

THE DUAL DIPLOMA TIMES

WRITTEN BY STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD

May 2023



SCAN ME

School News

Music, The Universal Language: AIS School Song Contest

Teresa Pereira Fernández, Paula Piña González and Josephine Sarsam De Pont

Music can bring us to the heights or depths of emotion. It can persuade us to buy something or remind us of our first date. In music, we can find peace and joy. And when nothing else can, it can lift us up, and get us dancing to its beat. Yip Harburg, an American popular song lyricist once said “Words make you think. Music makes you feel. But a song makes you feel a thought.” At the Dual Diploma program, we wanted to turn all of our values and ideas into a song. So the song contest was born.

The Dual Diploma program organized for the first time a schoolwide song competition, allowing the students the opportunity to show off their singing or musical talent by creating our school song. The requirements were that the students must incorporate the school mission statement in some way. “Our mission is to ensure we create a learning environment that fosters student achievement while providing a personalized learning experience for every student. AIS students are part of an international network of learners where innovation fuels both success and responsibility for global stewardship,” said Kristine Smythers, the Dual Diploma teacher responsible for creating this contest.

“We wanted the students to be able to show off their creativity while at the same time incorporating our school’s mission statement,” said Smythers. She talked to us about the process of selection, and she emphasized how difficult it was to choose a winner because there were a lot of good artists. They received more than two hundred applications with forty-four song submissions. The Building Community Team of teachers met to choose their top seven songs and from there, administrators narrowed it down to five students. They then narrowed it down to the top three contestants, when they shared the songs, a biography of each student, and the lyrics with all of the teachers. In the end, the teachers made their votes and chose the winner. After much consideration and careful review of all the songs, the teachers and staff selected Alberto Rodriguez Sanz, also known as Armus, and his song *We’re Sisters and Brothers* as the winner of the competition. Alberto’s song was truly inspiring and motivational. He demonstrated a deep understanding of our school’s mission statement and conveyed it beautifully through his lyrics.

Alberto is a fifteen-year-old Spanish student from Madrid with a passion for music. That is the reason why he spends a lot of his time singing and composing, as well as playing instruments like the piano, which he has learned since very little, or the guitar and the drums, in which he is self-taught. In the future, he would love to study music and his dream is to become a famous singer.

Alberto said that at first, he was not sure about participating but finally, as he loves music, he thought it was an opportunity he could not miss. “I had nothing to lose and I let my creativity fly,” he stated. From Alberto’s perspective, music is more than a hobby to the point he considers it “the inspiration for my whole life.” Nevertheless, composing a new song is not an easy process since there are a lot of things to bear in mind such as the rhythm, the lyrics, etc. “I started thinking of different things I could include in the song such as sentences, melodies, or just a catchy rhythm. I started composing the song with lots of ideas and then organized them in verses, chorus... and with some changes, the lyrics started to come out.”

But, how did Armus feel when he found out he was the winner? At first, he could not believe it, but suddenly, he realized that it was his first official award, and he had won it thanks to his creativity. Finally, this contest has been a perfect opportunity for him to start making his aspirations come true. Listen here: <https://qrco.de/bdwBiQ>

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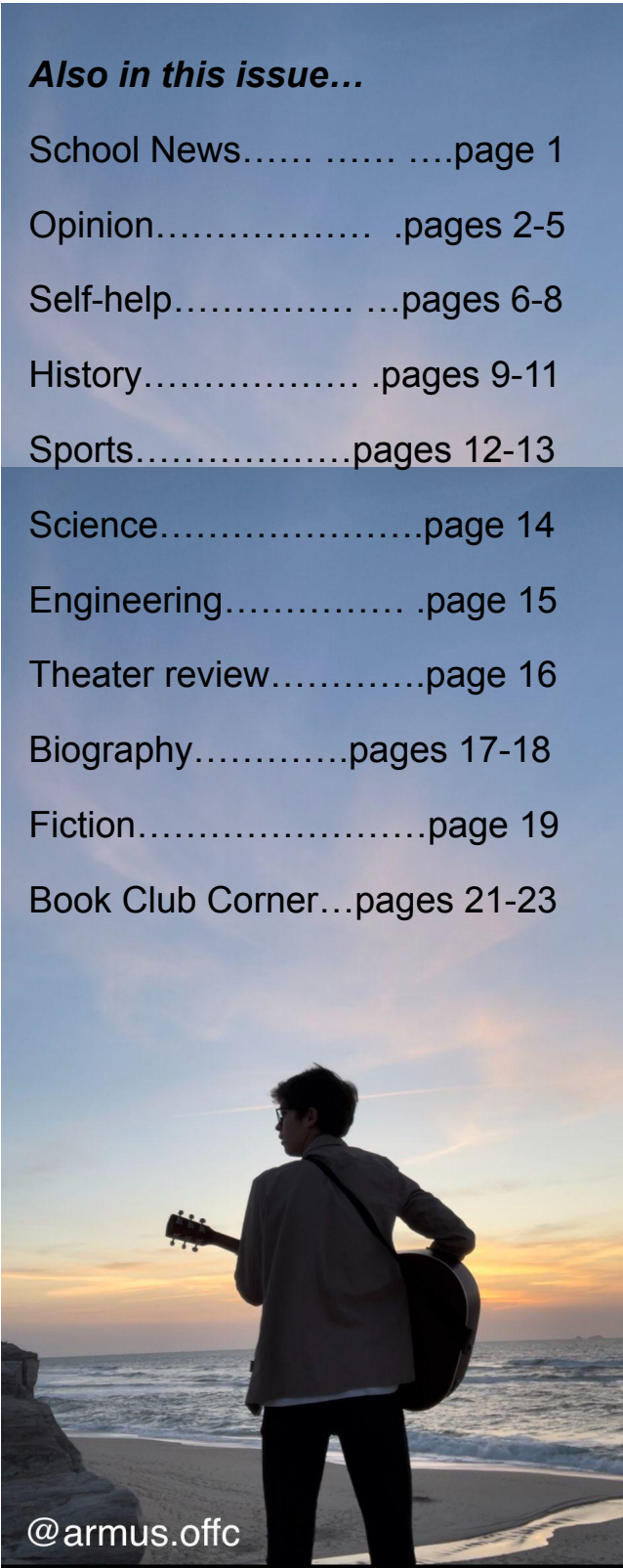
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@armus.offc

“I had nothing to lose and I let my creativity fly.”

-Alberto Rodriguez Sanz



Opinion

Sustainable Development Goals: Cooperating for a Better World

Candela Sain Sacristán

Nowadays, the world is witnessing a situation of environmental, social, sanitary, economic, peace, and security crisis. To implement measures that could end the various crises or almost improve the situation, it's essential to increase international cooperation.

In 2015, every Member State of the United Nations signed the 2030 Agenda: a plan for sustainable development, the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) its cornerstone, to promote the peace and welfare of society and of the planet. With these goals, a climate of collaboration for the development of strategies has been created to foster the improvement of education and sanitation, as well as, reduce poverty and inequality.

Everything started with the 21 Agenda, the first plan of international cooperation for sustainable development, approved in Río de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. Then, it was followed by the Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which had 2015 as its due date. In 2013, the first drafts of the next plan, the 2030 Agenda, began to be written; and it was finally ratified in 2015.

Every year, the Secretary General of the UN elaborates the SDG progress report, through the analysis of statistics given at a national level thanks to which he can evaluate the advances produced.

The Pandemic has provoked havoc in the majority of the SDGs. Due to it, the process of poverty reduction has been interrupted, as well as the supply chains, the healthcare services, and the face-to-face classes. After 2020, so many children couldn't return to their schools, which constitutes a violation of one of their main rights. Moreover, the problem with supply chains and inflation has dramatically increased hunger worldwide. COVID-19 has also evidenced the need to accelerate industrialization because countries with more and better industrial and technological resources have better borne the crisis than developing ones, which have now more difficulty than ever to subsist.

In addition, the war in Ukraine has had a great international impact. As a result, the number of refugees has grown, along with the number of people in situations of extreme poverty. Furthermore, it has also caused problems in the provisioning system, owing to the importance of Ukraine as an exporting country, and this has led to inflation and hunger.

Another of the main characteristics is urbanization. Cities are a source of wealth and welfare. However, uncontrolled and unsustainable growth has led up to a great amount of pollution and waste, even though a lot of this waste is responsibly managed by the authorities. Still, electronic waste is poorly managed. There are some minerals such as cobalt that apart from being toxic to the environment, also generate economic profit for those who sell them, given that they are used to produce chips and other electronic items. Because of this profit, many people, especially in Africa where it is most common, "employ" children to obtain the material, and I emphasize "employ" because these children are slaves: they receive no pay and risk injury or death every day, because mines aren't the safest places to work.

Besides, it's essential to highlight the triple planetary crisis: pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change, mainly caused by unsustainable production and consumption. On this topic, scientists affirm that we still have time to solve this, but it progressively reduces and it's necessary to act immediately.

Within this issue, there are lots of problems to solve. One of them is the demand for fresh water: it has been growing with the population, but years of overexploitation and poor management of reserves have depleted them. Also, there is a need to transform our relationship with nature, we must practice a circular economy that favors the well-being of our planet, society, and future generations.

One of the most important threats is the one that endangers our ecosystems, especially the oceans. The temperature of this great water mass is rapidly increasing, mostly due to plastic pollution. This brings about limiting the capacity to absorb pollution and climate change and puts various marine species in danger of extinction.

Nevertheless, the ocean isn't affected exclusively. Because of human activity, ten million hectares of forest are destroyed per year, endangering a huge amount of species that lose their natural habitat. According to António Guterres, the current Secretary General of the UN, "We must rise higher to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and stay true to our promise of a world of peace, dignity, and prosperity in a healthy planet." The previous year placed us a bit further from reaching the SDGs because although it has brought some improvements like the increasing number of countries legislating for the protection of poor people or the building of better education infrastructures, progress must duplicate or even quadruple in almost every goal to achieve the proposal of the 2030 Agenda.

Apart from this, on Tuesday, March 7th of 2023 all the Member States of the UN signed the Ocean Treaty, something for which the international community has been fighting for decades. Now and finally we have approved it and it protects approximately two-thirds of the ocean, including its exploitation control, and has increased the amount of Protected Marine Areas (PMA).

