

## GENERAL PETR PAVEL ELECTED FOURTH CZECH PRESIDENT

The 13 and 14 of January 2023, the first round of Czech presidential elections were held. As usual, few candidates were leading the polls. This holy trinity contained former chief of the General staff and the former chairman of the NATO military committee Petr Pavel, member of the chamber of deputies, former prime minister and a businessman Andrej Babiš and a university economist Danuše Nerudová. The predictions placed these three close, therefore there was no telling who was going to win the race before the results came in.

Other significant candidates included senators Pavel Fisher and Marek Hilšer or the deputy of the far-right SPD party: Jaroslav Bašta. However, these candidates received significantly fewer votes than the top three. Even though Babiš was ahead for most of the vote counting, Pavel eventually overtook him and was placed first in the first round. Mrs. Nerudová's results surprised most, as she ended up on the third place (does not continue to the second round) with only 13% which is way below the expectations.

The time before the elections was traditionally very tense as many candidates started spreading hatred and fear and digging up dirt on others. The whole disinformation campaign starred Andrej Babiš, who had many controversies around him including misuse of EU

funds and conflict of interests. After the first round however, the situation became even worse. It was only Babiš versus Pavel. Babiš started his misinformation campaign right after the first round. Within just a few days we could see billboards saying: "The General wants war - vote for Babiš" and similar. Appealing to people's fear was the main tactic employed by Babiš. With the ongoing war in Ukraine and a rising inflation and economic instability, even more people are likely to get scared by these words as many are facing difficulties and fear.

On the other hand, Pavel chose a not too aggressive campaign showing his advantages over Babiš. One of the reasons for that could have been that the majority of Pavel's resources were used to counter the misinformation presented by Babiš. Fortunately he was not alone. All three runner-up candidates (Nerudová, Fisher and Hilšer) endorsed the General in the second round and even participated in many of his meetings with citizens.

After two weeks difficult for everyone, the second day of the elections came and shortly after 14.00 the votes started being counted. It was not dramatic at all, even though everyone expected it to be. From the first till he very last ballot, there has not been a moment when Babiš would be



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winning. General Petr Pavel was elected the fourth President of the independent Czech Republic. Additionally, Pavel achieved the incredible score of more than 3 million ballots which is so far the highest anyone has ever received. The Czech nation has spoken loud and clear in favour of Pavel.

Shortly after he was elected, he already started talks with European and world leaders even though he has not yet been officially inaugurated as the presi-

dent. He called Mr. Zelenskyy, the president of Ukraine to reassure him about the Czech Republic's support and will to further aid Ukraine. He also called Mrs. Tsai Ing-Wen, the president of Taiwan with whom he mainly talked about future co-operation. However, his very first encounter with a European leader was with Mrs. Caputova, the president of Slovakia. It is a tradition that the first international visit of a newly elected president is to Slovakia, but this time around, it was president Caputova who came to Prague. Mr Pavel and Mrs Caputova had a joint press conference right after the official announcement of the results.

It is expected that Pavel will be popular amongst world leaders. Right before the elections the vice-President of the European Parliament expressed his support of Pavel also stating that "nobody here in the parliament is waiting for Babiš". The main reason for his likely popularity however, is his former high-ranked position in NATO. During that time he negotiated and led talks between all the member countries and therefore it is expected that he will enter the political scene with a strong foundation based on contacts with world leaders.

ADAM CHRISTL



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## ANDREW TATE WON'T DRIVE HIS BUGATTI FOR A WHILE

Controversial kickboxer and “self-described misogynist” Andrew Tate is still in prison after accusations of human trafficking and rape. The fan-proclaimed “king of toxic masculinity”, Tate started his career as a kickboxer and got into the public eye through the show Big Brother in which he participated. Before Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter, he was banned from this platform as he was known for tweeting many controversial tweets such as “women should bear some responsibility for being sexually assaulted.” After gaining popularity mainly the summer of last year, many teachers reported a major uptick in sexual harassment and sexist behaviour, showing he has normalized such endeavour.

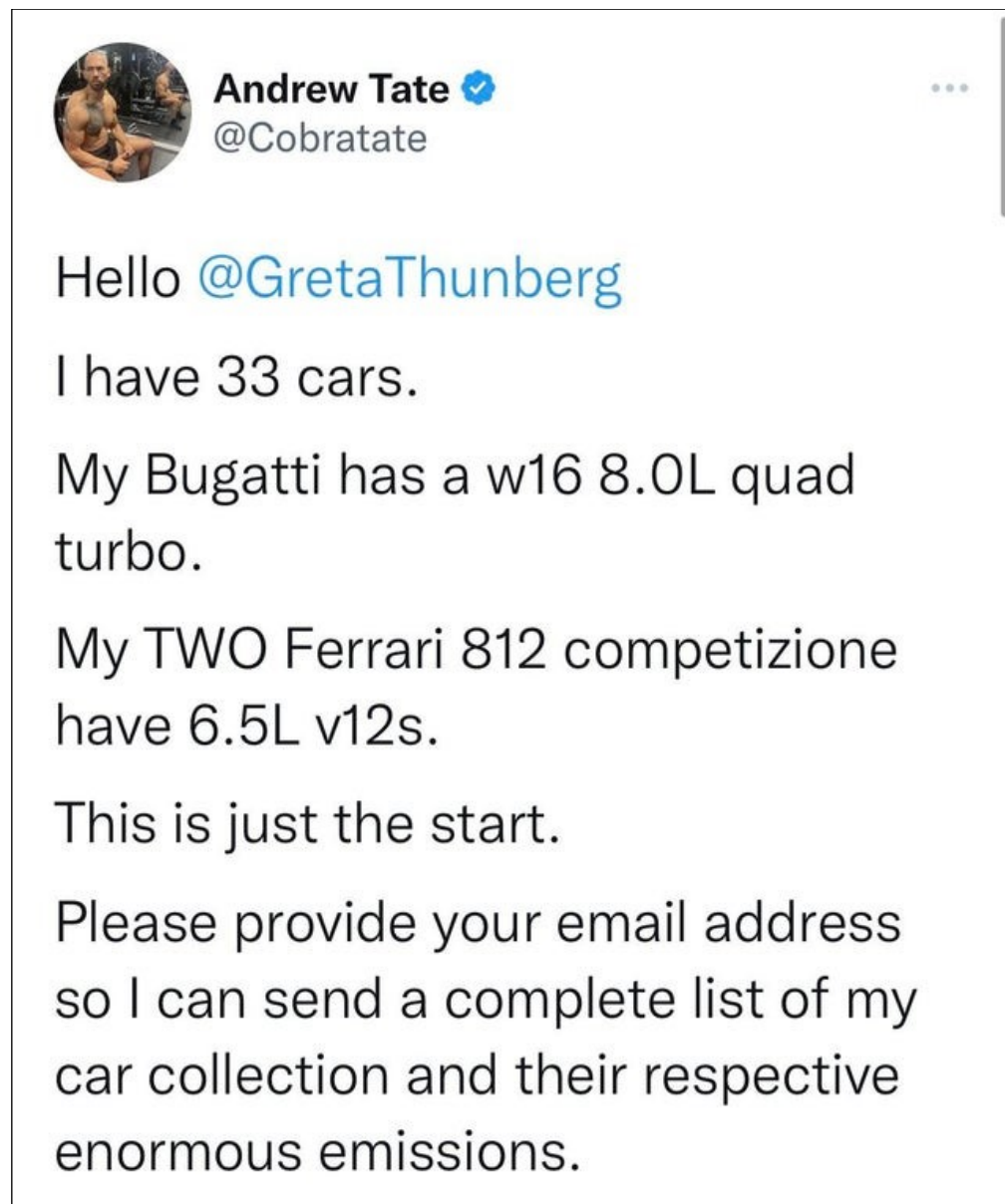
Since April of 2022, many allegations of human trafficking and rape were filed against Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan. According to DIICOT- Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism- the Tate brothers are suspected of having recruited victims for a criminal online porn scam. They made the victims believe they were genuinely interested in them and after transporting them into their house, where they were under constant surveillance, and forced them to act in porn videos under threats of violence, which they sold afterwards. For those offences, Tate is now facing the court with charges (if convicted) ranging from 3 -10 years of prison time.

