

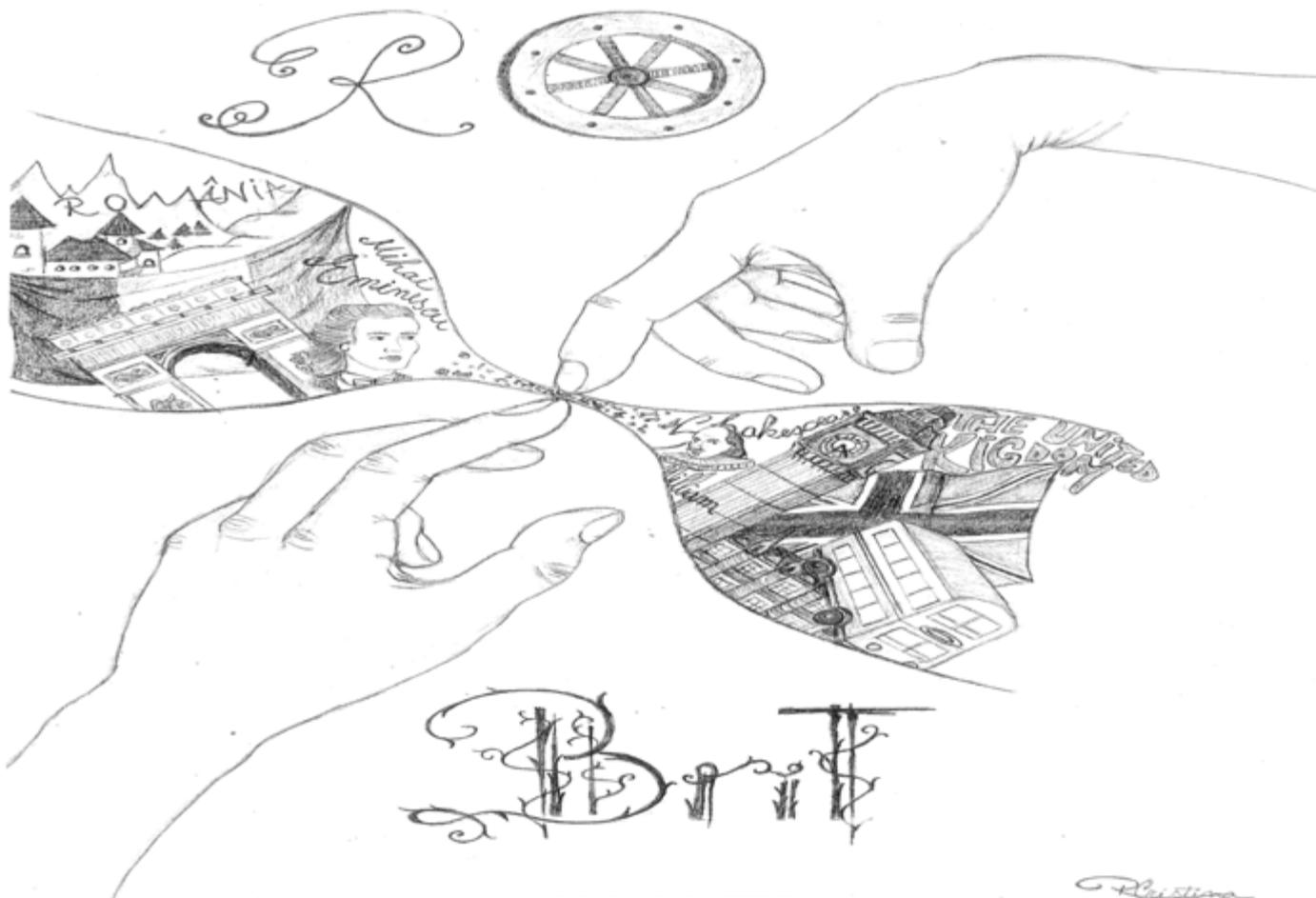


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RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL

English Annual Review
of the Romanian Students from
“Vasile Alecsandri” University
Bacău



ALMA MATER
BACAU

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EDITORIAL

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL is an annual English journal dedicated to publishing papers written by students in the Faculty of Letters (and not only), under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures from "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău.

This journal intends to encourage students to take more initiative in engaging in the English studies, providing at the same time the opportunity for them to have their research and creative writing published. Thus, RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL invites English-speaking students to contribute to the journal through submitting original articles. The journal welcomes submissions on English language, literature and culture,

its purpose being to provide a channel for the publication of original work by Romanian students who love the English language. This is an excellent opportunity for students to allow their research to be seen by their colleagues and to participate in a promising endeavour.

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL este o revistă anuală în limba engleză dedicată publicării lucrărilor scrise de către studenții din cadrul Facultății de Litere (și nu numai), sub auspiciile Departamentului de Limbi și Literaturi Străine de la Universitatea "Vasile Alecsandri" din Bacău. RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL intenționează să încurajeze studenții vorbitori de limba engleză să scrie și să publice în limba engleză articole cu privire la limbă, literatură și cultură, scopul principal al revistei fiind acela de a oferi un canal pentru publicarea de lucrări originale de către studenții români care iubesc limba engleză. Aceasta este o oportunitate excelentă pentru studenți de a permite ca cercetarea lor să fie văzută de colegii lor și de a participa la un efort promițător.

A Woman's Independence from Tess of the D'Urbervilles to Jane Eyre

Emima Busuioc, II, E-F

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

From early times, we all know that women were not considered the equals of men. Besides that, throughout history, they were often deprived of their physical, moral or cultural freedom.

The status of the woman in the Victorian Era (1837–1901) was not one very privileged, the women in this period were surnamed and considered to be the “Angel in the House”. Although women had few rights in this period, it is in England that their emancipation begins.

Women from the status of wives who only worked for family or in the house and took care of the children, began to want another kind of life, of course not all of them but at least some of them, who wanted to do something else, to have more rights and to be equals with the men of the age.

Thus, we have a new class emerging in the Victorian Society, that of the women who were educated and who became governess or writers. This change in society is also reflected in the literary works of some writers such as: Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. A Pure Woman and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

In fact, these two novels, in addition to all their themes, reflect the changes which were more and more visible in the Victorian society namely: the emancipation of women.

These two novels, present in my opinion, two kinds of distinct independence – the novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. A Pure Woman, deals with the illiterate woman's independence, while *Jane Eyre* deals the educated woman's independence.

Tess Durbeyfield is the heroine in Thomas Hardy's novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In my opinion, the theme of independence in this novel completes another theme: a woman's struggle to resist against an unfriendly fate. But *Tess*, unlike other female characters in the novel, keeps her independence in spite of all her shortcomings.

Intelligent, strikingly attractive and distinguished by her deep moral sensitivity and passionate intensity, *Tess* seems to have a bright future in front, but her being seduced by Alec will be the cause of all her tragedies.

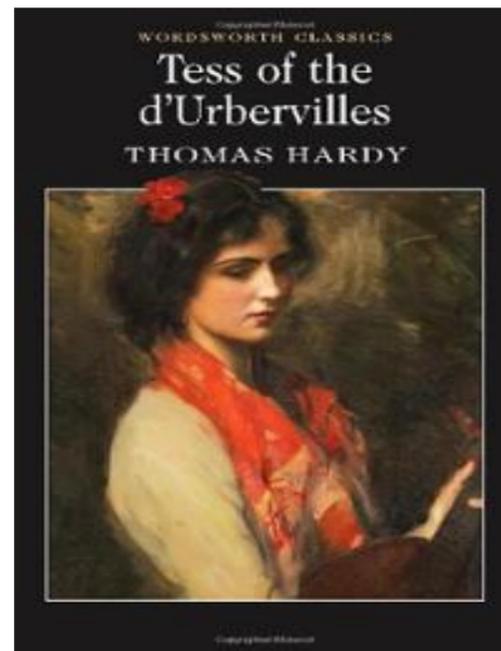
From the very beginning, we see that *Tess* is

the most responsible, sensible and level-headed from all her family, when she is not tempted by the news that she is a descendant of the noble D'Urbervilles.

Although she is maiden no more and she had broken all the traditions by having a baby before marriage and she is blamed by all the village, *Tess* shows her independence on countless occasions, such as when she rejected organized religion, and baptized her baby by herself, or when she leaves from home in search of a job at a dairy farm. At *Talbothays*, *Tess* finds her true love, *Angel Clare*, but she will not encounter happiness even if they marry.

Lead by a sort of marriage independence, *Tess* feels the need to tell *Angel* about her past. Though she is conscious that her being “maiden no more” will somehow affect their relationship, *Tess* chooses to tell the truth so that her marriage with *Angel* might not be one based upon lies and shallowness.

Whilst *Angel* loves her he cannot accept her and her past. The fact that *Angel* does not accept her, hurt *Tess* very much, but his decision did not crush her spirit.



When *Angel* leaves her, she struggles to keep their separation a secret and she leaves from home to gain her own existence. During the time *Angel* was

in *Brazil*, *Tess* had a difficult period finding work and she was forced to take a job at an unpleasant and unprosperous farm. Also for preventing being linked with *Angel*, *Tess* never says she is married or who her husband is. When she has no more money, she struggles very much in order not to go to *Angel's* parents and ask them for money, although *Angel* had told her to do that if she needed money. All her decisions show the depth of her feelings for *Angel* and also her independent and impulsive spirit.

Independent and pure in nature, *Tess* does not want to be tricked by *Alec* anymore but all her struggles are in vain, because in order to save her family, *Tess* sacrifices herself and becomes *Alec's* mistress.

In my opinion, the end represents the most beautiful feeling of freedom because, in spite of being a murderess and having all her life compromised, *Tess* fulfilled her desired to be happy with *Angel*, at least for a while and then she accepted her death. For *Tess*, her death did not mean that she disappeared, but that she was finally a free and uncaged spirit from an unjust life.

The second novel, *Jane Eyre* by *Charlotte Brontë* is a perfect example of a Victorian novel in which a woman's independence is shown.

Unlike *Tess*, *Jane Eyre's* spirit of independence is revealed from the first chapters of the book, when the little *Jane* opposes her cousin's desires and she disobeys him. She is punished and blamed, but all these pains will strengthen her character.

The frightening night spent in the *Red Room* makes *Jane* be confronted with all her fears and to grow mature over night. Not long after *Jane* is brought back from the *Red Room*, she begins to meditate about what happened and why she was treated in such a harsh manner, ideas far from being a Victorian common's girls concerns. In chapter 3, we discover that *Jane's* free spirit is inherited from her mother (she had married a man whom her father disapproved of).

Jane's good-hearted but strong-willed determination and integrity become apparent when she gives vent to her thoughts in front of *Mrs. Reed*.

As a little and poor girl, *Jane*, like the others from *Lowood* cannot change their poor condition but she totally disagrees and disregards *Mrs. Brocklehurst's* attitude over the children and the teachers from *Lowood*.

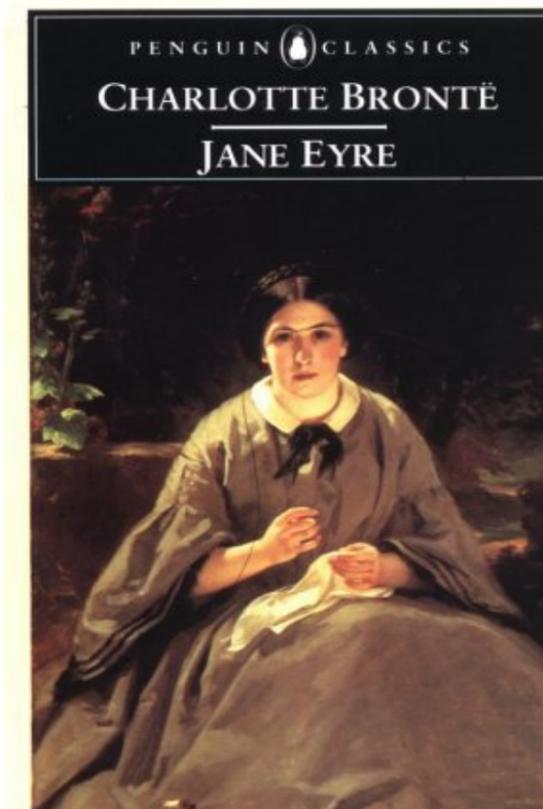
Jane keeps her spirit independent and after *Helen's* death, she manages to survive in the poor

conditions from *Lowood* and she continues her studies. Moreover after 6 years of studies she becomes a teacher. After two years spent as teacher in *Lowood*, *Jane* decides to make a change in her life and she advertises in search of a post as a governess. From her accepting the position of a governess, we can clearly guess her search for independence, both emotional and financial.

