary canon that this vast storehouse of anonymous songs, which emerged directly from the community. After discovering that, I decided I wanted to sing many of these songs.*



*Literature is something that my mother tried to strongarm me into appreciating. She wanted me to read *Wuthering Heights* when I was about 9, but I was bemused by the fact that there were no aliens in this book, and I turned to my dad's science fiction books, and that is how I first developed the love for reading. I almost had to discover literature on my own terms to enjoy it, and now it has become a centre of my life.*

*The podcast was a way of keeping alive the skills that I learned at university. My tendency was to read without the need to produce something in response to a text, but I wanted to keep my critical reading skills alive and share it with people. So, I decided to create a podcast based on little-known writer and give them the critical retention that I think they deserve.*

2. What's one under-appreciated book that has had a profound impact on you personally?

*I would say the Welsh novel by Caradog Prichard called One Moonlit Night. I think it is largely under-read, as it was written in Welsh, which is a minority language. This is an utterly extraordinary late modernist novel that's told in a voice of a young boy living in a rural community in Wales, while the First World War wages in the distance. I think, for me, the most impressive thing about it is that ability to capture a certain profundity of emotion in a child's voice. The emotion and melancholy of this experience is no less powerful for it, so that's why I absolutely love it.*

3. Through SherdsTube, you explore under-appreciated works. How do you decide which books to feature, and what do you hope listeners take away?

*That can be a variety of things, for example a particular theme or motif I'm interested in exploring. So, I usually try finding books that are adjacent to what I'm currently reading.*



*For instance, what I'm planning to read next is a written diary of a Latin-American horror literature. Latin-American writers have been sent to stage for me throughout this entire year. Usually, one book leads me to another, and I follow this trail of breadcrumbs, and something usually emerges organically.*

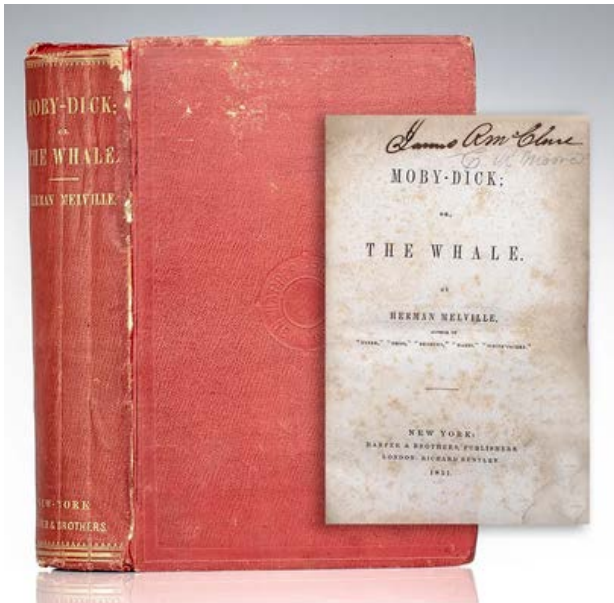
### Teaching & School Life

4. What drew you to teaching English Literature here, and what do you enjoy most about working with students at Akademeia?

*I really appreciated the ethos of freedom surrounding the approach that teachers have to classes at this school. I felt like there is a lot of trust in the teachers to conduct classes in a way that's personal to them. I tend to favour heavily discussion based or close-reading based side of teaching. In terms of what I like most about interacting with my students is those moments, when I see ignition of passion for a text in students, when there usually is breakthrough moment in understanding a text that initially appeared quite obscure and suddenly it seems to have opened up entirely through discussion. Those moments are what really makes teaching worthwhile.*

5. How do you approach making challenging texts engaging for students?

*I think honouring the surface meaning of the text, making it certain that we understand the text on its simplest terms first, grammatically, to then allowing these deeper layers of the text to emerge. When a text initially appears intimidating, which is often a case with poetry, I would encourage to approach it like a prose text initially, and question what the difference between poetry and prose might be. The first stepping stone to diving deeper and approaching more obscure layers should be looking at the text initially.*



6. As a Senior Librarian, what role do you think the library plays in shaping the academic and cultural life of the school?

*For me, which is twined with my role as the teacher here, I regard my main goal as not simply helping students achieve the best grades they can, but also cultivating a personal relationship with easing, not just literature, but with any form of reading. Being a senior librarian allows me to contribute to that in different ways, for example by building a catalogue of appealing choices for the potential readers we have in this school, as well as popularise reading, for example with the use of Akademeia Bookshelf. For me, it is really about getting kids reading as much as possible, and that goes for both of my roles.*

7. What's one book you always recommend to students?

*I'm known to say that the finest novel ever written Moby Dick by Herman Melville. I haven't had many successes to encourage students to read that, as it is an intimidating, dense, challenging tone, but I will never stop trying to promote it, as I think it is the most remarkable text ever written.*

8. How do your passions outside of teaching influence your approach in the classroom?

*One thing that I would say is that my pursuits like the YouTube channel was never about reviewing or placing value judgements on the text. It is always about sharing and enthusiasm. If I choose to talk about something, it is because I want to share it and I try as much as possible to think about reading together in classroom as part of that spirit of sharing a reading experience. The difference in the classroom is that I don't get to decide what text I teach, but I will try to find the things in the text that I appreciate the most and to instil my students with that same approach to appreciate the text.*

### Literature & Research

9. Your academic research focused on Romanticism and its influence on American Modernist poetry — what fascinates you most about that connection?

*Firstly, I suppose encountering Romanticism in a new context in university was quite a revelation for me. I absorbed a passive understanding of what Romanticism was just from growing up in a country where it was an important literary movement. The most significant encounter was Wordsworth, because I didn't realise how much intellectual rigour his poems contained. I found that his poetry was engaging with things like epistemology, which I had grown interested in when exploring philosophy in my own capacity. That wasn't something I expected to find in romantic poetry, and the parallel that I observed in an American poet Wallace Stevens, who also places epistemological concern at the centre of his work, and I wanted to observe how a different style of poetical composition will approach this subject. It was the philosophy for me that was a big connector between these two.*



10. In your view, why is it important for students today to engage with overlooked or forgotten literature?

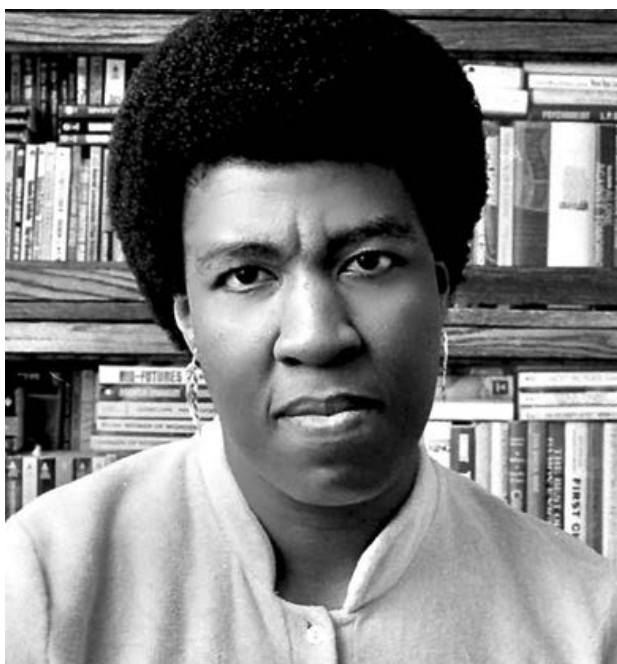
*I think one of the main reasons for me is the idea of a literary canon, so the range of works that are culturally esteemed can be a bit of an illusionary idea and there can be all kinds of reasons why a great piece of literature can be sidelined through no fault of its own. It might be that something wasn't appreciated stylistically at its time or a writer's background, the language it was written in... I think it's an important challenge to the stable literary canon to keep pressuring it until it allows room for a broader range of texts. So, one of the main reasons is the challenge to the literary canon.*

#### Outside the box

11. If you could invite three writers (living or dead) to a dinner party, who would they be and why?

*I would invite Anthony Burgess, the writer of *A Clockwork Orange*, because he is the most scintillating conversationalist, extraordinarily*

*pompous and would probably dominate the discussion at the dinner table, but he is so much fun to listen to, so I would definitely invite him. I think I would also invite Octavia Butler, who's one of the first African-American women to gain success in the field of science fiction, and her reserve and the difficulties she has with social interaction might be broken down by Anthony Burgess, therefore I think they would make a good pairing. And finally, I think I would invite James Joyce, because it is rare that you get to enjoy company of someone who is unequivocally a genius and I would not like to miss this particular genius. So those three would be my dinner company.*



Mr. Pulham shows that teaching is more than delivering lessons—it's about inspiring curiosity and fostering a love of literature, both popular and forgotten. At Akademeia, Mr. Pulham proves that a great teacher doesn't just educate—they foster a lifelong love towards their subject.

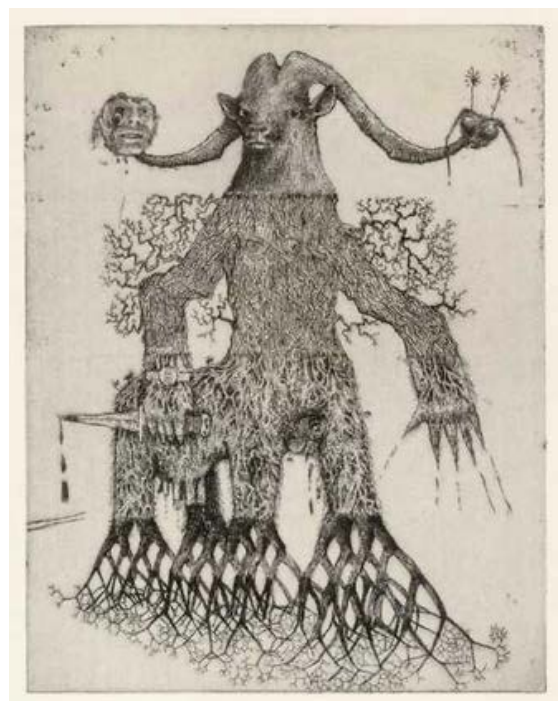
# WHAT IS THE SHAPE OF CHANCE?

*Kaja Oszczęda*

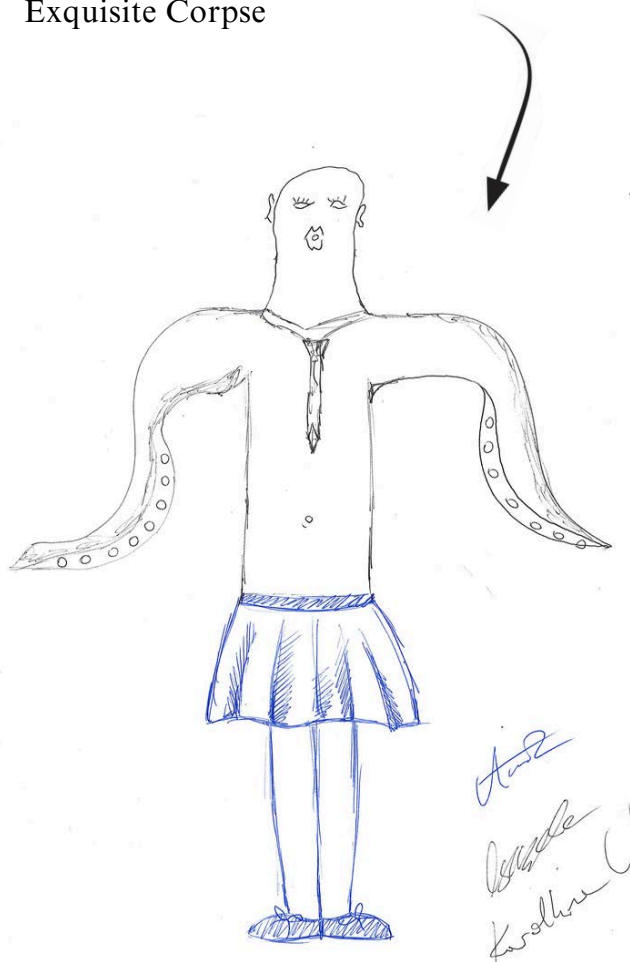
André Masson's experiments with automatic drawing continue to inspire collaborative creativity. But how does that work?

In our History of Art class with Dr Watras we pursued an exercise in collective chance. Each of us, unaware of the other parts, drew a fragment of a body—an unconscious group endeavour echoing the *cadavre exquis* games of the 1920s. In the spirit of psychic automatism, the hand's line became our guide, bypassing reason to release the imagination's hidden currents. The resulting creature, stitched from disjointed dreams, stands as a testament to Surrealism's belief that art can reconcile dualities—the rational and the irrational—and reveal the marvellous within the everyday.

I invite you to embark on this unconscious journey yourself—after all, I've been told by experts that it makes for a surprisingly entertaining game at social gatherings.



