

VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

june 2025





Hope is a dandelion – and a dandelion is it. The story of everything takes its course with the smallest, tiny-tiniest seed of it getting carried and carried away by the early summer breeze. Despite its completely inconspicuous looks, the slender seed possesses a secret super-power: It can take a hold even in the most unlikely places under the harshest and most forbidding conditions. Once settled down on the earth, it grows relentlessly. There is no way to keep it from putting down deep roots and growing sprawling leaves shaped by the embodiment of courage itself (Never forget – it is a Dant-de-Lion). Even though it may be perceived as unwanted or disruptive, its impact is purely beneficial. When dealt with wisely, its greens may nurture a hungry mind and its yellows may heal a broken will.

But one rarely comes alone. When one mind is nourished and its will restored, taking action becomes inevitable. Yellow turns white and a single shimmering transforms to a plenty fluffy ready to set off. Just like the beauty of the yellow is shared, the white is spreading out to make sure its essence is sustained. Because that is how it works - it needs to be shared and spread in order to keep the belief in the possibility of a positive future thriving.

So, when you encounter a dandelion breaking through a crack in the asphalt the next time, will you have the courage to take a chance blowing full of hope?

Sophia Abegg

Надежта е глварче – и глварчето е тоа. Приказната за сè си го продолжува својот тек така што најмалото, најситно семе од него е носено и однесено од раниот летен ветрец. И покрај неговиот сосема незабележителен изглед, тенкото семе поседува тајна супермоќ: може да се вкорени дури и на најневеројатните места под најсуровите и најзабранетите услови. Откако ќе се смири на земјата, расте неуморно. Нема начин да се спречи да пушти длабоки корени и да расте раширени лисја обликувани од самата олицетворение на храброста (Никогаш не заоравајте – тоа е Dant-de-Lion). Иако може да се перцепира како непосакувано или деструктивно, неговото влијание е чисто корисно. Кога се третира мудро, неговите зелени бои можат да го негуваат гладниот ум, а неговите жолти бои можат да ја излечат скршената волја.

Но, ретко доаѓа само. Кога еден ум е нахранет и неговата волја е обновена, преземањето акција станува неизбежно. Жолтата станува бела и едно треперење се трансформира во нешто меко, подготвено да тргне. Исто како што се споделува убавината на жолтата боја, белата се шири за да се осигури дека нејзината суштина е одржана. Затоа што така функционира - треба да се споделува и шири за да се одржи вербата во можноста за позитивна иднина.

Значи, кога следниот пат ќе наидете на глварче кое се пробива низ пукнатина на асфалтот, дали ќе имате храброст да ризикувате и да бидете полни со надеж?

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PERFECTING IMPERFECTION

When I picked up my first Jane Austen book, I was unsuspecting of what I was getting myself into. To set the scene, I was a clueless eighth-grader that discovered English 19th century literature after picking up “Jane Eyre” by chance in the children’s library two years prior. So, little did I understand of the social scope and great wit of the Austen book that was to become my all-time favorite, number one, going-to novel. Even less did I know of the ways in which this book would stick with me and grow on me. You may wonder which book could enact such power over a person’s heart. The answer is evident – it is Austen’s 1815 masterpiece of self- and character exploration, the perfect mix of romance and comedy or simply “Emma”.

Jane Austen is arguably the most iconic and well-beloved writer of the Regency Era. The six complete novels she got to publish range not only between the most important pieces of world literature but most importantly still star on countless

book lovers’ favorite lists. Her books may be old – after all, over 200 years have passed since her first book was published back in 1811- but the gripping stories she tells, the intricate characters she illustrates and the sharp wit and mockery she weaves in seamlessly have never grown to become outdated. The simple yet unique reason for the continuous place she holds in many readers’ hearts is that there is something substantially human and deeply relatable in the pages of every Austen novel. As much as her books are an astoundingly detailed picture of a certain time, place, and people, namely the countryside upper class of the early nineteenth century England, Jane Austen’s books have a certain degree of universality. This is especially true when regarding her “Emma”.

This treasure about the nature of human beings and relationships surprisingly enough centers around a young woman called Emma. Believing to have a special talent for matchmaking, the titular heroine struts to meddle with the destinies of her fellow small-townners only to find herself hopelessly tangled up

between the messy bonds of love and friendship. Along the way, Emma embarks on a journey of self-discovery and change that the narrator already foreshadows on the first pages but our favorite “handsome, clever and rich” protagonist had no chance of foretelling. At first sight, this story does not seem to have too much uniqueness to it. But in fact, the genius lies neither in the appeal of pomp nor the cruelty of fate of the story but its simplicity and relatability that make it applicable across times and places.

In “Emma”, the eponymous daughter of a wealthy hypochondriac is not as perfect as she herself and most of the people around her think. Beneath her charms and looks she is rather vain and manipulative, looking down on people that cannot meet her high standards. Her self-centeredness leaves Emma with poor understanding of others feelings which is one of the main causes of the chaos she stirs in the otherwise quiet Highbury. Still, throughout the story the reader is easily tempted to grow to

like the protagonist not despite but because of her character flaws. It is her outright imperfection, her embodying so many things that oppose the high and lofty ideals set for women of that time that make her human and her experiences deeply relatable. Because let us be honest, who has not ever had their Emma-moment of being mean and trying to get their way by every means? Emma is a character that makes mistakes in her romantic and platonic relationships, experiences the feeling of self-doubt, and goes through bare failure. In this sense, she encounters the challenges life inevitably comes with, making our favorite heroine as human as fiction allows. But what makes her story so extraordinary, is Emma's response to all the adversaries she is facing: Despite making every mistake and holding up the looks until the very last moment possible, she eventually gets around to self-recognition and is willing to allow herself to change as well as to fix the mess she created. Hence, Emma's exceptional character arc showcases some of the most important lessons life has to offer: imperfection and flaws are human but it is never too late to change for the better and even though it may be a hard process, it is always worth it in the end.

Another topic we get to experience alongside Emma are the facts that truth is always tainted by personal bias and feelings are the only thing we can rely on when navigating through this world of entangled relationships and connections. These notions become especially evident in Emma's mistaken belief that only with the help of her cleverness and matchmaking skills her new and admittedly rather naive friend Harriet can find a worthy partner. Even the very best intentions with which Emma is approaching this new project, cannot make up for her overestimating her own abilities and qualities as well as her attempts to interfere with true feelings. Due

to these misconceptions, Emma's matchmaking efforts backfire terribly and turn out to cause more harm than good. However, the protagonist is not the only one prone to falling for the trap of mistaking biased judgements for fact-based truth. Take for example Mr. Knightly, Emma's neighbour and a long-time family friend of the Woodhouses: He has been in love with a special someone for a long time but rather than following these very honest feelings, Mr. Knightly jumps to quick conclusions and lets himself be misled by personal preoccupations causing a series of misunderstandings further contributing to the overall messy situation between the eligible young people of Highbury. But "Emma" would not be a Jane Austen book, if the author would not lead the reader through her characters to the eye-opening moment of recognition and understanding - the moment when the true genius of her writing unfolds itself fully. In the final chapters of confessions and resolutions, Austen expresses the notion of a fleeting truth not only implicitly through the characters finding happiness after resolving all the prevalent misconceptions through being honest about their feelings but also puts it quite explicitly in a remarkable quote: "Seldom, very seldom does complete truth belong to any human disclosure; seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised, or a little mistaken; but where, as in this case, though the conduct is mistaken, the feelings are not, it may not be very material."

