The EU from Post-War Times until Today

Reflections on the Union's Difficulties in Establishing Its Project of the Good Society

by Silke Rief

The past elections of the Union's parliament have cast dark shadows on the European Union sky. The voter turnout has been lower than ever before and culminated in a new wave of far right and radical left. Considerable changes and alarming differences are preoccupying European leaderships nowadays and are confronting them with serious problems.

The European Union, a masterpiece once having no equal, has been shaken to its foundations. More than five years after the global financial crisis, Europe is still struggling against the negative economic repercussions and the political volatility that goes hand in hand with it.

When the financial crisis hit half a decade ago, many social advocates of social issues believed that their time had finally come. However, today it's just the truth to say that the 'social democratic moment' they've been struggling for has not happened yet. The problems of the financial sector also corresponded with a major deficiency in the construction of the Euro. What had started as a financial crisis became a crisis of the complete Eurozone and as a result strengthened the displeasure of many EU-citizens. So why is this the case and what does this mean for the future of the European Union in its foundation and the social structure behind? In order to give a proper answer to these questions, the development of the European social situation in the decades before the economic crisis has to be understood.

Having a look at Europe's fateful history of the past century makes it a lot easier to understand the EU that is often heavily criticised. Two World Wars and the following Great Depression have severely shattered European citizen's hope for stability and certainty. Prevailing Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism had transformed Europe to a centre of brutality and violence. Neither Islamic extremists, China nor other influential countries had caused or experienced similar destroying events as Europe. Indeed, Europe at the time from the beginning 20th century to the end of WWII can be considered as the continent that disrupted even global peace. The aftermath of those disastrous happenings has burnt itself deep inside the consciousness of post-war European society.

At its beginnings, the essence of the European Union was merely economically motivated. The EU has its origins in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), established in 1951. Its main purpose was to solve financial and political problems and to keep stability inside the Union. Soon, it turned out to be more than merely a frame for economic development and a political set of rules and regulations. In 1957, step by step, the 'EU founding-fathers' invented the idea of a community of people, and not just states and administrations, in order to make peace an irreversible feature of Europe. More and more states that had fought bloody wars or were separated by ideological divisions before started to join the single entity. The original idea of the EU's constitution was given a concrete shape through the inter-connected process of economic integration and geographical enlargement. The international community welcomed the emergence of such a European unity promising their member states to profit from equal rules of law, fundamental civic and political freedoms as well as human rights. The extraordinarily long period of peace that the continent has enjoyed after the Second World War is enough to prove that the project for European unity has been a remarkable success. The plan of an organization of unity and at the same time diversity seemed to be a monument and reawakened hope for the development and stability in the heads and hearts of the people.

This motto is still fundamental to the European project today even though the reality nowadays is confronted with geopolitical and cultural problems. The EU has all along been through turbulent cycles of deepening and broadening: first the core states, then Spain, Portugal, Greece, then after the fall of the Berlin Wall, membership was extended to Central and Eastern European States. But behind all the hard and complex transitions European leaders were eager and had a vision to move the European ideal forward through the policy of expanding and consolidating the Union.

In this vision of a united European Union stands at the pinnacle an integrated Europe with a single market subject to standard rules and a shared framework of human rights and justice. Power and major authority are still an important points in this variety of nations, cultures and economics, but the idea of a flourishing commitment of all member states within this all-embracing system is the key factor. No black or white nation, no right or wrong system, but a cosmopolitan structure where all member states can exist together, accepting European Union rules and human rights. On the other hand, they can profit from social justice, democratic rights and open markets and, related to that, new perspectives and future prospects.
international

The European Union’s prime time in implementing this mission is inextricably linked to the post-war boom. In an exemplary manner institutions were built, new economic sectors developed and the constant growth of the labour market created wealth and optimistic mood between the population and leading heads. Some tense relations could be pushed aside by the overwhelming evidence of success. The idea was not to lose this power in a common governing structure where it was possible to trump national states in critical areas, and where sovereignty was tied in responsible and appropriate ways. This period of European mutual dependency created the development of the EU as a common political structure that recognized diversity and difference under a shared instruction of law and regulations. This flagship project was bound to success for a long time and after years of promising fortune the Euro was invented as the united currency inside the European Union. The Euro was primarily built to form a single market and to avoid exchange rate problems. It provided price transparency, price stability, and low interest rates. It seemed that the EU politicians could now reap the fruits of their labour – they had built a strong Europe in a land of multiple states.

The constant increase of economic pressures at the turn of the 21st century was temporarily hidden behind the constant efforts of the US, the EU and China to reduce the speed of this uncontrollable economic growth. The economic success of the past years had surpassed all the expectations of global powers. Furthermore, especially the European Union was dazzled by their own shine of triumph, but the crash was never far behind. The collapse of Lehman Brothers was the igniting spark that kindled the light of the global financial crisis which was called the North Atlantic Financial Crisis. But as time went on it was clear enough that this was too easy a characterisation and that many of the countries of the European Union were deeply involved in the malpractices and offences of investment banking, subprime mortgages, excessive leveraging, and complex and unstable financial instruments. Moreover, the European Union governing structures, which were once seen as a perfect balance between leaders and nations, looked suddenly weak and contestable. The EU had made a big mistake with momentous consequences. They had built a multinational state with a single currency – but without wider fiscal and monetary controls. A global project with such dimensions and a leadership lack of strict regulations in financial matters was like sitting on a powder keg. Very soon the European Union was deeply involved in the global financial crisis and had to admit self-made grave mistakes. For the first time, the stroke of a genius as it was once considered was struggling and began to waver at its foundations.

Against this background, the question of European identity is once more reflected in a very powerful way. The questions now arise: who are we Europeans? What does it mean to be European after the World War and have all the virtuous ideals been forgotten? Can European identity, if there is any, survive the global financial crisis? Against this background, questionable signs of increasing social disintegration and a comeback of nationalist view have emerged: anti-Semitism, racism and far-right politics are being re-established as the dark side of European culture. The financial crisis strengthened the anyhow prevailing tensions among member states, which furthermore were deteriorated by the weakened monetary and fiscal position of several of them. The EU is now under pressure to act. The question now is if the leading powers are able to stabilise the European economy by harmonising social imbalances. Of course, if the recent gentle growth of economy could be maintained, the tense relations between the governments and their citizens could also be eased, but for the worst-hit states the way back to a reasonable recovery will be lengthy and hard.

However, the financial crisis has uncovered fundamental questions about identity and politics. European culture, like all cultures before, cannot simply be the result of elite efforts. It has to be built on a foundation of common values and beliefs, which have to be treated carefully over the long term. There were opportunities to anchor this basic ideas in the post-war-period but they were maybe insufficiently realized. It was easier for the leaders of Germany and France, along with their allies, to shape Europe in their own image and ideas. European governance was always a compromise between the interests of its elite powers and scarcely the product of extensive foresighted communication between peoples. The great aims of European cultural integration were especially projects of infrastructure, science and institution building. These are important, there’s no question about it, but they do not implicate the delicate core of the complex patterns of national cultures.

It remains one of Europe’s greatest achievements to have created a remarkable peace where there was once only devastation and war. The attempt to create common political structures somehow rooted in human rights and rule of law remains one of the most inspiring political projects in a global world risked by the irreconcilable differences between globalisation and nationalism. The basic idea of unity and diversity is crumbling in front of financial instability and political unrest. Citizens are understandably disappointed and sceptical about the Union’s leaderships. It will be difficult for EU supporters to earn back votes and bring back trust and confidence to the European population. In an era where serious global problems are predominating, the only right way straightforward is to communicate and to deal with those challenges. Temporary prevailing threats have to be faced by the governance and dealt with caution and concern before they get again out of hand. Only a responsible commitment to principles and procedures can create peace, unity and freedom in a diverse world. These are the predominant pillars of human rights and a modern European democracy.

The European Union – Unifying Force or struggling to survive?

The New Cold War

The Clash of East and West in Ukraine

by Patrick König

Since the deposition of the Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych in February, the world is at risk of entering a new period of resentment between the east and the west. In recent weeks, some politicians even said that Putin wants World War III. What is it that Russia tries to achieve in this country where the west, especially the United States and Germany, so hesitant to do anything about it?

The news are filled with pictures from Ukraine these days. Tanks rolling across the street, burning roadblocks and reports of people killed appear in newspapers every day, at least in Europe. In America, this crisis is ignored for the most part. On CNN, the search for the missing plane MH370 seems to be more important.

Obama’s strategy is basically to render Russia a pariah state by only keeping up the basic agreements about the mutual control of their nuclear missiles, but otherwise ignoring it. Obama is
Police in the Crimea are still accusing Russia for having started off the conflict and they keep doing this conflict gets out of control. The recent events show that Russia is very good at finding weak spots in the west. There isn’t really anything that can be done about the Russian aggression.

Even if Russia invaded Ukraine with its entire military force, there wouldn’t be any possibility to intervene without risking an actual war with Russia which the west is not willing to do. All we can do is sit and wait and maybe toss some potatoes on the stage.

The Hague. In consequence of Russia’s behavior in the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, the union of the mightiest countries in the world excluded Russia from the G8. The expulsion was decided unanimously during a meeting in The Hague on the 24th of April 2014.

The Group of Eight (G8) is a conference of the 8 biggest and most powerful industrial nations in the world: France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, the US and former Russia. However, that belongs to the past. Now the G8 has one member less and is called G7, after Russia was, in a manner of speaking, kicked out of this amalgamation.

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The Crimea Crisis was the beginning. The longstanding conflict between the autonomous Republic of Crimea, the Ukraine and Russia has culminated in February 2014 and spread from Crimea all over the Ukraine. It is understood that the majority of Crimea’s citizens have voted to cooperate with the Russian Federation in order to build a union. Because of the Ukrainian’s unstable financial situation at the moment, many Crimeans hope to profit from this union. For example, retirement annuity is not paid out completely because of the impending national bankruptcy. Russians’ per-capita income is even more than three times higher in comparison to the income of a person from Crimea.

Not only critics, but also independent journalists and locals reported that the election turnout was only about 30-50% and only 50-60% of this low turnout voted “yes”. One day later, an application for membership was put in, which was signed on the 18th of March by Wladimir Wladomirovitsch Putin. Since the 21st of March, when the contract got officially valid, the Republic of Crimea is part of the Russian Federation – at least according to Russia’s opinion. Not only the Ukraine doesn’t accept this questionable action, but even the UN titled this secession illegal and not tolerable.

The exclusion from this meaningful conference tightened the relation of Russia to the other leading industrial nations which take part in the G8. Since the 25th of March 2014 the G8 is officially the G7. “We have decided to fault Russia’s participation and we aspire that the seven leading nations assemble without Russia”, said France’s state secretary Laurent Fabius. Also, the intended meeting in Sotschi this month won’t take place there, but in Brussels instead. The Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, reacted ostentatiously composed.

"The G8 is an informal club, with no formal membership, so no one can be expelled from it. If our western partners believe that such format is no longer needed, so be it. We aren’t clinging for that format and we won’t see a big problem if there are no such meetings for a year, or a year and a half," said Lavrov. He added that from now on, all appreciable questions will be answered in the G20. The G20 is formed by the 20 most important industrial and emerging nations of the world.

The seven heads of state condemn Putin’s handling with the crisis in the Ukraine fiercely and a re-entry for Russia in the G8 is no matter at the moment, emphasized the union of the G7, which incorporated Russia 16 years ago, in 1998, when the G7 became the G8 for the very first time.
Armed men attacked a checkpoint near Sloviansk. It is still unclear who shot at whom. However, the incident could initiate an escalation again. Moscow talks about an infringement of the Geneva Convention. Besides, pro-Russian forces have imposed a night curfew now.

Sloviansk / Kiev - The Easter holidays should have been peaceful days in Eastern Ukraine. At least that is what the Kiev government announced. During this time there will be no force against the pro-Russian occupiers. However, the truce was broken on Sunday morning: Moscow-loyal militias were shot at a roadblock near Sloviansk around 3 o’clock in the morning.

The background of the action is still not clarified. Also there is uncertainty about the number of victims. While Russian media quickly reported about five dead persons, three separatists and two attackers, a leader of the pro-Russian militias reported us four casualties. The Ukrainian interior ministry stated one dead at least and three wounded.

Pictures of the compromised checkpoint show burnt cars with bullet holes in the doors. Furthermore, according to reports of tv and the BBC, new dollar bills and identifications of the Right Sector had been found on site. Moreover, a business card with the name of its leader, Dmytro Yarosh, appeared in Russian TV pictures. However, Right Sector spokesman Artyom Skoropadsky told the BBC the group had nothing to do with the shooting.

The incident is interpreted differently: The interior ministry in Kiev speaks of an "armed conflict" between two citizen groups, without going into details. The backgrounds need to be clarified, according to a statement. It would seem that the situation in the city is not under control. Thus, pro-Russian uniformed people had handed out 400 weapons to citizens after the occupation of the local police station. "This leads to death and casualties," the communication goes on to state.

Pro-Russian fighters blame the group Right Sector for the deed. The ultra-nationalists were involved in the overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovych in February. Also, the leader of the militia Ponomariov spoke out at a press conference. He asked the Russian government to send peacekeeping troops into the region to protect people from the National Guard and the Right Sector. According to the radio station Voice of Russia he said, "You kill our brothers. Only Russia can protect the city." Moreover, he asked for weapons and food.

Besides, Ponomariov imposed a curfew on Sloviansk, according to the AFP news agency. Between midnight and six o’clock in the morning it is forbidden to go out onto the streets. The rule will come into effect on Sunday, said the self-proclaimed mayor. A loudspeaker van drove through the city to proclaim the curfew.

The Russian foreign ministry called the shooting on Sunday a "provocation" and says that "the incident shows the lack of willingness of the authorities in Kiev, to keep nationalists and extremists under control and disarm them". According to the ministry, an undisclosed number of innocent civilians were killed in an attack by armed men from the Right Sector near Sloviansk. Citizens in Sloviansk might have ensured aerial photographs and symbols of the Right Sector of the overwhelmed attackers. Moscow accuses Ukraine to breach the Geneva agreement which should defuse the crisis. A spokesman for the accused ultra-nationalists rejected all accusations. He blamed Russian special forces for the attack.

Geneva Convention already endangered?

Actually, the Geneva Convention should lead to a de-escalation of the situation in the eastern Ukraine. On Thursday, the U.S., the EU, Russia and the Ukraine had agreed in Geneva that illegal armed groups have to be disarmed and occupied public buildings have to be released. According to the BBC’s reporter James Reynolds, who is currently in Donetsk (Ukraine), the Geneva deal is already in trouble and events in Sloviansk will do little to change that.

The heavily armed pro-Russian occupiers have opposed this agreement so far, however, and have held out in the public institutions. They communicated that Russia’s significance on the Geneva Convention was not binding for them. The occupiers have several demands, like a referendum on the connection of the eastern Ukraine to Russia and the evacuation of the pro-Western forces who have occupied the Independence Square in Kiev since November. Only if these conditions are met, they will vacate the occupied buildings, so says the statement of the pro-Russian protesters.

