

# ENJOY

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**In this issue, you can EnJoY:**

<b>Editorial</b> .....	3
<b>What Happened</b> .....	4
<b>CreARTivity</b> .....	9
<b>TransLANEtion</b> .....	14
<b>Interview</b> .....	17
<b>FORUM</b> .....	20
<b>Reading Ready</b> .....	22
<b>What the...?</b> .....	26

## Hello Enjoy-ers!



And we are officially back! Fresh out of the oven, the next issue of Enjoy is sitting right in front of you. We really appreciate you always coming back to catch up on the latest news from the life of our department and as we round up the winter semester of 2015, we are inviting you to ENJOY the ride with us!

It has really been an eventful and prolific three months of unyielding action. Make sure you check out section "What Happened" with pictures by Veronika Neirurer, as the 4th year students took on our annual Halloween celebrations. Thanks to their tireless preparations and creative geniality this year's Halloween definitely stands out as a highlight event. You can find the works of our poetic souls in section CreARTivity, we also offer a look on how our students took on a translation of a poem by A. A. Mine and an exclusive interview with a novelist Marek Mittaš. The favourite "What the..." section will take us on tour of the phenomenon of English idioms that have a tendency of leaving (not only) the non-native speakers scratching their heads.

A breath of fresh air flows in with our new section "FORUM" that will take on current world events and discuss important issues within this spectrum. We are very excited about this new addition and collectively hope that you will like it, too!

I want to thank the editing team and our supervisors for their spirited work while creating this piece and to all those who had contributed - we hope to have you again! Now readers, I do not want to hold you back when there is this and much more to discover! So get on with reading and make sure you provide us with feedback on what you love and what you would like to love in the next issue!

So, until "the next time," ENJOY!

*Michal Pizula*

## Halloween 2015

There are all sorts of scary in the world today. But, OUR department has always had a way of its own when it comes to making scary appealing. In the weeks leading up to our gruesome festivities, the social networks had been haunted by hashtags, promotions, posters - a huge and appreciated effort of our 4th year students. They made #klišoween2015 a thing! And, believe me, it really was a thing.



The meticulous preparations took hours before we kicked off the event on November 10th. The foyer of the Faculty of Pedagogy was transformed into a cemetery landmark resembling Michael Jackson's unforgettable "Thriller" video. Passers-by stopped to snap pictures and it really was a feast for the eye. Gravestones, spiderwebs, candles - a tough job to give these things any sort of cool factor, but it really set up the atmosphere like never before!



When the monsters, excuse, students started rolling in, we really felt like we were hopping into a whole new dimension. The diversity of masks was unforeseen, ranging from punny costumes of evening hosts Michal and Petra (The Black Eyed P's) to our multi-talented co-operator, slash DJ, slash performer Milan (The Ceiling Fan) to classic ones like Tinkerbell, Quasimodo and Esmeralda, an entire convent of witches, a handful of zombies to a brotherhood of masked demons. There was no opting out if you arrived without a costume.



Our face-painting magician Dominika took care of anyone who did not shy away and the transformation was complete after a couple of swift moves of a brush.

**"We are KLIŠ family" \*snap snap\*** Is there a better way to start off the annual Halloween event than by honoring our department with its own song based on a theme from the Addams Family? I didn't think so. After a brief introduction Radko "Bullet" Kováč tipped off the parade of performances by his solo dance, a spectacle we're lucky to call regular. He took his time off the night before competing in Polish "Mam Talent" show with his pals from Phantoms Crew and we really appreciate it!



Then our famed musician couple Puppailo hit the stage with their acoustic performance and, thankfully, that wasn't the last of them. Afterwards we made two student teams hate toilet paper forever by staging a "Make your mummy" competition. When they had it all wrapped up, we were treated to a brilliant vocal performance from Kristína Kušnířová and her rendition of Hozier's "Take Me To Church" was just out of this world. Harry Potter fans rejoiced when we announced a spell-ing competition where we pit students against teachers and the latter, to the joy of many, managed to walk away with a win. Trust me, it isn't easy to spell Dumbledore or "quidditch" under pressure. A mash-up of upbeat songs brought us to our feet with an incredible dancing showcase by Mirka Galová who didn't pay much attention to how spooky her surroundings looked and delivered a big time performance.



