

**FREE
DOM**



**EEB3's Musicians | STEM vs Humanities
Historical diamonds and more...**



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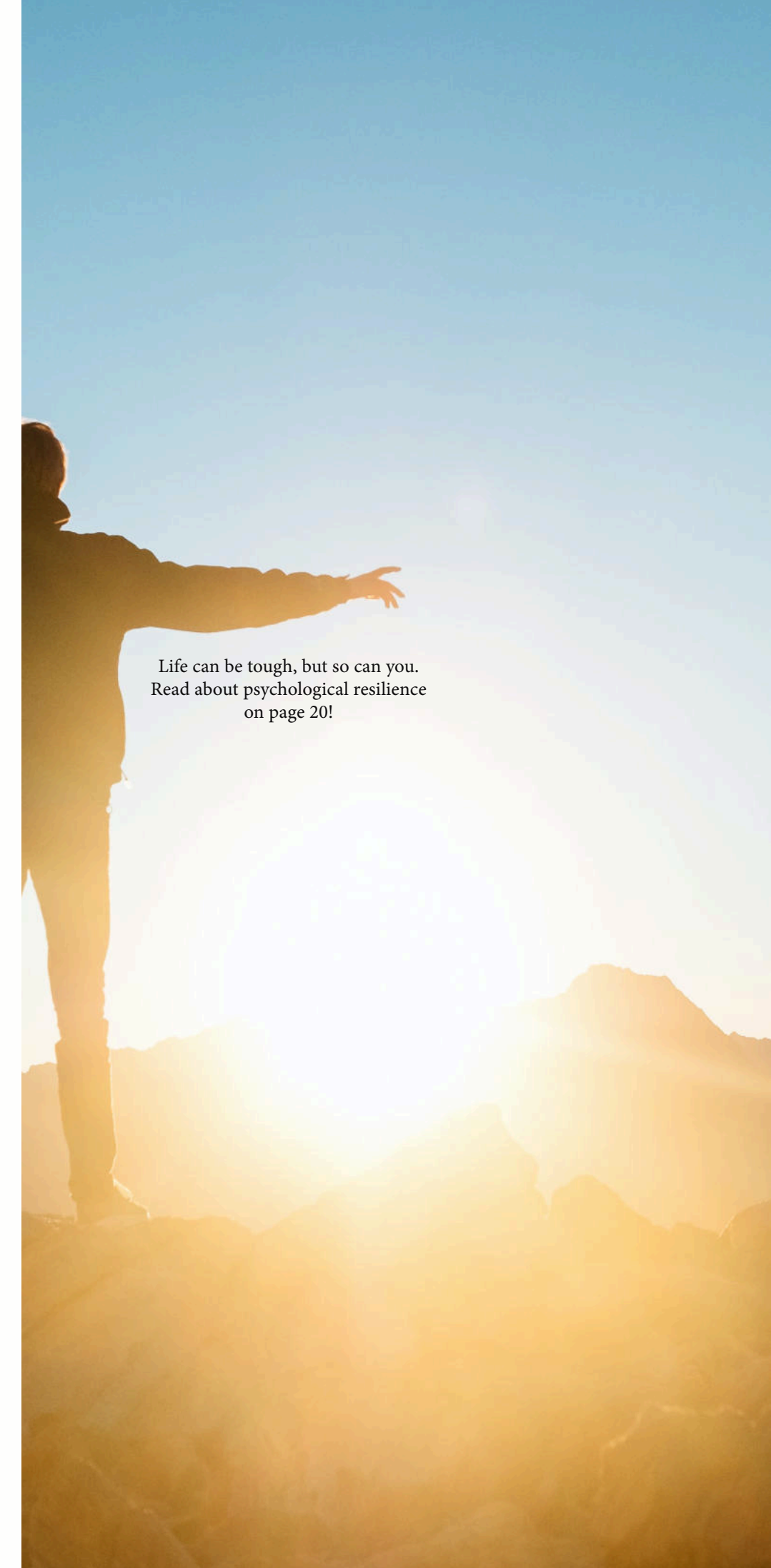
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Summer 2020



Life can be tough, but so can you.
Read about psychological resilience
on page 20!

Featured Articles



The BEE3 is the “by students for students” magazine of the European School of Brussels III.

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What time is it?

Springfest 21 is alive! That’s right, you read that correctly; Springfest 21 is coming, and it’s closer than it’s ever been. The plan is to split Springfest up into a one-week event, which will allow all students from different years to enjoy it safely. This means each year group will have one specific day to enjoy Springfest. You can find the schedule by clicking [here](#).

During the planned lunch-breaks, students will be provided with packed lunch they will have previously ordered with our Food

and Drinks crew, and will have the possibility to listen to music performed by live musicians! Students’ safety will, of course, remain the top priority. We are also delighted to announce that The Act performances and the Fashion Show will take place every day. All in all, we are working to make this day as memorable, enjoyable and safe as possible!

The SF21 core team looks forward to seeing all of you at Springfest 21!



The Midnight Library // book review

BEATRIX BUTTERS

The Midnight Library tells the story of 35-year-old gifted but unfulfilled Nora Seed in a space between life and death. This purgatory takes the shape of a library. In this library, Nora meets her former school librarian, Mrs. Elm, who reveals that if you are not supposed to move on yet, you are sent to this place; for Nora, that is the titular *Midnight Library*. Nora is both dead and alive during her stay at the Midnight Library, a stay that could end at any moment. But whilst Nora is there, time stops in the universe in which she died, and she is presented with the opportunity to live any of the possible lives she could have had, had

she taken different decisions. These universes are kept within books found on the infinite shelves of the library. Nora can enter each universe by reading the first line. If she finds a life that she prefers to her original life, she has the option to stay there. Otherwise, she returns to the library, where she can try another life. Nora can keep switching lives until she finds one that she likes, or until she is ready to move on forever.

Reading this book, I was immersed in each of Nora’s worlds, revealing all her regrets and all of her dreams. She is a terrific character, and her story resonated with me. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you my favourite part, as it



would give away too much of the story, but I highly recommend this book to everyone. No matter what your favourite genre is, you will find something to like in *The Midnight Library*.

Do you want to be part of the BEE3 team?

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Freedom á la Snufkin

“I’m longing to get away from this stony country. Even a poet can have enough sometimes”
– *Snufkin, Comet in Moominland (Tove Jansson)*

Not so long ago, I rummaged through my bookshelf looking for something (anything) that I hadn’t already read through during quarantine; to my surprise, I stumbled upon a dusty copy of my favourite childhood book series: the Moomins. Revolving around a family of hippopotamus-like creatures living in the strange and magical Moominvalley, it still amazes me how author Tove Jansson managed to use this literary world to explore such complex themes like family, growing up, longing and even depression. From the daring exploits of Moominpapa to the mischievous high jinks of Little My, I was just bubbling with excitement to delve back into the lives of these characters.

One of my favourite members of the Moomin cast, with perhaps the most interesting philosophy, is the carefree wanderer Snufkin. Snufkin enjoys his own company above all, relying on no one but himself for happiness, traveling simply for the sake of travel. Like the many creatures of Moominvalley, I, too, admire Snufkin for his self-sufficiency; especially now, as I am confined to my bedroom for weeks on end, I would give anything to be able to go out and explore foreign cities once more. But such freedoms have unfortunately been restricted in the name of health and safety; for many of us, we have arrived at a point where we question how long we can still stand confinement – in this edition of the magazine, we actually feature an opinion essay about adverse effects of lockdown on our teenage generation; read it on page 22!

In an episode of the 1990 TV adaptation, the inhabitants of Moominvalley are visited by a prophet who tells them to “go back to nature and enjoy a free life!” – but what is a free life? Freedom is perhaps the most fundamental value of our western societies – to be able to live our lives according to our own needs and wants. In the episode, each character presents their own interpretation of freedom, whether

that entails living in a tree, selling “freedom juice”, expressing oneself through clothing or setting sail towards distant lands. We are each responsible for our own happiness, and living in a free society enables us to pursue said happiness, in however way we choose; or as Snufkin says in *Moominsummer Madness*: “The main thing in life is to know your own mind”. If you want to better understand why we make some of the choices we do, and how freedom of choice could be expanded, perhaps take a look at a wonderful article on the choice between STEM and humanities subjects on pages 6-9. Alternatively, have a look at pages 12-14 for an interview with EEB3’s musicians to understand how they exercise their freedom of expression.

The Moomins, however, learn that freedom has its limits – namely when Moominmama mysteriously disappears. The Moomins realise that by chasing an idealised version of their own happiness, based purely on the expansion of their own freedoms, they (quite literally) lose sight of others; those who are dear to them. Nobody knows this better than Snufkin, who is often conflicted between travelling the world and pursuing his own happiness, and staying in Moominvalley with his best friend and greatest admirer, Moomintroll. “Perhaps you’re not always happy, even if you are free. Freedom can be surprisingly complicated, you see”, Snufkin comments.

Giving up part of our freedom to protect our loved ones is at the core of why the lockdowns were imposed in the first place. Really, living in a society at all means that you need to face certain restrictions in regards to your behaviour towards others, so that you may not infringe *their* freedom and *their* rights. It is important for us to have dialogues regarding the extent and limits of freedom, and with this issue of the magazine we aim to explore some of them.

Thank you for reading the BEE3.