Being a fiercely independent nature, *Jane* questions every time the things she does not understand, such as the attempts of murder against *Rochester* or *Mr. Mason*.

As a rational woman, *Jane*, when discovering that she has feelings for *Rochester*, rebukes herself and she does not allow herself to believe that *Rochester* will ever fall in love with her.

There were many differences between *Rochester* and *Jane* (such as: he was twenty years older than her, much more experienced, he has higher social rank, he was rich and she was poor and the relation between them was that between a master and his servant), differences that were a major barrier at that time, but in spite of all these *Jane* confesses her love to *Rochester* and she once more breaks the rules



when she accepts to marry him.

During the wedding preparations, *Jane* realizes the big gap between them and she feels uncomfortable knowing that she will be financially depen-

dent on Rochester.

Jane's feeling for Rochester are strong, but when the truth about Mr. Rochester's past is revealed, she does not accept the idea of becoming his mistress and to give up her independence, integrity and dignity, that is why she leaves Thornfield, even with the price of remaining alone without a home or a job.

When arriving at Marsh End, Jane confronts with a distinct situation which has the role to fortify her spirit – she finds out the truth about her relatives, she finally belongs to a family. Eventually she finds out that she has inherited a large sum of money from her uncle in Madeira. When her cousin, St. John Rivers proposes her, she refuses him. She feels that marrying him would signify to be no longer free and independent.

Finally when she gains independence financially and socially and also succeeds in gaining self-esteem, only then she will make a union in marriage, an equal one, with Mr. Rochester, and like this she will be able to live a life full of love and independence.

In conclusion even if our heroines, Tess and Jane, encountered in their journey through life unhappiness, disappointment, oppression, starvation or coldness, we saw that both of them remained as strong as they could in those difficult situations and they tried every time not to be consumed by that patriarchal society, which characterized the Victorian period.



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Dystopia in Charles Dickens's Hard Times

Cristina Lazăr, II, EF

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciur

Hard Times is Charles Dickens's tenth novel, published on 3rd April 1854. As it is a very well-known novel and because it is not my intention to present the story, I will not focus on the plot, on who the main character is, on what (s)he does and similar aspects connected to generic aspects. I will try not to repeat things that you have already heard of, but to help you to understand some key-words (if I can say this). To be honest, for me it's quite a challenge... So, let's try to clarify things...

Have you ever heard about utopia or...dystopia? Yes, you are right! Utopia is used to describe a good place, the Heaven if you want, while dystopia is the opposite, referring to a bad place. As general characteristics, those novels which describe a dystopian world present an unpleasant society where the predominant feeling is fear. Some major themes are mechanization, repression, loss of humanism/touch with reality/hope, dehumanization through psychological oppression, or/and routinization of work. In what the characters are concerned, most of the times they are affected by physical diseases. Speaking about the place of dystopian prose, we observe that generally it is an urban one, and the time makes reference to a (post)war period, but also to the future. You probably guess that these novels are very close science-fiction writings. In addition, it can be a form of modern satire, criticizing the social conditions or political systems.

dystopia

/dis'tōpēə/

n. An imaginary place where everything is as bad as it can be

In her book *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of terror and Trial*, Erika Gottlieb (2001: 4) defines dystopia as being "a hellscape from which the inhabitants can no longer return (...)". Generally, the dystopian fiction is represented as a "social elsewhere" framed as a future into which the reader's society has transferred.

Taking into consideration the relationship be-

tween the land and the people, more scholars decided that there is a very close connection, concluding that the land reflects the people and the people reflect the land. Charles Dickens observed this, and focused his attention towards the changes in England during the 19th century. The English towns were being transformed into mechanized scenes of factories and pollution and English people was also affected at a psychological level.

Some critics decided that, in Dickens's novel, dystopia is manifested on two axes: the physical landscape of Coketown and the psychic "mindscape" of Louisa Gradgrind (Lewis 2014: 17). Coketown is introduced to the reader as being a "triumph of fact" – as the author writes, the model of the utilitarianism urged by Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby – and then the landscape is described: "It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; (...), it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye (...). It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday or tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next." (book1, ch.5). In this paragraph some clear characteristics of the dystopian novel can be observed – a town (an urban place) which is not so interesting, on the contrary, forms a "hellscape"... the colour red is everywhere, the only water is in fact a "black canal" and a putrid and unnaturally coloured purple river which changes completely the normal image of life; monotony is everywhere because everything is "like one another" (the people, the streets); routinization of work is also present in the end of this excerpt. I dare say that there is the same oppressive atmosphere as in Baudelaire or Bacovia's poetry. The predominant colours, red and black, make the atmosphere more hostile; there is no light because

of the smoke and ashes, and the skyline is eclipsed by “machinery and tall chimneys”. The comparison of the smoke with the serpents may have also a Biblical connotation, because the serpent influenced Eve to commit the original sin and to be banished from the Garden of Eden. So here, serpents represent hell, a tormenting, dismal world full of “sins” in which people have to live.

In the same chapter we have the description of the utilitarian regime, characterised by monotony, laboriousness and austerity: “Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial (...) the relations between the master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery.” Dickens’s dystopia can be seen here very clearly as the relationship between utilitarianism and industrialism, and Coketown is the perfect place for them to cohere. Speaking about the connection between the factories and their workers, Dickens, using the device of interchanging features, or transfer of meaning makes factories seem more human and humans more mechanized. Making people seem like this, the author presents in fact their dehumanization, because they become as their machinery – lacking feelings, suffering a loss of humanity for the sake of efficiency and profit.

The second thing which is presented in a dystopian manner is the psychic mindscape of Louisa Gradgrind. There is a very close relationship between the landscape of Coketown and her mind; in fact, she is presented as a psychic mirror to Coketown’s landscape – for example when Louisa sits opposite a window looking out over the town, with its “high chimneys and the long tracts of smoke looming in the heavy distance gloomily” (book 1, ch.15). Dickens describes Louisa’s mindscape using the same techniques as for describing the landscape of Coketown: she is “metallurgical”, “overhung by a dark cavern”; enclosed by “artificial barriers”, “impassive, proud and cold”, “colourless”. Her psyche is made akin to the metallic, hard and self-important machinery of the factories, as well as to the dark, cold, colourless, and gloomy atmosphere of the town’s sky. But not only Louisa is described as being a reflection of the urban space; Mr. Gradgrind, the “eminently practical” father and “the man of facts and calculations” is presented as physically drawing very close to a square (“square forefinger”, “square wall of a forehead”, “square coat, square legs, square shoulders”) and as severe (eyes like “two dark caves”, “wide, thin and hard set” mouth, “obstinate carriage”) as the utilitarian system he values, a

reflection of the square schoolhouse he oversees. The same thing is valid for Josiah Bounderby – he has the same features as the machinery: he is “a big, loud man with a stare, and a metallic laugh”, made of “coarse material”, “swelled veins” and “strained skin” on his face (book 1, ch.4). The dehumanized dystopian landscape is reflected by characters’ physical features, but also by their names: Gradgrind, Bounderby, M’Choakumchild, which are in fact symbols of oppressive



actions (grinding, binding and choking) in service of the industrial machine.

The fact that Dickens managed to write in the 19th century such a novel which anticipated topics approached by modernists such as Aldous Huxley or George Orwell in their dystopian novels proved one more time his genius. He was a writer who felt very closely every nerve pulsating in the society of his age and succeeded in painting an artistic portrait which is equally valuable at a metaphorical values or as a realistic creation.

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English – the star of the world

Ionuț Avram, II, LEPC

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciu

Imagine you are in a foreign country and you do not know the native language of the respective country at all. How can you interact with the people around you? The answer is simple: you just have to use the English language.

English is the second most used language in the world, after mandarin, the official language of China. In fifty-three countries English is the official, de jure language. English is the official language used in air-to-ground communication, in football, in the Olympic Games, in trade, in business or in culture. English is the bridge between people who belong to different cultures and mentalities. Starting from the Elizabethan era, the English language gained more and more power around the world. Nowadays we think about the power of the English language as a consequence of the American political, military and economic power. We see the influences of the American culture everywhere around us, in movies, in books, on the streets, in shops or in music. Whenever we look at the American flag we think about the greatness, the prosperity, the unity in diversity and the complexity of the country. We can characterize English as the star of the languages, as one of the most famous and fashionable languages worldwide. But speaking about flags and stars, let us discuss about the importance and significance of the stars. What do they stand for? Why are they used on flags?

According to Jean Chevalier’s *Dictionary of Symbols*, “stars are symbols of the spirit, symbols of the conflict between the spiritual forces. The five-pointed star is the symbol of a universe in expansion. Just like number five, this kind of star is the symbol of perfection.” J. E. Cirlot suggests that a star is a symbol of “multiplicity” (p. 310). We also know that the human being has five senses, except the sixth one which is more related to the extrasensory and paranormal perception.

The stars on the American flag may symbolize diversity and complexity. In this case, the U.S. star is a symbol of the American spirit. Many other symbols on the U.S. flag can be analysed such as the thirteen stripes which send us to the first thirteen American states or the way in which colours are distributed on the flag. But many other countries in which English is

an official language have several stars on their flags. For instance, New Zealand is one of the countries that reveal the English influence in their flag.

“Its royal blue background represents the blue sea and clear sky surrounding us. The stars of the Southern Cross emphasize this country’s location in the South Pacific Ocean. The Union Jack in the first quarter recognizes New Zealand’s historical origins as a British colony and dominion.” In 1865 according to the Imperial Colonial Naval Defence Act all ships ‘must fly the Blue Ensign with the badge of the colony on it’”.



So as we can see, when we speak about the stars of those countries in which English is an official language we can suppose that the stars act as a mark of the great British colonial power. Besides stars, the Union Jack is another marker which is present on the British India flag and nowadays on the flags of Fiji or Australia. Australia has both the stars and the Union Jack as symbols of the English domination. Some other countries such as Australia and Singapore have stars on their flags. They also act as symbols of the British colony.

Another important aspect is the way in which the stars are organized on the flag and the elements



that surround the stars. There are many stars on different flags around the globe which are related to the Islamic faith such as the flags of Turkey, Irak, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, etc. and which are not profoundly connected in any way to the English world. The stars on the flags of the Muslim countries are generally connected, combined with the crescent moon. This mixture of both the star and the moon gives birth to theophany, “a manifestation of God in the night of faith” so they are just symbols of the Islamic faith. The five pointed star may stand for the five moments of the day in which Muslims pray. We cannot relate the stars on the flags of the former English colonies or USA to those of the Muslim countries. Singapore is no exception. The stars on the flag from Singapore are symbols related rather to the Islamic world and not to the English one, even if, as we know it, Singapore is one of the countries in which English is an official language, a former colony of the British Empire. From a different geographical perspective, the ways in which the stars of the flags from Oceania and Australia are organized are important details which need to be developed and analysed. Solomon Islands, Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea are just few examples of former British colonies, islands and territories in which English was and still is a main language, spoken by a large number of people. The stars on these flags do not have just a symbolical meaning but also a spiritual one. The positions of the stars, the way in which they are organized on the upper part of the flags may express “a kind of imperious exaltation”. Nevertheless the stars have a symbolical value

in any culture.

The stars of the Anglophone space, those stars that we can find on the US flag or on the ex-colonies of Britain symbolise cultural, political and first of all linguistic unity. The linguistic unity shows a sense of belonging for all the native inhabitants, for all those who live in these countries.