Warning of the threat of sanctions

Germany’s foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier warned against fueling the Ukraine conflict with threats of sanctions against Russia. German defense minister Ursula von der Leyen has threatened Russia with economic sanctions recently. Even the USA have announced tougher measures for Russia in case that the government in Moscow should not abide by the Geneva agreement for the resolution of the Ukraine crisis. On Saturday, Russia has also admitted for the first time, to have reinforced the troops at the frontier of the Ukraine, because of the situation in the east of the country. So far, the government in Moscow had always spoken of routine exercises.

Gun Control and the Tradition of Firearms in the US

Guns and the United States – these two terms often collocate. The U.S. is one of the most gun-focused countries on our planet. The question is why and how does this affect the inhabitants. The controversial topic of gun control is often discussed within the U.S. and also in foreign countries.

Many Americans justify the pos-
session of firearms and guns with their constitutional right or the factor of safety and protection. The stereotypical American wants to protect himself and his family without any need to call the police in a situation of trouble. Additionally, the Bill of Rights supports this behavior and the idea of possessing guns.

The Bill of Rights, which was released in the year 1791, contains the passage that every American has the right to “keep and bear arms”. The Second Amendment was originally made for the inhabitants of early America to protect themselves, because of the non-existing executive. In those days there was a lack of security and people were dependent on their self-defense.

Not only protection was a reason for the people to carry firearms, but also for the purpose of hunting possessing guns was inevitable. Nowadays, there is no need to go hunting, because everyone in the U.S. has access to a supermarket, where they can buy meat without shooting it themselves. In these days hunting is more seen as a sport and is a tradition many Americans practice. But the United States are not the only country, which has a big hunting tradition. Countries like Canada or even Germany and Austria have similar traditions.

One of the main differences between the U.S. and other states is that you are allowed to keep as many guns as you want in your house. In Germany or Austria the restrictions for gun possession are stricter. If you want to keep guns in your house, you have to put them in a special gun-locker, which has to be locked up.

These restrictions protect children to take the weapon of their parents. Especially the low regulations relating to the storage of weapons is often criticized by opponents.

Another example for the danger of keeping arms without an adequate locking-system, is the story of six-year-old Dedric Darnell Owens. This young boy took the gun of his uncle, brought it to school and shot a little girl, called Kayla Rolland, dead. During this accident, the mother of the young boy was at work and could not take care of her son. The uncle had a Davis Industries P-32, 32 caliber handgun, at his home - unlocked.

Not only accidents in households can occur. Also massacres like the rampage in Columbine High School are more likely to happen, when children or teenagers are able to steal or buy guns and ammunition. America is stamped by these terrorist attacks and suffers under the aftermaths of these. The United States of America are on top of the death-shooting list worldwide. About thirty thousand deaths a year, including suicide, murder and accidents are registered in the country of boundless opportunities.

Liberty is a very strong ideal of the United States. But the fact that this liberty can cause many problems is ignored very often. When mentally ill people have the opportunity to buy guns, the function of this value is ignored. Another harrowing fact is that while 311 million people living in the U.S. (including children) there are about 300 million firearms in circulation. "Guns don’t kill people. Americans do.”

This quotation of Michael Moore in 2013 is a satire of the NRA slogan “Guns don’t kill people, People do.”, which was said by the former president of the National Rifle Association Charlton Heston. He uses this quote to support the ideals of their organization, which is pro gun and wants to keep the freedom of bearing them without any restrictions.

Their interpretation of the Bill of Rights is that every American has the responsibility to protect his family by possessing a gun. This appeal glorifies self-appointed justice in a hidden way. The question about the need of firearms is always disputable, but the amount of weapons in the U.S. is doubtful and shows that their possession is totally overrated.

The inhabitants adhere on their American Dream and are proud of their history, but beside the patriotism they forget, which laws are still necessary and which could be modernized. Many critics share the opinion that Americans are frightened, which comes from the pressure and the reports of the media. When you put a country under fear, they are more likely to lose their trust in their fellows and feel the need to be prepared in a situation of danger.

Recapitulatory is to be realised that there would be less crimes, when the purchase of weapons would not be as easy as it is at the moment, because if people in general have less opportunities to get a gun, maybe it would reduce the number of deaths by shooting. Every adult has the responsibility to protect his children and to be carefully related to firearms. If there would be better restrictions and a higher responsible attitude towards arms, the violence could be reduced. To support this, the government has to initiate the first steps by making it harder to get a gun license and ammunition.

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**WO≠MAN?**

Transgender Identities in Europe

by Anna Krepper

Is it a woman with beard, a man with long hair or just a reduced "It"?

The names differed but the question remained the same: What or who is she/he presenting? We are certainly talking about Conchita Wurst, the Austrian Eurovision Song Contest winner and latest role model of the worldwide transgender scene.

When Austria decided to send Conchita as their representative to the Eurovision Song Contest, the world was shouting on the one hand in joy and on the other hand in dismay. At that point the question was raised, why one single performance of a man in a dress or a woman with a beard could get the power to divide nations. Some only judged the voice in a positive or negative way, but others considered her performance as a protest against the system. While bearded women in circus had nearly become usual and strangeness is à la mode nowadays, it seems incomprehensible why Conchita is seen as such an unusual and odd phenomenon.

*After so many years we really should have learned from our mistakes and try to start tolerance now because variety is the spice of life," suggests Anna Krepper.*

First of all to understand the term “transgender” it is necessary to split it up in “trans”, which stands for “beyond something”, and “gender”, the “sexual identity in a
The term 'populism' has had a negative connotation since the end of the Cold War.

Populism in Europe

How political debauchers fool society

by Theresa Chin

After I had seen the documentary Populismus in Europa - Eine europäische Krankheit (Populism in Europe - An European Disease; translation by C.T.) on 14th May this year, my curiosity about the topic grew. The term political debauchers goes back to Susanna Berndt and her inspiring book written in 2001 Die neuen Verführer (The new Debauchers; translation by C.T.).

The definition of populism has had a negative connotation since the end of the Cold War. The most important characteristics are the closeness to the people and the anti-elite attitude. Not bad at all, but on closer inspection demagogues turn out to be deceivers who contribute to confusion instead of the solution to a problem.

Within the European area, the populists have mainly belonged to right-wing parties. Beppe Grillo’s Five Star Movement, to make quite a contrast, is a left orientated party and therewith constitutes an exception.

All populist forms have proved to represent a dichotomous, bipolar conception of the world. The good and the weak ones have to fight against the bad, the stronger ones and the top brass.

In order to this polarization, the team spirit, the WE of a single group is intensified. They start to discern the OTHERS as their enemies.

Not least, the tricks of the populists don’t fail because we are living in a quite complex world that is difficult to understand. The people long to restrict this complexity and welcome every simplification.

Over and above, populists are likely to utilize emotionalisms so as to undermine the view of their followers. After all, it is manipulation. They play on psychic traumas and express exactly what the population feels. However, the population they are reputed to be so close to is only a small part of the general public.
The bipolar separation promotes egoism in the group, which does not only hold potential of conflicts, but also a positively threat for living together.

The following headlines demonstrate how dangerous this dynamics really are: Romanians leave Belfast after racist attacks (The Guardian), Netherlands split as anti-Muslim MP is cleared of hate charge (The Independent) or Hungarian gang jailed for racist Roma killings (BBC News).

A lot of demagogues are pretenders who change their minds continually. The Dutch founder and leader of the Party for Freedom are-albolism. The election campaigns of the Populists appear to be especially charismatic and attractive. Often death (FAZ; translation by C.T.).

enemy has to be attacked to red of hate charge (The Independent) or Hungarian gang jailed for racist Roma killings (BBC News).

The representatives of the party were elected directly on the Internet blog by the followers. The salaries of the party members do not rise above 5000 Euro monthly. "Why should taxpayer pay for the laundry service?" he asks. He claims total transparency. Everybody is able to retrieve the outgo on the website. On the other hand, the content of the blog is scrupulously controlled by the press relation officers. We are dealing with seeming transparency.

Furthermore he is totally against any collaboration with other parties. During the EU elections though, he changed his mind and met Nigel Farage of the right-populist UK Independence Party. The Italian press took up the issue several times, certainly because the meeting was supposed to be secret but then became public, and because of the fact that the leader of the Five Star Movement had always refused any collaboration. Now Grillo can imagine an alliance even with Marine Le Pen.

Criticism had already come up earlier in the party itself. Beppe Grillo is rather the voice of discontent. He declaims against the top brass. Often party members consider themselves to be victims and drive their followers to actions like the occupation of the roof of Monte-citorio. A few supporters arrive to the campaigns with Guy Fawkes masks (a British resistance fighter), which became famous through the Occupy Movement and initially exclusively served as a symbol for the hacktivist group Anonymous.

In Hungary the Hungarian Guard always attends the campaigns. Their uniforms are similar to the uniforms of the Pfeilkreuzer in Second World War. Lately Prime Minister Orbán declared the crown of Saint Stephen to be the Holy Crown of Hungary. His speeches bristle with national pride.

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In contrast to Orbán, who bears a controlled democracy with concentration on politics, economy and the media, Grillo seeks direct democracy.

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Increasing centralization and concentration of capital, the ongoing expansion of big companies which swallow up the smaller ones, but especially the management buy-in lead to complexity which, to my mind, is jointly responsible for the disorientation of society and makes it so easy for political debaucher to fool others until inhumanity toward people, who actually share the same fate, takes the reins.

In blind overestimation of their capabilities they believe that only they know what the best for the whole population is, but when it comes to the solution of problems, the resolution lacks in real sense of responsibility.

The responsibility is shunted to others and scapegoats are chosen, concepts of enemies are made up that stoke intrinsic and extrinsic delusion and finally turn out to be only an expression of the structure of the capitalism that has internalized the human character, which lets human beings run like clockwork.

International
Serbia is a country with many faces: On the one hand it is a country with beautiful nature and very traditional, but on the other hand it is still battle-scarred. In many villages and cities, e.g. in Beograd, the capital city, you can see houses which had been bombed in the Second World War and they have not been restored at all.

Another point is the lack of infrastructure. Especially in the regions, which are full of villages, there is only a train which goes twice a week. So the people there depend on a car to have the possibility to drive to the next city in order to go to the doctor or shopping. Unfortunately, only a few people are able to afford a car, which is the reason why a massive amount of people are subsistence farmers. Life in the city isn’t even better either. Everything is almost as expensive as in Austria, but the people earn a lot less than we do.

Serbia is located in the southeast of Europe’s Balkan region. It borders Hungary in the north, Romania in the northeast, Croatia in the northwest, Bulgaria in the east, Macedonia in the south and Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the west. The official spoken language is the Serbian language, but there are also many dialects which are mixed with those of the adjoining countries.

Last year I went to Pozarevac with my family, a little city in Serbia, and I had a conversation with a waiter. He told me that he earns between 800 and 1500 Dinars for eight hours, it depends on how many customers the bar has. One Euro equals 100 Dinars so he gets between eight and 15 Euros. That is probably the main reason why many people have no perspective in their lives and no hope for a better future. It is quite impossible to escape from the poverty once you are in. If you want to have the same salary we get in Austria or Germany, you have to go to university. But in order to do so, you need money. Plenty of money. Owing to the crisis, most professors want their students to buy their diploma if they want to finish university.

Another possibility to escape from the vicious circle is to move to foreign countries. Sadly, this chance cannot be seized without any help. Serbia is not a member of the EU, therefore it is quite hard for the emigrants to build a new life without money and any support. And the diploma does not serve any useful purpose in the EU countries.

Honestly, I feel sympathy for these people living in Serbia. I am aware of the fact that if my parents had not managed to move to Germany, I would not be here right now. I take so many things for granted which actually are not. In fact, it is because I got used to the life and the “luxury” I have got here.

Everyone defines luxury in a different way; for the Serbian folk it might be to have the same salary or infrastructure as we do. For me it is the possibility to study in Innsbruck while my parents still live in Germany and I do not have to worry about anything. My mother’s parents are still living in a minute village called “Turija”. They have a little farm and both of them are also working, otherwise they wouldn’t have enough money to survive. The water is polluted immensely and the electricity supply is miserable. Nevertheless, every time we visit them, they do not complain about a single thing. Whether it is only a show or not, I cannot assess. Maybe they accepted their life the way it is and they are trying to make the most of it. I have some little cousins who are living in Turija, too.

I asked the youngest one what he wants to become when he grows up. The answer I got from a nine-year-old boy was: “To be honest, I do not think about the future; neither about wishes. I know that I will never have the capability to fulfill them and I have to confess that I am baffled. I will take the job and the life this country gives me. My goal in life is to have a wife and one child. I think that is the single thing which could keep me away from desperation and giving up.”

This answer reflects the hopelessness of numerous citizens and the fact of having a deep fate that they do have neither the ability nor the possibility to change the situation.

Serbia is not far away from Austria. Nonetheless, the minutes of everyday life, which we take for granted, are unattainable for them. We all should be grateful for everything and every possibility we have and estimate them a lot more.

Free solo climbing

The term free solo climbing, or just soloing, describes a form of extreme climbing where the climber abandons all kind of safety measurement in order to ascend a route, such as ropes, harneses and other gear. The only equipment needed is climbing shoes, a chalk bag and the ultimate trust in one’s own physical strength and skills.

Free solo climbing often gets confused with free climbing, where the basic safety measures to prevent you from a fatal fall are given. With soloing, you don’t have that safety given, any mistakes you make results in certain death.

Another form is called “deep water soloing”. It just works as normal soloing, but instead of
climbing routes in the mountains with a length of several hundred meters, you climb above water on sea cliffs in a height which allows you to take falls. Still a certain danger is given, as a hard fall from a taller route may be able to knock a climber out, causing him to drown. Because of that usually a boat is present to collect the fallen climber out of the water. Another risk that shouldn’t be underestimated are waves, because if they are strong enough they might smash you against the rocks once you’ve fallen.

The risks with free solo are not only the climbing without the rope, which of course is the main danger in free soloing, but there are also many natural risks, such as the total exposure to the environment, the fast-changing variations in weather conditions, the absence of immediate help in case of an emergency and the danger of the route itself, which may contain falling rocks or icicles.

Another relevant aspect of free solo climbing is the constant presence of adrenaline. If the body is exposed to a stressful or exciting situation, it releases the hormone adrenaline. This increases the heart rate, pulse rate and blood pressure, which causes the heart to beat faster and to provide more energy for the person.

This phenomenon is also called “fight or flight” situation, because when danger appears you either have the option to confront it or to avoid it. Now with free solo climbing there is only the choice to confront it, a point of return after several meters is almost impossible, so the person has to keep going.

While climbing, the rush of adrenaline has to be mentally controlled, because too much of it may cause a panic attack, where muscles start to cramp, and too little of it may lead to sudden exhaustion. In both cases a secure and steady climbing isn’t possible anymore.

