

In This Edition...



Source: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/volby-do-poslanecke-snemovny-rekordman-okamura-ci-babis-u-kadernika-na-sitich-zacal-lov-na-volice-269871>

Young Voters Could Swing Czech Elections

By Matěj Diviš

Youth turnout, in any type, of Czech elections has been historically weak. However, in the 2021 Parliamentary elections, we saw a considerable surge of voters aged 18-34, who made up 23% of the total electorate and significantly increased the results of coalitions SPOLU (ODS, KDU-ČSL, TOP09) and PirSTAN (Piráti, STAN).

It seems that most of this year's candidates to the Czech Chamber of Deputies have taken a lesson from that and realized that the votes of young people are not insignificant, as they might have thought, few years back. On the 3rd and 4th of October, around 470 000 first-time voters are expected to cast their ballots, and so, all parties have included new, and sometimes bizarre ways to reach the younger generation.

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Recognition of the State of Palestine

By Oliver Erben

When France and the UK formally recognised the State of Palestine in 2025, the decision reverberated far beyond the corridors of their foreign ministries. It was more than a diplomatic gesture. For many, it was a long-delayed acknowledgment of a political and human reality that has existed for decades but has never been allowed to breathe freely.

Recognition, in this context, is not a simple act of protocol. It is a moral statement. Over 150 countries now acknowledge Palestine as a state, from Latin America to Africa and Asia, forming a global majority that contrasts sharply with the hesitancy of Israel's closest allies in the West. The 150 countries argue that Palestine has earned its right to statehood through international law, history and the lived experience of its people. Yet despite the diplomatic momentum, the question remains: what does recognition actually achieve for Palestinians on the ground?

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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

The new school year is in full swing, and we are proud to present the first edition of the *OG Chronicle* for 2025-2026. As always, there's a variety of different articles, commentaries, poems and other exciting surprises for your reading enjoyment.

In our *World News & Current Affairs* section, you'll find reports about the recent Czech general elections, legal developments in tax law in Great Britain, amazing medical advancements, and the constantly evolving geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.

A quick look through the *Social Commentary* section will lead you to pieces tackling such contemporary issues as the 21st century workplace, the way in which algorithms impact our lives and the psychology of fear. In addition, there's a beautiful ode to teachers and their profession and a look into the mysterious world of true crime.

Last but certainly not least is the *Culture* section, which features another interview with an Open Gate educator, this time English Language & Literature teacher and IB Coordinator Ms. Yule. This edition also features an interesting theatre review as well as a look at the world of professional journalism. And of course let's not forget the wonderful poetry that you've come to expect from the *OG Chronicle*.

So happy reading and we hope you enjoy Edition 1!

The OG Journalism Club

How Did the Modern Workplace Redefine Exhaustion?



The Effect of Algorithms on Our Everyday Lives



The Psychology of Fear: Why We Like To Feel Scared



You Made Living Beautiful



True Crime: Jack the Ripper



Developments in VAT Group Disregard in the Context of UK Tax Law



Will Gen Z Show Up? Young Voters Could Swing Czech Elections

Youth turnout, in any type, of Czech elections has been historically weak. However, in the 2021 Parliamentary elections, we saw a considerable surge of voters aged 18-34, who made up 23% of the total electorate and significantly increased the results of coalitions SPOLU (ODS, KDU-ČSL, TOP09) and PirSTAN (Piráti, STAN).

It seems that most of this year's candidates to the Czech Chamber of Deputies have taken a lesson from that and realized that the votes of young people are not insignificant, as they might have thought, few years back. On the 3rd and 4th of October, around 470 000 first-time voters are expected to cast their ballots, and so, all parties have included new, and sometimes bizarre ways to reach the younger generation.

For instance, almost all the most visible politicians have created an account on TikTok, despite a warning from the National Cyber and Information Security Authority (NÚKIB) which states the Chinese app poses a security threat due to the amount and way of collecting user data. On TikTok, politicians often explain their priorities and stances, however, we can also find eccentric and bizarre videos with latest trends or memes, example thereof being Zdeněk Hřib (Piráti), Jana Maláčová (SOCDEM – Stačilo!) and others.

It is not only the “known” politicians that aim to gain votes from young people. The so-called Generation Movement (Generace) is a new, center-right and liberal party created with several main topics, such as budgetary responsibility, cybersecurity and intergenerational cohesion. The party chairman, Daniel Krutý, has created this movement with a goal of breaking into parliament with almost solely young candidates. The Generation Movement has, however, faced accusations of links to Russian think-tanks and businessmen.

To convince young people to vote is a mission not only for politicians, but also for civic movements, media campaigns and other initiatives. The most visible ones are united under the ‘Your Voice, Your Choice’ campaign, led by an influential medium for young people, Bold News. Their ‘30 Under 30’ initiative gathers and promotes the 30 most visible and promising candidates under 30 years old. The aim of this campaign is to get as many young politicians as possible into the Czech Chamber of Deputies, since there are currently only 3 members out of 200, who are under 30 years of age.

Another project intending to motivate young people to vote is a political debate ‘Zavolíme!’ which is made and organized entirely by students. This debate with 6 visible politicians, who were chosen based on election models from renowned agencies, was livestreamed in tens of schools around Czechia. It focused on topics crucial for young people, namely affordable housing, education and foreign policy. The name of the debate - ‘Zavolíme!’, in English ‘We Will Vote’ - highlights its mission to boost youth voter turnout and promote civic engagement.

