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JABS

Journal of
American
and
British
Studies

summer semester 2012

Exclusively
from
the excellent
Dresden
University of
Technology

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For all those who have problems to start reading the JABS magazine, in the next articles two of our authors explain why that is and how to overcome it!

Procrastination – a national sport?

by Christin Rodner

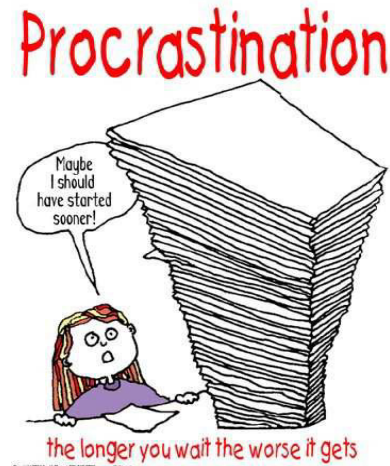
Imagine the following situation:

Two presentations, reading journals, a term paper – and everything needs to be done within the next two weeks. Three months ago, your plan was to start working on these tasks as soon as possible but then other things, just like tidying up your room, answering all e-mails or going out with friends, seemed to be more important. Now you are struggling to get everything done in time but still you lack motivation. Is this a familiar situation for you? Postponing things is one of your weaknesses? Then maybe you are one of the approximately 8 million Germans suffering from Procrastination.

Procrastination – more than a bad habit

The word Procrastination, derived from the Latin word “procrastination”, meaning *postponement*, is formed by the words “pro”, which means *for*, and “cras”, which means *tomorrow*. People with this dysfunction often tend to search for distraction in order to avoid completing unpleasant work. About 30% of the world population regularly postpone things; all fields of business can be affected but most of the time people who have to organize themselves, just like us students, share this habit. Persons with procrastination are frequently late, they seem to be unprepared, not well-organized and flounder on projects they have been working on for a long period of time. Moreover, in many cases procrastinators have the strong will to do everything perfectly and are therefore afraid of the success because the result might not be as they wanted it to be. Another cause of postponing things is the kick one can get: many people need some pressure to raise the adrenalin level because they are of the opinion that they work more efficiently at this point of time but in the worst case this can lead into a downward spiral of life. Causes for this can be the pressure to perform in today’s society as well as

an unstable personality. If daily life consists only of postponing everything, it can lead to serious mental disorders or even to depression and so some people cannot find a way out and fail in life.



<http://leavingcertdiaries.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/procrastination.jpg>

Strategy to help procrastinators

Although procrastination is little investigated and not described as independent dysfunction, one can find help in Germany in the out-patient department for procrastination of the *Wilhelms-Universität of Münster* which has developed a strategy to help affected persons: firstly, a tidy desk is necessary to be able to concentrate on the task. Secondly, all disruptive elements like mobile phones or internet have to be eliminated. After these things have been done, the procrastinator has to start working earlier but with a realistic goal. After that the working time can be increased little by little. By realizing the roots of the problem, the lowering of one’s own expectations and working in an organized way, procrastinators can, in the end, lead a normal and less stressful life.

If you want to test whether you are a procrastinator or not, you can visit the following website:

[Test yourself on Procrastination](#)

PROCRASTINATION

All's well that ~~ends~~^{starts} well

Your flat is as clean as it has rarely been: you have washed the dishes; you have gone round and round with the vacuum cleaner; you have done the dusting; you have cleaned the windows (plus the window sills); you have tidied up your desk (several times) and may have even rearranged the furniture. What you have not done, however, is to prepare the presentation for next week, do the homework for tomorrow, or catch up on some reading for your bachelor thesis. Now it is 8 pm and you feel like taking a break (after all, your day was quite exhausting), so you decide to go out with some friends - one beer only, of course!

Sounds familiar? You may be suffering from *procrastination*. The term itself comes from the Latin word 'procrastinatio', which means postponement and describes the behavior of postponing unpleasant tasks by doing other, often useless, things. As there aren't many studies, researchers and psychologists are neither sure about the reasons for *procrastination*, nor about its various stages (e.g. at what stage *procrastination* can be regarded as an illness). Nevertheless studies show that it increasingly seems to occur among students, especially among students of the arts, which are rather unstructured, thus require a huge amount of self-initiative and self-organization. At the university of Münster there is even a clinic which provides help for students suffering from *procrastination*.

However, not everything about *procrastination* is necessarily bad. If you tend to procrastinate a lot, there are ways to trick your own mind and make this weakness your strength. How? Take a look at the ideas of Anna Sommerer. As a student of design she was a 'procrastinator' herself. In her case this weakness turned out to be her strength: having been fed up with her own *procrastination*, she developed five products in her bachelor thesis that help get your work done without missing out on pleasures.

Number One: Cloth Bag

A cloth bag full of little pieces of wood, marked with pleasant and unpleasant activities, e.g. 'listen to your favorite song' vs. 'do the laundry'. The aim is to do what you draw out of the bag.

Number Two: Coin

You may flip the coin when unsure if you should continue to study. On one side of the coin is a pen. This means you proceed. On the other side is a crown. This allows you to do whatever you want to do, to procrastinate.

Number Three: Two Cubes

One cube shows different periods of time (e.g. 10 minutes), the other one shows activities (e.g. studying). Both cubes offer a side with a star on – if the dice shows both stars you may do whatever you want to do for as long as you want to do it.

Number Four: Post-it

Two Post-it pads, one to write down compulsory tasks, the other to write down voluntary tasks next to it – in order to see the pleasant activities as motivation.



<http://www.designmadeingermany.de/2011/15969/>

Number Five: Tea Candle

You light the candle every time you study. A tea candle burns on average for four hours, which is the ideal time for studying per day. As soon as you procrastinate, you blow out the candle. When you continue studying, you re-light it, maybe blow it out again, re-light it, and so forth. The daily aim is for the candle to be burnt out.

Of course, these are only an extract of all the different things you can do in order to motivate yourself to do unpleasant things. If you consider yourself to be a 'procrastinator', however, you might as well try some of the strategies explained here. There is a chance that you will find a way to make your weakness your strength – and cut down a lot of stress in the process. Whatever it is that works best for you, get started – now!

by Anna-Lena Roderfeld

The stereotype of the 'lazy student', who does anything to not having to do what they should, is well-known. Clichés, however, do not stay at university, they practically spread out into the world. The next articles deal with the question what there is about two distinct cultural stereotypes: the Italian mafia, and the mentality of the Irish.

The migrants mostly came from the Italian South, where, ever since, the political and economical situation has been more difficult than in the North of the country. Among these migrants who wanted to improve their standard of living by taking up hard and legal work, there were also members of mafia-like clans. Later, the families of the Italian workers followed them to Germany, including families that belonged to the Italian criminal organizations. In the course of time, more and more Italian restaurants and grocery stores spread up in Western Germany. Among them those managed by members of mafia-like clans, where they could conduct illegal business such as drug commerce, human trafficking and prostitution and launder cash under the cloak of doing legal business.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the communism, these clans expanded their system of illegal business to Eastern Germany.

The Italian Mafia in Germany

By Denise Schellenberg

There are six Italians who have just arrived in their cars, ready to drive home after they had celebrated the birthday of a friend in the "Da Bruno", an Italian restaurant. But suddenly a car passes by, its inmates firing at the young Italians sitting in their cars. None of them survives the attack. It is the early morning of 15 August 2007, the day of the "Duisburg massacre", whereby a feud between two clans of the Italian "Ndrangheta" reaches its climax, and the day the German public becomes aware of the fact that the Italian Mafia is no longer only a phenomenon that exists in Italy. In fact, it has already developed a network that operates in the whole world, even in Germany – and not only since the recent years! But, what exactly is the Mafia and how could it settle down in Germany?

Originally, the Italian Mafia developed in Sicily around 1860 out of groups that exercised control over the land of farmers and guaranteed them security. In return, they charged the farmers for doing so – the first protection money. When the Italian Nation was founded in 1861, there was a politically chaotic situation in the whole country, in which the Mafia could develop uninhibited and therefore became increasingly powerful. One could therefore say that the Mafia is as old as the Italian Nation itself. The term "Mafia" is generally used for the Sicilian criminal organization called "Cosa Nostra". But the term can also be used as a generic term for the different groups of the Italian organized crime organizations: the Cosa Nostra, which operates mainly in Sicily, the 'Ndrangheta, which operates in Calabria, the Sacra Corona Unita with its origins in Apulia, and the Camorra, originally from Campania.

In the 1950s, the first big waves of Italian migrant workers came to Western Germany because there was a strong labor deficit.



Since the Duisburg massacre, there has been more investigation in suspicious cases of drug commerce or tax evasion by members of the Mafia, but still there is not enough effort made by the German police and justice. The problem is that in Germany there is a serious lack of strict laws that prohibit mafia-like activities and the membership of groups belonging to the Mafia. It is often not possible to accuse persons operating in such business as there is simply no legal basis of indictment. Also, the German police have refused to cooperate with the Italian police in some cases in the past.

