

# VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

february 2025



One year ago, in February 2024, I was at the Montpellier Caribbean Carnival, celebrating the start of Lent. Totally immersed in a Caribbean environment. Who could have predicted a year later that I wouldn't be able to go to the carnival because I'd literally be in ANOTHER COUNTRY?

A country that is completely unknown to me, both in terms of culture and food, but what a beautiful country Macedonia is. I came here because I needed a change of scenery, to grow up too, to be a nobody in a new universe. And it challenges everything you think you know.

New rules, new people, I mean, beautiful people. A super benevolent entourage that helps us grow in this new environment. And getting lost in Macedonia is the best decision I've made in the last ten years.

I've met so many endearing people from different countries, Poland, Germany, Slovakia, and, of course, France. And finally, it's more than just an ESC in another country, it's a mix of all our cultures. Not a day goes by without eating a banichka, I've eaten pierogies at Christmas, drunk Slovak wine, and tried Polish sweets.

It's also about meeting people. Get out of your comfort zone to meet new people, not be alone, no matter what clichés surround you. We should be real.

You can only get better after an experience like that. And I wish everyone the same experience. Thank you to all the people I've met here and the great staff who help us daily. Open mind for full heart and soul.

Terry Ruart

Пред точно една година, во февруари 2024 година, бев на Карипски карневал во Монпелје, славејќи го почетокот на Великиот пост. Целосно нурнат во карипско опкружување. Кој можеше да замисли дека една година подоцна нема да можам да одам на карневалот, затоа што буквално ќе бидам во ДРУГА ЗЕМЈА?

Земја која ми беше сосема непозната и по култура и храна, но колку е само убава - Македонија. Дојдов овде затоа што ми требаше промена во „сценографијата“, да пораснам и да бидам никој во еден нов универзум. И кое ќе го предизвикува сè она што мислите дека го знаете.

Нови правила, нови луѓе, мислам, прекрасни луѓе. Супер добронамерна придружба која ни помага да растеме во оваа нова средина. А да се „изгубам“ во Македонија е најдобрата одлука што сум ја донел во последните десет години.

Сретнав толку многу симпатични луѓе од различни земји: Полска, Германија, Словачка и, секако, од Франција. И конечно, тоа не е само ЕСК-проект во друга земја... тоа е мешавина од сите наши култури. Не минува ден, а да не јадам баничка, пробав пироги на Божиќ, пиев словачко вино и јадев полски колачи.

Се работи и за запознавање луѓе. Излезете од вашата удобна зона за да запознаете нови луѓе, немојте да бидете сами, без разлика какви клишеа ве опкружуваат. Мислам, да бидеме реални. Може само да се подобрите по такво искуство.

На сите им го посакувам тоа. Им благодарам на оние што ги запознав овде и на персоналот во ВЦС што прави да се чувствуваме како дома. Отворен ум за полно срце и душа.

Тери Руарт

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# SO... WHY ARE YOU *still single?*



After debating with myself for an hour, I pressed “send” and threw my phone across the bed. I immediately panicked and went to clean the whole flat, do the laundry, and maybe take my fish on a walk. Why on earth texting a person you like is so nerve-racking? An hour later, I gathered the courage to look at my phone again, kind of hoping to see their name in the notifications, kind of regretting all my life choices. There was no notification. The *online* green circle next to their profile picture was laughing in my face. Conan’s *Gray Crush Culture* softly playing in the background... you get the vibe. I should have stuck to mysteriously reading a book at the party, waiting for a beautiful stranger to fall in love with me, as good old fanfiction has taught me. What’s up with the dating scene these days anyway?

## **Tiktokification of dating**

Remember when TikTok used to be an app for fun dances? Well, now it’s the place where you’ll hear the wildest life stories, get diagnosed

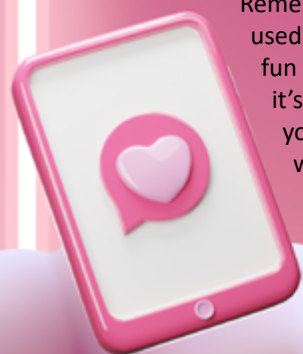
with five different mental issues and get life-changing – not necessarily in a good way – advice.

I hate to admit that, but Gen Z has a problem with being chronically online. It’s the issue that comes back while talking about nearly every part of our lives nowadays, and dating is no different. Social media allows us to compare ourselves to way more people than ever. We see people younger than us achieving things that some of us can only dream about – starting your own business, buying a house, getting engaged... the list is endless. Watching all the dating stories and (seemingly) happy couples can feel like you’re the only one being single at 21, 25, 29, and that there’s something deeply wrong with you and only you.

The problem with comparing doesn’t end with just feeling bad about ourselves. It also increases the expectations for everything to crazy levels. What could make it even worse? Well... if there’s one thing that people on TikTok love, it’s definitely making up rules and theories. The viral orange peel theory – where

asking your partner to peel an orange for you becomes a test for a healthy relationship – is a perfect example of how oversimplified and bizarre dating advice can get. The 3 months rule, “don’t reply too fast” game... It feels like every action in dating has a hidden strategy. And if the other person isn’t passing the tests, you should be out. Obviously, I don’t believe many people actually follow TikTok advice – I mean, hopefully – but being surrounded by content like that can put some uncertainty in our heads and prevent people from communicating properly.

The popularity of all the theories, “3 things to make him obsessed with you” advice and other magical tricks are probably a result of people being tired of failed dating experiences, and trying to find a shortcut to save them from going through all of this again. I’m not saying that all the dating tips are pointless, but the thing is: there is no shortcut to a deep, meaningful connection. I feel like we’re very quick to give up on someone because everything is a “red flag” or “ick” these days, at least according to







TikTok. Don't get me wrong, don't stay in a toxic relationship, but also don't avoid people based just on a few points you heard on your "for you" page instead of actually getting to know them.

### What's stopping us from finding love?

We could blame everything on social media, but there are more things affecting the dating scene in today's world. There's definitely a huge trend of hook-up culture going on, where non-committal attitude is normalized, and getting attached or catching feelings is sometimes even seen as a weakness. Situationships might have been the most popular "relationship" status I've seen in 2024, and... I'm not sure if anyone is really happy about it.

Maybe it's because Gen Z is so afraid to be vulnerable. I mean, if you don't open up, you won't get hurt, right? We're anxious and painfully aware of a relationship possibly going wrong, someone taking advantage of us or hurting us. Once again, it might be because of seeing too many examples on the internet. The fears also come from our personal experiences, because let's be honest, we've probably all been hurt by someone. However, taking a risk and exposing ourselves is necessary if we want to have a deep connection.

Maybe it's the lack of patience. In the world of instant gratification, we expect to feel the spark immediately, and give up after one or a few dates. Dating apps just fuel the illusion of unlimited options we can reach within a one button, making us feel like there's always someone better right around the corner.