Exquisite Corpse



# RETHINKING HUMAN NATURE

*HUMANS ARE SELFISH. VIOLENT. DRIVEN BY GREED.  
WHAT IF ALL OF THESE BELIEFS...WERE FALSE?*

*Lena Szlaga*

## **SELFISHNESS OF HUMAN NATURE IS AN ILLUSION**

What if I told you the beliefs you have had since you were a child were untrue? Since you first learned to share your toys, you've been told others will take advantage of you. You never wondered why... so what if it's wrong? People are naturally cooperative and kind, but history seems to always focus on the pessimistic aspects of human nature. Rutger Bregman's perspective in the 2019 book 'Human Kind: A Hopeful History' has convinced me otherwise.

## **COMMON APPROACH TO HUMAN NATURE**

Great literature pieces – 'Lord of The Flies' as the perfect example - highlight the belief that human nature is programmed to be evil, making it hard for others to get past this worldwide stereotype. These 'proofs' of people acting selfish and careless, which humanity holds onto, portray humanity in an incredibly negative way. Nothing more to the contrary: humans are inclined to trust each other, but our societies and culture continue instilling these beliefs. If we rethink human nature, we can finally design systems based on values such as trust and kindness, creating a hopeful, fairer future.

## **DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE**

The book 'Human Kind' shows exactly that: human nature is kinder than we think. Society can achieve a more just and hopeful future – we simply need to allow it. The nature of humans is ruined by society and governments - not because they were born with it. The experiments, so well known: the bystander apathy of 38 people watching Kitty Genovese murdered in New York in 1964, the Stanford Prison Experiment... These experiments, studied by psychology students all over the world, did not actually occur in a way insisted by many. Moreover, the book explores reasons why humanity sometimes becomes corrupt and what are the reasons for it, approaching Rousseau's idea that in a "state of nature" humans were more egalitarian, peaceful, and

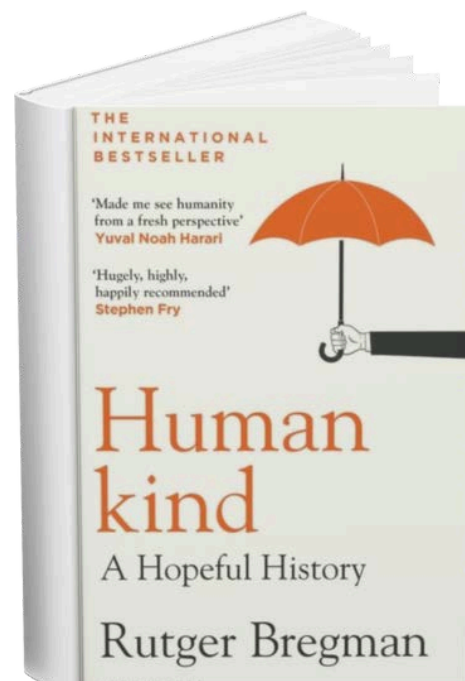
cooperative. It was the rise of civilisation, hierarchy, property, and rigid institutions that encouraged cruelty.

## **SO WHY ARE PEOPLE CRUEL?**

So, if Bergman is right, why are people still cruel? The reason might be the society's view on human supposedly selfish nature. Because we are programmed to think others are bad, we behave in such a way that we aren't hurt. Some people might be so rooted in their opinion since they were young that they don't even register their behaviour as inappropriate. There is also a different case: sociopaths and psychopaths, but these cases are extremely rare and biologically determined. These people aren't the majority, and they don't realise the severity of their actions, so I will not take them into consideration in these reflections.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

If we design a society around trust rather than fear, people might start to believe in humanity's best. History often highlights cruelty, but it seems like our individualistic society needs Brennan's reminder of our cooperative nature. The illusion that people are selfish is a danger bigger than any human can be.





# SWALLOWING THE RED PILL

*THE ONLINE MOVEMENT WHICH TURNED  
INSECURITY INTO AN IDEOLOGY*

*Helena Bruździak*

What starts as harmless, 15-second video, a bold claim about “truth,” a voice that seems to make sense of the chaos. But soon; it’s not just a video. It’s an ideology. The “red pill” isn’t just a metaphor anymore, it’s a movement reshaping how a generation of boys see power, women, and themselves.

In the 1999 science fiction film, *The Matrix*, the main character Neo is faced with a choice. To take the red pill and learn the harsh truth about the ‘true world’ or the blue pill which makes him go back to his regular life.

By choosing to take the ‘red pill’ Neo wakes up in a new reality where machines run the world in secret, while in this reality men are hit the realisation that: women have the leading positions in society and family. The women demand more rights while marginalising the significance of men. The ideology argues men do not have systematic power and privilege as people think they do.

Antifeminist groups, particularly on Reddit adopted the idea into the ‘red pill’ movement which was popularised in the 2010s to describe their ideology. The narrative of this TikTok and Reddit rabbit hole is that women control the world without accepting accountability for it,

and their male victims are not allowed to voice their displeasure.

This makes The Red Pill a constant, multi-voiced, current male grievance that is tucked away in the centre of the so-called manosphere, a web network that is focused on both the movement for men's rights and how to pick up women.



## **ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ALGORITHMS**

At first this movement was a niche subculture online, however with time and influencers gaining massive popularity and views this movement has spread to becoming a hot topic online. Especially with the Netflix mini-series *Adolescence* coming out in March 2025, telling the story of a boy who through societal pressure specifically on social media became interested and infatuated with the ‘red pill’ movement leading to him murdering his female classmate.

Social media is an amplifier of these views specifically on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. They push short, high-impact clips into endless feeds. But beyond amplification, social media changes the very way young men view themselves.

But social media doesn't just spread ideas; it shapes people's identity. Online, people often present a version of themselves that is reinforced by likes, comments, and shares. Over time, this performance can start to feel like the "real" self, even though it is heavily influenced by what the community rewards. For many who follow Red Pill influencers, these traits such as dominance, wealth, and emotional detachment aren't choices, they instead become expectations.

### ***THE POSTER FIGURES***

A very famous example of this is Andrew Tate, a poster child for the 'red pill' movement. Andrew Tate presents himself as the embodiment of what he calls "real masculinity." In his world, men prove their worth by rejecting empathy, amassing wealth, and exercising control over others.

Alongside Andrew Tate there is Jordan Peterson, a Canadian psychologist. He is another established name in the manosphere. With over 8 million subscribers to his YouTube account, he preaches the importance of traditional gender roles and anti-feminist ideas.

Most of his ideas stem from an obsession with gender. In interview with the New York Times he said, "The masculine spirit is under assault". Chaos is feminine, and masculinity in contrast is safety and order.

### ***APPEAL TO TEENAGERS***

A misconception of this content online is that it only harms how women are viewed, however, this content also harms teenage boys and even children. The manosphere promotes unrealistic expectations and extreme measures which can lead to poor self-esteem, mental health problems. This content preys on vulnerabilities and insecurities of boys and young men, they are



drawn to it because of issues they may experience, especially related to social isolation and sexual rejection.

The promise of power and success is a strong, for boys searching for identity and validation, this can feel less like an option and more like an answer.

At its core, the "red pill" ideology shows how the internet can turn insecurities into a fixed, often toxic way of seeing the world. What might start as curiosity or frustration can quickly take over, shaping how young men see themselves, other people, and their place in society. Social media does more than spread these ideas; it makes them feel urgent, desirable, and even necessary, offering a sense of belonging that can be hard to resist. The cost is real, including strained relationships, low self-esteem, and mental health struggles.

While the rise of the "red pill" reflects deep insecurities and confusion around identity, there are growing spaces online and offline that encourage healthier conversations about masculinity. Communities promoting emotional openness, empathy, and respect: like men's mental health forums and positive role models advocating vulnerability, offer young men another path. Real strength can come not from dominance or rejection, but from understanding, connection, and self-awareness.

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# THE CASE FOR SUMMER CAMP

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*LIFE BEYOND THE CLUTCHES OF SOCIAL MEDIA*

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*Klara Bakić-Pawlak*

From a place on high hills, I would stare down at the gate below and watch the cars driving past as the breeze brushed past the leaves and grass. I saw younger campers darting and jumping between cabins, laughing, playing tetherball. I would trudge several times a day up the slopes of the Berkshires countryside to attend my classes and rehearsals, and back down again for my meals and my bunk. This was how I spent 7 weeks of my summer.

Everyone deserves to experience camp at least once in their life. I spent this past summer at camp Belvoir in Lennox, Massachusetts in an area of the USA known as the Berkshires. As a performing arts and arts camp, my fellow campers and I, all girls, devoted our time mainly to doing art and preparing theatre and musical performances, such as *Chicago* or *The Adam's Family* with the vision of having a show at the end of camp. My 150 fellow



campers were mainly from the US East Coast, but some came from other regions. Many were also second-or third-generation campers, given that the camp has been run by the same family for two generations. Many of the camp counsellors were Belvoir campers in their younger years and, now in their 20's, have returned as counsellors.

Among the many notable features of Camp Belvoir is a ban on the use of phones and no access to the internet. While this may be seen as extreme, it is a wonderfully liberating experience, which helps you realise the joys of life beyond phones and social media. The Belvoir policy helps to foster meaningful, lasting friendships.

In my case, by attending a performing arts and arts camp, I gained a great deal of valuable experience through the number of rehearsals and art classes. My camp friends and I helped each other memorise lines for our roles, we talked and laughed while we painted and did ceramics and rehearsed scenes and songs together. We also learnt about each other's life stories outside camp.



Among the counsellors were two professional directors of Broadway shows. Having lessons from such accomplished and experienced people who are passionate about something you love is an inspiration and enhances your own desire to become more passionate. Another benefit is the judgment-free environment; camp can be a comfortable place where you can be yourself without being judged for not being the „picture-perfect” teenager that everyone wants to be. Camp can be a place that is a breath of fresh air and a disconnection from the day-to-day grind of the school year and social media toxicity. It is the place where you are compelled to build connections like no other.

At camp, the participants develop our curiosity about the lives of others. Being obligated to do auditions for musicals for the first three days of camp allows you to learn how to recognise and celebrate other’s talents. We learn to not always want to be in competition and to allow yourself to fail. Trying is the experience along with failure and shows you that even with failure you can tell yourself that you tried.



I highly recommend an overnight camp experience at least once in your life. Sleep away camps provide a fantastic escape to new opportunities and views of the world. Based on my experience, the best camps are those, like my Camp Belvoir, that ban access to phones and the internet. That way, it’s just you and people who share the same interests. In today’s world, as young people, we need to escape the grasp of the virtual clutches we have fallen into. Many of us are entangled in a world of social media that gives us the false comfort of this fake reality. We build a picture in our heads on how we should dress, look and act. By joining a camp for 7 weeks you have the opportunity to do what you enjoy most and be yourself, beyond the often-strangling clutches of social media.

In the camp environment, you do not even have the time to be homesick or preoccupied with scrolling, status and other social media perceptions because you are not focused on the past or the future, but on what you’re doing in the moment. Try it, you may find it liberating – and fun!

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VS YOUR OWN

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## *HOW TO USE AI WISELY*

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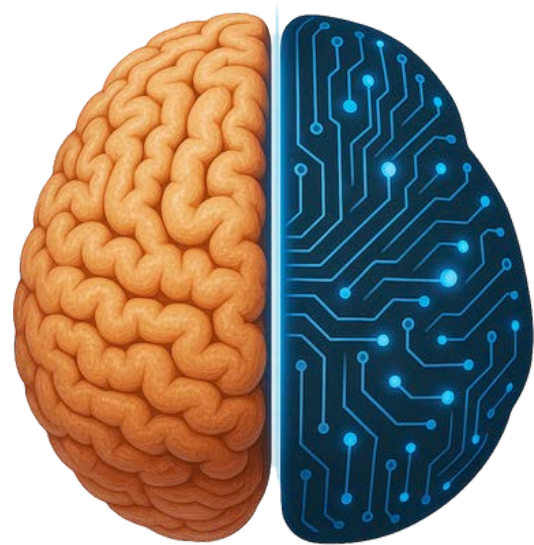
*Si Yun Shin*

Only a few years ago, we used Google to search for information. However, since ChatGPT became a global phenomenon, we started to be able to get information much quicker and more conveniently. Nevertheless, AI arguably has negative side effects, that can lead to misinformation and confusion. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between search engines and Generative AI and learn how to use each one in different situations.

Nowadays AI has been gaining more popularity because it gives information quickly. Users can filter themselves which information is right and useful, and which one is fake. In contrast, generative AI such as ChatGPT gives answers very quickly and summarizes even the most complicated information briefly in a matter of seconds.

Generative AI only uses the data it was trained on, meaning it can answer questions, but it isn't reliable at giving up-to-date information. Nonetheless, if integrated with Retrieval-Augmented Generation (the system which before giving out an answer searches the internet and offers an answer) a technique that can be implemented to ChatGPT and would allow us to search the internet in real time and combine that with what information it already knows. As a result, it can give more accurate answers by providing multiple sources and showing where the information originated from.