Education’s ancient war of words (and numbers)

BEATRIX BUTTERS
ILLUSTRATIONS // VALENTINA SKACKOVA

What is STEM?
It is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

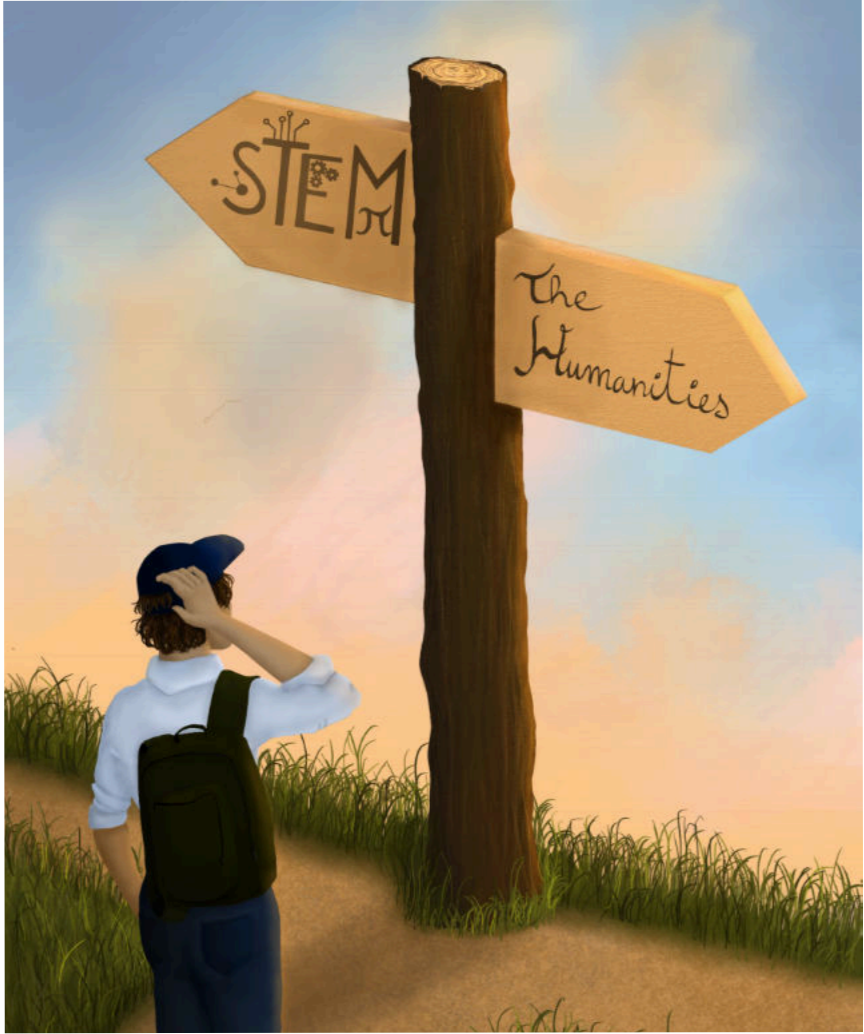
What are the humanities?
They are academic fields that examine parts of human society and culture.

An age-old dispute...

Which academic field is more worthwhile pursuing: the humanities or STEM? This debate is often raised amongst academics and friends – and is now even more relevant for students, as the 4th industrial revolution raises concerns regarding the value of the humanities. This article aims to demystify the underlying biases behind educational methods and students’ choices.

The intelligence stigma

The rapidly changing global economy, the sustainability challenge and many other factors fuel the need for evolution within the education systems. Digitalisation supports the opinion that STEM is more important than the humanities: as we become more and more dependent on technology, it is logical that STEM seems more valuable. Most students (and possibly teachers) in our school would probably agree that someone following STEM subjects is deemed more intelligent than someone who enjoys the humanities.



STEM is essential to tackling many of the world’s challenges, but understanding the human condition remains fundamental for students. The humanities, arts, and social sciences stimulate critical thinking skills and creativity, which are vital for a well-functioning society. This doesn’t mean that one is less important

than the other; they engender different ways of thinking. There is no point in making a comparison between the two in the context of societal importance. Knowledge should be pursued, and in different ways, to gain a better understanding and to think innovatively.

Economic pressure

Money is another factor: STEM allegedly leads to more job opportunities and higher salaries. This is an overly simplified perspective. When comparing STEM with the humanities, you should take all aspects of well-being into account, not only the economic ones. Why? Although money does, to some extent, make you happy, research suggests that there is a point at which it stops improving your well-being, or even reduces it. These “well-being metrics” increase the perception of life satisfaction beyond purely economic out-

comes. They reflect other traits such as psychological health, participation in democracy, and respect for human rights. These studies indicate that students should not pursue a STEM education or career for money, but rather “choose what’s most interesting and what’s most valuable to them” [1]. The main takeaway from this is that material wealth is not the only measurement of well-being. Many consider the cost of studying the humanities at university unjustified, as it is not as easy to get a job straight after graduating. Nonetheless, such studies provide a foundation for career develop-

ment. According to research conducted at Harvard University [2], later career earnings of graduates in other fields catch up with STEM. Nowadays, the job market evolves rapidly; according to a Washington Post article in 2015 [3], children might have to work until the age of 100 in 40 different jobs. It could be that somewhere along the way, your interests change and that you will no longer want to work in the same field. Thus, no matter which field of initial studies you opt for, lifelong learning will play a part.

Political motives

The political motives for the promotion of a STEM education are heavily linked to the economic ones. Choices between humanities or STEM determine whether a state has the skillset it needs for

a well-functioning economy. Governments are encouraging STEM-related development in response to demand. However, it is hard to get students to study STEM subjects and there are many reasons for this. Students often tend to

think that they are not “smart” enough for the sciences. STEM seems inaccessible to many, mainly due to its image in the media. If governments want to encourage STEM, one of the main tasks would be to change this perception.

Gender and ethnic/racial imbalance

Some of the factors that affect choices in school are obvious and keep coming up. One of these is the gender imbalance in STEM. It is clear from Fig.1 that women are far more likely to study the humanities than STEM subjects. There are many reasons for this, from a lack of role models [4] to sexism in STEM departments. In the EU, fewer than one in five ICT professionals are female. These numbers underline the opportunity for progress, and it only takes a quick Google search to find the various organisations that are trying to encourage girls to get into STEM (the EU is funding it as well) [5].

Although the gender gap in studying STEM subjects has narrowed, women are still less likely to pursue STEM careers than men. It has been proven that stu-

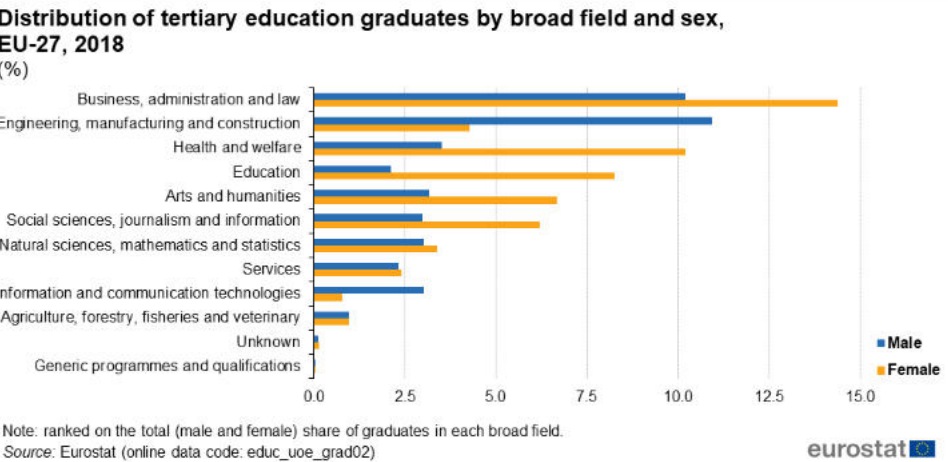


Fig. 1

dents with higher confidence in mathematics are more likely to choose a STEM career. In a Finnish study, mathematically capable individuals with high verbal skills

(the majority of which were female) were less likely to pursue STEM careers than those with high mathematical skills but moderate verbal skills (mostly male).

In other words, it is not that women cannot succeed in STEM, but rather that they tend to have more options.

Work associated with women is devalued by society, and when more women enter a career, the pay for that career tends to drop. Child-care services (one of the most woman-dominated fields) is one of the lowest-paid professions. Historically,

men dominate profitable industries. An example of this is computer programming. During the Space Race, many women worked in the control systems at NASA to launch men into space. It did not take long for computer programming to be established as “a women’s job”, while hardware engineering was considered men’s work. Then in the 1980s, the influ-

ence the tech industry held was realised, and a portion of employers began to connect female staff to mistakes and inefficiencies. New personality tests favoured men and might have been the origin of the stereotype of the antisocial computer geek.