Maybe it's the (hyper?)independence culture flooding our media, telling us

that we don't need anyone to make us happy. I love being a strong independent girlie myself, and I definitely don't think we NEED to be in a relationship, but... I also feel like sometimes we're trying to convince ourselves about it a bit too much. Young people give up on dating because it seems simply too pointless or even too traumatic, and prefer to focus on themselves. That's all great, but how long is it going to be enough for us? I never really felt the need to be in a relationship myself, but the older I get, the more I think that maybe there's some specific type of fulfillment that sharing this bond with another person gives, and maybe it'd actually be nice to go through life with someone special by your side.

Or perhaps it's because we're too hard on ourselves. Yes, you heard me right – I think that sometimes we try to drown out our insecurities with all the independence talk. Working on yourself is great, unless you feel like you need to achieve perfection before you get into a relationship. *Someone will love me if I lose weight, someone will love me if I get prettier.* Probably most of us have some insecurity that tells us that we can't be loved. But do we love other people because they are perfect, or because they are kind, funny, comforting – the list goes on – even though they have flaws?

### Future of dating

Well, it's not a surprise that dating culture is constantly changing. After all, we're moving forward as a society, technology is developing, and every generation is different from the last one. According to Tinder's Year in Swipe report, in 2025 we'll observe dating trends that should help with navigating the modern world. For me, the most interesting one is "Nano-ships". Smile from a beautiful

stranger, quick conversation in a cafe – it's all about finding joy in the smallest romantic moments. I think Gen Z breaks the popular belief that if the connection is good, it lasts for a long time. They value short flickers of feelings as well. Appreciating situations like that makes you happier and more optimistic while looking for your forever person, so why not?

Other trends mentioned by the report is being more specific and straightforward about what we are looking for – I guess everyone is tired of situationships. And, last but not least, it points out leaving the overly formal dates and strict rules behind. Instead, singles are focusing on the spontaneity of the connection. It means anything can be a date – a hike, thrifting, art classes, you choose.

Honestly, the best way to navigate this chaos is to mess around and find out what works for you. Sure, you'll stumble, get disappointed, and maybe cringe at our own stories, but that's how we learn what really matters in a connection. Because somewhere in the middle of the awkward first dates, failed talking stages, and occasional sparks, you might find something real.

Anna Wojdziak

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# The Mystery of Dreaming



**E**ver had a really random dream that you can't make any sense of? It is kind of funny that we just lie in our beds unconscious and our minds make up scenarios, for about a third of our lives. But are these scenarios as random as they seem or do they mean anything? And how come that we even have them at all?

Still, dreaming is kind of a scientific mystery which makes it even more interesting to dive into. Neuroscientists as well as psychologists are trying to figure it out – for now with limited success. Research is difficult because dreaming is very subjective and the brain is a complex construction. So, here is a short overview of what we know so far.

Why do we dream at all? There are several different theories on that. On the one hand, dreams could be a brain organizing system that clears and processes our thoughts, feelings and experiences, so we can order them, connect new and old thoughts to be ready for new ones on the next day. This also can lead to creative ideas or solutions for problems. On the other hand, there is a theory that widens this aspect with the idea of dreams being a preparation for the day in the way that if you are nervous about e.g. an exam you

dream about it to get ready, more comfortable and train yourself in it, so that in the end you probably perform better in real life. In an evolutionary context this could have been for example training about how to act when meeting a predator, so in the real situation you could act faster or smarter. An interesting fact by the way: We know that everybody dreams and we also suspect that animals dream.



Some scientists however believe that dreams are just random memories or pictures resulting from brain activity while building and strengthening our memory.

There is the idea of a dreaming meta layer which was one of the first ideas regarding dreams in modern times, however it is now thought of as outdated. Carl Gustav Jung as well as Sigmund Freud saw dream as a communication of your unconsciousness with your consciousness, where mostly your secret wishes are communicated. Nevertheless, they opened up the whole world of analysing and interpreting your dreams. Obviously, if dreams are just random images, we don't need to analyse them. However, looking at the other more recent theories we could still learn something through our dreams. How reliable are our dreams and how can we interpret them?

Our dreams can definitely show us something, but you need to decide for yourself how much trust you want to put into them, regarding the fact that scientists are really not sure about the purpose of dreaming. Sigmund Freud's theory led to his dream interpretation based on symbols having special meanings. As well as his dream theory, this interpretation is thought of as outdated. Jung tried his interpretation with sometimes a more personal and not that general approach which gets closer to our ideas in today's time.

Nowadays, it is more referred to as working with dreams than dream interpretation. It is now more clear that dreams process or mirror our day consciousness in a different kind of way. Dreams can therefore draw attention to things that stress or occupy us during daytime or give hints about unprocessed experiences. The interpretation is followingly really personal. If you try to analyse your dreams, try to give mostly the feelings of the dreams importance to break it down to this. Also, these insights don't necessarily mean anything and they don't need to be followed by an action or anything, but it

can give you some ideas, problem solutions, draw your attention to something or just be interesting.

If you are now thinking: But how can I analyse my dreams if I never remember them? Don't worry! There are some techniques with which you can train remembering your dreams. This includes doing a dream diary after waking up and being aware that you might dream before going to sleep.

In your dreams, things often feel and look more fatal or really confusing and random. To understand working with dreams and be able to better categorize and evaluate them, let's think about what our brain does during dreaming. To begin with, there are different phases of sleep: There is the rapid-eye-movement phase (REM) in which you have the most detailed, intensive and emotionally sophisticated dreams. Mostly you remember the dreams from this phase because of that and due to the higher brain activity it doesn't need that much time to wake up. Then, there is NREM1 (no-rem), the falling asleep phase which mostly includes surreal creativity and brain waves, NREM2, the light sleep phase, where you have longer and reflective dreams and NREM3, the deep sleep phase, in which dreams if remembered are short and without much detail. One sleep cycle lasts around 90min going through all the different phases, so in total you go through this cycle 4-6 times a night.

What explains some dream phenomena? The prefrontal cortex is a part of the brain that decides if things are logical or not. While this part of the brain is less active during dreams the visual cortex, responsible for visualisation is more awake than during the day. This logically concludes in confusing plots and fantasy pictures. Also, the part of the brain that is processing emotions is more active during dreams, which could explain the more drastic emotions as well as topics of our dreams. Then the part responsible for motoric is active during dreams too, which probably leads to dreams with a lot of movement.

Interesting to know is that while daydreaming the brain goes into a similar state as during dreaming while sleeping, so the creative and emotional part of the brain is more active.

And have you heard about lucid dreaming? It is where you know that you are dreaming and can change the dream. In this state the prefrontal cortex (Reminder: This is the one that is there for logical evaluation) is much more active than during regular dreaming, which leads to the discovery that you are dreaming. Some people just experience this, but you can also train it, for example, by having a ritual where you ask yourself if you are dreaming also in a wake state, so you also do it while dreaming. This can include having a ritual like reading a text (in a dream the letters change when looking at the text the second time). Lucid dreamers can really help scientists too, to discover more about dreaming. There was an experiment for example, where scientists were able to communicate with lucid dreamers while they were sleeping by them answering questions with body movements.