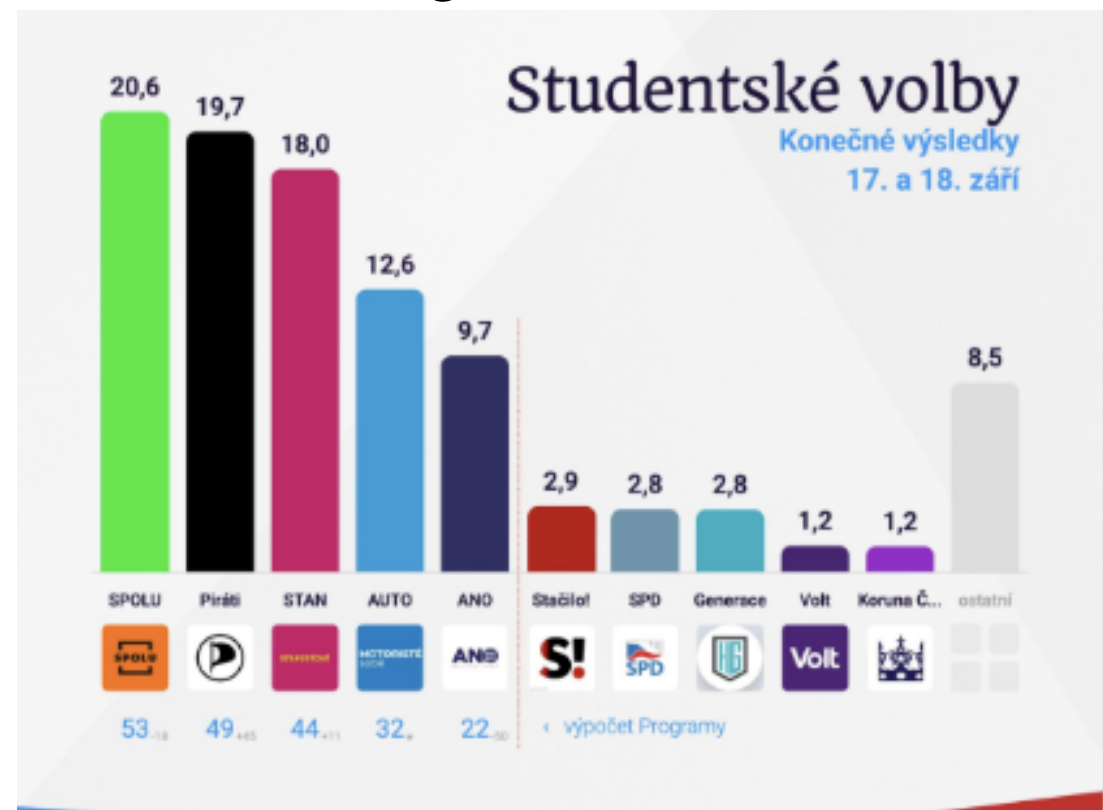


Source: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/volby-do-poslanecke-snmovny-rekordman-okamura-ci-babis-u-kadernika-na-sitich-zacal-lov-na-volice-269871>

Likely, the most visible of all the initiatives mentioned above – were the “mock” student elections, held on the 17th and 18th of September in over 630 high schools around the country. Students could cast their vote for any of the 26 parties, movements or coalitions. In the end, 90 820 valid ballots were handed in.

Members of the ruling coalition, alongside the Pirates, who left the government a year ago, earned a decisive victory. Coalition SPOLU, consisting of Civic Democrats (ODS), the Christian-Democratic People's party (KDU-ČSL) and the ‘Tradition Responsibility Prosperity’ party (TOP09), received the most support from high school students, winning the mock elections with 20.6% of valid ballots. Second place went to the liberal, center-left Pirates (Piráti), who earned 19.7%, roughly double what they are projected to receive in the actual elections. The Mayors and Independents (STAN), a center-right and progressive movement, received 18.02% and finished third.

These parties and coalitions are followed by the current opposition and a few non-parliamentary forces as well. Motorists for Themselves (AUTO), a right-wing and conservative party, received 12.64% of votes, 3 percentage points more than the current poll leader and favorite to win, catch-all party ANO of Czech billionaire Andrej Babiš. ANO earned just 9.67%, not even a third of what they are projected to receive in the actual election, coming up in October.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/DOwLYPOjC4n/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

However, students would not - unlike respondents in election models - send the socially conservative and left-wing nationalist Enough! movement (Stačilo!) into parliament at all, as they received only 2.94%. Enough! consists of the Communist party, Czech National Social party and other, including the Social Democrats, whose youth organization openly criticized this collaboration. Jana Maláčová, leader of SOCDEM, however, repeatedly said they want to be the main party for young, center-left and pro-European voters.

If students were the ones to decide, the Freedom and Direct Democracy party (SPD) would also fail to enter parliament, as the students gave them just 2.82% of the ballots. SPD has historically failed to attract many young voters aged between 18 and 34, mainly due to its radical and sometimes conservative opinions. The already mentioned Generation Movement earned 2.8%, which suggests the party will not perform as hoped in the real elections, as young voters were supposed to be their voter base and backbone of support.

The student elections have been organized for over 10 years, not only as a “mock” counterfactual or counterpart to the parliamentary ones, but also to the presidential or European parliament elections. Student elections are held to motivate young people, who cannot yet vote, to find interest in politics. These “mock” elections can also give us a hint on how the youngest eligible voters will decide.

Even though student elections and their results might suggest young people lean towards the governing parties, we must also look at the other side of the coin. On average, more grammar schools held the student elections than vocational schools. Also, the elections were often held at schools in big cities and their agglomerations. Therefore, a great percentage of rural areas and less educated young people are missing in these statistics. Some schools even refuse to hold such student elections, as they fear accusations of ‘politicizing education’.

The fact, however, remains that student elections do not correspond to reality, therefore young people will likely not vote as high schoolers did. This is further supported by the electoral model of STEM, which zooms in on the sociodemographic differences in the second quarter of 2025. This model from August states that 25% of voters aged 18-29 would choose ANO, 21% would vote for coalition SPOLU and both STAN and Pirates would receive 13%. SPD and Motorists would also enter parliament, the first mentioned would get 7%, the latter 9%. This model was specially designed to encompass all the demographic groups; therefore, being more precise and indicative of reality.

For us, striving to motivate young Czechs to be interested in public affairs and politics, the current political representation must give young people a chance to make an impact. After young people see peers active and willing to change issues, it could inspire them to also act and go vote. Allowing young people to co-decide in municipal councils, or even at their own schools, would close a significant gap between generations. This year, we could see a similar trend to the one in previous parliamentary elections, during which first-time voters helped to secure the win for today's government. Will young people save Petr Fiala (ODS) and his potential coalition partners, or will they lean towards a government lead by the current opposition and give a mandate to previous Czech prime minister, Andrej Babiš (ANO)?

Matěj Diviš

Developments in VAT Group Disregard in the Context of UK Tax Law

In its recent judgment in the case of The Prudential Assurance Company Ltd v Commissioners for HMRC, the Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Prudential and ordered it to pay value-added tax (VAT) on a success fee paid to Silverfleet Capital Ltd.

The judgement is highly relevant as it clarifies the conditions under which VAT is payable in the UK under the Value Added Tax Act 1994 (VATA). Specifically, it clarifies conditions for firms in the same VAT group, or a group of companies, which share the same ownership structure. Under section 43 of the VATA, also known as the VAT Group Disregard, the supply of services by a member of a VAT group is disregarded for tax purposes. While the general approach is clear, it had been unclear whether VAT is payable if a fee was paid after the dissolution of a VAT group but had originated in the services provided during the existence of such a group.

The court recapitulated the facts of the case. Between 2002 and 2007, Silverfleet provided Prudential with investment fund management services. It received both a quarterly management fee and success fees tied to the results of specific sub-funds exceeding a benchmark rate of return.

As both firms had been a part of a single VAT group, they did not have to pay VAT for these services at the time. In 2007, there was a management buyout after which Silverfleet left the VAT group. During 2014 and 2015, the success of former Silverfleet sub-funds triggered success fees totaling £9,330,805.92 with VAT payable at 20%. Given the fact that the VAT arose from services performed while Silverfleet had still been a part of the VAT group, it was unclear whether VAT should be paid on such services.

Prudential queried His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) about the correct amount of VAT to be paid. HMRC determined that VAT was payable per the invoice. Following a statutory application, HMRC maintained this view. Prudential appealed to the First-tier Tribunal, which reversed the earlier decision and held that no VAT was payable. HMRC then appealed to the Upper Tribunal, which reversed the First-tier Tribunal's decision and held that VAT was payable. Prudential then appealed to the Court of Appeal, which, in a majority opinion, dismissed the appeal and held that VAT was payable. Finally, Prudential applied to the Supreme Court to settle the matter.