Student choice is an extremely under-researched topic, especially concerning ethnic background. One of the few studies conducted found Black and Latinx students in the University of Texas at Austin were more likely to drop STEM majors than their White peers. The data showed similar percentages of students within the ethnic groups had STEM majors (19% of White students, 20% of Latinx students and 18% of Black students), but the rates of degree completion were much lower in Latinx and Black students. While 58% of the White students with a STEM major went on to graduate, only 43% of the Latinx and 34% of the Black students did so [6]. According to the lead author of the study “[Black and Latinx youth] from the same family backgrounds (parental education, family income, place of birth, ...) as White youth were still more likely to exit a STEM major and leave college without a degree.” In other fields, Black and Latinx

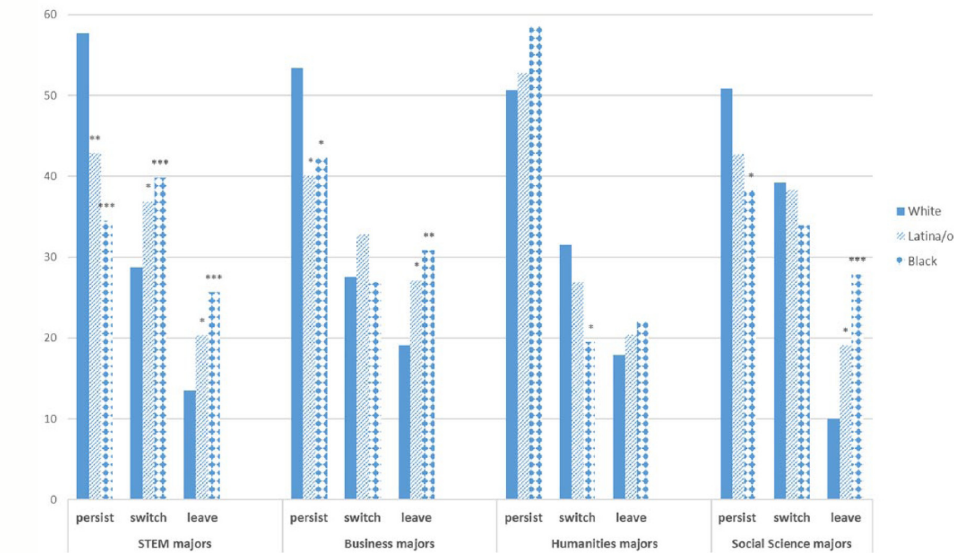


Fig. 2

pupils with similar family backgrounds did not drop out of the courses at a higher rate (see Fig. 2). More research needs to be conducted in order to understand the underlying issues behind these discrepancies so we may work towards

equal educational opportunities. Without a change, female students will keep dismissing STEM as a potential career path and certain ethnic/racial groups will continue dropping their degrees at a rapid rate.

Language section bias

One issue that is specific to European Schools when discussing students’ choice between STEM and the humanities is the number of students to form a class. The number of language sections in the European Schools has quadrupled since the first school was established in 1953. The system has become more complex over

the years, trying to mirror the education systems of all 27 member states. This factor is more significant for some language sections than others. For example, a student in the Czech section is less likely to be able to take maths 8 in their native language than someone in the francophone section due to the minimum number of students required to form a class. In this case, the Czech student has

two choices: (a) drop the option entirely, or (b) struggle to keep up in an advanced maths course taught in their second or third language. Neither is ideal. For the Francophone section, the opposite issue is problematic, as there may be too many students in one class. This can lead to difficulties for both teachers and students, and discourage students from choosing advanced maths.

Mutual exclusivity; should you do both subjects?

Most students are undecided about their course options. Some struggle choosing between humanities or STEM, as we are moulded from a young age to believe that those are the only two options. Knowing that by

picking one, you are rejecting the other is both a blessing and a curse. Studying both is sometimes frowned upon. You are seen as indecisive, and specific subjects are prerequisites for certain degrees. Variety in education allows students to expand their skills set and be better pre-

pared for the workforce and life in general. Both humanities and STEM subjects can be beneficial. However, the subjects must align with the interests of the students, and this is much more important than the domain itself.

Open Curriculum

The skills a pupil should possess after secondary school have shifted and broadened. Learning to learn (and learning autonomously) is more important than ever. Letting students choose what they want to learn is an option. The open curriculum approach used by Brown (a top-tier university in the US) is a perfect example of this. With their method, students explore different fields

of education and find out what they like most. Then they can create their own curriculum centred around what interests them. Putting university students in charge of their own education cultivates the love for learning that is vital for lifelong learning. It is, as they call it, a “flexible and rigorous” education. This approach may not be ideal for European Schools, as they are for children under the age of 18, and this way of learning

puts a lot of responsibility on students to find their purpose at a young age. It is difficult enough for most of us to have to choose a few subjects at 15. But as mentioned before, more well-being is generally achieved through following one’s interests, so if education systems were to give students a more freedom to follow a broad range of subjects they enjoy, the long-term results could be very positive.

Conclusion

Neither educational path is better than the other. There are advantages to being educated in the humanities and to being educated in STEM.

Further empirical research on this topic would help draw a better conclusion, but all in all, it does not matter if you want to

follow many interests in different fields or delve deeply into one area, as long as you like what you are doing.



The psychology behind phobias

Anything goes, when it comes to fear...

KATY KOPP

If you are not familiar with the term “phobias” yet, it is basically an extreme/ irrational case of anxiety or fear towards a certain thing/ certain things. Think of *Acrophobia*, the fear of heights, *Arachnophobia*, the fear of spiders, or *Claustrophobia*, the fear of confined or crowded spaces. These phobias can often lead to a certain degree of panic, and the person experiencing the phobia can even have symptoms similar to the ones of a panic-attack. For example: were you to have a fear of rats, and if you were to encounter one in your basic mathematics class – it could also be your French class if you wish – you’d quickly go into a state of panic and anxiety, your “fight-or-flight” response would switch on, and you might even go as far as to jump onto a table just to avoid that darn rodent at all cost. This would be a classic case of *Musophobia*, the fear of rats, or rodents.

But how do we get these fears? Well, there can be many reasons for the development of certain phobias, but one seemingly common cause would be what is called “social learning”. Let’s switch our last example with the mouse up a little, and say that instead of a student, you were the teacher of a bunch of youngsters, age of 6 or so. The reaction from our first example stays the same, you panic and frantically jump onto one of the desks, flailing your arms around in fear as on the brink of tears, panic arises within you. The students you are hypothetically teaching, who have not yet associated the



rat with anything, see this panicked reaction, and therefore now associate the rat with danger, so of course, they’ll go into a state of panic as well. Or at least most of them should. So now with this new learned danger, some of these kids will continue to fear rats in the future. Of course this sort of *extreme* fear might not stick around long for some, or it might, but that really depends on the child at the end. Of course, its not all about “social learning”, there are many more obscure as well as common phobias that just can’t always be taken in through that, for example: *Xantophobia*, the fear of the colour yellow, or one of my favourites: *Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia*, which ironically means the fear of long words. Obviously, these aren’t phobias we can typically learn through “social learning”, because:
1 It’s not quite as common to encounter someone who reacts frantically when seeing a long word
2 Especially once we exit our impressionable youth, we can use common sense and more rational thinking and reason: “hey, there is no reason for me to develop a fear of long words, as there is no way of these words hurting me, neither have I been proven otherwise.”

Anxiety is a common experience we all share in one way or another. It is something that is constantly lurking within us, and a good example of this would be our phobias, a more extreme version of certain anxieties that we have.

So, why do some people have them at all? Well, as some of you might have guessed, for us to end up with phobias we have to somehow link them with danger, so certain things can often be linked to past traumatic experiences, or from having been convinced something is dangerous. Let me use a personal example to illustrate this: I went for a jog once, and I came across a quite obviously dead snake on the street. Seeing it brought me panic; my heart racing, I shouted and jumped around in fear. I had never even properly encountered a snake before, and although this snake was very much not alive, and very much not a threat to me, I still reacted frantically. This was because of all these terrible snake stories I had heard before, so my brain was convinced that although the snake was dead, I was still in danger. As irrational as that sounds, that’s just something common that comes with phobias. Our brain justifies them since the thing in question has already been associated with danger, and at the moment of panic, nothing seems to be out of the realm of possibilities.
Of course, we can always grow out of old phobias, but we can also be exposed to new ones – anything goes when it comes to this quite interesting phenomenon: fear.

Fun facts! Elevens... elevens everywhere.

ALEXANDRA BARTOVIC

Pluto was named by an 11-Year-Old

Pluto was discovered in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh and Percival Lowell, who had predicted the existence of such a Planet X. Falconer Madan read about the discovery in the news and told his granddaughter, 11-year-old Venetia Burney, about it. Venetia suggested the planet should be named Pluto, in honour of the Roman God of the Underworld, who was able to make himself invisible. The name was forwarded on to the Lowell Observatory, where Pluto was discovered. On the 1st of May 1930, Pluto got its official name. It’s not certain whether she was the first person to propose the name Pluto. Historically, however, she has been credited with it.



11 species of fish can walk on land

Mudskippers are an example of a fish that can walk on land. They spend most of their time on land and store water in their large gills. But how do they do this? It has to do with their bone structure. Mudskippers, along with some other fish, have pelvic (or ventral) fins. As you can see from the image, the fin is placed lower compared to a pectoral fin (common fin), and the fin’s structure, shaped a bit like a human hand, allows them to climb.



The boy who stayed awake for 11 days

In December 1963, two boys, as part of their science fair project, decided to stay awake for as long as possible. Eventually one of them set the world record for the longest amount of time a human has gone without sleep. The two boys, Bruce McAllister and Randy Gardner, started their experiment, which ended on the 8th of January 1964. 17-year-old Randy managed to stay awake for 11 days and 25 minutes. Numerous experiments were carried out on animals (a cat managed to stay awake for 15 days but then died), and it is something that is still explored. Tony Wright, an author and consciousness researcher, claims to have beaten Gardner’s record.