There are a lot of interesting facts, ideas and theories but also still a lot of questions and room for discoveries. Maybe with science advancing we will have more specific answers some day, but for now just enjoy your hopefully nice dreams with a little bit more knowledge about them.

Sleep well and  
have sweet dreams :)

Maïke Seuffert

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Deutschlandfunknova: Träumen - warum machen wir das ?  
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planet wissen: Traumforschung



A Pallas's cat, a small wild feline with thick grey and brown fur and large yellow eyes, is peering through a circular hole in a dark, rocky wall. The surrounding rocks are rugged and vary in color from grey to reddish-brown. The cat's expression is somewhat grumpy, looking slightly to the side.

# GRUMPY *in* THE WILD



You've probably seen this fluffy ball all around social media. I mean, who wouldn't fall in love with this cute creature? Its real name is the Pallas's cat or manul in Mongolian language.

### But what is so unique about it?

A Pallas's cat is typically the size of a domestic house cat but what makes them look bigger is their thick fur. Its facial expressions made it viral on social media with the nickname "the grumpy cat". The colour of their fur changes depending on the season. More greyish to yellow colour of their fur, black markings and white dots of their bushy tails and face make them one-of-a-kind species. Their eyes are very round and yellow, whereas their ears are round, short and set low to their head.

### Pallas's cat hunting techniques

Pallas's cats are naturally nocturnal animals and spend the day in caves, rock stones, or burrows, where in the late afternoon they begin a night of hunting. However, they are likely day active as their prey is active during the daytime. The Pallas's cat uses ambush tactics unlike other big cats. They hunt by stalking or creeping up on prey, as their short legs do not allow them to run well. The Pallas's cat feeds on pikas, gerbils, voles, mouse-like rodents. One of the most interesting behaviors is its tendency to show low-energy, slow movements when hunting. This is an adaptation to save energy in the harsh conditions of its environment. The cat will often use its thick coat to blend into its surroundings, making it almost invisible to both its prey and predators alike.

### Where does this wild cat live and how does it adapt to its habitat?

Surprisingly, the Pallas's cat inhabits the remote steppes and mountain ranges of Central Asia including Mongolia, Russia and parts of China where the temperatures can go below zero. Adapted to the harsh environments, its thick fur helps it endure the freezing temperatures by providing insulation against the chill. Furthermore, its short legs and broad body allow it to move easily through tall grass and rocky paths, while its thick, bushy tail helps to keep their paws warm by standing on it. Isn't it such a unique and clever behavior?

### Threats and predators to the Pallas's cat

Known predators of Pallas's cats are foxes, wolves, and large birds like eagles. Humans have also been known to hunt the species for fur or body parts, especially in Mongolia, where there is a belief that they have medicinal value. The Pallas's cat faces many threats but the main ones are mostly caused by human activity like destruction of habitat, accidental capture and dog predation. Another major threat for the species is prey loss as pika and small rodent populations have been targeted by large-scale pest control. Climate change may also impact the ecosystems in which the species lives and the ability to maintain healthy breeding seasons.

The Pallas's cat is a very special and important species that brings so much to the ecosystem of Central Asia. Its nature, unique appearance, and remarkable hunting techniques make it an amazing subject of study for many scientists. It is very important for us to protect this species from any danger and make the population of Pallas's cats grow. With proper care and protection we can allow many future generations to observe and appreciate this skilled little predator.

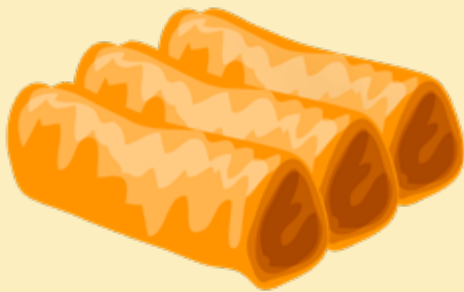
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# BUREK, YOUR PERFECT MEAL

**B**urek (aka: börek, bourekas, boreg, byrek) is widely recognized as a Balkan or Turkish delicacy and stands as one of the most popular pastries in these regions. Its origins trace back to the Anatolian region of Turkey. Due to the vast expanse of the Ottoman Empire, burek spread to the Balkans, North Africa, and other territories. The exact etymology of the word “burek” remains uncertain. There are some interpretations saying that it comes from the word “böğür”, meaning “kidney”, but this is just one interpretation.



Every country, city or even home has a different recipe for burek, but the basic recipe remains consistent. Burek is made with thin, flaky dough such as “filo” and filled with a variety of ingredients such as minced meat, spinach, cheese or potatoes. Burek can be either fried on a pan or baked in the oven. Making burek is simple, it involves layering dough with the filling, similar to assembling a multilayered cake. This unique speciality can be served hot or cold and accompanied by drinks like yoghurt, ayran or boza.

In Macedonia, many bakeries serve burek as a breakfast meal and the best time to buy it is early in the morning, as some of the bakeries operate until they sell out, often by around noon. After that, most probably you will not find your perfect burek. What surprised me here, and it is different than in Poland, is that some of the bakeries are open 24/7 and people prioritize buying various pastries over breadstuff.





A variation of Macedonian burek is called “баничка” (banichka). Unlike traditional burek, it is rolled with the filling like a roulade, giving it a distinct final shape. What makes banichka special to me is that, during Christmas, New Year’s, or the holiday of Vasilica, a coin is sometimes hidden inside the pastry. The person who finds the coin in their piece is believed to have good luck for the coming year



So far I have tried a lot of burek and banichki from various bakeries, and I can honestly say that it changed my perspective on breakfast. Now, for a reasonable price, I can enjoy a delicious meal, or whenever I’m too lazy to cook, I can treat myself to local specialties. Another great thing is that yoghurt or ayran are available at every bakery. Pairing the pastries with these drinks makes the experience even better, as they help balance the richness of the pastry and aid in digestion.

This Christmas, I traveled to Poland and brought banichka with me for the journey. I didn’t eat it all, so I saved some to take to my parents’ home. Even after sitting in my backpack for 24 hours, we were still able to enjoy the Macedonian specialty for breakfast. My parents, at first, weren’t that excited to try it because banichka didn’t look good after such a long time, but once they tried it, they were amazed. Together, we agreed that we don’t have anything like this in our country.



Is there such a thing as the perfect breakfast? Yes, and for me, it’s burek. It’s a simple meal, yet it provides enough energy to fuel you for the entire day. After a few months, I got my favourite ones. I enjoy banichka with sirenje, chicken and kashkaval or pizza burek. This pastry is unique because there are always new variations to try and discover different tastes of the Balkans.