That’s why not only physical training is required, but also strong mental training. Before trying free solo, professional climbers must be a hundred percent sure that the danger of death is reduced to an absolute minimum. So they check out their favoured route several times with a rope, and after that they repeat every little movement in their head, until they know the whole line by heart. The motivation behind this kind of sport may be a complete mystery for most people. Just think about it: Why would anybody with a common sense want to perform a sport where you hang hundreds of meters above the ground, just clinging on your fingertips, knowing that if you make one little mistake and one wrong grasp, you’ll fall to your death. All in all it’s a sport where you get as close to death as possible.

That’s why some people claim free solo climbers reckless or even suicidal, which might be one of the reasons why free solo climbing isn’t that popular and doesn’t enjoy that much appreciation like other forms of climbing.

It’s hard to determine when exactly people started to climb walls without safety gear, but the German sports climber Wolfgang Güllich, who is famous for many difficult ascents, was said to be one of the pioneers of this extreme form of climbing. He was the first person who climbed the route “Separate Reality” in the Yosemite national park, a route which was considered to be almost impossible to master, in free solo style in 1986.

Güllich was known for his simplicity and enjoyment of life. He didn’t practice free solo climbing because of the attention he got from society or because he had the feeling to prove his talents, but simply because of enjoyment. He once said that free soloing gave him a special feeling, with the imminent danger of death he learned to live his life much more intense. Ironically it was a car accident which ultimately took his life in 1992.

But with his ascent in Yosemite he set a milestone in the history of climbing. More and more climbers got interested in this hazardous, yet extremely fascinating form of climbing, and nowadays dozens of climbing pioneers practice this kind of extreme sport.

One of them is the generally known climber Alexander Huber. He is a qualified physicist, but gave up his job and dedicated his whole life to climbing. For many decades he has belonged to one of the best extreme climbers, together with his brother Thomas. One of his greatest achievements in free soloing was his ascent on one of the “Drei Zinnen”, a remarkable rock formation which lies in the heart of the Dolomites.

There he mastered the so called “Hasse-Brandler-Direttissima” route, an almost 600 meter high, partly overhanging wall. The stone in this route is sometimes loose and brittle, so the chance that a rock breaks off is considerably high. Huber managed it to climb the route in just three hours, compared to climbing with a rope he needed more than six hours.

When asked if he wasn’t any afraid to die, he responded that he had had always a moderate amount of fear while climbing. He said that this was what kept him safe, because the fear to die controlled his actions and movements, it prevented him from being too careless and rash.
Travel
Tourism in Southeast Asia: blessing or curse

by Rosa Stahl

I can still remember the first time I arrived in Thailand: the smell of fresh cooked food directly at stalls beside the streets, where a crowd of people held down their work. I was full of enthusiasm and anticipation and could not wait to explore this amazing and special country. Each year thousands of tourists from all over the world travel to countries like Thailand, Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam. The marvelous landscape, beautiful beaches, delicious food, magnificent temples and not least the total difference from Western countries attract many visitors.

Basically, tourism in Southeast Asia started after World War II, where Western troops arrived in Thailand and Vietnam. Since that time prostitution has been a major problem in Thailand. The number of women working in the sex business was growing and tourism was too. Later, movies like The Beach attracted many backpackers. Thenceforward, the tourist industry was increasing significantly.

The flood of tourists has an impact on local communities in both good and bad ways. In general, developed countries benefit more from the tourism industry than poor countries. There are many examples in Southeast Asia, from Vang Vieng in Laos to Angkor Wat in Cambodia to just about everywhere in Thailand. Ko Phangan, for example, is famous for its monthly full moon parties. At these parties people are drinking alcohol, taking drugs and dancing the whole night, directly at the beach. Every year people die at this controversial event. A similar tourist attraction exists in the neighboring country Laos, one of Southeast Asia’s poorest countries. Deep in the forests of Laos, in Vang Vieng, people started floating down the Nam Song River with tractor tires about 10 years ago. In the last few years the scene has exploded. Nowadays, many young people visit Laos only for the reason of party, alcohol and drugs. The river was once a serene spot for bathing, fishing and washing clothes for local families, now bars arise like mushrooms on rainy days beside the river. The success of being a popular destination for backpackers often has a high price.

Due to tourism, Southeast Asian countries have often changed their original habits. Food was once packed in banana leaves. Nowadays, every kind of food is plastic-wrapped - even if you buy something to drink, you get a plastic bag with a plastic drinking straw. Many beautiful islands and beaches are littered and the garbage beside the railway rises steadily. I was travelling northbound by train and I could not believe what I saw: locals are just throwing out their garbage from the train and litter the green untouched fields. People there are not used to collecting their waste and to recycle it. Garbage becomes a serious problem due to improper disposal and neither the government nor local people felt responsible for this increasing dilemma.

Cambodia suffered from it’s tragical history of genocide. You can still see the pain behind the smiling faces of Cambodians. Although Cambodia is rich in natural resources, poverty is omnipresent. Angkor Wat is the symbol of Cambodia and rightly the pride of people. Already early in the morning a crowd of tourists stroll through the temple complex, lean against the stones and climb up the ancient steps. Specialists worry about the conditions of this world cultural heritage.

Many poor families want to benefit from the visitors and see the opportunity for obtaining a better life. Children are begging for colored pencils, sweets or Uotitas and saying “no” is anything but easy. Unfortunately, only powerful people can benefit from the tourists. Cambodia as well as its neighboring countries are in the process of developing. Ecotourism, an upcoming market, seems to influence this development and the tourism industry in a more positive way. It has become very popular among nature lovers in Southeast Asia.

Exploration trips, mountain hikes or boat trips enable travelers to explore unknown destinations within the country. Travelers consume local products (food, coffee etc.) and stay in small guest houses instead of hotels. Tourists try their best to minimize environmental impact, support local communities and respect the locals’ way of life. Awareness of one’s impact helps developing tourism in Southeast Asia, without any doubt.

If you have been to Southeast Asia once, it is quite hard not to love it. Escaping from everyday life and being surrounded by admirable people. People who live in such poor circumstances, with a sad history and sometimes even worse future perspectives, still have charisma and a friendly character. Not for nothing is Thailand called the land of smiles.
A couple of years ago the meat and dairy-free diet was considered a completely unusual diet and a strange way of living, practised only by nutritional fanatics. However, in the last few years the public opinion towards a vegetarian or vegan diet and lifestyle has changed dramatically and people have become more open-minded and understanding.

Nowadays, it’s no longer a weird thing to be a vegetarian or even a vegan. The vegetarian and vegan communities are constantly growing and among them are also a lot of celebrities like Brad Pitt, Chris Martin, Kate Winslet, Naomi Watts, Natalie Portman, Pamela Anderson, Sarah Silverman, Paul McCartney who are vegetarians and Alanis Morissette, Alicia Silverstone, Ellen Degeneres, Janet Lebo, Russell Brand, Steve-O, Tobey Maguire who are vegan, just to name a few.

Some of those celebrities talk a lot about their eating habits in public and in social networks and their blogs are becoming increasingly popular. In addition, a lot of books about eating and cooking vegetarian and vegan meals have been published recently and even the food industry has jumped on the bandwagon by offering a growing range of vegetarian and vegan products.

It’s hard to say whether the newborn vegetarians and vegans are only following a short-lived trend, or if the change of their eating habits is the result of a deep conviction. There might be some people who only turned vegetarian or vegan because it’s quite fashionable at the moment and who will return to their former diet rather quickly, but also others who will stick to their new diet forever.

Basically there are two main reasons why people chose a meat and dairy-free diet and lifestyle: for health reasons or for moral reasons. The health reason and the moral reason are often combined, because a lot of vegetarians and vegans are driven by both. However, in general there is one reason that outweighs the other and convinces a person in the first place. Let’s look at the two reasons in detail.

The health reason

Nowadays, a lot of meat and dairy products, especially the cheap industrialized products, are highly poisoned. The meat, milk and eggs produced in factory farming often contain toxic antibiotics and hormones and are therefore bad for our health. A lot of those toxins remain in the human body after the consumption of industrialized food and can, for example, create a toxic colon or increase a person’s chance of developing cancer.

By eating organic meat and organic dairy products, those negative effects caused by toxins and hormones can be avoided, but there are nutrition experts and doctors who claim that meat and dairy products are unhealthy in general.

One of them is Dr. T. Colin Campbell, an American biochemist and author of the book The China Study, which was published in 2005. The book is based on the China-Cornell-Oxford Project, a 20-year study conducted by the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine.

The most important results presented in the book are that the consumption of animal products can cause numerous chronic illnesses such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and cancers of breast, prostate and bowel, whereas those who eat vegan are able to avoid or reduce the development of those illnesses. Although being very controversial among nutrition experts, the book was a great success. In fact, there are some people who have been cured from a serious disease after having adopted a plant-based diet.

The moral reason

A lot of people turn vegetarian or vegan due to moral reasons. This means that they think that it is wrong to kill animals for the only purpose to have a tasty meal, because in the industrialized countries it’s not necessary to eat meat or dairy products to survive.

This way of thinking is deeply rooted in human history. In fact, a lot of famous philosophers, writers and scientist were vegetarians, e.g. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Leonardo Da Vinci, Sir Isaak Newton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Ghandi, Leo Tolstoy, Franz Kafka, Albert Einstein and Albert Schweitzer. A famous quote from Leonardo Da Vinci is: “The time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look on the murder of men.” Leo Tolstoy said: “As long as there are slaughter houses there will always be battlefields.” And last but not least, Paul McCartney’s famous statement: “If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian.”

Some people use as an argument that these statements apply only to factory farming and that there are other ways of producing meat and dairy products, without causing so much suffering for the animals.

Of course it’s true that animals can also be raised and killed in a less cruel way, but if we wanted to close all slaughterhouses, the consumption of meat would have to be reduced dramatically and it would still be necessary to kill animals.

There’s no doubt that this topic causes quite a stir and that everyone has an opinion on whether it’s right or wrong to eat animal products. Like for most moral problems, it seems that there is no right solution and that therefore everyone’s moral choices should be respected. Nevertheless, I think that people should become aware of what they eat every day and think twice about the impact of their food choices.

Lifestyle

The meat- and dairy-free diet is gaining ground

by Bettina Hirnsperger

In the last few years the public opinion towards a vegetarian or vegan diet and lifestyle has changed dramatically and people have become more open-minded and understanding.
Chris Jones (Jonezen), an independent American rapper, lost everything he had; he was almost dead. In the lifestyle that he lived in, touring and partying around, drinking, going to bed, getting up and doing the same thing again, he nearly gave up hope. As he is one of my friends I’m going to tell you about his impressive success and coming back story.

By the age of 24 he was addicted to alcohol and drugs and had his first drinks before breakfast just so his body would work. Doctors said if he continued drinking he was going to die, but he kept drinking. It actually got so bad that his family said if he didn’t go to rehab, they would not watch him die in this way.

He refused to go unless he could bring his studio. He was fortunate to find a place in Los Angeles that would let him do that. Recording in treatment helped him to heal and go through that rough time.

His whole identity was so wrapped up in being a rapper, a party guy that drank, that the idea of not being able to drink and use drugs really scared him. Something he learned in rehab was that we get so wrapped up in who we think we are that we forget to just let go and be ourselves.

In rehab he struggled with people telling him what to do, when to wake up, and hated that they could see that he was just pretending that he wanted to be sober. He just wanted to pass the time in rehab as quickly as possible, but then he almost got kicked out.

That’s the time when something inside of him changed. He began to look at things differently and his mentality just shifted.

Music saved his life and he doesn’t know if he would have made it through without it. He went through a huge identity crisis as well, where he didn’t even know anymore who he was. Everything he had was gone. He took this mental situation as the main theme he wrote about in his songs.

His album is just a small piece of his story, written and recorded in treatment, so it’s from that point of view. It’s a reflection on his life, and all the things that happened, leading him to where he is now. In the beginning it was about conflicts and not being happy, when he started to change so did the music. His songs were more about hope, about how he can do that.

In rehab he wrote the album “Live from rehab” which is available online, and his best work to date. That album, and the changes he was able to make as a person, launched his career to a level it had never been at before. That’s what he realized once he was already out. Changes are scary and there’s always a part of your brain telling you not to let them happen in order to hold on to old habits.

What he hopes people get from his story and the album is to realize that anything is possible. You can change your life today. There are people who think it’s easier to just keep doing what brings them down and die rather than trying to climb their way out and he was one of them.

He’s telling his story to help people who feel hopeless to let them know, no matter what the struggle is, there’s another way, a better way. He wants to bring hope to other people because things always get better.

Another thing he would advise others who also struggle with addiction is to first and foremost reach out for help. We all want to think we can do it by ourselves but in the end it won’t work out. If you’re lucky there are brief moments of clarity where your better half takes over and for whatever reasons you make a call and ask for help.

Try and stay committed to that decision and listen to people who are there to help you. Even if it’s super hard, try to stop thinking that you know what’s best. Take direction - It will save your life.

The biggest goal Chris Jones has is to connect with people through his music and public speaking – to let others hear his story and try to give some hope to the hopeless.

After leaving rehab he signed a deal with Famous/Fontana/Universal, but after a short time he decided to work independently again. His music is very individual. There’s a bit of everything in it: Bars, banging beats, radio-friendly stuff, songs about his story, dub step, reggae and also guitar tracks.

His new album Beautiful Disaster comes out June 23rd and will be available on iTunes, Amazon, Google and anywhere you can find music.

“Hip-hop is either everything or it’s nothing. For me it’s everything” - Jonezen.

I think this quotation expresses the best way what music means to Chris. It’s definitely important to have a passion like he has, in order to go through hard times and find a way out.

You can find him on the web at: www.jonezenmusic.com.
Mobile phone use has unquestionably become the norm for people of all ages. Now it is increasingly popular amongst the younger generation to stay connected to each other and the world. On many occasions the willingly paying parents aren’t aware of the enormous consequences on their children’s social sphere, safety or health.

A study from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) of more than 20,000 children between the age of 8 and 18 years showed that 20% of the 8 year olds and 83% of kids aged 11 years own a mobile phone. And the percentages are steadily increasing. But the main question is why parents do primarily invest in a mobile phone for their children. The answer is quite simple.

The phone is used as a safety tool which connects the worried parents in case of an emergency with the youngsters. So the parent is never more than a phone call away when a kid is having his mobile phone with him and available all day.

What is more, by carrying their new items along to school, children often disturb the lessons by texting or by playing certain games. With such undisciplined behavior the students sometimes drive their teachers crazy. Moreover, when the kids don’t listen to the words their teachers say, they can’t get on well at school and their grades deteriorate. The well-discussed issue whether to ban mobile phones from schools is innumerable argued within the different schools all over the US.

Each school has to impose its own rules on phones in class. One thing is certain, the headmaster of the school picks an argument with the deeply concerned parents.

Furthermore, the latest mobile phones are seen as a status symbol of wealth in the society, as an iPhone costs about 600 dollars, which causes inequality among the students. Thus bullying can be the consequence, only because one child’s parents can’t afford the latest fashion and the kid has to be pleased with their old Nokia.