What exactly led to Tate's arrest in the last days of 2022? After being granted back his Twitter account after Musk's takeover of Twitter, Andrew often tweeted about traditional masculine values and his ultra-luxurious lifestyle. That was also one of the reasons why he posted a tweet about his sports car collection and requested Greta Thunberg to “Please provide your (her) email address so I can send a complete list of my car collection and their respective enormous emissions.” To that one of the youngest environmental activists responded with a tweet which stated “yes, please do enlighten me. email me at smalldickenergy@getalife.com.” This controversial reply swiftly became the fourth most liked tweet with over 3.9 million likes in a timeframe of something around one week. This to a certain degree destroyed the ego of the almighty ultra-masculine trendsetter, who could not have left this audacious reply without any response. And he had no better idea than to film a 2 minute video of himself smoking a cigar with some pizza boxes in his luxurious apartment and insisting like a little child that Greta in fact did not get under his skin. He completed his response with “Thank you for confirming via your

email address that you have a small penis Greta Thunberg. The world was curious. And I agree you should get a life.”

This video is by many viewed as Andrew's hamartia as the day after he posted this video publicly, he was arrested with his brother by Romanian police forces. Indeed it was not because of the video that the Tate brothers were captured, but Greta's commentary of the situation - “this is what happens when

tions regarding violence against women of the Tate brothers are based on truth, the “tweet war” with Greta indeed showed a growing toxic trend. Andrew is not the only one calling for attention. Many of Tate's followers post on social media posts about his innocence and believe the convictions are only conspiracies- further fueling the spread of problematic opinions and values as they are too scared to change the sides now. This further proves



<https://preview.redd.it/greta-thunberg-calls-out-andrew-tate-on-twitter-in-epic-v0-t5e8zt2syo8a1.jpg?width=640&crop=smart&auto=webp&s=2775075932721349cfca0cc5b6718ec75147631e>

you don't recycle your pizza boxes” - still managed to get over 3.2 million likes proving that the whole world was following the story of a controversial entrepreneur and young climate warrior. Tate confirmed the arrest by tweeting “The Matrix sent their agents” as he is known for his regular referring to the 1999 movie The Matrix. Sadly for Mr. Tate, not only was he arrested and his detention was only prolonged, the police also confiscated some of Andrew's favourite toys - his emission-producing luxurious cars- as well as other properties and land owned by him. What makes the situation even more humorous is the fact that Tate is being prosecuted because of GRETA - Group of Experts Against Trafficking in Human Beings- urging Romanian authorities to take similar accusations more seriously.

Although it is unclear if the accusa-

that the normalisation of misogyny which was started by Andrew Tate is not going to leave us ever soon. This among other things leads to a rising trend of refusing to recognize and act towards climate change because of individualism being taken to extreme measures. Going beyond the simple entertainment of this story, we can see how it brings on surface the intersection between machismo and climate change hostility. So, remember to always recycle your pizza boxes and think twice before accepting everything said by Top G as even though Andrew is behind the bars now, the question of how to deal with boys and young men who have bought into his rhetoric remains unanswered.

BARBORA VOTLUČKOVÁ

## THE WAR

In the early hours of February 24th 2022, Russian troops crossed the Ukrainian border in what would become “the war” for much of Europe in the ensuing months. That however was more than a year ago, and it is time to look back at havoc that Russian aggression has caused.

It is difficult to pinpoint a precise figure due to all the chaos and unreliability of government sources, but most estimates put the casualties at over 200 thousand dead or wounded, with some saying that that number could be well over 300 thousand. For reference this would make the war more deadly than the American invasion of Afghanistan which lasted for twenty years.

What's worse is that a lot of the damage has been done to civilians. The OHCHR has verified 8 thousand civilian casualties which tells us that the real number is significantly higher; senior NATO officers have indicated the toll could be more than 30 thousand. Death and injury are not the only damages incurred by the Ukrainians, the Human Rights Watch has also recognized substantiated allegations of repeated rape, blackmail, and looting. This can probably (albeit not entirely) be attributed to Russia's hiring strategies; the Russians have sent over 50 thousand convicts to fight in Ukraine, many of which were imprisoned exactly for rape, assault and stealing.

Those fortunate enough to be able to run away from the Russians have had to at least temporarily relocate, which has created a politically complicated refugee situation in Europe. Over 8 million Ukrainians had to flee their country, and just over 5 million of them fled into the EU. The biggest applause is deserved in Poland, which is housing over 1.5 million refugees, followed by Germany with nearly a million, and coming in third is the Czech Republic with roughly half a million refugees.

It is also important to note that over 16 million refugees actually crossed the European border, but 10.5 million of them came back to Ukraine, presumably to defend their homeland.

However, the factor of the invasion which has negatively impacted the most people are the global shortages of oil and agricultural products as a result of the sanctions imposed by Russia, and naturally Ukraine prioritizing their defence over tending to their fields.

The worst part is, the war is far from over, as in spite of Ukrainian heroism, Russia is persistent on keeping the war machine running.

MATĚJ MAREK



## RADICAL VOICES OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY SHAKING UP CONGRESS

On January 7th, 2023, after 14 unsuccessful rounds of voting, Kevin McCarthy, a Californian member of the Republican party, was elected the 55th speaker of the house. After the successful election all the representatives were finally sworn into their roles and the 118th Congress could get to work. After the elections in November of last year the Republican party, managed to secure a majority of 222 to 213, after four years in the House of Representatives.

Even though the newly elected Congress might seem like one with an easy Republican majority on paper, the dynamics of the body are much more complex. McCarthy managed to secure his seat in the 15th round of voting, due to the blockade orchestrated by the radicals



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within the Republican party. Their ballots were not only crucial in the election of Speaker of the House, but also will make or break any policy the party would like to pass in the legislative body. To get elected McCarthy had to sacrifice many of his rights and privileges as Speaker of the House to get the radicals on his side. From now on every single member can call to vacate the seat of the Speaker shifting the power dynamic from McCarthy. McCarthy also agreed to give them a bigger say when voting upon the budget of Biden's administration, which could result in the budget being rejected and the country having to declare bankruptcy. McCarthy already hinted his views on the budget in his speech calling it: 'Wasteful Washington spending'.

Overall, this distribution of powers will result in the voice of the radicals being heard even more than ever before. This could also trigger the already very divided society of the US causing more chaos.

During his opening speech after being elected McCarthy addressed many issues, which he views as most pressing. One of these was China, more precisely the Chi-

nese Communist Party. McCarthy views the government not only a threat to democracy and the hegemony that the US has had for decades, but more importantly he views it as a threat to the average American worker. He proposed a plan for a Bipartisan Select Committee on China. The main goal of the committee would be to investigate China and find solutions to bringing back jobs that have been outsourced to China.

McCarthy proposes many more plans for a more self-reliant America. He would like to implement protectionist policies, which should guarantee lower energy, utility and transport costs for American citizens. He started off his speech with the words: 'opportunity and democracy still thrive in America'. In his speech he also talked about the 'ideal of the American family', which he thinks is dying out. He talked about how every family should be able to afford a car, energy and many other living necessities. He would like to guarantee this by moving the industry



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back to America, creating more jobs and lower costs, rather than importing all of these essentials every American is reliant on.