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Jakub Pokuciński



# ПА... ЗОШТО СИ сè уште „сингли“?

После целочасовна дебата со себеси, притиснав „испрати“ и го фрлив телефонот на другиот крај од креветот. Веднаш испаничив и почнав да го чистам цел стан, да ја перам облеката и можеби да ја однесам рипката на прошетка. Зошто пишувањето на некој што ти се допаѓа мора да е толку напнато? После еден час, собрав храброст да го погледнам телефонот пак, надевајќи се дека ќе го видам името во нотификациите, додека се каев за сите одлуки во животот. Немаше нотификација. Зелениот „онлајн“ круг до профилната слика ми се смееше во лице. „Crush Culture“ на Конан Греј свири во позадина...ја сфаќате атмосферата. Требаше да си останам на моето мистериозно читање книга на забави, чекајќи некој убав странец да се вљуби во мене, како што ме учеа старите фикции. Што, всушност, се случува со полето на состанувања денес?

## Тиктокификација на состанувањата

Се сеќавате кога Тик Ток беше апликација за забава и танцување? Е па сега е место каде што може да ги слушнете најчудните животни приказни, да бидете

дијагностицирани со пет различни ментални попречувања и да добиете совети кои ќе ви го сменат животот - но, не мора на добар начин.

Мразам да си го признаам тоа на себеси, ама генерацијата Зет има проблем со тоа да биде хронично онлајн. Тоа е проблемот кој се повторува кога зборуваме за скоро секој дел од нашите животи денес, а и излегувањето/состанувањето не е ништо поразлично. Социјалните медиуми ни овозможуваат да се споредуваме себеси со повеќе луѓе од било кога. Гледаме луѓе помлади од нас кои постигнуваат нешта за кои некои од нас може само да сонуваат - започнување сопствен бизнис, купување свој дом, веридби... листата е бескрајна. Гледајќи сите тие приказни и (навидум) среќни парови може да ни направи да се чувствуваме како да сме единствените слободни на 21, 25, 29 и дека нешто длабински не е во ред со нас.

Проблемот со споредувањето не завршува само со негативните чувства за себе. Ги зголемува и очекувањата за сè до ненормални размери. Што уште може да се влоши? Па...ако има нешто што луѓето на Тик Ток го сакаат тоа е дефинитивно смислувањето на правила и теории. Виталната „лушпа од портокал“ теорија – каде тоа што ќе го прашате вашиот партнер да ви излупи портокал

станува тест за здрава врска – ова е совршен пример за тоа како поедноставени и бизарни може да бидат советите за врски. Правилото на 3 месеци, играта „не враќај веднаш“... Како секој чекор во врската да има тајна стратегија. Иако другата личност не го помине тестот, треба да се повлечеме. Се разбира, не верувам дека многу луѓе навистина ги следат советите на Тик Ток - мислам, се надевам, но да се биде опкружен со такви содржини може да внесат неизвесност во нашата глава и да ја спречат правилната комуникација кај луѓето.

Популарноста на сите теории, „3 нешта да направиш да биде опседнат со тебе“ совети и други магични трикови се веројатно резултат на тоа како луѓето се уморни од неуспешни искуства со врски, и како пробуваат да најдат кратенка која ќе ги зачува од тоа да поминуваат низ истото. Не вела дека советите се бесцелни, но работата е во тоа што не постои скратен пат до длабока, значајна поврзаност. Мислам дека пребрзо се откажуваме од некој затоа што сè е „лош знак/црвено знаме“ во денешно време, или така е според Тик Ток. Не ме сфаќајте погрешно, не останувајте во токсични врски, но, исто така, не ги избегнувајте луѓето само поради неколку точки кои сте ги слушнале на Тик Ток наместо да ги запознаете навистина.







## Што нè спречува да најдеме љубов?

Можеме да ги обвинуваме социјалните мрежи за сè, но има повеќе работи кои влијаат врз сето ова. Дефинитивно постои голем тренд на „културата на мување“ кој се провлекува, каде непосветениот став е нормализиран, и приврзувањето како и чувствата се гледаат како слабост. „Ситуационите врски“ можеби се најпопуларниот статус на врска кој го имам видено во 2024, и...не сум сигурна дали некој е среќен околу тоа.

Можеби е затоа што генерацијата Зет се плаши да биде ранлива, мислам, ако не се отвориш, нема да бидеш повреден, така? Анксиозни сме и болно свесни за тоа дека врска може да тргне наопаку, некој да нè искористи или повреди. Повторно, може да е до тоа што гледаме многу примери на интернет. Стравовите доаѓаат и од нашите лични искуства, затоа што, да бидеме искрени, веројатно сите сме биле повредени од некого. Во секој случај, преземањето ризик и изложувањето на себеси е неопходно ако сакаме да имаме длабока конекција.

Можеби е недостатокот на трпение. Во свет на инстантно задоволство, очекуваме дека веднаш ќе ги почувствуваме искрите, и се откажуваме после еден или неколку состаноци. Апликациите кои го нудат тоа само ја хранат илузијата на бескрајни можности кои може да ги достигнеме со кликање на едно копче, правејќи ни да се чувствуваме дека секогаш постои некој подобар токму зад аголот.

Можеби е хипер независноста со која се преплавени медиумите и која ни кажува дека не ни треба никој за да бидеме среќни. Обожавам да бидам силна независна девојка

и дефинитивно не мислам дека МОРА да се биде во врска, но...исто така се чувствувам дека понекогаш се обидуваме да се убедиме себеси во тоа повеќе од потребно. Младите луѓе се откажуваат од врските, бидејќи им делуваат премногу бесцелно или дури трауматично, и преферираат да се фокусираат на себе. Тоа е одлично, но колку долго ќе биде доволно? Никогаш не сум почувствувала потреба да бидам во врска, но како што стареам мислам дека има некоја специфична исполнетост во тоа да споделуваш поврзаност со друга личност, и можеби би било убаво да го поминам животот со некој посебен покрај себе.

Или веројатно е затоа што сме престроги кон себе. Да добро ме разбравте – мислам дека понекогаш пробуваме да ги угасиме несигурностите со разговори за независност. Работењето на себе е одлично сè додека не се чувствува дека треба да достигнеш совршенство пред да влезеш во врска. *Некој ќе ме сака ако изгубам тежина, некој ќе ме сака ако се разубавам.* Веројатно повеќето од нас имаме некоја несигурност која ни кажува дека не можеме да бидеме сакани. Но дали ние ги сакаме другите затоа што се совршени, или затоа што се љубезни, смешни и комфорни – листата продолжува – иако и тие имаат маани.

## Иднината на врските

Па, и не е изненадување дека врските постојано се менуваат. Покрај сè одиме напред како општество, технологијата се развива, и секоја генерација е поразлична од претходната. Според годишниот извештај за прелистување на Тиндер, во 2025 ќе ги опсервираме трендовите на излегување кои ќе ни помогнат во навигацијата на модерниот свет. За мене најинтересни се т.н. Нано-врски. Насмевка од убав

странец, брз разговор во кафуле - сè тоа е за наоѓање на среќа во малите романтични моменти. Мислам дека генерацијата Зет го крши популарното верување дека ако поврзаноста е добра, долго ќе трае. Тие ги ценат кратките изблици на чувства. Ако ценењето на ваквите ситуации ве прави посреќни и пооптимистични додека го гледате вашиот доживотен партнер, тогаш зошто да не?