Source: <https://www.ukpropertyaccountants.co.uk/the-ramsay-principle-shaping-uk-tax-law>

The Supreme Court considered relevant EU and domestic law and domestic case law. It then applied these provisions to this case and identified the three issues raised on appeal. First, it considered whether, at the time of supply of services, Silverfleet had been a part of Prudential's VAT group. It argued that, in line with preceding case law and the argumentation of the Court of Appeal, supply of services must be narrowly interpreted in the context of the time of supply. The barrister for Prudential argued that considering only the time of supply of services would lead to firms delaying invoices and payments if they believe that they will become a part of a new VAT group. Nonetheless, the Court discounted this argument as it believed that such conduct would be impractical and unlikely.

Afterwards, the Court considered the case of *B J Rice & Associates v Customs and Excise Commissioners*. While this case would enable Prudential not to pay VAT on the success fee, the Court noted that the ratio (scope) of this case had been substantially reduced by later case law and is now only applicable to similar or identical facts. As the case considered whether VAT should be levied on transactions supplied before the mandatory VAT registration of a business, it was not applicable to this case.

Finally, the Court considered the effect of regulation 90 of the 1995 VAT Regulations on the case. After determining that it applies to this case, the Court determined that regulation 90 requires the time of supply of services by Silverfleet to be modified to the payment of consideration, e.g. the payment of success fees. Based on this, the Court concluded that the time of supply must be narrowly understood as the time of payment for services.



Source: <https://www.blevinsfranks.com/offshore-tax-evasion-uk-cashes-in-on-crackdown>

Turning to the Time of Supply Rules (TOSR) of the Principal VAT Directive (PVD) of the European Council, the Court agreed with Prudential that there is a distinction between the chargeable event and the time when VAT becomes chargeable and can be collected. It also agreed with its argument that article 66 of the PVD allows member states to change the time of collection but does not allow it to change the time of the chargeable event. While it agreed with this interpretation, the Court noted that this is not enough to apply the VAT Group Disregard. Finally, the Court also agreed with the argument that VAT is chargeable only if the chargeable event occurred after it left the VAT group, rather than because VAT becomes chargeable at a later date.

Nonetheless, with reference to article 64, the Court noted that “the chargeable event for those supplies occurs at the end of the period to which the payment relates.” As the success fee had been a successive payment for the purposes of PVD, it either related to a period which expired when the performance of the services was completed or at a time when the success fee thresholds were met. The Court then rejected Prudential’s arguments that TOSR does not apply due to its wording as it used a textualist interpretation of its “ordinary meaning.” As such, it determined that ongoing supplies or supplies with successive payments are different in time from the preceding supplies and thus the payments made to Silverfleet made as a part of the success fee arrangement were not conducted as a part of a VAT group and were subject to VAT. It also argued that the earlier laws that VATA replaced do not apply to this case and should not be considered. Finally, the Court determined that the provisions of article 64 apply not only in the case of continuous supply of services, but also if the supply of services is speculative as in this case. After considering article 63 and relevant CJEU rulings, the Court upheld this position.

Overall, the judgement illustrates the importance of legal clarity in the area of VAT groups and the fact that this area of law is still incredibly complex and problematic. This is especially problematic as EU law both has a bearing on the result of this case and yet is now only considered to a limited extent.



Source: <https://connaughtlaw.com/tax-law>

Daniel Middleton

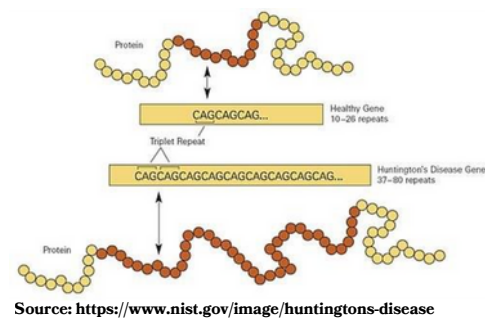
Huntington's Disease Successfully Treated

Huntington's disease (HD), also often referred to as Huntington's chorea, is a fatal, progressive, genetic neurodegenerative disease that often develops during a person's middle ages and progresses over time. It affects a person's cognitive, psychiatric, and motor skills, ranging depending on which of the three stages of the disease the person is currently in.

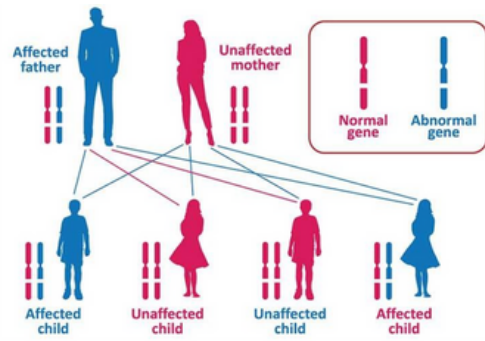
On September 24th, 2025, after years of research, for the first time ever, a cure was developed.

Huntington's disease is divided into three main stages: early, middle, and late stage. In the early stages, a person may start to lack balance and coordination, their attention span and memory will start to slightly decline and they might develop sudden mood swings or be irritable, but they are still able to continue their daily activities, including work and independent living. These symptoms progress through the middle stages, and towards the late stages of Huntington's disease, the person will become practically immobile. Patients are confined to a wheelchair or bed with lost ability for cognitive and speech skills, requiring around-the-clock care and attention.

The disease is caused by an abnormal version of the gene Huntingtin, or HTT. The normal HTT gene has a stretch of 10–35 repeats of C-A-G nucleotide triplets, which encode the amino acid glutamine. In people with HD, the HTT gene has more than 36 (to over 100) C-A-G repeats. The abnormally long stretch of poly-glutamine alters the HTT protein structure, causing a separation and cluster, forming a misfolded protein that is detrimental to nerve cells. The resulting neuron cell death is most often in the basal ganglia of the brain, which is responsible for cognition, motor control, and parts of emotion.



Source: <https://www.nist.gov/image/huntingtons-disease>



Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/cs/image-illustration/autosomal-dominant-inheritance-snar-1719931726>

Each person has two copies of the HTT gene, but one abnormal copy is enough to cause the disease. If a parent with the abnormal gene has a child with a parent without the gene, the child has a 50% chance of inheriting Huntington's disease. This type of inheritance is known as Autosomal Dominant Inheritance. The progression of HD depends on the number of C-A-G repeats. The greater the number of repeats, the earlier age it starts and the faster the progression will be. As the size of the polyglutamine stretch increases from generation to generation, the outbreak of symptoms gets earlier with every generation. This is known as Genetic Anticipation.

Professors Sarah Tabrizi and Edward Wild led part of the trial in the UK and in September 2025, when they got their “breakthrough results”. Over the course of a three-year treatment period, in which 29 patients got gene therapy injections deep into their brain, the data showed an average slowing of the disease to be around 75%, based on measures such as mobility and cognition skills. The gene therapy is made up of an inactivated virus, that is injected into the striatum, inside the basal ganglia, and once the therapy is delivered inside, the virus works its way into the neurons and injects a piece of DNA that essentially reprograms the neurons to “become a factory for its own cure”. The neuron is producing a molecule that slows the production of the harmful protein, which, as Edward Wild says, must be how they've slowed the disease. Since the disease is known to take someone's life around 10-20 years after the first symptoms start, this potentially gives people years, maybe decades, of a healthier life. Another way to visualize the treatment's effectiveness is to imagine the decline you would expect in one year without treatment would, with the therapy, take four years instead.