With this Treaty, the ocean, our maximum ally for the prevention of climate change is currently safer than ever.

The slogan of the Agenda and the SDGs is "Leave no one behind," and that's exactly what the international community, including all of us, is going to do: work hand-in-hand to reach our goals and turn this world into a healthier, cleaner and more peaceful place.





Opinion

Our Greatest Objective: Peace

Valentina Perdrix Firpo

The world is in crisis; A social, economic, energetic, and value crisis with an inflationary scale worldwide. And all caused by what? Wars. Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Afghanistan, Ethiopia... Do they sound familiar to you? These are some countries with present war conflicts that have managed to accumulate a total of more than 800,000 deaths in the last decade according to the international investigation group: Our world in data. In addition, some have lasted for more than ten years.

Our world is divided into many parts. Each country only seeks its internal benefit. Furthermore, current structures, such as the UN and the World Beyond Wars are inefficient or ineffective in resolving these conflicts as we could have seen in wars in Cambodia, Namibia or Tajikistan, who didn't receive any kind of help when dealing with their internal wars.

Therefore, it is necessary to look for new structures at the international level that provide new strategies to end the worst threat: a Third World War. And although we might think it is very far away, the recent war between Ukraine and Russia has given us cause for concern. This war would be more destructive than any previous war due to the use of nuclear weapons, and unfortunately that would leave us with a terrible result of deaths and environmental destruction.

But to avoid wars we have to ask ourselves the following question: What causes wars?

Most conflicts between countries are caused by conflicts between their political leaders and these in turn are due to three main factors: greed or desire for power, inequalities between inhabitants and ideological differences.

That is why it is essential to instill in education the acceptance of any person regardless of their race, gender, religion or political ideology, not only by explaining it but behaving consequently in order to fulfill it. And only in this way will we achieve the respect that we yearn for, no matter how different we may be. Hence, we will reduce social inequalities, and we will be closer to having the same opportunities for all the world's inhabitants.



Wikimedia Commons

So we must focus on obtaining our greatest objective: Peace. Such peace will lead us into a world with democratic values, without dictatorial regimes and above all where the union between people and countries, as well as with the planet, is prioritized. Finally, let me remind you that it is our responsibility to start working to achieve a future and long worldwide peace. It is challenging, but for sure it is worth trying!



Opinion

Being Well Informed: A New Challenge for Society

Margaux Peillet

We are confronted with information every day in different ways. Today, information reaches us without us having asked for it. We don't need to go looking for it anymore. The quantity of information is privileged compared to its quality. It is therefore necessary to be discerning. Not all messages are equal and not all transmitters have the same goal.

But what is the point of being informed? It has a function on an individual and collective scale. In a collective way, information has several roles. Foremost, information leads to control and power. Governments and the media use information to gain power, control, and influence over people. Moreover, being informed allows to us develop a critical mind and thus to have a public debate of quality. Today, it is important to understand the information to understand the world.

Today, most young people get their information from social networks, but the mixing of messages, the confusion of roles, and the virilization feed doubt about the identity of the speaker and the credibility of his words. Social networks are generally not a good source of accurate and verified information. It is therefore critical to be careful and not to take for granted some of the information found. There are others ways we can get informed such as through newspapers or TV news.

Indeed, getting information can be fun and rewarding without becoming a chore. You just have to find the right sources. Over the years, the media have become more and more used to new technologies. We are moving from paper newspapers to digital newspapers available online. Most of the media have now mobile applications that allow easier access to information. In order to stay informed on a regular basis, you can activate the notifications and thus be informed of significant events at the right time. It is relevant and concise information. In addition, it is essential to vary the sources in order to be sure of the information collected. The plurality of sources is necessary for accurate information.

Nowadays, getting informed has become a challenge but it is possible to change this and to use our new technologies wisely in order to allow an evolution of knowledge from a young age. Better information for a better life.



Opinion

Are Social Networks Real?

Irene Higuera Gómez

Social networks are digital platforms formed by communities of individuals with common interests, activities, or relationships (such as friendship, kinship, and work). Social networks allow contact between people and function as a means of communicating and exchanging information.

If we talk about social networks, the first thing that comes to mind is Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat. However, there are hundreds of social networks, some of which are curious like Catmoji, in which cats have their own profile. Social networks serve to amuse, entertain, or even learn, but what is real in all this?

According to psychologists, what people upload to their social networks is only what the world wants to see of them, not their real life. All this can cause a distorted reality as we idealize a lifestyle that is not real in most cases. According to David Bonilla, a psychologist at the Universidad de El Bosque, Bogota, "It is good that people show their best face because that is what social networks are made for. However, the problem arises when, instead of being a space for entertainment, they turn out to be the main way of getting to know each other". This argument is based on the fact that if we really want to get to know a person, we should not do it through social networks, since they will only show us the best of them and not how the person really is.

Another critical aspect of social networks is that they can greatly damage our self-esteem. Some studies prove how social network use affects the self-perception of a person's body appearance. Social networks always highlight a stereotypical beauty market, which promotes products that help care and beautify, as well as muscular and idealized bodies. Social media only sometimes shows what it is, everything can be an illusion.



Wallpaper Flare

A large number of images we see on the Internet and social networks are manipulated, either with editing programs or filters. Filters on social networks are virtual and distort reality by configuring a new standard of beauty. An unattainable ideal that moves away from naturalness and approaches stereotypes that are naturalized. Social networks such as Instagram have managed to popularize the use of filters through influencers and users themselves. According to a study by the Dove brand, five hundred of the people interviewed revealed that they don't look good enough naturally if they don't use any editing on their photos. Some of them feel disappointed that they don't look in real life like in their photos with filters on Instagram.

Content creators, also called influencers, have great power over all of the above. Influencers are, in today's society, those people who have important credibility of action before an online audience that follows their day to day, their actions and publications through social networks. The impact of these people is usually very powerful because they share many similarities with their followers and are, as far as possible, accessible, since they are in direct contact with their followers.

Many teens have the goal of looking like their favorite influencers or at least having the same body type. If these influencers were held accountable by showing their true lifestyle, the good and bad about it, their imperfections, or their concerns, teens would have a better conception of reality. We cannot try to have the same lifestyle as these people because what they show us is not real, it is something that no one can get.

However, new social networks such as BeReal are appearing lately. This application has gained great popularity in the last year, and this fame has been earned because it attempts to show reality. BeReal is a photo-sharing application that asks users to post one unfiltered photo per day. In addition, TikTok has incorporated a tool in its videos that allows us to see when a person is using a filter so that we can get an idea of what is real and what is not.

All this may lead us to a world in which social networks become more real, not just a page to show the best of our lives, idealizing them and making people believe that we have a perfect lifestyle. However, we still have a long way to go in which we have to raise awareness in society and show that not everything we see is true since part of the population believes that everything people show is real. Do you want to participate in this change in the way we use social networks?



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-55824936>



Opinion

Today's World in Different Eyes

Meritxell Faflués Cusidó

Today's world is viewed through a variety of lenses. The world has changed dramatically in the past century, and the way individuals view it can differ significantly. How we choose to see the world is largely based on factors such as our experiences and perspectives. Everything from technology to geopolitics can influence how we think about the state of the world today.

To apply some examples, my grandmother is probably going to see TikTok as a waste of time, but I might find comfort in watching other peoples' lives from another part of the world. The same way I might think that sending a WhatsApp is better than calling, and my grandmother will probably think the opposite.

Some people today might perceive the world as being highly unstable and volatile. Nations are facing many challenges, from climate change to nuclear weapons and more. The potential for conflict and disasters is ever-present, even in developed countries. Those who view the world through this lens may point to recent political turmoil, civil unrest, and economic downturns as evidence of their claims. They may see the world becoming increasingly unpredictable and chaotic, which is a cause for concern. But what many don't see is that most of the problems we are facing nowadays are repetitions of similar instances from the past. History repeats itself.

On the other hand, some people might view the world as becoming more interconnected and prosperous. The spread of communication technology and the development of powerful software solutions have enabled us to be more connected throughout the world than never before. People are now more connected than ever, which allows for the exchange of ideas and increased collaboration. Economic reforms in many countries have enabled people to have access to education and vital resources. These achievements have led some to view the world as a more progressive and equitable space that is on the path to a more secure future. A great example would be us, Dual diploma students. We are studying high school from another country without even have to leave home.

In both cases, perspectives can differ greatly depending on individual experiences and backgrounds. For many people, the world can appear as a place of potential danger and despair. People from war-ravaged countries might view the world with much trepidation. Similarly, those from deprived backgrounds may not feel comfortable in what is seen as an unequal and unjust world.

No matter one's perception of the world, most would agree that it is important for everyone to work together for a better tomorrow. Only by uniting can a brighter future be achieved in our turbulent world. As such, it is influential to listen to the voices of the oppressed and marginalized and to strive towards a more harmonious and equitable world. By doing so, we can create an inclusive and hopeful world that can be viewed through truly different eyes.



Clip Studio



Self Help

We Are the Product of the Choices We Make, Not the Circumstances We Face

Josephine Sarsam

If you really want to torture me, you should take me to Starbucks. Would an iced white chocolate mocha or a vanilla latte be better? The hot chocolate or the java chip frappuccino? The choices are endless. Lisa Passe says in the Street Journal that in Starbucks there are more than 87,000 possible drink combinations. My fear is that whatever I select, the other option would have been better.

Research has shown that the average human makes about 35,000 decisions a day. Most decisions are minor, and we make them instinctively or automatically — what to wear to work in the morning, whether to eat lunch now or in ten minutes, etc. But many of the decisions we make throughout the day take real thought, and have serious consequences. While reading this article, think about the last time you made a decision. Some of you might think about when you were deciding the brand of your new phone, while others that time when you had to choose the right school or university. In this article, I will be discussing the importance of decision-making and how to make the right choice (or at least avoid the bad ones).

“We are the product of the choices we make, not the circumstances we face,” said Roger Crawford, a tennis player whose inspiring life I'd like to tell you about, but that's another story. Although both examples I have mentioned before are decisions, the one about deciding the right school or university is the one that has a bigger impact on our lives. If you have already made this decision, ask yourself: “Would my life be the same if I had chosen the other one?” There are two probable answers: no and not at all. Every single decision we make, or don't make, affects our lives.