Nonetheless such points lead to cyberbullying – as the youngsters are well connected to each other with different devices with internet connection on it. Cyberbullying starts for example on social networks such as Facebook or Twitter, where mainly teenagers harass or harm others repeatedly. Often the bullies post rumours or gossip about a person or even publish harassing videos or pictures against their victims’ will. There have been really shocking cases in which the teenagers lost their self-esteem and committed suicide.

Like the case of Megan Meier, a girl from Missouri, who committed suicide aged 13 in 2006 because of cyberbullying.

A fake account from a 16-year-old boy called “Josh” wrote Megan messages on MySpace, earned her trust and spread gossip around her. Megan couldn’t stand this and died of suicide by hanging with a belt in her room. So cyberbullying is a serious topic, which shouldn’t be underestimated.

The dangers in mobile phone use lies not only within the social effects but also the medical aspects of children. In 2011 big commotion broke out when the World Health Organization (WHO) admitted that cell phone radiation may cause cancer. The evidence for this came from the Hardell Group from Sweden, where they found a pattern of increased brain tumours associated with mobile phone use on the basis of a 10-year study.

Moreover, there was a fivefold increase in glioma, the most common form of brain tumour, within people who started to use cell phones prior to the age of 20. The reason why teens and children seem to be more at risk is the fact that unlike adults, their brains and nervous systems are still developing; they have smaller brains, a lower skull bone density and more connective tissue making them capable of absorbing up to 3 times as much radiation as an adult.

In conclusion, kids nowadays are constantly carrying their phones with them to be connected to friends and parents. Often critical points such as the cyberbullying or health damages are unluckily not considered.

Parents should be role models and also avoid using their phones the whole day. Aside from holding back on giving children access to cell phones at a young age, informing them of the dangers associated with their use is always a great first step.
Health
Diabetes mellitus type 1
Fighting against the prejudices

by Deborah Griesser

When people hear the word "diabetes", they immediately think about a fat person not doing enough sports and eating unhealthy, but these are just some prejudices. One of the reasons why I'm writing this report is to inform people about what diabetes really is. Another reason is because I have been affected myself by diabetes mellitus type 1 since I've been two years old. Nowadays I'm quite used to it and I'm also getting along with it in a positive way.

For me it's almost something normal, because I can't remember how my life was without diabetes. A lot of people think that if you are a diabetic there are a lot of things which you cannot do. That's true within some limitations, but I can do nearly everything, like doing sports or also having a drink with some friends, without regretting anything. It's just about how you see yourself. You can see yourself as a person with an illness and therefore with a handicap or you can see yourself as a normal person being careful about what to eat and about doing some sports. For me it's not an illness and also not something I'm stressed out about, but diabetes is like a part of me; it just belongs to me like every child belongs to their parents.

There's one thing I absolutely want to get rid of and that's the prejudices created by the other people. A lot of them have no idea of what diabetes is really about and they just believe what others tell them. There are also some who say that it is somehow positive to have diabetes, because you always eat in a healthy way. Well, I would rather say that you should eat in a healthy way, but unfortunately it's not that easy to do so. Especially as a child it was quite difficult for me, because all the other children were allowed to eat sweets and I wasn't. When I was invited to birthday parties could I never eat a piece of cake and all the other children were looking at me as if I were an alien. These moments were really difficult, but in time the other children got used to this and accepted me the way I am.

According to Wikipedia, "Diabetes mellitus type 1 is a group of metabolic diseases in which a person has high blood sugar and results from the body's failure to produce insulin". This form was previously referred to as "insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus" or "juvenile diabetes", because a lot of children are affected by it. A lot of doctors are arguing whether diabetes is hereditary or not; some of them were able to cite the frequency of a history of diabetes in grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, siblings or cousins. Some others only speculate about this fact, because in some cases there were no relatives at all who were affected by this illness. The IDF (International Diabetes Federation) says that "Environmental factors and exposure to some viral infections have also been linked to the risk of developing type 1 diabetes".

Another prejudice is the unhealthy way of eating. Most people who get affected by diabetes didn’t eat in an unhealthy way in the past, but nevertheless they got ill. Surely you also have to consider that in some cases it's actually true that people get diabetes because they are eating just unhealthy things; most of these cases occur in America.

Most people also believe that insulin is going to heal people from diabetes, but that's not true; it only helps them to stay alive. Unfortunately there’s almost no chance of getting rid of it. As a person with diabetes you can just try to do your best to get along with this daily struggle.

Warning signs of diabetes may occur suddenly and include extreme thirst, frequent urination, drowsiness or lethargy, increased appetite, sudden weight loss, sudden vision changes, sugar in the urine, fruity odour of the breath, heavy breathing, stupor or unconsciousness.

According to some statistics, as many as three million Americans may have diabetes type 1 and the number of people worldwide with diabetes is more than 371 million (Type 1 and type 2 combined).

According to the WHO (World Health Organisation), "diabetes is predicted to become the seventh leading cause of death in the world by the year 2030 and total deaths from diabetes are projected to rise by more than 50% in the next 10 years".

It was quite shocking for me to read this prediction, because I never thought that there are dying so many people from diabetes and although this fact is referred to diabetes type 1 and type 2 combined, it’s still a high percentage.

It’s also difficult to tell people what to do in order to not become a diabetic type 1, because in some way you can prevent yourself from getting affected by it when doing a lot of sports and eating very healthy, but, as mentioned before, also the doctors are still arguing about a possible hereditary illness.

Therefore the best thing to do is to live your life in the best possible way and to take care of yourself.

New approaches to limb transplantation

by Olena Kalchenko

"Researchers and surgeons at UPMC propose to implement an immunomodulatory approach known as the ‘Pittsburgh Protocol’, which entails antibody therapy, donor bone marrow cell infusion and treatment with a reduced amount of immunosuppressive drugs to reduce toxicity for patients.

The idea of organ transplantation occupied human minds for many centuries. In 1897 the first laboratory attempt of limb attachments was made, a recipient was a dog. Non human primates and animals have long been used as translational models of human immunology and transplant immunobiology.

The loss of face or limb is a devastating defect that is difficult to treat with conventional methods. Limb transplantation is a surgical procedure to transplant a hand or leg from one human to another. It is the most sophisticated reconstructive procedure including not only medical but also ethical aspects. A limb is an organ of the human body that has a very difficult tissue structure: skin, fascia, muscles, blood vessels, nerves, bones, joints. Each of these anatomical structures reacts to transplantation in its own way.

The first pioneers of transplantation were Cosmas and Damian. The event is recorded in painting illustrated transplantation of a leg
Health / Culture

by Saints Cosmas and Damian, assisted by angels, it is shown that Sts. Cosmas and Damian replaced an ulcerated leg with a grafted a leg from a recently deceased man.

The first transplantation was made in 1998 in France and the era of limb transplantation started. Since that time 26 face transplants have been made worldwide. In the book Hand Transplantation, An Issue of Hand Clinics, G. Brandacher wrote that the first face transplantation was done in France in 2005 and the first leg transplantation in Spain in 2011. The largest organ transplant centers in the world are Loïsville, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Atlanta in the USA; Lyon, Monza, Innsbruck, Wroclaw, Valencia, Munich in Europe; Harbin and Guangzhou in Asia.

Limb transplant patients, like any other transplant patients, need to be given an immunosuppressive therapy, so that their body’s immune system does not identify a new limb’s tissue as a foreign and try to reject it as fast as possible. Due to associated risks with immunosuppression, this type of transplantation has not yet become a routine procedure.

Skin rejection in reconstructive transplantation is an immune response towards the epidermis. Mild skin rejection, defined as grade 1, is a common complication seen after face, hand and leg transplantation. Traditionally immunosuppression therapy, which has been used in transplants around the world, has required not to take drugs for a lifetime after the surgery. There is a really high risk of drug taking, because the medications increase risk of complications like diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, kidney failure, and even in rare cases such terrible diseases like cancer. The idea was to minimize the number, dose, and duration of drugs used by patients and in turn to improve this reconstructive modality.

The Pittsburgh Protocol is an innovative immunosuppressive therapy because it involves treatment of a patient with antibody plantation, injected antibodies remove those cells in the recipient’s body that attack the transplant.

The patient also receives an infusion of bone marrow cells from the donor in a week after immunosuppressive therapy. The donor bone marrow cells contain stem cells (2), which can potentially educate the recipient’s immune system in accepting the limb transplant as its own one.

Then the patient can take a single immunosuppressive drug only. Studies have also shown that this drug can be only Tacrolimus that improves the growth of nerves after transplantation. UPMS Protocol benefits not only the survival of the transplant but also return of function.

The first report of the experience with the “Pittsburgh Protocol” was presented by Professors G. Brandacher and Professor A. Lee at the 2010 Annual Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons. They reported that there were three recipients of upper extremity transplants and now they were in a very good condition.

The Pittsburgh Protocol is used by other organ transplant programs like liver and kidney transplant programs. The creation of UPMS Protocol is of grate importance for patients after kidney transplantation, because kidney is an organ that suffers the consequences of taking of immunosuppressive more than any other organs. Now the doctors have achieved low doses of immunosuppression and they hope to eventually eliminate or reduce immunosuppression drugs.

But there is another point, too. Some scientists find the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center protocol from "non-heart-beating donors" medically and morally questionable and irrevocable. They say limb transplants are not for everyone who is without a limb, but that limb transplants are nonetheless ethical. For these people, death is a risk worth taking and limb transplantation is a modern miracle for them.

A pop tart served with hot coffee

A depiction of a highly controversial civil lawsuit

by Teresa Staud

Stupid lawsuits are as American as apple pie. (Stephan 2009) Everyone’s heard about those crazy lawsuits where somebody earns an outrageous sum of money by making a complete mockery of America’s legal system. These are the stories you get in email forwards raging about people who sue microwave manufacturers because their cat exploded or who claim damages from Google because Google Maps advised them to walk on the freeway, causing them to get hit by a car. (Rosenberg & Harwood et al Utah District Court, Case No. 2:10-cv-00496) They have not only become a laughing stock on Seinfeld, The Simpsons and The David Letterman Show, sharing these narratives has become a part of our popular culture. Strangely, many of these legal legends are about poor, innocent corporations being victimized by evil, greedy people. (Blumenthal/Orin 2013) At a closer look at the details of these popular narratives (“tart tales” or “pop tarts”) are often oversimplified and presented in a very distorted manner.

Perhaps the most famous example of a pop tart is the “McDonald’s Coffee Case” (Liebeck v. McDonald’s Restaurants, P.T.S., Inc., No. D-202 CV-93-02419; 1995 WL 360309). It is hard to find an American who has not heard of it. Here are the facts: Stella Liebeck, 79, bought a cup of coffee at the drive-thru window of an Albuquerque McDonald’s. Having difficulty removing the lid so she could add cream and sugar to her coffee, Liebeck put the cup between her knees. While she tried to remove the lid, the cup tipped over and the entire contents spilled into her lap. In her lawsuit, she claimed that McDonald’s coffee was being served too hot and more likely to cause serious injury than coffee served at any other establishment.

Soon afterward, this case has become the most cited pop tart throughout the US and a poster-case for corporate entities with a vested interest in limiting the legal rights of consumers. But clever editors have also found out that a condensed version of the coffee-spill lawsuit was highly entertaining and enduring, particularly on the opinion pages. (Mencimer 2006) Moreover, this case has substantially shaped the common perception of law. But how? Just examine its elements: first, it is short – which
makes it easy to remember and, therefore, easy to retell. Second, it emphasizes the stupidity of the plaintiff – fumbling the cup of coffee, can be definitely regarded as being foolish. Third, it stresses the innocence of the defendant – McDonald’s gets suddenly confronted by a meritless lawsuit; buying coffee is after all an everyday occurrence, therefore everyone should be aware of the fact that coffee is hot.

So why sue then? Finally, these pop tarts center on greed – in this case, the jury awarded her $2.9 million in damages. “When Stella Liebeck fumbled her coffee cup […] she might as well have won a winning lottery ticket. […] That absurd judgment makes it easy to remember and, therefore, easy to retell. Second, it emphasizes the stupidity of the plaintiff – fumbling the cup of coffee, can be definitely regarded as being foolish. Third, it stresses the innocence of the defendant – McDonald’s gets suddenly confronted by a meritless lawsuit; buying coffee is after all an everyday occurrence, therefore everyone should be aware of the fact that coffee is hot.”

When I started to read the book I was immediately captivated. The way Jojo Moyes writes is really fascinating. She describes the characters and their feelings so that you can identify with their situation. The beginning of the book ‘The Girl You Left Behind’ from Jojo Moyes is about a woman called Sophie Lefèvre, living in St Péronne, a small town in France, during the First World War. She and her sister Hélène run the Kommandant comes to the Hotel during the First World War. She and her sister Hélène run the hotel ‘Le Coq Rouge’. They live with their brother Aurélien and Hélène’s children.

Their parents died long before and their husbands are at the Front. Although everyone tried to refuse the orders, the town fell under German rules. The Kommandant stays with her and surprisingly he allows them to eat all the leftovers. One day a German Kommandant comes and tells them to cook for the German soldiers and surprisingly he allows them to eat all the leftovers. Although they want to refuse to eat German food, they are happy to have a real meal and after a few weeks they get used to the soldiers present. Every time the Kommandant comes to the Hotel he admires the portrait Sophie’s husband Édouard painted of her. She kind of likes talking about art with the Kommandant because this reminds her of her husband.

At Christmas Sophie is the only one staying at the “Coq Rouge” with the Germans. Unexpectedly the Kommandant stays with her in the kitchen. They talk about the life of the artists in Paris and in the end they dance together. One day Liliana Béthune, a woman of the town who sympathised with the Germans, gets caught delivering the forbidden newspaper “Journal des Occupés”, so Sophie takes care of court subsequently reduced the jury award to $640,000, even though the judge called McDonald’s conduct reckless, callous and willful. No one will ever know the final ending to this case: the parties eventually entered into a secret settlement out of court which has never been revealed to the public, despite the fact that this was a public case, litigated in public and subjected to extensive media reporting.

But the coffee-spill lawsuit has become a landmark case of product liability suits. Liberals and consumer groups throughout the nation approved this ruling: those in the best position, which are manufacturers, distributors and sellers, should bear the burden of injuries and financial costs and should be held responsible for defect products. On the other hand, this case had major implications for Corporate America, who stated that product liability laws harm the nation’s economy. Soon after, Republican lawmakers set into motion a series of bills that would limit the monetary amount that could be sought in corporate lawsuits.

Corporate America’s and much of the media’s trivial portrayal of the case painted the picture of a perverted system of justice by creating this infamous pop tart, when in fact, the case demonstrates a legal system that punishes corporations for misconduct and protects consumers who may be victims of their wrongdoing. However, cases like this have prompted both state and federal legislatures to pass tort reform laws since then. (Neubauer/Meinhold 2012)

**The Girl You Left Behind** by Jojo Moyes

*Book Review*

When I started to read the book I was immediately captivated. The way Jojo Moyes writes is really fascinating. She describes the characters and their feelings so that you can identify with their situation. The beginning of the book ‘The Girl You Left Behind’ from Jojo Moyes is about a woman called Sophie Lefèvre, living in St Péronne, a small town in France, during the First World War. She and her sister Hélène run the Hotel ‘Le Coq Rouge’. They live with their brother Aurélien and Hélène’s children.