But measures against the power of the Mafia in Germany are being taken. Only a few days after the attack in Duisburg, Italians founded the organization "Mafia? Nein, Danke!" in Berlin, which today is a registered association.

Its members watch and fight the activities of the Mafia and thereby cooperate with journalists, justice and the police. There is also a strong cooperation with Italian restaurants and institutions of all kinds whose managers refuse to pay the protection money or doing business with mafia-like groups. On the association's homepage you can find a list of all Italian institutions that take part in this organization. Thanks to that, every single one of us can help fight the power of the organized crime organizations by simply supporting the Italian institutions that are members of this association.the Mafia and thereby cooperate with journalists, justice and the police.

A Paddywagon Tour- As Irish As It Gets?

In terms of stereotypes, the Irish are maybe the most productive for our clichés. They are said to be addicted to Guinness, fun-loving and talkative, which does not have to be negative. During my 6-month-stay in Ireland I had the opportunity to investigate some of those stereotypes myself. What could be better suited to such an endeavour than a Paddywagon tour on Ireland's West coast?

The term "paddy" can actually refer to all kinds of things, from a field or a bad temper to even an offensive word for an Irish person. In my case, it is the name of an Irish touring company, which probably chose the name to evoke associations with everything Irish – apparently successfully. In 2010, they won an award for "most fun tour in the world."

Therefore, my friend Anna and I decided to explore the famous Irish West Coast by Paddywagon Tours. For four days we left Dublin behind us and delved into the countryside on the other side of the island. We chose two Paddywagon tours starting from Cork – one to the Cliffs of Moher, the other one around the Ring of Kerry.



We start on a typical February day, waiting in the lobby of our Cork hostel for the bus to pick us up. At five past eight, the tour guide comes in. He is in his forties and introduces himself as Mike.

Guardians and schoolgirls

We board the bus. It is low season so the number of tourists is manageable. We set off towards a central meeting point where we will pick up tourists from Dublin.

After that, our first stop is Limerick. So far I have only heard about it from Frank McCourt's melancholic books about his childhood. Mike's account of Limerick does not help to banish this mood. He says Limerick was deeply involved in the drugs business in Ireland's South. Until recently, the police had the problem under control. Actually, the word for "police" Mike uses is an Irish one: *Garda*. The long form is *Garda Síochána*, meaning Guard of the Peace. To lend credence to the name, *Gardaí* usually don't wear any weapons as Mike explains to the surprised tourists. Only special forces are allowed to carry arms, for example the drug crimes unit in Limerick. However, in 2009, the financial crisis struck. The special unit was withdrawn. Now people in the region are afraid that the drug war will start again.

To raise our spirits after this thought-provoking piece of information, Mike switches the topic to school uniforms. Nothing unusual here in Ireland, but insiders can spot the subtle differences. We gaze out of the windows, desperately trying to catch a glimpse of a Limerick schoolgirl. Mike says the uniforms here consist, next to blouse and jacket, out of an ankle-length skirt. Apparently, Limerick schools are the most conservative. Just a few kilometres away, in Cork, the school uniform skirts resemble mini-skirts whereas in Dublin they have the usual length to the knee.

After a few tiny villages we arrive at the Cliffs of Moher. Mike advises us to skip the visitor centre and go to the Cliffs first before the fog blows in. It is definitely good advice and we enjoy the view of the large dark cliffs above the Atlantic Ocean without any hurry.

Ireland in a song

When we return to the bus, Mike is struggling with the door on the right hand side. He tries to close it, but finally he locks it in order to keep it from opening unintentionally. However, we soon forget the door because Mike has another highlight in store: a traditional Irish (drinking) song. We cannot escape so we have no choice but to follow the instructions. Mike starts to sing "The Wild Rover" and teaches us when to clap. After a while we are in sync and Mike praises our clapping abilities. At about 7 pm, we are back in Cork and Mike points out some pubs worth visiting. What else would you do as evening entertainment in Ireland?

On the Ring of Kerry

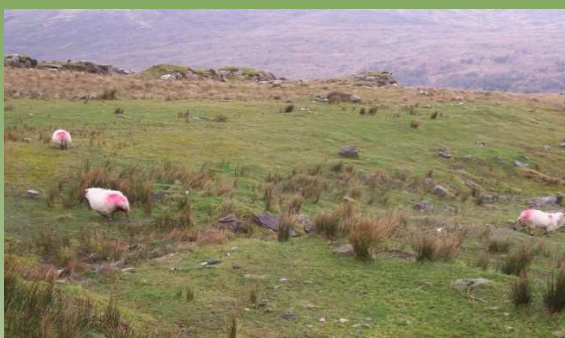
The next day the bus picks us up in front of the hostel again. When Anna and I go around it to get in, we notice a shattered glass pane on the right side door. Could this be yesterday’s bus?

This time, our driver is Sean. When everyone is seated comfortably, he starts talking. And he doesn’t stop again until we reach the central meeting point. “You know,” he says with his Kerry accent, “don’t ask me if I’m Irish. With a skin tone and hair colour like mine, and an accent like mine, I can’t be anything else.” Anna looks at me with a *when-is-he-going-to-stop-expression*. She has not slept well and hopes to catch some sleep in the bus.

Not surprisingly (at least not for Anna and me), the door opens in the middle of the road. We look at each other: it is definitely yesterday’s bus. Sean, however, teaches us Irish swear words while he slams the door.

In Killarney we change to the bus for the Ring of Kerry. I must admit we are quite glad to get rid of the broken door. And Sean. Our driver for today is – surprise – Mike, who recognizes us immediately.

Between the stories we already know from yesterday he throws in some anecdotes. Like the one about an elderly American lady who asked about the colour dots of the sheep: “Is it to mark them Protestant and Catholic sheep?” The famous Irish sheep are indeed prominent on the meadows and, as Mike promised us the day before, we see lambs.



The scenery along the Ring of Kerry and Killarney National Park is indeed beautiful. Later, we stop for lunch at a little coastal village. On the other side of the bay we see the Dingle Peninsula, where Mike comes from. Despite the lack of sun, the tour is great and I can fully understand why the Ring of Kerry is so popular. But

even the greatest tour has to end at some point and soon we are on our way back. During our last minutes in the Paddywagon bus, Mike strikes up “The Wild Rover” again and Anna and I join in the clapping enthusiastically.

Green at heart

Stereotypes about the Irish, like most stereotypes, have a true core. In my experience, they make a stay in Ireland even more exciting. Everyone seems to be very proud about their identity and even if they come across stereotypically, they do this in a very charming way.

In the weeks following our trip to Cork, I noticed much of the Irish charm again, especially on St Patrick’s Day when Dublin was green all over and filled with people from all over the world. The Irish hospitality manifested itself on many levels, from the helpful *Gardaí* to the open-minded locals.

Additionally, they also taught me to replace the German *gründlichkeit* with the more relaxed Irish approach.

by Jenny Reichel

In the next article it does not only get green again, but also a bit dirty and muddy – and nevertheless very enthusiastic!

Get to the Root of Enthusiasm

by Nicole Scheffel

If you have ever fought your way through the endless heap of papers and leaflets covering the walls of the huts at Zeunerstraße, you might have noticed that a vast number of these notes advertise certain opportunities to spend time abroad. This is a topic that certainly interests every student of English. Unfortunately, I was not able to find a payable way to spend the term break in a foreign country because there are no funded opportunities for staying abroad for a shorter period of time. Annoyed and depressed I poured out my heart to a friend of mine, who, surprisingly, offered a solution to my problem – an organisation called WWOOF. Full of excitement, I started researching.



Kunekune pigs from New Zealand at Bosavern Community Farm

The abbreviation stands for “World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms” and describes a membership charity that aims to give an insight in organic growing and low-impact lifestyles to everybody who is interested.

You work as a volunteer on host farms in exchange for accommodation and food. Moreover, you will get the opportunity to acquire new practical skills and learn more about agriculture as well as animal husbandry. Furthermore, nobody expects you to have any experience or competences in growing. Thus, the only things you need are the willingness to learn and some good gloves. You will have to work 4 to 7 hours per day, but not more than 30 hours a week. In addition, you are entitled to 2 free days a week, which you could use to explore the region with all the breathtaking landscape. Depending on the host you can just stay for a weekend or for several weeks as well as for a few months. The organisation was founded in 1971 by Sue Coppard who had enough of city life and therefore arranged to spend some weekends helping at a farm in exchange for food and accommodation. Since that time, the organisation has been growing constantly. Amazingly, today there are about 6,000 hosts in 100 countries, which enable you to wwoof all over the world.

Within the UK there are 564 active hosts online. To become a WWOOFer and to get access to the hosts' contact details, you will have to pay an annual fee of £20. After that, it is your turn to look for suitable hosts on the internet and contact them via e-mail or telephone. The homepage offers certain search criteria. This search engine enables sorting the hosts according to region, type of activity (gardens, woodland, livestock, alternative technology and green-building), situation (in town or village, outskirts of town or village, rural and isolated) and host type. In their entries the hosts introduce themselves and describe their farms in a free text. Moreover, they provide information about working hours, types of work and their family or community members. This way of finding and contacting hosts is very easy. I wrote approximately 10 application e-mails and received a quick answer from every single host, even when they were fully booked. With this pleasant fact my positive experiences with WWOOF began.