McCarthy's election as Speaker of the House ends an era of a Democrat led Congress. McCarthy's views, which are largely conflicting with those of the American President might lead to an ineffective governance of the Democrat party. However, it might lead to an even more divided American society, which will shape the future of the most powerful country and possibly the developed world.

FILIP GROSS

## BREAKING BORDERS: CHINA'S RETURN TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE

After 3 years of fighting Covid 19 with its "zero-Covid" policy, China opens its physical and economic borders to the world, allowing people and business to flow in and out. Many call this the certainly "biggest economic event" of 2023. For sure, this represents an easing of tensions of the Chinese society currently discontent with the harsh lockdowns and restrictive policies put in place to curb the spread of the virus.

This grand reopening will lead to Chinese tourists flooding into neighboring countries, boosting their GDP and employment, but will also lead to a potential spillover of the epidemic to the world. Experts predict that the new wave of Chinese tourism will contribute to a 3% GDP rise of Thailand, and, together with the economic opportunities the newly opened China will bring, to a 10% GDP rise of Hong Kong. China will once again fight for the technological and innovative companies of the west that have left the country due to instability in rules and reoccurring closures that have led to disrupted supply chains. Even though some of them may return, other countries like Vietnam may benefit from their new presence.

Experts warn that given that China

reopens when it is registering 37 million new infections in a single day and sees hospitals in major cities overwhelmed, this will only worsen the situation, and many will not be able to access the medical care they need to survive the disease. China has around 90% vaccination rate, but experts worry about Chinese tourists being potential unpredictable carriers as it is very difficult to obtain information about the current state of Covid infections. The Chinese government admitted in December that 2 million people have been infected during the last three years and 5 thousand have died, while now admitting that the death toll may instead be around 70 thousand. On the contrary, experts and even Chinese top-level health organizations claim that the death toll is rather closer to 1.5 million and the infection rate around 1 billion and according to the available data, it is for the first time since the Great Leap Forward that the Chinese population has declined. Due to the unavailability of accurate and up-to-date data, it is difficult for governments to regulate the flow of tourists to protect their populations, so a majority of countries have imposed mandatory testing for tourists coming from China and countries

like Morocco have banned those tourists altogether. At the end of the day, there certainly is economic potential from the newly opened borders, yet health risks remain an important consideration.

The reopening of the Chinese market will undoubtedly bring economic impacts of an immense scale locally but also globally. China is a massive importer of raw materials, importing more than double the amount of the second biggest importer of crude oil and almost 70% of the world's iron ore trade volume. Due to the factories reopening and the businesses increasing their activity in China, the demand for those commodities will surely rise too, and experts predict that the impact on the commodity market can have great impact on many countries' importing abilities. While the EU is trying to be energetically independent from Russia, it needs to secure its fuel imports from other continents. Goldman Sachs predicts that the new Chinese demand may bring oil prices up by almost 25%, making it way harder for Europe to purchase its oil. This global push, while potentially being offset through cheap Chinese exports of other products and the restoration of cheaper supply chains of global companies, will definitely not help

the fight with excessive global inflation rates. Economists predict that Chinese citizens have in just the last year due to their inability to spend their incomes thanks to harsh lockdowns saved up more than \$2 trillion and this will certainly show on the level of Chinese demand, magnifying the impact on commodity prices. And while the Chinese GDP rise has been particularly slow in the last two years, thanks to the reopening, it is expected to rise by almost 10% just in the next year, helping it on its path to challenge the American economic hegemony.

Chinese reopening may very likely be the biggest short-term as well as long-term economic event of 2023. It is likely to boost the Chinese economy by an inordinate amount and contribute to the soaring commodity prices worldwide having geopolitical consequences not only on Europe, but also on regions that economically depend on Chinese investments and trades, particularly South-East Asia and Latin America. While it will for sure open up new opportunities to businesses and tourists, we have to be very careful with the potential health impacts it might have on China and the world.

NICOLAS IVANOV



## THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF FASHION TRENDS

Fashion and beauty trends in society have changed significantly in recent years. A wider diversity of body types, skin tones, and gender expressions are now highlighted in the media, changing how beauty and fashion are defined in the cultural context. Nevertheless, despite this recent development, there is still pressure on people to adhere to particular beauty and fashion norms.

With the emergence of thrift store shopping, upcycling, and the usage of eco-friendly materials, we have observed a movement in the fashion industry towards sustainability. Leading this movement are companies like Patagonia, Pact, or Reformation, who are promoting the concept of apparel that is both fashionable and environmentally ethical. Customers are looking for sustainable friendly options as they become more aware of how their fashion choices affect the environment, compelling fashion brands to review their production procedures with the goal of cutting waste and lowering their carbon footprint.

Moreover, athleisure and streetwear have become more popular as well. As the distinction between athletic and casual clothing has blurred, well-known brands like Adidas or Nike have become

household names. The popularity of oversized clothing, sneakers, and accessories can be attributed to the fact that comfort and practicality have taken center stage in the fashion industry, ultimately assigning this style of clothing more than one function in the popular culture, and thus partially removing the need of a "special" kind of clothing for every specific occasion.

On the other hand, the media, advertising, and influencer culture continue to direct the emergence of new beauty trends, often promoting unattainable beauty standards. These standards have a significant negative effect on people's self-esteem and body image as the usage of photo manipulation software becomes progressively more pervasive. With its focus on flawlessness and perfection, the beauty industry has established an unattainable standard that is practically impossible for people to meet, not to mention the prevailing, narrow focus on certain face and body characteristics in which plastic surgery has often become the helping hand. Ultimately, some of these trends may have contributed to the increased incidence of eating disorders, body dysmorphia, and low self-esteem.

Nevertheless, as visible with the rise of

the body positivity movement and the appreciation of diversity in the beauty industry, there have been initiatives to question these ideals. Products for a much wider variety of skin tones are now available from companies like *Fenty Beauty* and *r.e.m. beauty*. The beauty business has changed, resulting in a more accepting place where people can be noticed and celebrated for who they are rather of feeling pressured to fit into a mold.

It's important to understand, though, that while these trends are a positive development, they are merely the start of a more extensive discussion about the role that the fashion and beauty industries play in our society. They are the ones who have the ability to question or support unfavorable cultural phenomena or biases and have a significant influence in directing the mainstream opinions with the use of campaigns and advertising.

The social effects of the fashion and beauty industries have come to people's attention more recently. Customers are expecting more from the brands they financially support, including more accountability, transparency, and attempts to help in solving various global issues. Because of this shift in customer behavior, businesses are being forced to examine

everything from the product development process to the way they present themselves on social media.

Additionally, it is crucial to realize the role of education in fostering a society that is more welcoming and inclusive. The media, schools, and families should aim to inform people about how the fashion and beauty industries affect society and promote critical thinking in the context of these cultural standards. We contribute to the development of a more welcoming and inclusive society by educating people about the effects of these businesses and by encouraging self-love and acceptance.

Trends in clothing and beauty have always been an expression of broader socioeconomic and cultural attitudes. Although there are now initiatives to question conventional beauty standards, there is still a lot to be done to build a more tolerant and inclusive society. It's up to us to carry on this discussion and work towards a society where everyone is comfortable in their own skin - and clothes.

VOJTECH PAVROVSKY

## TORY AUSTERITY

As Britain faces an uncertain economic future, the Conservative government's austerity measures have come under intense scrutiny. The Conservative Party has long argued that the cuts are necessary to reduce the nation's debt, but critics of the austerity plan are pointing to the growing evidence that it has failed to deliver the promised economic revival.