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At Christmas Sophie is the only one staying at the “Coq Rouge” with the Germans. Unexpectedly the Kommandant stays with her in the kitchen. They talk about the life of the artists in Paris and in the end they dance together. One day Liliana Béthune, a woman of the town who sympathised with the Germans, gets caught delivering the forbidden newspaper “Journal des Occupés”, so Sophie takes care of
Madame Béthune's daughter Edith. When Sophie finds out that her husband has been brought to a reprisal camp, she is willing to do everything to liberate him.

She goes to the German barracks and asks the Kommandant if he could help her. After he has raped her, Sophie feels guilty but she still hopes that he will liberate her husband. A few days later some German soldiers come to take her with them.

Sophie is brought to the train station where she meets Liliane Béthune. She loses her hope to see her husband when she gets to know that the train has crossed the border and they are now in Germany. Liliane knows that she is lost and so she takes one of the soldiers' gun and shoots herself.

The second part of the book is about a young woman called Liv Halston, living in London in 2006 and working as a freelance copy writer. Her husband David died four years before and she is still working on bringing it back to its lawful owner.

One day Liv meets Paul McCafferty. His job is to help people to regain pictures or something else they had lost or were stolen during the world wars.

Liv and Paul start to meet regularly. After a few dates they go home to Liv's house. When Paul realizes that Liv has the painting "The girl you left behind" he is very shocked because it is one of the stolen pictures and he is working on bringing it back to its lawful owner.

He asks her to tell him where she got the painting from and tries to explain that it had been stolen and is now worth about 2 million pounds. Liv is very angry because it was the only thing left from her husband. She accuses him of having planned everything from the very beginning and sends him away.

Liv tries to get information about the picture and about the girl on it. On the internet she finds the son of Sophie's brother Aurelien and she goes to France. When she meets Mr. Besettes she is disappointed that he can't tell her a lot about Sophie.

Aurelien, his father, was a very unforgiving man and he and his other sister Hélène decided that it would have been better for the family if they act like Sophie has never existed. He gives her a collection of letters and postcards from Sophie, so that Liv can see who she really was. Liv asks him why he didn't give this to the Lefèvre family as it would normally belong to them, he explains that they are only interested in the money this painting is worth.

The press is very interested in this case and they are already waiting in front of the court. Some of them insult her for being a complicit of the Nazis who had stolen the picture.

The second part of the book is about a young woman called Liv Halston, living in London in 2006 and working as a freelance copy writer. Her husband David died four years before and she is still living in the apartment he built, together with Mo, an old friend of hers. We get to know that in their honeymoon David bought the portrait of Sophie, now it's called The Girl You Left Behind for Liv of an elder American woman called Marianne Andrews.

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Marianne Andrews, the woman who inherited the painting from her late mother, tells the court that her mother got that painting from a woman and that it have never been in the house with all the stolen paintings.

In the court it seems to help Liv but unfortunately the opposite side also found an article which tells the name of the woman: it was the German Kommandant's wife.

Liv has already given up all her hope and so she brings the painting to the last day of court. The judge just wants to say his verdict when Paul comes in with an elderly woman in a wheelchair.

It's Édith Béthune and it's for her to clear everything, because it was she who gave the painting to the Kommandant.

The truth is that the Kommandant really helped Sophie to see Eduard again. They met at the border to Switzerland and got new passports. So they lived the last few years alone but happy together. In the end Liv is the lawful owner of the painting and very happy that Paul helped her.

After having finished the book I was quite surprised. Although I like stories with happy endings, this one seemed a bit too happy. I can't imagine that something like this could have really happened. But all toogether I really enjoyed reading this book; it's kind of a page-turner.

Parade's End
A visual feast, lacking a pinch of salt

by Stefanie Böhm

In a time when high-class period dramas such as Downton Abbey flicker across our TV screens every week, it may not seem a big thing anymore to bring up the 1900s feeling of life and society and create a production out of it. Yet, a team of highly acclaimed personalities made it their mission to once again make the audiences swoon over well-esteemed country gentlemen and the ladies by their sides. In 2012 premiered what HBO and the BBC had worked together to set on its feet. Screenwriter Tom Stoppard, well known for Shakespeare in Love and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, joined director Susanna White to come up with their very own version of Ford Madox Ford's tetralogy Parade's End.

Ford mostly focuses on the character development and how a fairly well-educated member of the British aristocracy would deal with the terrors or war and the change in society. This is highly in contrast to the description of the Great War that other novels of that time wanted to achieve. In the series, though, more attention is being paid to the inner conflicts of the main characters: Christopher Tietjens (Benedict Cumberbatch) is a government statistician who is portrayed as a man who finds himself in a situation of helplessness.

He is unable to break out of the prison that is his status and the time he happened to have been born into, tangling himself in the turmoil of trying to keep up appearance. Tietjens wanted to live in the 1800s, rather than the early 19th century when the book is set. "England was the foundation of order, before money took over and handed the country to the swindlers and schemers." (C.T. in Parade's End, ©BBC 2012)

His wife Sylvia (Rebecca Hall), on the other hand, is magically drawn to even those. As she is a bit of an unintelligent person who had to get married for social rank, she gets bored easily and deeply despises her husband. This is because he has a purpose in life that she lacks and she needs to make up for by ha-
ping countless affairs. What the viewer also finds out is that it is not entirely clear, whether her son Michael is Christopher’s or the result of such a burst of truculence.

When playing golf with one of his closest friends, Mr Macmaster, Tietjens meets the young suffragette Valentine Wannop (Ade- laide Clemens) who, for the major part of the series, is seen demonstrating for women’s right to vote. For him, Valentine soon becomes more than just a nice acquaintance, as she personifies what he cannot have in his life: She thinks freely, most of the time does not care about the opinions of others and pursues and stands in for her dreams. After a few short meetings, she has to admit that she has absolutely fallen for him, even though her mother warns her not to get involved with a married man.

When the war is at hand, Tietjens has to sooner or later join the army, as he does not consider himself “an English gentleman who’d let the country go to hell and never stir himself.” (C.T. in Parade’s End CBB 2012). On his last day in London, where he lives with his wife when he is not at Groby, the Tietjens’ family re- sidence in Yorkshire, he meets Valentine, who soon agrees to become his mistress. Earlier he found polygamy repulsive and could not understand how a man was able to hurt his wife and views in this vein.

Though, with Valentine becom- ing his only confidant in a world he could no longer bear, he ac- commodates himself with the idea. The series covers all the years of WWI, mainly describing the issues of society “back home” rather than dealing with what happens at the front, allo- wing only a few insights in mili- tary procedures. After intrigues and countless attempts, Sylvia’s to prise the slightest emotion out of her husband, the war is over and Tietjens can return home, where Valentine already awaits him.

In the series, Stoppard develops five one-hour-long pieces out of the four books by Ford, which were originally published in 1924 and the following years. He uses more or less all the material from the first three novels, namely Some Do Not …. No More Para- des and A Man Could Stand Up.

In the end, however, the viewer is left with a lot of questions that remained unanswered: Was Mi- chael actually Christopher’s son? Did he finally divorce Syl- via? Did Christopher and Valen- tine develop a proper relationship? Some of these could be found an answer to, when reading the last one of the books, Last Post. As other wri- ters before, he left out the last book almost entirely. This may be due to the fact that, as many believe, Ford was pushed by the publishers to write an ending to his work. Compared to the other parts, this one does not even fit into the story line. There is little of the struggle, the morale left that makes the first three books so lo-vable. It is almost wholly an ac- cumulation of inner monologues that lead to a pretty unpleasing finale of the story.

On the positive side, though, Stoppard made up his mind about how to make the historical plot appealing to young audi- ences. The first step was, of course, getting well-known actors on board. But he also added scenes, such as ones hinting at, or actually showing what goes on behind closed curt-ains, or scenes of wit or oddness.

To be honest, I was looking for- ward to the airing of this series for quite long. Having read the books, I could imagine that it would be hard to bring it onto screen. Yet, the first episode, showing off the best of British (and Australian) acting craft re- ally fascinated me. It was perfect and already the trailer being a vi- sual feast, the first episode left me in awe.

Though, as the series went on, I noticed that something was not right quite with it. - It may have been the far too high expectati- ons which were nearly impossi- ble to be met. Critics have already matched it with Downton, which I cannot sup- port, as the crew around it have 4 years of experience and suc- cess to look back to, whereas Parade’s End has before only been adapted once, for theatre in 1964, starring the stage-le- gend Judi Dench, alongside Ro- nald Hines.

The odd person might say that the actors in the series overacted their characters. But this is not- hing of a problem in my opinion: Actors who “grew up” with thea- tre, like Benedict Cumberbatch in the leading role, tend to be a tad theatrical, yes, but they know how to enact the intricacy of the plot.

However, my bubbling over with excitement and anticipation could have let me overlook small faults, like the sometimes much- too-loud background music and noises that even drown out the dialogues, or the not-fully-labou- red storyline. I cannot deny that the series has its certain deficits, but it still is a “must-watch” for fans of the actors and the books as well as lovers of British period drama.

The end of paper books

Will they possibly vanish?

Books have become part of our everyday life. They have proven their worth throughout several centuries and have created hun- dreds of new opportunities for mankind. However, they now have to face an obstacle, which they are not sure to overcome. In times of advancing technology the market has generated a new device called eBook reader.

This certain gadget, which was created in order to facilitate our reading, has become more and more popular within the last years. This being said, the ques- tion arises whether the eBook is really a helpful market expansion or whether it could soon be the cause of the disappearance of the renowned paper book.

Generally, paper books have al- ways been a secure and reliable method of delivering and keep- ing information. While books were a rarity when they first oc- curred and people back then could call themselves lucky enough to have one, they have now become easily accessible to everyone. This in turn means that knowledge and information have become widespread and universal thanks to books, which have ever since delivered essen- tial data.

Now, could you imagine the priest preaching from a histori- cally relevant book like the Bible on an eBook reader? Neither do I! There are certain genres of writ- ing that we always associate with paper books, for instance in- cluding the law code or classics such as ‘Romeo and Juliet’.

The disappearance of the paper book would therefore implicate a huge cultural loss, meaning that a part of our history would vanish without further ado. Conse-

quently, it is unlikely to think of the extinction of these culturally essential goods or of them being replaced by so called eBooks.

Furthermore, a paper book can always be reread and passed on to others, whereas anything you find on the Internet could already be gone by tomorrow. Often the reader does not have any pre-

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costs of the acquisition and updating of an eBook reader to the purchase of a paper book, it results that the traditional book is the cheaper alternative in the long-term view.

Since most major newspapers and dictionaries have started offering online versions, the question arises whether this act on the Internet’s behalf could eventually be threatening for books. Basically, not at all! These online additions only serve as a quicker and more convenient way for us to get the information we are looking for instantaneously.

Online versions of usually printed texts do not require the dissolving of the paper book but rather offer an alternative to it. Let alone the fact that there are still numerous people who love the feeling they get from grabbing a book, curling up with it, reading page by page and feeling the material of the book between their fingertips – and honestly speaking: curling up with an eBook reader just doesn’t seem as appealing.

However, studies suggest that everybody born after 1980 is part of the “digital natives”, which means they belong to a generation that has grown up with technology surrounding it. Hardly anyone of these people ever needs a manual in order to see how things work; instead they just take a device in their hand and seem to naturally synchronize with it. The newest members of the so called “digital natives” are often confronted with electronic devices at school and during their free time, yet, not all of them would prefer eBooks.

But then again, many people would certainly claim that a book is way easier to control for both young and old because you basically can’t do anything wrong by turning page after page. This is certainly true, but who says that an eBook reader is much harder to control – especially when a recent study shows that about half of today’s eBook readership consists of elderly people who, among other things, prefer reading books on a screen because the text can be zoomed in and the font can be individually adapted.

In general, many people tend to stick to the traditional book, seeing eBooks as something like a market expansion instead of a replacement for the beloved paper book. Since the eBook reader has come to life, critics fear that the book might disappear, when in reality the majority of people see eBooks as a simplification and variety instead of a replacement of the paper book, which will certainly persist many more years.

Sylvia Plath

Beautiful frail flower in a gale-force wind

by Laura Rebosio

What about writing a journal for all the time of your life? Have you ever written something about yourself? Have you ever registered or tried to register every single variation of your thoughts or feelings? Have you ever contemplated the writing activity as a therapeutic one?

For Sylvia Plath, one of the American key figures in the female poetry scene of the twentieth century, keeping a journal was a means to give order, sense and beauty to her life; she regarded writing not only as a therapeutic activity, but also as a spiritual and almost a holy one. In fact, she totally dedicated herself to the writing, not exclusively by recording the shadows of her thoughts in a journal – already from the age of 11 – but by composing poems, inventing short stories and novels too.

She published two major works during her lifetime, The Bell Jar and a brief collection of poems titled The Colossus, about whom the contemporary critics wrote enthusiastic reviews.

I must admit that my first approach to Sylvia Plath was completely casual: in fact, fascinated as I am by any kind of collection of written impressions, and keeping myself one too, a red book on the shelf of a library attracted immediately my attention a couple of months ago, as the Italian title was “Diari”, i.e. “Journals”. I totally ignored who Sylvia Plath was, but it took me few days to enter in her life and settle down among her written lines, absorbing her conflicting but appealing habit of mind.

The first thing that I noticed was the immediacy of her art, a way of writing that, although rich of metaphorical images and intricate passages, reveals the profile of a gentle, although frail, soul. Without barriers between the reader and the writer, and in a narrative style – far away from the barrier-free but cryptic stream of consciousness by Joyce in Finnegans Wake, for example – Sylvia Plath revealed her troubled and lonely personality, who tended to decline most often the contacts with the outward world in order to pursue the perfection of her art.

Sylvia Plath has often been linked with the “Confessionalism”, or “confessional poetry”, a literary movement of the mid-1950s, whose name stems from M. L. Rosenthal’s review article Poetry as Confession, published in The Nation on 19 September 1959. The reviewed poetry collection was Life Studies by Robert Lowell, contemporary with Plath, ascribed as well to the school of “confessional poetry” along with Anne Sexton, John Berryman and W. D. Snodgrass. Ted Hughes, Plath’s husband, noted that Sylvia Plath shared with the other members of this school “the central experience of a shattering of the self, and the labor of fitting it together again or finding a new one.”

Sylvia Plath was a gifted student at Smith College, MA, winning several awards and publishing stories and poetry in national magazines, already from her adolescence. She continued to excel, but she had a low self-esteem. Therefore, she was not seldom unhappy about herself, and her psychological balance was unstable.

In other words, she was striving for an artistic self-fulfilment – and she actually did have a great command of her art – but she was lacking in the one of her own life. Sylvia Plath was a high-flier, an overachiever. She was egocentric and determinedly orientated towards success; a magnetic personality and her special charisma used to make her the girl of many guys’ dreams, even though most of them were almost afraid of her overwhelming personality. On the other side, however, she was not willing to yield easily to the compromises of married life.