Because decisions have a great impact on our lives, it is important to be careful when making a choice. Firstly, it is essential to know who we are. This may sound very philosophical, but it is necessary. Ask yourself about the priorities you have, what you are good at, what your weaknesses are, etc. For example, if you aren't good at cooking, and you know it, don't choose to be the chef on Christmas day.

The second step is to analyze the different options. If you are facing the previous example about university, you can make a list of all the possible centers where you could go. You can even classify them in different sections depending on different factors, such as the distance from home, the education you receive, the costs, and the reputation of the centers, among others.



<https://nicholsnotes.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Many-Options.jpg>

Decision-making has a great impact on our lives.



<https://nicholsnotes.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Many-Options.jpg>

The average human makes about 35,000 decisions a day.

In addition to deciding based on one's needs and preferences, it is always important to ask for advice from someone. In most cases, parents are the ones that know you the best, so it is essential to take advice from them. Also, your friends, especially at a young age, can help you. The objective is to have the necessary information to make the right choice.

As we can see, making decisions has never been a mindless habit, but a conscious effort that requires huge concentration. Over the last decades, we have experienced the arrival of the “technology tsunami,” which has created an environment where information and communication never cease. Researchers estimate that our brains process five times as much information today as in 1986. Consequently, many of us live in a continuous state of distraction and struggle to focus. This state of distraction makes decision-making more difficult than it already is.

Moreover, with so many decisions to make during a day, especially the ones that have a big impact on other people, it's inevitable to experience decision fatigue. If we add the lack of sleep, the external problems we may face during the day and so many other daily factors, making the right choice becomes difficult if not impossible.

But not everything is bad news because there are solutions to face all of these difficulties. For example, to make concentration a priority, find time each day to unplug and step back from email, social media, news, and the onslaught of information. I know that it's easier said than done, but it works. Trust me! Besides, identify the most important decisions you need to make and prioritize your time so that you make them when your energy levels are the highest.

I would also recommend you (as researchers do) to stay away from what is called the “What if” game.” Once the decision is made, don't remember the other possibilities you were able to choose, and just focus on the one that you have made. As Phil McGraw said once, “Sometimes you make the right decision, and sometimes you make the decision right.”

To finish with, I would like to remember the words of our good friend Forrest Gump: “Life is like a box of chocolate.” This famous sentence, which has finally become a quote, means that we are not able to control everything in life, but once we have the choice, we must be careful. Today, we've learned that one decision can change your life. So, wherever you are, remember that you are just one decision away from a better life.



Self Help

The Way to Happiness

Teresa Pereira Fernández

The question of how to reach happiness has always been a central inquiry for humans. For lengthy centuries it seemed that happiness is something that is not rational, but rather, you have to reach it from a spiritual dimension.

One of the main occupations of philosophers and religious leaders was to determine the way to reach happiness. All of them promised their followers that they knew the right way to get eternal happiness. Why do we, humans, long so badly for that happiness? Is it a feeling, a state of mind? What is actually being happy?

Recently it has been discovered that maybe the answers were inside us all the time. And no, I don't mean in a spiritual way, I mean it in a biological way. Perhaps the key to happiness is in our body, in our brain, and it is something that we can control. It seems a rational thought now, but if you had said this to Plato, he would have had an existential crisis.

It turns out that happiness can be produced by chemical reactions or electrical stimuli. And the things that influence these reactions are called hormones. Hormones are nothing other than chemicals, produced by different glands throughout your body. They travel through the bloodstream as messengers and they play a part in many processes. It has been proven that they help promote positive feelings, including happiness and pleasure.

There are four types of hormones that influence the happiness process. The first one is **dopamine**. Known as the feel-good hormone, it is a neurotransmitter that works as a reward system for the brain, because it causes pleasure. It also helps with learning and memory. Listening to music, exercising, and doing what we like are dopamine-producing activities.

Serotonin is another neurotransmitter. It regulates your mood, your sleep, appetite, digestion, learning ability, and memory. According to research by the Erasmus Medical Centre, exposure to the sun and exercise can increase this hormone.

Oxytocin is the love hormone, and it is essential for strong family and friend relationships. The levels of this hormone increase with physical affection. Moreover, a paper published recently by Miho Nagasawa and his colleagues titled "Oxytocin-gaze positive loop and the coevolution of human-dog bonds," shows that giving pets affection and playing with them gives both the human and the dog a boost of oxytocin.

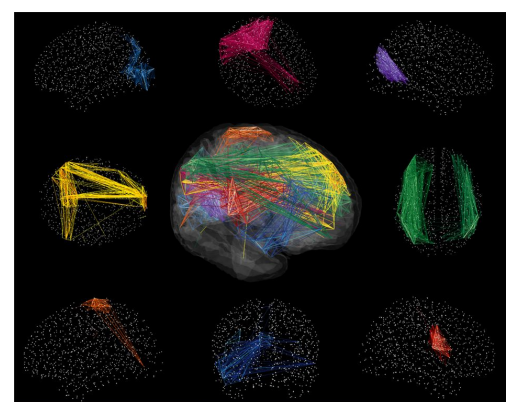
The last hormones of this kind are **endorphins**, which are pain relievers and are produced as a response to stress. Endorphins are boosted by activities that produce rewards such as eating and working out. A 2016 study from Cambridge University also showed that musicians experience an endorphin release while performing music, and even more when performing within a group. Laughter also relieves anxiety and stress because it boosts dopamine and endorphin hormones, as it is confirmed by a study from Sahmyook University, in South Korea. Stress is a normal feeling that we all experience throughout our lives. However, a life with regular stressors should be avoided, given that it causes drops in dopamine and serotonin levels, which can negatively affect mental and physical health. Some stress relievers that boost levels of happy hormones are as simple as going for a walk, run, bike ride, or other physical activity.

There are four factors that determine a big fraction of our happy-hormone production, which we can control day to day.

The first factor is food. When you eat something which you like it triggers the release of dopamine and endorphins. Some particular foods also impact hormone levels. Spicy **foods** cause endorphin release for many people. There also exist natural supplements that chemically increase the happy hormone number. These supplements are tyrosine (which produces dopamine, found in dairy and protein foods); green tea (which produces dopamine and serotonin); probiotics (produces dopamine and serotonin, in yogurts and fermented foods) and tryptophan (which produces serotonin, found in bananas, oats, protein products, and chocolate).

In addition, getting enough sleep is important to our health. It highly contributes to a balance of hormones, which affects all of us, from our emotions to our physical health. Sleeping 7 to 9 hours each night with a fixed schedule and avoiding caffeine helps to keep our hormones balanced. Third, regular physical activity can increase dopamine, serotonin, and endorphin levels. Lastly, many studies like the one made by the Wayne State University School of Medicine "Hierarchical control systems for the regulation of physiological homeostasis and affect," also prove that meditation increases dopamine.

Experts agree on the fact that serotonin, dopamine, endorphins, and oxytocin help promote happiness and pleasure while reducing depression and anxiety. It is always useful to be aware of how your brain works, and why you sometimes feel happy or sad without cause. This information is not to be used to try to always be happy, because that wouldn't be healthy and it is naïve to think that serious mental problems could be that easily solved. Nonetheless, it is important to have knowledge about our brain chemistry in order to surround ourselves with the best things and habits to have a healthy and peaceful mind, which leads to a higher quality of life. Furthermore, we should consider this information to avoid people trying to manipulate us by causing psychological reactions or to avoid being controlled by addictions that produce dopamine or adrenaline, such as scrolling through the Internet or unhealthily binge-watching a series. A happy life is, after all, a balanced life.



This is a photograph that shows different brains with colorful lines between neurons.
CC BY-SA
<https://www.neurobureau.org/galleries/brain-art-competition-2012/>



Self Help

How to Change: A Step-by-Step Guide

Margarida Vaz

A year ago I found myself struggling to find the motivation to do the things I love to do. The truth is, I'm not a rare, or special exception. This happens way too much in our world. But the point is, I changed. You can change too. I can't say it will be easy, but what do you have to lose by trying? I'd like to share with you what habits, tricks, and routines worked for me. If you're feeling like you're in a rut, perhaps some of these suggestions could work for you.

First of all, embrace failure. For me, one of the things that clogged my way to improvement was the fear of failure. Before doing anything that could improve my life in any way I would always question myself, and get anxious. If I had accepted failure as part of the process it would probably have taken half of the time I took to succeed in any task I did. Realize that failure is a way to learn how to do it better the next time. Don't beat yourself up. You're trying!

Although I do believe we have to be able to overcome failures, we also need success. If we keep losing we'll become unmotivated, and give up. So the key lesson is don't set unachievable goals. Only aim to do what's within your reach, or you'll get disappointed for not reaching what you couldn't in the first place. Take baby steps!

Apart from just setting goals you also have to be focused on doing things that you love. You won't find the strength to keep going every day, to accomplish your goals, or to overcome failure if you don't have time to relax and do what you like. You can watching a Netflix show or go out with your friends. It doesn't matter how but you must have a reward system for the work you will be doing.

Another thing that helped me was having a good support system. It doesn't have to be your friends or family. It can be a TV show, a YouTuber, a book, or anything. It just has to be something or someone that you know you can rely on and count on when going through hard times.

Lastly, I think it is important to do an activity every day that calms your mind. Try to meditate, journal, or just stop a second and breathe. Do something that makes you slow down, and focus on yourself.

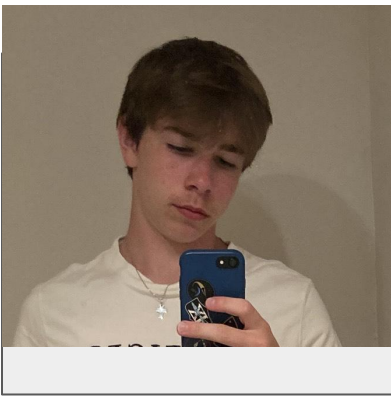
We all struggle sometimes, but eventually, we have to get back up. For me, it helps to have this system and reminders to get me back on track on my bad days. If I helped someone, even if just a little bit, my mission is fulfilled. I hope it was you.



Communicating Psychology



Peakpx



History

A Story of Tension Between the Two Chinas

Amaury Lemaun de Talancé

Capital names are significant in geopolitics. The name of a capital is bold and capitalized. And if you look at USA Google maps, Taipei has these characteristics, while on Chinese Google maps, it is a simple city. To understand this, we need to take a look at the history of Taiwan. But first, what is Taiwan?