With "Emma", Jane Austen takes the reader yet again on an experience full of self-resemblance and self-reflection that is so typical for her writing. Throughout the variety of topics her characters get to explore on the journey the plot takes them on, Austen creates a special closeness by letting universal human experiences always set the foundation for the thoughtfully crafted ways and arches of each character. This special closeness works

in "Emma" especially good due to the authors tricking the reader into believing the protagonist to be perfect, only to make them discover alongside Emma that the opposite is the actual truth. It is not that the hints are not there but rather, that they are well-hidden on the first glance and hilariously obvious on the second glance. In this way, not only the titular character herself gets forced to question how well one really knows themselves and gets to discover that growing and learning are a process of a lifetime - but the reader is going through a similar process. Therefore, not only "Emma", the book, but also Emma, the character, are both very special and extremely unique. Emma's imperfection and flaws make her an extraordinary female protagonist - especially when regarding the time of the book's creation. For her actions and traits it seems easy to see her as a sort of anti-heroine, still, the development she undertakes is something deeply human and even more heroic.

Just as it titular heroine, this marvellous novel is not without its flaws as it is clearly set in a time and place that diverges in many ways from the world as it looks like today. Nevertheless, "Emma" is as close to perfection as a book about the humanity of imperfection and the subjectivity of truth can very objectively be. In this sense, I wish everybody to have the same experience I had when picking up this masterpiece of a book for the first time:

"Then I examined my own heart. And there you were. Never, I fear to be removed."

Sophia Abegg



WALKING MY HEART THROUGH BELGRADE

A man walks through Belgrade in a straight line. And I don't mean it metaphorically – he literally moves forward without stopping. No fence, no building is an obstacle for him. As if he was the one with the city.

That's a movie I've seen at the Museum of Contemporary Art. I walked the streets of Belgrade too, but I didn't choose the shortest path. Actually, it's quite the opposite – I got lost in the narrow alleys between the apartment blocks, inspected the corners and peeked into the yards. I allowed myself to wander, and most importantly – I allowed myself to *feel*. Now I'm taking you on this journey with me. Spoiler alert: *no shortcuts today*.

Before my journey, I had one opinion in my mind – the one I read on some internet forum – that Belgrade used to be a capital of Balkans, but now it looks just like any other European city. *Wrong*. Somehow it manages to look like both of these things at the same time, depending on which turn you'll take.

That brings me to what really drew me to Belgrade: my fascination with brutalist architecture. It started here, in the Balkans, but I think the roots lay somewhere deeper, in Poland 20 years ago, which I remember from my childhood. To be fair, I'm not sure if I actually remember the grey blocks, or I'm romanticizing the memories my family shared with me, making them my own. Whichever one it is, this was the reason that lured me into the not-so-touristic parts of the city.

What caught my attention first were the metal, simple constructions serving the purpose of playgrounds' equipment, the only colourful element surrounded by grey walls. I remember playing on them before they got replaced with more complex plastic ones, which – in my opinion – leave less space for imagination. In Poland, it happened several years ago, here they're still in use in every housing estate I encountered, filling me with nostalgia.

Surprisingly, visiting some of the places I had on my brutalist architecture to-do list made me feel much more than

just curiosity or a vague connection to the past. When I look at beautifully decorated buildings, it makes me go *oh, that's pretty*, obviously. But looking at brutalist ones creates this unsettling feeling, like watching a car crash you can't look away from.

The journey started off softly, with the building called Toblerone Tower. This stop was light-hearted – just a fun fact in the form of a weirdly shaped building. With triangles sticking out of a cuboid, it resembled a famous chocolate. However, for the second spot, I chose one of the most iconic places in Belgrade, Genex Tower. One half of it is still operating, one is abandoned; both were looking down on me, starting to make me feel intimidated. I saw a group of tourists or architecture enthusiasts entering the inhabited part of the building, probably to go up the tower. Just the thought of being trapped in the elevator or on top of this construction filled me with anxiety, so I didn't sneak after them. Instead, I took a bus through half of the city, and arrived in front of the seemingly average three blocks of flats organized in a circle – Eastern City Gate. I've never been scared of a building before, but these... these did something to me. Looking up at the twenty-eight floors of gloomy panels – that felt more like a hundred – I couldn't shake off the anxiety.

Exploring these parts of the city made me feel like an intruder. Uncertain if I should be there, the bum bag and backpack gave me away painfully easily... well, looking confused at the bus stops probably did too. It made me realize that going into the role of a tourist doing touristy things in touristy places feels safe and comes naturally, so coming back to the city center was accompanied by a kind of relief.

Not to sound like Belgrade gave me just anxiety, I have to mention the feeling of freedom characteristic of travelling alone that I found here once again. It fills up your heart, but doesn't

make it heavier – actually, it's quite the opposite. This was my second solo trip, but the excitement was just like the first time. Maybe it's breaking out of the routine and streets you know like your own house that makes you feel like you're using your free will the right way.

Somehow, travelling is looking for small pieces of yourself in places you've never been to. I don't think you can feel fully at home on a four-day trip, but you can definitely find spots, things and people that will bring you surprisingly familiar comfort. My love for Asian culture led my steps through the streets of Belgrade to a small place with Chinese food, which made me feel more welcomed than I'd have ever expected. It was like a long, warm hug, especially after the evening when being alone started to feel a little bit lonely.

I'd describe Belgrade as a city of contrasts. The mix of modern, glass skyscrapers and old grey buildings from huge panels creates a weird kind of dissonance. The clash is fascinating to observe... I'd say, Hunger-Games-kind-of fascinating. It gives off kind of dystopian vibes, but it hasn't stopped to amaze me. I came to Belgrade with a mess in my heart, and I think the city resonated with my emotions very well.

When the bus on my way home broke down in a random field, I wasn't stressed out. I appreciated how pretty the view with the sunset was... and in that moment I knew – I had grown into the Balkans since my first solo trip six months ago.

Anna Wojdziak



Leaving city life for a peaceful one

On the 1st of May, I discovered a new side of Macedonia. The Macedonian countryside.

With my Macedonian friends, we decided to celebrate the Labour Day in the best way we could. BARBECUE! They invited me to Celopek, a little village not far from the Serbian border. The beginning of the day was similar to how we celebrate Workers' Day back home, a big barbecue with some beers. So, the most exotic part was to understand the Kumanovo dialect! Hard to understand at first, but after a couple of hours, you'll get it.



The first thing they showed me in Celopek was a little fountain. I felt like I was in a video game: just water and a lot of butterflies around me. If you don't see that, it's hard to imagine...

After eating a lot of pleskavica, chicken with cheese, and bread, we decided to go to the hot springs - Strnovac Banja. And what an experience! I didn't expect to find this in Macedonia. For two hours, I felt like I was back in Guadeloupe, at St Thomas Hot Springs, where water goes up to 80 degrees. The springs are located in a city we call Bouillante, which means boiling, so it's easy to understand what's happening there. The former name was Boiling Fountain. Enjoying the hot springs and watching the stars was wonderful, especially when you cannot see them in Skopje.

Then we came back home. I felt like I hadn't spent enough time in Kumanovo, so I decided to stay longer to discover the city. The only times I had been there before, I'd just driven across it on the way to another Macedonian place.



It was interesting to discover this city. You can see a lot of teenagers outside, just chilling in cafés, or next to the schools. I've learned that's a habit there. I was surprised because that's not common in France. Teenagers usually go straight home after school, and if they go out, they stay in their neighbourhood. Even in Skopje it's not that common. At least to me, or probably it's just less visible.

People don't speak much English in Kumanovo, so thanks to my basic Macedonian, I managed to make myself understood—and it was nice, in fact. In Skopje, because of English influence, people tend to switch languages if you can't speak Macedonian. Kumanovo was good practice.