Halfway through the program the belly-squeaking noises were just unbearable, so we let everyone try the best dishes - obviously cooked or baked by our students. They frankly outdid themselves this year and decided to go for quality, not quantity. Brainy cupcakes, gelatine-cakes, spider-cookies and all the rest of artistic food creations were hastily photographed and then disappeared in a blink of an eye, so that we could carry on with our program.



Energized by the sugary goodies, participants showed off their knowledge about Halloween in a nitpicky pop quiz and no-one walked away without a valuable prize. Our wits took a brief holiday during the highly anticipated performance by incredible and talented girls from ChiQui Pole Dance Studio as they managed to spark up the atmosphere with their jaw-dropping moves and halloweenie costumes.

Raffle time! This year's collection of prizes exceeded expectations and they could not be more attractive for students and professors alike. Prize donations were enormously generous and the lucky winners could hardly contain themselves with joy. There. Were. So. Many. Prizes.



# HALLOWEEN



We eventually broke the raffling down into two parts and cleared the stage for fantastic young dancers from Danceversity Nitra and their unstoppable energy never let the nice evening end on a dull note.

We gave out prizes for the most original mask (Quasimodo and Esmeralda) and since we felt it was not quite enough, a decision fell to award the creepiest mask award, too (the gory Black and White witch). When the hosts called the night and said their see-you-laters, there were no people rushing out in a hurry. Many stayed to make use of the Photo Wall to snap memories of this lovely department time and also helped with cleaning up. I don't think anyone in the history of our department remembers cleaning up a cemetery that quickly.

We could not be happier with how #klišoween2015 turned out and wholeheartedly, thanks to all visitors, students, staff and by-goers for joining together with us. Preparing this year's Halloween was a rewarding task and as a result it showed that ability to spend time together in celebration of this global holiday is one of the things that make our department so very special.

Scare you next year!

*Michal Pigula*

Photo: Veronika Neirurer

Designed by Freepik



## THROWBACK

I remember those days, when I was just a boy,  
we used to play on the playgrounds, fighting for the  
toys...

I used to toss the boomerang and tried to get it  
back...

man...what a throwback...

When I was a teenager, I used to be shy...

girls did not want to talk to me, I wondered why...

I met the first love of my life, she got away and  
never phoned me back...

man...what a throwback...

Now I'm a grown man, trying to get my life  
straight...

Many people lie to me, many hold me down so I  
don't

lose my faith...

The voice from within asks me "Who do you believe  
in?"

I don't know where I'm goin', but I know where I  
have been...

I use to reminisce about those days, but hell I have  
to move on,

don't want it back...

Still I think about those days and tell myself...

man...what a throwback...

Rou

## PUT U FIRST

Never changing priorities,  
That is how I roll...  
Somehow hard to believe,  
Trust me, I mean it all.

Everlasting love,  
Even though I'm not perfect,  
True colors to show,  
And yours to protect.

Sweeter than sugar,  
I love that taste of life...  
Everytime you're around,  
Everything goes aside.

Girl I put you first now,  
And of that I'm proud,  
Saying it clear and loud,  
(to be honest)

From the bottom of my heart,  
You are the water for my thirst,  
Wanna let you know girl,  
I PUT YOU FIRST.

Rou



Designed by Freepik

**HOW DO I FEEL**

the sun is burning  
slowly in my hands  
and I can see the time is reckless  
strips of light  
are getting through the storm  
heaven's wide open  
and I demand answers

I know the peace can be found  
in velvet words of faith  
promises kept inside the mouth  
of mountain lakes  
in waters deep  
I found myself lost in time...

Tess

**CHOCOLATE HEART**

I can hear your voice  
floating through the space  
colours seem much brighter as you speak

tell me anything  
and you'll feel the taste  
taste of my melting chocolate heart

you walk barefoot through my songs  
leaving footprints on my thoughts  
and I really don't mind until  
you're melting my

sweet chocolate heart

Tess

**HAIKU CORNER**

by **Nikola Jacková**

The sky full of stars  
It is truly beautiful  
Reminds me of you

This precious moment  
The moment when the sun sets  
That's when I miss you.

**YOU CAN**

I don't know what to say  
but I've a lot to tell  
please, read my lips

I know you can.

This section was created by  
**Terka Petrovičová**

Designed by FreePik

## Hello there!

*My name is Lucia and this is a little experiment. An attempt to create a collection of poems. Once upon a time, I was asked to collect some works of art created by my classmates. I wanted to write some by myself, too, but I could not. I missed the muse. It flew away, or hid in somewhere or was just quiet because she got tired of these days full of circumstances which demand creative responses...*

... they led me to the shore,  
Underneath the grey clouds.  
There was the sand before.  
Then I walked in the muds.