Raised beds in Polytunnels at New Forest Salads Farm

During the last term break I spent 7 weeks working on 5 different farms in the UK, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. I had the chance to explore several stunning countrysides in Devon and Cornwall, and visited Oxford on my days off at the Willowbrook Farm, which is near the university city. Furthermore, I relaxed in the New Forest National Park, where cattle and ponies roam free. On the 5 working days I hardly spent any money, learned a lot about organic growing and animal husbandry. Some of my tasks were preparing vegetable beds, planting potatoes, garlic, onions and salad, harvesting vegetables and weeding. Moreover, my work with chickens, geese, pigs, rabbits, cattle and sheep included feeding, cleaning their sheds and collecting eggs. All this physical exercise outdoors made me feel healthier and fitter. More importantly, I met many interesting new people from all over the world, and got an insight into British culture while spending the meals and the evenings together with the hosts.

All in All, working as a WWOOFer on a farm in a foreign country has many advantages. Certainly, you will improve your English, which is always the case when you spend time abroad. Furthermore, you can learn about a topic that concerns all of us: the environmentally friendly production of food. Last but not least, wwoofing is one of the cheapest ways of travelling. So grab your wellies, escape from the stressful urban life and blow the cobwebs away!

For additional information click on:
www.wwoof.org.uk

Veganism - an ethical, nutritional, medical and environmental cause for debate

by Kris Sullivan

The fact that organic growing and sustainable nutrition are vital topics for the surviving of the human race, becomes more and more acknowledged. The ones, though, who deal maybe most determined with those topics are still seen as a kind of alien life form by many people. In the following article our author explains, why veganism supports not only our survival, but especially that of our planet.

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Regardless of descent, background and upbringing, I think it is safe to make the assumption that the majority of people consider the consumption of animal products to be quite normal, if not inherently natural. Why shouldn't it be? Society embraces, even encourages its members to make use of every imaginable part of various animal organisms, while industries thrive on the colossal demand for meat, dairy, leather and wool products, to name a few. These goods tend to carry the conventionalized images of strength, toughness, healthiness, energy, high social status and potency that have long nourished and justified our relentless appetite for steak dinners and leather car seat covers. Thanks to the fact that the slightly less appetizing processing mechanisms take place on a highly proficient industrialized level, we are hardly even aware of the fact that we are indeed eating flesh or wearing dried lifeless skin. This, in fact, distances us greatly from the origin of our product and makes the act of consumption much more commodious. But it nevertheless influences the way approach and handle the matter tremendously, along with the nearly universal acceptance of such behavior. But back to the point. What exactly does the concept of veganism entail? As hinted at, it is not only restricted to maintaining an exclusively plant-based diet, but also includes refraining from various wares that are manufactured from or processed with animal organs or produce. This seems quite impossible at first, but only on account of the relative unpopularity and more difficult accessibility of the alternatives.



To which extent any animal products at all are truly needed by the human organism, is still at the center of many a heated debate among nutritionists. The central and recurring topic undoubtedly revolves all around the essential Vitamin B12, which actuates cell segmentation and is indispensable for the health of our nervous system. As Vitamin B12 is produced by certain microorganisms which inhabit other living beings, it can only be found in animal products such as meat, eggs and dairy. Certainly it can be taken as a supplement, but it can - and should - not be excluded from any diet. Aside from B12, all other vitamins, minerals and essential nutrients can be found in more than sufficient doses across the nearly inexhaustible pallet of grains fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts, oils, seeds, sprouts and herbs our natural environment has to offer.

A common stereotype vegans and vegetarians are afflicted with portrays these individuals as ailing, feeble and puny weaklings that lack strength and mental concentration owing to various nutrient deficiencies. This image is crushed by extensive lists of vegan/ vegetarian intellectuals and professional athletes ranging from world-class body builders to record-holding runners and martial art performers. The archaic and long since refuted argument claiming that meat and dairy are the only reliable sources of essential proteins is simply false, as are many other myths regarding the nutritional substance of plant-based diets.

The health benefits of this form of diet are hardly news to anyone. In contrast to meats, fish and poultry, vegan foods are entirely free of cholesterol, low in saturated fats and calories, and you are likely to be getting a much higher share of fiber, complex carbohydrates, antioxidants and essential vitamins. Subsequently, it does not come as a great surprise that ailments such as heart disease, diabetes (along with other obesity-related diseases), strokes and a number of cancers are much less likely among those who maintain a plant-based diet which is wisely planned.

Another aspect I find personally intriguing and highly exciting is the abundance of new, formerly unfamiliar plants, nutritional products and recipes that can be explored and experimented with. If you enjoy preparing food, the decision to omit animal products from your diet unfolds a quite vast - and rather unconventional - culinary playground and introduces your taste-buds to completely unknown flavors you might have not ever come across, had you not had to search for alternative manners and methods to nourish yourself. It is easier than ever to enjoy and thrive on a highly diversified vegan diet if you are just willing to make a small effort.

From an environmental point of view, meat and dairy consumption - particularly at our rate - is downright wasteful. Wasteful in terms of water usage, crop farming, land usage and the negligent exploitation of a plethora of other resources that are not exactly at our disposal in unlimited quantities. The seemingly endless lists of statistics regarding the massive ecological footprint of livestock agriculture speak for themselves. Whether we are talking about the water issue (it takes approximately 2500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef), greenhouse-gas emission (the livestock industry is responsible for 18% of global emission), deforestation (gaining land for livestock agriculture (feed crops and pastures) accounts for more than 90% of Amazon deforestation) or global starvation (The 760 million tones of grain fed to animals could cover the global food shortage 14 times), it becomes quite clear that livestock agriculture, factory farming and fish farming are the most destructive forces of our environment. The UN, myriad scientist and notable environmental groups agree on this point and have been discussing methods to reduce the global demand for animal products substantially.

Last but not least, the crucial factor for many people to go vegetarian or vegan is of ethical nature. Not only are the conditions that most factory-farmed animals have to endure highly disturbing and unacceptable, but so is the fact that humans assume - and highly exploit - the right to use animals for anything and in any way they see fit. Whether organically raised or selectively over-bred until their own organisms fail to cope with the excessive, steroid- and hormone fed animals are destined for the slaughterhouse. Some as valueless "by-products" of milk and egg production. Regardless of how "humane" killing methods might be, killing in itself is an act of assumed total control and right to determine over any kind of species. The animal is treated merely as a means to human ends, not as a creature in its own right. The right or interest to continue living can be considered the most basic and principal right of any being, which our behavior violates. The conflict lies within the trivial human interest to eat meat versus the basic animal interest to stay alive. Trivial in this case means that the consumption of meat is not necessary to the organism to stay alive. The consumption of meat simply isn't necessary. It is nothing more than a fabricated need, the fulfillment of which costs our planet way too much.

There are virtually no positive effects of our current dietary habits, not for ourselves or any other being on the planet. Much less is there any kind of valid excuse that justifies our negligence to change our diets other than comfort, convention and the assumed right to indulge in the culinary delight that only meat-based dishes have to offer, no matter the impact. No matter the sacrifice.

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For further reading:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/jun/02/un-report-meat-free-diet>

<http://www.vegansociety.com/become-a-vegan/why.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Vegetarianhealth/Pages/Goingvegetarian.aspx>

<http://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/meat-and-environment.aspx>

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=meat-and-environment>

<http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/78/3/660S.full>

Thinking about WHAT you eat also is thinking about WHERE your food comes from and WHAT is in there. These questions lead us back to fish and meat for the next two articles.

Hidden ingredients in meat

By Franziska Baumgärtner

Increase of meat consumption

Meat is a regular component in the diet of most people, especially of those living in industrial countries. Meat consumption has risen rapidly in the last few decades. In the 19th century the yearly per capita consumption in Germany was about 14 kg. Between 1961 and 2007 meat consumption in Germany per person per year increased from an average 64kg to 88kg. Since 1961 global meat production has risen by 377%. This extraordinary increase in meat production was made possible by the development of large-scale livestock farming.

Consequences of mass husbandry

Why shouldn't we consume meat at a high rate? Its advantage is that it is high in proteins and relatively low in fat. Unfortunately, mass husbandry has brought not only a positive effect on the price of the meat you buy, but also negative effects on the meat itself. For this reason, you can find more in your meat than healthy proteins; you can encounter substances you would not generally expect to be present in the meat you consume.

The first example of an unexpected and undesired substance found in mass-produced meat is antibiotics. Usually thousands of animals live closely together, sharing relatively little space. Therefore a sick animal in the livestock poses a very high risk to the other animals. In order to avoid the infection of the healthy animals and hence avoid a great loss of profit, all the animals receive antibiotics via their food, antibiotics that later appear on your plate in the meat you are about to consume.

Another ingredient frequently found in meat is hormones. Livestock is often fed hormones to promote faster growth. There

are numerous studies that have examined the detrimental effects of hormones and antibiotics in meat on the health of the human body.