At its heart, the policy of austerity is a

form of fiscal tightening, involving cuts to public spending with the government implementing a range of measures from raising taxes to reducing welfare spending in order to reduce the budget deficit and stimulate economic growth. However, the harsh reality is that the cuts have had a devastating impact on the lives of ordinary people across the country. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies,

austerity has cost the average household £1,400 a year. The cuts have also seen a drastic reduction in public services, with libraries and other vital services shut down and staff levels slashed. Meanwhile, the evidence suggests that the austerity measures have not been as successful as hoped in terms of boosting the economy. The UK's growth rate has been sluggish, with wages failing to keep pace with inflation. The economy has also been hit by the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, with businesses reluctant to invest due to the ongoing uncertainty. The impact of austerity has been felt most acutely by those on low incomes: with services slashed, those already struggling to make ends meet have been left with even fewer options. In a society where the gap between rich and poor is widening, the government's austerity measures are exacerbating the problem, leaving low-income citizens most vulnerable.

Austerity has been a deeply unpopular policy, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets in protest. The government has been forced to make a series of U-turns, including the controversial 'bedroom tax'. But for many, it is too little, too late. The government's austerity

measures have been a failure, and the public are rightfully angry. The cuts have hurt the most vulnerable and failed to deliver the promised economic revival. It is time for the government to take a different approach, one that puts people before profit. Rather than continuing to cut public services, the government should focus on investing in a green recovery. This would create jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Other measures such as raising the minimum wage, increasing taxes on the wealthiest, and clamping down on tax avoidance would ensure that those at the top pay their fair share. The government must also ensure that future economic policies are fair and equitable. This means tackling the growing inequality in the UK and ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities. Only then can the UK move forward in a way that is fair and just for everyone.

OLIVER ERBEN



<https://www.wsns.org/en/articles/2022/10/24/bnik-o24.html>



## THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

A dangerously complex issue has overtaken the world in recent years. It poses a threat to global governments and societies and puts pressure on people and legislation. I am referring to the intricate case of political correctness. Now, political correctness is described as the act of avoiding offending and discriminating a specific group of people achieved through implementing measures moderating language and behavior. While its aim is to actively protect individuals from marginalized groups and promote inclusivity, recent events argue the subject has

been blown out of proportion and the whole topic is causing division in society. It is argued that political correctness is a dangerous tool causing division and censorship. When misused, it can lead to censorship of certain topics deemed inappropriate, dishonesty between people as they fear being deemed 'morally incorrect,' or reinforcement of harmful stereotypes. Though these aspects are not the intended result of political correctness, its purpose and effects continue to be questioned and investigated.

Opponents argue that deeming certain

opinions 'wrong' is against freedom of speech, which allows for an individual to freely express their opinions without being penalized or prosecuted. While freedom of speech allows for creative expression, constructive criticism, and collaborative communication, the system can be abused and directed to present hatred and prejudice towards a specific group. Political correctness limits the right to free speech in order to protect groups subjected to hatred and create a more respectful and inclusive society. Today, world governments are trying to figure out a balance between the right to free speech and protecting vulnerable groups from harm. These ideas may seem relatively simple, but they dig into the inner issue of society and how it perceives certain groups of people.

Many social media platforms also took part in this trend to combat politically incorrect speech. Platforms like Facebook made massive system changes and the introduction of heavy moderation. This provokes these questions: Which type of content should be moderated? Who decides what is morally incorrect? Doesn't this silence our personal views and opinions?

Personally, I believe some form of political correctness should be introduced into both society and government as to ensure the safety and wellbeing of marginalized groups. Although one should be able to express their opinion, it should never be done with intent to harm groups or individuals, and it should not lead to one group being deemed the outcasts and the other the dominant 'leaders.' We should strive to coexist in one country without intending to offend and harm one another in the face of our differences, as should the governments. In general, mild forms of political correctness should exist within the government and society to protect the rights and safety of many marginalized groups. Freedom of speech must be allowed; otherwise, it may be misused to silence, discriminate or censor people with no mainstream opinions. Its limit ends when one's opinions attack someone's being, or otherwise respond to extremist and harmful ideologies, as seen in Germany's law on antisemitic hate speech.

CALISTA MAŘÍKOVÁ



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## THE DEATH OF FREE EXPRESSION

It is no secret that the US has a problem: Guns. It feels as though a day does not go by without a mention in the news of a new shooting. From Los Angeles to Connecticut, blue state or red state, it seems like a massacre can happen anywhere. It is difficult not to be immediately captivated by shocking headlines like "Walmart Gunman Bought Pistol Hours Before Killing" or "Nation Reels After Gunman Massacres 20 Children at School in Connecticut." However, this tragic pattern is not the only consequence of overly relaxed firearm regulations in the United States. The First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of speech, press, and assembly, is under fire. The Second Amendment, which grants all citizens the right to bear arms, is often exercised in a way that impedes discussion and free expression; a pillar of the US Constitution and "the American Way."

Peaceful assemblies are increasingly likely to have armed intruders. For its population of 320 million people, the US has over 400 million firearms in circulation. Some of those are held by sane and law-abiding citizens who only seek to safeguard themselves, their family, and their property. Others, however, use them to violate the rights and safety of others.

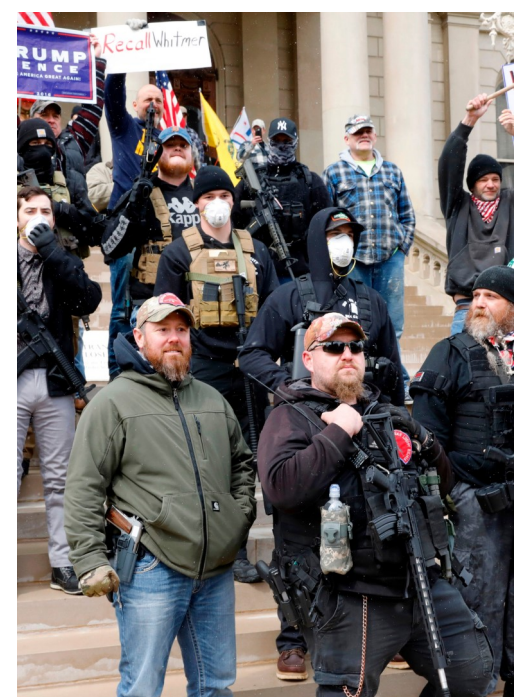
There are cases after cases that show how different groups, such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, disrupt many peaceful and well-intentioned gatherings. A Juneteenth festival in Tennessee, a gay pride event in Idaho, and an LGBTQ event in Memphis all have something in common. All were disrupted by men carrying guns and intimidating the peaceful parties involved. People are less likely to come out and support a cause if there is a threat of armed opposition. The presence of dozens of men armed with pistols and AR-15s who seem hell-bent on pushing their own agenda would be enough to scare anyone - especially a participant in an event who may end up a victim of their reckless actions. For example, during a Covid protest in Washington, a protestor was shot in the foot by a member of Antifa. Despite the severity of the injury being mainly negligible, it goes to show that an armed crowd can become violent very quickly.

It is most prominent for Republicans to be guilty of this kind of behavior. A New York Times analysis found that at more than 75% of rallies analyzed those that openly carried guns were also the ones who opposed LGBTQ rights, abortions, racial justice rallies, and held sympathy

towards the lie perpetuated by Donald Trump regarding his loss in the 2020 elections. Gun rights groups are also not shy to support Republican candidates at all levels of office. This can be seen in the fact that since 1998, gun lobby groups donated over 50 million dollars to politicians, and 99% of those donations were sent to Republicans.