The deepest oceanic trench in the world is about 11 000 m deep

The Mariana Trench is the deepest oceanic trench in the world, located in the western Pacific Ocean. First discovered in 1875, its depth was recorded at around 8,000m. However, in 2009, using the sonar system, scientists recorded its depth at 11,000 m. Here’s how the sonar system works: a device (sonar device) sends sound waves down through the water. When the sound waves hit objects (e.g., fish, vegetation, or the seabed) they bounce back to the surface. The sonar device measures the amount of time it takes for the sound waves to hit the object and bounce back to the surface.

Quick facts

- 1 An average adult’s skin weighs about 11 pounds (5kg).
- 2 World War I ended on the 11th day of the 11th month, at the 11th hour.
- 3 South Africa has 11 official languages (the most in the world): Pedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, Tsonga, Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Xhosa, and Zulu.
- 4 Japan is the 11th most populated country in the world, with 126 million inhabitants.
- 5 An average person breathes in around 11,000 litres of air every day.
- 6 The base of the Statue of Liberty, is shaped in an 11-pointed stars



Given the rise of streaming platforms, it is easier than ever to discover music from around the globe. Now, while this is obviously an incredible opportunity, it can lead us to overlook music close to us – something I am guilty of as well. So, for this BEE3 issue, I decided to interview three very talented artists from our own school – **Gemma Lua** (Gemma Timpano), **Matucho** (Matis Jürgensen), and **Cami** (Camille Ruiz) – about their music and experiences as young artists. While their experiences and views are similar in some respects, but by no means identical. But first, let's establish the basics:

How would you describe the style of music you make?

Gemma Lua: I'd say on a large scale it's mainly pop, maybe alternative pop in some cases.
Matucho: The one I release I would say is hip-hop, more specifically – I'm not sure if it's a thing, but my favourite rapper calls it "lyricism". So, when you really give meaning to the words, the power is really in the words.
Cami: I'd say it's pop. I'm mainly influenced by pop or indie style, so I'd say it's in that category of music.

Who are your main stylistic influences?

G: Lyrically I really admire artists like Taylor Swift, Lana Del Rey, Billie Eilish. Musically I really admire Pink Floyd, I love their dynamics and really try to imitate that in my music. I also really admire their experimentalism. Other artists like the Smiths for instrumentals, so I have a very large range of influences. I also write

poetry, which I translate into songwriting, and there I'm influenced by people like T.S. Elliot or Yates.
M: I'd say the first ones that really brought me the love for the combination of heavy drums and poetry (so the lyrics) were Tupac and Joey Bada\$. Otherwise, what really inspired my French rap was Nekfeu, he really inspired my flow. Lastly, I would say Sticky Fingers, an Australian rock/indie band and their vibe is just – I don't know, it just really makes me happy.
C: I'm mainly inspired lyrically by groups like Men I Trust, L'Impératrice, but also people like Jaden Smith.

One thing they all have in common is an early start when it comes to music. Gemma Lua, growing up in a musical family and going to pubs and gigs to see her father's band play from an early age, started learning instruments very young

and began singing at eleven. She started writing music herself when she "started having things to write about", so the beginning of her teenage years. Matucho, similarly, began taking violin lessons at three years old, but quickly switched to piano after realising it wasn't his thing. He taught himself how to play the guitar and sing in S4 and began writing rap lyrics. Cami also began singing at a young age, discovering what karaoke was at age ten and recording herself singing, prompting her to take singing lessons.

At some point, they all took a leap of faith of sorts – releasing their music to the world, on various platforms such as YouTube, Spotify and SoundCloud. As they are amateurs, so don't have a record label, they use a distributor – incidentally they all use the same one, *DistroKid*, and have "only good things to say" about it. "You pay them 20 euros a year, and then

ASTRID KUTOS

EEB3's musicians



Click on the albums for the Spotify link!

you can drop as many songs or albums as you want". If anyone has more questions about this, Matis kindly offered to help out, so feel free to contact him about it.

But what is it that pushes someone towards taking that step?

G: I used to record cover and post them on SoundCloud, and then when I started writing songs, I thought I would do the same. It was more for myself, to have kind of a repertoire of everything I'd done music wise – I never expected people to find my SoundCloud. And when I came here, I did. People started proposing the idea of putting [my songs] on Spotify, which to me seemed completely unreal – Spotify was, to me, a platform for professional musicians and record labels. So, I never really considered it until about a

year in, when I did some research and found out that anyone could put something on Spotify.

M: In winter of S4 I started a hip-hop collective with two friends from school. The first time we released something was I think March of S4, so 2018, on YouTube. It was never really a question if we wanted to release it or not, because we always wanted to share our thoughts and emotions.

C: So, as you know, I released my first song Pilot on Spotify and a lot of other streaming platforms this February, but before that I already composed music. It was the first one I wanted to release because I was inspired by other musicians in our school, like Gemma or Matis and everything. So, I just asked them what it was like and talked about it with my family.

Gemma, you released your second album "The Things I Couldn't Say" in November 2020. Could you briefly walk me through that?

G: It was written over the span of a roller-coaster of a year, 2020. So, for all of us, I'm sure everyone can understand that there was a lot going on, and nothing at all. So, it's kind of all the feelings that I collected over that year that I would write about, and then I would record as I went.

Matucho, you also recently released a new song, Bloch 50, in February. What's the story behind that?

M: Bloch 50 is actually the longest story. Bloch 50 is the neighbourhood where I live, and I've lived here since forever – I had my first steps here, first friendships, first everything. That's why I really wanted to make a song about this, because I really developed myself here. The idea came to me first in S4 – it didn't have the name Bloch 50, but the theme, the vibe, was exactly the same. And over the years I always updated the song, the lyrics, everything the beat. The song I released has nothing in common with the original song.

Cami, also you released your first single, Pilot, in February 2021. How did that come about?

C: For my music Prébac, I was a performance major, so I had to provide two performances and one composition. So, what I did was I found a video from like three years ago where I had recorded really cool chords and a little melody, so I tried to improve it and to find lyrics. So, for the inspiration I really thought about a situ-



ation that I was feeling at the moment with the help of other lyrics, because I don't always know how to formulate my feelings.

When it comes to inspiration overall, the three artists describe similar influences: largely based on their own experiences, memories or personal struggles. Gemma describes using music as an outlet: "I'm someone who hates talking about emotions and emotional expression, so music is my outlet for anything that I feel, anything that I experience." While Matucho also bases his lyrics on his own experiences, particularly "things that make [him] happy in the moment", he also mentioned wishing to explore more in the future, creating songs that are like stories. Drawing inspiration from her favourite artists, Cami mixes personal experiences with musical styles she likes, aiming to write lyrics that other people can "can really identify with through their own experiences".

When it comes to the impact of streaming platforms on their experiences, the answers are all rather positive. While of course the financial aspect is brought

up – Gemma recalling that she made a profit of about 10 euros from her first album, which received around three thousand streams - the exposure argument seems to win out, particularly for younger artists just starting out. As does the global aspect: both Gemma and Cami saw a high number of streams from surprising countries, Ecuador and the Philippines respectively, despite never having visited them and not knowing anybody there. As Cami puts it: "If it had only been on a CD that I would distribute to my friends, it would never have had the same impact".

Since many people at our school share your music once its released, it's a reasonable assumption that most students have heard some of your songs. How do you feel about that? Do you separate yourself from your music to an extent?

G: I think when I released my first album, it came as a bit of a shock to me because I kind of hadn't expected people to put the pieces together – that the person writing the songs and the person they saw in school was the same person.

I didn't realise that by putting out my feelings to thousands of people, I was actually putting out my feelings to thousands of people. And so that clicked a while after for me, and it the second album it was a lot easier and a lot better.

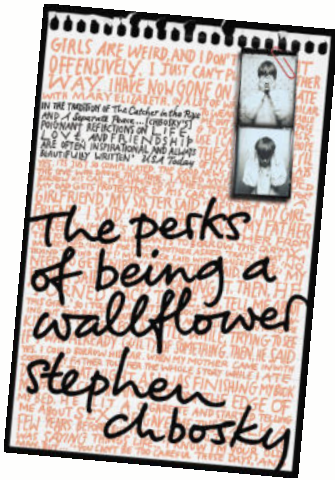
M: I don't really know, because all the people I talk to, when they look at me, the first thing they think of isn't the music, because they've known me for much longer. But I am eternally grateful for how kind so many people were, how supportive, how lovely they really were, their feedback. I'd say I don't separate myself from my music, because the music I make is really me at that moment.

C: I think because I didn't write too literal lyrics, I wasn't afraid of people knowing too much about my personal life. I'm not afraid that people will learn too much about me and I'm happy to see people listen to my music.

While only Cami plans to pursue music professionally, hoping to study it at university, all three musicians plan on continuing to release music, so keep an eye out for future releases!

Read these books!