And that reflection came  
To me when I saw them...  
The stone cliffs. Behind them -  
Her brother with no name.

His dark eyes fixed on me.  
I promised to return.  
Sooner he hoped to see  
Awakened memory.

Bet we met months ago,  
From sundays I came home.  
Coincidentally  
I met Siaya on the shore.

She had kitenge dress,  
poor English as children's  
And the little brother  
Then jumping around her.

For a single hour  
We enjoyed together  
Quiet friendship...  
I promised I'd return.

The wind blows where it wants.  
His dark eyes fixed on me.  
Sooner he hoped to see  
Awakened memory.

*...I'm sorry for this anacoluthon, the muse came back! "Like the wind which blows where it wants." The following four poems are by two very kind men who agreed to write some pieces on the topic I suggested – dreams. (In fact, my poem was also about the dream.) So...here they are, enjoy!*

**Lucia Sekerová**

Where the river curves in smile,  
where the air feels cold and chill,  
my mind and heart with joy to fill  
I kindly ask you for a while.

Where the stone marks countless mile,  
where the feet show urge and will,  
my body let to shake with thrill,  
to shiver fiercely then I'll!

For eternity has once been spoken,  
taken, rather carelessly,  
as a veil to conceal the awe.

For memory, she cannot be broken,  
fallen, rather painlessly,  
the veil lifted by feline paw.

**Matúš Genský**

Among the dreary woods I walk,  
cease not I must to win.  
Row far amidst the ocean waves,  
oar straight to places dim.  
Seek muses ancient wisdom's talk,  
to save me from the sin,  
I try, but hard is rhyme for waves.  
Clap not! Now, where's the bin?

**Matúš Genský**

## TWO FACES OF A SINGLE PAGE

Touched by a muse feels like a sin now  
"to implement" seems like an ordeal of hell  
there are some rulers and ancestors to bow  
and not nodding is not how sanity smells

I beg you don't make me read another page  
torture and torment of life beyond this  
when all that school really is is one tiny cage  
for hours and days you look to abyss

After these years I know that there is more  
thousands of pages yet uncovered lay  
there is no spite, but there was before  
I'm under the candle light for rest of my days

It made me realise that it is better  
to find your heroes in land of the letters.

**Zdenko Kramarčík**

## AFTER THE BRAIN OF MINE GOT BLOWN OUT BY A SHOTGUN

I'm writing these lines as I am dying  
It's not a nice thing but nonetheless true  
don't even think of telling me I'm not trying  
I've tried thousands of times, though it is cruel


It is a cruel thing to kill myself  
over and over, day after day  
with your benevolent smile you sit there  
inside I'm slowly breaking my neck

and you talk and talk and hum like a bee  
It drives me mad, but you still play the preacher  
and I'm on the end of the rope and I find this real  
mean  
but I must say to you that you are a terrible  
teacher

**Zdenko Kramarčík**

*This one last poem is written by my classmate who created it for one very unexpected purpose – she needed a text for stylistic analysis!*

### THE SORE OF LIES




Do you know that place where we  
Left our hopes and walked away?  
There is nothing – just a tree,  
Sand with footprints, shell and clay.

Black as spirits – yours and mine,  
This clay spreads through the universe,  
Reaches stars, but there's deadline!  
'cuz I'm his and you are hers.

I know you love our little lies  
Like lonely loather lacks lax lust  
But remember – when faith dies  
Leaves a message full of dust.

Swear to me you'll gulp that sore  
And forget to paradise  
Then, one day we'll meet on shore  
Where shadow of those lies lies.



**Martina Pišová**

*To conclude this experiment, there is one last think I have to say. For it surprised me that after reading all of these poems, I realised they have some obvious similar features, e.g. the shore, the memories... They seem to have something in common. I think that after all we really created, accidentally, or not, a collection! Thank you for your participation!*

Let's look at how our 2<sup>nd</sup> year masters dealt with the translation of A. A. Milne's poem,  
*Buckingham Palace, into Slovak...*

## ORIGINAL

### Buckingham Palace

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
Alice is marrying one of the guard.  
"A soldier's life is terrible hard,"

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
We saw a guard in a sentry-box.  
"One of the sergeants looks after their socks,"

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
We looked for the King, but he never came.  
"Well, God take care of him, all the same,"

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
They've great big parties inside the grounds.  
"I wouldn't be King for a hundred pounds,"

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
A face looked out, but it wasn't the King's.  
"He's much too busy a-signing things,"

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
"Do you think the King knows all about me?"  
"Sure to, dear, but it's time for tea,"

Says Alice.