Други трендови споменати во извештајот се посспецифични и конкретни во она што го бараме – претпоставувам дека на сите им е доста од неизвесни врски. И како последно, го потенцира отфрлањето на премногу формалните состаноци и фокусот на спонтаноста во врската. Тоа значи дека сè може да биде состанок - планинарење, часови за уметност, купување од втора-рака, ваш е изборот.

Искрено, најдобриот начин за навигација во овој хаос е да се забавувате и да откриете што функционира за вас. Секако ќе има сопки, ќе се разочарате и можеби ќе ви биде непријатно од сопствените приказни, но така учиме што е навистина важно во врската. Затоа што некаде помеѓу чудните први состаноци, неуспешните фази на зборување и повремениот искри, можеби ќе најдете нешто вистинско.

Ања Војџиак

Превод: Мартина Даниловска

Извори:

Tinder's Year in Swipe™ 2024

YouTube – [Christina Aaliyah “gen z has a dating problem”](#)

YouTube – [Christina Aaliyah “gen z is undateable”](#)

YouTube – [Madisyn Brown “gen z doesn't believe in love \(situationships, orange peel theory, sprinkle sprinkle\)”](#)

# ***Two months of learning,***

reflect

***reflecting***







I was catching up online with a friend who lives in the Netherlands one day and I had expressed to her how exhausted I was of my day to day life back in Skopje. After comforting me with some affirming words, she mentioned Olde Vechte Foundation, this place she had recently been to for training and gave me the idea to check out the volunteering options they provided.

And so, after a bit of research, I applied to OV for my short term volunteering. Fast forward a few months and there I was, in the little city of Ommen, having arrived late in the night in November, ready to start my journey.

Even though it was maybe past 10pm when I arrived at Olde Vechte, I was fondly greeted by some of the volunteers and got a little tour. The buildings were packed with volunteers and people from various trainings the foundation hosts, there were even two cats who the volunteers took care of, Luna and Krisi. This was my first 'good omen' if you will. Whatever would happen in the next two months I knew I had signed up to the right place.

What had initially caught my eye in regards to Olde Vechte was that the volunteering activities had a more 'hands on' approach, with manual labour being quite an integral part of the volunteers tasks. This was perfect for me as up until applying there, I had been working an office job and felt I needed a break from the hyper-digitalized life I had been living.

In my two months there, I was faced with many new and exciting challenges for which I quickly learned proper tools to help with overcoming said hurdles.

Among the various activities I had, most notable were the opportunity to help with demolishing one of the older volunteering houses, where I finally learned how to properly use some important tools. I also helped out with various tasks in a local garden in Ommen, where I gained a bit of knowledge on natural herbs and remedies for various ailments, as well as the ins and outs of the upkeep of a sustainable and seasonal focused garden, in a country like the Netherlands where much of the agriculture is mainly done in greenhouses.

I also learned how to use a sewing machine at one of the local second hand shops, participated in an art therapy training, helped out in the volunteer kitchen where at times we would be cooking for 50+ people, as well as doing landscaping and minor repair works on some of the buildings at the foundation.

What was most shockingly positive for me was the other volunteers and how easily they accepted and integrated me as part of their community. In those two months, I got to truly feel like I was a part of something bigger, a collective of people focused on bettering themselves and their surroundings. There was a lot of introspection in Olde Vechte, a lot of reflecting, crying, letting go, accepting, learning, creating, being.

I am so grateful for the ecstatic time that I got to have in this magical place with so many beautiful people, I would not trade these experiences here for anything else!

---

Angela Manchevska  
Short-term ESC volunteer  
hosted by Olde Vechte

**& being**





Jacob Desvarieux et Jocelyne Beroard. © AFP



© Les Vikings de la Guadeloupe



Zouk Machine en 1992 © BENAROCH/SIPA



Zouk sarl, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia commons

Zouk, mwen  
enme' w



Let's talk about the best thing  
Guadeloupe gave to the world.  
ZOUK.

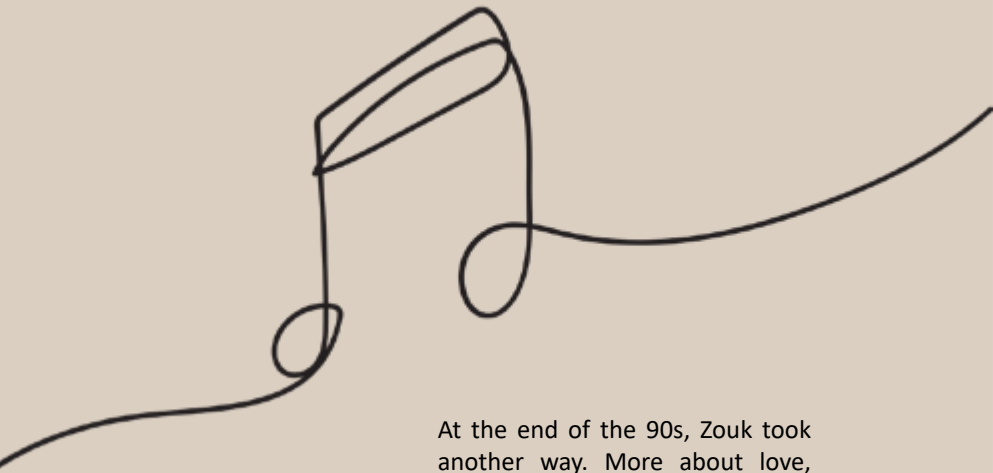
Have you ever heard about Zouk?

Zouk is a Creole word that means "Popular Ballroom." People used to go to zouks, like nightclubs, to spend time and meet each other. During this time, Kadans were very popular. Weibert Sicot created the Kadans music style in Haiti in the 1960s, and the Kadans orchestras played music in zouks.

Many bands were born during the 1960s and 1970s, including La Selecta, Les Aiglons, Exile One, The Grammacks, and Les Vikings de la Guadeloupe.

In Les Vikings de la Guadeloupe, Pierre Edouard Décimus is the bassist. He decided to try something new with Freddy Marshall and Jacob Desvarieux, three Guadeloupeans influenced by opposite musical styles. Jacob played Rock during his teenage years in Marseille, while Pierre Edouard and Freddy played Kadans.

They started with a base of Kadans, mixed with Gwoka and Bèlè (Afro-Caribbean music style), Biguine and Mazurka (Ballroom dancing music style), and Kadans-lypso (Kadans from Dominica, influenced by carnival music). They also use more synthesizers and rhythm boxes instead of classical instruments.



Right now, we have Zouk. "Zouk Béton". The first version of Zouk is still popular during weddings, carnivals, baptisms, etc. Kassav popularized Zouk everywhere.