Her fine sensibility and empathetic attitude towards life were both good and ill fortune. In fact, Sylvia Plath couldn’t find a balance between her dream of reaching success through her writing, and the real life she had to face when she married Ted Hughes, poet himself: this life was the conven-

Upon hearing the words ‘... and they lived happily ever after’ after listening to their favorite fairytale, every child’s eyes light up. And quite surely, everyone of us once was awed and then stated, ‘This is just like in a fairytale.’ But what if there existed no happy ending, not even for our beloved fairy-tale characters?

This must have been Bill Willingham’s thoughts back in 2002, when he created his much-lauded graphic novel Fables, published by DC Comics’s imprint Vertigo. In more than 20 volumes which contain 140 monthly-apparing issues up to now, Willingham retells the stories of both well-known and unknown fables. Basically, ‘fables’ is a term coined by Willingham himself to describe all sorts of fable characters and creatures from nursery rhymes, urban legends and other well-known childhood fables. His reinterpretation of the fables’ destinies starts off with the expulsion from their realms by an atrocious creature only known as the ‘Adversary’.

After a time of meandering, they eventually settle in our world and establish a clandestine community in New York city, which they baptise ‘Fabletown’. For this idea, Fables and its team have already landed over fourteen Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards – the comic industry’s equivalent to the Oscars so to say – including the award for the Best New Series in 2003. Furthermore, the series has been nominated several times for the coveted Hugo Award for Best Graphic Story, which is presented by the World Science Fiction Society. Thus it is not astounding that the prominent review site IGN called Fables ‘the best comic book currently being produced’. So let us have a closer look at the sometimes surprising twists of fate of our childhood idols.

Legends in exile - The fables’ new story

As already mentioned, all kinds of fables have to flee their homelands after the bloody expulsion by the Adversary. Hundreds of years ago, they fled to the human world and founded Fabletown in New York city. But obviously, some of the fables like Beast from ‘The beauty and the beast’ or creatures like trolls would cause a stir when wande-
turn everything into gold.

What do you think, is the legends’ new story literally legendary?

I gave a couple of people a short summary of the first happenings in Fables and asked them questions about it afterwards. The general tenor of the responses I received was a positive one – the concept of Fables is thought to be original, interesting and intriguing. Michael (21, music student) said, ‘Wow, this sounds amazing! In fact, it’s such a likely and logical idea that it makes you wonder ‘Why didn’t I think of it?’ but I still love it!’ The opinions of two other interviewees, Madeleine (21) and Juliana (20), both translation studies students, were unanimous: ‘Fairytales are our childhood dreams.

They are, as a matter of fact, unreal and filled with personalities and schemes interpreted as black or white. So branding the mundane version of their stories as wrong and euphemistic and revealing that the fables’ lives have in fact been more than real is a great idea. It’s more realistic though cruel. Particularly the dark truth about the seven dwarves. ’Contrary to the last remark, Michael thought that it was a genius idea to distort the intentions of some fables. The Woodsman of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, for example, actually intended to rob Little Red Riding Hood but stumbled upon Bigby who was trying to eat her. In the end, Woody saved her only because he was hoping to be rewarded.

Interestingly enough, only few people questioned considered the love story of the Big Bad Wolf and Snow White odd. As Bigby does not get too far out of character in his rough behaviour, most thought it was nice that he is trying to be a good person. I also told the interviewees about a few characters that do not occur in the comics, but in the game related to Fables. For instance the Little Mermaid serves as a prime example of the struggles the fables have to go through since she had to turn to prostitution in order to get by.

While Madeleine found the fact that the little mermaid prostitutes herself appalling, Michael thought her new story fits just fine. Yet, the revelation that Gepetto is in reality the gruesome Adversary left a nasty taste in all interviewees’ mouths. According to Fables, he started carving more living puppets when Pinocchio left him to travel the world. However, too much power clouds the mind and formerly nice Gepetto decided to take over the homeland’s rule with his puppets’ army.

New legends are born

At any rate, Fables has been branching out slowly and almost imperceptibly. For example the TV series ‘Once upon a time’ or the police procedural ‘Grimm’ both originate from the vision of creating a TV version of Fables. Their stories, however, ended up too far from the actual plot and therefore cannot be regarded as TV adaptations of the graphic novel.

Still, Willingham’s big hope to bring his characters to life is vivid. The Warner Bros. Studios are currently working on a live action Fables film and the independent digital publisher Telltale Games has developed an episodic adventure game on Fables called ‘The Wolf Among Us’. This game is officially confirmed as a prequel to the comic series and Bill Willingham even assisted in creating it. It also features a few interesting fables that do not appear in the novel, such as the urban legends of the Jersey Devil and Bloody Mary or the characters from the nursery rhymes ‘The Crooked Man’ and ‘Georgie Porgie’. If I may add, ‘The Wolf Among Us’ is highly recommendable and engaging, as are the comics. It must not be missed out on.

Also, at last year’s Comicon, the biggest annual comic fair in the world, Willingham announced that he will end Fables with issue #150 in early 2015. Naturally, his firm fan base is expectant and he himself said, ‘There is a sense of pressure that says, Don’t screw this up!’ Although fans are positive that the ending of Fables will be epic, Willingham is not willing to rest on his laurels and is already working on his new project ‘Gods and humans’.

At Comicon, he also stated, ‘I don’t trust success. It’s a stranger to me for the most part. Never allow yourself to be comfortable and say you’ve made it. Never coast on the last story. You have to build the next story.’
The anxiously awaited ending of *How I Met Your Mother* has come. After 9 seasons of family, friends, slaps, fights and legendary moments, CBS aired the final episode of the legendary TV show on March, 31. Weeks before a lot of gossip went through the media, especially social networks, and everyone was wondering if that was really going to happen. What then happened in the final episode was utterly surprising for the majority of the fans of *How I Met Your Mother*. To say the least, the reactions of the fans were wide apart and still are.

The final episode started, as is usual for *How I Met Your Mother*, with some jokes, happy everyday-life stories and flashbacks. But then after about 30 minutes everything changed. The dream couple Barney and Robin announced their divorce. And that should not be the only turn in the story. The gang drifts apart more or less over the years. Adulthood turns out to be not as easy as it seemed before. They all got kids, married and improved in work and other affairs. Therefore they spend not the same amount of time together as they did before. For instance, Robin hurled herself into her work, Marshall finally becomes judge and Barney turned into his old personality.

Ted and his wife Tracy McCon nell, the long-awaited mother, have a happy life and are close to their well-deserved ‘happily ever after’, until the mother dies due to an illness. So the death of his love is the reason why Ted decides to tell his kids about the story of how he met their mother, he says.

As it turns out, he accidentally centred the story more on Robin and him than on the kids’ mother. Ted tells his kids how he and Robin meet for the first time, how they split up, get back together, split up again and so on. Then the kids start to complain about that, because their mother is hardly in the story, but then the kids also encourage Ted to call Robin, since their mother is dead for more than 6 years, and it is time to start something new. So, probably he was trying to ask his kids for permission to date Aunt Robin again, because he still is in love with her.

As you can see the final episode is full of surprising moments. Many fans are shocked about how the producers wrote the ending. This ending of *How I Met Your Mother* is not what I expected either. I am not sure if I should like the final episode or not. The first thing I did not expect is the divorce of Barney and Robin. In the last season of *How I Met Your Mother* the viewer was shown how much they loved each other. Barney has even managed to develop a few completely new characteristics. But in the end he is the same ladies’ man as he was before, just older. The whole character development of the last few seasons is completely ruined in less than 15 minutes. The same goes for other characters.

For example, Robin starts to neglect her friends, family and love for her job again. The only thing that has not changed is the Lilly-and-Marshall thing. They still are the perfect couple and have found a happy family. Marshall improved in his job and makes his dream come true. They have a more or less happy life; so do Ted and his wife. Unfortunately, after years of happiness Ted’s wife contracted an illness and eventually died of it. This crucial moment only lasted 4 minutes out of the 50 minutes the grant final counts. I think this is way too little time taken for the main person, the mother, to pass away.

If the ending of the story was the death of the mother and Ted’s grieving for her, I would not have any complaints. But the rest of the last episode was absolutely different to what I had imagined and is in fact still unbelievable to me. What happened after he finished his story is still unbelievable for me. In my opinion, Ted ultimately ending up with Robin was the worst case scenario that could ever happen in this TV show.

I think whether you like this controversial ending or not depends on how you have regarded the whole series. I, for example, have seen it as “How Ted and Robin always split up and realize that they are not right for each other”. Others may have seen it as “How Ted and Robin continuously fall in love again and have always loved each other”.

But despite my shock and after some time to digest the events of the last episode, I have to admit that the ending is somehow fitting. On one hand the ending of *How I Met Your Mother* is really surprising and full of unhappy endings in a happy-ending story. But it shows how real life can be. Not everything stays as it was, friends come into your life and some friends step out of your life; your interests change and so do the people around you. The series has the courage to face everyday issues like divorce, death and break-ups in a realistic manner, after all. There is not always a happy ending every time you need one.

So I think that the ending is made very realistic. However, it has to be mentioned that the ending seems to be a bit out of the usual, regarding the rest of the TV show. The sitcom has never been as realistic as it was in the final episode. There have always been unrealistic magical tricks, utterly dumb pick-up scenarios (that always worked out, of course), and fantastic scenarios, like the “kakamouse” and, of course, unrealistic love stories and more, in the show. So I still have to say that Carter and Bays should have made their last episode a bit more like the rest of the show in order to avoid the somehow odd ambiance in and about it.

So I do not like some events in the final episode, most importantly the fact that Ted and Robin got back together, I can only recommend *How I Met Your Mother* to everybody who has not seen it yet. You will realize that the show still remains legendary and wait for it... daily.

Authors: Stefanie Böhm, Theresa Chin, Maximilian Gampl, Deborah Grieser, Antonia Hemetsberger, Bettina Hirnspurger, Aleksandra Kostic, Olena Kalchenko, Anna Krepper, Patrick Küng, Kristina Rancic, Laura Rebosio, Silke Rief, Nadine Rotter, Madeleine Sandholzer, Barbara Schaber, Pia Schorlemmer, Rosa Stahl, Teresa Staud, Verena Tscholl, Catarina Wetscher, Jenny Zeller

Layout & Design: Katharina Walter

The editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by the authors.
Überhaupt nichts. Versteh das, bitte, zunächst einmal. Dass Du Dich sofort und ganz klar an Dr. Sharpe erinnern wirst – und an seine Frau, daran hege ich keinen Zweifel. Es ist ja so, dass die Ge-
schichte bekannt ist, mir aber einige noch unbekannte Vorkomm-
nisse zu Ohren gekommen sind. Und so mache ich mir daran, sie
dir zu erzählen.

Meine Beziehung zum Doktor, zu seiner Frau und ihrer Freundin ist
in vielerlei Hinsicht außergewöhnlich. Ohne jetzt auf Erklärungen
einzugehen, die mir nicht zustehen, lass mich Dir sagen, dass die
Teile ihrer Geschichte, die unseren gegenwärtigen Zweck betreffen,
genau und – nach meinem besten Urteil – unparteiisch erzählt wer-
den, ob ich sie nun beobachten konnte oder nicht.

Niemand, so denke ich, der bei der Hochzeit war, träumte davon, dass es einmal eine solche Geschichte zu erzählen gäbe. Es war
eine so schöne, friedliche Hochzeit. Jeder, der dabei war, erinnert
sich daran, wie an einen seltenen Sonnenaufgang oder eine beson-
ders zarte Maiblume oder auch an die Melodie eines einfachen alten
Liedes, die klingt wie der Gesang einer Goldamsel und Schmetter-
linge und Tautropfen.

Wir waren nur wenige Gäste; wir alle kannten einander, der Tag war
strahlend und Harrie fiel weder in Ohnmacht noch brach sie in Trä-
nen aus. Es gab einige Brautjungfern – Pauline Dallas und eine Miss
– Jones, glaube ich – neben Harries jüngeren Schwestern; und die
Gäste waren gut gekleidet und sahen gut aus und fühlten sich alle
wohl, ganz wie zu Hause und einander ebenbürtig. Die städtischen
Cousinen in Spitzen und Perlen schlossen die Freunde vom Land
in grauer Wolle nicht aus und es gab kein Gedränge und keine ein-
zige von zu viel Zierat verdorbene Vorderseite.

Harrie kann nicht unbedingt als hübsch bezeichnet werden; aber
eine Frau muss schon sehr unscheinbar sein, wenn sie an ihrem
Hochzeitstag keinen angenehmen Anblick bietet. Harries Augen
leuchteten – ich habe nie zuvor solche Augen gesehen! – und sie
warf ihren Kopf zurück wie eine Königin bei der Krönung.

Ihr Vater vermählte sie. Der alte Mr. Bird ist ein seltsamer Mann, mit
sechzehn Jahren beginnenden Ansichten über viele Themen, unter anderem
über den Schatten einer gründlichen Prüfung auf die vollkommene Erfüllung der
Versprechungen in ihrer ganzen Tragweite unterzogen.

Hochzeiten sind stets eine traurige Angelegenheit für mich – so viel
trauriger als Begräbnisse, weil der Anfang eines Lebens eigentlich
trauriger ist als sein Ende. Die Bereitschaft, mit der junge Mädchen
etwas, das ihnen wichtig erscheint, zu begehen, und diejenige, die
wieder von ihrer Bräutigam, den sie mit dem Abend des Todes
verweigerte, wird als die traurigste der Hochzeiten erlebt.

Ich gebe die Worte der Zeremonie teils so genau wieder, weil sie mir gefiel, teils, weil ich inzwischen einige Male Gelegen-
heit hatte, mich an sie zu erinnern, und teils, weil ich mich damals
gesagt habe, wie viele verheiratete Männer und Frauen aus unse-
rem Bekanntenkreis vor Gott und der Menschheit eigentlich als
„rechtsmäßig angetrautes“ Ehepaar leben könnten, würde ihre Bin-
dung einer gründlichen Prüfung auf die vollkommene Erfüllung die-
er Versprechungen in ihrer ganzen Tragweite unterzogen.

Du versprichst, ihr ein treuer Ehemann zu
um ihr Wohlergehen zu bemühen wie um das deine. Du verbindest
alle männlichen Tugenden zu pflegen; und dich in allen Dingen
sehr zu lieben, wertzuschätzen und zu be-

„Ich erbitte vom Vater im Himmel, er möge Zeuge deiner Aufrichtig-
keit sein; du … nimmst nun diese Frau, deren Hand du hältst, zu
dermehrige angetrauten Ehefrau – und wählst unter allen
Frauen einzig sie. Du vertraust ihr als deiner best
en Freundin auf
deine Ehefrau – und wählst unter allen
Frauen einzig sie. Du vertraust ihr als deiner best
nen Freundin auf

Der Stoff umhüllte sie in einer langsam fließenden Be-
tätigung seiner Fehler begreift sie erst, nachdem sie einige Jahre
Wer den war, um die Parianvasen abzustauben, die Augen trocknete.