I went to my friend's home and met his family. They were happy to meet a new person from abroad, asking me a lot of things about my culture, how we live, what we eat, how life is on an island.

There are 2 things that warms my heart: when you are interested in my culture, and when you feed me. And when people don't know how to speak your language, they will show you how they appreciate

you
with
food and
alcohol, so,
every 30mn,
they ask me if i'm
hungry and it's hard
to refuse because
you don't want to
hurt them, but you still
feel warm with these
intentions.

During my third day, I finally started to walk around Kumanovo, enjoying the sun in square Marshal Tito, and my friend decided to show me something next to Kumanovo Banja. I was so shocked! Can you imagine? Natural sparkling water in nature! I've never seen that in my life, so we brought some bottles home. End of the day, we went to Agora, one of the most famous bars in Kumanovo, after eating in a beautiful restaurant.

On Sunday, at the end of the trip, I was supposed to go home in the morning, but my friend's mother asked me to take the last bus, so we could spend more time together. I was so glad to be welcomed to her house, no one else can compete with Macedonian hospitality on this planet.

Thank you, Mario, Damjan, and Stefan, for this nice weekend. Special shoutout to Mario, who was my translator the whole weekend. I will never forget this trip.

Terry Ruart



INTERSLAVIC

AS A TOOL FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Despite saying several times that I should write about other topics than linguistics, I always find myself going back to this topic in one way or another. And this time my niche interests lead me to discover more about Interslavic. For those of you who may be confused about what this language that I'm talking about is, you can for now imagine it as some kind of blend of all the different Slavic languages, or a Slavic Esperanto.

What led me to writing this article is as always some random thoughts that I had, and of course curiosity. Indeed, over the last few years I met or became friends with quite a lot of people from various Slavic countries. And while I've been studying several Slavic languages for almost 5 years, I thought that it would be more interesting to ask people who are directly concerned by them, that is Slavic people.

To be honest, I didn't know much about Interslavic before doing some research for this article. I just knew it existed and imagined it as some kind of Slavic Esperanto, however I don't remember ever seeing or hearing it. So, for me it was very interesting to find some texts in Interslavic. As a non-native speaker of a Slavic language, who has some knowledge in Russian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Ukrainian and Polish, at first glance, I somehow get different impressions depending on if I read it in Latin or Cyrillic. That is in Latin I get Czech/Slovak vibes, however in Cyrillic I get Ukrainian vibes due to the presence of the letter *є*, since I know that it is used in Ukrainian. While I was doing research for this article, I started to think that maybe I should just learn Interslavic instead of digging into different Slavic languages. Obviously this is more of a joke for me, however I will try to keep an eye on news about

Interslavic, because I'm still quite curious about it.

Coming back to my original idea, I had many interrogations about how Slavic people from different areas may feel about a language such as Interslavic. Of course, I was wondering how Interslavic may sound or look like to native speakers of different Slavic languages, but I also had questions related to representation. That is how different languages are represented in Interslavic and if people of different nationalities can feel represented by the same language. Luckily, for this little research I managed to interview speakers of all 3 subgroups of Slavic languages: Czech, Slovak, Polish and Silesian for the Western group; Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian for the Southern group and Russian and Ukrainian for the Eastern group.

It is also important to note that the majority of people that answered my questions speak or have knowledge in at least one other Slavic language. Furthermore, a lot of them also study or are interested in linguistics. There's no doubt that these elements influenced the answers I received in some way. Also, as you will see soon, while most had the same opinion about the purpose of a language such as Interslavic, opinions were divided concerning the impressions that Interslavic gives.

Let's start with the part that was the most surprising and honestly quite amusing to me: how Interslavic is perceived differently by native speakers of different languages. Indeed, I expected that there would be differences, but I didn't expect that the vibes people got would be that contrasted. That is, every Polish speaker that answered my questions and that

read/listened to Interslavic said that they can see a very strong Czech or Slovak influence in it, to the point that Polish isn't that much represented for them. However, when I told this to the Czechs and Slovaks they said that actually, they got more Balkan/Serbian or Russian vibes. Finally, when I asked my Macedonian /Serbian /Croatian acquaintances, generally, they said that on the contrary for them it's more influenced by Central or Eastern Slavic languages, with maybe some South Slavic influence. For example, one of my Macedonian friends said to me about Interslavic that *"it's like Ukrainian if I could actually understand it"*.

For me this division is really funny. Of course, I expected to get different answers but I didn't expect that everyone would get so different impressions of Interslavic, which I guess shows that in some ways every language, or at least every language family is somehow represented. This is even more interesting when considering the results to my questions about the degree of understanding of a short text and a short video. Indeed, the majority of people understood without much difficulty more than 50% of both the text and the video. I believe this is where the fact that most people had knowledge in another Slavic language had the most influence, especially for Macedonians. Indeed Macedonian (like Bulgarian) don't use cases unlike other Slavic languages, as Interslavic uses cases, knowledge of Serbian or another Slavic language is somewhat crucial for understanding Interslavic, in our case.

That's why one could ask themselves how, and most importantly if, native speakers of different languages can feel represented by the same language, or if they can feel their language being represented in Interslavic. Concerning the representation of native languages in Interslavic, the feeling of representation generally stems from words or elements of the different languages being present. Though opinions are divided as despite the fact that features can be recognised it is obviously impossible for one single language to present all the characteristics of around 10 languages. Which means that core parts of what

characterise one language may be missing. Regarding personal identity representation in Interslavic, answers are also somehow divided, while yes most feel represented in some ways, this feeling comes more from the P.O.V of "it will be used not for representation but more for improving communication—for example, replacing English in some form within the Slavic community".

Now that the use of English in international context has already become standard, it is unlikely that Interslavic would be learned for the purpose of replacing it. However, the fact that people of different nationalities can see the potential of Interslavic as a communication tool to avoid English means that it can fulfill more than just some goals (in the fields of education and communication) that may seem utopic at first.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone that helped me write this article by answering my little questions about Interslavic. I hope you enjoyed reading it :)

Chloe Gaschy

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THE FIRST HOME I CHOSE

If you told me five years ago that I'll live in the Balkans for a year, I would probably assume you're joking. Not only Balkans, but Macedonia out of all places – a country I never really heard much about, maybe apart from the characteristic red flag with yellow sun and location on the map learnt in geography classes. Now I know that I missed out, and I'm starting to think it might be the most underrated country in Europe. Fortunately, my decision to take a gap year and volunteer with the European Solidarity Corps program brought me to Skopje, and turned it into the first home I chose myself.

One of my main goals for this volunteering project was to work with social media and content creation, as this is what I want to do in my professional future. In Volunteers Centre Skopje I had a chance to see how it is to be in front of the camera while recording tiktoks, practice my short texts writing skills while preparing social media posts,

and realized that one of my favourite tasks is actually making graphics. Every month I wrote an article for VOICES magazine on topics such as psychology or internet culture. While I love letting my words flow on paper (or, more likely, a Google document), the most fun part was definitely designing the articles while learning a tool completely new to me – Adobe InDesign.

Another part of my work in VCS was organizing and supporting various events. I had an opportunity to share my passion for art crafts by leading workshops about vision boards, zines or working with clay. Sometimes we left the office and helped with local actions such as clean-ups or collecting donations. I always had a space to make my own ideas come true, which resulted in helping at a dog shelter or organizing anime movie nights. A lot of tasks I took on were a mix of things I liked or had experience with and things I've never done before, so I could do what I enjoy while being challenged. A great example would be recording a podcast about Japanese culture – a topic I was passionate about for years, in a form I haven't tried yet.