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Mixing Business with Pleasure

Matea Hortolomeu & Cristina Negrea, II, C.I.G.
 Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

Gone are the days when business was only carried out at the office and in conference rooms. Now people mix business and pleasure in a range of settings which are more or less associated with commerce. But what are the rules of ‘business entertainment’ in an international context? Let us see a brief guide, depending on corporate culture and cultural differences:

China: It is said that the Chinese people are very well organized, precise, punctual and very serious. Have you ever wondered how the Chinese combine business with pleasure? Business meetings often take the form of evening dinners and “expect your host to order enough to feed twelve people for a party of six.”¹ Most probably you will serve many dishes and very diverse ones, so you are advised not to eat too much before such a meeting. However, do not rush to finish eating because this gesture is a sign that insults the host (he may think that he has not ordered enough to satisfy your hunger). Also, “it’s not a bad idea to practise eating with chopsticks before making your business trip to China. Your host will certainly appreciate your efforts to use them and you should avoid asking for European-style cutlery if at all possible.”²

In **Romania**, business meetings usually take place in a formally organized setting or in a business centre. When you choose a café or a restaurant as a location for a more distinguished business meeting, it is not compulsory to think of a state-of-the-art venue, but accessibility in terms of price and location comes first. If there is a restaurant that you know is good near the hotel premises it makes no sense to go to the other end of the city, unless your business partners are looking for some really eccentric Romanian spirit.

Britain: The British prefer to conduct a business meeting over lunch or, more rarely, dinner. The latter has a more pleasurable component, allowing business contacts an opportunity to get to know their business partners better, with a colloquial, less official touch, so “do not expect to talk shop over your lamb cutlet and trifle.”³ What is surprising about the British

is that they sometimes tend to hold business meetings in pubs, even if it seems strange, for them this is normal. Anyway, dinners are usually reserved for pleasure. Also, if you ever attend this kind of meeting you need to be prepared to serve the British version of beer which is very different from European beer that you are probably used to: “British beer – warm and flat – is an important national product. Make sure to try it before moving on to something a little more drinkable.”⁴

U.S.A: “Breakfast meetings, where business is mixed with smoked salmon and scrambled eggs, have become pretty popular here in recent years. If you are invited to one, set your alarm clock for an early rise: such meetings often get underway as early as 7 A.M.!”⁵ We can say that business people from the USA are much more formal than the British. They talk business over breakfast but business over dinner is not excluded either. In this case each business partner receives an invitation to dinner. It should be noted that punctuality is very important to them because punctuality can be a criterion by which a business man can choose his partners. You can also bring flowers or a bottle of wine as a gift for the host.

In **Romania** and not only in our country at the end of a business meeting with international partners it is common to offer a gift, for example, a good book or a hand-carved decoration or some traditional object. However, the gift must be offered at the end of the meeting, so as not to be considered a bribe. Did you know that in Saudi Arabia after finishing a business meeting if you make a gift, you should never give an alcoholic drink? It is a serious crime, here drink is considered a taboo subject and even a sin.

As we have seen, there are various ways in which business people all over the world conduct business in both formal, conventional ways and in more entertaining, alternative manners. However, I also noticed another way of mixing passion and business in quite a different manner at a student who has her own handmade business with objects. She is a student fellow of mine, so let us see how she does that.

¹ Kenneth Thomson, *English for Meetings*, Cornelsen Verlag GmbH a Co. OHG, Berlin, 2009, p. 52.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Kenneth Thomson, *English for Meetings*, Cornelsen Verlag GmbH a Co. OHG, Berlin, 2009, p. 52.

My name is Cristina Negrea and six years ago I started making handmade objects as a hobby. When my creations began to be a point of interest for friends, family and other people I decided to turn it into a business. At the beginning it was not too successful, but in time it became a way to make money by doing what I like to do and what makes me happy.

In my handmade business I feel like I am working at the best job where I am my own boss and I make money to develop my work and myself at the same time.



The product line contains jewellery, ornamental stuff, wedding objects such as invitations, table cards and many other similar products depending on what the client asks. In the first four years I created only small articles from paper sheets in another way, by turning it in small rectangles to make bigger ornaments. This year I have added a new kind of handmade work to my portfolio by making beaded jewellery.

My collection of handmade includes origami figures, plates, wedding ornaments, quilling accessories, origami frames, greeting cards and



holiday items. The price of my creations is not too big, the products are cheap enough to be bought by everybody who likes and admires my work.

The clients are not the same for all my products. All of them are different and have different preferences, and they make more or less claims. Over the years, I have tried to satisfy all kinds of clients and their orders and, until now, I have not had any

complaints for the products I sold.

As a conclusion, looking back to the success I have had with my 'hobby as a business' or the other way round, I intend to continue my activity with handmade art products and I will develop my business as much as I can.

There are lots of ways of mixing business with pleasure at our workplace, combining passion and work, a hobby and one's job. What matters in the end is the result of our work, and this can only be a good one when we work with pleasure.

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A part of my collection of handmade



Public Speaking – How to Turn Fear into Success

Radu-Marian Botez, II, C.I.G
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

Take a deep breath and imagine that you are speaking in front of a large audience. Imagine that you are on stage with all eyes on you, but you do not have any trace of emotion. From the moment you start your speech, everything is perfect, your audience sips every word and every sentence that you utter and, in the end, you draw bursts of thunderous applause.

From the opposite perspective, imagine that you get to be the main actor in a speech, you are the one in the spotlight. All eyes, familiar or not, are upon you, and you are talking to yourself. The ideas in your head and the ideas on your paper seem to have no planned structure and your voice is trembling, you are out breath and your palms are sweaty. You arrive in a corner after 5 minutes of fame, which seemed like 60. While getting positive opinions from the others, stunned, you are too busy to have a dialogue with yourself about what might have been necessary for the speech to come off well.



Both situations are possible to exist at the same person in practice; of course, they can appear in different situations and contexts. The best strategy I know of, which is used by professional speakers too, in order to get rid of a large part of the emotions on the scene, is to know very well the content of your presentation. There are speakers who, before having a speech in front of an audience, repeat their presentation even for 50 times.

Andy Szekely, Romanian entrepreneur, author, public speaker, and coach said that to get rid of your fear of public speaking is equal to speaking in public for 10 times; if you want to improve your body language and your communication skills when you speak in front of people, you have to speak in public

for 50 times; and if you want to be an expert in public speaking, you have to speak for 100 times in front of people. We can all see that the recipe for success is not a difficult one, but it takes time and resources.

One of the biggest fears of the beginners in public speaking is represented by the question: what do we do when, during the speech, a paper jam occurs, questions are asked and we do not know what to answer, or any other situation that puts us in difficulty? There is a simple solution: be yourself, be as natural as you can. To come out with flying colours from any trouble, first it is important to be natural, when you are in front of the audience concentrate on what is happening around you and be less concerned about yourself, give up thinking about the possible fears and doubts. Smile as much as you can: smile and good humor are contagious. Use your body expression, your personal impact of your natural charm.

Another important field in public speaking is language. At any time you have to speak in front of an audience, you must give a great importance to the body (posture, gestures, facial expression and eye movement). All this can betray emotions and uncertainty, especially since the transmission and the interpretation of these signals is almost entirely subconscious. Studies have revealed that we communicate by means of verbal language around 5-7%, by para-verbal language 13-15%, and the body language is divided into two categories: eye contact – 35%; body – 45%.

And, in the end, if you are convinced that you can be a public speaker, remember to pay attention to your speech, because, as Dale Carnegie said: "There are always three speeches, for every one you actually gave. The one you practised, the one you wish you gave, and the one you gave!"

For more information about public speaking visit or read:

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Personal Development – Why Should We Do It?

Radu-Marian Botez, II, C.I.G
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea



Against the fact that everybody talks about “personal development”, I surprisingly found that there are few people who can define this concept.

The concept of “personal development” refers to evolution and personal improvement during our entire life, in domains like education, career, personal relations, health, productivity, spirituality, etc. It refers to the process of becoming better as a person day by day, a process which lasts for the entire lifetime.

Personal development is based on knowledge. The only major difference between a person who fights every single day for survival and a successful person is related to knowledge. And I do not refer to the classic knowledge achieved at school; I refer to the competences enabling you to take decisions based on this knowledge.

To be successful in all your interest domains, it is very important to invest time, energy and financial resources in the acquisition of knowledge in these domains. You can make new habits, like buying interesting books in your interest domains, or participate in conferences, workshops, trainings, boot camps or you can read specialized blogs and watch online movies to constantly reach a new level of development.

Personal development experiences help us:

- acquire new skills – the advantage of personal development experiences is that they help us acknowledge, accept and experience new skills, abilities and values. Later, we can integrate them into everyday behaviour, into any dimension of our lives: both personally and professionally;
- identify the right directions for personal development. Each of us has different areas of interest and specific skills and abilities, so it is important to identify these individual elements before we start to invest resources in our personal improvement;
- understand the need for continuous learning. We have to promote the concept of “lifelong learning”, and this concept comes with a continuous process of changes. In a world where technology is changing from one day to another and where we have access to almost any information and country in the world, we are compelled to adapt quickly to all kinds of changes.

But everything I am telling you about personal development will have no effect without the key-element: self-education. You have to go into the world as such and explore, experience, fail, then get up and continue because the best form of learning and developing yourself is by doing something starting right now.

The challenge that I am launching to you is to think about the area of interest that attracts you the most and search the internet for at least one article written in this field and read it. Because accepting this challenge means that you have just made an investment in your personal development! Good luck!

Image source:
www.personalitatealfa.com/blog, accessed March 5, 2015.

Older and wiser! My Experience as a Second-Time Student!

Second Time’s the Charm?!¹

Malvinia Bostan, I, C.I.G.
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

I would like to start by saying that this is the first time when I write an article and it is very exciting. Now I am a first-year student in Accounting and Management Information Systems at the Faculty of Economic Sciences, but how did I end up here?

Well, my experience as a student began a couple of years ago. When I finished high school I was very excited to go to the University, to meet other people, to see other places, to get to know another city, but I was not so sure about what I wanted to pursue as a career. I did not even know what I wanted in life and so, driven by impulses, other people maybe, I chose to attend the courses of a university that was not so good for me, or so it turned out to be. The study program was Food Control and Expertise, so it was related to the food industry, and the University was in Bucharest. I studied a lot of chemistry, technologies and many others. After a couple of months I was sure that this was not something for me but I remained anyway and I even have a master’s degree in this domain.

Obviously, I did not start a career in this field given the fact that, first of all, it was very hard to find a job and, second, because life has its own ways of managing things. So, to summarize, I returned to my home town and started working in my mother’s company, a pharmacy. My mother has always wanted me to pursue a career as an accountant or maybe as a pharmacist, just like her, but she did not want to put pressure on me on doing something that I did not like. But now, sometimes I feel that I would have liked her to force me or to insist more on choosing to attend this Faculty.

When I graduated high school I did not want to hear about economics. However, last year I came to the conclusion that I wanted to become an accountant, especially because I want to continue working at my mother’s firm and because it is a big opportunity for me. In fact, it is a family business and my sister also works there as a pharmacist and we will remain as owners after my mother retires. Actually, she has already started coming less and my sister and I are in charge.

And now let me tell you about my student experience for the second time. I love it. It is better than the previous time, but in other ways. The first time it was all about having fun, going out, meeting people, seeing places and the part when I had to study was boring. But now I can see the difference. I like going to classes, paying attention, learning new things and understanding what we are taught.

I have friends that told me that I am crazy starting another University and at first I was a bit scared, maybe I still am a little, but I am sure that this is what I want to do and three years is not so much...No?

Looking back, I think that we are not prepared at the age of 18 to decide what to do in life. Maybe there should be some kind of classes in high school or when we finish high school that give people counseling on what they should do in life, how to choose the career they want. I think in other countries this is an ordinary practice in schools. They teach or advise their young people how to choose their path in life.

So, some pieces of advice for you, dear students, include:

- Try to mix both having fun with studying because there is time for everything, you are young and you have all your life ahead...
- Pay attention in class because if you do not understand there, at home it will be harder;
- Make friends, you never know when you need someone to explain something to you or to help you with a task;
- Treat the teachers with respect because they are there with a purpose...to teach us everything we need to know about economics or other fields;
- You need to be responsible because no one forced you to go to a Faculty, it was your choice. Finally, try to realize that from now on you are adults with responsibilities!