Even though the treatment isn't a fully developed cure yet, scientists are hopeful that in the next few years the disease can be slowed almost to a full stop. However, these results aren't just beneficial for patients with Huntington's disease; this discovery could mean incredible breakthroughs in many more neurodegenerative diseases, such as Dementia, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. With these ideas scientists have new ways to experiment and trial treatments, and who knows, in the next few years-decades, we could have treatment options for various fatal diseases.

Jasmine Anna Adamcová

Recognition of the State of Palestine

When France and the UK formally recognised the State of Palestine in 2025, the decision reverberated far beyond the corridors of their foreign ministries. It was more than a diplomatic gesture. For many, it was a long-delayed acknowledgment of a political and human reality that has existed for decades but has never been allowed to breathe freely.

Recognition, in this context, is not a simple act of protocol. It is a moral statement. Over 150 countries now acknowledge Palestine as a state, from Latin America to Africa and Asia, forming a global majority that contrasts sharply with the hesitancy of Israel's closest allies in the West. The 150 countries argue that Palestine has earned its right to statehood through international law, history and the lived experience of its people. Yet despite the diplomatic momentum, the question remains: what does recognition actually achieve for Palestinians on the ground?

To understand this, one must return to 1988, when the Palestine Liberation Organization declared independence and sought recognition from the world. Since then, the map has not changed in the way the declaration hoped it would. The West Bank remains fragmented by settlements and military checkpoints, and Gaza, blockaded and bombarded, continues to bear the scars of a conflict that shows no sign of ending. Recognition, powerful as it may be, has not translated into sovereignty.

Still, for many Palestinians, every new recognition is a small vindication. It affirms that their struggle for self-determination has not been forgotten. It pushes back against the perception that their political fate is to be indefinitely managed by others. Recognition gives them access to international institutions, legal avenues, and the symbolic legitimacy that comes with being seen as an equal member of the international community.

But Israel and its allies see it differently. For them, recognition without a negotiated settlement risks turning symbolism into obstruction. The Israeli government argues that unilateral recognition undermines the peace process, rewarding intransigence rather than compromise. The United States has echoed that line, insisting that a Palestinian state should emerge from talks, not declarations. The problem is that those talks have been frozen for years, and the political conditions to revive them appear ever more remote.

This stalemate has created a growing sense among European and Arab diplomats that inaction now carries its own moral cost. “It was becoming dishonourable to do nothing,” a former French foreign minister said earlier this year. The images from Gaza, the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, and the continued denial of basic political rights have all fuelled the feeling that recognition, while imperfect, is at least a step towards rebalancing an unequal relationship.

The legal consequences of recognition are also significant. It has allowed Palestine to sign international treaties, take part in global institutions and bring cases before the International Criminal Court. In 2021, that recognition enabled the ICC to open an investigation into alleged war crimes in the occupied territories. These actions, while largely symbolic in the face of Israeli military control, shift the conversation from politics to accountability. They challenge the notion that Palestine exists in a legal vacuum.



Source: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/recognition-of-palestinian-state-expands-ahead-of-un-general-assembly/3694200>

Yet even supporters of recognition acknowledge its limits. A flag at the UN and a nameplate in international meetings cannot replace sovereignty, nor can they protect civilians in Gaza or secure free movement in the West Bank. The risk is that recognition becomes a substitute for political courage, a way for governments to signal virtue while avoiding the harder task of confronting occupation and impunity.

Still, symbolism has power. Recognition does not end wars or draw borders, but it can change the way the world speaks about them. It tells Palestinians that their existence is not defined solely by conflict, and it reminds the international community that endless waiting is itself a political choice. The recognition of Palestine may not bring immediate peace, but it forces a question that has been postponed for too long: how long can a people be told they are not yet ready to be free?

Oliver Erben

How Did the Modern Workplace Redefine Exhaustion?

We check emails before brushing our teeth, call it ‘hustle’ and wonder why we feel empty by Friday.

Burnout is the ‘dirty little secret’ in far too many organizations. Almost everyone experiences it or has experienced it in the past, but no one wants to talk about it. It is perceived as a social norm where excessive work demands and constant pressure to be productive become normalized, leading to a widespread feeling of chronic exhaustion and a diminished sense of accomplishment. It creates an environment that prioritizes busyness and constant output over individual well-being, devalues personal time, and may even stigmatize rest or breaks.

The ‘culture’ part of this concept is very important. It emphasizes that it extends beyond an individual and refers to an environment for far more people, such as the workplace.

Many sources talk about this issue and advise more focus on mental health. So why have the systems not already changed? Many companies and organizations reward overwork and value employees more who are willing to do it. They praise workers who skip breaks, never take time off or answer e-mails at night. They do not offer strong health insurance or stress management programs. Without care for employees’ wellbeing burnout gets only worse. The correlation between poor management and burnout is strong. Leaders who fail to listen or show understanding often lose their best people.

A 2022 report from the American Psychological Association (APA) provides an in-depth look at burnout and stress in the workplace. 79% of employees reported chronic workplace stress as a major issue affecting their well-being. Nearly three in five employees reported negative effects from work-related stress, including lack of interest, emotional exhaustion, and physical fatigue. In 2023 APA’s ‘Work in America Survey’ reported other important findings related to mental health. 59% of respondents with low job satisfaction reported their workplace as toxic.

Other sources state that in 2024 about 82% of employees say they face burnout - an increase from 60% in 2020 to 72% in 2024. Leaders report they often feel used up at the end of the day. Even in Europe, a continent known for more protective labor laws for employees than for employers, the studies indicate rates as high as 35-60% of workers experiencing burnout. The percentages are rising, for example in France where in 2017 only 12% of workers were at risk of burnout, but now in 2025 the rates increased to 36%. These numbers demonstrate the rapid escalation in recent years, which can be caused by several external factors, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, overall higher pressure on people’s performances or increased need for money because of their financial situation. The highest levels of burnout are measured in the IT sector, because of its increasing importance and demands in the world now and therefore growing pressure. Growing levels are also faced in other countries like Poland, Turkey or Serbia.

The rise of technology and remote work, also known as “home office” has also further complicated the boundaries between professional and private life. The so-called “home office” may offer flexibility but also leads to an “always on”/ “always available” mentality, making it harder for employees to disconnect and recharge. The constant availability via emails, texts or virtual meeting easily infiltrates into personal time, accelerating exhaustion. And the nonstop digital connectivity leads to a state of heightened alertness even when faced with non-urgent information, only raising stress and anxiety levels.

And we are not only talking about employees - leaders are in a tough position too. They may feel burned out themselves while also contributing to burnout culture. They then either give their employees more work to do and overwhelm them with tasks. Or they do not want to admit their own struggles and vulnerability, and as a result, their teams also do not want to.



Source: <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/whats-causing-teacher-burnout>



Source: <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/whats-causing-teacher-burnout>

This creates a ‘burnout spiral’, where negative feelings and physical exhaustion of burnout lead to behavior and further negative circumstances that only reinforce the burnout, making it progressively worse and harder to escape. All these numbers and statistics only result in decreased productivity, high employee turnover, increased absenteeism, more cases of severe mental issues like chronic depression or chronic anxiety, and also other physical issues.