But volunteering is not only work, even though the line gets blurry sometimes – after all, we work, live and spend our free time with the same people. It definitely taught me, especially as an introvert, how important my alone time is and how to compromise between

socializing and resting. Also, once again, I learnt that not everyone will like you, and you'll not like everyone, but you can find your people if you just stay yourself and not try too hard... however cliché it sounds. I had a chance to meet people similar to me – for example, the ones I crochet with, because it turned out we share the same hobby – and people that are my complete opposite, which definitely broadened my horizons.

For me, volunteering is a space to go out of your comfort zone in a controlled environment. The best example is the distribution of VOICES I did recently. Going through several cafés and bars, asking if we can leave some copies of the magazine there, was the best exposure therapy for social anxiety I've ever done. It's not always comfortable, but it's definitely worth it – I can see how my self-confidence has grown since the beginning of the project.

I also learnt how to enjoy things despite not being good at them. Two new hobbies that fill my free time are baking and doing yoga – both of them I tried for the first time here, but I'm pretty sure they are going to stay with me for longer. I had an opportunity to travel a lot, too, thanks to the strategic location of Macedonia in the middle of the Balkans.

I don't know where my life will take me next, just like I never expected it would bring me to call Skopje 'home'. But I know that in my heart I'll carry all the places I made my own, all the times I laughed so hard I cried, and all the goodbyes that were always just 'see you later'.

Anna Wojdziak





Shtëpia e parë që zgjodha



Nëse do të më thoshit pesë vjet më parë se do të jetoj në Ballkan për një vit, ndoshta do të supozoja se po bëni shaka. Jo vetëm në Ballkan, por edhe Maqedonia nga të gjitha shtetet - një vend për të cilin nuk kam dëgjuar shumë, ndoshta përveç flamurit karakteristik të kuq me diellin e verdhë dhe vendndodhjes në hartë që mësova në orët e gjeografisë. Tani që e di se e kam humbur mundësinë atëherë të dëgjoj më shumë, po filloj të mendoj se mund të jetë vendi më i nënvlerësuar në Evropë. Për fat të mirë, vendimi im për të marrë një vit pushim dhe për të punuar vullnetarisht me programin e Korpusit të Solidaritetit Evropian më solli në Shkup dhe e shndërroi atë në shtëpinë e parë që zgjodha vetë.

Një nga qëllimet e mia kryesore për këtë projekt vullnetarizmi ishte të punoja me mediat sociale dhe krijimin e përmbajtjes, pasi kjo është ajo që dua të bëj në të ardhmen time profesionale. Në Qendrën e Vullnetarëve në Shkup pata mundësinë të shihja se si është të jesh para kamerës ndërsa regjistron TikToks, të praktikoj aftësitë e mia të shkrimit të teksteve të shkurtra ndërsa përgatisja postime në mediat sociale dhe kuptova se një nga detyrat e mia të preferuara është në fakt krijimi i grafikës. Çdo muaj shkruaja një artikull për revistën VOICES mbi tema të tilla si psikologjia ose kultura e internetit. Ndërsa më pëlqen t'i lë fjalët e mia të rrjedhin në letër (ose, më shumë të ngjarë, në një dokument të Google), pjesa më argëtuese ishte padyshim dizajnimi i artikujve ndërsa mësoja një program krejtësisht të ri për mua - Adobe InDesign.

Një pjesë tjetër e punës sime në VCS ishte organizimi dhe mbështetja e eventeve të ndryshme. Pata mundësinë të ndaja pasionin tim për artizanatin duke drejtuar punëtori rreth tabelave të vizionit, revistave zine ose punës me argjilë. Ndonjëherë dilnim nga zyra

dhe ndihmonim me veprime lokale si pastrime ose mbledhje donacionesh. Gjithmonë kisha një hapësirë për të realizuar idetë e mia, gjë që rezultoi të ndihmoj në një strehë qensh dhe në organizimin e netëve të filmave anime. Shumë detyra që mora përsipër ishin një përzierje e gjërave që më pëlqenin ose me të cilat kisha përvojë dhe gjërave që nuk i kisha bërë kurrë më parë, kështu që mund ti bëja ato që më pëlqenin teksa sfidohesha. Një shembull i shkëlqyer do të ishte regjistrimi i një podkasti rreth kulturës japoneze - një temë për të cilën isha e apasionuar prej vitesh, në një mënyrë që nuk e kam provuar ende.

Por vullnetarizmi nuk është vetëm punë, edhe pse ndonjëherë vija ndarëse bëhet e paqartë - në fund të fundit, ne punojmë, jetojmë dhe kalojmë kohën tonë të lirë me të njëjtët njerëz. Më mësoi patjetër, veçanërisht si introverte, sa e rëndësishme është koha ime vetëm dhe si të bëj kompromis midis socializimit dhe pushimit. Gjithashtu, edhe një herë, mësova se jo të gjithë do të të pëlqejnë, dhe nuk do t'i pëlqesh të gjithë, por mund t'i gjej njerëzit e tu nëse qëndron vetvetja dhe nuk përpiqesh shumë... sado klishe që tingëllon. Pata mundësinë të takoja njerëz të ngjashëm me mua - për shembull, ata me të cilët përshtatem tërësisht, sepse doli që ndajmë të njëjtin hobi - dhe njerëz që janë e kundërta ime e plotë, gjë që padyshim që më zgjeroi horizontet.

Për mua, vullnetarizmi është një mundësi për të dalë nga zona juaj e rehatisë në një mjedis të kontrolluar. Shembulli më i mirë është shpërndarja

e VOICES që bëra së fundmi. Të kaloja nëpër disa kafene dhe bare, duke pyetur nëse mund të linim disa kopje të revistës atje, ishte terapia më e mirë e zvogëlimit të ankthit social që kam bërë ndonjëherë. Nuk është gjithmonë e rehatshme, por ia vlen patjetër - mund të shoh dukshëm se si është rritur vetëbesimi im që nga fillimi i projektit.

Gjithashtu mësova si t'i shijoj gjërat pavarësisht se nuk jam e mirë në to. Dy hobi të reja që merrem në kohën e lirë janë gatimi i ëmbëlsirave dhe joga - të dyja i provova për herë të parë këtu, por jam shumë e sigurtë se do të më mbeten në jetën time për më gjatë. Pata edhe mundësinë të udhëtoja shumë, falë vendndodhjes strategjike të Maqedonisë në mes të Ballkanit.

Nuk e di se ku do të më çojë jeta më pas, ashtu siç nuk e prisja kurrë se do të më bënte ta quaj Shkupin 'shtëpi'. Por e di që në zemrën time do të mbaj të gjitha vendet që i kam bërë të miat, të gjitha herët që kam qeshur aq shumë sa kam qarë, dhe të gjitha lamtumirat që gjithmonë ishin thjesht 'shihemi më vonë'.

Anna Wojdziak
Përktheu: Dora Arifi





Macedonia has a long Christian history. It is mentioned even in Acts of the Apostles. As from the start of Christianity this land was under the influence of the religion. Nowadays, in Macedonia, most of the Christian population is Orthodox; there are also Catholics and Protestants but in smaller representation. Across the country, it is easy to find many beautiful Orthodox churches, mostly small and modest in appearance and in characteristics that can be described as a Byzantine style with Balkan taste.