Designed by Freepik

**TRANSLATION created by Gabriela Naďová**

Menia sa stráže v Buckinghamskom paláci –  
Ide tam Alica s Krištofom po pravici.  
Alica si berie jedného vojaka.  
„Ten sa ti pri práci vôbec nevláka.“

Menia sa stráže v Buckinghamskom paláci –  
Ide tam Alica s Krištofom po pravici.  
Videli sme vojaka na stanovišti.  
„Seržant si svoje ponožky stále čistí.“

Menia sa stráže v Buckinghamskom paláci –  
Ide tam Alica s Krištofom po pravici.  
Hľadali sme kráľa, no nebol tam.  
„Aj tak ho ochraňuj, Pán Boh sám.“

Menia sa stráže v Buckinghamskom paláci –  
Ide tam Alica s Krištofom po pravici.  
Mávajú večierky, vnútri aj vonku.  
„Kráľom nebudem, ani za stovku.“

Menia sa stráže v Buckinghamskom paláci –  
Ide tam Alica s Krištofom po pravici.  
Videli sme tvár, nebola kráľova.  
„Toho čaká už povinností hora.“

Menia sa stráže v Buckinghamskom paláci –  
Ide tam Alica s Krištofom po pravici.  
„Myslíš, že aj mňa v tom paláci poznajú?“  
„Jasné, ale poďme si dať teplého čaju.“

**TRANSLATION created by Radovan Kováč**

Pri Buckinghamskom paláci sa menia strážnici,  
Christopher Robin kráča popri Alici.  
Jedného zo strážnikov si za muža bude brať  
Alica,  
Vojak sa narobí v armáde ako mulica.

Pri Buckinghamskom paláci sa menia strážnici,  
Christopher Robin kráča popri Alici.  
Sledovali sme vojakov v strážnej búde,  
ich ponožky si obzeral jeden zo seržantov na  
obhliadke.

Pri Buckinghamskom paláci sa menia strážnici,  
Christopher Robin kráča popri Alici.  
Hľadali sme kráľa, ale neprišiel,  
Boh mu pomáhaj a chráň ho od pekiel.

Pri Buckinghamskom paláci sa menia strážnici,  
Christopher Robin kráča popri Alici.  
Veľké dvorce patria oslavám a bohatým pánom.  
Veru, ani za sto libier nebol by som Kráľom.

Pri Buckinghamskom paláci sa menia strážnici,  
Christopher Robin kráča popri Alici.  
Zhliadli sme tvár, no Kráľova to nebola,  
pretože on rieši dôležité veci dookola.

Pri Buckinghamskom paláci sa menia strážnici,  
Christopher Robin kráča popri Alici.  
Myslíš si, že Kráľ pozná mňa a celý tento kraj?  
Iste, drahý, teraz je však čas dať si čaj.

**TRANSLATION created by Štefan Buček**

Výmenu stráží je vidieť spreď paláca  
zašli si tam Krištof Robin a Alica.  
Alica si berie jedného zo strážce.  
„Vojak poslúchne, čo mu veliteľ káže.“  
Hovorí Alica.

Výmenu stráží je vidieť spreď paláca  
zašli si tam Krištof Robin a Alica.  
Stál tam vojak pripravený na stráženie.  
„Seržant im dáva pozor na oblečenie.“  
Hovorí Alica.

Výmenu stráží je vidieť spreď paláca  
zašli si tam Krištof Robin a Alica.  
Všade sme hľadali, no nenašli kráľa.  
„Keď tu nie je, určite niekde zaháľa.“  
Hovorí Alica.

Výmenu stráží je vidieť spreď paláca  
zašli si tam Krištof Robin a Alica.  
Na panstve poriadajú veľké oslavy.  
„Nebudem ja kráľom, vyhod' si to z hlavy.“  
Hovorí Alica.

Výmenu stráží je vidieť spreď paláca  
zašli si tam Krištof Robin a Alica.  
Niekto už vykukol, lenže kráľ to nebol.  
„Má on veľa práce, len aby to stihol.“  
Hovorí Alica.

Výmenu stráží je vidieť spreď paláca  
zašli si tam Krištof Robin a Alica.  
„Myslíš, že kráľ o mne vie úplne všetko?“  
„Určite, len teraz je čas na čaj, zlatko.“  
Hovorí Alica.