This cultural phenomenon does not only occur in the workspace. We can witness it even in school with teachers and students. This ‘always working’ mentality driven by the belief that more effort equates to greater success, only leads to mental and even physical struggles.

Teachers and parents want their students or children to do everything, be great at everything, or at least try everything. They do not want them to miss out on something they see or “know” that would be great for them or at least has the potential to be. In many cases a child surrounded by this pressure, to excel in every possible field, is very likely to take this mentality to heart. They do not rest and gradually only exhaust themselves. The worst thing is that they do not even realize it because, in their eyes, that is just a part of the process to becoming the best.

On the other hand, teachers can give students so much unnecessary work, they need to stay up late, work 24/7, and they still not able to keep up. Or parents can put so much pressure and expectation on a child to be great, that they are scared to make any mistakes and they feel need to be perfect. In education systems, systematic changes are more important than self-care. Even if students practice self-care, they will still be overloaded with many deadlines and things to do. This only creates a fear of making mistakes and the thought that they are the only one who cannot keep up. All this results in them not telling anyone that they need help and only pushing themselves to more mental and possibly physical extremes which can result in even more dangerous situations than burnout.

But what if rest isn’t the opposite of work - but the foundation of it? When did being a workaholic become a good thing? Somewhere between ambition and survival, we lost the art of rest - and called it success.

Addressing cultural burnout in society will never completely eliminate it. But we can work on minimizing it by creating a safe space at work and in offices. We can start by changing how we talk about work – that hard work is good but so is rest. We can create an environment where employees can talk about their mental health without fear of being judged or receiving negative consequences. Leaders must model healthy behaviors, like taking vacations, respecting work-life balance, showing empathy and listening to their teams. Leadership training with a great focus on active listening and emotional intelligence, can help managers spot signs of burnout early and support their teams proactively. People want to be heard and valued.

Organizations could offer better support by accessing mental health help, health insurance, or time off. Allow flexible schedules for people when needed. Use data and research where burnout happens most and try to prioritize that specific sector. On an individual level, adopting clear boundaries between work and rest, and prioritizing self-care are essential practices.

In conclusion, the burnout culture is a global phenomenon affecting or possibly soon to be affecting every one of us, because we, as a society, value the outcome more than the source. We forget that hard work is just as needed and important as rest and being exhausted from work does not make us the best or at least more intelligent. We need to try to focus more on our wellbeing, otherwise we will remain loyal to a system that profits from our exhaustion and burnout will keep masquerading as ambition.

The Effect of Algorithms on Our Everyday Lives

Our friends and family determine how we view reality and what we base our opinions on. Or at least that's how it worked before we began to consume content made all around the world all day, every day. It lets us access information instantly. But how objective is the information we consume? Social media applications are free, which means we, the users, are the product. The success of a social media app is largely determined by how frequently people use it. They keep us scrolling for hours thanks to algorithms that personalise our feeds and keep us engaged. But how does this algorithm affect us in our everyday lives without us even realising?

Algorithms are designed to show us similar content to what we liked in the past, repeatedly, so we continue watching and scrolling. Take a moment to imagine what happens when we see the same opinions, styles and types of people every day. You are stuck in a so-called echo chamber. An echo chamber is, by definition, "an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own". This is extremely dangerous, especially with political views. If you keep on seeing the same opinion all day from different people on social media, you are bound to believe that that is the reality. Every time you see another video with the same opinion, your opinion becomes more extreme because you start to view it more as the reality, rather than another person's opinion. This creates an extremely polarised society. People begin to have extreme opinions and treat them as reality because they see them constantly reinforced online. Algorithms support our confirmation bias, the tendency to perceive new information as another piece of evidence for our existing opinion and ignore opposing or objective information. Algorithms shape our opinions and support our confirmation more and more each day without us even realising it, which makes it far more dangerous.

Not only does an algorithm shape our opinions, but also how we view everyday life and the standard of living. As you by now probably know, influencers usually show only their happiest, most aesthetic moments. Seeing only perfection makes us feel like we are the only ones not living our dream. In the same way, social media can, as previously mentioned, change and exaggerate our opinions on politics; it can change the way we view the "ideal life". To put it into perspective, imagine you are happy with your life as it is when videos of students living abroad are shown to you, and you engage with this new and exciting content. You did not dream of that before, but constant exposure conditions you to. This idealised content distorts reality and harms self-image.



Source: <https://www.embarc-marketing.com/social-media-algorithms>

Lastly, algorithms disrupt our dopamine balance and attention span. As I mentioned earlier, the algorithm is designed for you to stay watching content for as long as possible. This is done by showing you short videos with exciting content. It sounds fun, not having to watch long videos but having shorter, more exciting ones each time you scroll. However, this makes your brain crave short, engaging content with fast information more than a deeper reflection and analysis. Suddenly, it is harder to focus on work and you no longer want to watch 2-hour-long movies. Why would you, when you have multiple applications willing to show you an endless amount of short videos carefully chosen for your liking?

Algorithms are devils in disguise. At first glance, they seem great. Content is picked out based on our liking, so it filters massive amounts of information and content for us. It is what makes social media that much more enjoyable. But when you look at the purpose of them and why they were designed the way they were, you realise you are the product of social media. Its main purpose is to keep you engaging with content, no matter the impacts. Every click on TikTok, every scroll and every opinion based solely on repeated content makes us dumber. That is the reality we live in, and the sooner we realise that, the sooner we can use social media consciously without endless scrolling. We do not need to eliminate social media entirely - it has its benefits. But we must realise what it does to our brains in order to decrease the amount of damage it does to us.

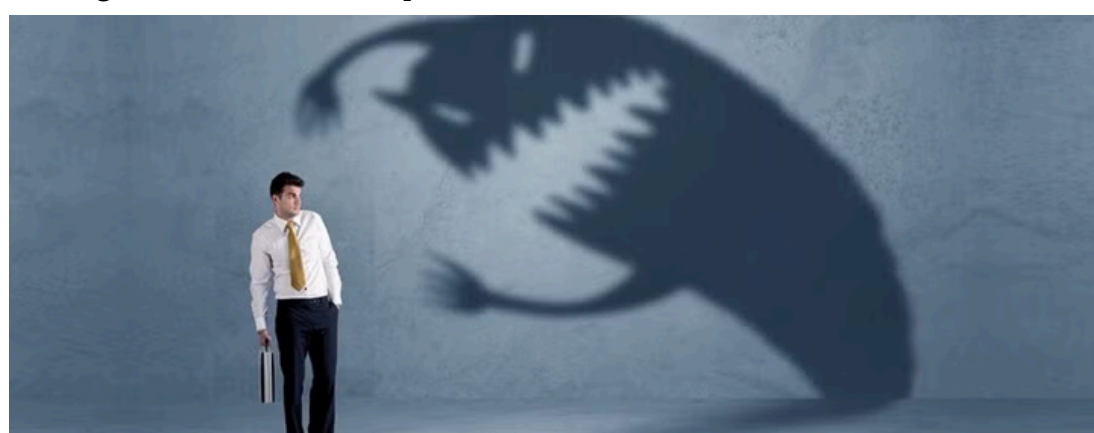
Andrea Grossová

The Psychology of Fear: Why We Like To Feel Scared

The lights dim, a shadow enters the screen and suddenly your pulse quickens. Even though you know you are safe in the movie theatre, your body reacts as if a real threat was nearby. Strangely, many of us chose to feel this way. We go to the movies to watch a horror film, we wait in the line for a roller coaster that stimulates danger, and with excitement line up for haunted houses. Emotion, that is primarily designed to protect us, turned into a source of entertainment. The main question is: Why do we like to feel scared?