Republican candidates accept or even welcome guns at their rallies. Take the case of Jeff Neff who was running for the Pennsylvania state senate in 2020. He was taking part in a protest against Covid restrictions when armed men wearing body armor and skull masks joined. He welcomed them with open arms - going so far as to even pose for a picture. He has since left politics and claims to be regretful about his involvement in the interaction. He said: "Please know that I do not condone any threats or action of violence by any person or groups." It seems as though he has since seen how detrimental armed protestors at rallies and protests can truly be, if only to his personal ranking/standing/votes and not wider public safety.

Whether the right to bear arms should or should not be a part of US law is a long discussion for another time. Right now, it



<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/04/trump-supporters-protest-coronavirus-orders>

is crucial to protect the rights ensured by the First Amendment, and only then should the United States focus on balancing it with the Second. In the words of Alan Gottlieb, a hard-line gun rights advocate who is also rightfully worried about the prospect of guns at public protests: "Firearms serve a purpose, and the purpose is not a mouthpiece."

DANIEL ADAMEC



## WHAT IS IDENTITY?

It's said that we all have an identity, yet it is difficult to define this term. My best shot at a definition of identity is a continual development of you, your role in the world and what makes you unique from other people. Through distinguishing characteristics and your social role, the term 'identity' encapsulates the whole of you. But have you ever thought about what forms your identity? How our beliefs, values, self-worth and self-esteem shape it? I believe that understanding our identity is crucial to understanding ourselves and others around us.

Identity can be a powerful and positive driving force in a person's life and provide a sense of purpose and direction. It allows them to understand who they are and what they stand for. It can also affect our view of cultural heritage, as, in this sense, identity can give a person a feeling of pride and connection to their community. Thus, diversity and inclusivity are recognized and valued in society. For instance, a person who understands and embraces their cultural identity may feel a deeper connection to their heritage and may be more likely to participate in cultural events and activities. Similarly, a society that recognizes and celebrates the diversity of its citizens'

identities can foster a more inclusive and equitable community.

However, things are not always positive. Identity can be a source of tension and conflict, as individuals or groups can feel marginalized or oppressed because of their 'true' identity. And for that reason, it is important to be aware of the ways in which different identities work to promote equality and understanding.

Identity is a complex concept, yet it is not hard to tell how it is formed. A variety of factors including biology, culture and personal experience shape this it. For instance, physical factors, like our height or our eye colour, reveal that genetics play a major role in determining who we are. However, the culture and society around us (like our family or our neighbourhood) shape our inner characteristics, such as beliefs and values. The same could be said for our own personal experiences, which, go hand in hand with culture and society. Our identity is constantly evolving, as throughout our lives we will never cease to encounter new experiences and learn more about the world and ourselves. Our identity is a combination of many different elements that come together to create a unique and complex picture of who we are, as people.

Identity also powerfully shapes our what we value and what we don't. A demonstration of this could be that a feminist may hold the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities and may advocate for policies that support gender equality. However, on the other hand, it's possible that, some people may (unfortunately) not hold these same beliefs and may not see the need for policies that support this. In general, there exists a lot of issues in which people have different views on, such as race, religion, sexuality in general and more and these are linked to our identity.

Going further, one of the most fascinating things about identity is the effect it can have on our self-worth & self-esteem. For example, belonging to a specific community or group can give you a feeling of validation and acceptance. Plus (this depends on the community that you are in) the people in the community can provide support and encouragement for your actions, which could also contribute to a more positive self-perception. Despite this, we must consider the fact that there is a chance that we won't fit into the group or will be rejected by it which could damage our self-esteem. The damage caused by this effect depends on how strongly we are

involved with the group or how much we value it as part of our identity. This can lead us to a feeling of isolation and loneliness.

Also, it is important to mention that today, when people are increasingly interacting with others from diverse backgrounds, understanding identity is crucial. It can help in removing stereotypes and biases that can lead to discrimination and prejudice. It can promote empathy and understanding, which can lead to more harmonious relationships and communities. Understanding identity can also help to promote social justice and equality by addressing issues related to marginalized groups. Additionally, understanding identity can also be beneficial for personal development, by helping individuals to understand their own values, beliefs, and aspirations, which can lead to greater self-awareness and self-esteem.

Overall, understanding identity is an important aspect of personal and social development, which can lead to greater understanding, empathy, and acceptance of others.

MIKULÁŠ BOLCEK

## AI GENERATED ESSAYS: THE DAWN OF THE NEW WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT?

Most students in any school over the world have had an essay assignment. Here at Open Gate and in other modern schools, it is one of the most common tasks because a student can write about a given topic in any subject, whether it is a comparison of two novels in English class or analysing the effects of

amylase in a biology lesson. Since it does not require more than a computer, or pen and paper, it is one of the best methods to evaluate a student's understanding of the discussed topic.

Students, however, are always evolving species when it comes to making their life and especial-

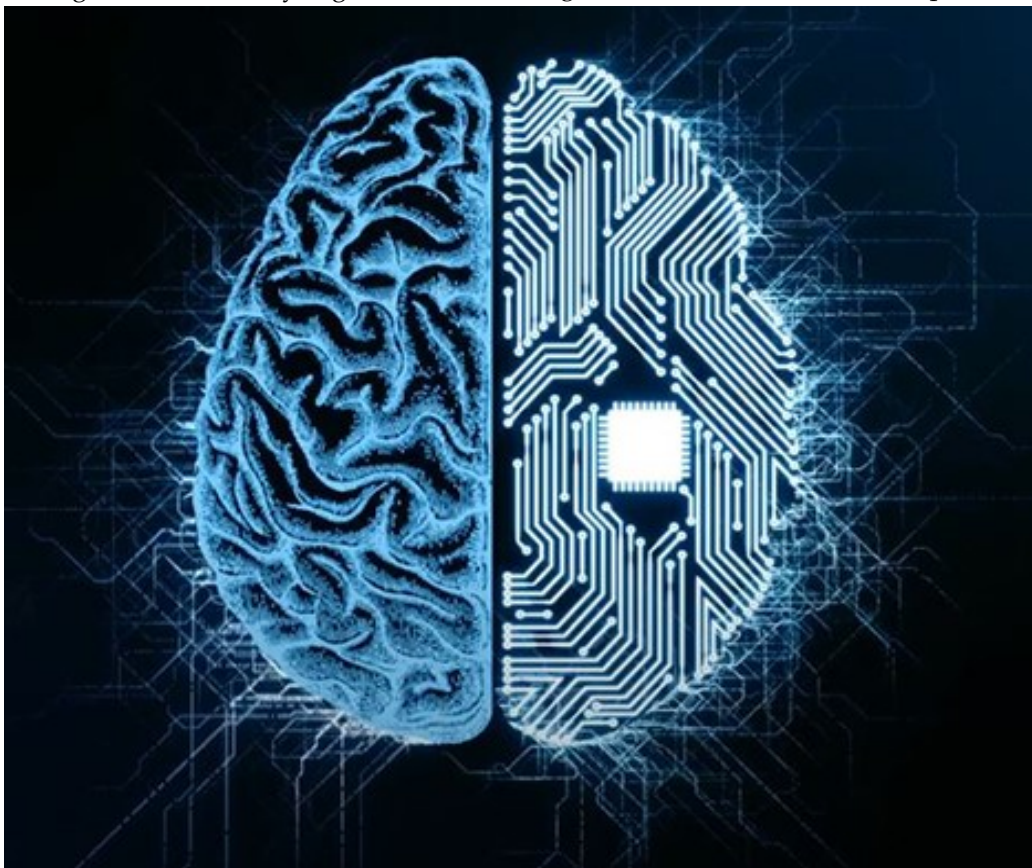
ly homework easier. This year, I have encountered more and more applications that can allegedly write an essay for you, without plagiarising any of the essay's parts from other websites. This advancement in AI technology allows us to save a lot of time doing our assigned work as we have to state no more than the topic of the essay. The technology has been around for a while. A company Open AI started with these so-called large language models, but it protected its product and put forth certain policies that did not allow the abuse of the programme. Since then, the competition has grown, and many companies created similar models without limiting their usage. The lightning-fast innovations of AI in the last years have made it accessible to the public. Now, even elementary-grade students can access them since they are free for anyone to use.