**TRANSLATION created by David Grich**

Buckinghamský palác svoju stráž mení,  
Krištofko s Alicou prechádzku mieni.  
Alica si strážcu za muža chce vziať:  
„Nebude on už viac ťažký život mať!“  
Povedala Alica.

Buckinghamský palác svoju stráž mení,  
Krištofko s Alicou prechádzku mieni.  
Videli sme strážcu tam, kde by on stáť mal,  
„Seržanta zas jeho pár ponožík zaujal.“  
Povedala Alica.

Buckinghamský palác svoju stráž mení,  
Krištofko s Alicou prechádzku mieni.  
Kdeže je kráľ? – Všetci sme naň čakali,  
„Nepríde on, asi ho sny máťali.“  
Povedala Alica.

Buckinghamský palác svoju stráž mení,  
Krištofko s Alicou prechádzku mieni.  
V paláci je im všetkým iste veľmi dobre,  
„Žiť vnútri v paláci? Ani za všetky drobné.“  
Povedala Alica.

Buckinghamský palác svoju stráž mení,  
Krištofko s Alicou prechádzku mieni.  
Zrazu niekto vykukol, nebol to však kráľ,  
„Ten vždy veľa vecí na starosti mal.“  
Povedala Alica.

Buckinghamský palác svoju stráž mení,  
Krištofko s Alicou prechádzku mieni.  
„Myslíš si, že si má ma kráľ na pamäti?“  
„Daj si teraz čaj, aha, ten čas letí.“  
Povedala Alica.



## "I DON'T MINCE MY WORDS"

As a writer, editor, and copywriter, **Marek Mittaš** got into readers' minds mainly thanks to his first collection of short stories called *Hriechy v rukavičkách* (*Sins in Gloves*). His uncommon sense of humour, unprecedented candor and the way he reveals the most secret corners of the human unconscious classifies him as one of the best Slovak authors nowadays. *Kým nás dieťa nerozdelí* (*Until the Child Parts Us*), his first novel written as an experiment with his colleague Kristína Falťanová, just reaffirmed his status in the society of writers. Although one could assume that his books and numerous short stories speak for him, who is Marek Mittaš actually? A great writer and an attentive observer of the world and people? A latent critic of the society or just a receptive artist who shows us his impression through wit, irony and individual author's language? Let's find the answer together with the writer himself in this interview about his books, plans for the future, but also about his own life.



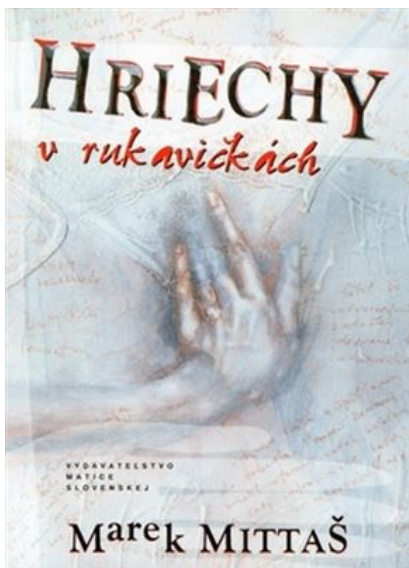
Can you recognize the name Marek Mittaš? If your answer is "no," then sit down comfortably, take your electronic device with *EnJoY* in it and read the following interview carefully. You will meet a part of a great writer, editor, and copywriter, whose books you will want to have in your hand immediately...

**Your work is devoted to topics which are difficult to discuss openly for a lot of people, even in our society. Before publishing your works, aren't you concerned about the reaction of the reading public?**

There are always some expectations and tensions regarding the reaction of the reader but I would not call it "fear." They do not concern only books but also a single short story published in a magazine. I am always curious about how my readers will receive the story; whether they will like it, enjoy it and so on. But it doesn't depend on my topics alone. The fact that I write about the things which a lot of people try not to see is my hobby – I like to look at everything a little

differently than others; not to perceive our world in a monolithic way (as it is done by mainstream media) is very interesting for me as well as to "get under the skin" of at first sight banal or taboo topics. At last, I am glad if the reader enjoys this new view with me. There are always expectations about whether it happens or not.