Thank you for reading and I hope that you will consider some of the pieces of advice I gave you.

¹ The correct form of the proverb is “third time’s the charm”, with reference to the belief that the third time you try to do something, it will work (<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/third+time%27s+the+charm>).

“Inițiativa” – the publication born from an idea

Victoria Iașișin, III, CRP
(Editor-in-chief of “Inițiativa”)

In the beginning of December 2014 the students from the Republic of Moldova that study in Bacău released their official publication “Inițiativa” – a publication filled with determination that should represent the student entourage from Bacău. This publication was born in just a month, but its impact apparently will last for years. Bellow I will tell you the story and present you this initiative project.

October 2014 – The President of GIB (Grupul de Inițiativă Basarabeană) told me about his idea – to have a publication. Well, I use to say “idea” because it was only an idea. Nobody had a specific plan, the only thing he told me was that the organization wanted a publication and he thought I was the best candidate for the position of the editor-in-chief. Of course I accepted and in that moment the responsibility to have the first issue by December 1st was passed to me.

I gathered my team, gave everyone brief indications about how our articles should look like and we created the structure of the first issue. Everything was set up, everyone was working and we managed to have the first issue come out in the same day Romania was celebrating its National Day, which was quite important for us too.

“Inițiativa” – the official publication of the Moldavian students from Bacău

“Inițiativa” was officially released on December 2nd at “Vasile Alecsandri” University Library. The event was not very big, but it was an important part of this project, which is 100% created and initiated by students.

Even though we expected it to be a quiet and simple reunion of our supporters and some of the teachers from the university, it turned out to be more successful than we thought it would be. There were present our readers, some of our teachers – Mrs. Elena Bonta, Ms. Floria Florinela and Mr. Vasile Puiu – who continue to support this project and help us on maintaining it alive, library workers and, to our surprise, we became an interest for the local press. Our event was attended by reporters and journalists that work for “BacăuNET”, “Deșteptarea” and “Adevărul”.

On December 2nd Inițiativa was released as the first official publication of the Moldavian students that study in Romania. This project is an important one not only for the students from Bacău, but also for all the Moldavian students throughout all the universities in the country.

What is actually “Inițiativa”?

“Inițiativa” is a publication born from determination, creativity and a lot of *initiative*. The title of the newspaper came up randomly to one of the editorial members and we associated it with the name of our organization – “Grupul de Inițiativă Basarabeană din Bacău”. It was impossible to find a name more suitable and so significant for our cause – it was just perfect for what we intended to do.

“Inițiativa” is a non-political, monthly publication, which promotes the activity of GIB Bacău and the national values of Moldova. One of our most important goals is to promote culture, correct writing, and personal development. We live in a period when students remain attracted by other things rather than studying or getting involved in different useful activities, which would help them perform in their field or at least have an important contribution to their resumes. If we can claim so, this publication is something that should help

students focus on what they want to become and what they should do to get to that point.

The first issue of “Inițiativa” came out on December 1st, it was printed in 300 copies, and was dedicated to the National Day of Romania, that is why it included a few articles on this subject. The regular issues will come out on the 16th day of the month, only the first came out as a special one.

Our team hopes “Inițiativa” will become a tradition for all the generations of Moldavian students, and month by month, it will expose all the good experiences our students have here. The editorial team wishes that with each issue this publication became better and more popular throughout the university.

Blue, Yellow, Red – Visual identity

It was a challenge to create our logo, because none of the students that represent our team is specialized in graphic design. We did not have a logo until three days before the newspaper had to go for printing. The situation designed this way that we were about to leave the newspaper without a logo. Fortunately, one of students that already finished his studies built a logo for us, which was just perfect and represented our identity. As you might know, our logo consists of three colors – blue, yellow, red – disposed vertically in some kind of a whirl, with yellow in the center of it. Yellow symbolizes the center, the start of everything and determination, which absolutely fits our situation. Moreover, those three colors represent the national flags of Republic of Moldova and Romania.

This logo was just something we accepted from the lack of time we had and we never pictured it this way. However, from a happy coincidence, it was the best thing we could have had for our publication.

Finally, “Inițiativa” is the result of a good idea and the work of people with great will. It is all about will and passion, because I believe those two can help in creating great things, things you never thought could be real. When I was told about this idea it was something new for me, I never thought of having and managing a publication here. Sincerely, I never thought it would be possible. Yet, if there is passion and love for what you have to do, nothing can stop you.



Gifted Hands. The Ben Carson Story

Emilia Avrămiea (Berereş), I, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciuc

After reading the fascinating book Gifted Hands by Ben Carson I understood that you don't have to come from a privileged background to be successful in life. Ben Carson is a living proof of that. Gifted Hands. The Ben Carson Story, written by himself, is the story of this brilliant and renowned paediatric neurosurgeon who works at John Hopkins Hospital.

Ben Carson was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1951. When he was eight years old, his parents divorced, leaving his mother to take care of Ben and his younger brother, Curtis, by herself. Their mother had to work several jobs to make enough money to provide for her small family. Times were tough and the family had to move around several times in order for them to survive.

This meant Ben and his brother had to change schools several times in their young lives. After a move to Boston, Ben and his brother went to a small, private school in Detroit, where they both did well and were ahead of most of their classmates. But, after the family moved back to Detroit, the boys discovered their previous education had been inadequate and they were behind most of

the other students in their classes. This led to teasing and tormenting from them, and Ben was called the "class dummy." He almost let that defeat him. But his mother developed a smart plan. She made a schedule for both boys to read 2 books every week and write their reviews. And they were no longer allowed to spend hours watching TV, but limited to only two programmes per week. Of course it was not easy at the beginning, there was a fight, but the wise and perseverant mother won. By reading and writing both boys started to grow. Ben developed an interest in science, and was fascinated by rocks. He read everything he

could lay his hands on about the subject. When his science teacher brought in a rock, a piece of obsidian, Ben was the only student in the class who could identify it. Ben, and his teachers, discovered that Ben had a special aptitude for learning, especially when he read about something. He kept reading and books got him out of trouble. From being the last in his class, in a short time he became the first. He used his love of reading, and his special talent for learning by reading,

to eventually excel in his studies, not only in grade school and high school, but also in college. Ben went on with his studies until he became a neurosurgeon and has become a leader in his field. At a more subtle level his career path could also be interpreted from a religious perspective. Ben was raised by a Christian mother who taught her boys the love of God and the desire to live a good Christian life. The underlying theme throughout the book was Ben's reliance on God and his belief that God wanted him to be a doctor.

At the young age of 32, Ben Carson became the Director of Paediatric Neurosurgery at John

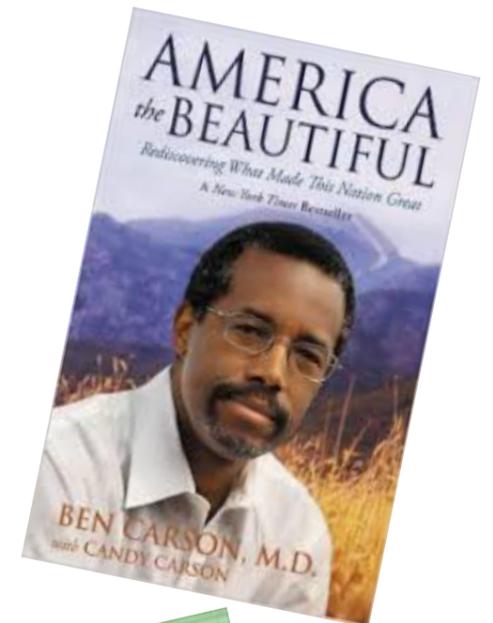
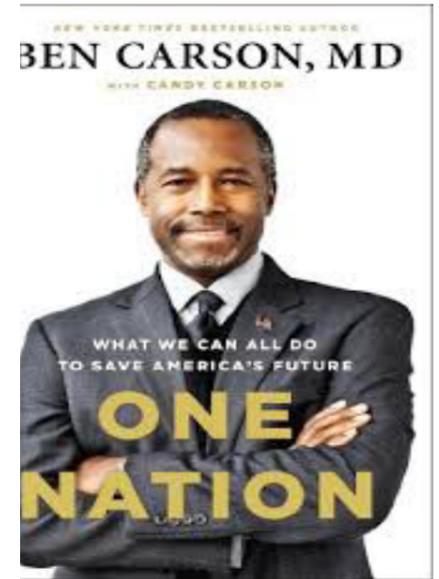
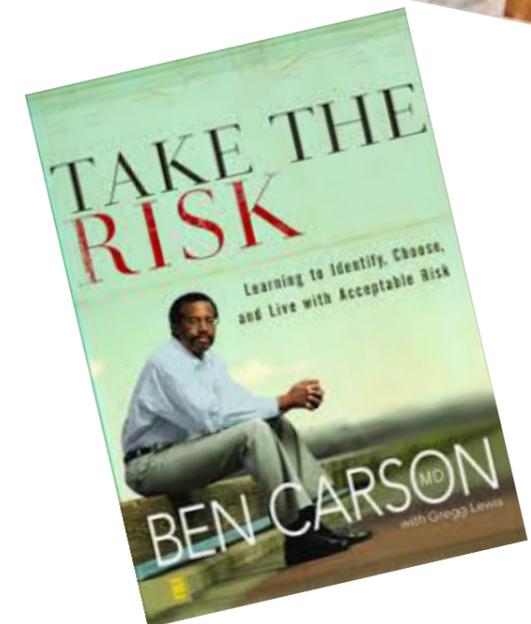
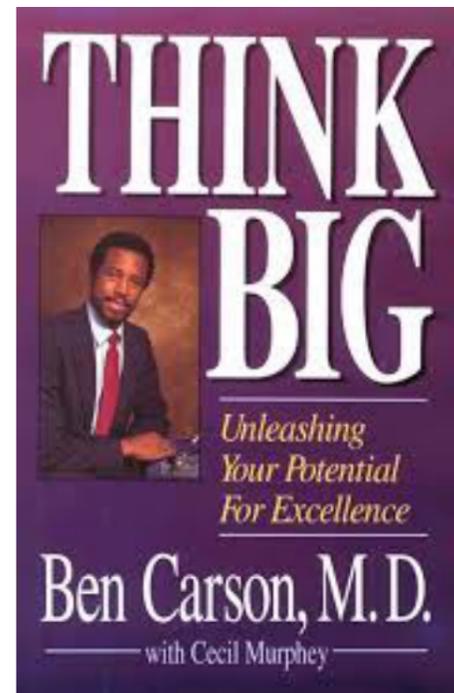
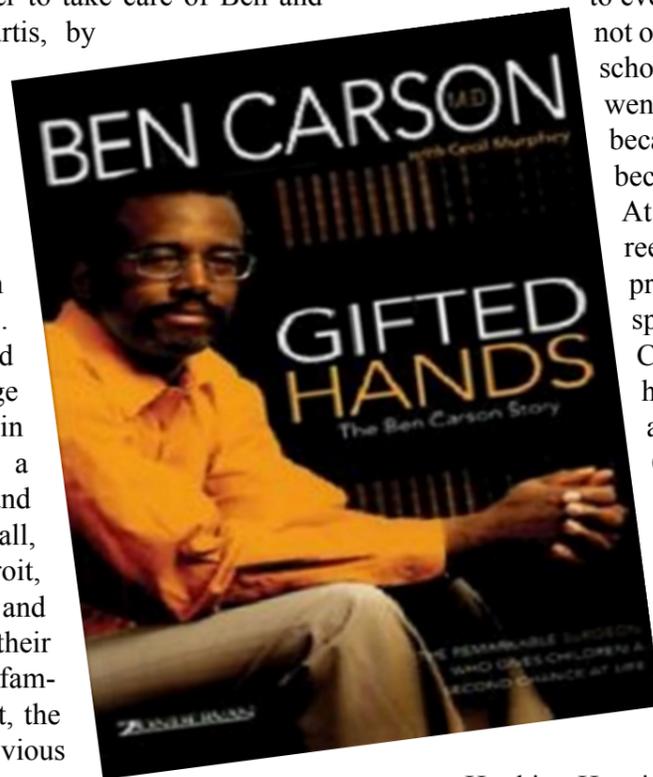
Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. From this position he operated on many patients and got exceptional results. One of the cases that brought him international fame was the separation of a pair of Siamese Twins joined at the back of their head, the Binder twins, Patrik and Benjamin. The German family travelled to United States where their twins underwent the surgery that gave them the only chance to a normal life. The previous operations done on twins had had as outcome the survival of only one of them. The Binder twins, separated in 1987 not only survived but developed normally and became adults leading a happy independent life.