Kassav is the precursor of Zouk. They exported it from Japan to the Soviet Union, becoming the first Afro-Caribbean band to perform in these countries.

During their 40-year career, they performed 2000 concerts, sold 5 million discs, went on an African and Caribbean tour, and were on all the radios across the world. Some bands sing their songs in English and Spanish, and the word Zouk is completely associated with Kassav.

During this era, Zouk's lyrics were more about the problems of society, pride in our roots, social justice, how to recognize slavery as a crime against humanity (which was finally recognized in 2001 in France, and 2020 in Europe...), and culture in general.

At the end of the 90s, Zouk took another way. More about love, romanticism, heartbreaks... Until the end of the 2000s. Réal Limit (Alex Catherine and Richard Birman), Harry Diboula, Tatiana Miath, Gilles Floro, and many more were the most popular artists. Everybody was doing Zouk music. That's the music of the people.

Zouk is everything for us, we listen to it every time, everywhere, for each event of our life. And I cannot live without Zouk, I should listen to it daily. It's our legacy and it will never disappear as long as we share it with the world.

**Zouk, mwen enmé'w.  
(Zouk, I love you.)**

Terry Ruart

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# The Secret Life of an Introvert





Being an introvert in today's noisy world is like trying to meditate in a room full of toddlers. While the world celebrates loud, social interactions, introverts are often just trying to find a quiet corner. They're not anti-social; they're just pro-solitude.

Let's explore the life of an introvert, where silence is golden, and socializing is a strategic move.

### The Art of Small Talk

Introverts are experts at avoiding small talk. "So, what do you think of the weather?" someone asks, and suddenly their brain freezes. The usual response is something like, "well well, it's nice", followed by an awkward silence. If you've ever tried to escape a conversation about the weather with an introvert, you know the struggle is real. It's not that they hate talking; they just prefer conversations with more substance - like, say, a dissertation on the philosophy of solitude.

### The Energy Drain of Socializing

Ever wonder why introverts leave parties early? Socializing drains their batteries faster than your phone in 2% mode. While extroverts thrive on people, introverts need alone time to recharge. It's not personal; it's just that their social battery has a very limited lifespan. By 11 p.m., they're ready to be "that person" sneaking out without saying goodbye.

### The Comfort of "Me Time"

Introverts don't fear "me time," they revel in it. It's like therapy. Whether it's binge-watching Netflix, reading, or just staring into space, being alone feels like hitting the reset button. It's their personal sanctuary - no small talk, no crowds, just blissful silence. It's like recharging.

### Socializing, But Make It an "Event"

When an introvert agrees to attend a gathering, it's like preparing for battle. They carefully plan their outfit, mentally rehearse their conversations, and figure out the quickest exit strategy. But once there, they thrive in short bursts, retreating to a quiet corner when their social battery runs low.

Introverts aren't anti-social; they just know that sometimes, silence is more satisfying than small talk. They thrive in their own quiet way, and while they might not be the life of the party, they're definitely the ones who can enjoy the peace that follows when it's all over.

From an introvert,

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Ezana Shabani



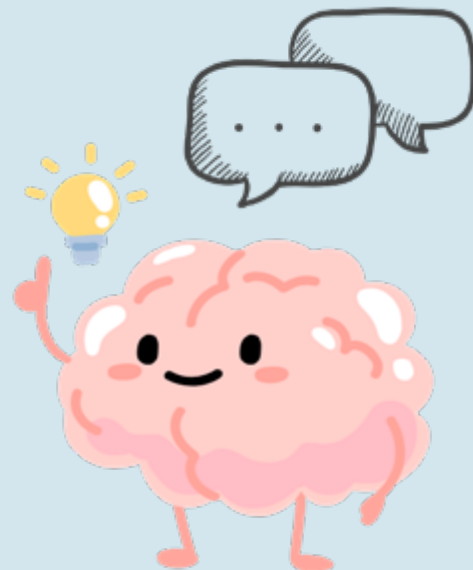
# Language Alter Egos

While I was back at home, enjoying my holidays, I started to reflect on some things. You know, the random thoughts you suddenly get around midnight before going to bed and that lead you to doing some introspection. Well, that's how I got the idea for this article.

I had already thought about how weird it is that sometimes I feel more comfortable with English than French. I mean it doesn't make sense, right? French is my native language, it should be the one I'm most confident with. So why do I sometimes feel like I have another personality when I'm speaking English?

For a little bit of context, I think the first time I really started to notice this was during my first ever trip alone abroad, for a summer school in Bulgaria. While I already had a pretty high level in English, it was my first time speaking it for a long period of time (3 weeks). And still it felt pretty natural to me.

But anyway, coming back to this initial thought that sparked my reflection, I decided to do some research about it despite the fact that it was probably already past midnight. I just needed to know that my thoughts were normal, and was curious about the reasons behind these ideas.







The main factor that studies pointed out was the importance of the sociocultural context. Indeed, the way we behave and think can in many ways be influenced by the languages we speak. From non verbal communication, to sentence structures or even the way we express feelings, lots of elements can evolve when speaking a foreign language as we are adapting to different cultural norms.

As a matter of fact, there will always be some kind of connection between language and culture, so adjusting our behaviour to the language we speak should be a very natural thing, whether we do it consciously or not. In a way, this makes us chameleons that are just trying to adapt to different environments.

Furthermore, we may use different languages in different contexts during which we would also need to adapt our speech to fit these contexts. For example, we may only use one in very serious situations, and another one only with friends. So, we unconsciously associate these languages with the context in which we use them and form some personality and an opinion on them based on this.

So, how could I use my personal experience to explain this change of personality that I so clearly notice? In my case, apart from the composition of my social circle, one of the other key elements of my sensation of awkwardness in French would be the fact that I mostly consume media that are in English. Indeed, it has already been many years since I started to consume content (social

media posts, videos, music and literature) that is mostly in English, and now in other foreign languages. Due to this many, if not most, of my pop culture references are in English. Which in itself is not really a problem, however it can become one if for example a joke or some specific line doesn't really sound fun or nice anymore when translated in French. Or, for example I sometimes don't quite know some artists that are currently popular in France. Maybe another reason for this feeling could be the fact that I never travelled much in France, even as a kid with my parents. But I think this is due to the fact that I'm from Strasbourg, which is next to the German border and also near Switzerland, so it's somehow quicker to get to other countries than to go to some places in France.

Finally, the most obvious point for me is my social circle. As a kid, I never had a lot of friends and I was very shy anyway. So I didn't have many friends in France in the first place. However, now that I started travelling alone for different projects, I find myself having more foreign friends, who are thus English speaking. I'm not complaining about this, in fact it doesn't bother me that much, it's just that as a consequence I'm more socialised in English, than in my native French.

While the fact that my experiences have led me to feel quite confident when speaking English is great for me, there's also some kind of downside. As I expressed earlier in this article, English sometimes feels more natural than French to me, though it doesn't affect me much, as I think it's mostly

something that I notice myself. Due to this I try to make more "efforts" to connect with the French language, especially when consuming media. For example, now I would say there's some kind of balance between English and French when it comes to me listening to podcasts, or videos, for example. I also started to buy more books in French again.