At its core, fear is a survival mechanism. The amygdala in our brain sends information to release adrenalin and cortisol into our body as a means to prepare us for the well-known feeling of fight or flight. Our ancestors survived because they were sensitive to threats, such as being chased by a predator, and fear shaped their reactions. In this sense, fear is highly adaptive. Yet, in today's world, the "threats" we face are often fictional - horror movies, ghost stories, or thrill rides, yet our body still responds with pounding heart and sweaty palms as if we were facing real, life endangering threats.

So why do we sometimes seek what biology advises us to avoid? The key lies in context. The research shows that when we encounter fear in a safe environment, the same psychological responses that prepare us for danger can also feel intriguing. This is often called the "sweet spot" of fear. Too mild, and we feel bored. Too intense, and it could be overwhelming. But at the right intensity, fear releases adrenaline and dopamine, creating a rush similar to the euphoria of exercise or excitement.



Source: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/podcast/knowledge-at-wharton-podcast/fear-motivate-workers-make-things-worse>

Neuroscientist Joseph LeDeux points out that fear involves bodily reactions and conscious feelings. When we watch a horror movie, the threat is illusionary, however, the relief we feel afterwards is real. This cycle of tension and release can be rewarding. It is almost like emotional exercise.

Of course, not everyone enjoys being scared. Some people are more sensation seeking compared to others. They are drawn to new, intense experiences. Between factors that influence our reaction towards fear belong personality, age and even gender. Studies show that people who are more likely to get overwhelmed fast, tend to dislike scary experiences, while those who can handle stronger stimulation often find them fun and thrilling. Of course, social setting matters. For example, if you are watching a horror movie with a friend, the fear you would usually feel while watching alone might transform into laughter and bonding.

Fear is not only personal, but also cultural. Around the world, people have long shared ghost stories, myths, and rituals that provoke fear in the means to entertain, educate, or to bring the community closer. Today, haunted houses, horror films and video games continue this long run tradition across the world. Psychologists revealed that sharing frightening, spooky experiences can strengthen social ties. Laughing together after getting spooked at the same time is a form of collective relief.

There is also fear facing tendency at play - by choosing to confront controlled fear, we might gain a sense of mastery. Walking out of the haunted house we might not only feel relief but also pride - "I survived that" moment. In this way, scary entertainment can boost our confidence and resilience.

Fear might have evolved to protect us from harm, however in safe contexts it becomes something more complex. It transforms into thrill, a bonding experience or even a source of joy. The paradox of fear is that while it warns us about dangers, it also allows us to explore our limits or connect with others and experience life more vividly. So, the next time your heart races in a dark theatre, or on a roller coaster, remember, fear is not just about survival, but also about feeling alive.

Sofie Karafiátová

The Quiet Architects of Our Lives

Not all builders work with bricks and layouts. A handful work with words that repeat in our minds long after they are spoken. Some work with presence, shaping us through the comfort or pressure they bring into a room, some work with example, modeling the behaviors and values we slowly make our own, shaping the foundations of how we see ourselves, what we believe is possible, and how we move through the world. They leave no visible monuments behind, but their influence often lies longer than that of any stone. These are the quiet architects of our lives, the people that shape us in ways we often do not see until years later.

One of the most remarkable of these so-called architects are our teachers. Every student knows the importance of teachers, yet it is easy to overlook the silent power they hold. Through repetition and presence, their lessons and words slowly and almost invisibly weave themselves into the rhythm of our minds. Day by day, week by week, the countless hours spent in their company gently carving up who we become. However, unfortunately not all teachers guide in the same way. Some perhaps happen to unintentionally build walls - moments or approaches that make a subject feel distant, daunting, or comfortless. A student may turn away from a field of study, not from a lack of curiosity, talent or passion, but because the door to that world remained closed or because the path was blindly overshadowed by discouragement. In such moments, it is not the student's potential that falters, but the architecture of influence surrounding them. These forces - the words, actions, and attitudes of others - become unseen currents that shape a student's course, determining not only what they learn, but whether they choose to step forward at all. As one wise man said, "The authority of those who teach is often an obstacle to those who wish to learn."

Other teachers can open gates to us. Their passion and patience invite us in, guiding us toward recognitions we might never have imagined. It is not the facts alone that remain in memory, but the spark of enthusiasm, the gentle push, the careful attention to how we learn. A single lesson, a thoughtful word, or the way a teacher shares their love for a subject can shape our choices, awaken unexpected interests, and even alter the course of our lives. Yet the best teachers transcend that authority, they do not merely convey knowledge, but create opportunity, guiding us toward possibilities we cannot yet see. The true builders of our learning in the end are not the textbooks or classrooms, but the people who breathe life into them.

But the sphere of these architects does not stop at the classroom door. Parents and guardians are the first and commonly the most constant builders in our lives. They work by showing us through their actions how to treat others, how to face challenges, and how to value ourselves. They shape our earliest habits, teach us values, give us inspiration, light up curiosity, guide us through difficulties, and give us the foundation of love and safety from which all learning begins. Sometimes their work is invisible to us, like waking up early to prepare us for school, staying up late to help with our school projects or simply asking how our day was. These everyday acts quietly carve the outlines of the people we are becoming.

Even those we may often happen to overlook such as the bus driver who gets us safely to school, the cleaning lady who ensures our classrooms are clean, the cafeteria worker who serves us meals with a smile. They create the structure in which learning can happen. Without them, the school would not function properly and our lives within it would look very different.



Source: Jan Cerny

As we go about our busy lives, it is easy to overlook the architects working in the background. Yet, when we pause to notice them, appreciation naturally comes to us. For it is they, the teachers, family, friends, even our environment, who shape the structures of our hearts and minds. They are the quiet architects of our lives.

Kristýna Kotálová

True Crime: Jack the Ripper

On the foggy streets of London in 1888, fear had a name-Jack the Ripper. Hidden in the shadows of Whitechapel / Spitalfields, he was never seen, never caught, and never identified. Yet his crimes shook an entire city and left behind one of its greatest mysteries. Who was he? Why did he kill? More than a century later, the world is still searching for answers.

His first victim was Mary A. Nicholls, born in 1941 in London. On the night of 31st of August she was seen walking down Osborn Street at 2:30 a.m. by her roommate Emily. As she later said, Mary was drunk as she was slapping against the walls of a grocery shop and she tried to get her back to their Thrawl Street lodging-house, but Nichols refused and walked towards Whitechapel Road. An hour later, carman Charles A. Cross found the body in front of a stable in Buck's Row. As he took a look he saw a woman lying on her back with her eyes open, her legs straight, her skirt raised above her knees. Quickly he went to look for the police, and not long after the police officer inspected her body with his lantern and pronounced her dead (throat cut).