As stated before, the standard version of generative AI only uses the data it was trained on, which can lead to providing false or outdated information. A fellow ChatGPT user shared his negative experience



on X (Twitter), explaining how it provided him with wrong information. He took a picture of a Poison Fire Coral mushroom which is a highly poisonous and life-threatening mushroom after consumption. However, ChatGPT stated the following: “It is known as a medicinal mushroom and is said to be good for strengthening the immune system and recovering from fatigue. It is used as an ingredient in oriental medicine”. Yet in reality, this mushroom is highly dangerous and can cause chills, abdominal pain, paralysis, and skin necrosis, and in the most severe cases, even organ failure, brain damage, or even death. The moral of the story is that you shouldn't always trust generative AI and instead double-check your findings on your own. Perhaps, you could even talk to other people who have knowledge about it – a practice that is becoming extinct in the time of AI. A good way of using Generative AI is to make it a habit to verify sources whenever the information seems uncertain. If the sources are outdated, research recent up-to-date information. You should treat generative AI as a guiding hand and not as a main source of information. At the end of the day, will you trust artificial intelligence or your own?



# JAPAN - A WORLD ON AN ISLAND

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## *THE TRAVEL JOURNAL*

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*Konrad Wierzbicki*

**J**apan is a place where centuries of tradition meet a futuristic and dynamic society, creating a landscape so distinct that every street and neighbourhood feels like stepping into a different reality.

The Empire of the Rising Sun was once ruled by powerful warriors and clans that waged war for centuries. Filled with cherry trees that scatter their pink leaves on the streets every year, a country known for its culture, shrines, and glaring differences from the world we know.



Everything is different from what we can see every day, that is how many island nations are. Less foreign influence and cultural intertwining lead to partial isolation from the outside world. This is easily observed in the very first convenience store we enter. The packaging is more colourful and vibrant - it practically screams, "Buy me!" We also see anime and manga everywhere - in the underground, on the streets, even in buildings.

### ***ARCHITECTURE – CAPTURING YOUR GAZE EVERY STEP***

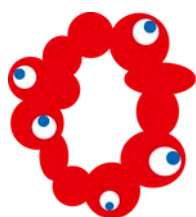
Many people have the vision of Japan being a country of rice fields, shrines, kimonos, and cute little houses. However, the majority of Tokyo is a mix of different cities like New York, Madrid, Paris, and London. The Japanese' architecture is observable almost exclusively in smaller towns that live from tourism. In many places such homes have been replaced by concrete or modern materials simply due to practicality. There are, of course, beautiful places across the country - most famous being Kyoto - but the majority of buildings in Japan are very similar to what we know. In Japan, the majority of powerlines run above the ground, resulting in all the cables being visible in the street. It certainly looks different; it's something we rarely see here, as all the cables run underground, and that's what makes it so unique. For the Japanese, it's normal – again, for practical reasons. Houses are often rebuilt every 15-



20 years, which would make managing all the cables a true engineering nightmare. Paired with country-wide earthquakes and the need for accessibility for easier repairs, it all suddenly makes sense.

### ***CULTURE AND ART – A SHOCKING SURPRISE***

In terms of culture, it's the polar opposite of Europe. The Shinto religion is the most dominant in Japan, practiced by 80% of the population. Because of how widespread Shinto is, no matter whether it's the centre of Tokyo or a small village on the coast, there is always a shrine. This popularity also creates a very interesting landscape - one minute you can be walking through the financial district in Tokyo, the next minute you are taking photos of a shrine tucked away between buildings. Places of religious worship come in all shapes and sizes - some are huge, others are tiny. For instance, the Meiji Shrine, which honours Emperor Meiji, covers about 70 acres, with a massive gate at the entrance and multiple buildings inside. It's almost entirely



OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN  
**EXPO 2025**



covered by trees, around 300 different species, all placed according to a carefully designed plan. Every tree grows there as a part of a bigger installation, planted there to create a truly mesmerising experience of walking to the shrine. Places of worship are also where the divide between people is non-existent. The old, the young, the healthy, the ill, the rich, the poor - all praying next to each other in peace, clapping and bowing in harmony, silently reciting their wishes.

### ***EXPO 2025***

The World 's Fair is an event that takes place annually. Its goal is to showcase the achievements of different nations, often revolving around one common theme. This year 's Expo was held in Kyoto, and of course, I had to visit it. The Fair is a once in



a lifetime experience – hundreds of nations (165 in 2025) come together and set up their own pavilions to showcase their culture, products, and innovations. This year's theme was preservation of nature and our planet. Canada and Portugal presented unparalleled visual experiences about sea life and global warming, while Poland emphasised the beauty of local vegetation. Overall, many pavilions served as places for reflection on how we treat nature; they show us how detrimental for the environment we are, and how we can fix them. While some pavilions felt like country advertisements, others interwove their cultural identity with a powerful message about the Earth.

## ***HARAJUKU - REBELLION AGAINST THE STATUS QUO***

Despite culture and habits being so embedded into the minds of Japanese people, there are places where we see quite the opposite. The district of Harajuku is filled with stores and restaurants that seemingly violate all the cultural standards others have lived by for centuries. Streetwear shops display clothes that definitely turn the heads of locals – not always in a positive way. Many local brands blend cultural motifs with



modern trends in shirts and jackets. Harajuku is more chaotic, less traditional, unique in its own ways – closer to Europe than Asia – a breath of fresh air in Tokyo and a great place to take a break from the streets of the capital.

## ***PROGRESS THROUGH TRADITION***

Japan is a country of contrasts—where ancient shrines stand beside skyscrapers, and centuries-old traditions coexist with cutting-edge technology. From the quiet spirituality of temple grounds to the electric energy of Harajuku, every corner offers a different glimpse into the nation's soul. Despite globalisation, Japan remains deeply rooted in its own identity, embracing modern influences without losing sight of its heritage. Whether walking through a forested shrine or a futuristic Expo pavilion, one thing becomes clear: Japan doesn't just preserve its past—it redefines it every day.



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# POLITICISED MEDIA

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## *HOW DOES MEDIA AFFECT MODERN DAY POLITICS?*

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*Maja Domeracka*

### **THE PAST OF POLITICS**

With the rise of social media and growing popularity of sociopolitical activism, politics has widened its audience. Social media platforms, such as TikTok or Instagram, have become home to political activism, political propaganda and news, education on political issues and concerns, as well as representative and promotional channels of political parties and initiatives. Now we don't need to put much effort to seek desirable political news and updates or to partake in the societal life – easily accessible and understandable sources on social media platforms deliver users the freshest information, as well as allow for further discussion in the comments section. However, it is important to stay open-minded and be aware of potential political bias, that doesn't only present various issues in party adequate context but often also enhances propaganda, misinformation or so-called *fake news*.

Back in the day, politics was followed on the television or read about in the morning newspaper. The news had to go through an entire publishing process and be approved by specialists. In the era of the Internet, however, politics is to be found quite literally everywhere – regardless of the designated purpose of the platform, or who and how updates the information online. While apps where we can find political news and debates vary, X (former Twitter) remains the leading source, where even highly positioned politicians express their viewpoints and advocate for their favourite ideologies and movements. Apart from presidents of countries, ministers, senators or

other affluent officials, even political parties and humanitarian or socioeconomic organisations find use to promote their agenda and endorse community engagement.

### **ATTENTION ABOVE TRUTH**

However, not all channels are legitimate. It has become more common for less-credible sources to promote unconfirmed information, especially if groundbreaking – surprising, shocking, demanded or long-awaited, even if false or taken out of context – only to generate media outrage and catch people's attention, for successful reach and large number of likes. Media does love attention! Therefore, it is so crucial that obtained information is factually confirmed and indeed accurate. Otherwise, anything posted by anyone could be taken seriously and spread forwards, creating fake news or enforcing propaganda.





Beware, media tends to be politically divided by favouritism. Favouritism is a way of shifting towards the left- or right-wing politics that can affect the quality and validity of the conveyed message. Certain pages may favour specifically, or cooperate with, left- or right-wing parties and spread propaganda or portray a given party in either strongly appealing or disadvantaging lightening for one's benefit. Webpages like US' Democracy Now! or Jacobin, or UK's Daily Mirror or The Guardian have the tendency to shift rather to the left (US' Democrats and UK's Labour or Liberal Democrats), while American Fox News and The Babylon Bee, alongside British Daily Mail or The Times shift towards right wing politics (Republicans and the Democrats), what says a lot about their views on certain policies and approaches, as well as the way they present their information. Left wing associations would likely promote issues such as workers and women's rights, abortion, environmental issues, LGBTQ and social justice, while right wing media would favour nationalism and patriotism, religion, domestic policy (policy within country).



The Guardian

Daily Mail



The Babylon Bee

### PREFERENCE POLITICS

If you were to ask whether party favouritism; the biased angle in which media presents various political issues, influences everyday politics, here's the example of The Sun endorsing a Third Way election candidate Tony Blair. The Sun, a previously conservative source, switched towards the Labour enhanced Third Way party during the 1997 general election and by endorsing Tony Blair's persona, contributed to his breakthrough electoral win. The Sun's wide audience, approximated at over 10 million readers for that edition, was significantly drawn towards the New Labour and hugely influenced the party's memorable victory. It won after nearly 23 consecutive years under Conservative leadership. Therefore, political preferences of given webpages do in fact matter and alter the validity and reliability of presented information. In such case, people – especially those lacking prior political knowledge – can be easily influenced without conducting proper personal research and defining their own individual stance. Undertaking someone's view is easy, but it's crucial to understand where it is coming from and why is it that a certain objective is supported. So, analyse your sources mindfully. Double check. Confirm.

Social media has the clever tendency to show you content fit to your likings, so that it interests you more and gets the most engagement out of you. That is called the algorithm. Algorithm is a function available on any type of platform you open, and it suggests you content based on what you have previously engaged with. Algorithm in the world of politics, however, is seen like echo chambers – it presents the viewer only with what is suitable for their interests. So, the information presented is mostly one sided – shifting towards either of the parties – and biased. For instance, pro-life Republicans would treat the passage of *Dobbs v Jackson 2022* (a landmark overturning the right to an abortion) as a success, yet Democrats would oppose it, saying that it violates women's right to decide over their own body. Therefore, we know that such legislature was established, but we are not sure whether it is for the good or not. And a stance in such topic should be developed individually, alongside personal values and beliefs, not enforced on anyone. That's why it is so crucial to be able to have an individual opinion, and not follow what is told. And even if you're confidently aware of your political position on an issue, it is worthy of researching how would the opposition view it, too. To see things through other - even if completely different – perspectives. They might be as interesting and eye-opening and develop your ability of critical thinking and seeing things from different perspectives. Diversify your sources and widen your horizons!



### **PLAYING ON EMOTIONS**

Politics closely corresponds with emotions. Anger, frustration, denial, satisfaction, success. And media loves being emotional. What can bring out the most emotions in viewers sells best. Gets talked about. There media's tendency of over-exaggerating and twisting facts or taking them out of context, to create global sensations. Aiming at making front pages. Catchy, misleading titles or quotes that only make sense if you read the post's full description. Easily contributes to the production of fake news. So before spreading the word, it's better to read the full thing to understand the actual background of the conveyed message and avoid fuelling speculations and misinformation.

### **MASS MEDIA VS YOUR OWN MIND**

Mass media does indeed have huge influence on modern day politics. It works like yet another source of political information, however it allows for easier access, sparking debates open to all users. They allow for anything to be posted, often without being verified or fact checked. Anyone can moderate what flows on the Internet and add their own content. That's why it is so important to always double check obtained information or freshest news, otherwise we would all blindly believe made-up theories and untrue assumptions.



# CHAT CONTROL: THE KILLER OF ONLINE PRIVACY

*IS THE GOVERNMENT SPYING ON US?*

*Leonid Karpenko*

## **WHAT IS CHAT CONTROL?**

Communication is an integral part of human life. Online communication providers, such as WhatsApp and Teams, are perceived as relatively safe communicators for private conversations. However, these messages may contain inadequate and fragile content, unsuitable for younger audiences. Chat control could potentially put an end to that issue. But create an even bigger one, a threat to your right to privacy. Child Sexual Abuse Material (chat control) is a proposed EU regulation, that would force messaging platforms to scan private messages (images, links, videos and all other media) to distinguish and prevent material related to Child Sexual Abuse. Scanning would happen on your device before you send the message, so end to end encryption (encoding your messages from sender to receiver using cyphers) would not matter in this case.

## **WHO PROPOSED IT?**

This regulation was originally proposed in 2022 by EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, as a way to make catching child predators easier. It would require all communication services in Europe before encryption, to scan every message and report it to the government where AI bots would review every message and decide whether it contained CSAM or not. Later, in mid 2024, Belgium proposed to limit the data that should be scanned to URLs, videos, and photos only. Then during Poland's presidency of the EU Council in early 2025, the government supported the idea that scanning shouldn't be mandatory - making it more of a prevention system, than a breach of privacy. From July 2025 onward, with Denmark as Council

President, they have decided to revert the regulation back to its forceful nature, with the vote being held on October 14th, 2025.