Considering the fact that I'm learning quite a few different foreign languages, I think I'll never get rid of this feeling of having different personalities, probably there are even some that I haven't even discovered yet. So, I guess I'll just have to constantly try to find some harmony between all these languages and personalities.

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Chloe Gaschy

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# BYREKU, WAKTI JUAJ PERFEKT





Byreku njihet gjerësisht si një delikatesë ballkanike ose turke dhe qëndron si një nga pastat më të njohura në këto rajone. Origjina e tij vjen nga rajoni i Anadollit të Turqisë. Për shkak të hapësirës së madhe të Perandorisë Osmane, byreku u përhap në Ballkan, Afrikën e Veriut dhe territore të tjera. Etimologjia e saktë e fjalës “byrek” mbetet e paqartë. Ka disa interpretime që thonë se vjen nga fjala “böğür”, që do të thotë “veshka”, por ky është vetëm një interpretim.



Çdo vend, qytet apo edhe shtëpi ka një recetë të ndryshme për byrekun, por receta bazë mbetet e qëndrueshme. Byreku bëhet me brumë të hollë e të krisur si “filo” dhe i mbushur me një sërë përbërësish si mish i grirë, spinaq, djathë apo patate. Mund të skuqet në tigan ose të piqet në furrë. Bërja e byrekut është e thjeshtë, përfshin shtresimin e brumit me mbushjen, i ngjashëm me montimin e një keku me shumë shtresa. Ky specialitet unik mund të shërbehet i nxehtë ose i ftohtë dhe i shoqëruar me pije si kos, ayran ose boze.

Në Maqedoni, shumë furra buke shërbejnë byrekun si vakt mëngjesi dhe koha më e mirë për ta blerë atë është herët në mëngjes, pasi disa nga furrat e bukës funksionojnë derisa të shiten, shpesh rreth mesditës. Pas kësaj, me shumë mundësi nuk do të gjeni byrekun tuaj të përsosur. Ajo që më befaso i këtu, dhe është ndryshe nga ajo në Poloni, është se disa nga furrat e bukës janë të hapura 24/7 dhe njerëzit kanë prioritet blerjen e pastave të ndryshme në vend të bukës.

Një variant i byrekut maqedonas quhet “баничка” (banička). Ndryshe nga byreku tradicional, mbështjellë me mbushje si ruletë, duke i dhënë një formë përfundimtare të dallueshme. Ajo që e bën të veçantë baničkën për mua është se gjatë Krishtlindjeve, Vitit të Ri apo festës së Vasilicës, ndonjëherë brenda në brumë fshihet një monedhë. Personi që gjen monedhën në copën e tyre besohet se do të ketë fat të mirë për vitin e ardhshëm.

Deri tani kam provuar shumë byrek dhe banički nga furra të ndryshme buke dhe mund të them sinqerisht se më ka ndryshuar këndvështrimin për mëngjesin. Tani, me një çmim të arsyeshëm, mund të shijoj një vakt të shijshëm, ose sa herë që jam shumë dembel për të gatuar, mund ta shijoj veten me specialitete vendase. Një tjetër gjë e mrekullueshme është se jogurti ose ayran janë në dispozicion në çdo furrë buke. Kombinimi i ëmbëlsirave me këto pije e bën përvojën edhe më të mirë, pasi ato ndihmojnë në balancimin e pasurisë së brumit dhe ndihmojnë në tretje.

Këtë Krishtlindje, udhëtova për në Poloni dhe solla banička me vete për udhëtim. Nuk i hëngra të gjitha, kështu që ruajta disa për t’i çuar në shtëpinë e prindërve të mi. Edhe pasi u ula në çantën time për 24 orë, ne mundëm të shijonim specialitetin maqedonas për mëngjes. Prindërit e mi, në fillim, nuk ishin aq të emocionuar ta provonin sepse banička nuk dukej mirë pas një kohe kaq të gjatë, por sapo e provuan, u mahnitën. Së bashku, ne ramë dakord që nuk kemi diçka të tillë në vendin tonë.

A ekziston një gjë e tillë si mëngjesi perfekt? Po, dhe për mua është byrek. Është një vakt i thjeshtë, por siguron energji të mjaftueshme për t’ju ushqyer gjatë gjithë ditës. Pas disa muajsh, mora të preferuarat e mia. E shijoj baničkën me sirenje, pulë dhe kackavall 3 apo byrek pica. Kjo pastë është unike sepse ka gjithmonë variacione të reja për të provuar dhe zbuluar shije të ndryshme të Ballkanit.

Jakub Pokuciński  
Përktheu: Diola Sokoli

Burimet:  
Wikipedia - Burek

# Behind the bars of society



When a casual and mostly even as “fun” categorized activity turns out to become an earnest evaluation of a time, you know with quite some certainty that you are reading a poem from Rainer Maria Rilke. In one of his most well-known poems, “The Panther”, written between 1902 and 1903 Rilke performs precisely this brilliant move by using a visit in the Parisian “Jardin de Plantes” as opportunity to assess the prevalent loneliness, passivity, and lack of autonomy under the harsh, restrictive social rules and constraints of the time around the turn of century.

Rilke’s “Panther” is characterized by a meticulously clear and rigorous structure: The poem consists of twelve verses, evenly distributed over three stanzas. With the exception of the last verse, the verse meter is a steady five-

beat iamb. Through the use of the cross rhyme as a rhyme scheme, alternating female and male cadences are created. Thereby the poem’s formal composition takes on an aesthetic yet strict form that not only symbolizes the cage of the panther on display described in the work, but also the metaphorical cage in which a notorious society concerned more about superficial appearance than inner wellbeing puts the individual.

In the poem’s first four verses composing the first stanza, the lyrical narrator describes the panther pacing up and down behind the bars of its cage which constrain his existence to the space within. With the beginning of the second stanza the attention of the lyrical speaker shifts to a closer examination of the panther’s gait and its circular path. At last, the lyrical subject points out the

occasional opening of the panther’s eyes, reporting that this permits the panther to perceive the world around him but remains without any effects on his state of mind.

Throughout the whole process of observation captured in the poem, the lyrical narrator remains in the background without being ever mentioned explicitly. Likewise, the panther is only named in the title and in the first stanza only referred to through the two personal and possessive pronouns “Sein” (v. 1) and “Ihm” (v. 3). In all the following stanzas it is only implied that the subject of the lyrical speaker’s observations is the titling panther. With this reduction of the lyrical subject to the recipient’s lens and the panther to their observation, a very objective, almost sterile atmosphere is created right from the start resembling





the scientific research conducted at the site of this lyrical piece, the Jardin de Plantes in Paris.