The second victim was Annie Chapman, a 47-year-old living in Crossingham's Lodging House. On the night of the 8th of September at 1:35 a.m. she didn't have enough money for the night so she had to earn it via prostituting herself. At 5:30 am she was last seen on Hanbury St. in Spitalfields talking to a 40-year-old man. Annie's body was discovered shortly before 6:00 a.m. by J. Davis. He and two other men ran to the nearest police station. The police arrived by 6:30 a.m. and Dr Phillips was able to establish a definite link between this murder and the one of Mary Nichols. Annie had also suffered two deep slash wounds to the throat, before her murderer had mutilated her abdomen, and a similar blade had been used in both murders.



Source: <https://wordsworth-editions.com/jack-the-ripper-part-one/>

His next two victims were Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes, murdered on the 30th of September. 44-year-old Elizabeth was again a prostitute living in a lodging house. At 12:35 a.m. she was seen by W. Smith, talking with a man in front of a gentleman's club in Whitechapel. At 1:00 a.m. her body was found by L. Diemschutz, as his horse abruptly turned to the left to avoid the object lying on the ground. Her body was turned, which showed the knife inflicted on her neck. The other victim was 46-year-old Catherine, who was coming back home to London after a trip to Bermondsey. She was last seen at 1:35 a.m. in a narrow alley talking to a man by three witnesses: J. Lawende, J. H. Levy and H. Harris. By 1:44 a.m. Cathrine's mutilated and disembowelled body was found on Mitre Sq., exposing her cut throat.

His fifth and last known victim was a 25-year-old Mary J. Kelly. Again like the other victims she worked as a prostitute and lived in Spitalfields. On November 9th, she invited a man up to her room to earn some extra money. One neighbor heard a scream at around 5:30 a.m. in the morning, however decided to ignore it as it was rather normal in this part of town. The next day at around 10:15 a.m. the landlord and his assistant came to her room to collect the rent. As they couldn't open the door, the assistant peeked through the lock and saw her dead body. Instantly they called the police, who later described her body: "The body was lying naked in the middle of the bed...The whole of the surface of the abdomen and thighs was removed and the abdominal cavity emptied of its viscera... the arms mutilated by several jagged wounds and the face hacked beyond recognition of the features. The tissues of the neck were severed all round down to the bone."

Jack the Ripper's murders ended as suddenly as they began. After Mary's horrific death, no more cases were ever linked to him with certainty. Despite countless investigations, theories, and even modern forensic attempts, the killer's identity remains a mystery. Some say he was a doctor, others a butcher... Jack the Ripper was never caught, never named, and never brought to justice. And perhaps that is why, more than 135 years later, his story continues to fascinate and terrify.

Gabriela Salata

■ Madame Bovary on Stage: Bliss, Passion, Intoxication ■

White, so soft, yet with a bite of arsenic? It's at the tip of her fingers. There's always more, in her dreams, in the lives of other people. This is Ema Bovary: dreamer, lover, prisoner of her own appetite and the protagonist of the modernized play *Madame Bovary* adapted from the eponymous book by Gustav Flaubert. This adaptation of the famous novel about the power of romantic imagination was directed by Tomáš Loudný and has been in the repertoire of Stavovské Divadlo since 2024.

Ema, so young, so bright, as pure as her white veil stretching out behind her. Who wouldn't fall in love with Denisa Barešová's *Madame Bovary*? Not Radúz Mácha's *Monsieur Karel Bovary*, her devoted husband. Without her, he would be just "Karbovary", a doctor with no purpose, no love, and no wealth. But a few steps behind, the mother listens to the young lovebirds: Martina Preissová as Mrs. Bovary senior, tolerated for what she provides, not for what she has to say. Ema will be a proper wife; she won't even stumble upon the lives other husbands have to offer. Halls of fame, pomegranates, battles, danger, scarves with monograms, power, control and most important of all - maraschino ice cream. After the couple's wedding, days come and pass, and nights are quiet in the towns of Tostes and Yonville. *Madame Bovary*'s dreams are more distant than ever; the stories in her books are just a fantasy, forever stuck in her mind. But what would happen if she tasted just a little bit, just a pinch of soft, white sugar? Don't think about it too much; the show is starting.

When you first walk into the theater hall, on the steps leading to the stage, a little off-center sits a heel. Not just any heel, one generous in size, like a piece of furniture. The symbols used in production as props and scenery have a striking, loud effect on the viewer. The shiny shoe or the pearl necklace takes many forms – from an ordinary object to a characteristic element of the entire scene. Their obvious presence on the otherwise empty stage contrasts with the unclear and almost hidden meaning. Do they represent Ema's ambition, her obsession with class and wealth or her fascination with the lives of others? The indications are glaring at us, mocking our confusion. Yet even the mirrors at the sides are highlighting them, and we are forced to focus on their reflection.



Source: www.narodni-divadlo.cz/cs/predstaveni/pani-bovaryova-CpVuJqi1TKy4T_lTX-cK6g

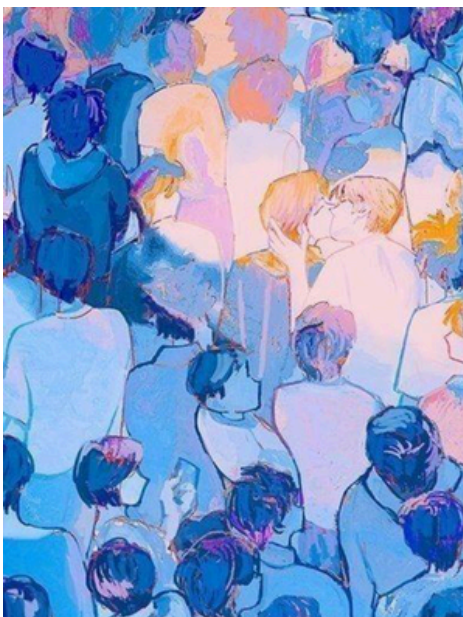
■ You Made Living Beautiful ■

My darling, I would go through it all again.
I would dance on broken glass with my bare feet,
Sleep on the floor without a blanket,
And endure the hatred from those who were supposed to
Teach me how to let people love me.

I would lose everything dear to me once more,
Just to meet your eyes for a single moment,
Because the love I see in them is enough
To make me believe that life is worth
Fighting for.

You are so gentle and sweet,
It scares me a little
And brings tears to my eyes.
How can someone hold me as if
They were afraid I might get hurt?

You are the only one who touches me
To keep me together,
Instead of trying to break me.
You are my heaven, my angel,
In this tragedy I call living.
You taught me how to breathe,
And suddenly, all the pain became
Worthy of carrying.
Maybe I am not damaged to the core;
In your presence, there is still hope.



Source: <https://pin.it/6674XjXy7>

Andrea Kočová

The visual references complement the characters and the story, overflowing even into the costume design. If you watched *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007), you might remember the famously deliberate design of Dorothea Umbridge's attire. A similar idea is implemented on our main character in the play – Ema.

While Umbridge's clothes changed because she started to reveal her true nature, Ema's character development is a little more intricate. Her light and modest pink dress and white veil slowly but surely change into a more fashionable and brightly colored silhouette with an accessory that is either a decoration, restriction or a torturous instrument. The development of her wardrobe not only changes with her perception of real life, but also her attachments, her desire, and eventually the path to her downfall.