Taiwan is an island located in the east of China, in the China Sea. With a population of 23 million people, it is the fourteenth most densely populated country in the world. Taiwan shares common points with mainland China, such as the official language (Mandarin), but it also has differences, such as in government and mentality. Indeed, China is rather viewed as an authoritarian communist government according to the Democracy Index, while Taiwan has an imperfect democracy with a desire for independence. Despite this desire for independence, China, for its part, doesn't hide its desire to regain full possession of Taiwan. From now on, we can look at the history of Taiwan.

The history of Taiwan goes back a long way, but we will firstly look at it from the 16th century. At that time, Taiwan was populated by the ancestors of the Austronesian populations we know today. With the creation of large ships and the European desire to discover the world, the Portuguese arrived in Taiwan at the end of the 16th century. They did not stay long. In the 1620s, the Dutch arrived and set up bases in the south of the island, with a commercial aim. This Dutch colonization was also followed by a desire to spread European culture, such as by forcing the Christianization of part of the population. The Spanish, who were not far away in the Pacific, colonized the north of Taiwan. Then, a war began between the Spanish and the Dutch, which ended with a Dutch victory that took possession of Taiwan. At the same time, strong Chinese immigration took place in Taiwan. This was because the Manchus had overthrown the Ming dynasty.



Image represent the conflict and tensions between Taiwan and China by showing a soldier between the flags of both countries. Photo credits: BBC

Until 1885, there followed a succession of different policies in Taiwan. On this date, Taiwan was integrated into the province of Fujian, while Japan began to expand its territory and worry about its neighbors, especially China. Ten years later, in 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan. Some Taiwanese refused this annexation and declared Taiwan independent territory, thus creating Taiwanese resistance. Japan will therefore colonize Taiwan for 50 years, making it economically stronger, at the expense of a rather authoritarian policy.

After the defeat of Japan in World War II in 1945, this country was forced to leave Taiwan to the Allied forces. Then begins a civil war in China (on the mainland): on one side the Communist Party led by Mao Zedong and on the other the Kuomintang, a Taiwanese political party. The communist party won a lot of ground, and in October 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China. The Kuomintang, therefore, took refuge in Taiwan. Two Chinas exist then, one located in Taiwan, which means, original China, and the other one on the mainland and gathering actual China, which means the Communist party, a new party taking Beijing as its capital.



We can think that relations between China and Taiwan have improved over time. In reality, this is not the case, not at all! China continues to claim Taiwan as its territory, while Taiwanese nationalism has increased in recent years. More and more people in Taiwan consider themselves Taiwanese (65%) and not Chinese (5%), with the rest of the people taking no position, compared to 15% and 45% in 1990. Faced with this, according to the BBC, “President Xi Jinping has said "reunification" with Taiwan "must be fulfilled," and has not ruled out the possible use of force to achieve this.” We can then ask ourselves why China does not take possession of Taiwan by force. In fact, China is already exerting considerable pressure, for example by increasing the number of military exercises near Taiwan, especially in places where they are not supposed to be. More than fifty Chinese aircraft have been counted in Taiwan's airspace since September 2021. The Chinese government does not hide its desire to regain full possession of Taiwan. For example, the case on October 16, 2022, during the Chinese Communist Party Congress, where Xi Jinping announced "We are not committed to abandoning the use of force, and we reserve the option to take all necessary measures." And what can Taiwan do against China's military power? Actually, Taiwan can't do much. However, many countries, such as the United States, defend Taiwan, even though they don't openly take a position on the issue. Contrary to what we might think, the Taiwanese are not really afraid of the situation, with more than 60% believing that there will be no war with China.

Finally, we might ask what Taiwan's place is international relations? In fact, it has much less political weight than China. Only fourteen states, mostly small ones like the Vatican, recognize Taiwan as a "sovereign country." And at the UN, Taiwan is not represented. Indeed, only one China is included; therefore, Xi-Jinping's China has the right to its seat and claims to represent Taiwan. So we can see a certain Chinese domination over Taiwan. We can also find this domination at the Olympic Games, with Taiwan being obliged to call itself "Chinese Tapei," with a special flag.



History

Chernobyl: A Ghost Town

Carla Roa Saez

Everyone has heard about the accident of Chernobyl, the worst disaster in the history of nuclear power generation, but what is the real story?

We can't start talking about Chernobyl without knowing what nuclear energy is. It consists in a nucleus of Uranium that is bombed by neutrons, which produces the fragmentation of the nucleus. This is known as nuclear fission. This process releases a lot of energy and radioactivity (which are the sources of this type of energy) in what is known as a chain reaction. This chain reaction is controlled by nuclear power plants through a series of security procedures to prevent hypothetical situations such as the loss of electricity.

During the night of April 26, 1986, at the Vladimir Ilyich Lenin Nuclear Power Plant, located in northern Ukraine, the workers of unit four were ordered to implement a security method to cool down the nucleus in case of a power cut. Unfortunately, things went wrong and they had to stop the operation, leading to an excess of Xenon (gas that absorbs neutrons, slowing down the nucleus).

Led by pressure from the directors of the USSR, they wanted to avoid the interruption of the reactor by extracting the control rods. Moreover, they intentionally decided to leave out of service the refrigeration and security mechanisms, as well as the automatic system turn-off. These were the main causes of the accident, due to both, the poor conditions of the facilities because of economic reasons, and the imprudent decisions that the Soviet Union imposed, (the chief engineers accepted).

With the reactor already out of control, the temperature, and therefore the pressure, rose and began to boil, causing the coolant to vaporize and triggering a chemical, not nuclear, explosion that damaged the reactor envelope. Now they did try to stop it, inserting the poor-quality control rods, which instead increased the power. This led to an enormous fire and a second explosion, in which two workers died. Toxic particles began to be released into the environment, and for the next 10 days, they tried to extinguish the fire and limit the release of toxic particles into the environment. Despite the death of two workers, and the fire, no one was evacuated until about 36 hours after the disaster began.

The meltdown had already spread radiation as far as Sweden. After first denying any accident, the Soviets finally made a brief announcement on April 28. Then about 30% of Uranium was in the atmosphere, and the Soviet Union eventually evacuated 335,000 people. There were initially at least 28 deaths as a consequence of the accident and more than one hundred injured. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation reported that more than 6,000 children and teenagers developed thyroid cancer after being exposed to radiation from the accident.

It also had an environmental impact; an area of about four square miles became known as "Red Forest" because a lot of trees after absorbing radiation turned reddish-brown and died. Fish from the nearby Pripyat River had so much radioactivity that people could no longer eat them. Cattle and horses in the area died. Also, scientists have found elevated levels of cataracts and albinism, and low rates of beneficial bacteria, among some wildlife species in the area. On the other hand, due to human escape, the numbers of animals from lynxes to elk have increased. So, who was responsible for the accident?

Viktor Bryukhanov was at that time the director of the Chernobyl Atomic Energy Station. He helped build and manage the Chernobyl nuclear plant, but Mr. Bryukhanov denied criminal liability. He blamed it on the design flaws dictated by Moscow, the failure of higher command to provide adequate safety equipment, and bureaucratic red tape that divided responsibility between technocrats and Communist Party officials. Nonetheless, he was expelled from the party and sent to a labor camp for 10 years, however, he was released at half of his sentence after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Anatoly Dyatlov was the deputy chief engineer for operations at the Chernobyl Atomic Energy Station. The night of the accident, he was in charge of supervising the safety test. When Leonid Toptunov, chief reactor control engineer, made a mistake, Dyatlov insisted on continuing with the test even though Toptunov and safety protocols suggested otherwise. He was sentenced to 10 years of hard labor for his responsibility in the accident, together with Viktor Bryukhanov.



Staff in the control room of Reactor Number Two on a regular work day. Photo web source: National Geographic

Today, the exclusion zone is quiet, yet full of life. Few people live inside the exclusion zone full time, and they rely on food from their gardens and the forest. About seven thousand people (firefighters, scientists, security guards...) enter the zone to work on shifts, and tourists from all over the world visit Pripyat as a historical destination. Furthermore, the reactor is covered by a massive steel containment structure, and there are people working on the decommissioning of the three other reactors, which will take until at least 2065. So is nuclear energy dangerous? It is undeniable that it has to be conducted by experienced and qualified people, who have wide knowledge of the subject. This is because if something goes wrong, the consequences can be devastating as history has proven.

Furthermore, and in part due to the accident of Chernobyl, nuclear energy is now far safer and more controlled thanks to the several advances in technology that have been added to the reactors, as well as the different organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, among others, which ensure that the nuclear plants fulfill the security requirements.

In conclusion, nuclear energy is nowadays a reliable and safe energy source. Moreover, it is also a great option, together with renewable energies, to produce the vast majority of energy that we need, due to its low waste (that has to be professionally managed) and its great capacity of production.



History Women's Suffrage

Laia Véliz Arnabat

Imagine being a woman in the 18th century: not having rights and being unable to give your opinion on something political without being the negative center of attention of all the white men. Well, that type of situation decreased thanks to Women's suffrage.

It started in the 18th century, but women weren't given the right to vote just like that. They had to fight for their rights. New Jersey was the first place where women's right to vote was maintained in 1776. However, this was reverted in 1807 so that only white men could vote. In 1848, more than 300 activists reunited in New York, and after two long days giving speeches, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, known for being one of the biggest pioneers fighting for women's rights, presented a document called "Seneca Falls Declaration", where it said that "All laws which prevent women from occupying in society the position which their conscience dictates, or which place them in a position inferior to that of men, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore have neither force nor authority."

In 1870, Utah was the first state within the United States to dictate a law approving women's suffrage, and Utah's women were the first to vote. But, then again, this law was reverted in 1887, and a lot of women created an organization called "Territorial Women's Suffrage Association". They pressed the government, and in 1895 Utah's politics started arguing about women's right to vote. A politician called Orson F. Whitney supported this movement. "It is the destiny of women to have a voice in government affairs," he said. "They were created for it; they have a right to it". Finally, they accepted it. Utah was the third state in the Union to extend political equality to women.