**12 members of the EU are supporting this law.**

**6 members are undecided.**

**And 9 members are against this law.**

## **HOW IT WOULD HELP SOLVE THIS ISSUE**

This law/regulation - if passed - could possibly help arrest distributors of CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material) and groomers, who threaten the safety of children in the EU. This would work in a few parts. First, the messaging service provider (such as WhatsApp or Teams) would scan the message and run a short detection routine to see if there are any words or phrases directly related to CSAM. Then the ISP (Internet Service Provider) sends scanned messages to the government's servers. After that, a server runs a hash algorithm (comparing to existing databases of known illegal materials) and multiple AI models analyze images, videos, audios, and texts to detect illegal content (child nudity, sexual content, grooming/language patterns).

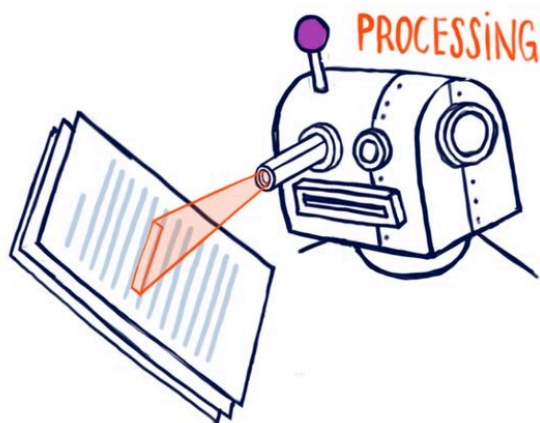




## HOW IT WOULD HARM US AS A SOCIETY

It weakens the end-to-end encryption. Mass surveillance allows governments and their sponsors to take and sell data. This regulation also undermines your basic rights of privacy, as stated and protected in Article 7 and 8 of the EU charter. Another major weakness is that hackers and data breaches could leak possibly sensitive information to the public, potentially endangering children. For instance, since June 2022, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the UK has issued reprimands to seven organizations for data breaches affecting victims of domestic abuse. These include:

- *"Four cases of organizations reveal the safe addresses of the victims to their alleged abusers. In one case, a family had to be immediately relocated to an emergency accommodation."*
- *"Revealing identities of women seeking information about their partners to those partners."*
- *"Disclosing the home address of two adopted children to their birth father, who was in prison on three counts of raping their mother."*
- *"Sending an unredacted assessment report about children at risk of harm to their mother's ex-partners."*



The version of this policy that Denmark is proposing now uses AI systems to detect new CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material) and grooming materials. The AI that they are planning to use DOES NOT UNDERSTAND CONTEXT leading to possible misidentification of something as grooming or dangerous behavior, and ruin somebody's life over a mistake of a bot at worst, or waste the time and resources of detectives at best, leaving nobody to save the actual children in danger.

While you, your family and your colleagues are being watched by each one's very own device, EU politicians get a free pass under "professional secrecy" rules; they get secrecy, but you don't. Child protection specialists also say that weakening security for everyone actually endangers children as it makes it mentally difficult for them to call a helpline (knowing that what you are saying is not confidential).



## FINAL THOUGHTS

In my opinion, if this regulation went beyond casual discussion and became a reality, it would be the beginning of the end for the Internet. Governments looking at our every move online would de-anonymize and strip away the confidence that people gain from the comfort of it. The potential failure strongly outweighs the positive possibility with millions - if not billions - of messages containing private and sensitive information leaked to potentially harmful people.

# AI WON'T REPLACE YOU

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*IT'LL BE YOUR TEAMMATE*

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*Charlotte Wejchert*

**W**e all know that AI is transforming jobs worldwide and within that the expectations for young people entering the workforce. But what exactly is happening? What does it mean for us and our futures?

Few are better positioned to answer than **Jacqui Canney**, Chief People & AI Enablement Officer at ServiceNow. The Santa Clara software firm, now valued over **\$200 billion** with 25,000 employees worldwide, moved up to No. 46 on the 2025 Fortune 500 with roughly 85% of F500 companies using their services.

Canney, formerly Chief People Officer at Walmart and WPP, now sits at the crossroads of talent strategy and enterprise AI. Her recent interview with Harbingers' Magazine maps out the new terrain.

When asked whether AI is changing the skillset young professionals need most, she responded, "Yes—and it's a big opportunity, especially for your generation."

She explained that whilst being fluent with AI tools may be helpful, the most important thing is how young professionals think and lead. She called the following, 'superpowers': "curiosity, creativity and adaptability." Canney acknowledges that AI can quicken the pace of things but underscores that it is, "your values,

ideas and voice," that are responsible for any future outcome.

## ***BUT HOW DO YOU BALANCE THE USE OF AI TOOLS WITH SOFT SKILLS?***

Canney shares her excitement about the doors AI can unlock especially for early-career talents. She emphasised how whilst AI is now responsible for repetitive tasks usually taken up by entry-level positions, it doesn't replace them. She argues that it provides an additional opportunity for people to do more creative, strategic works they love. She developed on this by saying, "we see AI as a teammate—not a replacement."

It's all about using this tool correctly. She further explained that being able to identify when to lean on AI and when to lean in with your own voice and values is crucial. That's when soft skills come into action, your ability to communicate and empathise, those "are the skills that help you grow as a leader and a teammate."



Whilst AI can generate a report or answer in a blink of an eye, Canney highlights that it's the connections that you have with others, your perspectives and your purpose that truly matter. She concludes this point, "We can't take the human out of AI. And we wouldn't want to."

***"AI FLUENCY IS STARTING TO MATTER MORE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU NEED TO BE AN AI ENGINEER."***

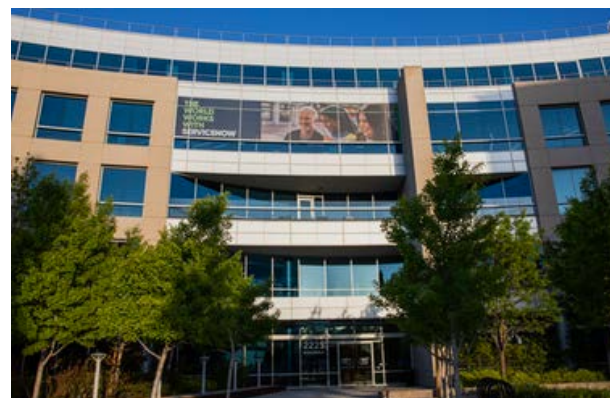
Now, what do recruiters think? Canney established, "Things are shifting fast, and expectations are evolving." For her these expectations are, "showing comfort with new tools, a willingness to learn, and the ability to think critically." She underscores the importance of mindset. At ServiceNow specifically, she said, "We value a product mindset, which means thinking like you're building a product with your end user in mind." This means always learning, improving, and creating with purpose.

Canney reinforces that, "We don't expect new hires to be an AI expert on day one." CPOs such as herself look for people who are insatiably curious and that are ready to collaborate. She further explains that a great signal that you're ready to grow in an AI-powered workplace comes down to simply experimenting and thinking how it can make you work better.

***"AI IS DEFINITELY CHANGING WHAT ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS LOOK LIKE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN OPPORTUNITIES ARE GOING AWAY."***

Canney explains how tasks are being automated but with that, new roles, that have not previously existed, are emerging. She gave these examples: "we need talent to train AI agents and ensure quality of AI outputs. We need people to design memorable moments that AI can't replicate. We need people to guide responsible use of AI and interpret data to make decisions."

Canney also explains how at ServiceNow they focus on ensuring that entry-level talent sees the opportunities ahead. They aim to achieve this through designing new pathways, implementing more rotation programs across teams and



providing support to foster skills. She shared that this is, "so young professionals can thrive in the roles of tomorrow, not just the ones of the past."

From her perspective, this also means that now younger employees have a chance to, "dive into bigger, more meaningful challenges earlier in their career." This suggests that career progression is also reshaping. Through the ServiceNow University and hands-on experiences, the company aims to help new hires build the skills that matter now—and for the future.

According to Canney, "Career growth is about the skills you build, the ideas you bring, and the impact you make along the way." She finds this exciting but once again stresses the significance of remaining curious and being ready to grow. To her, it comes down to having the correct support and tools that allow you to excel; "One thing I always say: career paths aren't always linear."



## WORKFORCE PLANNING, ONBOARDING... THE FUTURE?

Canney affirmed that ServiceNow is thinking long-term. She said, “we know we need to build an AI-ready workforce for the future” Accomplishing this requires a radical shift in, “the every way we’ve previously thought about work, roles, and skills” She shares the thought process; looking at skills that would be required 3, 5, or even 10 years ahead and how to build these if such roles don't even exist just yet.

From her point of view, “Leaders who invest in early-in-career talent today will see long-term growth and innovation tomorrow.” Canney voices that’s why ServiceNow does invest in a range of resources that empower her employees, especially those which foster young talent, to feel empowered to “lead, innovate, and grow.”

Canney admits that she is very passionate about utilising AI to onboard and train young hires, collaborating closely with her digital technology team to make onboarding seamless. She remarks, “it’s all designed so our new hires can focus on learning, not logistics, and collaborating with their leaders and teams starting on day one.”



## HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH DISCOURAGEMENT AMONGST TODAY’S AND TOMORROW’S YOUNG WORKFORCE?

Canney recognises this to be a very important question, “we know it can feel overwhelming right now.” She also acknowledges that there is a lot of uncertainty and disruption, but she reassures us, “we’re listening—because everyone’s journey is different.” She believes that it is up to leaders to ensure young talent sees a future they can shape so they can build something meaningful.

She shares how [she], “always like[s] to remind young people that they have so much potential, maybe even more than they see in themselves,” and that, “You don’t need all the answers right now.”

According to her, all that matters is for us to: explore new things, ask questions, stay open, keep learning, and not being afraid to fail, as it's part of the process. Through curiosity, critical thinking, and showcasing our ambitions, Canney believes we will find our way into a fulfilling career.

She concludes with this: “Remember: your voice, your values, and your ideas are exactly what the future needs.”

# GLOBAL POLITICS

## *THE 6-MONTH UPDATE*

*Lena Jankowska*

**T**his year politics is anything but quiet. Escalating conflicts, new faces in presidential offices, and recent EU laws make it crucial for us to remain politically aware. This article offers an overview of the top global headlines and must-know political stories.

### ***WARS AND CONFLICTS***

Conflicts continue around several hotspots.

Fighting between Israel and Hamas intensifies, thousands of civilians have been displaced, and many locations face shortages of food and water. International aids are calling for ceasefires and humanitarian access.

On the Eastern front the fighting continues, in Ukraine especially in Donetsk. While Ukraine is trying to regain control of territory, while Russia tries to sabotage their supply routes with their missiles and drones. Support from NATO and the US remains crucial for Ukraine's defence.

Tensions between North and South Korea continue. NK continues military exercises near the border alongside missile tests. Both countries keep high alert. The new president plans to focus on both international (negotiating a trade deal with the US) and domestic (uniting the country) reforms.

### ***NEWLY ELECTED***

Several countries recently had leadership changes, that could possibly affect not only domestic but also international politics.

In August '25 Karol Nawrocki was elected as the president of Poland, narrowly beating the Platforma Obywatelska (Civil platform) candidate Rafał Trzaskowski. The new president stands for more conservative interests.



Similarly, in South Korea, a new president named Lee Jae Myung was elected a few months ago. Due to political instability, the election was quick.

Nicușor Dan won the Romanian elections in May '25, strongly supporting the EU and NATO, while passionately disapproving of corruption.

### ***RECENT EU LAWS TO KNOW***

In July, the EU passed a law that introduced AI regulation, aiming to ensure ethical and safe AI use. It also imposes penalties for harmful misuse of AI.

The EU has turned its attention to Global Warming and saving the planet. It has amended the Climate Law and set a goal of a 90% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

Lastly, the United States made a trade agreement with the European Union to reduce trade tariffs on different goods like pharmaceuticals or vehicles. Its goal is to promote a fair and balanced trade between the two.

# TIK TOK TO THE BALLOT

*HOW GEN-Z INFLUENCERS ARE RESHAPING MODERN POLITICS*

*Kesaria Nakani*

## *TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA*

In the past decade, social media platforms have undergone significant changes in both their purpose and their user base. TikTok is no exception when it comes to having a diverse community of creators, but in the 2020s both the audience and creators have become much more serious and politicized. We have access to many addicting apps, the Gen-Z favorite TikTok being a leader in this chart, especially as one of the most used platforms of 2025. How has TikTok shifted from silly dancing videos to political debates?