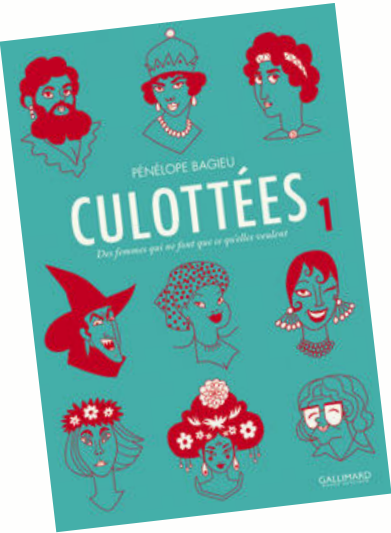
CHARLOTTE TULKENS



THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER

BY STEPHEN CHBOSKY

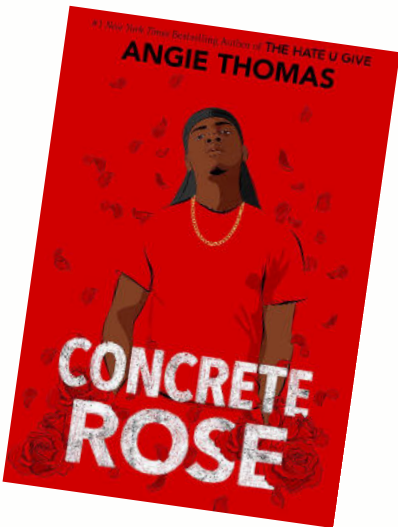
In *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* we follow Charlie, a wallflower, meaning he is someone who is always present and nice but stays on the sidelines. This story is told through letters addressed to a friend of Charlie's. This makes it a very personal way of storytelling in which we have this special connection with Charlie. He's a protagonist I think all of us can relate to, in one way or another. He's such a sweet and innocent character that, without even realising it, you start caring for him. We follow him on his coming-of-age story, set in high school, where he starts making friends and creating important relationships. At the end there's a plot-twist waiting for you, so keep on reading, because it will be worth it. This book has been adapted into a movie with the same name starring Logan Lerman, Emma Watson and Ezra Miller. After reading this amazing story you can watch the movie which has been very well adapted. I highly recommend reading this book. I believe that depending on your experiences in life, each reader will have a different view on it – but, that is the beauty of the story.



LES CULOTTÉES

BY PÉNÉLOPE BAGIEU

Les Culottées est une série en bande dessinée constituée de deux tomes. Dans chaque tome nous découvrons 15 femmes ayant existées et dont la destinée a amélioré le monde. Plus précisément, nous suivons des femmes de plusieurs siècles différents qui, chacune à leur tour, combattent le sexisme dans leur société, et la nôtre. Ces histoires se lisent et relisent, chaque lecture étant tout aussi savoureuse que la dernière. De la femme à barbe à Peggy Guggenheim en passant par Joséphine Baker vous découvrirez des femmes souvent méconnues qui ont pourtant transformé notre société en prenant leur destin en main. Les histoires sont toutes très bien racontées et Pénélope Bagieu montre un vrai talent de dessinatrice. Son style d'écriture et celui de son dessin se mélangent parfaitement pour créer des portraits qui se lisent facilement et avec plaisir. Chaque petite biographie reste avec vous bien après l'avoir lue car elles sont toutes aussi intéressantes les unes que les autres. Je vous recommande fortement de lire ces deux tomes, car après les avoir lus vous serez impressionnés par chacune de ces femmes incroyables !



CONCRETE ROSE

BY ANGIE THOMAS

Just like all of Angie Thomas's novels, *Concrete Rose* discusses a particularly important topic that we don't often read about: teen pregnancy. Set in the 90's, we meet Maverick, a 17-year-old boy who just discovered that he's a father. We follow him through his life-changing journey as he juggles school, his new baby boy and his relationships. Through the story, Angie Thomas gives excellent social commentary on this situation that often happens in our society. Angie Thomas's writing style is one of the reasons I love this book so much. It pulls you into the story, and you feel like you are in the streets with Mav. This story is a quick read that will have you hooked until the very last page. One of the things I loved while reading this book was the family relationship between Maverick and his parents, as Angie Thomas shows us once again what family is all about. She did an excellent job with sprinkling some humour throughout the story, which made *Concrete Rose* an even better reading experience. I highly recommend reading this amazing story, and when you're finished reading it you can continue on with *The Hate U Give*, in which you follow Maverick's children.

Fate: The Winx Saga review

Netflix’s take on “Winx Club”

NATHALIE DE LA CALEJA OROZCO

If you grew up in the early 2000s you’ve probably heard about or even watched *Winx Club*, a very popular Italian animated series on Nickelodeon about teen fairies who study magic in a school called “Alfea” located in a place called “Magix” (the center of what’s called the “Magic Dimension”). The show revolves around Bloom, the main character, who lives in the human world but finds out she has fairy magic and moves to the Magic Dimension. The series contains a myriad of different adventures, love stories, and more, in which Bloom and her friends are involved. The original show has been running for 8 seasons with season 9 getting released this year.

So, you can imagine how excited all *Winx Club* fans got (including me!) when Netflix confirmed their live action take on it: “*Fate: The Winx Saga*”. This version is directed towards teenagers, whilst the cartoon was more appropriate for younger audiences.

In this version of the show, our protagonist Bloom (Abigail Cowen), finds out she has fire powers after an accident occurred at her house. Subsequently, she decides to go to the “Alfea College for Fairies”, in a dimension called the “Other-world”. She lies to her parents by telling them she’ll be attending a boarding school in Switzerland, so they have no idea that she has these mystical powers. She gets assigned a suite with four other girls, whom she later calls her best friends: Musa (Elisha Applebaum), Stella

(Hannah van der Westhuysen), Terra (Eliot Salt) and Aisha (Precious Mustapha).

Alfea, apart from being a fairy school, it is also a school for “specialists”, a group of boys who are trained to become warriors.

Bloom and her friends get enrolled in mysteries and adventures related to Bloom’s origins, whilst working together with specialists: Riven (Freddie Thorp) and Sky (Danny Griffin). This also includes some spicy romantic encounters. Beatrix (Sadie Soverall), who – at first glance – appears very sweet and gentle, later reveals herself to be the mischievous antagonist of the season. The main issue they all face is battling beings called “The Burned Ones” who appear to go after Bloom and her powers. What do the Burned Ones want? Will Bloom discover her origins? What is Beatrix’s

motive? All these questions will get answered if you decide to watch the show.

Obviously, when Netflix first announced its live action *Winx*-based series, we all knew it would contain a few changes – however, there were a lot of differences and not all of them pleased the fans, so allow me to compare and contrast both versions:

The most noticeable change is the tone of the live-action version. It’s darker, more somber, and it has been said to resemble the tone of *Riverdale*, perhaps one of the most drama-filled shows currently running on television. This wasn’t as shocking as one might think, due to the fact that it is targeted at a more mature audience, and most teen shows nowadays tend to have an edgier tone. However, *Winx Club* is known for its bright, vibrant colours and its bubbly and light-hearted tone. So for the producers

to steer off so far from the source material definitely came as a surprise to dedicated *Winx Club* fans.

Such fans came to question *Fate: The Winx Saga*’s fashion choices. The *Winx* fairies are known for wearing very high fashion, editorial, bold outfits, however, in the Netflix version, they wear more earth-like, less colourful, darker toned outfits, so this was a bit of a disappointment to the hardcore fans of their original fashion. When it comes to the transformations and wings, in *Fate*, they don’t have usual transformations nor do they all have signature wings (at least in this season), whilst in the cartoon they transformed in almost every episode. Though what most fans are enraged about is the blatant whitewashing and the missing characters. In the animated series we had a diverse group of friends, with Musa the music fairy being Asian, Flora the nature

fairy being Latina and Aisha the water fairy being Black. Unfortunately, it’s quite common to cast white actors or partly-coloured actors to play fully coloured roles, for example: Musa in *Fate* is played by Elisha Applebaum, who is mostly white and ¼ Asian, and Flora is not even in the live-action; instead we have her cousin Terra who is completely white and portrayed by Eliot Salt. Nevertheless, the hate isn’t directed towards the actresses, it’s directed towards the casting directors. Even though two characters suffered whitewashing, Aisha is still Black and is portrayed by Precious Mustapha. Apart from this whitewashing dilemma, fans weren’t at all pleased with Tecna, Flora, Brandon and more missing, who played crucial roles in *Winx Club*, with Tecna and Flora being part of the iconic friend group. It created even more confusion amongst fans, why an important protagon-

ist such as Flora would be left out, and her cousin be included. In relation to the nemesis, *Fate*’s Beatrix is not even in the original cartoon. The original antagonists are a group of witches called the “Trix”, who go to a school for witches called “Cloud Tower” – but it could be a possibility for them to join the show in later seasons; nothing has been confirmed yet. Another big change, which might actually be positive, is that in *Winx Club* the specialists go to a separate school called “Red Fountain”, whilst in Netflix’s version they go to Alfea. This represents a move towards more gender equality for the *Winx* universe.

Moving on, the romantic couple pairings are different in *Winx Club* than in *Fate*; not all the original couples remained the same and the live action contains a little more “boyfriend drama” – another symptom of the move towards the teen melodrama genre.

Lastly, the Nickelodeon show contained a lot of show tunes, whilst this version lacks music, which is ironic considering Musa is a music fairy... except that *Fate*’s producers instead designated her as an “empath” meaning that she is extraordinarily empathic towards others.