In 1920, women could finally vote in the United States. The expansion of women's right to vote in the whole world also started in the 19th century. The rights were given to divorced women, widows, and women who paid rent or taxes. The first country on Earth was New Zealand. Saudi Arabia was one of the last countries to accept the right of women to vote. They could finally vote in 2015.

In conclusion, women had to fight for their rights for years, even decades, but they achieved their goals. Nowadays, it is more than normal for men and women to vote for their president. We still have a lot to fight for, but if we do it together, as women in the 19th century did, we can achieve our goals.



Group of women voting for the first time in New York City in 1920. Getty.



Sports

Is Mindset the Key to Becoming an Elite Athlete?

Nora Gutiérrez Maderna

What is the first image that comes to your mind when you think about your favorite athlete? Do you picture them winning? How do you think they got there? Was it because they were born with a special talent? Or would you say it is a product of their mindset?

Most would say their success comes as a result of some kind of “gifted talent,” but the truth is that they all had to go through a long way to be the best. All this journey is simplified into one word: mindset. But, what is mindset?

Mindset is described as the sum of one’s beliefs, and how these affect their performance. Essentially, there are two types of mindset: fixed and growth. The fixed mindset is the one in which you believe that your abilities, intelligence, and talents are innate and static, and therefore that no matter what you do they won’t change. The growth mindset is not as limiting. People who own a growth mindset believe that, with enough practice and effort, they can develop their aptitudes. Have you identified which one you have? Let’s look at an example.

In an experiment carried out by Carol Dweck, a professor from Stanford University, four hundred students were given a series of puzzles to solve, and later they received their results alongside some praise. Two hundred students were told “you must be good at this”; and the other two hundred “you must have worked hard at this.” After that, they were asked to take either an easy or a difficult test: 66% of the group that was “good at it” decided to take the easy test to maintain their reputation; 90% of the ones who had ”worked hard” decided to take the difficult test, as they were eager to improve.

Michael Jordan is the perfect example of a growth mindset: considered the best-ever basketball player, the most-awarded one of all time, the most emblematic player of the Chicago Bulls, and the face of the NBA for more than a decade. He once said "I can accept failure, everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying." That is a growth mindset.

Although both types of mindset are well-marked, developing a growth mindset isn’t impossible. So if you consider yourself to have a fixed mindset but would like to change that, here are some tricks you could follow:

- Look at your own improvements, this will help you to realize the value of effort.
- Review the success of others, have you noticed how they got there? Can you do the same?
- Learn from your mistakes, not everything will turn out right the first time, which is a great opportunity to learn from what you did wrong.



Michael Jordan doing a Slam Dunk in a match playing for the Chicago Bulls. Depositphotos.



Sports

She, My Role Model, My Hero

Sara Canales Marín

When we think of great heroes in the sports world, we think of figures like Leo Messi, Kobe Bryant, and Rafael Nadal. We visualize thousands of athletes from different fields, but they all have one thing in common. They are men. On the other hand, if the references are women, the list becomes much shorter. As a woman and a sports fan, I find it very difficult to find those women with whom I can identify, and who are role models for me and my generation. That's why I thought it would be necessary to make a list of great women athletes.

One of the best-known sports worldwide is soccer. We have all seen a match at some point, or what fan of this sport has not been excited to see the great Leo Messi lift the World Cup for the first time at almost thirty-six years of age?

In Spain, there is a woman with the same potential or even more. Her name is Alexia Putellas, she is twenty-nine years old and has spent the last ten years playing in the first division of Barcelona FC where she is currently the captain. Among other awards, she has received twice the golden ball for best player in the world, becoming the only woman to win this award twice in a row and the woman with the most awards in the history of the sport. Recently she has also been awarded as the best player in the world.

Her beginnings in soccer were in the school playground, where she says she was the only girl who played. Later she started playing in the lower categories of the soccer club closest to his town, Sabadell, and after playing for several seasons, she signed for the Futbol Club Barcelona when she was only twelve years old. At the age of seventeen, she was signed by Levante Unión Deportiva, one of the best women's soccer clubs in Spain, to play in the first division until Barça contacted her. Since then, her entire sporting life has revolved around her childhood team, Barcelona FC, and the Spanish national team.

At the end of last season, Putellas suffered a cruciate ligament injury, for which a large part of the 2022/23 season she will not be able to play soccer. Even so, the player has made several statements saying that she will return as soon as the knee allows it and will do so much stronger and with much more desire to play soccer.

America is one of the continents where teenagers play the most sports. They play different sports, but as far as women's sports are concerned, they stand out among others in tennis.

Serena Williams is an American tennis player who, with her style and competitiveness as her most characteristic traits, has won four Olympic gold medals, twenty-three Grand Slam singles titles, and fourteen doubles titles. A brilliant career of a tennis player who has undoubtedly marked an era. She is the youngest of five siblings, Venus is the best-known, and she also has a brilliant career. She started playing tennis when she was only three years old, her father, who was determined to take the two sisters to the top, took on the role of coach, and they spent hours on a tennis court near their home. Her beginnings as a professional tennis player were not easy, as she was always in the shadow of her sister, who dominated women's tennis. Twelve years later she would reach her moment of maximum glory when she won gold in singles and doubles at the London Olympic Games. A benchmark in women's tennis, the American tennis player has won 23 Grand Slams to date, placing her in second place all-time in the women's all-time ranking.

Tai Tzu-Ying is currently the queen of women's singles badminton. Ranked No. 1 in the BWF women's rankings, Tai hails from the Taiwanese city of Kaohsiung. She represents Chinese Taipei at the international level in individual and team events, and her father was the director of the Kaohsiung City Badminton Committee. Influenced by her progenitor, she took up badminton in elementary school, becoming a top player at the national level at the age of twelve. In 2009, aged just fifteen, she made her BWF Grand Prix debut in her home country at the Chinese Taipei Golden Grand Prix, before going on to reach the final of the Vietnam Open; she also played in the final of the Singapore Open Super Series in 2010, on her 16th birthday. But it wasn't until 2011 that the then seventeen-year-old made her first breakthrough, winning the U.S. Open Grand Prix Gold, her first international title, something Tai herself calls her most memorable sporting achievement. She spent almost two years as world Number One until in mid-2028, when Spain's Carolina Marin snatched the title from her, although less than a month later and after winning the Asian Championships, she restored her title.

Fortunately, nowadays women's sport is becoming more and more normalized in society. However, it is still far behind men's sports in terms of relevance, salaries, and even the number of people who practice it.

It is a clear need to solve this gender inequality also in the field of sport and to be able to exemplify it with women who, today, are “making history and who broke all kinds of barriers to achieving their dreams.”



Alexia Putellas © ESPNFC



Serena Williams © MaxPPP



Tai Tzu-Ying. Wikimedia Commons



Engineering Customizing in Real Life!

Carla Roa Saez

How many times have we been playing any video game such as The Sims 4 or Animal Crossing and we have wished to be able to choose every step of our life, even our appearance? Well, what if I told you that it is possible?

As with everything, this amazing biological process called genetic engineering, has a beginning. In 1973, biochemists Herbert W. Boyer and Stanley N. Cohen developed this process by inserting DNA from one bacteria into another. This process consists of manipulating the genetic material of an organism and being able to change the genes to improve the capabilities of the organism beyond what is normal.

Genetic engineering, also known as genetic modification, is used in many different areas, such as medicine, biotechnology, industrial agriculture, and scientific investigation. In the field of medicine, genetic modification has been used to produce insulin, growth hormones, vaccines, and many other medicines as well as to treat infertility. In biotechnology, some crops can be modified to tolerate specific herbicides, plant diseases, and insect pests. Biotechnology is also being used to reduce saturated fats in cooking oils, reduce allergens in foods, and increase disease-fighting nutrients in food. Looking toward the future, advances in biotechnology will be used to produce nutritionally enriched or longer-lasting food that contains lower levels of certain naturally occurring toxins present in some food plants.

Moreover, scientists discovered a way of modifying human DNA, making it possible to end diseases, modify humans, stop or slow down aging, maybe even reverse it! Dra. Emmanuelle Charpentier in 2012 developed along with Jennifer Doudna, and refined by American scientist Feng Zhang, a gene-editing technology called CRISPR/CAS9 which we can use to modify, delete or correct specific aspects of our DNA. Until then, people only knew about CRISPR as Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats, which is an antiviral mechanism where a part of the virus' DNA is saved in the genetic code of the bacterium until it is needed. When the virus attacks again, the bacterium makes an RNA copy from the DNA archive and produces a protein called CAS9 which will fight against it. Then, the scientists figured out that the CRISPR system is programmable, by giving it a copy of the DNA you want to modify and introducing the system into a living cell. This process works for every type of cell: microorganisms, plants, or animals, including humans.

In 2015, scientists used CRISPR to cut the HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) out of living cells from patients in the lab. A year later, they carried out a larger experiment with rats that had HIV in almost all of their body cells, by injecting CRISPR into the rat tails, they removed more than fifty percent of the virus from cells all over the body. In a few years, CRISPR therapy will cure HIV and other viruses such as Herpes. Cancer, one of our major enemies, could also be defeated by CRISPR therapy, which gives us the means to edit the immune cells and make them better cancer fighters.

When people imagine their future, they picture an image in their head surrounded by their family and especially their children, which they imagine with specific desired traits, perhaps tall, muscular, and intelligent. But is it possible to have a choice? It is. It's called designer babies. This process consists of editing the genome of a human embryo, and it has been attempted twice. In 2015 and 2016, Chinese scientists experimented with embryos and were partially successful on their second attempt. Modified humans could alter the human species, since its modified traits will be passed to their children, spreading through generations until modifying the whole gene of humanity.

However, there is an incredible controversy about if it should be used or not. Genetic modification in humans raises an ethical debate on the rights of the baby. Some people say that it's not ethical because 'it goes against nature'. On the other hand, people say that parents are the ones who should have the right to decide about being genetically modified. Also, as our knowledge of genetic modification advances, the temptation of creating 'the perfect human' will grow. Imagine you make your kid immune to cancer, then why not make it stronger, taller, maybe more intelligent, or why not give him perfect eyesight? Modified humans could become the new unattainable standard, which of course not everyone on Earth could have access to, causing inequality.