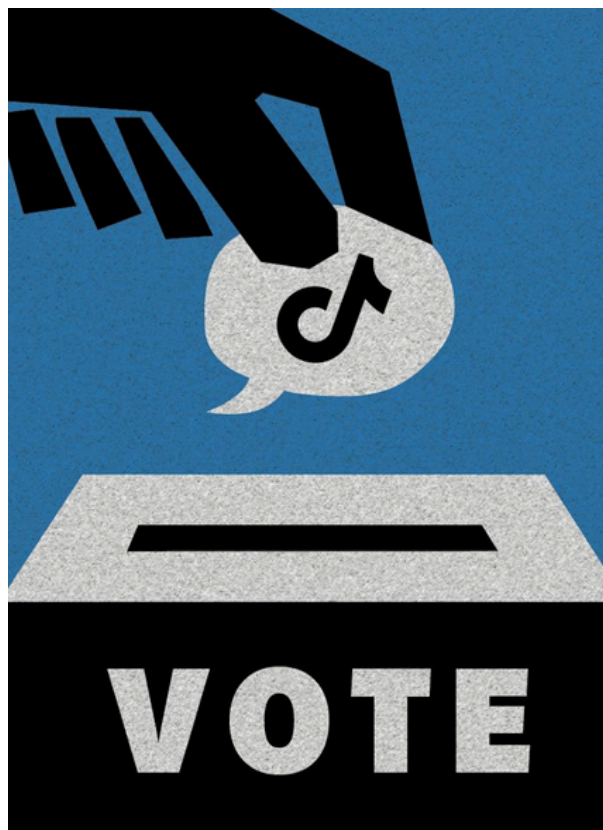
## *THE RISE OF GEN Z POLITICAL INFLUENCER*

Generation Z, people born roughly between 1997-2012, are digital natives. We're the ones who grow up with access to smartphones, laptops, and various social media platforms since the early days of our lives. We have learned to rely on sources provided through the digital world, unlike a much older generation who are used to traditional ways such as newspapers, and TV.

Politics has always been an important topic, but we've been told since the early days that we shouldn't worry about such things, that it's not our business or that we are too young and uneducated to understand it. That is why a lot of teens and young adults often back away from engaging in political matters. But now with the rise of political awareness on TikTok, people have started to understand better, engage more and take part in at least some form of political participation.

For example, in Poland's 2023 parliamentary elections turnout was 74.4% highest in the history of the Third Polish Republic.

Reports suggest that the reason for such high participation was the impact made by social media. There's two main key points we could highlight from this. For instance, many politicians decided to use social media to spread their campaign, which encouraged engagement with people through the app. Young people now mostly use social media as the source of information therefore they became much more exposed to the news. The impact of social media is proven positive by this example because we can see how which at the end resulted in active political engagement and a high turnout.





Unlike the traditional politicians who spread their campaign and political views, e.g. on television channels, while giving speeches, holding conferences and so on, Gen-Z political influencers decide to do this their own way. Despite the criticism, their approach works because it feels much more raw, real, personal, and immediate.

These young creators spread awareness and talk about relevant topics through the mixture of memes, humor and storytelling with political commentary, intertwining entertainment and civil education to close the gaps between the two while also making this process fun, educational and easy to understand. The reason why this works is because this is how Gen-Z itself works, we are used to this fast consuming information through posts made on social media, short videos and tweets instead of some more demanding, 'boring' talks on TV or long articles in newspaper that you get from a booth down the street.

## *THE CHANGEMAKERS*

We can distinguish these political influencers in many ways. For example, many of them are from USA discussing American politics and challenging Right-wing ideas, we can also find climate change creators who speak about

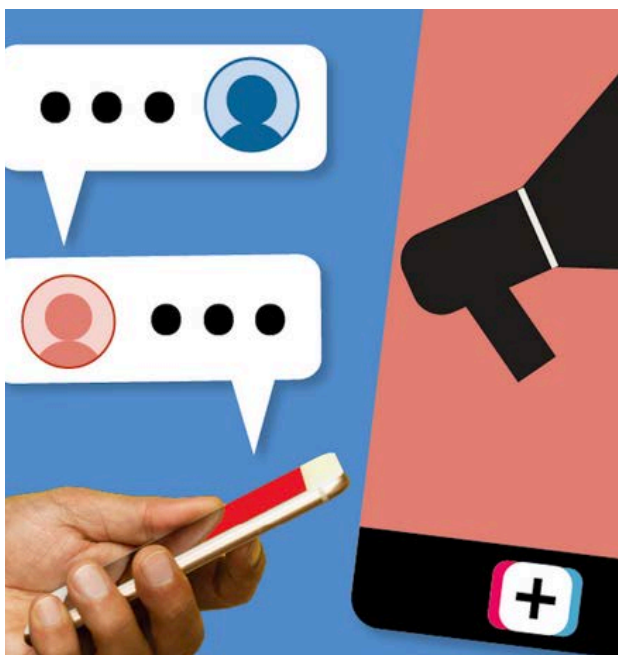
importance of taking care of our environment and what role does and should government play in it, British influencers discussing today's UK politics and many others discussing the Middle East, Europe, Asia etc. Therefore, it's safe to say that there is big range of creators covering and spreading awareness on political situations in various countries.

## *POWER OF TIK TOK OVER GEN-Z*

TikTok is used daily by millions of people, especially by the youth, therefore whether we want to or not we are constantly exposed to all kinds of media provided by the algorithm and consequently so cannot escape such content especially now that it's so widespread. Seeing a political video, going through its comments and sharing it is itself a political participation, so when the question of how impactful political activism is on TikTok, we can argue that it has increased people's political participation and awareness to a certain level. To define the word 'political participation' it can mean various things such as, taking part in voting, running for a mayor, organizing and going to protests, sharing content on social media, commenting on posts, following certain creators and so on. Therefore, the engagement with politics through TikTok means you are participating in political life. To focus on more practical side of it through this, the political awareness and knowledge which many youngsters didn't have before or decided to stay away from it has increased, whether this is through now actively participating in elections which before might not have seemed as important or through spreading awareness within peers and speaking out more.

## *GRIP ON DAILY LIFE*

As of today, we all can agree that whether it's TikTok or some other app, social media has become part of our everyday lives. We scroll endlessly through our feeds, consuming tens of thousands of useless content daily without even realizing it, so alongside watching silly dancing videos, we can take time to focus on the serious side of it all and use this as a tool to educate ourselves and make up for the wasted time.



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# WRITING SHAPES THOUGHT

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*WE USED TO WRITE TO THINK; NOW WE TYPE TO KEEP UP. SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE PEN AND THE KEYBOARD, OUR MINDS TOOK DIFFERENT PATHS.*

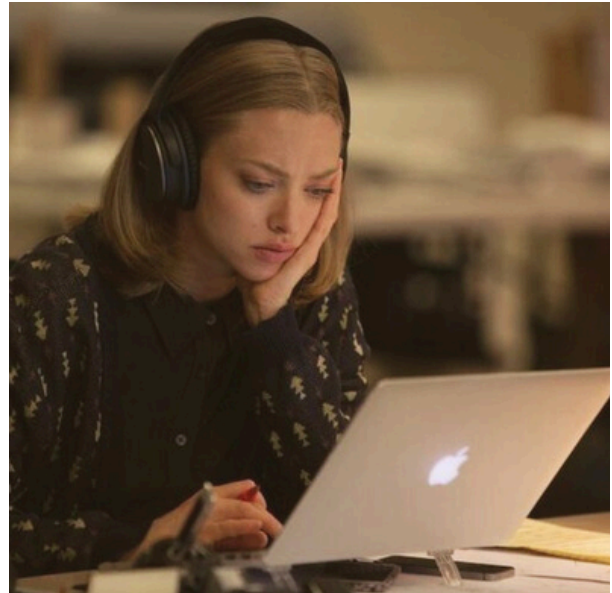
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*Violeta Pehlivanova*

To set the scene, its early morning, you are in a dimly-lit classroom early in the middle of November. It is raining outside; you are slightly cold and listening to the teacher ramble on about something most likely important. While you are fighting sleep you notice the distinction between two of your classmates: one is chewing gum (mint?) and rapidly typing notes on their laptop. From time to time, they might tab out to play some videogame or reply to a text. Their notes are alphabetically-organised in folders – all very aesthetically-pleasing, that is for certain. The other type, though, is enveloped in chaos – they have a cup of coffee that is almost empty, highlighters surround them, but their caps are nowhere to be found. This person is scribbling in their notebook, crossing things out and getting mad. They have completely forgotten their incredible handwriting and are writing in hieroglyphs. The different approaches of the two clearly clash about which approach is more effective. The question here, though, is not about who is better, or which method is more useful, but rather about the difference in their mindsets. Both types will certainly retain knowledge in different ways. However, does the tool they write with have an impact on the way they think?

## ***Technical aspect***

Purely physically, writing by hand and typing work in vastly different ways, despite usually expressing the same ideas. Handwriting notes or essays, and journaling, for example, takes quite a bit more time and effort in contrast to simply typing them out. It is rather slow and tactile



compared to typing; it requires more physical effort to write nonstop. I am certain that is a situation you have been in: writing something so passionately and quickly that your hand starts cramping. That usually would not happen with typing (though I feel it might be possible). Typing, although much faster, is not as physically taxing. It is also much more uniform and easier to read in comparison to traditional handwriting, where it differs according to each individual. But why am I pointing out the obvious? Precisely because the different physical mechanics of how we write impact our brains and how we process and retain information.

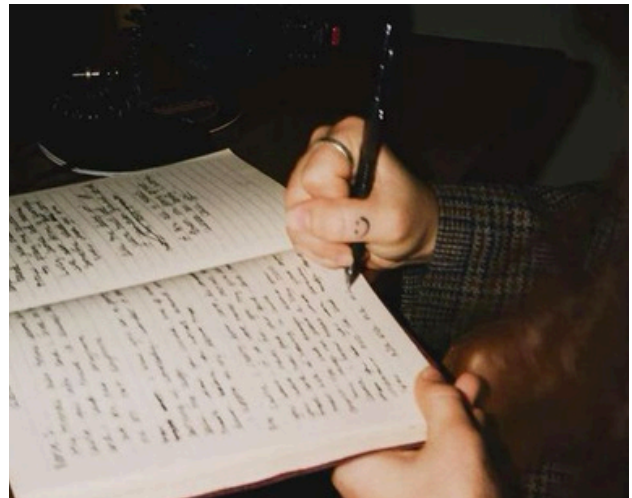
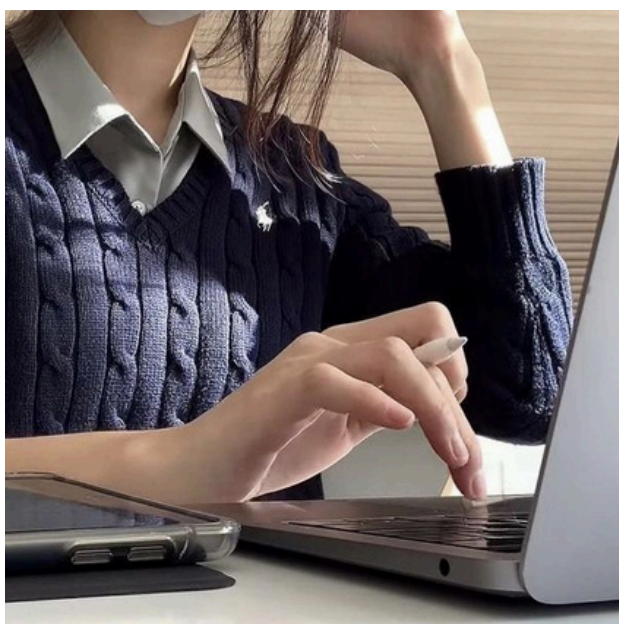
## ***Something to keep in mind while studying***

Recent research has demonstrated that handwriting boosts memory retention whereas typing leads to verbatim processing/transcription. A review done by Paolo Taurisano for the American National Library of Medicine shows that handwriting activates neurons in our brains whilst typing does not. When it comes to studying, different people have contrasting needs. But what does this mean for their educational needs? Well, firstly, a benefit of different writing forms is

providing a sense of freedom for pupils to choose how they all write, study and retain information. Students who choose to handwrite their notes and study by writing plans or repeating ideas might succeed more due to better recollection for tests or exams in contrast to typing them out. On the other hand, typed out notes and reading from a screen can be more beneficial for subjects where one might need to memorise something verbatim. The two types cater to different needs: however, studies have proven that handwriting is generally more useful to a student who needs to remember and recall information for a written exam.

### *The emotional layer*

Have you ever met a person who writes their journal on Word? I am not talking about visual diaries or video entries but actually sitting down with a laptop before bed and writing about your day. It sounds quite futuristic. A screen poses not only distractions such as notifications or battery percentage but also carries a sense of coldness – it does not have as much “soul” as a physical journal would have. A journal gives a person the opportunity to feel “connected”, even grounded to their emotions. It is also more private and personal; it is surely a different feeling than typing on a keyboard. Believe it or not, the variations truly make us perceive the information differently, not only help us retain it in different ways. Some people might perceive and approach



hand-written works with a creative mindset rather than with a critical lens – the way they would look at a typed-out piece.