Other surgical innovations that Ben Carson is

responsible for are:

- The first intrauterine procedure to relieve pressure on the brain of a hydrocephalic foetal twin.
- In 1985, Dr. Carson conducts a rare procedure called hemispherectomy that means he removes the half of the brain responsible for seizures. This procedure stopped the seizures of the children who were born with deficiencies and the other half of the brain that was left managed to compensate the workload, thus helping children to have a normal life. This procedure has brought hope, joy and blessings to many families.

Besides his amazing medical achievements, Doctor Ben Carson is often invited to speak to young students, encouraging them to learn and to run for excellence in the chosen field. He has developed a scholarship fund for the poor children called Carson's Scholars Fund for academic excellence and humanitarian quality, offering especially to poor children the necessary support to learn and develop so that they may get the chance to achieve and become great persons as adults. Ben Carson has written six bestselling books. He started with Gifted Hands, then continued with The Big Picture, Take the Risk, America the Beautiful and One Nation. As recognition of his merits, the White House had offered him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honour. He was also invited in 2013 February, 7 at the National Prayer Breakfast as a guest speaker where he got all the appreciation and gratitude for his achievements.



The Hunger Games

Dumitrița Bejan, I, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci



Happy Hunger Games! And may the odds be ever in your favour.
Suzanne Collins

Being a big fan of reading, and also being a great cinema-goer and lover, I had some contradictions with myself on the subject “What is more interesting”: to read a book or watch the film?

I have arguments both for reading and for watching the film. It is always interesting to watch a film that was based on a book that you had read before. So you can compare and analyze what you read and what you see in the film and infer if the story is similar to

how it is depicted in the film or to how you had imagined it.

People who read a lot are usually very critical in terms of plot and subject of the book, because the film does not comprise all the scenes and elements you can read and “see” in the book. But besides that, the film can reach your expectations, if you leave aside the criticism and you analyze the things from another point of view – the unity it manages to form by itself and not in comparison to the book since it would be impossible to transfer on screen all scenes and nuances in the book.

With these things being settled as my own personal opinion in the debates book vs. film, I would like to focus on some differences between the film inspired by the novel with the same title of author Suzanne Collins – the sci-fi thriller *The Hunger Games*. In this film I felt the producers did a fairly good job portraying characters and scenes similarly to how they had been presented in the book but there were some changes I could not agree with. The most visible and important difference, I think, was the point of view from which the story was told. The reader can experience a wide range of emotions and live various scenes in the book from Katniss Everdeen’s perspective. In the film, it would have been much harder to achieve the story line from the standpoint of the character, therefore the story in the film is told from an omniscient point of view, in order to allow viewers to better understand its subject.

In addition, I would say that script managed to describe very well each district, as well as to present the reason behind the games. The film, however, also had its own merit and attraction, through the multitude of well-crafted effects. From this perspective it would seem that what were seen as limp effects in the book became astounding effects in the film. It all depends on each person, his preferences for the written word or for the scenes in the film or on his own power of imagining the world from the book and then comparing it to the director’s screened vision. All I can say and advise anyone is to read it first and then to see the film because I vote for first-hand authenticity. You will not feel sorry, anyhow, for either choice because it is one of the richest and most beautiful stories from what I have read and seen, falling under the heading of science-fiction movies and books.

I would end with a quotation which blends perspectives – Jac Vanek said: “You are the books you read, the films you watch, the music you listen to. You are what you take from these.[...] You are a collective of every experience you have had in your life. You are every single second of every single day. So drown yourself in a sea of knowledge and existence. Let the words run through your veins and let the colours fill your mind until there is nothing left to do but explode. There are no wrong answers. Inspiration is everything. Sit back, relax, and take it all in. Now, go out and create something.”

Cloud Atlas

(from film review to personal thoughts)

Paula Turnea, I, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Cloud Atlas is a 2012 science fiction film written and directed by Lana Wachowski, Tom Tykwer and Andy Wachowski. It is based on the 2004 novel *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell. The film has multiple plotlines set across six different eras. The official synopsis describes it as “an exploration of how the actions of individual lives impact one another in the past, present and future, as one soul is shaped from a killer into a hero, and an act of kindness ripples across centuries to inspire a revolution”.

Paradoxically enough, it was included in both Best movies and Worst movies categories. In my opinion it was one of the most impressive films I have ever seen. Maybe it was the story, or the make-up and the special effects or perhaps, all of it. I liked the fact that it kept me in suspense and I did not have time to get bored, not even for a minute.

They used the same group of actors to tell six different stories. The transformations by help of the make-up were amazing; some of the actors were almost unrecognizable. At first it is confusing to keep up with the transformations and the transition from one scene to another especially when you have the same actor impersonating both a villain and a positive character in the same film. But then I realized the purpose behind it. That’s what happens to all of us in real life – sometimes we pass through some periods in life when we aren’t able to see the positive side of things and we become mean, selfish and unpleasant but we have moments when we make peace with ourselves and we become better persons. That’s why I believe there’s no such thing as “good people” and “bad people”. I think we all have moments in our lifetime when we are “the bad guy” and also moments when we are “the good guy”. No one’s life is linear, from beginning to end. We cannot say we only had bad things or only good things in our lives, there is always a balance between them.

The film also made me think about the fact that we all have choices in life and it is up to us whether we are content or not with them. There are no coincidences and everything we do and say has a consequence in our life, sooner or later. It depends on us to find the right path and make the right decisions. And even if we are sometimes wrong, we have to learn from our

mistakes and not to repeat them. We all go through some bad experiences but what emerges from them, a good or a bad deed, thought, word, gesture, depends on us.

Another idea the film made me wonder about were the boundaries society implements to becoming a “respected citizen”, such as gender, social class, education. And often some of these boundaries are set by ourselves, in our minds, as our inner demons. We create our own limitations and become unhappy because of this. We are pressed by time, deadlines, bosses and life itself. We are all searching for ourselves in order to achieve happiness but society expects us to be in a certain way which often does not fit our own beliefs and desires. Most people comply with such expectations and tend to become “robotized” in this huge consumer society.

I believe we should liberate ourselves from what society expects from us and be fully aware of our acts and thoughts in order to become our “best version” of our self.

I think this is an inspiring film and I warmly recommend it. If it made me think of some things, maybe it will also help you think of some.



seek find study EDUCATION ADVENTURE ABROAD

Living on Your Own

Adrian Cojan, I, AA
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

Life outside one's country borders comes with challenges, failures and achievements that will turn you into a very different person. Your world is getting bigger and it will be hard to decide to go back home.

Going abroad in search of a better life brings many challenges, uncertainties and experiences, which can be more or less pleasant, regardless the country chosen as a destination.

In the last twelve months I have lived in several countries. I have become acquainted with new cultures and traditions, I have met interesting people and I have made friends for life. I have tried to live my life to its full potential. Living abroad is the most rewarding and challenging experience that anyone can have. These experiences have changed the person I thought I was. Personally, the travelling experience produced four great changes in my life:

1. You will never be the same

Once you decide to go abroad you must think that it is more than changing the home and the community. You will realize that you grow, evolve and move on. Things that were once important lose their meaning. Things that seemed worthless become suddenly important. Friendships are priceless and the family becomes more important and meaningful. Moving abroad will make you realize how few the things you take for the journey are. Moreover, you begin to redefine the idea of success.

2. It will be difficult to return home

The moment you return home is hard. People whom you left behind have changed, you become a different person and you just realize that life went on without you. This is a huge price that you have to pay once you go abroad.

3. Your world gets bigger

On the other hand, your world expands with the new experiences and you will seek for new ones. Even if you knew the world is big, once you explore it, you really find out how amazing it is.

4. Everything seems possible

Leaving home was the hardest part, but once I took this step, nothing was impossible. You can travel further, speak another language, cook various dishes and embrace other cultures. You will understand the traditions and customs of the place, you will be more open to opportunities and approach strangers with greater ease. I proved to myself that I can live abroad and I can survive. I had the courage to follow my dreams. I am happy to have discovered a part of the world and its mysteries.

My Erasmus Experience

Costi Roman, III, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciuc

When you are young, you are trying to do all your best to develop yourself, to enhance your abilities and your competences of all kinds. It is also a time when you dream and when you want to do as many planned things as possible. You dream to travel, to see other places, to get to know other cultures and to be happy. You are like a little bird who wants to leave its own nest to discover the world.

This is how I felt, too. This is my story. I applied for the Erasmus Mobility programme. How did I find out about this? Some fellows from the third year had come at the beginning of the academic year and told us about it. I was in the first year of study and I had just started the faculty. They said it was by far the



greatest experience they ever had and they also said why. After that I thought this was a great opportunity for me to go too, so I took the exams in that spring. I wanted to go to France because I also wanted to improve my knowledge of the French language and it was the best place to do it. But it was not meant to be, so I was redirected to Atatürk University from Erzurum, Turkey being asked if I wanted to go or not. Of course I accepted because I wanted too much to change my routine and to see something else because I had spent all my life in my hometown so I was bored of it and I also wanted to see how it is to live away

from your family. I wanted to test and to develop myself through this journey. I really wanted a change!

The leaving time came. I arrived in Erzurum, known as the coldest city in Turkey being surrounded by high and spectacular mountains. I expected to be freezing, but it was a nice spring day on the 20th of February. It was a much nicer weather than the one from Bacău. This was such an unexpected surprise! I have to tell you that the weather was very changeable due to the alpine climate. You could have a sunny morning, a windy afternoon and a snowy evening! Trust me, one day this happened in spring! I was really surprised because I was not used to sudden weather changes. But the weather kept being not as cold as I thought it would be. I loved the fact that in May or June the weather was so fine! Neither too hot, nor too cold, just perfect to enjoy it. In other land cities the weather was terribly hot, but I was lucky there.

The campus is really huge and it has everything, absolutely everything you need, with no exception. In Erzurum there are places for entertainment, pubs, restaurants, shopping centres, historical buildings and monuments, parks and even a botanical garden. Atatürk University is the second largest university in Turkey, the campus is built based on the American style and everything is centred on the student and on his/her own needs. The university is equipped with the latest equipment to facilitate teaching and learning.

My academic experience was also interesting. Because my specialty is Translation and Interpretation, I have no literature courses because the focus is on translations, grammar and exercises, both in English and French. Due to this reason, I did not have the literature courses and other related ones at the Atatürk University, which are known there to be the most difficult courses, so for me it was just a little bit easier than in Romania. There is no such thing as "specialization. The students study all together, which means up to 50 students and sometimes much more just for one academic year. They are only separated by the language they study, for example the English or the French department. There are integrated more courses, so they have courses like speaking, writing, vocabulary, linguistics, translations and many other

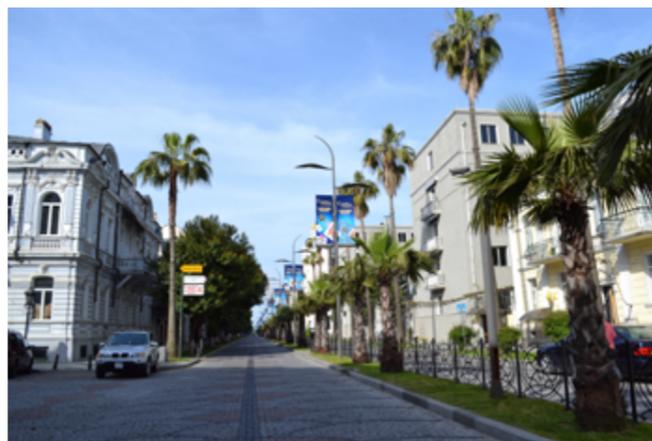
ones and they all have to study them. Unlike Bologna system that Romania and other European countries have adopted requiring 3 years of study, Turkey uses the old system, based on 4 years of study just for the faculty. But if a student is not well prepared for the University, the solution is one extra preparatory year. All in all, this is pretty much, but I think Turkish teachers appreciate this system because they have enough time to insist upon difficult concepts, which is a very good thing.