Furthermore, as our knowledge of genetic engineering improves, we could solve the biggest mortality risk factor: aging. This is caused due to the accumulation of damage to our cells, along with genes that directly affect aging. Thanks to genetic engineering we could slow down or stop aging. There are some animals immune to aging, such as the lobster and the turritopsis nutricula, we could maybe take some genes for ourselves. We would end up dying, but instead of doing so at ninety, we could last a few more decades with our relatives and loved ones.

Another unbelievable side of science is cloning. This term describes different processes that can be used to produce genetically identical copies of a biological entity, by taking a genetic part of an organism and recreating it in another place. According to the National Human Genome Research Institute, researchers have cloned a wide range of biological materials, including genes, cells, tissues, and even entire organisms, highlighting Dolly the sheep.

Dolly the Sheep was the first mammal cloned from an adult somatic cell. It was born in Scotland on July 5, 1996 by a process of nuclear transfer from a cell taken from a mammary gland. She was then euthanized at the age of six years due to progressive lung disease. There was no cause to link her disease with cloning. After cloning Dolly was successful, many other large mammals were cloned, including pigs, deer, horses, and bulls.

To conclude, humanity needs to continue developing our knowledge and contributing to science, as it can help us in many different areas. Science is developing as fast as we breathe and even the smallest contribution can make a big impact.



25 years of Dolly the sheep. Photo web source: Roth, Clare



Theater Review

Starmania : A Prophetic Vision of our Future World?

Eva Nahon

Since the 20th century, we have witnessed the rise of futuristic novels such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* or George Orwell's *1984*. These novels, whether dystopian or utopian, have nevertheless remained at the stage of simple fiction, as the vision of a world so far outside the norm seems improbable. But what about *Starmania*? Written in 1979 by Michel Berger and Luc Plamondon, *Starmania* is a French rock opera whose famous headliners were Daniel Balavoine and France Gall.

Synopsis: In the near future, the West is one country. In this world where the specters of terrorism and totalitarianism loom, everyone will have to decide what to do with their lives.

Monopolis, the new capital of the West, is terrorized by the Black Stars, a gang led by Johnny Rockfort who operates under the influence of Sadia, an agitator from high society who goes down into the underground at night and gives his orders. They meet at the Underground Café under the amused gaze of Marie-Jeanne, the automaton waitress.

Above this underground café rises the Golden Tower, a building at the top of which is the office of Zéro Janvier, a billionaire who is entering politics by becoming a candidate for the presidency of the West. He bases his campaign on the return to order and the construction of the New Atomic World. Zéro Janvier thus becomes the sworn enemy of the Great Guru Marabout, an environmentalist candidate, and of course of the Black Stars.

Starmania: a Futuristic Vision: In addition to being particularly entertaining, *Starmania* proves to be a prophetic show, right at the heart of current events, relying in particular on a world where the media and the flow of information are omnipresent. Indeed, the show is punctuated by the regular interventions of the television news which relates the evolution of the Black Stars gang. Moreover, aren't the Black Stars and the attack they orchestrated against the golden tower of Zero January similar to the attacks against the twin towers in New York in 2001? Furthermore, wouldn't the Black Stars actually be the Daesh terrorist group (a.k.a. Isis) fighting against Georges W. Bush, i.e. Zero January? This once again reveals the accuracy of the script: Berger and Plamondon have in a way foreseen the rise of terrorism in our society.

Starmania is therefore profoundly topical and speaks more than ever to today's audience. The megalomania of a company director who wants to become president of the whole of the West with an extreme right-wing policy, and who does not hesitate to manipulate terrorists in order to rally public opinion to his cause, all this seems very topical. The businessman thus becomes a providential man, a hero of the nation, the only one capable of restoring order, and opposes the guru Marabout, an environmentalist candidate ready to do anything to save what remains of our planet. Once again, *Starmania* proves to be prophetic and premonitory of the environmental crisis we are experiencing and which is becoming more and more a fundamental issue in our more than urbanized world. Indeed, the story is set in a violent urban society, where new technologies undermine the quality of human relationships and where the reflected image is central. Thus, Zéro Janvier marries Stella Spotlight, a fallen star.. In 2009, France Gall said in an interview: "When President Nicolas Sarkozy married Carla Bruni, I immediately thought of the love story between Zéro Janvier and Stella Spotlight". Definitely, what consistency... We could also talk about the figure of Sadia who, at night, who dresses up as a band leader, and that of Marie-Jeanne, the automatic waitress, to highlight the norms of different genders and the rise of artificial intelligence in our society. In short, *Starmania* stands out as probably prophetic compared to today. Would it be possible to identify some inconsistencies?

Errors, Inconsistencies in *Starmania*: If we leave aside the ridiculous and very unrepresentative spit of futuristic costumes, can we find inconsistencies in the history of this society which is said to be at the height of modernity?

Unfortunately for Berger and Plamondon, yes, we can... Let's first look at the etymology of Monopolis. In this regard, the fact that there is only one "mono" city "polis" to govern the whole West seems absurd if we take into account the situation of our present world. Indeed, as our world proves interconnected and multipolar, it is too extravagant to think that a gathering of all the traditional western powers could take place. Moreover, if we remain in this logic of globalization, it is more predictable that we will sit down in the future to the phenomenon of rising power of emerging and developing countries and the decline of Western countries. Therefore, establishing the idea of a futuristic world whose center is the West becomes obsolete and senseless.

In the same way, the utopia of a completely centralized power in a single city but especially in the hands of only Zero January seems absurd if we consider the Western countries as being mainly part of a democratic political system in which national sovereignty and the protection of fundamental freedoms are paramount. This regime then took the form of authoritarianism and almost totalitarianism. Indeed, with the instrumentalization of a single television channel and propaganda around the head of state Zero January, this regime dangerously hovers around a totalitarianism that, as we saw with the USSR, has a lifespan with an expiry date...

In short, *Starmania* stands out as an utopia, a dystopia, a tale of love stories that make you dream or even a tragedy that can dismay. But above all *Starmania* is an exhortation to young people to do better than previous generations, to understand the world, to live an exciting youth and finally to die without regret as an "eternal star."



Version of *Starmania* played in Paris at the Scène musicale



Biography

Gloria Fuertes

Irene Fraga Martín

Gloria Fuertes was born on July 28, 1917. Her interest in literature began at the age of five when she was already writing and drawing her own stories. It would be with only fourteen years (1932) when she published her first poem "Niñez, juventud y vejez." At the age of fifteen she would recite her poems on Radio España in Madrid, and at seventeen she wrote her first book of poems "Isla ignorada."

It would be in her 40s when she entered the professional literary world. In the first five years, some of her children's plays and staged poems would be premiered in several theaters in Madrid. In addition, she worked from 1939 to 1953 as editor of a children's magazine "Maravillas," where she published weekly stories, comics and poetry. The fame of Gloria Fuertes was increasingly remarkable.

It was in 1942 when she met Carlos Edmundo de Ory (poet), being this the gateway to Postism, a poetic movement. She actively participated in magazines such as "Postismo and Cerbatana" with Edmundo de Ory, Eduardo Chicarro (painter) and Silvano Sernesi (poet). From 1940 to 1945 she would participate in a parallel way in another magazine called "Chicas" where she would publish humorous stories. And also in the newspaper "Arriba" with the story of "Coletas y Pelines". But not only this, also at the same time she founded the group "Versos con Faldas" with María Dolores de Pueblos and Adelaida Lasantas dedicated to give recitals and readings in the bars and cafes of Madrid.

In 1950 she published "Piruli", and in 1952 her first play in verse called "Prometeo" led her to receive the Valle-Inclán Prize. During these early years, being aware that books did not reach all parts of Spain and that a large part of the population was still illiterate, she organized the first traveling library. She traveled through small and remote villages, taking her literature to the little ones. She also founded, together with Antonio Gala, Rafael Mir and Julio Mariscal, the poetry magazine "Arquero", which she directed until 1954. From 1955 to 1960 he studied Library Science and English at the International Institute, which opened many doors for her.

In 1960, she traveled for three years in the United States after obtaining the Fulbright scholarship to teach Spanish literature at Bucknell University, Mary Baldwin College and Bryn Mawr College. She would later write "Ni tiro, ni veneno, ni navaja" in 1966, "Poeta de Guardia" in 1968 and "Como atar los mustaches al tigre" in 1969.

In 1972, she received the Juan March Foundation scholarship in Children's Literature, which allowed her to dedicate herself exclusively to literature. In 1973, she wrote "Sola en casa" and "Cuando amas aprendes geografía." Later she received the diploma of honor of the Hans Christian Andersen International Prize for Children's Literature, which places her among the most important universal authors of children's literature. Besides collaborating in TVE (Spanish television) programs such as "Un globo, dos globos, tres globos" and "La cometa blanca," she also writes for the magazines "La codorniz" and "Discóbolo." Later on, she wrote her stories for children: "La pajara pinta" (1972), "La ardilla y su pandilla" (1980) and "Cocoloco pocoloco" (1985). She died on November 27, 1998 of lung cancer.

This great writer is characterized by the irony with which she deals with topics such as love, loneliness, pain and death. She uses a fresh and simple language, which brings musicality to her poems.

As a child who grew up reading Gloria Fuertes, I can say that she was one of the first writers of whom I had a book. I read poems such as "Un globo, dos globos, tres globos" to "El regalo de la abuela." She is from my hometown and the fact that she was a woman writer, something that for years has been so complicated, was an inspiration for me. I will never be able to stop thanking all the women writers who have paved the way for future generations. Gloria Fuertes was, is and will be the heritage of the people from Madrid and from all the children of the world.



Miralles, Carlos. "Gloria Fuertes." *La Voz De Gloria Fuertes*, 2017



Biography

Agatha Christie, Queen of Crime

Charlotte Hubau

Have you ever heard of Agatha Christie? This English novelist has now become essential in the detective literary universe. *The ABC Murders*, *And Then There Were None*, *Murder on the Orient Express* or the famous *Death on the Nile* are today part of a collection of more than 67 novels and 119 short stories, translated into several hundred languages for sales exceeding four billion books today. But if she was and remains one of the most famous writers in the world, it is for a very specific reason. Let's dive together into her rather special world.

Agatha Christie was born in Torquay, England on September 15, 1890. After writing her first detective novel following a lost bet with her sister, Agatha did not expect to become an essential figure in English literature of the 20th and 21st centuries. Her character of Hercule Poirot, inspired by Sherlock Holmes, then of Miss Marple immediately gained popularity, and marked the beginning of her meteoric rise to planetary success. But what makes her novels so special?