That the panther serves the poem as an object, that its role is a strictly passive one, is as well apparent with regards to the numerous personifications. On this occasion, not the panther but items and abstract processes such as the gaze, the bars, the will, and a picture get assigned human traits (see v. 1, 8, 10). All of these things are accused of active actions, while it appears that the panther is not doing anything, but rather only being done to. Nevertheless, the many personifications are not only demonstrating that even items and abstract processes seem to be more vivid and dynamic than the panther but even more so, the attributed actions appear to mirror the panther's state of mind. Every action has something lethargic and melancholic about it: the "gaze" (v. 1) is "tired" and "holds nothing anymore" (v. 2), the "will" is "numbed" (v. 8) and the "picture" (v. 10) "ceases to be in the heart" (v. 12). In this way, the panther's feelings are expressed indirectly: it seems to have lost interest in its life and the outside world, it has grown weary of it (cf. v. 1f.), its once 'great will' (v. 8) is numb, thus no longer existent, and every external impression leaves it internally unmoved, numb, and indifferent (see v. 10ff.).

The close connection between the panther's state of mind and his imprisonment is most evident in the first stanza. In the first verse, the bars of the panther's cage are repeatedly mentioned (see v. 1, 3, 4). On the one

hand, they are held responsible for the tiring of the panther's gaze (see v. 1). On the other hand, the bars limit his space to live thus mark the borders of his world as expressed with the help of a metaphor reinforced by repetition (see v. 3f.). The repetition of the contradictory hyperbole "a thousand sticks [...] a thousand sticks" (v. 3f.) creates the impression of seemingly boundless limitation and thus emphasizes the panther's perception of his captivity as monotonous and hopeless, which is the basis not only of the animal's despair but also of its resignation and weariness with life.

Containing two consecutive alliterations that have a tone-painterly character, firstly "Gang geschmeidig" (v. 5) characterized by soft G and D sounds and secondly "starke Schritte" (v. 5), which is characterized by hard K and T, the poem's fifth verse describes the softness and smoothness of the panther's gait the power just as it does the strength and power of the predator. The thereby implicitly and explicitly created image of a majestic animal is supported by comparing the gait to a "dance" (v. 7). However, the comparison as well functions as a bridge to the limitations of the panther expressed by the hyperbole in verse 6, since the dance is bound to a fixed "center". This leads to the impression that the outward elegance of the panther does not help against the limits that are set for the animal, perhaps precisely because of its inherent grace breaking its "will" (v. 8).

In this regard, the panther can be interpreted as a symbol of individuals

trapped between social conventions and duties limiting their perception and dulling their spirit in the same way as the panther's captivity. As a consequence, individuals become as lethargic and numb as the panther in the last stanza of the poem. On the rare occasion that individuals, like the panther, perceive something outside the boundaries of their very own cage, it still fails to touch their hearts and provoke a reaction. The poem can therefore be read not only as a mirror of the zeitgeist around the turn to the 19th century, but also as social criticism, a criticism of restrictive social constraints, but also individual passivity. Hence Rilke's "Panther" is to be located on the literary spectrum somewhere between naturalism and aestheticism for its underlying social critique on the one hand and almost playfully regulated structure and the choice of the motif of the panther in the cage. In any case, the poem is a well-known work of the form of object poems focusing on the panther as an otherwise voiceless object and exploring its perspective getting down to the essence of not only the animal's state of mind but rather the individual's passivity within the tight-knit web of social norms, constraints, and hierarchies. Elaborating on the themes of experience, perception, and loneliness the poem is unquestionably a programmatic work of the literary era of the "fin de siècle".

Sophia Abegg

Find the poem in German and English [here!](#)

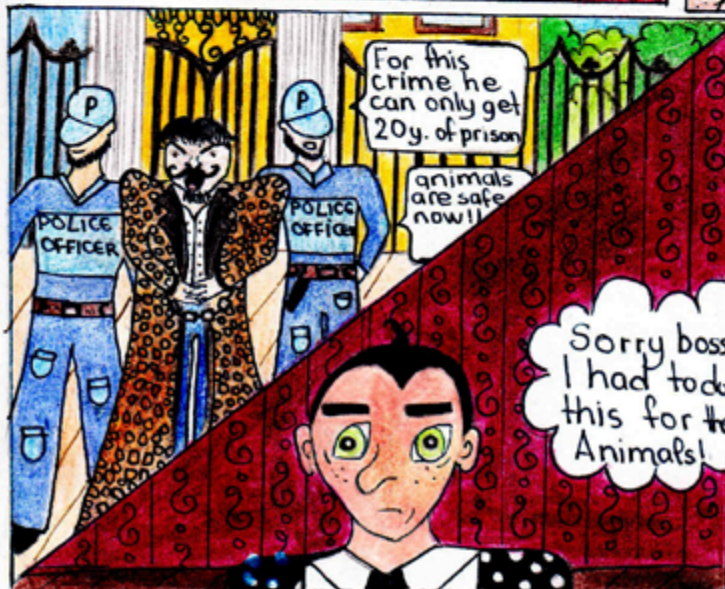
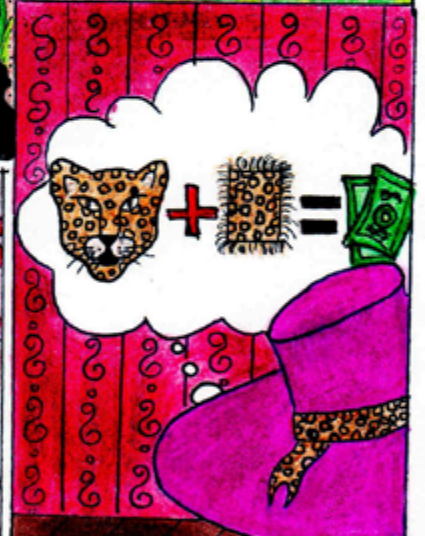
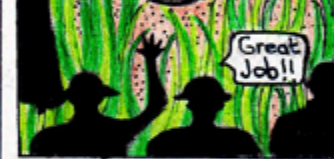






# 100 LIVES FOR ONE THING







# HOW TO WRITE ARTICLES FOR VOICES



## TOPIC

- Anything, except politics or hate speech
- Think of topics that would interest **our audience** (youth)
- Maybe a **current event or trend** that you could write about?

## RESEARCH

- Use **credible sources** when researching your topic
- Double-check** any information you include in your article to ensure **accuracy**
- Don't plagiarize**
- Link the sources** at the end of your article

## STRUCTURE

- Use **short, attention-grabbing headline**
- Write an **introduction** at the beginning (what, who, when, why, how)
- Include **body** and **conclusion** in your article, maintain a logical flow
- Write your **full name** at the end

## WRITING

- Use **clear and concise language** that your audience will understand
- Avoid** too technical terms and **hard language** unless necessary
- Be engaging** and try to make your article interesting to read

## FEW RULES

- The article should be around 500 - 1000 words
- Don't** include images or illustrations in the document
- Send possible **photos separately** (with sources and assured they're **free of copyrights**)
- Edit and revise** (clarity, grammar, and spelling error)

## WHAT ELSE?

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