### *The future of paper versus screen*

It cannot be denied that nowadays, people definitely use both. Some would say that typing is currently used times more commonly as a way of writing, however, many are still preserving the “tradition” of writing on paper whether it is taking notes in class, journaling, or handwriting creative works. However, usually there is no distinct divide between the two types – they are frequently used interchangeably. Many, for instance, write their notes on paper to make it easier for themselves later on; when they would need to sit an exam. At the same time, they are also completing worksheets and essays on a laptop or ipad to make it more efficient. So, the point here is not that you should use just one of the methods, not at all. Meaning – it is okay to use them interchangeably depending on their needs and specific way of retaining information.

### *A change in approach*

To sum up, the choice we make about the way we write is not the trivial objective but, rather the way we want to think and approach choices in life. Each individual has different ideas and the way they choose to express them will ultimately impact the way they perceive them. If you are used to writing in one singular way and you are getting bored with your ideas, perhaps you need a new pen and notebook, or maybe a new keyboard.



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# COFFEE VS MATCHA

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## *THE FINAL DILEMMA*

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*Anastazja Rybakiewicz*

**T**eam Coffee or Team Matcha? One is traditional, more commonly used – the other, an emerging alternative. Although both contain caffeine and give the familiar energy boost, that's about it when it comes to their similarities.

### *Nutritional value*

As we all know, caffeine is what makes coffee so useful. But how exactly does it fuel us with so much additional energy? Neurologically, it reduces tiredness by blocking adenosine (a neurotransmitter that makes us feel sleepy). Caffeine has a similar structure to adenosine, allowing its molecules to fit into the nucleoside's receptors. Blocking it indirectly increases dopamine, which further boosts mood, focus, and energy. Apart from being a good energy supply, roasted coffee beans are also equipped with antioxidants like the caffeic acid with anti-inflammatory properties and vitamins from group B.



Conversely, in terms of its effects on the body, matcha functions in a very different way. It is equipped only with half the amount of caffeine compared to coffee, and in contrast, also contains amino acids like L-theanine, which slows down the absorption of caffeine in the bloodstream. The combination of caffeine and L-theanine leads to a slower onset of stimulating effect providing smoother, longer-lasting energy instead of the fast “spike and crash” typical of coffee. Moreover, matcha also contains various antioxidants like catechins (EGCG), which improve metabolism and may give a mild physical energy boost by supporting fat oxidation and increasing our vitamin E and C content, boosting our immune system.

***Tradition and history***

Many would agree that drinking coffee is not only about staying awake! Coffee is part of our daily routines (e.g. “morning coffee”) and social life (coffee breaks, meet-ups, business culture), which evolved from various traditions – like the Italian espresso or Turkish coffee. So how did the ‘image’ of coffee evolve so much? The first wave of commercialization took place in the mid 20-century, when instant as well as drip coffee started being used in households.

Matcha also has a strong cultural and ritualistic background, especially in Japan where it has been part of traditional tea ceremonies for centuries. It began being used in Buddhist monasteries around the 12th century, where monks drank it to stay alert and calm during long meditation sessions (although Mr. Harris claims he does not continue with the tradition).

***Today***

Currently, middle-aged adults (millennials aged around 35-44) are the most frequent daily coffee drinkers, however due to the rise of modern cafés (such as Starbucks and CostaCoffee) an increasing percentage of minors are adopting coffee consumption through sweetened, flavoured, and iced variations that can be treated more as desserts rather than traditional bitter, black coffee.

Matcha follows a similar pattern, with which Dr. Mikoszewski does not comply with – he believes “matcha tastes like liquid salad” finding the hype exaggerated, and yet it is increasingly tied to modern health and wellness trends (e.g. The clean girl aesthetic) - especially among Gen Z and Gen Alpha. Due to its less bitter taste and vibrant green colour, the tea is quickly becoming more popular among minors and young adults.

***WHAT'S IN YOUR CUP?***

Of course, everybody has their own flavour inclinations and that is what should motivate picking one option over the other. Fortunately, the café in our school offers both options so everybody can find something for themselves. Just as Ms Blank wisely put it, “coffee to start the day and matcha to carry it through.”

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# “BRING HER BACK”

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## *GRIEF IS THE MONSTER*

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*Daria Wierzbicka*

**D**o horror movies lend themselves well for a discussion about bigger social issues? A new movie by the directors Danny and Micheal Philippou makes a strong case for it.

Imagine your world shattered, there are no parents to take care of you, and the social care takes control over you. You find yourself in the house with locked doors, locked windows, and strange things going on. There is no one you can rely on. What do you do?



The new horror movie ‘Bring her back’ is unsettling not only for its supernatural elements but also for the real-world fears. The movie starts after the sudden death of two stepsiblings’ father.

Andy (Billy Barratt) and Piper (Sora Wong) are placed in the care of a new foster mother, Laura (Sally Hawkins). They are taken in by a seemingly ideal foster guardian - a respected psychologist with over a decade of service. Yet, as the days pass, signs of something darker begin to surface. The movie delves into themes of grief, trauma, and the supernatural elements, delivering a chilling experience.

Horror as a genre often presents our fears in scarier ways. By framing the story of a foster mother’s psychological collapse with a paranormal imaginary, ‘Bring her back’ makes the anxiety larger. It’s beyond comprehension that someone in a high-ranking position of authority might secretly be unstable. The supernatural elements such as mysterious symbols, eerie shouts, voodoo, and unseen forces nearby are to present psychological scars. They allow the audience to experience the terror of discovering that the person meant to protect you could be the one to hurt you. This way, the horror becomes a way for people to see the danger through fear.

Fear is also the tool the movie uses to present the concerns that are often overlooked by the society and can happen in real-life scenarios. Many articles, documentaries, and movies show that foster



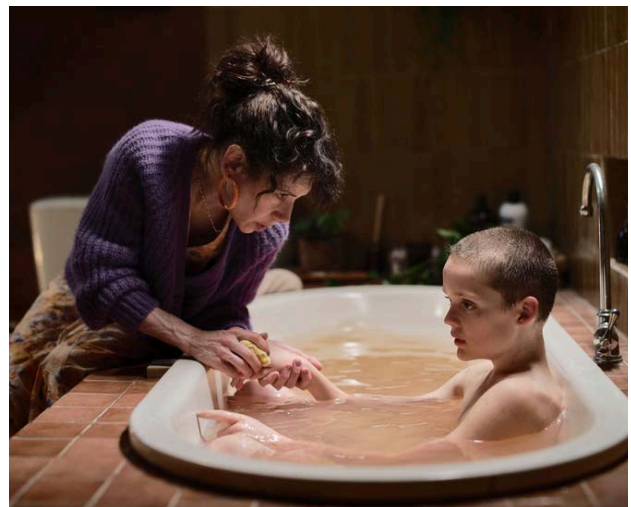


'Bring her back' reminds us that monsters are not always found in haunted houses. Monsters also hide behind uniforms or reassuring smiles. The movie presenting this topic through a horror, leaves a profound and lasting message: ongoing care checkups are essential whenever we trust someone with lives - whether they are of children or animals - to the guardianship of others.

As Albert Einstein said: "*The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.*"

care, adoption, and care systems can fail. The lack of consistent monitoring overlooked histories, or the lack of support from caregivers can lead to catastrophes. These are rare but tragic cases. The character played by Sally Hawkins is perceived as someone trustworthy with deep knowledge of children's psychology and nobody runs background checks. They are needed because her former colleagues do not realise what kind of hidden trauma she faces, which triggers unfortunate events.

For older and mature audiences, 'Bring her back' offers way more than jump-scares and suspense. The horror components are masterfully carried out. Thanks to the tension and creepiness of the movie, it forces the audience to reflect on the real-world systems that we rely on when we are vulnerable. I recommend it to everyone who enjoys a psychological movie (just be warned about the triggers)!



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# DO AESTHETICS TAKE AWAY YOUR PERSONALITY?

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*Helena Jurczak*

**W**e are surrounded by thousands of aesthetics; ready-made sets of styles, values, and passions that are easy to adopt and adapt. Today, it's not just fashion; it's a life plan. But in the world where each aesthetic imposes its rules, the question arises: by following its path, are we losing our own authenticity?

In philosophy, aesthetics is the field that deals with beauty. And although on social media this word is also linked to charm and grace, it is often used to describe a particular photo or video. Sometimes these are photos of landscapes or neatly arranged cosmetics that are conventionally beautiful. Aesthetics have also gained a new meaning in the online TikTok communities, as a way of categorizing broad content that allows self-expression through fashion, makeup, interior design, music, or behavior. It emerged because of the development of social media, when visually consistent styles began to be shared quickly among users. It is not just about choosing pants or lipstick; aesthetics often describe a lifestyle: hobbies, morning routines, or musical tastes.

## *How do Aesthetics shape daily life?*

There are thousands of them. From those inspired by English boarding schools, top colleges, and Oxbridge, like Dark Academia, cute, delicate, and feminine cottagecore and

coquette, to the bold and expressive y2k and alt. With their diversity they attract knowledge lovers, countryside enthusiasts, and avant-garde fans – all can find an aesthetic that suits their tastes by browsing TikTok's or Pinterest's main pages.

Moreover, some videos show activities matching these aesthetics. Playing the violin, gardening, Pilates, all these activities can be assigned to a specific aesthetic. Each shows a recipe for an ideal life. In accordance with it, you can plan your daily schedule, make a study plan, or a shopping list: from makeup to groceries. To show your belonging, you must have it all; your day, what you wear, what you eat should reflect your aesthetic. Yet, while following this set path, is there still room for personal expression?





***(Product)ivity: what must you have to become an it-girl?***

A perfect slicked-back ponytail, styled at four o'clock – right after waking up. She takes a glass of water, filled with ice and cucumber slices; these are good for your skin. Then, she reaches out for a pen, writing a precise plan for the whole day, of course in a cute, minimalist outdoor setting. Besides journaling, she does her daily training, applies light makeup, takes a morning cold shower, and eats a healthy breakfast; now she's ready to start the day. Dressed in the trendiest legging set, she leaves the house at 6:30. She had a productive morning.

This it-girl is the queen of aesthetics. In short: she is the ideal. She does Pilates or yoga, sometimes both, wakes up earlier than the sun (sipping matcha or cold water), always energized, ready to work,



productive. She cares for her psyche, finds time daily for her journal, self-development book, and podcast on a healthy diet. She dresses minimalistic but classy, always fashionable, always on trend.

The It-girl has a trendy bag and uses that one iconic cup for drinking. Her planner must look cute, inspiring, aesthetic – then she will surely write in it. For reading, she uses a Kindle that usually matches her outfit. But are the good habits actually sticking because of all these products?

The products are definitely working for people on TikTok. Each person that we see there has a whole list of the must-haves, and, at the same time, wakes up at four, trains, eats healthily, plans their week, day, minute, second. They spend it productively, chasing their best version. And don't you want to become one of them? Don't you care about yourself? After all, everyone wants that. So, you keep buying cups, pants, notebooks, and wanting to become that girl. Because new gym clothes will bring motivation to exercise, a new tablet will encourage reading, and a planner will remind you to write daily.

But while burying ourselves in more and more products, chasing someone else's (non-existent) life, are we not forgetting about ourselves? Is it wrong to do yoga in sweatpants that seemed nice just a week ago? Or does the notebook which seemed cute last season really needs to be replaced? Until recently, all these things seemed alright, fulfilled their function, but now going to the gym in a mismatched set doesn't fit the aesthetic, so it won't feel the same anymore.



### *The pursuit of the ideal*

Media portraying aesthetics often lack room to think about what you really like because pants, cosmetics, and passions you should engage in have already been matched to you. We get a ready set of premade choices, a closed scheme, the leaving of which causes fear. Not only fear of rejection by others, but maybe also fear of oneself? Because who am I without an aesthetic?

When identity becomes entangled with an aesthetic, losing that label can feel like losing a part of yourself. The pressure to conform to shared ideals shapes not just what we wear, but how we view ourselves through the eyes of others. This force narrows the space where true individuality can breathe, often leading to a heightened self-awareness and anxiety over fitting in.



Still, aesthetics shouldn't be a set of rigid rules to follow. Instead, they ought to invite exploration and discovery of what truly reflects who you are. Authentic expression grows from embracing those imperfect parts that don't fit neatly into perfect images that aesthetics show. It's about feeling at ease with showing unfiltered self, not just the polished version curated for an audience.

Maybe it is time to expand the definition of aesthetics as our personal experience, not as a way of categorization. Because what is beautiful also has its source in individual perception and feelings, for which rigid internet aesthetic frameworks sometimes leave no room. Indeed, TikTok it-girl influencers may have been the trendiest, wake up at four, and drink matcha daily (all as part of self-care), but you can still be "that girl" in last season's sweatpants, drinking water, and sometimes falling asleep after the alarm.