This may not seem like an issue for students, more like a relief, but the dark side of the occurrence is worse than what we may think at first glance. There is nothing teachers can do about these programs so far. The Turnitin program used here at Open Gate cannot detect this issue because it is not plagiarism. The es-

say is a brand new, never seen before piece of writing, but the student made it in a few clicks and did not have to understand anything about the topic. This may lead to a lack of effort in school and result in a generation of people that never learned the importance of thorough analysis and precise comprehension. The problem is not so much about not doing homework as it is about not learning some of life's core skills.

So, what is the solution? The same thing that created this problem: technology. This new shortcut for pupils will work only for a limited amount of time until some other company sees a new hole in the market and creates a program that will be strong enough to trace these systems. Unlike in other areas of our everyday life, there are little to no rules about the ethics of the use of technology. It is time to create a united series of regulations that will ensure a safe advancement in technology and its responsible use. This technological business model of "produce now and worry later" must be stopped. The consequences of any actions shall not be an afterthought.

ADAM CHÁRA



<https://www.uu.se/en/research/ai-artificial-intelligence/>





## THE YEAR IN SPORT 2023: BOLD PREDICTIONS BY OUR 'ANALYSTS'

All of us enjoy doing something enriching even outside of the academic world – everyone has their own special interests – and I believe I am not addressing the minority when it comes to one of these interests being watching, or actively taking part in sports. We all love to predict, guess, hope or wish how something will turn out. That is why I set out to interview various OG students and teachers about the sports they are interested in and their predictions for the upcoming year, from cars going round in a circle to people trying to hit a ball with holes in it.

Let's start with an easy one: although the previous Formula 1 season offered its ever-increasing fanbase an almost anticlimactic ending in the form of a Max Verstappen and Red Bull dominance, that now seems long gone and everyone is looking forward to the start of the new season in March. I sat down with Kuba Hošťálek and Dan Strnad to find out how they feel about the 2023 season.

**Who will win the constructors' championship and why?**

K: Well, I think the main favourites are Red Bull again, of course, but on the other hand, they had little time with the car in the preparation, so... Mercedes will be strong too, but Ferrari, after their disastrous last year, I don't think they will come back. (laughs)

D: With Ferrari, I don't think their new team boss will help, there are much deeper problems.

**And will there be any interesting battles in the midfield to look out for?**

D: The Alpha Tauris will be strong, definitely.

K: I think McLaren will come back stronger, and hopefully start off better than last year. It is going to be an interesting midfield, also because of some interesting driver movements, like Fernand Alonso to Aston Martin. I just feel like that wasn't a smart move. But we will see. Also, the regulations could help to make the fights in races longer as we saw last year.

D: Yes, the regulation change was pretty significant last year, but now I think that the gap will start to get bigger and bigger until the next change, which is in 2026 I believe.

**Finally, who will be the driver to win the 2023 FIA Formula 1 Championship?**

D: MAX VERSTAPPEN!!!

K: I hope it would be Daniel Ricciardo, but he is just a reserve driver this year... (laughs)

After the controversial Qatar World Cup is over, it is all the more exciting to get back to club football – and the most glamorous club competition, the Champions League, is finally about to continue in

February with its intriguing knockout stages. Filip Gross was the man I talked with to find out more.

**Who will lift the UEFA Champions League this year?**

I believe there are many good options for the win. The obvious answer is Manchester City with their squad depth, but they're also kind of stumbling in the English Premier League right now. Another great choice would probably be Bayern Munich or PSG as they will play against each other already in the round of 16 in February, so that might decide the whole thing. There are still some more great shots though, for example Napoli, who are destroying the rest of the Italian Serie A this year, especially their new Georgian signing, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. Then also Real Madrid, with amazing squad depth and experience.

**And do you have a personal favourite? Who do you wish would win it?**

I hope Bayern Munich can win it again. They honestly deserved more Champions League wins in the last ten years or so.

Moving on, we have the North American sports leagues – love them or hate them, another big, awesome, exaggerated, glorious season is about to go down in history. For those interested in basketball, Adam Chára has the answers.

**Adam, who will win the NBA?**

Ooh, that's a tough one... But I would have to say that it's going to be the Boston Celtics. They have decent depth in the team and both their offence and defence are among the top-rated in the league, so teams that are balanced like them have a great chance of winning it.

**And who will become the MVP? Someone we already know or a surprise?**

Yeah, it could be Luka Doncic, but I think it's going to be Giannis Antetokounmpo, who is just going to continue to dominate and win his third MVP trophy.

The NHL is another important overseas competition, and when it comes to hockey, there is only one person in the school I could ask to get the best possible predictions. A passionate Toronto Maple Leafs supporter, Mr. Witt is no stranger to the NHL and also looks forward to the upcoming playoffs.

**The regular season is already long past the halfway mark, so approaching the playoffs, who is going to win the Stanley Cup this year?**

The Stanley Cup this year... I can tell you my hope, which is the Toronto Maple Leafs, who I've been following since I was a kid and I hope they just win one Cup before I die (smiles). However, Boston

seems strong in the regular season, and they've got that all-Czech line – Pastrnak, Krejci and Zacha, so I think they can keep it up. But still, Toronto is firing on all cylinders as we say and I can't possibly give you an objective answer (laughs), because for me it will always be Toronto!

**And can you give me the best point-scorer of this season?**

Maybe Connor McDavid... Yeah, I would put my money on McDavid. It won't be Auston Matthews this year even though he had a great season last year, a great goal-scoring season.

**Finishing on a random, unpredictable one, who will win the Draft Lottery to get the best young player for the next season?**

Good question. My guess would be Columbus or Minnesota, they're rebuilding right now so they could use a good draft pick. Minnesota is generally a disappointment for me this season, I expected better from them. Ottawa is kind of a nice surprise; they were terrible last year. But we shall see...

Closer to home, there is an event even occasional sports fans tend to keep an eye on. Last year, the Czech National team brought a medal home after a never-ending, heart-wrenching 9-year drought, along with a glimmer of hope and optimism. But how will the team led by Finnish head coach Jalonen fare this time? Reminiscing of our bright hockey history, can we aim even higher? Moreover, after a promising U20 tournament earlier this year (where the Czech youngsters won silver against all the odds, tasting defeat only in the final game against Canada), the sky seems to be the limit. But what does Ondřej Galyáš have to say about that?

**So, who will win it?**

I'm an optimist, so I think that Czechia will get the gold medal in an epic final against the home side, Finland. It will, of course, depend on how many players will be willing to come from NHL, but I sense that the quality of the Czech top league (Extraliga) is getting higher, so even these domestic players can play hockey on the world stage. After the juniors' success at the start of the year, I feel like those good times of Czech hockey are finally coming back and with a good coach, and a fearless team performance, I think the lions will roar in May.