The answer lies in the author's creative mechanism. It's simple: you will never guess the end of one of her books. Unpredictability makes Agatha Christie such a special novelist. Each clue that she lets us understand as we read will only serve to surprise us at the end with a view of very specific twists that no one can imagine. Readers are compelled to discover the finale and this curiosity drives us to the finale. She keeps us in suspense by squealing here and there some information that we will only fully comprehend when the killer(s) is revealed.

But that's not all! The diversity of Christie's stories makes each reading exciting and allows us to live a totally different experience from the previous one. A "huit-clos," then a disappearance, a serial killer, nothing seems to stop her. Added to this is the presence of endearing characters that everyone is delighted to find over the books. Of course, Hercule Poirot first! At the same time a man full of himself with very particular habits but so interesting and intelligent, the reader can only be happy to see him carry out an investigation. Miss Marple is also a woman we like to see reasoning, just like Superintendent Battle in *Murder Is Easy* or *Cards on the Table*, Colonel Race in *Death on the Nile* and *Sparkling Cyanide* or even Inspector Japp in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*.

So Agatha Christie, queen of crime? Recognized as the greatest novelist of the past one hundred years, many authors have tried to make a name for themselves by emulating her style, but none seem to have succeeded in matching her. It would seem that to date no one has been able to reach her level and offer us such exciting detective stories, even if some have already managed to approach it. Our favorite novelist therefore has some time in front of her before someone manages to take her crown!



Agatha Christie



Lady Diana, Vogue



Biography

Lady Diana: An Icon

Camila Osculati

Lady Diana, also known as Princess Diana, was a beloved figure of the British royal family who captured the hearts of people around the world. She was born on July 1, 1961, and married Prince Charles in 1981, becoming the Princess of Wales. Diana quickly became one of the most photographed and admired women in the world, and her fashion choices became a topic of discussion and inspiration for many.

Diana's style and fashion choices played a significant role in her rise to fame. She was known for her elegant and timeless style, which was both sophisticated and approachable. She became a fashion icon in the 1980s and 1990s, and her influence is still felt in the fashion world today. She wore many iconic outfits, such as the off-the-shoulder black dress she wore to the Serpentine Gallery in 1994, the green velvet dress she wore to the White House in 1985, and the pink chiffon gown she wore to the Cannes Film Festival in 1987.

She helped to popularize some of the most iconic fashion brands of her time, such as Versace, Chanel, and Dior. One of the most iconic fashion pieces associated with Lady Diana is the Lady Dior bag. The story between Lady D and the "Lady Dior" wasn't like the one between Jane Birkin and Jean-Louis Dumas. The bag already existed before her: Diana was seen carrying the bag on many occasions, and it quickly became a fashion symbol. The Lady Dior bag was eventually named after her, and it remains one of the most sought-after luxury bags in the world.

Beyond her fashion choices, Lady Diana also used her platform to champion important social causes. She was an advocate for people with HIV/AIDS, and she helped break down the stigma associated with the disease. Diana's impact on fashion and her advocacy for important causes helped her become a role model for many women. She used her platform to promote issues that were important to her and to make a difference in the world. Her legacy continues to inspire and empower women around the world to this day.

In conclusion, Lady Diana's fashion choices and advocacy for social causes made her an icon in her time and a pioneer for women's rights. Her influence is still felt in the fashion world, and her legacy continues to inspire generations of women to use their voices to make a positive impact on the world.

Fiction

In Position

Daniel Pino

Hanta looked through his telescopic sight, and he saw a large mound of people crossing the street of the hive, he then made a series of adjustments "The Squawk" and proceeded to put on his servo armor helmet to activate his commlink.

"I'm in position, twenty seconds to squawk."

Hanta didn't get any response, but he didn't need one either as he knew his comrades had received the message. He couldn't see them, but he knew they were all around him, also in position.

Then the moment came, in one corner of his eyepieces the countdown timed five seconds, and at that moment he saw a retinue of what resembled essential members of the nobility, surrounded in turn by a court of burly bodyguards carrying riot gear.

"They think those simple men can defend them from the yoke of the Emperor of Mankind, poor simpletons!"

He thought as he waited patiently for the moment when the countdown ticked down to zero, without taking his eyes off the one who seemed to be and who they had been informed was the ringleader of that cohort.

And when the moment came, with one single action from him and his men, confusion filled the street.

Finally, the street was desolate. Hanta looked away from the scene and gazed at the sky.

"We are the Emperor's shadow hand, and we will not let him down in our work anymore than our father did."

After this reflection, he faded into the shadows.

He was reunited with his brothers on the bridge of the ship "Silent Justice", there an officer of the Administratum congratulated them for their actions for the empire

"Congratulations team Kage. Without your help that hive world might have fallen into the corruption of the cult in which its former governors were partakers and we would have had to invest more resources than we have needed," said the officer as the four colossal figures in black in front of him stood motionless and silent.

"Officer, why are you congratulating us for such a mundane action for our chapter? We don't need to be praised, serving our acclaimed emperor is enough", said finally one of the superhuman soldiers.

"I see it is true that those who carry the genetic seed of Corax are not very grateful for compliments. In any case, I hope that if there is still some of the former human you used to be, he will take my words and strengthen you, although, on second thought, you are already strong enough... Pardon my rant, our astropaths have detected a heretic fleet on their way to this sector and have requested our assistance, be prepared for an arduous campaign. This concludes for now."

"For the Emperor," whispered the soldiers in salute, after this, each left in silence to their armory, where other chapter brothers were checking their battle gear. Despite the soldiers in armor, the room was plunged in a sepulchral silence, something that came intrinsic in their genetic DNA, that and their desire to purge the heretics that roamed the galaxy, their hunt continued.



This story is set in the universe of Warhammer 40.000

Book Club Corner

For Perpetual Peace

By Immanuel Kant

I believe this is one of Kant's most actual works: to allow perpetual peace, the philosopher explains, society must be prepared to abandon authoritarianism and standing armies. I am not going to lie, this is an actual, real philosophy: it may not be as immediate or as clear as any light-hearted novel, but I believe that these kinds of works really enlighten the human mind and push us towards positive change.

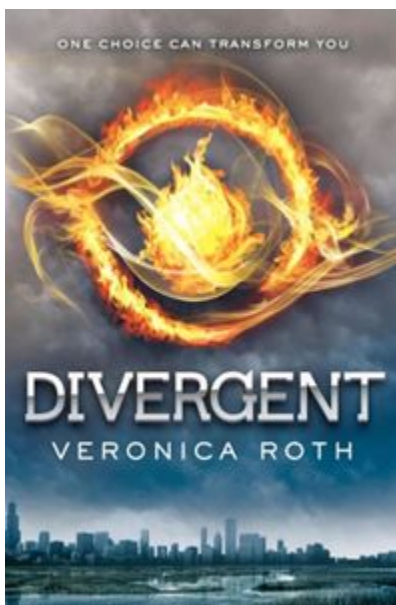
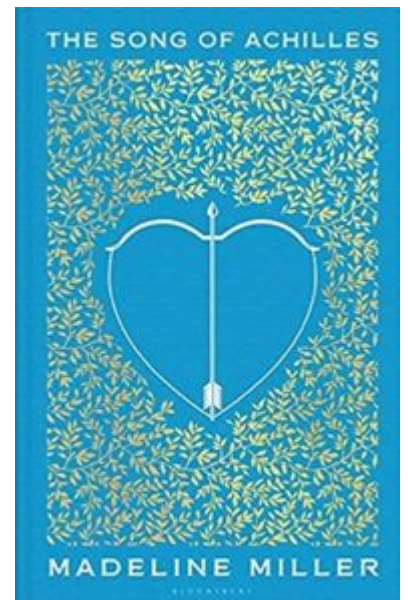
-Piergiulio Fasciani , 18, Italy

The Song of Achilles

By Madeline Miller

The Song of Achilles is a retelling of the classic text, The Iliad by Homer, but from Patroclus' point of view. It follows his childhood with Achilles and the Trojan War until the death of Achilles. From my point of view, this book is not only beautifully written but also perfectly adapted, given that it is a retelling of Greek mythology. All through the book, the characters all have the same essence as in the original text, but we can see small nuances that deepen the characters and validate their actions. This is why if you like Greek mythology, you must read this book.

-Adriana Berjemo, 16, Spain



Divergent

By Veronica Roth

Divergent is set in a dystopian society that is divided into factions based on personality traits. It has a lot of action and complex characters. It is a really good dystopian novel.

-Clara Blanca Fort, 15, Spain

Divergent is the first book of a saga of four books. It is a dystopian novel that talks about how the population is organized based on their personality. It is an interesting book with love, fiction, battles, and plot twists. I really recommend it.

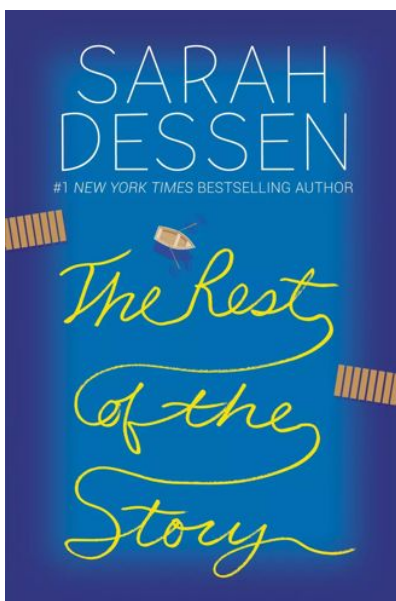
-Isabel Gómez Saura, 15, Spain

The Summer I Turned Pretty

By Jenny Han

I consider this book very entertaining because it represents the dream of a teenage girl, also you can imagine how people suffer for love or the pain of their past.

-Paul Marina Cricenti, 16, Spain



The Rest of the Story

By Sarah Dessen

I really loved this book for how she explains the way the main character tries to solve who she really is and is really helpful for me. I love romance, so it is recommended for those who love it as me. It is about how Emma goes to her summer place, which she has not been to since she was little, to spend a few weeks with her grandmother and family. She realizes there are two completely different communities, her parents each from one side. Which side will she choose?