And being surrounded by the mountains, there is also a ski resort named Palandöken. I appreciated very much the fact that the expenses were similar to my hometown, so I got used there quite fast. I loved very much the Oriental atmosphere because it was something new for me. The music, the language were different, some of the buildings were built differently and the culture colour was present everywhere. I loved this difference because it caught my attention and interest, having no such things in Romania. I also noticed that the Turkish enjoy travelling to Europe from exactly the same reason. They do not have that type of culture, so for them it is something new, different and interesting as well.

After coming to Erzurum, I soon discovered that, unfortunately, English is not spoken outside the faculty and it was a serious problem. This is why I learnt a very little Turkish. I wish I could learn more, but it is quite difficult and people were speaking pretty fast, so I could understand only a few words. I could however observe that the Romanian language borrowed an incredible number of words from Turkish, so those were the ones that I first recognised in the language spoken around me. Of course, almost all the time I had at least a Turkish friend with me as a translator, but sometimes I would spend time by myself and I had to deal with people who were not speaking English. But I managed it, thank God!



Most of the Turkish people that I met were kind, caring, warm-hearted and hospitable. Briefly, they were really good people. I felt I was one of them, part of their life. They know very well how to treat their guests. When I would go to some places to have lunch, to spend some time, or as someone's guest, the hosts were really polite and they made me feel good knowing that there is someone who took care of me and made sure I had a nice time and did not lack anything in their house. The small gestures are always important and make all the difference.



I had the opportunity to travel several times with some Turkish students and it was one of the best things that could happen to me during my Erasmus experience. I visited many cities from Turkey, each of them having something unique, making it special.

I also had the chance to visit Batumi, a city from Georgia. It is situated on the border with Turkey and it is such a wonderful city! I could see beautiful buildings and places, palm trees, paved roads, the Black Sea was close and the weather was gorgeous! Then I went to the botanical garden and I saw splendid landscapes with the Black Sea coast and many lovely flowers that I had never seen in my life till that moment.

But Turkey also had a lot of other nice things to show to me. Bazaars and many small shops, many places to have a lunch in or something to drink, parks, great friends, delicious meals and interesting places to visit.

Before I came back home, I had the chance to spend a few days in Istanbul. What a huge and awe-

some city! I fell in love with it! I can definitely say it is the crown's jewellery! I visited many important places of great interest for every tourist. Hundreds of years of history were on your every step through old buildings and monuments. The infrastructure is highly developed. You can use the trams, metros, buses, taxis and of course, sea buses. There are a lot of pubs and shops of all sizes, superb parks and Bosphorus's



landscape is stunning! I was also impressed by the number and type of tourists. You could find tourists of all ages, races and ages roaming through the city. Never in my life have I seen so many different foreigners in just one city! It was absolutely incredible!

I appreciated very much the fact that Turkish people dress elegantly, even the simple ones. They have a good sense of decency, especially the girls. They do not dress to turn men's heads, but to feel good with their own outfit. There are also covered girls, having a scarf on their heads, due to religious reasons. For me it was something new to see this around me, but I got used with it.

You can find a great variety of meals and almost all the time the salad is also given. Turkish people like spicy meals, but if you don't share the same taste, there is no problem. You can surely find something you like to eat. The Turkish cuisine is very healthy and delicious. There are also many Turkish delights and desserts which are very sweet, for example lokum (you can find it simple or with pistachios or walnuts), baklava, kadayıf, künefe, Kemalpaşa dessert, koz helva, macun, etc. The Turkish drink a lot of tea which is served very hot in some special small glasses.

I had a fantastic experience, much better than I had expected it, and I am very happy I applied for the Erasmus scholarship. I had no regret I did it, even though I had some problems, but fortunately I sorted them out. When I started this faculty I never thought that I would go to Turkey for one semester, but as we all know, life is unpredictable and full of surprises. For me it was the first time being abroad, so this experience is memorable for one more reason. I went to some places that I had never dreamt of, I took lots of photos, I made many new friends, maybe for life, but perhaps the most important thing, I proved to myself that I can live very well without my family and I can overcome many problems without their help. I travelled a lot and I carried on by myself and for me it is a proof that I am strong enough not to be afraid anymore to leave my family and my home one day to live on my own. In such experiences, you discover yourself more than ever through your strengths, fears and emotions. You get to find out that there is no turning back. You do it, you ask people around you for help if you need it and you get what you want or you fail. And if you choose the first option, this empowers you in a very special way. You have to feel this to understand it perfectly. To develop yourself, you have to leave your comfort zone otherwise you will always be the same and nothing new or interesting will happen to you.

In this kind of experience, you find out more about a culture by seeing it with your own eyes rather than reading about it. You feel it with all your senses and that is why it lasts much longer in your memory. Then you learn that you have to accept the differences, to accept other people as they are. You cannot judge them because they have their own reasons and what is strange for you it is normal for them due to their cultural background. And if you think more, this is how they would feel if they visited your country and discover your specific customs and habits. And once you accept the other culture's differences, something wonderful happens: you become more open-minded and tolerant, and along with the strength of taking care of yourself, you have the qualities that will help you all your life. In addition, the discovery of a new country makes you culturally richer and enhances your knowledge on many aspects. This is the beauty and the essence of the Erasmus experience. If you have the chance to be part of it, do not hesitate to apply for it! Dare and do it! It is a great opportunity for your life and it is something that surely changes YOU! Just do it and invest in yourself! Perhaps this chance comes once in a lifetime, so do not waste it!

**Interview with Adrian Lopez, a Spanish student
who decided to spend a year in Romania
thanks to the Erasmus exchange programme**

Interviewed by
Cristina Diac, II, C.I.G.

1. Hi, Adrian! Would you like to present yourself in a few words?

Hi! My name is Adrian and I am from Logroño, a small town in the north of Spain, the capital of the region of La Rioja (known for having the best wines in the world). I am a mechanical engineer and an industrial engineer, I am a handball player and I have been passionate about music since I was 8 years old (playing the piano).

2. Why did you decide to apply for the Erasmus exchange programme?

I decided to apply for the Erasmus programme three years ago but it was not possible until last year. The main reason was academic, trying to pass the most difficult subjects and return to Spain to finish the final thesis. But, of course, I wanted to live an experience known throughout Europe such as Erasmus, living with people from other countries far from home.

3. Did you have many countries on the list? Why did you choose Romania?



Engineering had about 10 options, such as Italy, Portugal, France, Turkey, Poland, Germany, Denmark ... and, of course, Romania. I chose Romania because I have some friends who were here 2 years ago and they told me about their experience, so I said to myself: "I want to live this, too!"

4. What was your first opinion about Romania? Was it different than you had expected it to be?

These friends told me about everything I could find, and yes, it was very different. I still remember getting on the plane in Zaragoza and not understanding anyone, there were 5 Spanish boys along with other people returning to their home country. Get to the airport early in the morning

in Bucharest, get money in a new currency (RON) and get to the train station to take the first one to Bacău.

The first impression when we arrived in Bacău – stray dogs, old buildings with broken walls, the first contact with the crows near the students' hostel ... It was really all my friends had told me.

5. Did you like living in Bacău? Was it easy to accommodate here?

I remember arriving on the premises with our big suitcases and a teacher from the Faculty of Letters helped us on our arrival at the university's halls of residence. We only had to pick up the keys to our room and sign the stay contract. A small room for 3 people, but in a week we got accustomed. We arrived a week before classes started and we were alone in the residence. It was all a bit strange, but when the university students began to arrive everything started to become alive.

6. How did the university welcome you?

I went with my student fellows to the International Relations office, and there we met Silvia Leonte, the Erasmus coordinator and the person who was most helpful during our stay. We had a small welcome meeting and later representatives of "The Students' League" came to the halls of residence to offer help.

7. How did the professors of our university seem to you?

Contact with teachers came later, through our engineering coordinator we arranged appointments with the teachers of our subjects, and if they did not speak English he helped us. The process took almost a month, but finally we met all the teachers and they told us the conditions to pass each of the subjects. Furthermore, the language barrier represented a difficulty.

8. Did you socialize with other incoming Erasmus students?

Of course. In our case it was easier with the other Spaniards, we were the majority but there were also French, Italian and Turkish students. With some of them it was more difficult because of the cultural differences, but it was nice, we learned from the tastes of each other.

9. How would you describe Bacău? What about its people?

Trap question. Let's see, how to describe it... For me, right now Bacău is like my second city, I follow it daily on Facebook. I am not going to lie, Bacău is not a very attractive city, I travelled all over Romania and there are beautiful cities with many possibilities. But Bacău is a cosy little town, everything is close and that is a plus. I preferred the times when it snowed and when the warmer weather came we went to the 'Island' to spend the day.

People are wonderful, we were treated well, we had no problems and they have always helped us with everything. One of the best memories that I take with me is going every day to shop at 'Piața Sud' and getting a smile from the woman in the bakery, the fruit seller greeted the arrival of the Spaniards, the girl selling at the shop near the residence knew what we wanted at all times, the women in the laundry made us smile just saying hello... And of course all the friends we have made, undoubtedly the best memory.

10. What cultural differences between Spain and Romania struck you?

The first impression was that of a cold environment. History influences the culture of a country, and for someone like me, who did not know the not-so-distant past of Romania, it was not easy at first to see things that actually happened in my country 40 years ago.

In Romania, religion plays a more important role than in Spain, where young people no longer go to church. Salaries are low, so for us it was cheaper to live here; the best example is: for the price we paid in Spain for 1 beer, here in Romania you can have 4.

The physical aspect is more important here than in Spain, personal care is almost an obsession, even going to class very well dressed, there is a greater 'body worship' than in my country. People smile less on the street, but after living for a year here, what I have realized is that there are countries that have an incorrect image of Romanians, they are humble people but they give everything they have, not like in Spain. I like the simplicity and the humility of the Romanian people.



11. What will you remember the most about this experience?

I will remember this year as the most special of my life, the end of my college life and the year in which I have shared many special moments with people whom, probably, I will not meet again in my life (but I hope to do it again). I will remember living in a different country from mine being independent and speaking another language, travelling and seeing different places than the ones I can see in my country.

12. How did you spend your free time? Did you visit other Romanian cities?

In my free time in Bacău I played sports, went out with the rest of my fellow students for a drink, took a walk, went to the mall, watched handball matches of Stiința Bacău... But the best way to use my free time was visiting other places. In the first month, together with Erasmus students from Iași, we took a trip to Transylvania and we were very 'attached' to them for future plans. We visited Iași many times, we made trips to Bucharest, Brașov, Sibiu... We went to Vama Veche on the 1st of May, too. Of course we visited the whole area of Bacău, such as the salt mines of Târgu Ocna, Slănic, we also went to Piatra Neamț...

However, the best experiences came at the end; I went with a fellow student to Tulcea and there we did canoeing on the Danube River, an unforgettable experience for me. Later we went to a festival of electronic music in Cluj-Napoca, and took the opportunity to rent a car and travel to Budapest. There was only one thing left I wanted to do before leaving Romania and I got it last week, touring the Transfăgărășan road. In summary, I have spent many hours on the train but it was worth, I have a lot of photos on my Instagram of the places I have visited and many of my friends in Spain have been surprised. I have recommended them to visit your country because for me it is a country not known for tourism but with a lot of beautiful places.

13. What would you say to students still hesitating about this adventure?

I understand the doubts that appear at the beginning, indecision, but now when I look back I realize it has really paid off. The fear from the beginning transforms into joy, because you will continue forming yourself in another country, you will make dozens of new friends, meet wonderful places, learn to think differently, to be more independent, even defend yourself in another language...

A tip from me: don't think so much and jump for it, you may have a difficult first week, but from there on you will experience unforgettable months.

14. If you had another chance to visit Bacău, would you take it?

Bacău... I do not know if I am going to visit it again, I am sure I will visit Romania. But, of course, if I had the chance to return to Bacău I would take it because I would like to see again all those people who shared those days with me, with whom I keep contact and who earned a special place in my life.