Among these is the long-time study conducted by the University of Brighton, which was published in 2010. The study, led by Dr. Imogen Roberts, showed that girls start puberty much earlier nowadays than they did 100 years ago, a trend that correlates with the rise of meat consumption over the same time period. Furthermore, Dr. Roberts stated that women who started their period relatively early were much more prone to cancer and heart disease. This does not, however, mean that meat should be avoided altogether, but you should abstain from a high-meat diet.

According to a recent news report, 70% of all the antibiotics produced by the pharmaceutical industry end up in mass husbandry. As a result, some germs have become resistant to antibiotics. Those germs are called MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus). Via the contact with and the consumption of meat, those germs can find their way into the human body. If you then have an infected wound, taking antibiotics becomes ineffective.



This is only a small fraction of the consequences of giving hormones and antibiotics to the animals that we eat. Most importantly, humans probably have yet to examine all the ramifications. Eating meat that contains hormones and antibiotics is an unsettling and unsavory notion. Therefore, a good alternative is organic meat from organic farms where adding hormones and antibiotics to the food of the animals is prohibited. The

From the hunter to the hunted

by Katrin Kositz

Movies like *Jaws* („Der weiße Hai“) influence the image of sharks we bear in our minds. Therefore, most people are scared of the ‘demon‘ which reigns over the deep blue sea. In contrast, the hunter started to become the hunted. Various shark species have been harvested for centuries by countless fishermen, whereby the motivation of the people is either an economic one or just amusement. Tourists may praise themselves by saying: ‘We killed a shark.’ How heroic.

With regard to economic reasons, fishermen and industries consider the shark’s meat, teeth, skin, skeleton and fins as especially useful. The most valuable part are the fins. In order to gain as much profit out of them as possible, people kill over 100 million animals every year („shark finning“). In comparison, twelve people die through a shark attack yearly. Sharks which are favoured for their fins are hammerheads, blue sharks, cat sharks as well as the special basking sharks. The process of „shark finning“ is highly violent. Fishermen catch their victims either by nets or by applying long line fishing methods, which is known as the ‘curtain of death‘. In case of the latter, one-fibred lines, which can range up to 100 miles, are stretched near the surface of the sea. Every 30 miles the lines are attached with fish or dolphin meat as bait. Besides turtles, tuna and other fish, numerous shark species die trapped in this device. As soon as the shark is on board the vessel, fishermen cut off the animal’s fins and throw its body as ‚vestige‘ back into the water – dead or alive. What awaits the shark is an excruciating death.

Either it drowns, is eaten by other fish or starves. Through ‚shark finning‘ over 8,000 tonnes of shark fins are obtained every year. In addition, 200,000 tonnes of sharks as left overs can be counted. Although this process already seems shocking enough, what these fins are used for is much more scandalous. It is nothing more but shark-fin soup. This typical, expensive Chinese delicacy has no real taste and only serves as a display of wealth. Shark-fin soup is often served at weddings. The purpose of the fins lies in the texture of the soup. One would have to pay ca. \$100 for such a dish.



http://media.tumblr.com/tumblr_le9mwm6qXp1qe1av.jpg

The trading of shark fins increases every year by around five per cent. Countries in Europe hunting sharks are France, Portugal, the UK and first and foremost Spain. However, various European countries have minimised their amount of shark fishing due to the threat of overfishing. Only Spain still sticks to its considerable involvement in shark fishing. In 2003, Spain, the USA, New Zealand and Japan were listed as the greatest shark fishing areas all over the world whereas the main market is Hong Kong.

One might wonder whether anything has been done in order to protect sharks. Several organisations such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) have been trying to mandate regulations and bans to stop 'shark finning'. The first attempt was in 1993 when the Shark Fishery Management Plan (FMP) forced fishermen to maintain a certain weight ratio of fins:carcasses. Regulations of NOAA defined realms where shark fishing is forbidden. Further arrangements followed. By the end of 2009, all EU states introduced a strict control on the weight ratio of fins:carcasses. It was additionally constituted that fins can only be cut off when the fishermen are on land. Therefore, the people on board vessels are forced to decide carefully how many fish they are going to take with them. Although the implementation of all these regulations have constructed a certain network of rules, there still is uncontrolled shark finning. Fishermen found and still find ways to sidestep the regulations.

What is going to happen if the overfishing of sharks continues? By now, 18 shark species are listed as threatened by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Sharks reach maturity late, the expectancy rate is low and additionally, the gestation period is rather long (e.g. a spiny dogfish is pregnant for about two years). Therefore, a considerable long time is necessary until the damage to the population of sharks has been remedied. Unfortunately, it does not seem that industries and fishermen will concede the required time to sharks.

The predator plays an important role within the food chain below him. Sharks keep the balance of marine life. Since they eat all the sick animals of the ocean, coral reefs and other underwater lives have the chance to thrive. Furthermore, if sharks were extinct, numerous fish and ocean animals would be left to live off the plants within the oceans. These, however, produce essential oxygen wherefrom we on earth live.

Finally, the constant killing of sharks by man will not only lead to serious consequences for life within the ocean but also for us.



<http://greenchamberofcommerce.net/wp-content/uploads/evidence-of-shark-finning-in-the-maldives-photos-300x225.jpg>

The daily fight for survival does not only take place out in the wilderness - but also in the seemingly neat and structured worlds of

**ALLOTMENTS
&
FICTION**

...



The radio

By Ira Richter

Since 2010 I am member of the KGV "Schleiermacherstraße" (KGV = *Kleingartenverein* – allotment garden association). Being part of a small garden community is an enriching and interesting experience, which I definitely did not have on my what-to-do-until-thirty list.

Friends of mine asked me whether we would be willing to share a small garden in an allotment garden association. Since then we have been dividing the workload and the costs in our tiny piece of land of 120 m². Since my flat lacks balcony and backyard, the garden offers the opportunity to invite friends to spend the afternoon or have a barbecue.

The allotment community consists of young families, usually new members of the association, and older couples who have been leasing their gardens for decades. The resulting generation gap sometimes causes conflicts but mainly opens the mind for the "other" generation, on both sides. Young inexperienced gardeners like me and my friends benefit from the advice of the "professionals", whereas they, on the other hand, admire our efforts to grow kiwis and pep-eronis.



The world outside of this microcosm seems so unimportant and what matters are issues such as mouse beepers, weeding, watering, planting the right plants at the right time and harvesting. Despite the apparent harmony, some of the long-time residents, especially our neighbour, feel confronted with one issue: noise.

He is the perfect example of a stereotypical allotment gardener. At the slightest and smallest glimpse of the sun he appears in his garden and starts weeding, cutting, painting, and if necessary, harvesting. He loves to present his 70-year-old body to the public and emphasizes, whenever in a conversation, that he enjoys working in his garden and reading a newspaper afterwards, in peace. Being a pensioner apparently causes a lot of stress, which he wants to eliminate by working and relaxing in his garden.



Unfortunately, his need for quietude does not correspond to the "noise" our children produce while playing together. When the two daughters of my friend, my daughter and my son run around the garden, a certain level of noise is unavoidable. Our neighbour usually endures the racket for about 10 minutes and then leaves.

The latest gadget we installed did not amuse him in the least: a radio. His utterances with his wife "*Oh nee, jetz ham se och nochn rad-scho*" – "Nay, now they also 've a radio", required new diplomatic skills. Acting as if we did not hear them through the thick hedge, we turned the radio on but at an adequate level. Gradually, we are increasing the volume in order to accustomise him to this new device. We are in good faith that the radio will not become a controversial issue.



“Elementary, my dear Watson!” - the BBC’s *Sherlock*

by Carolin Gobe

The United Kingdom, New Year’s Day 2012. After a long night of celebrating, over 9 million people (including myself, as I happened to be staying in London) nevertheless gathered in front of the TV to watch the start of a second season of a television series they had been anticipating since 2010: *Sherlock*, the highly successful and BAFTA-awarded BBC television series about the world’s most famous consulting detective Sherlock Holmes. Of course, this is not the first adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s stories. Just think of the 2009 blockbuster “Sherlock Holmes” with Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law. However, why this series is ahead of all the others and made me a huge fan last year after watching it on German television, is the fact that it catapults the world of Holmes and Watson from the Victorian age to a new level - the 21st century!



Sherlock Holmes and John Watson

<http://www.haz.de/Nachrichten/Medien/Fernsehen/ARD-zeigt-zweite-Staffel-der-BBC-Serie-Sherlock>

At first glance, most familiar things seemed to have stayed the same: Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson still share a flat in the famous 221b Baker Street, the detective is still a passionate violinist, and John still writes about their cases - not in a journal, but in a blog. Holmes no longer smokes his pipe, but uses nicotine patches. Instead of sending telegrams, he constantly sends text messages and owns a website - “The Science of Deduction” (which, in fact, really exists!).