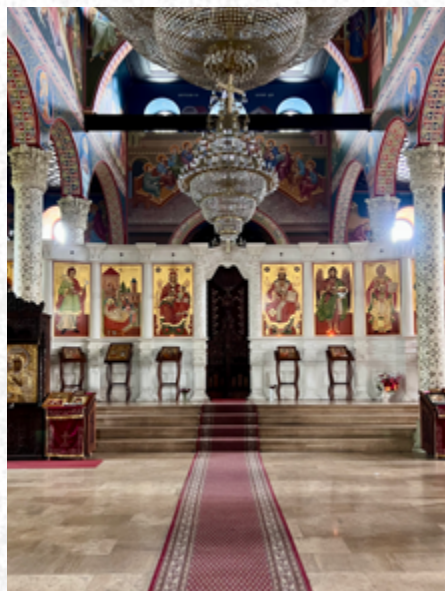
Before coming here, I wanted to explore more about churches, because from my Polish perspective I was expecting to see many big, 'rich' Orthodox churches in Skopje. I was a bit surprised when I discovered that it's harder to find it here.

Macedonian capital has a long history, so it should mean that it has many old buildings. Unfortunately, because of the earthquake in 1963 many of them were destroyed and then communism as an ideology basically against religion didn't allow rebuilding most of them.

One of the most splendid Orthodox churches in Skopje is dedicated to the Nativity of the Theotokos on the left side of Vardar river. Originally, the church was built in mediaeval times but in the beginning of 19th century Macedonians decided to build the new one as a change of law in the Ottoman empire allowed it. The plan of the church is a three-aisled stone basilica with a western extension. The iconostasis is decorated with marble and wood carvings. Unfortunately, due

to the fire in 1944 the church was partly destroyed and then in an earthquake in 1963 it was destroyed completely. When Macedonia gained independence, some of the people that remember the church before destruction were trying to rebuild it. In 2008, the church was rebuilt in the same shape as before 1944.

Mostly, what can be noticed in Skopje churches is that they are small and look inconspicuously from outside. The Ascension of Jesus near Kale in Old Bazaar is a perfect example of this. Outside it is small and looks more casual than a place of worship. Inside it has many murals and incredible iconostasis which is one of the most spectacular in the whole country and is recognized as the best example of nowadays iconography.



Church of the Nativity
of the Theotokos



Church of Ascension of Jesus

Church of St. Clement of Ohrid



Church of St. Joseph



Many churches in Skopje have a history that is connected with times before the Second World War, but one church is an example of modern architecture. The cathedral of Saint Clement of Ohrid which is the biggest one of Macedonian Orthodox Church. The church was built for 18 years and was consecrated in 1990. Architecture of the church refers to traditional Orthodox style but as well is connected with the modern style of the capital.

Even though Catholics represent only 0,75% of the population there are two Catholic churches in Skopje. As it was mentioned before, the earthquake destroyed almost 80% of the buildings and as well the catholic church. That's why Catholics needed

to have some place for worship. They decided to make a small church in a barrack which is dedicated to Saint Joseph, where there is still celebrated liturgy in Eastern and Roman rite.

Because the church of Saint Joseph is small, the Catholic population needed to build something bigger to provide a space for the faithful. In 1977, the building of a new Catholic cathedral in Skopje was finished, as the previous one was completely destroyed in the 60's. The look of the cathedral is different from the other churches in the city. The style is typical for Yugoslavia in the 70's. Compared to Orthodox churches the Catholic cathedral looks more simple and doesn't have connotations with the traditional style like the

Orthodox cathedral of Saint Clement. When I went to research the churches in Skopje, I met a cantor who said that churches in Macedonia are not that spectacular and are mostly modest because what is seen is less important than having strong and spectacular faith. But I think even though there are not many big, breathtaking temples, because of natural disasters or wars, they are in a way beautiful and have important meaning for the community.

Jakub Pokuciński

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WHERE THE CONTINENTS MEET, STORIES BEGIN

The Regions of Türkiye

Imagine a country with a from east to west, north to south tells a different story and leaves a different taste in every corner. Türkiye is not just a geography; it is a living legacy where the past, nature, and people are intertwined.

In this article, we will get to know Türkiye with its seven regions and discover the unique nature, culture and unforgettable flavours of each region. A unique Anatolian tale awaits you on this journey from the raging waves of the Black Sea to the warm beaches of the Mediterranean, from the spice-scented streets of the Southeast to the villages decorated with olive trees of the Aegean.

MARMARA: Gateway to Europe

The Marmara Region is Türkiye's window to Europe and its economic heart. As a region connecting Asia and Europe, it has a great importance in world history. This region, which is a transit point both geographically and culturally, has been the crossroads of civilisations throughout history and has always attracted attention with its rich cuisine and natural beauties.

Istanbul: Capital of Three Empires

The heart of Marmara is, of course, Istanbul. This fascinating city, which was the capital of Eastern Rome, Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire, is an open-air museum bearing traces of every moment of history. From Hagia Sophia to Topkapi Palace, from Galata to Beyoğlu, from the Bosphorus to the Grand Bazaar, this city bears the traces of both east and west. This unique metropolis, where tradition and modernity, crowds and tranquillity meet, is one of the cultural capitals not only of Türkiye but also of the world.

Some Special Dishes of Marmara:
İskender Kebabı (Bursa), Edirne Ciğeri, İnegöl Kofte...





CENTRAL ANATOLIA: A Hidden History and Culture in the Middle of the Steppe

Central Anatolia has a quiet but deep character in the centre of Türkiye with its wide valleys, harsh climate and deep-rooted history. Ankara, the heart of the region, attracts history fans with its Anıtkabir, the symbol of the Republic, and its museums. Cappadocia in Nevşehir attracts worldwide attention with its fairy chimneys, underground cities and balloon tours. Konya stands out with its atmosphere full of spirituality bearing the traces of Mevlana. Eskişehir is a dynamic and modern city with its Porsuk River and young population. Kayseri contributes to both winter tourism with Mount Erciyes and cuisine with its pastrami.

Some Special Dishes of the Central Anatolia:
Yağlama (Kayseri), Etli Ekmek (Konya), Çibörek (Eskişehir)...

MEDITERRANEAN: Where Sun and History Embrace

The Mediterranean Region is a four-season tourism centre with its long coastline, clear sea and historical ruins. The region carries traces of Mediterranean culture on every part. Antalya is the star of the region with its beaches, ancient cities (Side, Aspendos, Olympos) and luxury holiday resorts. Mersin stands out with its seaside and historical spots such as Tarsus. Adana attracts attention with its warm weather and rich cuisine at the foothills of the Taurus Mountains. Hatay is a land of taste and culture where civilizations meet.

Some Special Dishes of the Mediterranean Region:
Adana Kebabı, Maraş Dondurması, Künefe (Hatay)...



AEGEAN: Geography of Blue, Peace and Holiday

The Aegean Region is one of the most preferred holiday destinations in Türkiye. The deep blue bays, villages decorated with stone houses and seaside towns waking up with the sunrise form the soul of the Aegean. This region is a paradise for both those who want to be in touch with nature and those who want to experience the sea, sand and sun trio to the fullest.

The Aegean coast is full of seaside resorts that have become the favourite of local and foreign tourists. Places such as Çeşme, Alaçatı, Didim, Kuşadası, Ayvalık, Foça, Bodrum, Marmaris and Fethiye offer countless alternatives for both fun summer evenings and quiet getaways.

The Aegean fascinates not only with its sea but also with its nature. The hills dotted with olive groves, lavender fields, hiking trails and roads surrounded by ancient cities allow visitors not only to relax but also to explore.

Some Special Dishes of the Aegean:
Yaprak Sarma, Seafoods, Çökertme Kebabı...



SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA: Capital of Flavour and Hospitality

The Southeastern Anatolia Region is a deep cultural centre which blends the past and the present in the ancient lands of Mesopotamia. Gaziantep has entered the flavour heritage of UNESCO with its cuisine. Şanlıurfa, called the City of Prophets, bears the first traces of human history such as Göbeklitepe and Balıklıgöl. Mardin is an open-air museum with its stone houses and Assyrian culture. Diyarbakır preserves its historical texture with its city walls and Hevsel Gardens. Batman leaves an emotional trace with the flooded heritage of Hasankeyf. Adıyaman is world-famous for its giant statues on Mount Nemrut.

Some Special Dishes of Southeast Anatolia:

Çiğköfte, Lahmacun, Antep Baklavası, Antep Tava, Mumbar, Beyran...

BLACK SEA: A Thousand Shades of Green, The Purest State of Nature

The Black Sea Region is Türkiye's greenest, freshest and most colourful geography with the most lively nature. Mountains, plateaus, streams, and misty hills come together here; traditional life and natural beauty intertwine. Trabzon stands out with natural wonders such as Sümela Monastery and Uzungöl. Rize is the favourite of nature lovers with its plateaus, tea gardens and foggy mountain peaks. Artvin is like a hidden paradise with its unique spots such as Karagöl and Macahel. Samsun, as the modern face of the Black Sea, combines historical richness and city life. Amasya smells of history with its Ottoman houses and king tombs on the banks of Yeşilırmak. Tokat is a bridge between Central Anatolia and the Black Sea and is a city of agriculture and stockbreeding with its fertile plains.

Some Special Dishes of the Black Sea Region:

Hamsi Tava, Tokat Kebabı, Kuymak (Trabzon & Rize)



EASTERN ANATOLIA: An Unshakable Culture in a Harsh Geography

The Eastern Anatolia Region is the oldest witness of Anatolia with its high mountains, historical buildings, harsh climate and deep-rooted folk culture. The region, which has the two largest barrages in Türkiye, is of crucial importance for Türkiye. Erzurum is the address of winter tourism with Palandöken Mountain. Van is famous for its breakfast and is worth seeing with Lake Van and Akdamar Island. Kars turns into a white fairy tale land in winter with its Ani Ruins and Çıldır Lake. Ağrı offers epic views with Türkiye's highest peak Mount Ağrı and Ishak Pasha Palace.

Some Special Dishes of the Eastern Anatolia:

Cağ Kebabı (Erzurum), İçli Köfte (Elazığ), Kadayıf Dolması (Erzurum)...

Furkan Ögüt

my muse
 she's smiling at me
 smiling, but still hiding
 she's fast on her feet

sometimes she's sitting
 up there in april's trees
 plucking lilac blossoms
 throwing them at me

a rain of sweetness
 like honey on my lips
 she's painting in the sky
 with cloudy fingertips

and the pictures she's painting
 look like worlds far from ours
 she keeps me dreaming with her whispers
 brushes my cheeks and temples
 with her trembling wisdom whiskers

on other days though
 she seems so far away
 is jumping from branch to branch
 and I can't keep up
 with her childish pace

doesn't she care
 that she makes me angry
 and that I feel alone and so cold?
 still I can't help but think
 that what I feel
 is solely my own fault

because I know
 at times while I am shaking
 and raising piles of doubt
 she's floating down
 my dire waterfall of mind
 screaming drunken words
 right up to me
 please, voice breaks apart
 please, just set me free

Polar Muse

I love and hate her
 my little polar muse
 she's gone and here
 embracing me
 breathing in and out
 my ugly fear

a fear that I know
 to be mostly untrue
 because
 while she's sitting in the trees
 or floating down mindful seas
 while she's painting clouds
 or screaming out
 there's always
 this little tickle of a smile
 while she's licking her whiskers
 while she's making me cry

a smile as sweet and bitter
 as cinnamon and sugar
 a smile
 full of love and rage
 locking herself in and out
 of my golden ribcage

in synch to my heart she's beating
 on walls and tearing on my skin
 my muse
 you're eating
 and feeding me
 from within.

Luzie Ada Welker

A love letter to hiking

The sun on your face, a little breeze squeezing over your ankles and a spectacular view from a mountain top. All of this is what hiking is about. Exploring nature from its most close form of transportation: walking. On a first glance, hiking might sound dull and even stupid. Why would I decide to put physical effort into just walking up a mountain without a goal in it and just enjoy it? Well... as a person that grew up with hiking, loves it and has done hut hikes before, but definitely isn't a morning person and more of a lazy one, let me take you on a little journey.

You are lying in bed in a mountain hut. The scream of a rooster woke you up. Sun is shining through the blades on your face. In your bed, it is still warm although you already feel the breeze of coldness on your face. Short motivation to get up – and then you are standing. Your company is waking up and a continuing fiddling starts. Getting dressed in short trousers even though it's still cold but you know you will regret long ones later, packing up things in your backpack and then having a fast, however rich breakfast from whatever the hut is offering with the sun rays on your face, that just appeared from behind the huge mountain you are looking at. It's an indescribable atmosphere. Between the mountains it's silent and you only hear the rattling of the dishes and a conversation now and then. You know it's gonna be a long exhausting day, but you look forward to it and are either full of energy or still cold from standing up. Maybe your circulation will first start with hiking. Anyway, you make your lunch packet, pack your last things together, go one last time to the toilet, put on your hiking shoes and shoulder your backpack. You are ready for the adventure!

This is what for me a hiking morning might look like. Maybe

at that time I am woken up by an alarm, I might press on snooze and it is a bit more brutal to stand up. Let's keep it realistic. Everything in the morning goes kind of on autopilot because you know what to do and just do it and also you're sometimes a bit too tired to think about it. But I promise you, after the hike you will not regret it. You know a day full of nature, beauty, fun and physical effort is waiting for you.

So then you start hiking. It is still a bit fresh in the morning and on the one hand, you feel a little breeze around your legs, but on the other hand, the sun is already warming up your face. The backpack lies heavy, but somehow comfortable on your hip. The feet are tightly tied in your hiking boots. Then you walk and you don't have to think about anything. No responsibilities (because you don't have service anyway) and just nature and you. Maybe a nice company that you have the funniest and most unfiltered conversations with. On a hike, you literally talk about everything: Do you think this spot is better for peeing or rather the other one? Uhhhh, this mountain looks like a smiley! Have you ever thought about what animal you would be? How are you, for real, at the moment?

Quest on the way:
Crossing a stream
without getting
wet

It can be the most random, deep, philosophical or just fun questions. Hiking together is bonding... because you are alone together in nature which also means a little bit set free of social expectations and boundaries.

My favourite hikes are those where it is first more or less flat to get into the walking, then you have the ascent. Afterwards a little descent and then you are at the new hut. When the ascent comes, the first 10 min are always the worst. You start sweating. Your legs start hurting from the day before. You wish you never did this hike. However, after a few minutes you start to assimilate. You get either used to the sweating or the sweating goes down (still haven't figured out which one is really happening). Your legs remember they actually have muscles and it gets a little bit easier. Don't think it's too easy though - no, it is still a fight, but definitely a nice one worth pushing through.

Feeling your body and bringing it to its borders also has a special beauty in it. You are just focusing on walking, taking the easiest way, breathing or just the ground around your feet. Apart from the obvious benefits regarding sports and being outside, your focus is shifting from your mind to your body. Your mind kind of gets empty and you get calm. No overthinking or second-guessing anymore. Just being comfortable in your own skin. Definitely, hiking is a huge mental health boost for me. During hikes your mind does amazing and sometimes surprising things. Also, on your own you can have the most random thoughts and ideas. Getting out of this overstimulated world is one of the huge benefits hiking has. I myself like to observe the nature around me while hiking. During that time you kind of get forced to use all your senses. The smell of forest or a flower, birds chirping and the cracking of the branches below your feet, the cold air, but warm sun on your skin as well the feeling of the different ground textures below your feet or the tree trunks you are touching. The colour composition of the different trees, mountains, landscapes and flowers as well as the

beautiful forms and full on picture. Noticing butterflies and insects flying by and occasionally maybe seeing a little animal. Sometimes during hikes the view is literally changing with every step, because a new mountain appears. You can't get by without noticing those beauties during hiking. This mindfulness and being aware of your surroundings is exceptional. This observing and being happy about the smallest things you see is gold for your soul. It inspires and enriches you and makes you more grateful.