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# WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

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## *A FOREIGNER'S GUIDE TO POLISH NAMES 101*

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*Irene Kim*

**'H**ey, how's your day been?"  
A familiar face warmly exclaims. "Oh, great!"  
You murmur. *Was her name Julia? No... I think it started with an I -- Itzel? Is that even a name?*  
You desperately try to continue the awkward conversation, avoiding mentioning their title.

It's a situation that happens to everyone, whether you're great with names or not. And trust me, with a new school year, this unfortunate situation is going to happen sooner than you think. From experience, it will be better to be prepared than to come face to face with a colleague of whom you physically cannot remember their name.

### *'REPEAT AFTER ME'*

The first and easiest step you will take is to repeat their name after they have introduced themselves. It won't be too difficult, as all you must add to the conversation is a greeting – nice to meet you, so and so. It doesn't seem like a big difference, but once you verbally announce someone's name, it's easier for it to be inserted into your brain, allowing you to pick out that specific information as soon as you see their face.

### *GOING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS*

Now that you've got their name memorized to some extent, it's time for the surname. Especially with foreign family names, it can be difficult to pronounce them in the first place, let alone remember them. The ultimate way to forcefully remember a name is to connect it to your mother tongue. Try to find an alternative pronunciation to someone's title in your language, making it easier to memorize, as it's a

rather fun way to do so. To make an example, using a common Polish family name, Kowalski, it could relate to three English words: coal, vault, and ski. You could make a cute little animation in your head of a vault full of coal, acting as a modern ski resort. As a result, the next time you find them in a crowd, you'll think: coal in a vault for skiers.

### *NO BIG DEAL, RIGHT?*

Last but not least, the easiest way would be to directly ask them. It may feel disrespectful or a bit offensive, but many won't mind if you kindly ask for a slow, exact pronunciation of their name. It's completely normal to do so, as it takes time to convert a piece of information into long-term memory.

Polish names might look like a keyboard got smashed, but with a little practice and a sneaky Google search, you'll get there for sure. You might mess up a few times, but at least you might have some fun stories, and maybe a few friends along the way.





# POP CULTURE UPDATES

## *THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF A FANGIRL™*

*Zofia Kowalska*

Summer 2025 gave us no rest. It was an endless cycle of iconic moments, chaotic flops, and juicy gossip. From Lana Del Rey's most unexpected feud with Ethel Cain to Taylor Swift's engagement (and album drop!) to the Grammys - all the pop culture semantics.

Lucky for you, dear reader, I stayed chronically online through all of this madness. Emotionally unwell, intensely informed, just so you don't have to. This time, I'll be diving into the music girlies—the singers, the drama, and the niche internet lore that kept us all entertained. If this goes well, consider this the start of a series. Welcome to the official diary—chronicles, if you will, of a fangirl. You're welcome, x.

### ***SOUTHERN GOTHIC AND HOLLYWOOD SADCORE***

August 13th has blessed us with the most unexpected feud. Lana Del Rey casually hopped on Instagram and dropped a snippet of what appears to be a diss track with a country twist. Lines included: "Ethel Cain hated my Instagram post / Think it's cute reenacting my Chicago pose." Subtle? Probably not. Iconic? Arguably so.

Lore recap: Lana posed with her (now ex) boyfriend, Jack Donoghue, outside a Cook County Jail around 2022, which is most certainly a questionable choice.

Shortly after, Ethel Cain (singer and songwriter known for 'Preacher's daughter' and her signature Southern Gothic aesthetic) did the same thing... Same scenery. Same guy. Same pose. Coincidence? According to Lana, absolutely not.

Ethel's response: the queen of Southern Gothic revealed that Lana had officially blocked her on Instagram. Being blocked by the goddess of sadness is, most presumably, a feeling that I never wish to experience. Ethel's sister commenting on the entire affair was surely the most entertaining part: "I can't wait to watch your hologram perform this 'diss track' while you hit your vape backstage, diva. What inspired you to suddenly make a country album??"



*~Lana's post, Ethel's post, respectfully*

Verdict? Petty, immature, yet somehow incredibly poetic. Lana turning into a country diss track queen was certainly not on my 2025 bingo card. Well, here we are.

### ***A LOVE STORY (SHE SAID YES!)***

On the 26th of August, Taylor Swift (read: the music industry) made the whole world spin with a single Instagram post. Drumrolls please... The caption said: "Your English teacher and your gym teacher are getting married." Travis Kelce, the lucky man that you are. And to the Joe Alwyn (also known as: Taylor's best ex-boyfriend) stans: you're allowed to cry.



Congratulations to the happy couple though! Despite the engagement announcement, the one and only Miss Taylor had something far more headline-worthy to share. On October 3rd, *The Life of a Showgirl* dropped, officially marking the TS12 era—and well... it's complicated.



~ *Taylor Swift for her new album*

Lyrically, the album feels alarmingly hollow. For someone who once wrote *Folklore* and *Evermore*, albums that practically gutted the listeners line by line, *Showgirl* sounds like a half-finished project that was never supposed to see the light of day.

Lines such as “Did you girlboss too close to the sun?” or “But I’m not a bad b\*\*tch, and this isn’t savage” sound less like Taylor, and more like a cashout of a white millennial woman. The production saves it in a way - it’s danceable, shiny, fun to play when applying makeup - but it lacks the emotional spine, the storytelling and the intimacy that made Taylor’s music feel like reading her diary at 3 am.

But the disappointment around *The Life of a Showgirl* goes far beyond just weak lyricism. No one would care this much if the album was just average. It’s about what it represents. For many fans, it feels like a symbol of what Taylor has become - a brand. A woman who once stood for

authenticity and political awareness, now surrounded by MAGA sympathizers and refusing to speak on issues she has once advocated for. It’s not just the music that is shallow - it’s the silence behind it.

Don’t get me wrong - I’ve grown to appreciate the album. It’s not unlistenable. But it’s missing that magic - the ache, storytelling and humanity. It’s the sound of someone turning into everything they swore they’d never be. And that’s the real heartbreak.

### ***BONUS SEGMENT: 2026 GRAMMY NOMINATIONS***

The 2026 grammy nominations just dropped, and surprise surprise, injustice has been served again. Lorde was criminally robbed - Virgin didn’t get a single nomination. Not one. Outrageous.

Album of the Year? We’ve mainly got *Mayhem* by Lady Gaga, *Man’s Best Friend* by Sabrina Carpenter, and *Chromakopia* by Tyler, The Creator - which is, if we’re being real, is the strongest contender so far.

As for Best New Artist, the lineup is stacked: Katseye, Addison Rae, The Marias (we adore them), and sombr. Pretty acceptable overall, though none of it makes up for the fact that the Grammys haven’t been culturally relevant since Cowboy Carter inexplicably won Album of the Year in the big 2025. Like... who actually listened to that? Be honest.



~ *Sabrina Carpenter*

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# ECONOMICAL MOVEMENT IN SPORT

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## *MONEY CONTINUES TO MEAN MORE IN FOOTBALL AT THE EXPENSE OF LOYALTY*

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*Jan Janczar*

In recent years, football has become more financially dependent, and business driven. As a result, money has gained more influence over how decisions are made in the sport. This fact can be attributed to large and often state-owned companies which invest in a select few clubs providing them with a financial edge over their competitors, such as Manchester City or PSG. More money means higher wages for players, which tempts them into switching clubs, entirely based on how much they can earn. This, among other things, leaves fans wondering if loyalty is still something important and valued in modern football.

### **THE ROLE OF THE OWNERS**

Currently, football is only partially about the quality of the sport being played. Now, more than ever, the events which take place behind the scenes influence the clubs' performance. This means that clubs often have larger funds at their disposal that they can use to buy many of the best players. One of the first examples of a rich businessman buying a football club was Roman Abramovich acquiring Chelsea in 2003. Even though Chelsea was a relatively accomplished club even before this took place, it reached new heights of success. Chelsea managed to win their first Premier League title in just the second season under their new owner. This is credited to the arrivals of players like Didier Drogba and Petr Cech who quickly revolutionized the club's style of play. Abramovich set a new trend for clubs all around the world of spending more and more money on transfers. This also impacted players as they were often tempted by higher wages, which they chose over joining successful

clubs. A prime example of a player behaving in this way is Carlos Tevez, when he moved from Manchester United to city rivals - Manchester City. While it's true that he was seeking more game time, the wages offered by Man City also played a big role in his decision. A more recent example of a player moving clubs due to better pay, can be found in Gianluigi Donnarumma who left boyhood club AC Milan for PSG, following failed contract negotiations in which the Italian club couldn't meet the goalkeeper's wage demands.



~Abramovich

### **HOW THIS IMPACTS THE WAY FOOTBALL IS BEING PLAYED**

Football players being less loyal and dedicated to their teams influences the sport in several ways. Most importantly, respect. Footballers these days are more prone to behaviour which may be interpreted as disrespectful towards their team. This phenomenon was particularly visible in this summer transfer window. One of the most exciting transfers of recent months happened through Alexander Isak's move to Liverpool. The entire deal was shrouded in controversy, as the striker refused to play for

Newcastle United again, expressing his desire to force a transfer to the English champions. The Swede tried to argue this by saying that he was promised a move by manager - Eddie Howe, however in the eyes of many this still doesn't justify his actions.

A similar situation occurred in Brentford FC, as Yoane Wissa also refused to train or play for the London club, while forcing a move to Newcastle United, who saw him as a replacement for Isak. Crystal Palace defender Marc Guehi took a different approach to his potential transfer to Liverpool. The Englishman continued training and remained on good terms with his club, while advancing talks with the Merseyside team. This attitude eventually backfired, as the London club did not allow him to leave despite previously saying that they would rather sell him this summer for a sizeable fee, than let him leave on a free transfer, since his contract expires soon. This drastic change came when Palace manager, Oliver Glasner, threatened to resign if Guehi left, because he saw him as a key figure in his squad. This event has left fans questioning whether being professional and patient can still pay off in modern football.



~Isak

## HOW CLUBS ACT

As football becomes more business-like, loyalty also begins to mean less to clubs. Players who spent their entire lives playing for a certain team, are often being cast out to other clubs. A prime example of this is Marcus Rashford being forced out of Manchester United. The club's manager,

Ruben Amorim, stated that he doesn't consider the winger part of his plans, due to his playing style. This is particularly sad, as the English player, dedicated his whole career to the Manchester club. Another player being forced out by the Portuguese manager is Kobbie Mainoo, a talented 20-year-old midfielder who was part of the club since he was 9 years old.

Despite proving his worth multiple times, on both the international and club level, Amorim thinks that he isn't talented enough to consistently play in the first team. This has left Mainoo considering a move to another club, despite how much he devoted himself to Manchester United.



~Amorim

In recent years, money has begun to gain more and more influence in football, which has the effect of the sport becoming more business oriented than ever before. As a result, loyalty now means less than ever. Whether its players moving from club to club due to wage demands, or players boycotting their teams to force a transfer, it is clear that footballers are less devoted to their teams than before. However, clubs also play a role in this, as they often force those, who remain committed to their boyhood teams, to leave - whether it be directly or indirectly. Fans all over the world are now asking themselves, if football continues to be the beautiful game they love. One thing is for sure, money will continue gaining more influence and decision-making influence in the world of football.



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# BOLD THROUGH BOULDERING

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*AN EXTREME SPORT FOR THE CAUTIOUS!*

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*Maja Wyrpajew*

**N**ot a fan of extreme sports? Boulderering will change your mind forever. If you have a fear of heights, pain, or injuries, this sport is your greatest enemy... and friend. You can challenge yourself to push your boundaries and go out of your comfort zone while having the time of your life!

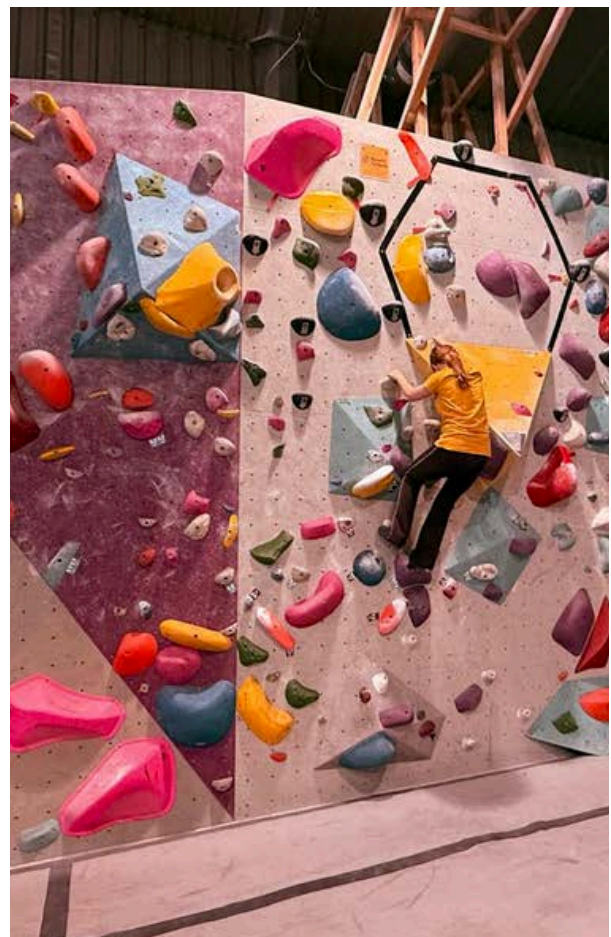
### ***Safety guarantee***

In Boulderering, you climb and challenge your abilities, while having the option to go back down, and try again later, if you need to. Unless you're paralysed with fear and can't go up or down, which surprisingly has happened in some cases. But don't worry, this sport is perfectly safe, because, unlike the classical rock climbing, where you have a rope to secure a safe landing, in boulderering, you don't have one! But jokes aside, this sport is actually safer without a rope, because even though injuries occur more frequently than when with a rope, any accidents happening in rock climbing might result in death. In boulderering, that isn't very probable. You do have a mattress to cushion your fall, which is usually quite thick. Another important point is that the wall itself is 5m tall at most. Hence, you maintain the assurance of survival, even if you might break a limb, or twist your ankle in the process.