Each season consists of three 90-minute episodes. All of them are loosely based on different cases which are often already indicated in the title. “A Scandal in Bohemia” gets adapted to “A Scandal in Belgravia”, referring to the wealthy district of the capital in which the episode takes place. Within the series, various quotes from the stories are, slightly adapted, inserted into the dialogues. “It’s a three pipe problem!” becomes of course “It’s a three patch problem!”. It is little changes like these which modernise the stories without losing the reference to the original works, and at one point, there was not even a change necessary due to an odd coincidence: originally, Watson is a retired army doctor who has served in Afghanistan; a background which could also be perfectly possible nowadays.

Reasons for the success

The heads behind this modernisation are the screenwriters Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat, who is also the lead writer of the British cult series *Doctor Who*. It is due to their genuine love for the stories of Doyle that a modernisation was made possible in such a detailed, complex and amusing way, that it is a real joy for the viewers to follow the stunning and quick deductions of Holmes, which are literally made visible by fade-ins of single words. It is almost unnecessary to remark that the portrayal of the characters adds to the praise by the media as well. Benedict Cumberbatch is brilliant at playing a highly intelligent, wayward and often bored to death detective with absolutely no empathy. It already brought the actor two nominations at the BAFTAs and provided him with the stepping stone for an international career. Watson is played by Martin Freeman, whose portrayal of Holmes’ calmer, more charismatic, but nonetheless thrill-seeking friend already won him a BAFTA, and again a stepping stone to the leading role in the upcoming film “The Hobbit”.



The calm before the storm: meeting nemesis Moriarty
<http://www.daserste.de/unterhaltung/film/sherlock/der-reichenbachfall-100.html>

The good news is, season three has already been announced and probably will begin to air in late 2013. For anyone who still cannot get enough of the detective's adventures, I simply recommend you starting reading the books. The series made me curious about the original stories. While, of course, everyone has heard of the detective, very few have actually read the stories. As I have indicated above, it makes you realize even more the countless references and precise work which were put into the adaptation, and introduces you to the obvious ageless works of Doyle about the greatest sleuth of all time: Sherlock Holmes!

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Some people like reading, or watching TV for immersing in other (more) fascinating worlds. Others prefer to bring these worlds to life: the next article reports about this hobby.
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Quoth the herald...

...about two weirdos, unshaven apparently, looking as if they smell quite awful robed in something that looks like a mixture of an old clothes collection and a carnival costume who wave "plastic" swords around and run through their grandparents' backyard. I am not talking about the worst "Lord of the Rings" - parody ever but about what people think when they hear someone talking about "LARP" - provided that they know what this abbreviation stands for, anyway. Those who actually know that LARP stands for Live Action Role Play think of this term, linguistically speaking, as heavily connoted with stereotypes and – even worse – prejudices. Except from the LARPer themselves, of course.

I am not complaining about people having stereotypes for we all do have some, but I am pointing to the prejudices with which LARP is unfairly confronted with. Right here the question arises: How come? Why do people have those prejudices? The reasons may be various but most of them are presumably grouped around one point: LARPing is an exception to the norm. Adults who dress up and play with weapons like children cannot be mentally fit. However, I myself have experienced it differently. I am not talking about having read an article or having met some LARPer but being involved in LARPing myself. Hence I consider it my responsibility to enlighten those who look for new horizons.



What is LARP?

LARP basically means that you slip into the role of a certain character whom you breathe life into by means of character traits, habits, abilities, skills, age, and a vast number of other factors. Thus, you become your character and leave your usual self behind. As your character you can decide what to do. If you do not want to take up arms, you do not have to. What about choosing the career of a priest or a scholar? Fighting, although a constituent part of the action, is not everything. That is why the whole activity is called “role play” and not “role fight”. Most uninitiated people are prone to forgetting that role play is based on its plot which in most cases is invented by the administrators of the respective convention and realised by the characters. Those actively taking part in the storyline who are anxious to solve their quests, are called player characters, players or in the shortened version just PCs. They are independent in their actions and have the privilege to decide freely, which at the same time is their great burden. Every decision has consequences which could bring a character into great trouble. Do not forget: In LARP there is no reset-button as in video games, but you have to live with the effects of what you have done or said. On the other hand there are the non-player characters, mainly addressed as the NPCs, who are characters as well but not as sovereign for they are used as a means by the administration to compete against the players. In doing so the whole plot becomes even more intense and gripping. It can include a variety of actions, not only fighting but also riddles, performing rituals, collecting information, negotiating contracts, and even more.

However, even such theoretical knowledge is no never-failing guarantee to understand LARP in all its varieties. The first time I was about to go LARPing I knew about this, but nevertheless did I ask myself: What will it be like? Will it end in (vicarious) embarrassment? You can have read and heard a lot about LARP but unless you take part in an event, which is usually called a convention, you might have difficulties in fully understanding what it is and means. I myself, for example, was not able to think of myself wearing chain mail and plate armour beforehand. Now I think differently. My first time of LARPing was everything but embarrassment or weird. It was great. Well, at least there have to be reasons why LARPerers are high in number.



In Germany there are between 500 and 600 openly advertised conventions a year that for the most part last over one long weekend. They count from some dozens up to several hundred participants. Germany's biggest LARP events, “Drachenfest” and “Conquest of Mythodea”, are attended by more than 6,000 people each! Looking at these numbers, one could argue that LARPing is not only a footnote in leisure time activities. One cannot claim it to be a mass phenomenon, though, because the events take place in relatively outlying spots. This is because of the simple reason that, for example, a mob of tourists dressed in Hawaiian shirts with their cameras dangling around their necks would be quite inappropriate at such an event and would harm the atmosphere, which is essential for a good event. How could you feel like a ruthless mercenary if you were surrounded by people who are off topic? The ambience, sometimes referred to as authenticity, does not include, as an ignoramus might claim, the lack of sanitary equipment, though. LARPerers do not run around smelling awful and looking that way. Camp life may not include luxury but it does contain sufficient hygiene, sometimes even food provided by the organiser who is also responsible for organising the place where the event is going to take place.

These usually comprise campgrounds, the fields around a hostel, sometimes even dugouts, or castles. The chosen place depends on the respective convention for not all LARP-events belong to the category of fantasy. Other genres animated by LARP are science fiction, end time, western, horror, or others. Even the re-enacting of historical battles is a kind of live action role play. Nevertheless, most events belong to the genre of fantasy including knights, kings, magicians, witches, monsters, elves, dwarfs, and considerably more.

Now two questions remain:

Who actually goes LARPing and why?

By posing this question it would be highly insufficient to answer it for myself only. Therefore I asked other LARPer what their employment might be and what their motivation was in participating in role play. The stories behind the persons are as manifold as their motivations and even their working background. The stereotype – or prejudice – claims that only social outsiders and what is generally addressed as “a freak” takes part in LARP. Way off the mark! Among the respondents a mail-man, a trained retail salesman, an eCommerce-Manager, a nurse, a legal assistant, students, an electrician and maintainer, a management assistant and mother of a 4-year-old daughter, and a gardener and various other occupational groups are to be listed. However, you hardly get to know about the occupations of other LARPer while playing because those are insignificant. You are not a manager at a convention but your character. Therefore all players, no matter whether PCs or NPCs, are equal.

This matter of equality is one of the diverse reasons I was given when asking why people were LARPing. For many respondents role playing is a time-out from daily routine, from work, stress and, most of all, from their mobile phones and computers. The fact that a life without all these technical companions still is possible, if only for a couple of days, appears to be like heaven on earth. LARP is not only a chance to get work out of your head, but it also is a compensation of the drab monotony of everyday life. You can break the chains of habit and be yourself – or someone completely different. Furthermore, LARPer appreciate the physical activity that comes along with the events. As one NPC said: “You do not trudge from your bed to your computer, to the dining table and then back to bed, but you really have to run if you are being hunted by a group of murderous PCs – or if you hunt them.” Thereby you are outdoor and can enjoy nature in all its facets, be it sun, clouds, rain or snow or spiders and bugs in your tent. As a LARPer you finally swap your desk with meadows and woods you can roam and your pen with a sword or other tools. All these are experiences players like to have, because they are different to the daily routine and they are conducive to learning new things. I was told that others learned working with leather, forging, sewing, about regional herbs and how to make fire without a lighter only because of LARP.

Live action role play offers even more individual possibilities which were quoted as reasons as well, namely individuality and creativity. By bringing a character into life a player has to think about his or her background, abilities and specialities. This requires a certain amount of fantasy and offers, on the other hand, individuality for no character will be exactly the same. All are different as people are in real life. Those differences are conducive to the interacting. One always has a freedom of choice but LARPing nevertheless demands and encourages logical reasoning. One always has to consider which choice to make, what consequences it will entail. Those freedoms one hardly has in everyday life and so LARPer name it as one reason for role playing. It might help the development of personal abilities and character traits.



Logical reasoning and creativity are not the only features you can develop. One female NPC told me that she enjoyed wearing the masculine-neutral armour of her group because she was of small body size and in her role she felt stronger because she was no longer underestimated. Additionally, some LARPer claim that people today are mollycoddled and that role play supports the appreciation of luxury again. After one week of LARPing you come to appreciate constantly warm water and your cosy bed because for the last couple of days this has not belonged to your standard equipment. I think this is a highly important factor of how LARPing supports personal development.