Then being on top of mountains is a very particular feeling. Apart from admiring the stunning view all around you and being proud of having it made up there, you get more aware of the beauty around you. Also, it gets clear that you are only a small person in a huge wonderful world and don't matter that much, which for me is a really freeing feeling. Being able to look far and being closer to the sky and sun makes you feel very free. And come on, don't tell me you never felt so free on a hike that you run over a meadow just for fun and this full on feeling of freedom and overwhelming beauty around you.

After lunch time, with your lunch packet over an amazing view you are starting the descent. Contrary to popular belief, the descent isn't always easier than the ascent. Sliding down the mountain because it's too steep or falling because you are not that concentrated anymore are common things that also happened to me. Slowly your feet and legs are starting to hurt and you wish you were finally arriving at the new hut.

However, there is one thing that really keeps you alive during those moments: it's called side quests or just fun things on the way. Seeing a little stream next to the way you might want to dip your feet in it. Maybe you will pass some cows or horses on the way that may enjoy a cuddle. Or as on one recent hike of mine we had to pass a crazy amount of little streams without getting wet and little snow fields without sliding. These surprises and refreshing adventures on the way is what makes hiking so diversified and interesting. You never know what you may

encounter and what the way has up its sleeve for you and you look forward to the challenge and fun it will give you. Nevertheless, you have to keep in mind that getting dirty or wet is a secret goal of hiking and a hike without getting a tiny bit dirty is missing something.

Your hike is slowly getting to an end now and now your legs and feet are hurting. The sun is not that strong anymore and a comfy, silent and melancholic atmosphere starts appearing. A few final steps and you arrived at the new hut. Taking off your hiking shoes feels like the biggest relief in your life and you are sitting down on your bed. You go shower or just change and suddenly feel fresh again. Your body feels very tired, but in a good and satisfying way at the same time, because you have accomplished a lot that day. It's a nice and comfortable feeling. During dinner time, you share your stories with the other hikers and play cards. You enjoy the mountain air, fall with a positive exhaustion in your bed and look forward to your next hiking day. Can you understand why I love hiking so much? Of course, in this article I am romanticising a bit (e.g. there could be bad weather which makes the physical effort and pushing through part much more the main character). Nevertheless, the beauties I am describing are true. The experiencing of nature, the shutting off of society and availability, the most fun and crazy stories and conversations and the beauty of nature. All this paired, of course, with physical activity, sweat and a bit of dirtiness together is hiking and for me it's (mostly) beautiful.

Maike Seuffert

cute animals
you may
encounter



Galapagos Islands

A diverse destination
with the rarest species
in the world



We all have probably heard of these islands when David Attenborough, a famous biologist, made a series about them—it was one of his most popular series since these islands had one of the rarest species of fauna and flora.

What exactly does this island uncover and why is it so special?

Location of Galapagos Islands

The location of these islands itself offers a rocky surface as a consequence of many volcanic eruptions in the past. These volcanic activities and the locality of the islands itself make it a perfect habitat for many rare species like the giant tortoises, marine and land iguana, Galapagos sea lion, blue-footed booby and many more species that can only be found on these islands.

There are in total 19 islands that are in the Pacific Ocean thousands kilometers from the country Ecuador.

Marine iguanas

These species are the only species of lizards that have the ability to swim and live in the oceans. Not only that—the marine iguanas can only be found on the Galapagos Islands. They may seem as scary creatures with their big eyes, sharp claws, and spikes on their back but in fact they are social creatures and very friendly to humans. Their favorite food is the sea algae that they search for very deep into the waters and can even stay up to 30 minutes underwater!

Marine iguanas can also change their colours during the breeding seasons to red, green and even turquoise, similarly like the chameleons. They can be very fast in the water reaching up to 30 kms per hour, which is very impressive for a lizard! When they get a little



exhausted from the speedy swims they just lay on the rocky shores and enjoy the sun while absorbing the light with their dark skin. Isn't that so pleasant?

Galapagos giant tortoise

There are many species of these giant tortoises on the Galapagos Islands, which arrived on the islands around three millions of years ago. They are very popular because of their enormous sizes which are nowhere seen except on these islands. You may be familiar with the 100-year old tortoise George that met David Attenborough—that was the last living representative of the Pinta island species.

The giant tortoises are very chill animals that just love to eat lots of vegetation. Their big necks allow them to reach high-growing plants and survive in these conditions. They love to stay in the mud for a while as it helps them keep an optimal temperature during the biggest heats of the day.

The Galapagos giant tortoises are highly protected due to their near extinction in the past centuries—they were a source of food and material to the humans and a big number of them were killed. Luckily, now they are under protection by many laws and are a part of the Galapagos National Park.

Blue-footed booby

This funny named sea bird really does have blue feet which is very unusual in nature.

These species live mainly in South America down to the main breeding place—the Galapagos Islands. What is really interesting about this bird is that the more intense blue colour on their feet the male birds have, the higher the chances of them getting a female partner.

Their diet mainly consists of different types of fish that they catch while throwing themselves into the waters.

They also do not make nests like any other birds—actually, they just lay their eggs on the ground.

During the breeding season, male boobies do really fun dances and rituals using their feet to attract the females. The dance is about spreading the wings, tapping their beaks and feet, and finally, whistling.

When humans firstly had contact with this species they thought of them as silly and clumsy birds, as in Spanish “bobo” means stupid. In fact, these are really intelligent birds that can manage to live in very difficult conditions.

The Galapagos Islands show us a whole new dimension of life that thrives there and day by day we get more and more fascinated by the rare species that live on the islands, as well as their unique capabilities and features. Although there are numerous laws for protection and national parks for these islands, it's important to educate others about their value—especially when Charles Darwin theory of evolution was based on these islands.

They are literal treasures that are our and the future generations responsibility to protect and ensure that these islands are in safe hands as they offer extraordinary eco-systems.

Lara Mihajlovikj



Sources:

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Blue-footed booby - Galapagos Conservation Trust

Усовршување на несовршеноста

Кога ја зедев мојата прва книга од Џејн Остин, не се сомневав во што навлегувам. Да ви ја доловам ситуацијата, бев изгубена осмоодделенка која ја откри англиската литература на 19.тиот век откако случајно ја зедев „Џејн Ејр“ во детската библиотека две години претходно. Па така, почнав да го разбирам општествениот опсег и големата духовитост во книгата на Остин која стана мојот омилен роман на сите времиња, број еден и роман кој одново и одново би го земала. Уште помалку знаев за начините на кои оваа книга ќе се залепи и ќе расте на мене. Можеби се прашувате која книга би можела да има таква моќ врз нечие срце. Одговорот е евидентен - тоа е ремек делото на Остин од 1815 за истражувањето на себеси и карактерот, перфектната мешавина на љубов и комедија или наједноставно - Ема.