**Who will be the biggest disappointment and who the pleasant surprise of the tournament?**

For me it would be Sweden and Slovakia. Sweden's been waiting for a medal from a major tournament (championship or Olympics) since 2018 and they are not looking like getting one this year. There are several junior players with a great po-

tential, but it seems they're afraid to take them to the big scene. Slovakia surprised us already at the 2022 Winter Olympics and I feel that they are the complete opposite of the Tre-Kronor – playing with a very young team with lot of talent and they can live their dream this year.

The next is a tournament that is underway already – the new tennis season has just begun, so I naturally had to ask Richard Švejda about the Australian Open.

**Who are your favourites for the first Grand Slam of the year (The Australian Open)?**

Okay, so for me there are only two players in this, really. Rafa Nadal and Nick Kyrgios – these two will be in the final and my prediction is that Kyrgios will win it, also with the home support obviously! I think this season will be interesting and Kyrgios will dominate in other tournaments as well, and I expect Roger Federer to make a surprising comeback, so I'm really looking forward to it!

And now, the moment you've been waiting for – the most important competition of them all. Full of excitement, emotions, rivalry, amazing fan support, creative team names and missed scoring opportunities... Yes, the time has come to predict the 18th season of FLOG, and who better is there to ask than its main organizer, Mr. Klauz?

**How is the FLOG season progressing so far in your opinion?**

I think it's all going well, because there are no restrictions, so the matches are not cancelled – the fourth round of matches is starting now, and we hope to get six full rounds plus a semi-final and final evening at the end. So, there will be a lot of games. The only problem I see is the students' reluctance to referee games, and then others' complaints about some of the refereeing...

**And the main question: who will win it?**

Well... It really depends if all the players will be there for the final game, if some players will be missing, I think it can really make a huge difference because as we can see the games are often quite close and there are definitely players on all the teams who have made progress. But my secret guess is probably... (laughs) Kubovi Hoši.

Now, that we know who to put our money on, a huge thanks belongs to all the respondents. And just like them, I am sure we can all look forward to a great year full of exciting sporting events, whether you agree with their respective predictions or not!

PAVEL GALYÁŠ



## A NEW WAVE OF (AWFUL) SAMPLING

You have probably already seen it, especially this last year. Multiple worldwide hits were built, in major ways, with older, often also popular, songs. "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)" by Elton John and Dua Lipa, "I'm Good (Blue)" by David Guetta and Bebe Rexha, "Super Freaky Girl" by Nicki Minaj, the list just goes on. This was not just a simple coincidence, there were even more examples of this on social media, specifically Tik-Tok. The main connecting thread between them being; their lack of quality. These songs have all been nearly universally panned when examined critically, and this new wave of sampling has been frowned upon. But are these criticisms valid? Why are we so strongly opposed to these popular songs sampling other popular songs (at least those of us who analyse music critically)? It requires us to take a look at sampling as a whole, and what makes a sample good.

Taking older pieces of music and recontextualizing them in new pieces of music is the straightforward way of explaining sampling. Primarily used in hip-hop to create unique instrumentals that take advantage of electronic equipment to manipulate the original songs, sometimes to the point of unrecognizability, in a way that still sounds pleasant to people. Most

importantly, the samples are meant to be repeatable to create a constant background element against which rappers rap. The art of sampling is often associated with "crate-digging", an activity in which producers look through collections of often unknown music to find compelling songs to sample. This has been further popularized with the explosion of musical archiving through YouTube, and databases meant to catalogue sample usage in music, like WhoSampled. However, popular artists and their songs can also be sampled effectively. A favourite example of mine has been the sampling of Björk on the album „N\*\*\*\*\* on the Moon“ by Death Grips, where Björk's vocals are so chopped up they become another instrument onto themselves. So, what makes a good sample, and why do the aforementioned hits get penned as cases of "bad sampling"?

Oftentimes, a good sample is simply qualified as being a nice-sounding snippet that works well when repeated. However, samples can go beyond that. They can stack, they may be completely transformed, or they can add onto the meaning of the given track. The last method can especially improve a song and provide a new layer of meaning to it, an example

being the sampling of Boris Gardner's "Every N\*\*\*\*\* Is a Star" to kick off Kendrick Lamar's album *To Pimp a Butterfly*.

When we examine our list of hits, we realize that their use of samples is meant to be at least somewhat clever in relation to what the songs are meant to be about, or they are simply referencing other popular songs. The issue is that the actual use is very shallow and can be charitably described as exploitative of people's nostalgia. "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)" clumsily combines quite a few Elton John songs, sounding more like a mashup with a generic nu-disco beat under it. "I'm Good (Blue)" is a horrific example of how to take an iconic song and suck out all the life behind it with one of the most generic set of beats and lyrics on any EDM song in recent memory. "Super Freaky Girl" uses the same sample as "U Can't Touch This", that being "Superfreak". Using the same sample in a new song is not frowned upon, but it is a worthy criticism when the track is simply referencing a song while lazily trying to copy the success of "WAP". Extending our reach to songs popular on social media, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Bitch" by Leah Kate is an embarrassing example of trying to combine pop-punk and nursery rhymes in a way that feels like it is making fun of

your intelligence every step of the way. Obviously, all of these comments are subjective and unquantifiable, but I am certainly not alone in my opinions, as any comment thread concerning these songs will tell you. So, why is this such a large issue for me?

Sampling is a beautiful facet of modern music production. It allows people to create wholly unique instrumentals that sound strange on paper. However, when sampling is simply used as a form to reference older and more popular material, it has the same effect that lazy references in TV shows have: It is boring, overplayed, and contributes nothing to your piece of media. The milking of nostalgia has always played a major role in the pop zeitgeist, but when it is this blatant, it makes me scared that popular producers and songwriters are going to get even lazier and audiences, unaware of how creative sampling can be. All this to say, if you hear a song that samples a song you already love, and you like this new song, ask yourself if that is because you just like the original and the feelings that hearing the original remind you of.

IVAN PAVLOVEC

## FASHION TRENDS ARE REPEATING

Trends are everywhere. Before I go into more detail about trends in fashion, it is important to know a little more about this term. A trend is a general direction in which something is changing, developing, or heading. The word "trend" first appeared in the 1590s and meant "to run or bend in a certain direction." At that time, however, it referred to rivers, costs, lands, etc. The noun appeared in 1777 and meant "the way something bends".



<https://www.mamamia.com.au/claw-hair-clips-comeback-trend/>

As late as the 1950s, the word also referred to "a prevailing new trend in popular fashion or culture." (Nordqvist, C.)

The trends come back in all industries, but as I mentioned before, this article focuses on fashion trends. First, the trend should go through some phases. The first phase is the introduction, which is used to tell the world about a new style, which can be something completely new, or to give the "old" style a chance. This is possible through designer shows, fashion merchandisers, textile manufacturers and marketers. The next stage is to increase trendiness. In this stage, social media, more precisely influencers and famous people, play the main role. Then the peak of popularity is reached because consumers wear a trend every day, and you can see the corresponding clothes everywhere, including fast fashion stores. The following two phases are rather gloomy, as the trend first decreases in popularity and then is generally deemed unfashionable. The bonus phase is the reintroduction of the trend when this cycle repeats.

There are 3 theories as to why trends are repeating. The first one is the reintroduction of our parents' clothes. Lots of designers take inspiration from clothes

worn by the previous generation which is why trends are repeating approximately every 20 years. This is also called the "20-year Rule". The second theory was produced by James Laver. He said that the 20-year rule is too short, and fashion cycles are closer to 50 years. Moreover, Laver claims it takes 50 years to return trends not just in fashion, but in art, architecture, design, and music as well. The third theory is more scientific. "Hemline theory" was presented by George Tayler, and this theory shows how fashion changes based on the economy. For instance, in the roaring '20s, women started wearing shorter skirts and dresses to show off their elegant and fashionable silk stockings. Fur coats, jewels, and sparkles were all the rage. With the Great Depression, hemlines dropped back down since silks were no longer affordable nor in-fashion. Furs, sequins, and glitter felt too ridiculous during such scant times. It was not until the economy started thriving again long after the Depression that glitzy fashion came back to the fashion scene. In my opinion, all these theories are valid because they all work in certain contexts and are partly connected.