The most important aspects of why people go LARPing, however, are the social ones, for it is never a one-man-show but always depends on teamwork. Very often I was told that the main reason for role playing were the nice people one met. The activity is closely linked with socialising, keeping in touch, finding new friends and meeting kindred spirits. LARP is a great whole created out of single characters who interact peacefully – at least off topic, of course. Without teamwork you cannot achieve anything. You can neither solve all the tasks to proceed in the plot nor survive in battle without companions who back you up. Teamwork is just one part of the big picture that LARPers particularly stressed.

This big picture is based on equality, benevolence, respect, tolerance, acceptance, companionship and more. All these characteristics of a LARP event are the most striking and frequent reasons while the players actually role play. The list given is only a short one compared to all the invariably positive traits LARP was characterised with by the players I asked. LARP is a whole social network which is not based on electronic devices but on real-life contact. Many LARPers state that this network is as tolerant and open-minded as you hardly can find anywhere else in society. As one PC said: “You can be who you are. Neither short-haired women nor long-haired men are looked at strangely. You can weigh 200 kilograms without being bullied.” Where else does this apply? Basically, LARP is a time-out from the world together with kindred spirits you do not meet on the internet but by the camp fire. Actually, the aspect of being together at such a fire was very often mentioned as a central reason for what makes LARP so valuable. “I love it to simply cool down, in the evening, when there are candles and camp fires everywhere and a bard strikes up a song – There's nothing better than this.”

All those aspects lead to one central statement: LARP is just fun! Be it fighting, acting, singing or just enjoying the convention with all the great people! It is a leisure time activity and therefore people are role playing because they like to. All the reasons explained above for LARPing create an atmosphere of enjoyment. So if one says “I am LARPing because it is fun”, then he or she is referring to much more than you might think of at first glance.

Thus I can sum up the question of “Why?” with the term of “fun” - in countless aspects of meaning. But what about the “Who”? As figured out, LARPers are not freaks but just people, like you and me. However, the admin of the NPCs characterised them as following: “A bunch of weirdos who come here every summer to bathe in the sun fully dressed in plate armour.” Nevertheless, he used weirdos in a very positive way, characterising them as just different from most people, not being stuck in their jobs but still having a healthy amount of fantasy, of adventurous spirit and commitment to something different than work. Maybe LARPers are queer fish in their own respective ways, but does this have to be something negative? Where else is an adult still allowed to climb trees without being looked at with a shake of the head? At a convention one can do so and no-one would be shocked by this. LARPers are tolerant. I consider this an outstanding feat. Maybe society should not label LARPers as nerds too soon but take them as an example: They enjoy the richness of nature and cultivate social contacts. They live the ideal of mutual help, tolerance and equality between all social and age groups. Where else can you find all this?

by Martin Eichhorn



There still are a lot of other extraordinary ways of spending your freetime - let us turn to the fun and dark sides of sports as described in the next two articles!

PLAY HARD! HAVE FUN! BE AWESOME!

- German Rollergirls Take On The Track

By Sarah Reddmann

'No, Mom, I don't want to be a Ballerina!
Why can't I play Rugby, like my brother?'

'Sweetie, Rugby is a sport for boys only!'

So what sport do girls get to play who do not want to dance, who cannot handle a ball, or do not want to cheer on other people? – They become rollergirls!

If you want to be a rollergirl you should not be afraid of bruises, of falling hard, and of playing a rough game. Roller derby is a contact sport, which means that the opposing teams get to hustle each other off the track to make room for their "jammer" to get through the competing "pack".

Which brings me to the basic rules of the sport.

It is played by two teams of five members roller-skating in the same direction counterclockwise around a track. A game consists of a series of short matchups called "jams", during which both teams designate a scoring player, the "jammer", who scores points by lapping members of the opposing team.

The goal of each team is to assist their own jammer while hindering the rival jammer, who is also trying to get through the pack of the two teams. Therefore both teams play offense and defense at the same time, which makes tactics and strategies highly complicated.

Roller derby became popular in the 1940's in the US, but unfortunately vanished into thin air after a while, only to be revived in the first decade of the 21st century.



Today Roller derby is an international sport dominated by all-female amateur teams who enjoy themselves at "bouts" (Roller derby games), and put a lot of effort, time, and creativity into finding the perfect pseudonyms and eccentric uniforms for each player and team.

Every derby player is safely equipped with a helmet, knee and elbow pads, and a mouth and wrist guard, so the risk of getting hurt by falling is minimized as much as possible.

The image of a Roller derby girl is definitely one of a



tough, self-confident woman who represents her independence and relentlessness through a punish, feminist, sexy, and colorful look.

I only recently started skating and became a part of the newly founded Roller derby team here in Dresden. We are at the beginning of building something really great and big, with so many experiences and goals ahead of us. Even though none of us members have known each other for very long we act in concert and try to make things happen and work as soon as possible. Hopefully we can have scrimmages and bouts against other German and international teams in the foreseeable future.

By now there are more than 1000 amateur Roller derby leagues all over the world. It is becoming more and more of a serious sport again, and its inclusion is being considered in the 2020 Olympic Games.

So if you want to become a rollergirl, a referee, a sponsor, or just a fan, or if you want to help us organize and plan our next steps towards becoming a real team - look us up on the web and find out more:

<http://rollerderbydresden.de/>

Historical facts of the Olympics in London

1908 Summer Olympics (the Games of the IV Olympiad)

between 27 April 1908 and 31 October 1908

with 22 nations in 110 events in 22 sports

1948 Summer Olympics (the Games of the XIV Olympiad)

between 29 July 1948 and 14 August 1948

with 59 nations in 136 events in 17 sports

2012 Summer Olympics (the Games of the XXX Olympiad)

between 27 July 2012 and 12 August 2012

with 204 nations in 302 events in 26 sports

2012 Summer Paralympic Games (the XIV Paralympic Games)

between 29 August 2012 and 9 September 2012

with 164 nations in 503 events in 20 sports

Are you ready for Olympics?

You must be proud to have the Olympic Games in your country for the third time but do you really think you are ready for it?!

by Ilempi Romanova

TfL will do its best?!

It is a weekday morning and you are on the platform waiting for the train to come. It comes but you cannot get in due to too many passengers inside the train. Then the next comes and you still stay on the platform. Then you hear the announcement that there is a delay on the line and you are recommended to take an alternative route. As a result, you get to your destination later than you have planned. And it is only with more than 300,000 people, who work in the City of London, trying to get to their jobs in time during the rush hour. During the Olympic Games more 500,000 visitors from all around the world are expected to come to London, which is already seen as a great burden on the transport system of London.



<http://www.getaheadofthegames.com/travel-in-affected-areas.html>

Apart from the Olympics, the London transport system has already been an object of criticism. During the last years with people rushing to the capital in search of better opportunities, the London transport system experiences many difficulties in coping with the everyday flow of a growing population.

Nonetheless, the transport for London (TfL) tries its best to solve the approaching problem by warning passengers to expect delays and giving some good advice such as to plan your trip long before peak times or try to choose an alternative route or an alternative mode of transport like going on foot or cycling to your destination, which is supposed to save not only your time but to get you burning more calories.

Notwithstanding the difficulties with the mobility of people during the Games, the connections between some parts of London have already undergone some improvements. Besides, the new cable car, which was opened on the 28th of June 2012 to the public, is going to take over a part of the burden from the TfL, by carrying 2,500 passengers per hour up to 90 meters high over the Thames between the Royal Docks and the Greenwich Peninsula and giving them a beautiful view over the Olympic city.



<http://www.nbcolympics.com/news-blogs/2012/londons-cable-cars-set-to-take-flight.html>

Olympic-boom in “stinky” Stratford

Nowadays, Stratford in the East of London is associated with the Olympics but for a long time it had the reputation of being “stinky” Stratford. From the mid 19th century it was a hub of industry with a number of noxious trades that provoked the name “stinky” Stratford, giving at the same time opportunities for employment and for the community to grow around it. Lately, the area has been used as a rubbish dump.

Thanks to the Olympics 2012, Stratford underwent a lot of rebuilding and redevelopment. Apart from the fact that 17 out of 26 sports events will take place in the Olympic Park in Stratford, it is also a location for the Olympic Village which will house over 10,500 athletes from more than 200 countries as well as thousands of officials during the Games.



<http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/londoner-sommer-spiele-olympia-boom-in-stinky-stratford-a-776850.html>

Doubtless the Olympic Games will change public opinion about the eastern part of London, but it is still questionable if the venues will pay for themselves in the future. After the Olympics 2004, Athens still makes much profit from the new airport and motorway, but for the reuse of many venues there is neither money nor plans.

Do you get your money’s worth?

Besides, the last but not least critical problem are budgetary considerations for the Olympic Games where the venues and the Olympic Park costs are largely funded by public money and the Games are sponsored privately. With the 2.4 billion pounds planned in 2005 to cover all expenses for the Olympics, the expenditure has risen much higher beyond expectation, reaching 9.3 billion pounds. Such a significant underestimation of the expenditure for the Games before is a matter of criticism, not only of some political leaders but of Londoners as well.