Overall, as someone who has grown up watching *Winx Club*, I think this show is definitely watchable, but if you’re expecting it to be exactly, if not similar to the cartoon, you will mostly likely not enjoy it. However, if you enjoy dark teen dramas and would like to see the light-hearted fairies in an edgier tone, go for it – you’ll definitely love it! I personally enjoyed it as I would with any other teen drama. I have to admit that the production is quite good, the special effects are very well done, but as I said before, it’s surely not the same as the original and beloved *Winx Club*.



The Winx Saga cast; © NETFLIX

The Kohinoor Diamond

ERIKA KAVVADA

The origins of this 105-carat gemstone are shrouded in mystery. Some claim it was unearthed in India's Kollur mine in the 13th century, while others say that it was found in a dry river bed. According to superstition, it is also cursed. Currently, it can be found in the Tower of London, on Queen Elizabeth's crown. How did this legendary gem end up so far from its place of origin? Who is the rightful owner? To answer these questions we must first understand its history.

PICTURED: Queen Victoria wearing the Kohinoor (Franz Xaver Winterhalter, 1856)

The earliest record of the diamond dates back to Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire, in the 16th century. According to his diary, it was gifted to him after he conquered Delhi and Agra in 1526. Historians are unsure whether the 187-carat diamond he wrote about was in fact the Kohinoor.

The diamond finds itself next on the Peacock throne of Shah Jahan, the fifth Mughal emperor. Unfortunately, while in the possession of his son and successor Aurangzeb, it was crudely cut by the Venetian lapidarist Hortense Borgia, bringing its weight down to 186 carats. Once again, this story is not entirely accurate, as it is likely the Orlov (now part of Catherine the Great's scepter in the Kremlin), was mistaken for the Kohinoor.

In 1739, the Mughal treasury was looted by Nadir Shah of Persia, who took the diamond and many other historic jewels. This is when the infamous diamond got its name, as the Shah exclaimed it was like a "Mountain of Light", or Koh-I-Noor, and was taken to modern-day Afghanistan, where it would remain for 70 years.

Following Nadir Shah's murder, his grandson came in possession of the diamond in 1751, who then gave it to Ahmad Shah Durrani, founder of the Afghan Empire.

Shuja Shah Durrani, a descendant of Ahmad, wore it in a bracelet until 1813, when he gave it to Ranjit Singh, founder of the Sikh Empire, as a token of gratitude for his help and hospitality when he fled to Lahore following his overthrow. Ranjit Singh proudly wore the diamond on special occasions and kept it in Gobindgarh Fort when it was not on his person. After suffering his third stroke, Ranjit Singh, now too weak to speak, explained through gestures that he wished the Kohinoor to be donated to Jagannath Temple, along with other jewels.

Or so argued Bhai Gobind Ram, head Brahmin (priest and teacher). His treasurer, Beli Ram argued that the gem was state property, and should be passed on to Kharak Singh, the emperor's eldest son and successor. When Ranjit Singh died, Beli Ram hid the Kohinoor in his vaults, and Kharak Singh also agreed the diamond should remain with him.

Due to an 1839 coup that overthrew Kharak Singh, the diamond ended up in the hands of the prime minister's brother, Gulab Singh, Raja of Jammu. It was his until 1841, when he gave it to emperor Sher Singh, as a way to make an alliance.

Since then it has changed ownership many times, taking the form of a token of gratitude, a family heirloom, a prospective donation to the Jagannath Temple, and an attempt at making an alliance. The last Maharaj to own the Kohinoor was also the youngest. Five-year-old emperor Duleep Singh wore it on his wrist after he ascended to power following an 1843 counter-coup.

This brings us to the end of the Anglo-Sikh War in 1849. The Last Treaty of Lahore was signed, giving official ownership of the Kohinoor to Queen Victoria. The Kingdom of Punjab was annexed to the East India Company. Maharaja Duleep Singh, now eleven years old, signed the diamond over.

According to legend, the diamond was almost lost before its journey to England, as it was placed in a waistcoat pocket, which was then sent to be laundered. Luckily, it was found and returned by a valet.

The heavily guarded Kohinoor, sealed in an iron safe, left Bombay on April 6th, 1850 on the HMS Medea. A cholera outbreak while the ship was docked in Mauritius led to it almost being under attack, as locals wanted it to depart immediately. The Kohinoor was presented to the Queen on July 3rd, 1850 in Buckingham

Palace, on the 250th anniversary of the East India Company. Since then, it has been placed on the Crown of Queen Alexandra in 1902, and remains there, on display in the Tower of London.

Its turbulent story is far from over. The governments of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have all requested the return of the Kohinoor. The government of India was the first to claim it as soon as the country got its independence in 1947. There are also internal disputes, as the Indian Culture Minister has promised to make "all possible efforts" to see its return, yet the Solicitor General of India denies the fact that it was stolen, and says it was given voluntarily.

Pakistan lay claim to the Kohinoor in 1976, arguing that its return would show Britain's willingness to let go of its colonial past and move forward with the process of decolonisation. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom James Callaghan replied, citing the 1849 Treaty of Lahore with the Maharaj and the diamond's long and complicated history.

The Taliban claims the Kohinoor as Afghanistan's property. In 2000, they formally asked for its return, saying it was taken by India, and then by Britain. They support their claim by making reference to the fact that the Kohinoor was given to Ranjit Singh by Shah Shuja Durrani while his son was being tortured.

Britain's main argument against the diamond's return is the fact that it has been part of British history for 150 years, and that returning it would eventually lead to the British museum being empty. Britain also argues that due to so many claims, it is impossible to decide on an original owner. The British government is firm in its position that the Kohinoor will not be returned. Due to its complicated history and the lack of possible compromises, it will remain in Britain for the foreseeable future.

Welcome, stress!

VALENTINA SKACKOVA

Stress. Anxiety. Failure. Lovely way to start an article, isn't it? Unfortunately, these factors can be part of our daily lives, and dealing with them is never easy. It is unpleasant and tiring, often demotivating. But although we are all exposed to stress, two different individuals would

probably not have the same reaction under the same circumstances. "We boil at different degrees"; Ralph Waldo Emerson nailed it. So, why do some of us simmer like water, while others barely bubble around 5000° like tungsten? What determines our boiling temperature?

Two words: **psychological resilience**. It is "the capacity of individuals to cope successfully with significant change, adversity or risk" (Lee & Cranford, 2008). In other words, it's the ability to deal with negative change or stress and to move on without harmful long-term consequences. Highly resilient individuals (in our case, the "tungstens") have an energetic approach to life, embrace challenges, and keep up a positive attitude. This doesn't mean they see life through heart-shaped, rose coloured glasses. But when failure, stress, or other charmingly negative change stumbles their way, they don't break down. People with lower psychological resilience, on the other hand, tend to dwell on their problems, feel victimised, or may turn to unhealthy coping strategies, such as drugs, alcohol or other substances. Poorly handled stress can lead to a long list of undesirable effects: a lower immune system, moodiness, memory and focus problems, low self-esteem, insomnia, and more.

Good news though: psychological resilience isn't an inborn talent or aptitude. It is something you can cultivate and improve. Your resilience is similar to muscles; it can be trained. But if you do not exercise regularly, it will get softer, just like your muscles.

Psychological resilience is also influenced by the conditions we grow up in. A loving, reliable environment, combined with enough opportunities to master challenges and stress are the key for children to develop a higher resilience. An extremely stressful and chaotic home will usually have the opposite effect. Keeping the child in a protective bubble doesn't help either. Stress is required to build up tolerance; gradual exposure to it, at manageable levels, can help develop coping strategies to become resilient.

What else makes the difference between our tungstens and water-people? A positive attitude. If you're an obturate pessimist like me, this may seem like an unattainable, even an undesirable goal. But try and change your beliefs and standards. Your beliefs affect your feelings and emotions. Your emotions affect the way you think. And your thoughts affect how you respond to situations. So, if you imagine that a situation might not end up in the worst way possible (which is still far from being idealistic), you will feel calmer. Your cool head will help you think more clearly. And your thoughts will make you stick to the good old "think before you act". As endocrinologist Hans Selye said; "It's not stress that kills us; it's our reaction to it". Good motivation to work on our attitude, isn't it?

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves what to think and not let circumstances bring us down. Think about your ability to change the stressor. If it can't be changed, then it is what it is. Your energy is better spent working on coping with the circumstances. If you can change it, then what are you waiting for? Moping around with self-pity as your only companion never did anybody good. Failure helps us build our resilience. Face your challenges and try to bounce back from them (preferably with a minimal "moping" step). Stress can hijack your brain: find something else to focus on, rather than on the elephant in your mind. Get out of your comfort zone and try something you've wanted to accomplish for a long time. A purpose in life increases psychological resilience. Surround yourself with supportive, empathetic people, who will help you get through tough times. They will listen.

Let's make it clear: resilience doesn't stop you from making mistakes; it stops you from feeling dejected by them. It won't rid your life of stress, but it will teach you how to welcome stress, and how to keep moving forward. Water can't turn into tungsten; but you can become more resilient. Life can be tough. But so can you.