Џејн Остин е несомнено една од најиконските и најсаканите авторки од ерата на Регентството. Шесте романи кои ги има објавено не само што се вбројуваат меѓу најважните дела

на светската книжевност, туку најважно од сè – и денес се наоѓаат на листите со омилен книги на безброј љубители на литературата. Нејзините книги можеби се стари - сепак, повеќе од 200 години имаат поминато откако е објавена нејзината прва книга во 1811, но приказните кои ги раскажува, интригантните ликови кои ги илустрира и острата духовитост и потсмет кои незабележливо ги проткајува стануваат безвременски. Едноставната, но сепак уникатна причина поради која таа го задржува своето место во срцата на читателите е дека постои нешто суштински човечко и длабоко поврзливо на страниците на секој роман на Остин. Иако нејзините книги претставуваат неверојатно детална слика на одредено време, место и луѓе – конкретно, провинциската виша класа во Англија од почетокот на деветнаесеттиот век – делата на Џејн Остин имаат извесен степен на универзалност. Ова особено важи кога станува збор за нејзиниот роман „Ема“.

Ова богатство за природата на човечките суштества и врските изненадувачки се фокусираат околу млада жена која се вика Ема. Верувајќи дека има посебен талент за сврзувања, насловната хероина

почнува да си поигрува со судбините на нејзините мал-граѓани, само за да се најде себеси безнадежно заплеткана помеѓу хаотичните љубовни и пријателски сврзувања. Попатно, Ема започнува патување на самооткривање и промена, кое нараторката го навестува уште на првите страници, но нашата омилена „згодна, паметна и богата“ хероина нема никаква шанса да го предвиди. На прв поглед, оваа приказна не изгледа како нешто особено уникатно. Но всушност, генијалноста не лежи ниту во привлечноста на луксузот, ниту во суровоста на судбината, туку во едноставноста и поврзливоста, кои ѝ овозможуваат да биде применлива низ различни времиња и места.

Во „Ема“, истоимената ќерка на богат хипохондрик не е толку совршена колку што таа самата и поголемиот дел од луѓето околу неа мислат. Под нејзиниот шарм и надворешна убавина се крие суетна и манипулативна личност, која со презир гледа на луѓе што не ги исполнуваат нејзините високи стандарди. Поради својата себичност, Ема не успева да

ги разбере чувствата на другите, што е една од главните причини за хаосот што го предизвикува во инаку мирниот Хајбери. Сепак, низ целата приказна, читателот лесно е во искушение да ја засака хероината – не и покрај нејзините мани, туку поради нив. Токму нејзината очигледна несовршеност, нејзиното отелотворување на многу нешта што ѝ се спротивни на високите и возвишени идеали наметнати на жените во тоа време, ја прават човечка, а нејзините искуства – длабоко поврзливи. Зашто, да бидеме искрени – кој не доживеал своја „Ема-момент“ на себичност и обид со сите средства да ја постигне својата цел? Ема е лик што прави грешки во своите романтични и платонски врски, доживува несигурност, и минува низ очигледни неуспеси. Во тој смисол, таа се соочува со предизвиците кои животот неизбежно ги носи, правејќи ја нашата омилена хероина колку што е можно почовечна во рамките на фикцијата. Но, она што ја прави нејзината приказна толку извонредна е реакцијата на Ема на сите неприлики со кои се соочува: Иако прави низа грешки и се држи до својата надворешна слика до последен момент, таа сепак стигнува до самоспознавање и е подготвена да се промени, како и да го поправи нередот што го предизвикала. Затоа, извонредната трансформација на ликот на Ема нè учи на некои од најважните животни лекции: несовршеноста е човечка, но никогаш не е доцна да се промениме на подобро – иако процесот може да биде тежок, секогаш вреди.

Паралелно со приказната на Ема, добиваме и увид во уште една важна тема: вистината секогаш е обоена со лични предрасуди, а чувствата се единственото нешто на кое можеме да се потпреме кога се движиме низ овој заплеткан свет на односи. Овие идеи стануваат особено

очигледни во уверувањето на Ема дека само со нејзината памет и спојувачки вештини, нејзината нова – и признаено наивна – пријателка Харит може да најде достоинствен партнер. Дури ни најдобрата намера со која таа му пристапува на овој проект не може да ја компензира нејзината преценетост и мешање во вистинските чувства. Поради овие погрешни уверувања, обидите на Ема за спојување се претвораат во катастрофа и нанесуваат повеќе штета отколку корист. Но, хероината не е единствената што паѓа во стапцата на мешање лични убедувања со вистината. Земајќи го примерот на г-дин Хајтли, соседот и долгогодишен пријател на семејството Вудхаус: Тој одамна е вљубен во една посебна личност, но наместо да ги следи искрените чувства, пребрзо носи заклучоци и дозволува да биде заведуван од лични предрасуди, што предизвикува низа недоразбирања и уште повеќе го усложнува љубовниот хаос во Хајбери. Но „Ема“ не би била роман на Џејн Остин ако авторката не нè водеше – преку своите ликови – до моментот на просветлување и разбирање: моментот кога се разоткрива вистинската генијалност на нејзиното пишување. Во завршните поглавја исполнети со признанија и разрешувања, Остин ја изразува идејата за променлива вистина не само имплицитно преку тоа што ликовите ја наоѓаат среќата по искрен разговор за своите чувства, туку и експлицитно преку една извонредна мисла: „Ретко, многу ретко целосната вистина ѝ припаѓа на некое човечко признание; ретко може да се случи нешто да не е малку замаскирано или погрешно разбрано; но, како во овој случај, иако однесувањето е погрешно, чувствата не се – тоа можеби и не е толку важно.“

Со „Ема“, Џејн Остин повторно нè носи на патување полно со самоогледување и саморефлексија – нешто што е толку типично за нејзиното творештво. Низ низа теми кои нејзините ликови ги истражуваат по текот на заплетот,

Остин создава посебна блискост преку тоа што токму универзалните човечки искуства се темел на секоја вешто изградена карактерна линија. Таа блискост е особено присутна во „Ема“, бидејќи авторката нè мами да веруваме дека хероината е совршена – само за подоцна заедно со неа да откриеме дека вистината е сосема поинаква. Не затоа што не постојат навестувања – туку затоа што се добро скриени при прв поглед, а смешно очигледни при втор. На тој начин, не само Ема како лик е принудена да се запраша колку навистина се познава себеси и да открие дека растењето и учењето се процес што трае цел живот – туку и читателот минува низ сличен процес. Затоа, не само „Ема“ како книга, туку и Ема како лик се навистина посебни и уникатни. Несовршеноста и мани ја прават оваа хероина извонредна – особено имајќи го предвид времето кога книгата е создадена. Нејзините постапки и карактер лесно можат да нè наведат да ја видиме како некој вид антихероина, но развојот што го доживува ја прави длабоко човечка, па дури и херојска.

Токму како и нејзината насловна хероина, и овој прекрасен роман не е без свои недостатоци – тој е јасно поставен во време и простор што се разликуваат од денешниот свет. Но, „Ема“ е колку што може да биде блиску до совршенство – книга за човечноста на несовршеноста и за субјективноста на вистината, која објективно успева да биде величествена. Во тој дух, му посакувам на секого да го доживее истото чувство што го имав кога за првпат ја отворив оваа ремек-дело: „Тогаш го испитав сопственото срце. И таму беше – ти. Никогаш, не плашам, да се отстрани.“

Софија Абер

Превод: Марина Даниловска

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?

- You can write in English, Macedonian and Albanian
- You don't need to be pro, VOICES is **open for everyone!**
- Writing to the magazine is **voluntary**
- We can provide you with a **certificate** if you become a writer for VOICES magazine





Our monthly magazine has a very simple, yet powerful, mission - to be the voice of youth. And how do we do that?

We encourage young people to take an active part in today's society through journalism and designing by giving them a platform to express themselves. VOICES is produced in Skopje, Macedonia, and published online every month and four times per year as a printed edition.

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