15. Did this year abroad change you?

I think so. I have learned to be more independent, now I look at everything in a more open way. I noticed that although here I did not have what I had in Spain, I can be just as happy with less. Only one problem, now I want to keep travelling... but I can't!

16. Would you like to add anything else to this interview?

I want to thank all those who have accompanied me this year, my Erasmus colleagues, my Romanian friends, the staff of the university, every one of those people with whom I have been in contact and have treated me so well. I thank all of them because they have made Romania look like my second country.

Mulțumesc frumos!
Adrian Lopez Jimenez

Great Time, Great Experience

Andreea Herghea (Trofin), II, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciuc

Working as a teacher in kindergarten for ten days in the UK... How about that?! When you have a chance like this you take it and 'spend' it. I know I did so.

When I heard about this for the first time I was so happy that I wanted to go there the next day. A kindergarten from England made an invitation to our kindergarten to participate to an exchange programme for ten days. My principal thought that the best person for this would be me. So... "England here I come!" I said to myself and.. off I went.

I entered this project expecting to see the differences between our system of education and theirs. It was a good chance for me to enrich my knowledge and improve my expertise as a kindergarten teacher and to come back home with new ideas to improve the educational system.

When I first got there it was surprising to see the way in which teachers work with children and how they use their time during daily activities, what specific things they cover every day.

In a group of twenty children there, there are four people taking care of them and working with them. Their activities are relaxed and playful and as much time they spend on Language or Maths they spend on Art, Music, Science. They combine activities and in all of these children are happy and laugh all the time. Between activities they have a break which they always spend outside even if it's raining or snowing. If during the activity a child wants to go out she/he is permitted to go out but always accompanied by an adult. Playtime has been part of the kindergarten classrooms since its beginnings and in England this is applied even today. They play a lot and during their activities one of the teachers watches (observes) the child and writes down things that seem interesting about him/her from a physical and psychological point of view. It's an observation that will help the teacher in her activity but also one that will help the parents to find out more about their own child. During their activities, which are mostly done under the form of games, children work a lot on their own, without any help. For instance, during one activity of painting, a four-year old boy, started painting with the brush and finished with his hands. Nobody told him anything

because they said it was his personal view upon the work and that can say a lot about him.

It's true that teachers have to respect the activities in line with the requirements of the early years foundation stage. This involves developing work lessons plans to motivate children using resources to help them learn. They build and maintain relationships with parents in order to help the child and to involve them in the child's upbringing and education. Family is very important for the child's support and they try to involve the parents as much as they can through every activity. Some of the teachers even make visits to the child's home in order to find out what the child's environment looks like.



Going there reminded me that teaching is energy and passion. It's nice to see the joy on every child's face but most important to see how, in the classroom, they can be who they want to be and feel whatever they want to feel. The classroom is their safe haven when they are away from home. You have to be calm and understand them and since I was in England my experience as a teacher has increased in ideas and ways of treating a child. I feel that guidance and positive response can help a child to gain self-confidence and to feel good about himself or herself. I enjoy children's honesty and innocence and I'm still learning from them after all these years.

Interview with Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo

Iuliana-Alexandra Fleşcan-Lovin-Arseni, II, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo has been the holder of the academic chair of English Philology at the University of Oviedo since 1996. He also served as chair of English Language & Linguistics at the University of Corunna (1994–1996) and appointed as first Dean of the *Facultade de Filoloxía* there. At the University of Oviedo he served as Humanities Campus Director, Deputy Dean and Registrar of the Arts Faculty (1988–1994).

The Professor has an impressively long list of international positions and activities: consul of education at the Consulate General of Spain in Miami (with jurisdiction over the US south-eastern states); counsellor for education at the Spanish Embassies in Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines; postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Oxford; Visiting Professor at Whitman College, Washington (2002).

Besides all these, Professor Fernández-Corugedo has, of course, a remarkable Academic activity that has never ceased throughout the time. He has been present in several fields of publication, by writing a great number of books and articles, but also translating into Spanish and into English.

STUDENT: When there is someone like you, with such a great activity, the first question to ask is: What was the main motivation in your life and your career? Who was your paragon during all these years and why?

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

I do not think that people need any special motivation to do things. We just do them. In my case I procrastinate a lot and boredom and indolence tend to be quite accommodating. I would not say that I have “a great activity”. Just some, because activity can also do us good and there is always the question that we tend to find it interesting to feed ourselves every day, or at least every other day, have a roof, etc.

I am taken aback with the idea of paragons... it reminds one of Edmund Spenser’s characters in his *Faerie Queene*... I do not think I have ever had one, at least consciously. I tend to consider that most of what I have come across has been serendipity or happenstance, and I cannot really think of anyone (not even literary characters) who I would like to have followed in a virtuous sense. This is probably because I am a rather boring character who dwells in irony. No, no hero or heroine worship from me, I am afraid.

STUDENT: I would like to know why you have chosen the Professor career and why English? Would you like to tell us some advantages and, why not, disadvantages of your choice?

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

I do not think that I actually chose this career very actively, it has been rather a sort of *roman-fleuve* within some reasonable limits. Part of my family has a long dedication to the Spanish civil service – there have been active members of it in the “service” since the early 19th century, and that might have influenced me in a subliminal way. Do not make too much of that because in my closest family – I am the sixth of eight brothers and sisters – only two of us actually went into the civil service. What I had in mind when I finished my Bachelor’s degree in 1981 was to go overseas for a while and complete my education while I worked as a Spanish lector. Actually I had applied for a fellowship in Oxford to start a doctorate there in 1982 and might very likely have obtained it as the two referees who supported my claim were Camilo José Cela and Professor Emilio Alarcos, who were both significant people for academics at that time. But just when I was waiting for a result of the application family matters got very complicated: I had to take care of a significant part of our businesses and that made me stay in Asturias for a rather long while. Basically I had to give up the idea of going anywhere for some years. I was able to stay in Oxford much later, as a postdoctoral fellow in 1990. In the meanwhile I was granted a Spanish Ministry of Education research fellowship in 1982 and started working at the University of Oviedo that year.

Why did I choose a first degree in English? That is much easier to explain. It is not unusual in this part of Spain to have an intense maritime commerce with Britain and other countries in the North Sea and also in the Americas. English has been a common skill with us in these northern parts at least since the late 18th century. So one of the languages we were usually taught since childhood was English. Together with French

and German (though German really dwindled after WWII) and Italian – in that order – (curiously enough, not Portuguese), they constituted a sort of staple of foreign languages for people whose families had interests in shipping and other international commercial ventures. I was basically allowed by my parents to do that degree rather than one in Law as I was expected to (most of my family have had degrees in Law for some generations), because a languages degree would still have been an acceptable one for me to become a career diplomat, which I think might have been in their minds at the time. Life went another way.

As to the advantages and disadvantages of this sort of job, that, again, is easy to condense in a paragraph. It tends to be a job in which people not unseemingly enjoy what they do and which allows you to keep your mind alert and flexible. It is intellectually exacting and occasionally exciting. It also implies being in contact with young adults and being able to help them (if they wish so) in their learning process and prospects. The two main throwbacks that I see in Spain are that nowadays it takes a very long time to reach a stable academic position: on average a tenured lectureship does not turn up until you are 38 to 40 years of age, and only after a rather exhausting effort that implies at least a doctorate, substantial publications, some international mobility, sensible teaching experience and so on, while salaries are not competitive when compared to other similar positions in other areas of life. Though they can be attractive enough in the sense that they usually allow to make ends meet. The other terrible thing is that education is a very long-term investment as educational changes and developments may quite easily take seven to ten years to start offering commendable results, which means that it is not always very easy to foresee what may come out of a good (or a bad) programme of studies.

STUDENT: You have translated both into English and Spanish. Which type of translation seemed to be more difficult? What challenges have you found during the process of translation and how have you faced them?

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

Yes, and to and from French, Portuguese and Italian as well. Generally I do not find much difficulty in translating texts from fields in which I think I am competent, but one has to be extra careful with legal documents because a misplaced comma or the wrong term can trigger rather unpleasant and expensive situations. If I were to define on type in particular, I would say the texts of international treaties and agreements tend to have nuances that not even insurance policies have. However, constant practice normally wins the day. Translation has changed enormously (for the best) since the advent of computers – I tend to talk about BC = before the computer and AC = after the computer to date the contemporary episteme – and the sort of challenges translators had BC, such as the lack of accessibility to dictionaries and reference works have disappeared (mostly). When the EUROCAUTOM project finished it was merely the starting point of many other things: automatic translation systems have improved enormously in the past twenty years, and I would not be surprised that in the next twenty most everyday translation becomes automatized. Our main challenge today seems to be how to improve the human-machine interfaces so that the online free databases and tools –such as Google translator – become as powerful as the commercial software.

STUDENT: From so many books that you wrote, which one do you think defines you both as a writer and researcher?

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

As you appear to ask for just ONE, let us go for *Spenser’s Amoretti & Epithalamion* (1983). I may have done other fine (?) things after that, but as one enters the “ridiculous” period of one’s academic life one tends to go back to the beginning.

STUDENT: I am an Erasmus programme exchange student, so I would really like to know if you have some advice or observations for all Erasmus students who study at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, University of Oviedo.

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

The Erasmus Academic Exchange Programme has been one of the best managed, implemented and successful of the European Union Directorates, and it has really made a difference in the way in which young university students see their peers in other countries. Despite the fact that the number of movers is relatively small in terms of the whole of the European Union Universities’ studentship the impact is formidable.

For those Erasmus scholars who, like you, are in Asturias this year, a word of caution: beware of the *gamusinos* and such other ilk. Now, on a more tender note, try to enjoy this region (despite the rain it can be

quite lovely) and while I should say that it is not convenient to miss lectures, assignments and classes, life tends to be much more than that. I suggest that you try to find and make friends in Asturias. The locals tend to be rather nice and you can make life-lasting friendships. Do not limit yourselves to the mere academic exchange and find ways to mix and live with Asturian students and people. It is not just cider and food, there are plenty of interesting things to do here. So go for them and choose especially those which you cannot find at home.

STUDENT: From so many countries you have visited inside and outside Europe, which one was the most impressive? Do you have any pleasant memory from there to share with us?

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

New Zealand. New Zealanders are very easy-going and very polite and well-educated. Warm and polite may define them better. It is a pleasure to work with them. The country is astonishingly beautiful and both the North and the South Island have ravishing landscapes. However, if you really want a pleasant memory, then that would come from Egypt. Picture yourself on a manicured lawn by an open air swimming pool at sunset, surrounded by hibiscus and jasmine, watching how the good old god Ra starts sinking behind the western ranges on the leftbank of the Nile, near Luxor, scarring the horizon in pink and purple. You are there engaged in pleasant conversation with a group of friends. The egrets and the ibises cross the sky in slow motion, there is an orchestra playing Boccherini, you sip some chilled Lanson (preferably rosé), and all that seems to make you ponder that you may be close to heaven. At least we thought we were close to the Egyptian gods who apparently enjoyed themselves enormously some millennia earlier.

STUDENT: Here comes the last question: If there was any chance, would you like to visit Romania?

Professor Fernández-Corugedo:

Yes, very much indeed. It is one of the countries in Europe that has a special attractive for other Romance-language speakers such as Spaniards because it has a rather interesting mixed soul of mainly, I think, Slav and Latin roots. I have also a mild professional interest in visiting the ten Spanish Language Programmes in the bilingual sections that Spain supports in Romania and see how they are working, because according to the news I have, Romanian students of Spanish tend to be functionally bilingual well before they finish their secondary studies. And then, there are exceedingly interesting places to visit in Romania. It will certainly need a month at least.

STUDENT: I feel honoured that you have accepted so openly my invitation to this interview. Thank you!



Before Erasmus

I don't find any proper title for this "Article"

Iuliana-Alexandra Fleşcan-Lovin-Arseni, II, TI
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciuc

- jeans
- pencil
- shampoo
- hairbrush
- toothbrush

Oh! Sorry! My article, my article... I am supposed to write an article. I'm not worried, because it is very easy to write. All I have to do is to wait for my inspiration. Wait and wait, and wait... OK! I suppose my inspiration is lost... Where?