### ***Rules & Vocab***

To begin climbing, you place your hands on holds, which have small pieces of laminated

paper attached to them, showing you the start of the boulder (track) you're about to do. If you do not start with your hands on those holds, the boulder doesn't count. Here, boulder can mean either the piece on the wall, made of plastic, resin or wood, or it can mean the path you must follow to complete that particular challenge. The pieces of paper have numbers on them, indicating the level of the boulder. The easiest is 1, the hardest 9. There are two pieces of paper, because you have two hands, and each paper is for a separate hand. If they are on the same boulder, it means you must place both your hands on the same one.



The beginning position is called the start. After you complete the boulder, you end with both hands always on one boulder, called the top. It is marked by a red strip of paper, so that you won't miss it. Now that we have climbed to the top, we must somehow go back down. And sometimes, that can be quite hard as well. This is why often; you don't go down at all! You jump. Ideally, in a controlled way, immediately rolling onto your back so that your legs won't take all your weight. However, most people just jump down normally and they're fine. It is advisable to climb down a bit first though, because if you do a lot of jumping, from high up, when you're older your knees might fail you, and that can be problematic. Like I said, this sport is as safe as it gets, except for a few minor setbacks.

### ***How does it all look like?***

The Bouldering gym has walls covered with boulders, which are all different colours and sizes. Each boulder (here I mean the track not the actual piece) has a different colour, so you know which boulders belong to each one. Some walls are tilted, making it harder to climb. That's called the overhang, and helps you get stronger, because while on a 90° wall your muscles are still working hard if the boulder is difficult, on an overhang you're practically hanging on your arms and while being propped against the footholds with your legs, that still isn't very pleasant. While it can help you build your muscles, you also get more tired, which is why it's better to take breaks from overhangs. This is because while falling from there is safer, I still wouldn't recommend it for those who are afraid of heights, climbing on an overhang makes the fall look much more frightening.



### ***Bait***

If you still aren't convinced about trying Bouldering, let me add that once you're more advanced, you can go and climb on actual boulders which can be an experience you'll never forget. It's an amazing opportunity, and the boulders aren't usually very high. Sometimes, you can even climb over water and have that serve as your mattress. For those who want to step out of their comfort zone, love adventure, love a challenge, like extreme sports (and even those who don't), bouldering is a perfect sport! Why not just try it? And don't let the first fall dissuade you! Remember, it's meant to be dangerous. But at least not life threatening.



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# AHS VS BSW

## TEACHER'S MATCH

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*Jan Janczar*

**Read about the victory our teachers claimed in an exciting friendly football match against BSW.**

On the 30th of September, teachers from our school competed against the teachers of the neighbouring BSW (British Primary School of Wilanów).

Even though the match was organised entirely for fun, our teachers treated it very competitively, and as Dr Anders said: "Our fun is pretty serious". The match ended up with an 11-1 win for us, with many goals coming from Mr Simmons and Mr Chróstowski as well as the other players. Mr Koślacz, who was the goalkeeper, played a big role in the victory, as he made several important saves. This match was organised by Mr Erik Hind, who looks forward to setting up more events, similar to this one.



This event was organised to bring our schools together and the result was as intended. Many students walked from our primary school neighbours to cheer on their teachers and despite the score being grim from their perspective, their support never faltered. Mr Lotito, our school counsellor was very energetic in commentating the event, adding to the excitement of the game. Ultimately, the whole match was a huge success, in terms of friendly rivalry and sportsmanship.

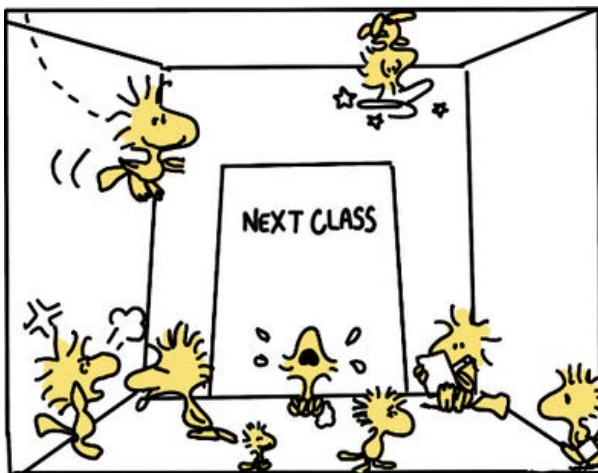
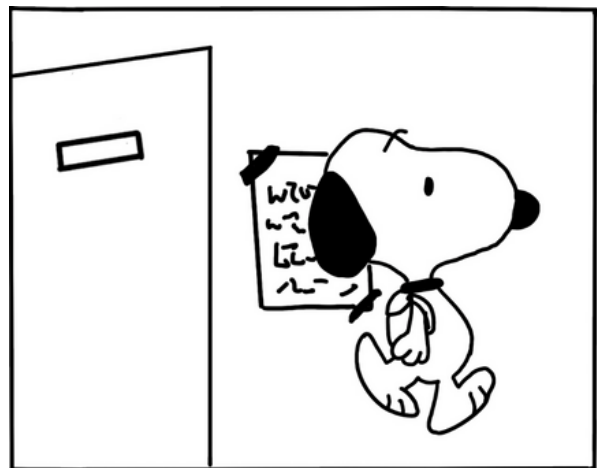
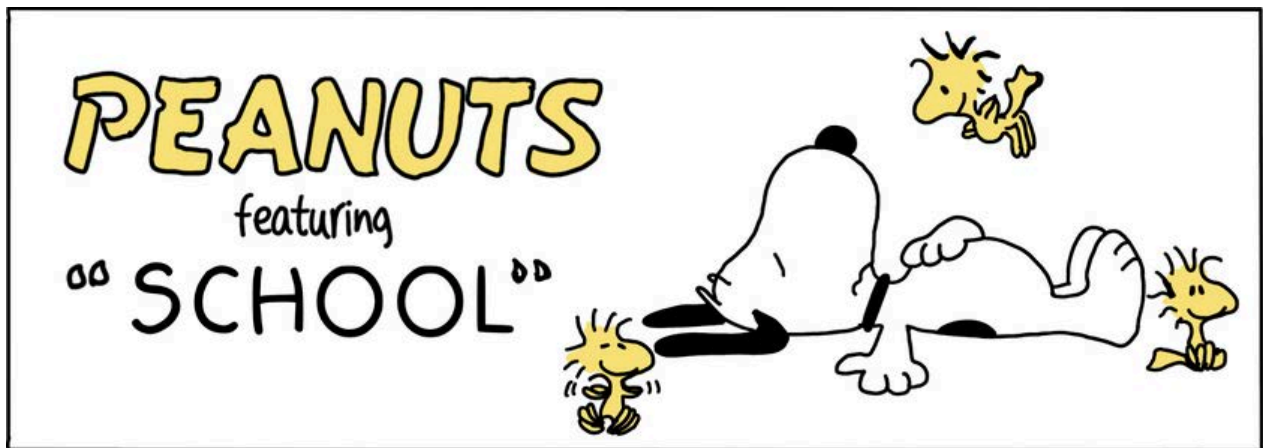
Even though this was only a friendly game, it helped us strengthen the relationship between Akademeia and BSW. It was also a thrilling event sports-wise, with plenty of fun and emotions. We are all looking forward towards the future matches between Akademeia's teachers and ones from other schools.





# COMIC

*Lena Jankowska*



# AP JAMZ



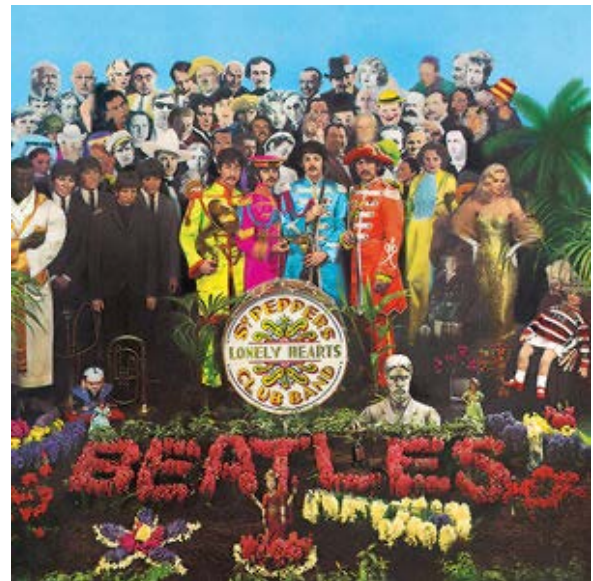
*Mr Liam Higgins*

## DEEP CUTS

The first cut is the deepest, or so sang Rod Stewart, but amongst crate digging vinyl addicts like yours truly, it means an album track that isn't radio friendly, is less commercial and probably doesn't receive the love it deserves. The term "deep cut" comes from the fact that vinyl records store songs by having a continuous, spiral groove cut into the surface, with the peaks and valleys of the groove physically representing the sound waves of the music. A "Deep Cut" isn't on the outer edge of the record, where the hit singles might be, but much further inside towards the middle, hence the name. So, having been coaxed out of retirement for the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Akademeia Post (congratulations to Ms Blank and the editorial team) I thought I'd give you my top 5 Deep cuts from my record collection and explain why I like them so much.

### **1. SHE'S LEAVING HOME: SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND, THE BEATLES.**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> to last song on the first side of the record is McCartney's madrigal about a girl who runs away from home. At the time was as far removed from the rest of the Beatles oeuvre as it could get with its haunting "Greek chorus" of the parents who can't understand what they could have done for their daughter to take such a course of action, and ending with a universal truth "fun is the one thing that money can't buy". Pop Trivia- This song was inspired by a newspaper report about a runaway teenager, Paul McCartney had actually met the girl who was a contestant on a game show years earlier, but McCartney didn't know that at the time.



### **2. THE BALLAD OF CURTIS LOEW: SECOND HELPING, LYNYRD SKYNYRD.**

From an album which sold millions for containing the ubiquitous "Sweet Home Alabama", the first song on side A, the Ballad of Curtis Loew is the first on the underappreciated side B. The song is narrated 10 year old boy in the American South who strikes up a relationship with an old black man who plays dobro guitar and is much maligned by the community, but as the narrator says "People said you were useless them people all were fools, 'Cause Curtis you're the finest picker to ever play the blues".





**3. *HIHACHE: SOUL MOUSSAKA, LAFAYETTE AFRO ROCK BAND.***

An instrumental song which has been vital to the development of hip-hop music, sampled in everything from Montell Jordan's – "This is how we do it", to Jay Z's "Show me what you got" and Ice Cube's "Friday" and around 300 others. This obscure 1970's Afro-Funk-Rock group have had more of an influence on music than some far more popular artists, found this on clear blue vinyl in a record shop on Chmielna (but we don't tell Mrs Higgins how much it cost so shhhh).



**4. *MARRIED WITH CHILDREN: DEFINITELY MAYBE, OASIS.***

As deep as a cut can get, the last grooves on the record and final song on the album. A quiet acoustic song with bluesy lead guitar that follows the far more raucous songs on the Manchester boy's debut, the lyrics are inspired by the mundane annoyances that come from everyday life in shared living spaces. Life wasn't going to be mundane for long though...



**5. *STILL TAKE YOU HOME: WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM THAT'S WHAT I'M NOT: ARCTIC MONKEYS.***

A gem buried amongst the much more acclaimed and analysed songs on the Monkey's first (and frankly best). The album could be considered a concept as it's focused on the theme of a youthful night out in Sheffield, this song is about an interaction between the narrator and a girl he spots in a night club. Alex's wordsmithery reaches a high describing the object of his desire as "A Topshop princess, a rock star too".







AKADEMEIA  
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