Finally, in 1950s was trend on claw



<https://trendhotnewstoday.blogspot.com/2020/02/kendall-jenner-clips.html>

clips, and due to Alexander Wang – a favourite designer of the Kardashians and Beyoncé – put the accessory centre stage at his Autumn/Winter 2018 runway. So, in this case, the trend was come back due to second theory which was produced by James Laver. This trend confirms the theory of why trends are repeating.

OLEKSANDRA SUPYLNYK



## SONNET OF FEBRUARY

## CRINKLES: A CHOCOLATE HEAVEN

Oh what a rogue slave am I  
Prisoner to myself and I  
Chained to cold solitude  
Dampened, my mood rude and crude

What cruel fate I bear  
As the sea and the stars  
We never touch only stare, melancholy

In feast, in bath or boredom I remain  
My heart not sated my mind not clear  
I ponder in essence of remembrance  
My beloved of her excellence, in nature  
arcane

Walls or valleys divide our connection  
We sew our tethered tender affection  
Until reunion occurs, melancholy



[https://www.seekpng.com/ipng/u2q8a9y3r5a9e6u2\\_cupid-clipart-valentines-vector-black-and-white-library/](https://www.seekpng.com/ipng/u2q8a9y3r5a9e6u2_cupid-clipart-valentines-vector-black-and-white-library/)

Okay okay. I admit it. I usually bake these originally Filipino cookies, as Christmas confectionery. However, I've realized that they'll really fit any occasion. And since spring is the time of love, and "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach" (or so I've heard), I've decided it's the right time to share the recipe. Even if you have missed Valentine's Day, there is always May 1st for you to try them. And believe me, they're delicious!

### Ingredients:

- 140g plain flour
- 50g Dutch cocoa
- 5g baking powder
- 2g ground cinnamon
- a pinch of salt
- 190 g castor sugar
- 55g dark chocolate
- 55g butter
- 2 eggs
- icing sugar for coating



<https://www.naskokvkuchyni.cz/cokoladove-crinkles/>

### Method:

- 1) Sift flour, cocoa, baking powder, cinnamon and salt into a bowl and add castor sugar as well.
- 2) Chop up the chocolate into small pieces (don't cut off your fingers in the process) and add it to the bowl.
- 3) Melt the butter in a small pot.
- 4) Add the melted butter and eggs into the bowl.
- 5) Mix all the ingredients thoroughly and process the mixture into dough.
- 6) Let the dough sit in the fridge while letting the oven heat up to 190 C.
- 7) Sift the icing sugar into a soup plate.
- 8) Break the dough into pieces of about 20g and form small spheres. Coat them with the icing sugar. (I recommend shaking the plate.) Lay the spheres evenly on a baking tray with baking paper, leave at least 5 cm between each piece.
- 9) Bake for about 12 minutes. (You'll have to learn to estimate the ideal time yourself)
- 10) Leave to cool. (Just kidding, you won't be able to wait - they're too difficult to resist anyway)

DANIEL STRNAD

## CHRISTMAS MARKETS AND THEIR SPIRIT

A day with a wintery atmosphere, warm elements of love, and being with the ones you love the most. That's the spirit of Christmas. Even if waiting for it is full of the stress of buying gifts or just preparing, it can still be enjoyed through the many activities you can do alone or with your close ones, from drinking tea or coffee at home while watching Czech fairy tales to walking around the city filled with decorations all over. And one of many attractions filled with this spirit that goes back to the Late Middle Ages, around the 14th century in Europe, are the Christmas markets.

These festive markets are known for their colorful lights, delicious food and drinks, and unique handmade crafts and gifts. They were held in front of churches since Christmas was a holiday primarily celebrated by Christians. The markets provided an opportunity for people to buy goods they needed due to its diverse range of products. They were also called "Christkindlmarkt" (Christ Child market) or "Weihnachtsmarkt" (Christmas market).

The first documented Christmas market dates back to 1434 in the German city of Dresden. The market was held in the city's town square and was known as Striezelmarkt, after a type of sweet bread that was sold there. The market was an in-

stant success and quickly became an annual tradition.

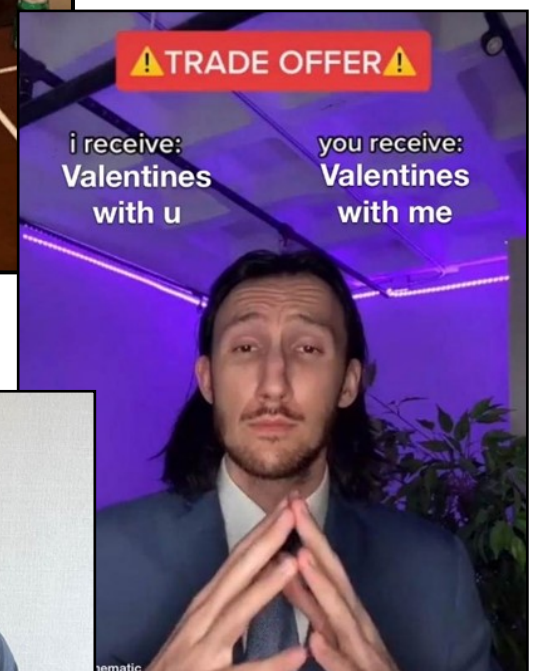
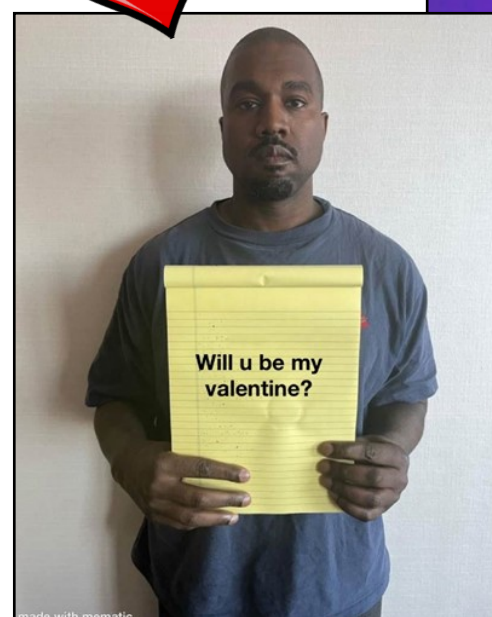
As time went on, the markets grew more and more elaborate. They began to spread throughout Europe by the sixteenth century, with cities and towns competing to establish the most extensive and finest market. The markets featured more secular themes such as music, food, and entertainment, showcasing carollers singing hymns, musicians playing festive tunes, or acrobats performing daring feats. They became a place for socializing and community gatherings, where people of all backgrounds celebrated the holiday season.

In the 19th century, these markets spread beyond Europe, taking place in North America and other parts of the world. Today, Christmas markets are held worldwide, from traditional German markets in Berlin and Munich to modern markets in Tokyo and New York City.

Despite their evolution, Christmas markets remain a beloved tradition worldwide, with millions of people visiting them each year. They provide an opportunity to enjoy the sights, sounds, and flavors of the holiday season while also celebrating with family, friends, and the warmth of the community.

SOFIA DAŇKOVÁ

## VALENTINE'S MEMES



DANNY SMÍŠEK





# chronicle

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