Madame Bovary is being portrayed as a tragical story, tackling serious issues of fantasy vs. reality, the limited role of women, marriage, adultery and materialistic values. However, the piece does not get by without some comedic relief. Whether it's noted on the cost of energy, managing personal finances or the constant surveillance of stepmothers, the audience can find comedy in the everyday life of the Bovary family. The maid Victorie, brought to life by Tereza Jarčevská, with her whimsical dance creations, Petr Vančura as the pharmacist Homais running around among cardboard cutouts of chickens, and the ruthless businessman Monsieur Lhereaux, portrayed by Pavel Neškudla as he plays his sly little tune of deceit, support the fast pacing and lighthearted moments that punctuate the story's darker turns.

The public opinion about this play remains inconsistent. Some critique the underrepresentation of *Madame Bovary*'s historical context and the simplification of Flaubert's complex characters. Others praise the provided space for individual perspective and the accessibility of the story to people who aren't familiar with the book. Considering that the book itself is often described as a timeless work, providing insights into the lives of humanity no matter the time or space, there is a capacity for a deviation from the original narrative. Although, it is important to acknowledge the history of the book's origin and development throughout time, to realize its importance and to be able to integrate it into the values of today's society. From my perspective, the play provided many initiatives to engage the audience and help the viewer understand the elaborate nature of the characters and their situations, without hesitating to implement a striking vision of what the story can be outside of a written text. While the portrayal of inner streams of thoughts in a play will always be different from a book, there is more room for personal observations and a more immediate, individual approach to the work's essence. In doing so, the play transforms literary reflections into vivid, lived moments full of bliss, passion and intoxication.

Julie Hoffmanová

■ Comfort Flames ■

The chilling breeze as it flies past,
brushes my cheek with sharp edges,
the sudden warmth of blood causes shivers,
but it's nothing compared to the heat in the hold of those walls.
The walls, they quickly turn to ash,
crumbling under the charred roof.
Wiping the remaining soot off my trembling hands,
a sigh escapes,
my lungs are swollen with the chill and smoke,
each wheeze for air like a crack from the inferno.
The flames seemed gentler than the freezing cold,
they only made me beg for my life, not for it to be taken
even with burns on my skin, I'd crawl back to the house enveloped in fire
for a fleeting moment of comfort that I cannot reach in this piercing wind,
It'd be too much, but never lacking.
As snowflakes fall, each a fresh unique start all I see are the perished
memories set ablaze
I wish to be incinerated with them, rather than search for a sliver of warmth
elsewhere.
Within the piles of white snow, the hum of flames draws in,
dressed as a warm blessing that's returning.

Nela Králová



Source: <https://pin.it/cBqYdj42b>

OG Chronicle Interview: Ms. Yule

Susan Yule teaches English and last year became the IB coordinator at our school, to which she came in 2020. Although she is from Scotland, she says that home is where her family is. When you can't catch her in her office, she is probably enjoying her free time at a concert or with her cats at home. Does she like Czech food? And what is it that makes the IB diploma special? For my first interview of the school year, and at the same time my last piece for the OG Chronicle, I sat down with her to inquire more...

What skills do you think students develop most through the IB?

I think it is self-management & collaborative skills, although I hope they also learn to reflect on their learning and how they can contribute to the world via their experiences with CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service).

What do you think makes the IB approach to education different from other systems?

The DP Core is the main thing, as the ATLs (Approaches to Learning) and ATTs (Approaches to Teaching) which are at the heart of IB are similar in many educational systems, including the Czech one.

What are the responsibilities of the IB coordinator, and how does your usual day look like?

My main responsibilities, apart from the administration involved, is to support students and help our teachers become the best IB teachers in the world 😊! My day doesn't have a routine as every day is different. One thing that I can expect, however, is to have unscheduled meetings.

We read a lot of books in our English classes. You as a teacher read these books each year again and again, so is it still entertaining, or does it become boring?

Every time I reread a book that I'm teaching I find something new in it. But I also like to keep it 'fresh' so only really teach a text for 4 years then swap it for something new. That keeps me on my toes. Also, every time I teach a text I am taught something from my students as they bring their own perspectives and interpretations, which is my favourite part.

Was English or Literature your favorite subject right from the beginning, or were there other subjects in school that you enjoyed?

I always enjoyed English and Literature at school (not Maths!), but I also found/find History and Politics (Modern Studies back in the day) interesting.

Ondřej Galyáš



Source: Susan Yule

Outside of Open Gate, what's something you love to do that we might not know about?

I go to concerts and festivals when I can. The Czech Republic is great for live music, and being in the centre of Europe means that travelling to see a band or go to a festival is feasible and gives me an excuse to 'escape' for the weekend.

The OG website states: "She enjoys trying local cuisine, often using restaurant reviews as a basis for deciding which location to visit."

How do you like Czech cuisine?

I don't. Sorry, but for me it's too heavy and induces sleep, and I really don't like sweet sauces with savoury meals (Svíčková, for example). Czechs will argue it's not sweet, but for my palate it's sweet. I mean, would you put ice cream on top of řízek?

Do the Scots and Czechs share the same kind of humour?

I can't really comment on the Czech sense of humour, but if it's satirical, sarcastic, ironic, self-deprecating and a bit "off the wall", then yes, we share the same sense of humour.

How often do you travel to Scotland? Do you miss your home?

I rarely travel to Scotland as I don't have family there anymore. I think that having been living in Europe for over 20 years, I don't really regard it as my home anymore (home is where your family is, which for me is Norway and Czechia). However, what I do miss are the stunning landscapes/natural beauty of Scotland, as well as the Scottish people and their sense of humour.

Ondřej Galyáš

Exploring Journalism at Charles University

Towards the end of September, I attended the Summer School of Journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. Although short, the program offered an intensive look into different branches of journalism and provided valuable insights into the field.

The week began with a session on disinformation led by Jan Jirků, showing how much harder it is to recognize false information as it grows more sophisticated with the rise of social media. On Tuesday, we were encouraged to design our "ideal medium." This sparked a debate well known to older OG students from their ToK classes: about objectivity, and whether it even exists. Later, we were introduced to the basics of television reporting and even tried recording our own interview. The day ended with a workshop on online newsrooms, where we learned how essential speed, teamwork, and accuracy are in digital journalism.

Wednesday was my highlight. At Český Rozhlas, we practiced moderating and studio work in real time, while Karol Lovaš shared his experiences from working in radio. Equally valuable was an informal meeting with current journalism students, who gave us insider perspectives on studying at the faculty.

The program concluded with Barbora Osvaldová, former head of the journalism department and longtime editor, who reminded us of the importance of concise, well-crafted news writing. Afterwards, we received our certificates, marking the end of four intense but rewarding days.

Overall, the Summer School balanced theory, practice, and discussion remarkably well. Each lecturer brought both expertise and enthusiasm, making the sessions engaging and ensuring that everyone could discover their strengths. For me, the seminar sharpened my practical skills, confirmed my interest in journalism, and highlighted the challenges the profession faces in the age of AI and social media.

For OG students considering similar opportunities, the Summer School of Journalism at Charles University is an excellent way to gain insight into the world of media, learn directly from professionals, and make useful contacts. Even if you do not end up loving it, you will still leave with valuable experience — and a very cool certificate.

Rozálie Slámová

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