Es wäre schade gewesen, wenn Myron Sharpe das versäumen
hätte, also rief ich ihn von der Veranda, auf der er saß und Stuart
allauf die Sonnendurchfulte Land streicht – Stuart
Mill „Über die Freiheit“ las, herbei.

Wenn Du Dir nun eine eigene Meinung über einen Mann bildest, der
einen ganzen Vormittag im Oktober – wenn die Farben im flirrenden
Licht leuchten, wenn die Luft erfüllt ist vom süßen Duft der herab-
fallenden Kiefernadeln und der sanften Liebesung des Win
der, ihre Mutter, die ein wenig weinte, so wie Mütter am Tag vor der
Hochzeit weinen, glättete zärtlich eine kleine Falte; ein oder zwei
Brautjungfrauen saßen im Hof, und über die Treppe, und der schwarz-weiß
marmorisierten Linoleum boden des Flurs. Am Ende der Zimmerflucht stand, umrahmt von einer Reihe
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derm vorbei. Der Stoff umhüllte sie in einer langsam fließenden
Bewegung.

Durch ihren Schiefer, der schimmerte wie Perlen, schienen schwach
ihre Arme und der Schatten einer einzelnen, scharlachroten Blatts
fliert durch einen Vorhang auf ihre Stirn.

Als Harrie, die sich plötzlich umdrehte, sah uns, ihr Blick traf den ihres
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Nichits Neues (1869) - von Elizabeth Stuart Phelps

dabei, wie ich leise sagte: „Es muss für’s Leben passen; für ein ganzes Leben, Dr. Sharpe.“ Dr. Sharpe lächelte heiter. Er war sehr verlebt in dieses weiß-rot-rose Wöllichen, das gerade die Treppe hinaufgeschwebt war. Er hätte wohl nicht einmal Zweifel daran gehabt, dass es ‚passete‘, wenn es auf ihn zugewendet wäre, um das Wagnis von zwanzig Lebenszeiten mit ihm einzugehen.

Und dasselbe galt für Harrie, da war ich mir sicher. Sie stahl sich an diesem Abend zu ihm, nachdem ihr Brautkleid wegräumt worden war, und kniete in ihrem einfachen Musselinkleiden zu seinen Füßen, während ihr Haar, das durchscheinend geraten war, hinter ihren Ohren aus dem Netz kam – Harries Ohren waren sehr klein und hatten die Farbe von blassen Apfelblüten –, und wandte ihr ge- rötetes und erschöpftes Gesicht zu ihm hinauf.

„Myron, leg doch bitte das Buch zur Seite.\"

Myron legte das Buch zur Seite (irgendetwas über „Gallnererkran- kungen“) und blickte einen Moment lang stumm in das ihm zuge- wandte Gesicht.

Dr. Sharpe hatte immer wieder Momente, in denen er sich selbst sehr misstraute; vielleicht war das bei den meisten Männern so – oder sollte es sein. In diesem Moment wurde sein Gesicht ernst. Die kla- ren Augen dieses jungen Mädchens strahlten ihn an wie Lichter auf einem Altar. Unwürdig, wie seine Seele nun einmal war, hätte er ei- gentlich seine Schuhe ausziehen sollen. Der Boden, den er betrat, war heilig.


Ich glaube fest daran, dass Dr. Sharpe seine Frau zu jener Zeit so selbstlos liebte, wie er nur zu lieben wusste. Harrie schrieb mir oft, dass er „so gut“ zu ihr war. Sie war manchmal ein bisschen beun- ruhigt, dass er „so viel mehr wusste“ als sie, und manchmal über- kam sie das Bedürfnis, Zeitung zu lesen oder ihr Französisch zu wiederholen, und Fälle von Hydrophobie oder irgendein anderes, angenehmes Thema, das mit seinem Beruf zu tun hatte, zu studie- ren. Ihr Ehemann belächelte ihre Bemühungen, fand sie aber umso annehmlicher, als er ihre Beziehung zu ihrem Patienten Gelee in lustigen Formen zu machen, oder zu seinem Schöpfer und plapperte über Krupp und Masern, und zupfte dabei mit ihren kleinen, rosa Fingern an seinem Backenbart.

All das war, wie ich gesagt habe, bevor das erste Baby geboren wurde.

Es ist überraschend, was für vage Vorstellungen junge Leute im All- gemeinen und junge Männern im Besonderen von den Problemen und Mühen des Familienlebens haben, besonders vom Familienle- ben mit einem Einkommen von Tausendachtundachtzig plus die kör- perliche Verfassung der Amerikaner und die Dienstboten am Land.

Dr. Sharpe wusste ein bisschen über Krankheiten und Babys, Sorge und Wachhalten, aber dass sein eigenes Baby absichtlich bis zwei Uhr morgens wach lag und schrie, war ein Grund genug, sich stän- dig zu wundern, und dass es – er und Mrs. Sharpe hatten ihren ers- ten Streit über seine hartnäckige Angewohnheit, dass Kind „es“ zu nennen – dass es sich ausnahmslos dazu berufen fühlte, eine Kolik zu bekommen, gerade wenn er nach einer Nacht mit einem sterben- den Patienten ein Nickerchen machte, war eine Eigentümlichkeit kind- lichen Geistes, auf die er, gelinde gesagt, nicht vorbereitet war.

Lange Zeit war es für sein männliches Verständnis ein Mysterium, dass Biddy nicht Kindermädchen und Köchin zugleich sein konnte.
„Warum, was hat sie denn jetzt zu tun? Nichts außer Steaks grillen und Tee für zwei kochen!“ Die Tatsache, dass im Haus immer wenn er Harry in Ruhe für sich alleine hatte, um eine besonders ange- nehme Tasse Tee mit ihr zu trinken, plötzlich das Kreischen aus dem Kinderzimmer erforderte und dass dem Baby immer etwas fehlte; war jedes Mal wieder eine neue Überraschung; und warum sein Sohn und Erbe, wenn sie das Haus voll Gesellschaft, aber kein „Mädchen“ hatten und Harrie aufgrund eines starken Kopfwehs im Bett lag; aus- gerechnet dann von Scharlach bedroht war, war ein philosophisches Problem, über das er lange und gründlich nachdachte.

So wurden die alten süßen Gewohnheiten der langen Flitterwochen nach und nach auf die übliche Art und Weise durchbrochen. Harrie träumte nicht mehr auf den Klippen am gleißend hellen Meer zu Mit- tag, hatte keine Zeit, ein rotes Bild im Badekleid abzugeben; sie hatte selten die Kraft, in den Sonnenuntergang zu rudern, mit offe- nem Haar, die Bucht feuerte; und es gab niemanden, der sie vom Ufer aus betrachtet hätte. Es gab keine Spaziergänge mehr den Strand hinauf zum Abendessen, die glücklichen Fahrten in der Däm- merung fanden eine Ende; sie konnte nicht mehr auf das Knie ihres Ehemanns klettern, weil sie das schwere Baby auf dem ihren hatte.

Bald las sie auch keine Zeitungen mehr; Corinne und Racine sam- melten in Ruhe Staub auf ihrem Regal; Mrs. Sharpe bereitete keine aufwändigen Gelees mehr zu und fand keine Zeit, sich nach den Babys anderer zu erkundigen.

Nach einer Weile gewöhnt man sich an alles, besonders, wenn man zufällig ein Mann ist. Es hätte Dr. Sharpe überraschen, wenn er sich die Mühe gemacht hätte, darauf zu achten, – was er, denke ich, nie tat, – wie leicht er sich an seine einsamen Ausfahrten und unterbro- chenen Tees gewöhnte; an die Tatsache, dass er nicht länger Har- ries aufmerksames Gesicht an der Tür oder am Fenster sah; daran, dass er abendelang allein da saß, während sie dem quengelbem Baby mit ihrer süßen, etwas müden Stimme vorsang; dass er sich ins „Gästezimmer“ stahl, um zu schlafen, wenn das Baby nachts weinte und Harrie fast jede Stunde aufstand, zwischen Wiege und Bett hin und her eilte, mit ihm im Zimmer auf und ab ging oder neben ihm saß und sang oder liegend selbst weinte, aus schierer Verzweif- lung, weil sie so müde war; er gewöhnte sich an die einsamen Spa- ziergänge; an häufige Besuche bei Nachbarn, um die Wahlen zu diskutieren oder den Typhus in der Stadt; daran, dass er vergaß, dass die Kommunikationsfähigkeit seiner Frau über Bigby und Zah- nen hinausgehen könnte, dass sie vielleicht manchmal wieder Lust auf eine Dämmerungsfahrt haben könnte, eine sonnige Segelfahrt, auf das Glitzern und die Frische, auf Träumen, auf Berührungen, auf Lieblosungen, all diese Dummheit ihrer Gesichter Verlieb- ter in den ersten Tagen ihrer Ehe; er gewöhnte sich daran, seine ei- genen Wege zu gehen, und sie die ihrigen gehen zu lassen.

Doch er liebte sie, liebte nur sie und liebte sie sehr. Daran zweifelte er nicht. Und er hielt sich an die Überraschung, sie auch nicht. Ich kann mich an einen Besuch in ihrem Haus erinnern, bei dem ich kaum verber- gen konnte, wie sehr ich erschrak, nachdem ich gehört hatte, dass sie ihn „Dr. Sharpe“ nannte. Ich rief sie gleich darauf von den Kin- dern weg unter dem Vorwand, dass ich Hilfe beim Auspacken be- nötigte. Ich schloss die Tür ab, zog sie neben mich auf eine Holztruhe, nahm ihre beiden Hände in meine und betrachtete ihr Gesicht. Sie war eine gut gekleidete Frau, wie ein Krupp, wie ein Armeeuniform, wie ein Seidegewand; und Harrie stöhnte über der vorletzten Manschette, wie sehr ihr Rücken schmerzte und ihre Schläfen pochten, und sich dieser fesselnden Beschäftigung gewidmet hat, wird ver- stehen, wie sehr ihr Rücken schmerzte und ihre Schläfen pochten, wie sie ihre Finger waren und wie sie ihre Finger waren, warum ihnen Augen tränten, ihr Haar nicht hochgesteckt war, ihr Geist abgestumpft war; warum die Stimmen der Kinder unerträglich, das Knallen einer Türklingel, die Vergangenheit ein verschwommenes Fleckchen, die Zukunft unerträglich, das Leben eine Last und Freundschaft ein Mythos warnten, warum ihr Haar nicht hochgesteckt war und ihr Kragen herunterhing. Miss Dallas kam einen Tag zu früh, und wie es der Zufall wollte, war Harrie an diesem Nachmittag damit beschäftigt, Hemden zu- zu, während sie mit einem „Dr. Sharpe“ zu ihr herein, wie Miss Dallas rauschte mit Handschuhen in einem sehr kleidsamen Reisekostüm mit Schleier, „Harrie, Harrie, deine Freundin ist hier. Ich habe sie durch einen zuckenden Zufall am Bahnhof getroffen und mit nach Hause genom- men.“ Und Miss Dallas rauschte mit Handschuhen in einer Parfumwolke in einem sehr kleidsamen Reisekostüm mit Schleier, das der neuesten Mode entsprach, zu ihr herein.

Harrie war zu sehr eine Dame, als dass sie auch nur ein Wort für eine Entschuldigung verschwendet hätte, also eilte sie so, wie sie war, mit ihrem Kattern, und zündete die Kinder herabhängenden Kränze, in Paulines stattliche Arme und streckte ihr ihre lieben, brennenden Wan- gen zum Küssen entgegen.

Aber ihr Ehemann sah verärget aus.