The art of concentration

EVA STEININGER

We've all experienced getting distracted when in reality, we should be paying attention: right before an exam, in an important meeting, while speaking with our parents - We often suffer from a lack of active concentration. I will explain below what concentration is about and I will provide tips on how to improve it. Concentration is the mental process of focusing all your attention on a single thought or task. It takes place in the conscious part of our brain, the cerebral cortex, which controls all of our thoughts and actions within our awareness. Voluntarily focusing on one thing continuously can take a lot of effort. Most of the time we are not completely focusing on what we are doing. For example, when we are reading, our



mind is typically interrupted anywhere between 20 and 40 percent of the time. You might think that these interruptions are often external – a phone call, a message, a bird passing by your window, but according to psychologist Gloria Mark's research, our mind is responsible for around 44% of these interruptions. Losing focus is actually an evolutionary feature meant to keep us safe. It happens when our brain is noticing things that might need our attention.

This function of the brain plays an important role when humans are confronted with danger and need an immediate fight or flight response. But today, with our less danger-prone and more intellectually demanding lifestyle it's negative side effects have become more evident.

The good news is: You can work on strengthening your focus so that smaller distractions don't cause full stop on your thinking.

Focusing Techniques

Use a timer to limit your work-time. Knowing that you have a break coming makes it easier to stay concentrated and motivated. So instead of trying to slog through for hours, you will get your work done in a shorter time through bursts of intensive work. What works best for me are blocks of 55 Minutes, after which I then decide to either take a break or continue for another 55 minutes if I

still have enough energy. The Pomodoro Technique however, advises blocks of 25 minutes for work, followed by a 5 minute break. Create a "Do later list". I'm sure you've experienced many occasions in which you were concentrating on an important task when suddenly a random idea, errand, or question popped into your head. Even if it only takes you a minute or two to research a random factoid, it gets your focus completely off

track. Next time when this happens to you, just write down whatever is on your mind to deal with it later (or not at all) and continue focusing on your main task. Creativity expert Julie Cameron even advises to write three full pages of brain dump every morning to clear mental clutter. It can be anything: vacation spots to research, a rant about someone you know or an explanation of what you are feeling at the time.

During online lessons

You have to be in a classroom for a set period of time anyway, so why not use that time to pay attention and actually learn something.

Take detailed notes. If you are not taking notes, then you're just listening passively to what's being said, and that makes it much harder to stay focused. Making detailed notes forces you to concentrate on what's being said during the lesson, process it and then write it down in a digestible form. Not only does it

mean that you are indeed paying attention, but you're also more likely to remember what's been said as a result.

Active Reading. When you must read a text in or for class, don't just go through the words, but underline important passages, ask questions, and recapitulate. It will help you to stay focused and when you later come back to it, you will directly recall what it was about.

Think of questions. You don't necessarily need to ask them, just think of them and perhaps write them down.

If the subject is too hard, try to work out what you'd need to know in order to fully understand it.

If it's too easy, have a think about what you would ask to advance to the next level. What questions would be asked of you if you were studying this more in depth?

If you don't know where to start, try thinking like a toddler – interrogate the topic with questions like who, why, where, when and how. That should keep your brain occupied for a while.

COVID-19's effect on Gen. Z

PAUL KÜPPER

For the past year, every measure we have been taking against the spread of the corona virus was justified to either stop intensive care units from overflowing, or to protect those most vulnerable within our society. With this thought in mind, a lot of things have been taken away from

us that just shouldn't be overlooked – the young generation has given up essential elements of its development to such an extent, that I am asking myself whether it can still be justified.

For starters, we haven't been receiving the best possible education by our schools or universities. This is not an attack towards any teacher or school, because they still taught us to the best of their abilities. But: online school is just not the same as in-situ learning. For some students it has been worse than for others, but I think we can all agree that it won't positively impact us in the future. By lowering the bar, you're also not solving this problem. Good education is important, so before underestimating how big of an impact a lack of it has, ask yourself this: do you want to go to a doctor who spent a year of his study without being able to practice in the hospital?

A social life also plays a major factor in a good childhood. It's important to go out, socialise and make contacts to further build your social skills. I don't mean the festivals or the wild celebration, but the basic human interaction that is necessary for social development. For the past year this was mostly taken away from us, which has led to the development of a lot of mental health issues like stress and social anxiety. Furthermore, the treatment for serious mental health issues has also been

disrupted. The WHO conducted a survey back in October 2020 that showed: *“Over 60% reported disruptions to mental health services for vulnerable people, including children and adolescents (72%).”*

Throughout this crisis, the government has also been helping those in need. Every lockdown the economy is massively impacted, which leads to the government funding the local shops, bars, restaurants, etc. To add to that, the government also has to cover the cost of the vaccines. The post-covid economic Everything combined adds up to a lot of money, that will be paid by the future workers and taxpayers (i.e. us).

Every single decision was obviously well thought through and has a good short-term reasoning behind it. The problem comes when it all adds up and the young generation is left behind. If you look at the long-term effects of the missed education, the bad mental health state (not only caused by corona) or potential future economic ramifications, then the young generation definitely becomes one of the major victims. It also doesn't help that the we will be the last group to be vaccinated. Is there at least a solution? Well there is not much to do, except stay strong and support each other. We can't get our education back, nor will there be an immediate fix to the mental health situation. Opening everything before enough people have been vaccinated isn't smart and we future economic issues will be subject on us no matter what.

We are arguably giving up the most and aren't getting anything in return.



Is it 1984 or 2021?

LUISA SIMON

ILLUSTRATION // ZOFIA LEIB

Is the fictional story “1984” by George Orwell really becoming a reality? *1984 is a book about permanent governmental surveillance, censorship, brainwashing and suppression.* With all the cameras watching and recording you, data you must reveal and fake news spreading widely today - it seems possible. We live in democracies, not in a dictatorship like “Oceania” and yet there are some similarities.

How far can you walk before a camera records you? Not far I would guess, if you live in cities as 76% of the world's population does. Governments justify their surveillance by citing crimes and the deterrent effect of cameras. Of course, this argument is valid to an extent, but it does not remedy the inherent problems of systematic surveillance. How can we be sure that the data is not misused and does not end up like the tele-screens in the book? Where do we draw the line between privacy and public security? When is it an encroachment on your freedom? And there are more and more far-reaching surveillance tools: According to Huang Yongzhen (the CEO from Watrix, one of China's most important firms for artificial intelligence); China has already been using their system for gait recognition since 2020. Even if you are pretending to limp it can recognise you. Besides the gait recognition, there is face recognition that some of us also use to unlock our phones, and the new (optional) corona tracking app that locates you for public health purposes.

In addition to governmental surveillance, we divulge a lot about ourselves through electronic devices like phones, computers, smartwatches and so on.

Unlike in the novel, we aren't forced into anything, but I'm not sure we all know what we are agreeing to, when we download an application like Instagram or just by opening a website and accepting cookies. Did you know that Instagram's parent company Facebook can read your chat records, see what you post, who you follow? Facebook can either personalise advertisements to maximise the likelihood of your purchase or directly sell user profiles. It does not stop there, some applications have access to your pictures, your camera, your microphone, your location etc. Also, you may be faced with cyberattacks and viruses if you're not careful.

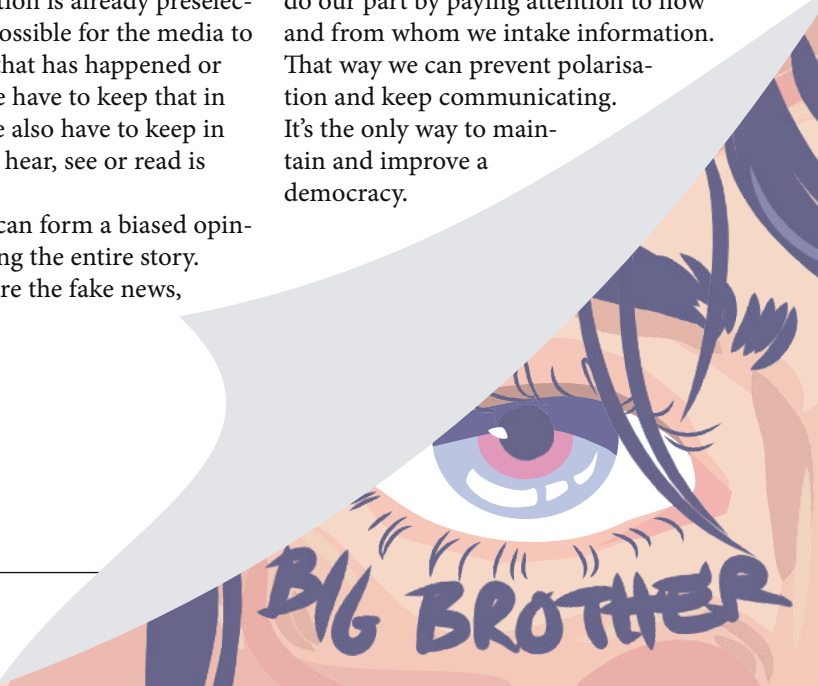
Besides surveillance, brainwashing complements the re-education system with the “Newspeak”, the “doublethink” and the “thought police” of Orwell's story. In our society it is a different kind of influence. We may not be fully aware of it, but media have a significant impact on us nonetheless. We have many different choices of channels on television, applications and newspapers, though we all have our habits. We keep informing ourselves in the same way, and we build a sort of bubble because we often don't compare or verify received information. The problem is that the information is already preselected. Surely, it's impossible for the media to report everything that has happened or will happen and we have to keep that in mind. However, we also have to keep in mind that what we hear, see or read is rarely neutral.