In addition, there are some other important events for Londoners to celebrate that also require considerable investment such as the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee that was celebrated early this June.

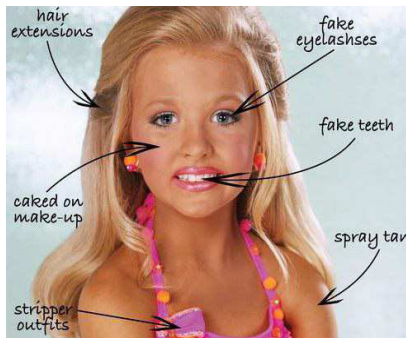
There is hope of getting money back from 7.7 million tickets available for the Olympics and from thousands of tourists coming to the city to see the Games, but the economic effect of such a mega-event is hard to predict. Anyway, the whole world will be following the Games, a fact that might make you proud to have them in your country.



Children in the Media

Child Beauty Pageants

By A. GASCA DALY



A living Barbie doll.

With US-style pageants being held in other countries, like England and Australia, it is of paramount importance to think about the impact they have on the children that participate in them and those watching them; but with few documentaries or television series on the subject it is difficult for the general public to be aware of what is going on. Some of you might have seen *Little Miss Sunshine*, a film that tries to shed light into how preposterous the premise of such competitions really is.

The US-based reality TV show *Toddlers and Tiaras* also documents what happens behind the curtains of American pageants. They are mainly targeted at girls but boys can enter as well. The age categories are, for the most part, 0-5, 6-11, 12-16, 17 and up. There are two types of pageants, Glitz and Natural; and the difference is a great one. Glitz pageants not only allow but worst of all encourage: fake tans, fake hair -extensions or wigs-, fake eyelashes, fake teeth, acrylic nails, high heels, waxed or trimmed eyebrows, padding, make-up, swimwear and outfits that would look questionable even on an 18-year-old, let alone a young child. On the other hand we have natural pageants, where make up is not allowed if under 13 years of age, outfits must be age-appropriate and they interview the child, so the emphasis is not placed solely on looks.

Some defend pageantry by stating that they are no more detrimental to a child than any other

sporting, academic or artistic activity might be, in terms of self-esteem or mental health. Some enter their little girls into such competitions *because* they want them to be more confident.

However good their initial intentions might be, things can quickly go south, as it appears most of them are trying to fulfill *their* own childhood dreams, or to relive them, as so many mothers were beauty queens themselves, now past their prime. It is not uncommon to see parents showing their child what to do while they are performing. One of the most prejudicial aspect is that some mothers have self-image problems themselves which are being passed on to the next generation and that the child is being taught that self-worth depends on beauty.



The other terrifying aspect is that these little girls end up acting like *Lolitas* on stage, actually being told by their own parents to “shake their booty” and flirt with the judges. However innocent they think a costume might look, the sad reality is if you present yourself in a certain way, people will treat you like that; so they are actually putting the child in harm's way.

Pageants are a pedophile's dream come true. They are televised so any internet-savvy pedophile can find footage online if they don't already have cable. Although the children are not nude and it is therefore not considered pornography, they do feature highly sexualized children acting in a provocative manner.



Shows like this cannot be taken off the air, but is that really the issue at hand? Even if the pageants do not end up being televised, they would still take place because the demand is still there.

Regardless of what actually goes on, this is not what the law considers child abuse. These children have a roof above their heads, food in their homes and are not orphans. The law is supposed to protect those who cannot protect themselves. How is parading your prepubescent girl around, dressed in skimpy outfits, showing off their midriffs, acting in a provocative way and encouraging them to act and dress like adults good parenting in any way? Foster care is not the answer but at the very least a social worker should be appointed to supervise such events, where parents have been caught on film giving their child energizing beverages, candy and straight-up sugar to keep up their energy levels.

At the end of the day, parents end up paying hefty fees to have their child judged on their appearance. With prizes ranging from a few hundred to two thousand dollars, depending on the pageant and how Glitz it is, is it really worth it? The competition is gruesome and the prize does not always cover the costs it entails.

For the pageants with the big-money prizes, contestants are expected to look the part: they have to have the perfect look, which means many end up getting expensive designer gowns which can cost anywhere from 200 to 1,000 dollars. As if that were not over the top, they also get coaches to assist them with their choreography, walk and smile.



All in all, if this is what the child wants to do and is not being coerced in any way, a natural pageant seems to be the way to go. Instead of focusing on beauty so much, we should teach our children to enjoy their childhood because this is a precious time, where they are extremely impressionable and the experiences they have are going to shape who they become later on in life.

Some room for your own thoughts about this topic:



A “tiny” problem

Dresden is struggling to handle its population growth.

By S. Adelt

Dresden is growing and growing and growing. The current population forecast estimates that in 2025, Dresden’s population will reach 550,000. Today, the city claims to be Germany’s capital of births - quite rightly so. Last year, 7322 children were born, 101 more than 2010. Dresden’s parents don’t only prove to be quite busy, they also appear to be highly creative. Delfine, Elbe, Traugott, Goldmund and Friedensreich are only a few of the names published by the local registry office, earlier this year.

Despite the prosperous news, the city is struggling with taking care of its smallest inhabitants. This coming summer, Saxony’s capital will be lacking around 1,500 day-care places for its under three year olds, meaning that many parents will have to worry about their child’s care when parental leave finishes. One such case of parents who are faced with this issue are Anita and Paul. Together they have an ‘11 month’ old daughter called Jelena. Paul is currently working in a coffee shop and Anita is a medical secretary. Anita’s parental leave is going to finish by the end of May 2012. “We have been trying to find a place for Jelena literally since the day she was born and so far have had absolutely no luck. I want to start my work again in June, but have no chance to do so. I can’t just put her in my pocket and take her with me, can I.”

Dresden is lacking 1,500 day-care places

“The situation is strenuous, both for us as a family and our financial situation.” Paul adds. “We are stuck waiting for a miracle to happen and don’t know what to do. The city does not offer proper solutions and private care like babysitters or nannies is too expensive.

Children are also one of the main subjects of political and social debates, as the following two articles show...

We are at a point where things are getting really difficult to manage.” Once the financial support from parental leave runs out, the family depends on Paul’s small income, which hardly covers the costs of accommodation, food and clothing. “If Anita can’t get back to work soon, our savings will be used up in no time. We will seriously have to consider moving into a smaller, cheaper flat in the outskirts of Dresden.”

The situation of Anita and Paul is frustrating and seems paradoxical when looking at Dresden’s current childcare politics. From August 2013, every child under the age of three will be guaranteed a place in day-care by legal claim. Martin Seidel (independent) is Dresden’s mayor for Social Affairs and promises to create at least 1700 new day-care places by the end of the year. “To initiate this, we want to enlarge our capacity in day-care centers and increase the number of staff. However, the major relief will be mobile child care facilities, the so called ‘kita-containers’. We already offer five of these containers and want to construct another ten to fourteen.”

Kita-containers and child minders as a remedy

These *kita containers* will cost about 10 Million euros and can only be a less-than-ideal solution. It seems obvious that the population-boom came as a surprise to the city and that it will be a major challenge to fulfil the legally promised childcare places. Right now, the expansion of child minders as an alternative to day-care centers is being initiated. Becoming a child minder requires a training period of 160 hours as well as a completed apprenticeship in any other field.

The introduction of child minders might be an appropriate solution for the current struggles. In any case, the city has to react quickly in order to maintain its positive reputation of a child-friendly and child-prosperous city - a state that is extraordinary for most German cities, considering the country’s aging population pyramid.

Inclusion yes, but not at all costs

by Maud Häschel



"My son is diagnosed as having dyslexia, which means 30 per cent disadvantage compensation, he also suffers from ADHD which is 30 per cent compensation and the poor thing also has rheumatism, equalling 20 per cent compensation. That adds up to a total of 80 per cent Disadvantage Compensation. I guess you know that I have to insist on having changed his F from the last class test to an A-."

In no other industrialized country will you experience as much confusion and disagreement in terms of education as here in Germany. 40 different schools types and 80 different kinds of schools prove the chaotic conditions of our present situation. In addition to that the German school system is one of the most selective ones. Surveys showed that a child's education depends highly on its social background, which means that students coming from academic households are much more likely to attend the *Gymnasium* while those from working class families have to attend the *Hauptschule* in which they are taught how to fill in application forms for social welfare, instead of encouraging them for lifelong learning. In conclusion, the most obvious problem is the partition of the school system. There are four main parts, namely the *Gymnasium*, *Realschule*, *Hauptschule* and *Sonderschule*. Those being admitted to the least attractive school types like *Hauptschule* or *Sonderschule* will have problems finding a job after school and will cost Germany billions of euros. That is why politicians in some federal states decided to combine the *Haupt-* and *Realschule* to the *Oberschule*. In the long run they also hope to integrate students with special needs to these school types so that there would be no need for a *Sonderschule* in the near future. With the help of these actions education officials aim at enabling more students to receive access to higher education which in consequence would prevent future shortcomings of qualified employees.