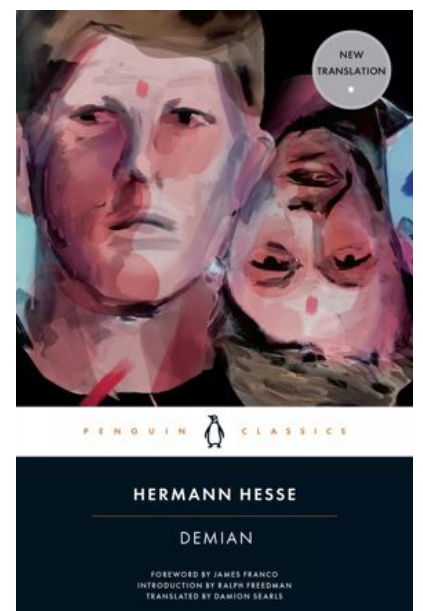
-Inés de Febrer, 15, Spain

Demian

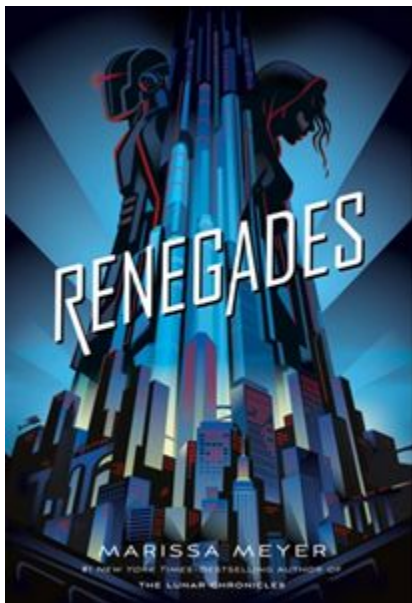
By Hermann Hesse

A short but complex novel, it is one of those books that look like a quick and easy read, instead, they make you reflect and think about yourself. *Demian* makes you question about your own concept of good and evil, corruption and temptation, self-growth and improving yourself, and the existence of God. I really appreciated the friendship between Emil Sinclair, the main character, and Max Demian, the guy he meets at school. Also, I really enjoyed the way Sinclair's character changes and evolves as he grows older.

-Sara Bololoi, 16, Italy



Book Club Corner



Renegades

By Marissa Meyer

The Renegades Trilogy tells us a story about a world where some people - called prodigies - have extraordinary abilities. After experiencing decades filled with anarchy and terror, a group of heroes, the Renegades, have restored peace and order. However, our main character, Nova, is determined to destroy this organization at all costs. This book is full of action, politics, twists, and even romance. I enjoyed this novel because the worldbuilding is fantastic, the characters are beautifully written, and having the main character as the villain is interesting and exciting.

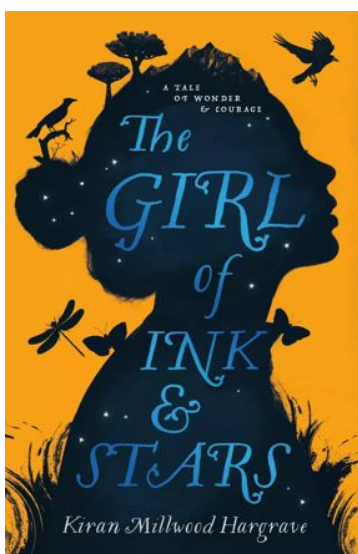
-Celia García Lorenzo, 15, Spain

Good Omens

By Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman

Personal review 2-4 sentences: Good Omens is a comical novel that follows an angel and a demon that try to stop Armageddon. While being funny and having characters that are full of life, Good Omens also presents more interesting topics like prejudices and destiny.

-Olga Casañ Tejado, 17, Spain



The Girl of Ink and Stars

By Kiran Millwood Hargrave

This is the story of a young girl, Isabella, and her best friend, Lupe. When Lupe goes missing, Isabella does everything she can to be part of the search party. She has an ancient map and uses this and her knowledge of the stars to navigate the forgotten territories of her home island. The land is dangerous and full of myths. Isabella must find Lupe before these myths become more than just stories. It is interesting and a short read. I had a lot of fun reading it.

-Mercedes Pérez, 15, Spain

The Hunger Games

By Suzanne Collins

The Hunger Games is a dystopian saga written from the perspective of the main character (Katniss Everdeen) that is one of the girls that is selected to participate in the Hunger Games, an annual event of that nation. This book is perfect for summer reading because it is easy to read and interesting. It is also one of my favorite books because it is beautifully written and has a movie that I recommend watching after reading it.

-Alejandra Oltra, 16, Spain

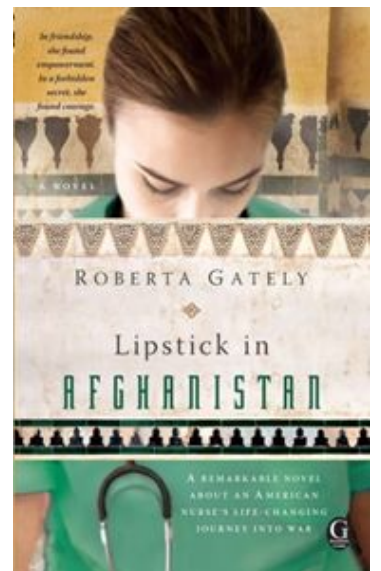
Lipstick in Afghanistan

By Roberta Gately

I read this book a year ago and it is by far my favorite. It's a very good story and you won't be able to stop reading but there's more.

The theme is very deep and it made me think a lot, for certain aspects that's the book that changed my life.

-Anna Petra Braceschi, Italy



The Silent Patient

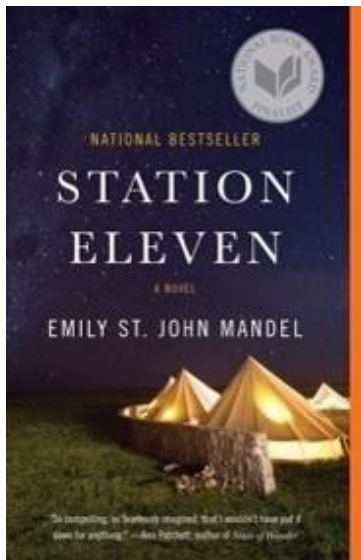
By Alex Michaelides

The Silent Patient is about Theo, a forensic psychotherapist that wants to help Alicia, a woman that killed her husband and has not talked since then. I really loved this book even though it was one of my first English readings, so I did not understand some parts. It is very intriguing, and you do not really know the real history until the last chapters. The author was very original in authoring this book.

-Anouk Gil



Book Club Corner



Station Eleven

By Emily St. John Mandel

This book is about a deadly virus that kills most of the world's population and how a group of musicians and actors must survive a world destroyed by the pandemic. Beyond the story, it is a book that makes you reflect on the values of humanity. I recommend this novel to all those interested in the post-apocalyptic genre and in books that reflect today's society.

-María Roldán Alfaro, 14, Spain

Murder on the Orient Express

By Agatha Christie

This book is about a murdered being committed a board of the Orient Express during a snowdrift in the middle of the night. Detective Hercule Poirot must find the killer before the murderer decides to kill again...

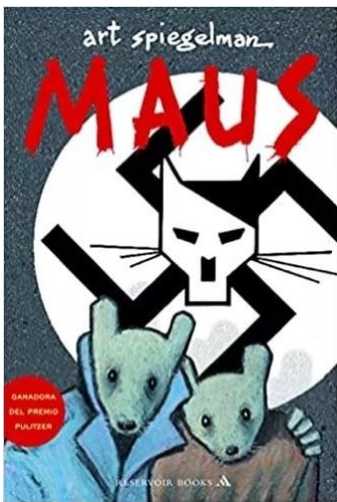
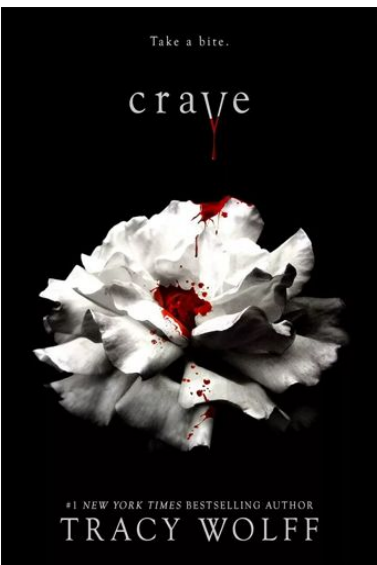
-Aina Costa, 15, Spain

Crave

By Tracy Wolff

Crave is a book in which Grace, the main character, enters a supernatural Academy without her knowing it. This book is incredibly fun to read and is not only about fantasy but also romance. It also puts together a lot of different supernatural creatures, as vampires, dragons, and more.

-Yaiza Sanchez, 16, Spain



Maus

By Art Spiegelman

I liked this book because you can see from the point of view of a real survivor the story of World War II and how the Nazis subdued the Jews. You can see all the different injustices and cruelties the Jews were subjected to, and you realize that, in many cases, living or dying was only decided by luck. You realize how terrible it was and the consequences that those events had for the people.

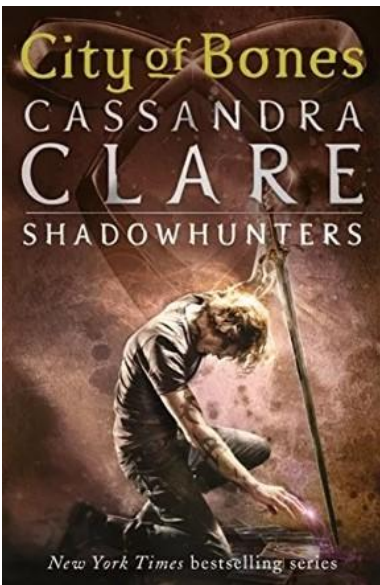
-Dan Valveny, 13, Spain

Shadowhunters

By Cassandra Clare

I read this saga a few years ago, but I remember it so well that I'm waiting for a moment to reread it. Our protagonist sinks into the depths of the supernatural world that surrounds New York. And from there arises each spectacular adventure. It is a mixture of youthful fantasy and romance, more fantasy than romance.

Marta Ortega, 17, Spain



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WRITTEN BY STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD

May 2023

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