Moreover, one can form a biased opinion without knowing the entire story. Not far from that are the fake news,

which can be very persuading. Not long ago, a Black Lives Matter demonstration was said to be much more guarded than when Trump's supporters stormed the Capitol. A photo from the White House with many soldiers at the front showed that clearly. The news and the photo as evidence made it in serious tv news, until someone identified the building in the back as the Lincoln Memorial. Even if the statement in itself is not false and it was merely the photo that was misleading, this example shows how easy it is to be manipulated.

In the end, the main distinction between our reality and Orwell's novel is that our democracies do not collect personal information to eliminate people like Winston Smith who could be dangerous to the system and the ruling party. The purpose of those private firms' data collection is purely commercial. The extent of information they store about you is shocking and it could easily be abused. I encourage you to therefore minimise the amount of personal data you give out, as you never know what could be done with it.

To conclude, we are incredibly lucky to live in democracies that ensure security and freedom for their citizens. We should do our part by paying attention to how and from whom we intake information. That way we can prevent polarisation and keep communicating. It's the only way to maintain and improve a democracy.



EU, Buy local!

The EU’s double-dealing with Microsoft

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The use of foreign – primarily US – software has become commonplace in many schools, firms and institutions within the European Union (EU). Even European institutions themselves do not shy away from their usage; *Microsoft* applications, such as *Word*, *Excel* or nowadays *Teams*, are simply too convenient to not include in our modern home offices – but at what cost?

Every day, we trust cloud and communication firms with our personal data; yet it is not always clear **what data is collected, how it is used, and by whom**. The

EU has long aimed to become a leader in securing adequate data protection for all 450 million EU consumers, one of the most sought-after markets in the world. The 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a testimony to these ambitions – yet the self-proclaimed “toughest privacy and security law in the world” [1] seems to bark more than bite: its intentions fail in practice due to a lack of enforcement and effective penalisation.

An example of ineffective data protection can quite ironically be found within the EU’s very own institutions, as investigated by the *European Data Protection Supervisor* (EDPS) in July of 2020 [2]. The EDPS analysed the 2018 licensing agreement between European Institutions and Microsoft, and discovered, amongst others, the following findings:

- 1 A disproportionate amount of contract modifying power in the hands of Microsoft
- 2 Vaguely worded restrictions on data processing
- 3 A lack of control over the location and usage of data by third parties (e.g. foreign governmental agencies)

The license itself is based on a standard Microsoft document, therefore other organisations that possess agreements with Microsoft should be weary of similar issues as the European institutions.

The first major factor investigated was **Microsoft’s unlimited, unilateral modifying power**.

This means that Microsoft could virtually change the entire document, including data processing purposes, location of data storage, etc... all while EU institutions had (according to the EDPS) “few or no contractual controls over what personal data was collected by Microsoft from users or what Microsoft could do with those data [...]”, making for an incredible power imbalance.

By allowing a foreign firm to hold so much authority over EU citizen’s personal data, it is questionable whether the EU institutions can guarantee the protection of said data; especially as an ‘unlimited right of unilateral amendment’ breaches their own data processing regulations, which – while separate from GDPR – greatly resembles it [3].

A further threat to privacy stemmed from the purpose limitations – these usually explicitly define for what purposes data may be (or may be not) collected and used; yet the EDPS could only identify ‘providing an online service’ as the most explicit statement of purpose within the license. Such **vagueness** gives Microsoft a lot of unfounded room for

interpretation, and can potentially lead to the processing of data in circumstances the EU institutions did not intend to permit.

Perhaps the most concerning factor the EDPS identified, is **inadequate control over the location of data** processed by Microsoft, due to a “lack of proper safeguards to protect data that left the EU/EEA.” While some of the data collected through Microsoft services is stored within the EU (e.g. mailbox content, SharePoint content, etc...), this does not include the valuable *metadata* – i.e. data about data.

Here is a neat trick for you to try at home: look up the IP address for the *teams.microsoft.com* server and locate it using *geoIP.com* – you’ll find that it is in fact based in the United States. This means, that every time you click on a Microsoft Teams link, data – such as the meeting ID and user IDs – are sent outside of the EU. From there it is not a big step to assume that Microsoft can link such data with your user identity and recognize patterns within your behavior, such as with whom you meet and when.

This becomes an issue when you consider that Microsoft may **disclose personal data to third parties**, such as foreign law enforcement or governmental agencies, as stated in the Microsoft Privacy Statement [4]. Microsoft may be put into a position in which foreign surveillance laws come in conflict with EU law.

In such a case, EU institutions would have “few guarantees at their disposal [to] ensure that Microsoft would only disclose personal data insofar as permitted by EU law.”

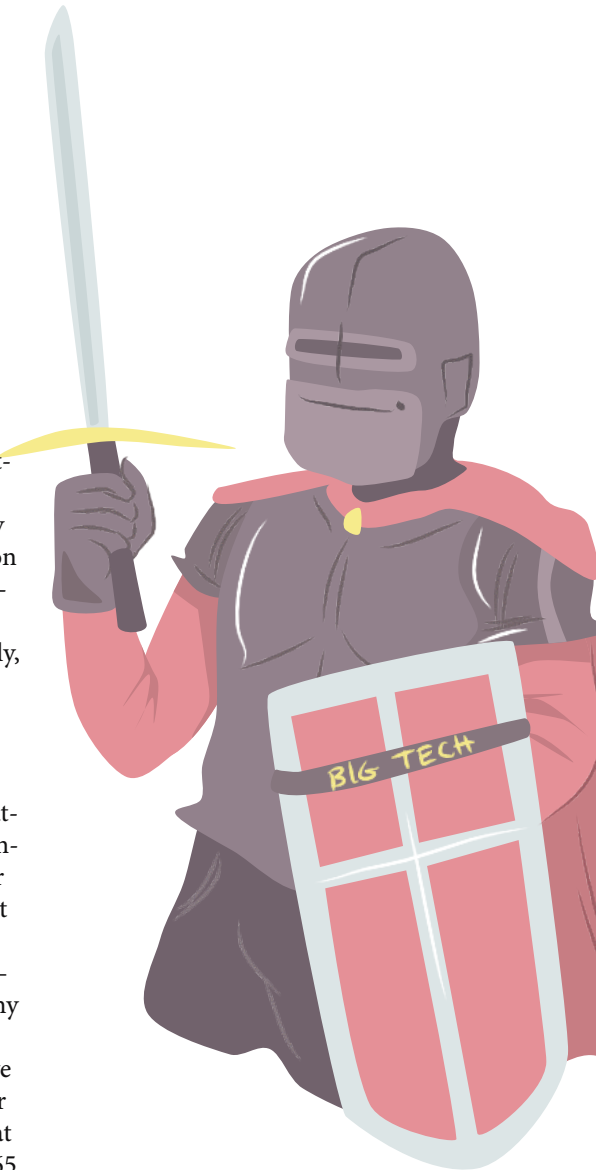
So now we understand the hypocrisy of the EU: imposing strict regulations on citizens without holding its own institutions to the same standard. If not even the EU can protect our data competently, how can we? It seems necessary to re-evaluate the current license agreement between the institutions and Microsoft in the interest of the European peoples.

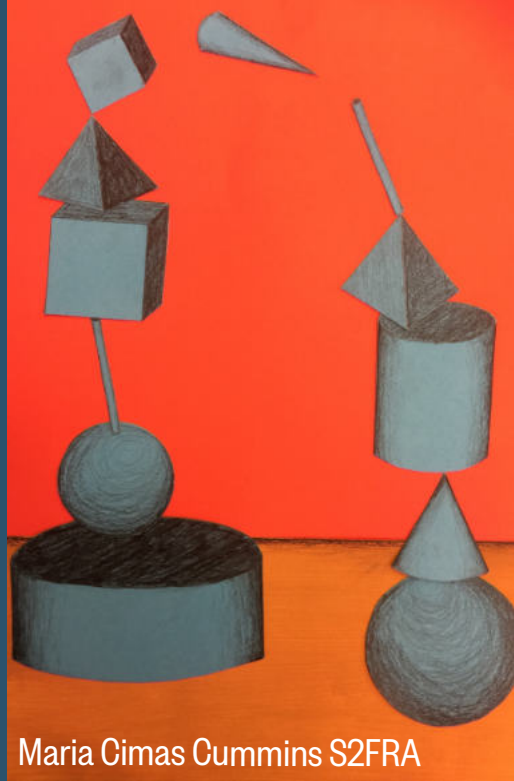
Perhaps one should even ask why outsourcing IT services to non-EU companies is necessary, or even appropriate, for public institutions. The EU is the largest economy in the world, it is the largest trading block, it is a leading innovator – yet where is the European solution? Why must we be so reliant on US companies? The issue is not that we do not have alternatives – for instance, *OnlyOffice* or *SoftMaker Office* are European firms that provide similar services to Microsoft 365 – the issue is that they are artificially kept small by pumping money into non-EU options.

Such anti-competitive behavior goes against the EU’s very own ambitions: just recently, the Digital Markets Act was introduced to regulate “gatekeeper” companies (such as Microsoft) and create a fairer playing field for all [5]. In this sense, it seems ironic that EU institu-

tions themselves would contribute towards ensuring Microsoft retains a dominant position in Europe.

To quote Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age and Competition: “[Competition] helps to make sure our economy works not just for a few big companies, but for everyone” [6].





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beauxarts

A selection of the various masterpieces that are being produced in the art department.