In seinem besten Jackett kam er vor dem Tee hinunter, um ihren Gast zu unterhalten. Bigby hatte sich an diesem Tag den Nachmittag freigemacht, und Harrie eilte mit schmerzendem Rücken hin und her, um Tee zu machen und die Kinder zu waschen. Sie hatte keine Zeit, um sich zurechtzumachen, und anstatt eine hungrige Reisende
Ja", sagte Harrie. "Er weiß sehr viel. Das habe ich schon immer ge-
was er gestern Abend über präadamitische Menschen gesagt hat."
und nähten; Harrie verkrampfte ihre Schultern und schwärzte sich
Am nächsten Tag saßen Miss Dallas und Mrs. Sharpe zusammen
und Harrie weinte ein wenig und fühlte sich, als könne sie allein
Hemden hatte arbeiten müssen, und küsste sie, während er sprach;
Kattunkleider hatten Harrie noch nie gestanden, und dieses Kleid
und die Essigkaraffe verschüttet; ihr Hut war blau - er war ein Ge-
Doktor, seine Frau und ihr Gast – zusammen mit so wenigen Kin-
„Deine Freundin ist ein kluges Mädchen", sagte er aufmunternd, als
„Pauline ist so hübsch und intelligent!", schrieb sie mir. „Ich wusste
tig das Baby hoch und ließ anmutig ihre zierliche, teure Uhr zur
Kenntnisse von kurzen und langen Röcken. Er war wohl ein Dut-
man dann drei Kinder hat, um die man sich kümmern muss, ist es
Es begann unangenehm zu werden; Miss Dallas – die sich bei Strei-
be merkt, dass sie sich nicht zum Reden aufgelegt fühlte, und war
wie müde sie war, denn ihr Ehemann, wie er später erwähnte, hatte
nahezu durchgeschnitten, und die Essigkaraffe verschüttet; ihr Hut
so freundlich, ihre Freundin selbst zu unterhalten. Miss Dallas war eine sehr
Dummchen sein, bevor man heiratet, oder auch nicht. Aber wenn
ja schon immer, dass ich ein kleines Dummchen bin. Man kann ein
zeigte, dass sie doppelt so viel gelesen und gedacht hatte, als eigentlich der Fall war.
Myron Sharpe hatte seine Frau immer für attraktiv gehalten. Dass das niemand sonst tat, war ihm einerlei gewesen. Er hatte oft in die munteren Augen der kleinen Harrie Bird geschaut und ihr gesagt, dass sie sehr hübsch sei. Theoretisch dachte er auch, dass sie sehr hübsch war, jetzt, wo sie die Mutter seiner drei Kinder war und sich damit abbrackerte, seine Hemden zuzuschneiden.
Miss Dallas war eine stattliche, wohlproportionierte Frau, die lange
gegenwart zu lassen, strich sie sich ihr Haar glatt, knottete sich ein Band des Kragens zu und kam in ihrem Kattunkleid herunter.
Darth, warf ihr einen recht überraschten Blick zu. Er warf ihr an
„Daheim gibt es viel zu tun", schrieb sie mir. „Ich wusste ja gar nichts davon.
Kleider und blaue Hauben tragen musste. So achtete Harrie, die auch normalerweise nie sehr viel von sich zeigte, auf die Tätigkeitseinstellungen zwischen Eheleuten prinzipiell nie einmischte – hob anmutig das Kind hervor, nachdem Pauline vier oder fünf Tage lang im Haus gewesen war, dermaßen genau auf ihre eigenen Fehler, dass sie permanent niedergeschlagen war, was weder zu ihrem Aussehen noch zu ihrer
„Dein Ehemann ist ein sehr intelligenter Mensch, Harrie", bemerkte Miss Dallas, während sie lavendelfarbene und zitronengelbe Wolle
Straße sieht, eine Frau mit feinem und ausgeprägtem Geschmack
die Besonderheiten von Miss Dallas, dass sie nie mehr als eine oder
drei Farben für die selben Zeit trug. Harrie trug, wie es der Zufall wollte, über ihrem violetten Kleid ein langweiliges graues Schultertuch (Rocco hatte auf dem passenden Überkleid zwei Tintenfäden und die Essigkaraffe verschüttet); ihr Hut war blau - er war ein Ge-
Eines Morgens kam Mrs. Sharpe etwas in den Sinn. Ihr Mann hatte schlicht und einfach eine ganze Woche lang jeden Abend zu Hause verbracht. Sie befand sich im Kinderzimmer, schaute langsam in ihrem niedrigen Schaukelstuhl, während sie das Baby im Arm hielt und gleichzeitig versuchte, Strümpfe zu stopfen, als sie der Ge-
Einige von meiner Cousine Mehitabel."
Aber war das nicht ihre Stimme auf der Veranda? Der Schaukelstuhl
wie sich nur Frauen über solche Kleinigkeiten Gedanken machen
‚nicht sagen können, ob das Schultertuch seiner Frau himmelblau oder erbsengrün war; er wusste nichts von den Tintenfleckten; er
warf dabei einen Blick hinein. „Ich habe mich sehr für das interessiert,
so dass man dann drei Kinder hat, um die man sich kümmern muss, ist es
„Ja", sagte Harrie. „Er weiß sehr viel. Das habe ich schon immer ge-
„Deine Freundin ist ein kluges Mädchen", sagte er aufmunternd, als
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„Ja", sagte Harrie. „Er weiß sehr viel. Das habe ich schon immer ge-
das Kind hätte sie ruiniert; ihr Kleid schleife im Sand hinterher – sie
war von präadamitischen Menschen. Aber was sich unter politisch
und gedacht hatte, als eigentlich der Fall war.
Myron Sharpe hatte seine Frau immer für attraktiv gehalten. Dass das niemand sonst tat, war ihm einerlei gewesen. Er hatte oft in die munteren Augen der kleinen Harrie Bird geschaut und ihr gesagt, dass sie sehr hübsch sei. Theoretisch dachte er auch, dass sie sehr hübsch war, jetzt, wo sie die Mutter seiner drei Kinder war und sich damit abbrackerte, seine Hemden zuzuschneiden.
Miss Dallas war eine stattliche, wohlproportionierte Frau, die lange
Geheimnissen von kurzen und langen Röcken. Er war wohl ein Dut-
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des Kragens zu und kam in ihrem Kattunkleid herunter.
Dr. Sharpe warf ihr einen recht überraschten Blick zu. Er warf ihr an
warsicht.
Dehnte, die auch normalerweise nie sehr viel von sich hielt, nachdem Pauline vier oder fünf Tage lang im Haus gewesen war, dermaßen genau auf ihre eigenen Fehler, dass sie permanent niedergeschlagen war, was weder zu ihrem Aussehen noch zu ihrer
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rondinaussäße – und was hielt er von Brownlow? etc. etc. „Tennessee!", rief Harrie; „warum, seit wann ist dann Tennessee
tig das Baby hoch und ließ anmutig ihre zierliche, teure Uhr zur
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... stoppten abrupt und Harrie sah durch die Vorhänge hinunter. Das Pferd des Doktors war am Tor angebunden. Der Doktor saß in einem Gartenstühle und fächelte sich mit seinem Hut Luft zu: Miss Dallas saß auf dem anderen Stuhl; sie plauderte und wickelte ihre gol- dene Wolle um die Finger, - es war auffallend, dass sie diesen Morgen nur goldene Wolle verwendete; ihr Kleid war zartblau und violett hätte nicht dazu gespasst.

"Ich dachte, deine Hausbesuche würden bis zum Essen dauern, Myron", rief Harrie durch die Vorhänge.

"Ich dachte dasselbe", antwortete Myron ruhig, "aber es scheint nicht so zu sein. Willst du nicht herunterkommen?"

Harrie dankte ihm und erklärte freundlich und nonchalant, sie könne das Baby nicht allein lassen. Dies war beinahe das erste Mal, dass sich das Mädchen der Schauspielerin etwas zu schaffen machte – da das Baby eigentlich gerade beim Einschlafen war und Harrie dies wusste.

Sie drehte sich ruhig von dem Fenster weg. Sie konnte nicht wütend sein und zanken; oder laut werden und weinen. Sie legte die kleine Har- rie in ihre Wiege, kroch aufs Bett und lag für lange Zeit vollkommen still da.


"Duftpuder natürlich", erklärte Miss Dallas lächelnd.


"Was soll dieser Unsin, Harrie?" fragte ihr Ehemann in scharfem Ton. Ein anderes Mal fuhren der Doktor und Pauline bei Sonnenunter- gang am Strand entlang, als sie um eine enge Kurve bogen und Pauline voll Verzückung ausrief:

"Schau, welch wundervolles Wesen! Wer kann das sein?"


"Harrie, das ist ausgesprochen leislingsinnig! Was ist denn nur in dich gefahren?"


Eines Tages ging sie in ihr Zimmer und sprerte die Kinder aus. Der Wind kam von Osten und es regnete in Strömen. Der Doktor und Pauline spielten unter Schach – Außerdem würde sie höchstwahrscheinlich nicht vermissen. Sie nahm ihr Hochzeitskleid aus der Schublade, wo sie es liebvolle
Abgelegt hatte. Das Kleid legte sich wie Raureif über ihr ausgewaschenes Hauskleid, die lieben cremefarbenen Handschuhe hingen lose auf ihren abgearbeiteten Fingern.

Arme liebe Handschuhe! Armes liebes Perlenkleid! Sie hatte ein wenig Mitleid mit ihrer Unschuld und Unwissenheit und Vertrauensseligkeit.

Ihre heißen Tränen fielen auf den Stoff und hinterließen Flecken. Was, wenn es eine Möglichkeit gäbe, durch sie wieder zur kleinen Harrie Bird zu werden? Würde sie sie ergreifen?

Die Stimmen ihrer Kinder riefen nach ihr. Drei unschuldige Babys – wie viele sollten es noch werden? Unschuldige Babys, die im Schatten eines zerstörten, lieblosen Zuhauses aufwachsen mussten! Was hatte sie getan? Was hatten sie getan?

Harrie war eine starke, gesunde, liebe Seele voll starker, gesunder Lebenslust. An diesem trostlosen Nachmittag jedoch sank sie im Kinderzimmer zu Boden und bat Gott, inmitten der gelben Hochzeitsspitze, sie sterben zu lassen.

Es war schon spät, als sie hinaufgingen, um nach Harrie zu sehen. Sie war eingenickt oder in Ohnmacht gefallen und das Fenster hatte sie leere Augen brannten und sie leer auf das Wasser, wo die sie in die Wellen hielt, als sie der Drang danach überkam, und sie lehnte sich über die Seite des Bootes und sah auf das Wasser hinab. Nur ein einziges weiteres Segel war auf der Bucht zu sehen. Sie lehnte sich über die Seite des Bootes und sah auf das Wasser hinab. Nur ein einziges weiteres Segel war auf der Bucht zu sehen.

Dann schlug der Wind die Tür zu.


„Treiben, treiben hin und her“, summte Pauline.

Das Licht im Westen verblasste ein bisschen und hinterließ einen angespannten Ausdruck im Gesicht des Doktors.

„Ein ehrlicher Mann“, sagte der Doktor. „Ein ehrlicher Mann, der seine Frau hingebungsvoll liebt, aber der in ihr nicht das Einfühlsamkeitssinn der Verständnis seiner intellektuellen Bedürfnisse, diese–“

„Ich empfinde für solch einen Mann immer tiefstes Mitgefühl“, unterbrach ihn Miss Dallas sanft.

„Sich ein Mann“, fragte der Doktor in einem nachdenklichen Ton, „diente von den flachen Konventionalitäten einer unbekannten Welt nicht gehindert werden an einer Freundschaft, in der seine müde Seele Ruhe, Kraft und Anregung finden wird?“

„Sicherlich nicht“, sagte Pauline, ihre Augen wanderten über das Wasser; glänzend gelbe, grüne und indigoblaue Schatten legten sich nun über seine rötliche Färbung.

„Pauline.“ Der Sharpes Stimme war leise. „Pauline!“

Pauline drehte ihren wunderschönen Kopf. „Es gibt Ehen für diese Welt; echte und ehrenhafte Ehen, aber für diese Welt. Und dann gibt
es Ehen für die Ewigkeit - Verbindungen der Seele."

Nun, Myron Sharpe ist kein Narr, aber genau das sagte er zu Miss Pauline Dallas, draußen auf dem Boot eines Abends im September. Wenn Du glaubst, dass nicht auch weisere Männer als Myron Sharpe unter solchen Umständen noch unverzeihlicheren Unsinn von sich gegeben haben, dann wirf doch den ersten Stein auf ihn.

„Schon möglich“, sagte Miss Dallas mit einem Seufzer, „aber sieh! Wie dunkel es geworden ist, während wir gesprochen haben. Wir werden noch in einen Sturm kommen; aber ich fürchte mich nicht - mit dir an meiner Seite.“


Beim Zurükrudern hatten sie mühsam gegen die starke Ebbe an-kämpfen müssen. Der Himmel und das Meer waren schwarz. Der Nebel zog wie ein Geist über die Ebene, die Klippe und das Feld. Der Regen prasselte auf sie herab, als sie den Strand hinaufgingen. Auf einmal blieb Pauline stehen. „Was war das?“ „Ich habe nichts gehört.“ „Ein Schrei, - ich glaube, ich habe einen Schrei gehört, da unten im Nebel.“

Sie gingen zurück und stiegen ein Stück die rutschige Küste hinun-ter. Miss Dallas nahm ihren Hut ab, um zu hören. „Du wirst dich erkälten“, sagte Dr. Sharpe besorgt. Sie setzte ihn ter. Miss Dallas nahm ihren Hut ab, um zu hören.

Gemeinsam gingen sie nach Hause. Miss Dallas hatte sich das weiße Handgelenk verstaucht, als sie versuchte, beim Rudern zu helfen; er zog es sanft durch seinen Arm.


Eine lange Zeit erinnerte er sich an diese Worte und an den Ton sei-ner Stimme, als er sie sagte; er erinnert sich wohl jetzt noch daran, wie dunkel es geworden ist, während wir gesprochen haben. Wir werden noch in einen Sturm kommen; aber ich fürchte mich nicht - mit dir an meiner Seite.“


Dr. Sharpe schien verwirrt, als er mit großen Schritten zur Türe ging. Selbstsame war das erste, was er tat, das Thermometer von der Wand zu holen und es anzusehen. Ein Bad bei solchen Temperaturen? Gedanken an Harries Vorfahren schossen ihm wie Blitze durch den Kopf, während er das Ding wieder von der Nagel hängte. War da nicht einmal von einem Großonkel die Rede gewesen, der in einer Anstalt gestorben war? Während er sich den Mantel zu-knüpfte, spielte sich die Zukunft von drei Kindern mit einer geistes-kranken Mutter vor seinem inneren Auge ab.

„Soll ich dir helfen, sie zu suchen?“ fragte Miss Dallas zitiernd. „Oder soll ich hier bleiben und heiße Küche vorbereiten oder...? Was soll ich tun?“ „Es ist mir egal, was du tust!“ sagte der Arzt ungestüm. Gerechter-weise möchte ich erwähnen, dass es ihm tatsächlich egal war. In diesem Moment hätte er nicht einen einzigen flüchtigen Blick auf Harries kleines, vertrautes Gesicht geben in der Abendbrot mit seiner ‘Seelenfreundin’ getauscht. Plötzlich überkam ihn ein kalter Hass gegen sie: er hasste den Klang ihrer sanften Stimme; er hasste das Rauschen ihrer Kleider, als sie mit einem Ta-schentuch an den Augen an der Tür lehnte. Erinnerte er sich etwa in diesem Moment an ein Versprechen, das er diesem kleinen Ge-sicht, das ihm jetzt fehlte, an einem längst vergangenen Oktobertag gegeben hatte? Als er hinaustrat in den Sturm, tröstete er sich da etwa mit den Worten: „Du vertraust ihr, Myron Sharpe, ‚als deiner besten Freundin auf Erden’.“

Wie es der Zufall, das Schicksal oder Gott – was auch immer du be-vorzugst – so war, hatte der Doktor gerade die Tür hinter sich zu-genommen, als er mich im Regen vom Bahnhof herbeiführen sah. Ich hörte genug von der Geschichte, während er mir von der Kutsche herunterhalf. Ich ließ meinen Hut und meine Tasche bei Miss Dallas und zog meinen wasserfesten Umhang über. Dann wandten wir uns dem Meer zu, ohne ein weiteres Wort.


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...Dort sterben – in meiner Hörweite – und keine Chance –

Und während er dies sagte, verstummten die Rufe.

Er drehte sich mit grauem Gesicht um, zitterte etwas, dann lächelte er ein wenig und begann mit entsetzlichem Frohsinn zu behaupten:

„Das ist bestimmt nur für einen Moment, wisst ihr. Wir werden sie wieder hören, Hansom!"


Während er sich über die Seile beugte, sagte George grimmy und leise:

„Könnt’ die ganze Nacht dauern, die Leiche zu finden.”

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Die Flämme war heruntergebrannt und das Licht der Lampe war matt. Der Regen klopfte auf eine unheimliche Weise an die Fenster. Ich hörte es nie gerne, wenn der Regen an die Fenster schlägt. In dieser Nacht missfiel es mir noch mehr als sonst und ich versuchte, die Flämme ein wenig zum Lodern zu bringen, als die Haustüre aufgeweht wurde.


Miss Dallas sah jedoch über ihre Schulter und zitterte.


„Du vermisst sie sicherlich”, sagte die arme Harrie zitternd, sie war noch sehr schwach.

„Ja. Sie war sehr lieb zu den Kindern, während ich krank war.”

„Sehr.”

„Sie war sehr lieb zu den Kindern.”

„Harrie!” sagte der Doktor, der keinen Rat mehr wusste. „Das wäre für eine Szene; aber es war so augenfällig, dass ich mich nicht mehr an sie erinnern konnte.”

„Hannah!” – Ich denke, ich muss dich ins Bett schicken.”

„Ja. Sie war sehr lieb zu den Kindern.”

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Die beste Freundschaft eines Mannes ist eine Frau mit gutem Verstand und gutem Herzen, die er liebt und die ihn liebt”.

„Dazu kommt, dass die Ehefrau die beste Freundschaft des Mannes sein sollte – in jeglicher Hinsicht der beste Freundin – oder sie hätte niemals seine Frau werden dürfen.”


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