More equality by abolition of the German *Haupt-* and *Sonderschule*

Of course the combination of the *Haupt-* and *Realschule* improved the structure of our education system but it did not change anything regarding the discrimination against children coming from educationally disadvantaged families. The much too early division of ten-year-olds into *Gymnasium* and not-*Gymnasium* is the major problem. As long as there is a *Gymnasium* parallel to the *Oberschule*, the system stays impermeable. Only one third of those who changed to the *Gymnasium* at a later point in time made it to the *Abitur*. That means that more students need to be admitted to the *Gymnasium* in the first place so that they can, in time, adapt to the demands there. In recent years Brandenburg and Saxony actually admitted considerably more students to the *Gymnasium* than just ten years ago, not to guarantee more access to higher education but to make sure they kept up the number of students during the years of the 1990's low birth rates. This is why the portion of students attending the *Gymnasium* lately became higher but not with the desired effect that more students entered university, but with the effect that companies employed students having finished the *Gymnasium* rather than those from other types of schools. Meanwhile, this vertical displacement has gone so far that parents and students fear that they will have no future prospects if not making it to or through the *Gymnasium*. This is why politicians and parents feel the pressure to keep up this institution, and should their children have problems with the workload and the pressure of impending tests, they even go through the effort of arranging expensive private coaching for their children. So obviously, these developments have enhanced social fragmentation even more.

Inclusion for more mixed ability classes

Times have changed, of course. Therefore you cannot compare today's students with those of 20 years ago. Twenty years ago television sets and computers were prestigious objects but nowadays every student has at least a smart phone and often they also have a TV or computer in their own children's room. So it is no wonder that today's students have difficulties in getting prepared for school if there is so much distraction everywhere. Television and computer games might have also caused the modern Epidemic of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). A few years ago children with this kind of disability had difficulties in being accepted to the *Gymnasium* but this has now changed:

To enable mentally or physically disabled children to attend any kind of school, the UN passed a law in 2009 according to which UN states have to make sure that any kinds of possible discrimination against disabled students are dispelled. This is also in the sense of Germany's basic law (Art. 3, §1 GG) which says that no one is to be disadvantaged on the basis of social background or disability. To meet the new demands, Germany introduced the so-called Disadvantage Compensation which guarantees that any evidence of academic achievement is tailored to the disadvantaged student's capabilities. Should the student be dyslexic, he/she is allowed to receive help from a second person, often a social worker, and students with ADHD are granted 30 per cent Disadvantage Compensation, which means that they may have 30 per cent more time for an exercise or simply 30 per cent less or easier tasks. But does that really make the system more just? Is it not just another kind of discrimination if the disadvantaged are treated differently?

Individual support for every single student is impossible

What politicians did not take into consideration is the fact that German classes are still stuffed with 20 to 30 children and that individual support for each student is simply not possible for a teacher who might have up to 300 different students each week. Another problem is that teacher trainees are not being prepared for teaching mixed ability classes, neither at university, nor during their periods of practical training. In this respect the whole introduction of integration classes seems a little bit rash.

Disadvantage Compensation causes a loss in educational quality

On the one hand the Disadvantage Compensation seems to be a good way to enable more students to receive a certificate; on the other hand it might discourage healthy children who have to work more for the same results. In consequence, many parents might try to artificially achieve ADHD diagnoses for their children so that they might receive better grades. This would at least explain the ever rising number of ADHD cases. In elementary schools inclusion and integration are even more difficult. Here we might even find heavily mentally disabled children who need to be personally assisted by a social education worker who has to be present during the whole lesson, which is the first irritating fact. Secondly, the integration children often disrupt classes with violent or screaming attacks, and this is actually no learning atmosphere for anyone. Of course, the other healthy students might become more familiar with and in consequence more tolerant towards disabilities, but on the whole the programme causes a loss in educational quality.

Teachers cannot cope

In the end, the inclusion programme has been a failure, mainly because of the teachers who cannot cope with the work load that mixed ability classes cause. The only thing the government could do to make inclusion work is to employ more teachers so that the size of classes is not beyond 18 students and grant teachers fewer working hours. So far, everyone has looked down at the teacher profession as well-paid part-time employment, which is by no means the case. Apart from the 32 lessons being taught at school, teachers have to correct papers, prepare lessons, cooperate with parents, arrange class trips (on their own costs), organize parent-teacher-conferences, attend further education seminars during school holidays... taking all that into account, most teachers work up to 50 hours a week. In conclusion, 20 hours of teaching-lessons would be reasonable and if we achieved that, there would be fewer cases of early retirement and burnout and disadvantage compensation could be substituted by more individual support.

I hope— in the name of the whole JABS team— that this JABS edition has succeeded in establishing its very own way of inclusion, and has provided the readers with new and interesting insights, ideas, and solutions!

Thank you for reading and mingle on :)

Editorial

The names of the **JABS team members** in summer semester 2012 are hidden all over the whole magazine.

The development of this JABS edition was initialised and supported by our supervisor **Mr Keith Hollingsworth.**

The layout is the work of **Carmen Gaunitz**, who, at the right side of this page, names the sources of all pictures used — provided that it was in her power to know where the pictures were taken from and except naming the sources of the pictures, which already have been named next to the pictures in the texts.
;)

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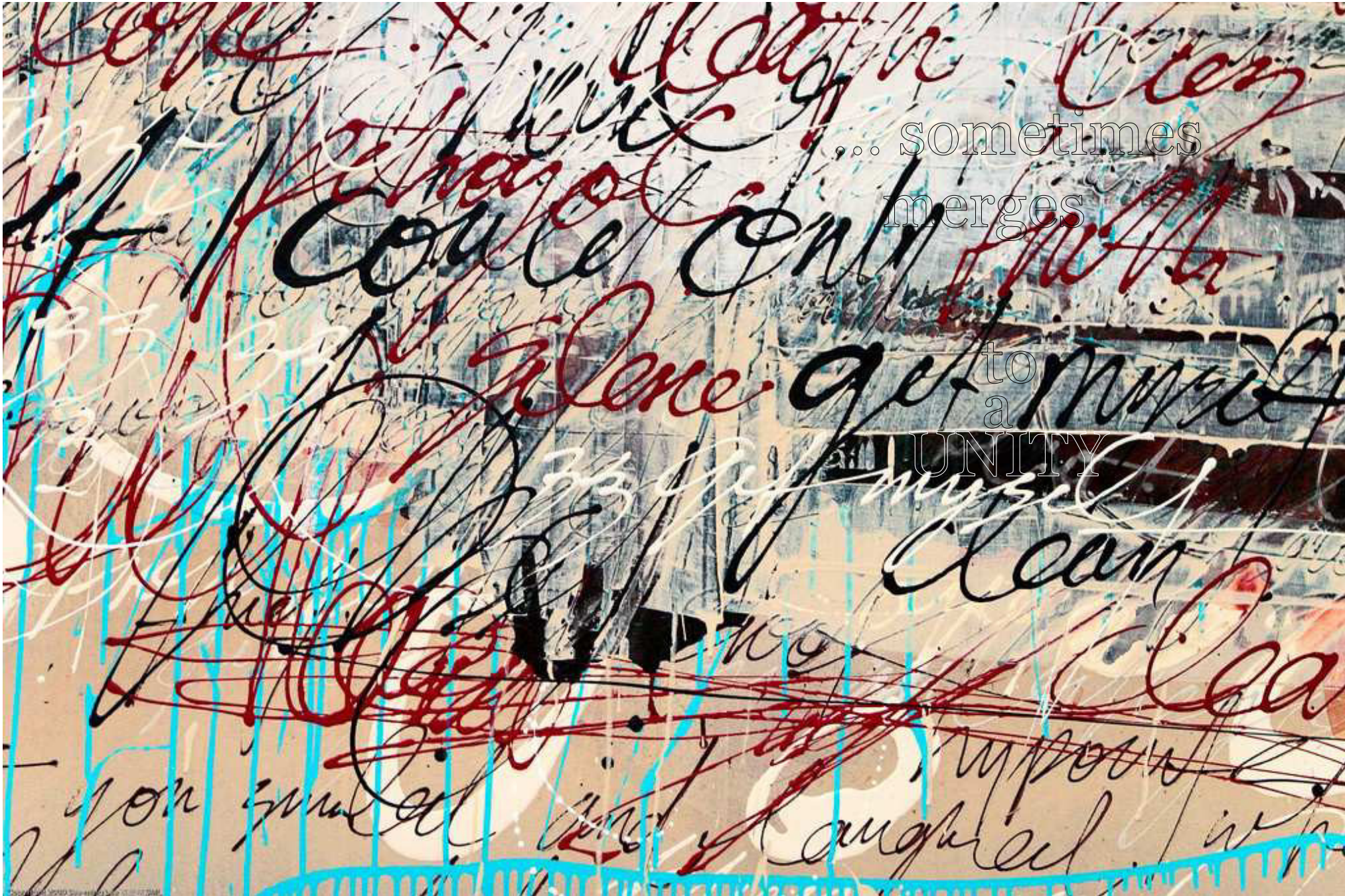
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