Well, maybe it's lost in Spain. Why there? Because there is my Erasmus destination. I'm sure you've got the point now. Yes! I want to share with you my psychological portrait before leaving with an Erasmus Mobility.

I'm leaving! It's happening... Finally! Do I know anything about this? Nope! The unknown, the frightful unknown. I'm kidding. I suppose I am fine. After all "I am not the first one" who is going to experience Erasmus.

But enough with "I". Let's speak about you. You, the one who has decided to leave next year. I promise you to gather as many pieces of information as possible so as to be more confident than I am at the moment. I think I've already learned that the most important thing when you start to search useful things for your leaving is to know WHAT questions to ask and WHERE.

- fix my glasses
- go to the doctor's

Sorry again! I'm still caught in my TO-DO list.

Time is too fast for me now. My family, my house, my Faculty, my friends, my stuff, my places... my "everything" is not small enough to fit my luggage. Trust me, my dear fellow, you will want to play with your DNA in order to divide yourself into two pieces. In this manner you will be both with your "everything" and your "challenging new experience" at the same time. Of course this is not possible (YET).

Enough with you, let's speak about me. Besides these feelings, I have already fixed some aims which I must achieve there. I am not leaving for nothing. I'm leaving because I want to be on my own for the first time in my life, I want to handle unexpect-

ed situations without asking my parents to help me, I want to see what my English of level is in another country and to improve it, especially in speaking. I want to get stronger and I want to discover new manners of thinking specific to people from another country. I want to prove to myself several private things and I want to become a better person for my family.

I hope I'm not boring. I have to write these in order to check if I succeed in accomplishing all this aims. I can easily continue my list, but after all it's only about things that should help me to grow up. Perhaps you are thinking that I'm stupid if I am expecting to be a grown-up after Erasmus, taking into account the fact that it is a law of Nature to grow up wherever you are. Of course you are right. I just think that Erasmus is a helping factor in this process I am telling you about.

Chill! Chill!

This is craziness!

Yes, my poor mind is having an argument with itself now. Maybe you wonder if yours is going to "do" the same. Well, it may be like this or worse, but don't worry, everything is going to get fixed somehow, somewhere... in the end.

I would really like to give you some pieces of advice in order to be useful for you. But for the moment I am the one here who needs this! I don't know what to think and what to dare. It feels like I am in front of a Black Hole. And now I don't have any right to complain about it because I am the one who has designed it by choosing Erasmus.

I hope, my dear reader, that you are not going to misunderstand my message. I don't regret and I'm not going to give it up. It is a chance, not a curse. And, speaking about that, I think I have a tiny piece of advice for you: TRY ERASMUS! It doesn't matter which country, what language or what cultural/geographical/historical/political/economical preferences you have. Just do IT! "

So, give some tips for students and future teachers? Well, this can't be hard, I've been a student for more than half of my life. Then why am I drawing a blank?

It might sound strange, but the two experiences seem to have fused together in my mind and now, when I look back, I judge my years as a student through the eyes of the teacher and the time I spend teaching I see from the perspective of the students. It feels like I will never stop being a student and at the same time never be just "the teacher".

My first piece of advice doesn't really belong to me, it is something someone much wiser shared with some first year students many years ago, and that is "be shrewd, in school but also in general in life." Pay attention, be clever, resourceful, practical in everything you do and you will succeed. A sort of "work smarter not harder".

I think beginnings are essential. The way a class commences is very important regardless if you are sitting in your chair preparing to take notes or listening to your teacher or if you are in front of the class with a multitude of inquisitive eyes gazing and analyzing your every move. Captatio benevolentiae, the Latin for "gaining the goodwill of your audience", show that you know why you are there. As a student, you should try to get in that mindset, you are there to learn, to focus. As a teacher, you have a job and also a responsibility, you are giving more than your time and energy, you are providing an education.

It's funny to look back and remember how our teachers kept asking us if we actually wanted to follow this career and most of us were either unsure or just against this idea but once you start on this path, it is hard to give it up.

Be prepared! I know this sounds redundant, but it can make a great deal of change. Take just 5 minutes before class and read your notes, I promise everything will make sense much better (since, let's be honest, most students do not even bother with the courses during the semester). For newer teachers, I can't stress this enough. You might have a clear image of how the class will unfold, it's been a few minutes in and everything is going to plan when, all of a sudden, "students happen", and something almost always happens. I usually try to make a couple of scenarios

for each class to be sure I can cover any possible outcome. You must be able to adapt your style to any situation. Related to this aspect, one very useful tip I got from my mentor was "use everything around you". Try to use anything that is at your disposal in a classroom. This will help you since it is close and also the students will most likely be more familiar with it.

Most students feel confident in saying that a teacher's job is easy and would trade places anytime. I can assure you, a lot of teachers would like to go back to the times when they were students. Neither "job" is easy. After I had done my quota of hours of teaching for the DPPD program I was fairly sure that I knew what I was getting myself into. I had no idea. If I had to describe my first real teaching experience I would say it was tiring, funny, scary, frustrating at times, but also amazing. It's a whole different monster to tackle when you have to prepare for each individual class, each day, every day. A different kind of responsibility altogether. One important aspect I realised was the relationship that is created between students and teacher over time. There's something quite satisfying in seeing your pupils getting attached and trusting you.

Be a lion! I don't mean dress up as one, just don't be afraid. I know everybody hates making mistakes, especially in such a close community as that of a class, but we are all human, it is inevitable. What is important is the way in which you react when you realize it and try to fix it.

I think I painted a somewhat daunting image about teaching, but everything gets better with time and experience. Trust yourself, be responsible towards yourself and others, show respect and treat them the way you

would want to be treated. My best advice is try.

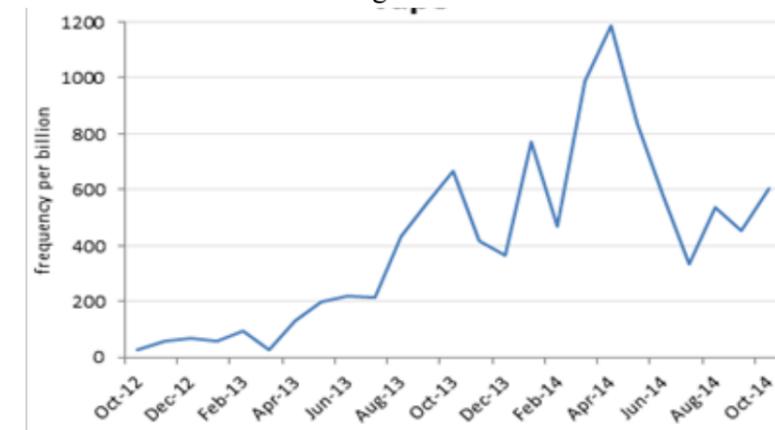


2014 is now gone but it is never too late to gain some general knowledge about language, especially if you are a philology student. Online dictionaries have been trying to attract their readers and users by introducing new engaging sections to their sites, including word of the day descriptions, word of the day quizzes, crosswords, slideshows, all of them with the purpose of making the English language more appealing to students. The Word of the Year competition awards the word that has been significant and highly popular throughout a year, especially based on media contents. After observing the dominating themes in headlines and news contents, the Oxford Dictionary and Dictionary.com chose vape and exposure as winners of the top honours in this competition. We will briefly present both, with special focus on their meanings, hoping they could add precious information to your linguistic competence.



Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year is vape. Although it had strong 'rivals' (such as bae, budtender, contactless or normcore), vape turned out to be the victorious one. And now comes the inevitable question: "What does vape mean?" I said it is inevitable because it was also my first reaction, but the answer is simple. Vape has its origins in the abbreviation of the words vapour or vaporize and, to be more precise, I will quote the exact definition given by the Oxford Dictionaries added in August 2014:

"the verb means – to inhale and exhale the vapour produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device - while both the device and the action can also be known as a vape. The associated noun vaping is also listed." Now that we have revealed the origin and the basic meaning of the term, the next question is: why vape? Vape has become more popular after the so called "e-cigarettes" (or e-cigs) have become quite common. It is proved that we are more likely to be tempted to use the word vape than we were two years ago (in fact, thirty times more likely!), and its use has doubled since. The figure below confirms this statement.



Vape also actively contributed to creating new compound nouns with increasing rates of popularity. Here is a list of the most common compound nouns: vape pen, vape shop and also vape lounge, vape fluid, vape juice, and others. An interesting coinage is vaporium.

It is quite interesting the fact that the word vaping existed before the phenomenon occurred. E-cigarettes became commercially available starting with the 21st century, but back in 1983, in an article from the New Society entitled “Why Do People Smoke?”, the first known usage of the term could be identified. Nevertheless, according to the Oxford Dictionaries research, this sense of vape (or vaping) began to appear in mainstream sources only starting with 2009.

The next star of the year for 2014 is, according to Dictionary.com... exposure. This is because the Ebola virus, the stealing of personal information and the appalling acts of violence which dominated the news also suggested that vulnerability and visibility were central to the main subjects of 2014. Therefore, Dictionary.com chose exposure as the word of the year for 2014.

As far as its origin is concerned, the word exposure appeared in the English language in the 1600s with the meaning of “being without shelter or protection”. Over the next centuries it took on numerous other meanings, some of which were particularly relevant in the context of the events from 2014.

1. Exposure: the condition of being exposed to danger or harm
By mid-November last year, in West Africa, over 14,000 cases of Ebola were identified, with over 5,000 deaths. This event was described by The World Health Organization as being “the most severe acute health emergency in modern times”. Exposure to this disease was a big concern for countries like Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone which tried to provide the best possible care to those who were infected. At the same time, headlines worldwide recorded the great threat posed by this disease in the 21st century.

2. Exposure: the act of being exposed to public attention, publicity
Ebola became connected to high publicity levels in the US in the early fall when the three top network nightly programs, ABC World News, CBS Evening News and NBC Nightly News, allocated 28% of their total broadcast time to Ebola. Moreover, both Facebook and Google started fundraising in order to support West Africa. The publicity surrounding Ebola caused heated debates and concerns on the ways in which the virus was transmitted but it also revealed the distortion of ideas related to it.

3. Exposure: the act of bringing something to light, of revealing or uncovering a crime or evil
This meaning is connected to a series of criminal acts and violent events that disclose a gruesome aspect of our society or its tendency towards racism and violence. An example is that of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18 year-old black male, who was shot to death by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. This event led to high waves of media coverage and it sparked heated social media discussions regarding prejudice, racism and discrimination. Another example is that of the beheading of two American journalists, James Foley and Steven Sotloff. The entire world was shocked by the exposure of this crime in detail as the terrorist organisation ISIS posted the beheadings on YouTube.

4. Exposure: the disclosure of something private or secret
This meaning is connected to a series of events such as stolen credit cards or hacked private photos which made us realize the vulnerability of personal information. An example is that of Target which revealed the fact that 110 million customers had their credit cards, pin numbers and other private information swiped. Another example is that of Apple’s iCloud which was hacked, this fact leading to the exposure of nude photos of over 100 celebrities. One of the celebrities reacted to this attack saying that “The law needs to be changed and we need to change”. This undesirable exposure of private data made us think of the new risks which our technology involves.

Webography

<http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2014/11/oxford-dictionaries-word-year-vape/>, accessed January 9, 2015.

<http://blog.dictionary.com/exposure/>, accessed January 9, 2015.

<http://cdn.oxwordsblog.wpfuel.co.uk/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/vape.png?1c9512>, accessed January 9, 2015.

Young People

Renata Voenco, II, EF

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

Living their existence today,
In wide ego they rejected,
And who would then the prey,
What they lost and what protected.

To know their purpose uneasy,
Too mysterious and confused,
Too hard would be or too easy,
Be happy today. Bemused!

In loosely-hide the felicity,
Cause large is their justice,
They exudes the simplicity,
But always doing injustice.

Indifference is the sentence,
Nothing is too difficult or wild,
Having been so repentance,
Of small, young and child.



Celebrating Anglophone Cultures 2014 in pictures.
RO-BRIT Student Journal - We Study, We Create, We Share, We Evolve