Short stories in your older book *Hriechy v rukavičkách* are works of fiction about ordinary lives of ordinary people but despite this, there is something absurd about them as if they weren't created by human imagination but by the process of human existence itself in the spirit of saying "you can't think it up, only life can think it up." So where are you looking for inspiration for your literary works?



In the book's preface I used Louise Welsh's quote: "If it came to someone's mind, there is clearly someone who realized it." Regarding stories in the book it could act frightening but it is an answer to this question. I draw my themes from everyday life. Behind the doors of how many "respectable people" who have a job, travel by bus and whom we meet in the streets a secret is hidden? Abusing, sexual violence – let's call it nonstandard hobbies or also wasted desires of people who had had their dreams but ended up with the minimum wage in the factory. Then we wonder why an ordinary person, a neighbour or a friend one day kills his wife. But this act of violence may have bubbled under the cover for a long time. I draw my inspiration from the things everywhere around me but, of course, sometimes it wants a little bit of an effort and courage to look at them from a different angle.

A lot of your short stories point, among other things, to your remarkable knowledge, for instance about the anatomy of human body. Within your "writing preparation," do you study science, consult with experts or read specialized literature? Or did you acquire all this knowledge simply "on the go"?

When I write, I always rely on the story. It must be the strongest element. Of course, if the plot or some key detail demands it, I consult it with professionals, mostly from the field of medicine. But I don't use knotty anatomic explanations. However, sometimes it is important to know how long it takes until the body bleeds to death when the artery is cut through or what could complicate the death and so on. For instance, in my upcoming collection of short stories called *NeVinných 15* [*The Guilt(less) 15*], which is going to be released in the first half of 2016, there are some short stories where it was necessary to know the proper layering and names of vessels as well as the consequence of their damage to the human body. Naturally, it comes out from reality and because of it I consult these issues with a doctor. Because the story is good, believable and frightening only if it relies on real life.

Let's discuss some sensitive issue: Is there something in your works that mirrors your own life?

(Smile) I can't answer this question, although it belongs to the most frequent questions I get. But I can tell that there are real characters in my short stories or at least the characters which were born in my fantasy and they could be real. But this is probably the case of every literary work. (Smile.) Every work is a reflection of its author which is simultaneously a mirror of his own ideas on the paper. From this point of view writing is always greatly authentic.

The last literary work you published so far is a novel *Kým nás dieťa nerozdelí*, co-authored with your colleague Kristína Faltánová. How did the idea to create a book written from two distinct perspectives – from a man's and from woman's point of view – come to your mind and what do you think about this kind of experiment?

It is really an experiment but according to the readers' responses, it is a success. Kristína addressed me with a suggestion that we cooperate on one story. The idea to offer a possibility of insight into the heads of a man and a woman who try to solve the same existential problem appealed to me. With Kristína, we were interchanging chapter by chapter gradually moving the plot. It is a very interesting way of writing which resulted in one really dynamic whole in the end where it was possible to illustrate the male and the female way of thinking through an issue of a child. I have to admit that at first sight, from thematic perspective, the book was slightly different from my short story work. Nevertheless, I tried to show things as they are in this novel – rough, tender, often on the edge. I didn't mince my words and that was, in fact, the reason why Kristína contacted me.



**Martina Pišová**

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## WHERE IS EUROPE GOING?



It began - as always – quietly and unobtrusively, so nobody could predict anything sinister. Silent iniquity was reinforced with time and a number of unfortunate decisions of high-ranking politicians. These things which were culminating for a long period of time peaked in one single day, thence and forever known as the day which changed the face of Europe: 13th of November 2015.

If there were some optimists who believed our planet was the place of satisfied and peaceful people before this date, they certainly changed their opinion after the tragic events which took place in Paris that day. Media marked this “Friday the 13th” as the end of the Europe as we know it, but is it really true? The eye of the public focuses on Paris because the eye of mass media does the same. It means that people who live in a restricted comfort zone of their lives and who cannot see the rest of the world which is a little bit farther than the park they can observe from the window of their kitchen, were clearly shocked by the pictures they have seen on television. Others who realized what the world really was (and what it really wasn't) were maybe outraged, sad or resentful... But absolutely not surprised. They knew that just because the attacks with a large number of victims took place in a “civilized” city of a “civilized” country on a “civilized” continent, it meant nothing more than the war which was dilating. Because the war was there for a long time – it did not start with the Paris attacks. The number of days without war since year 2925 B. C. is namely... zero.

Since the war is the situation without peace and we could mark European current events as everything but peaceful, we are clearly at war without realizing that. The problem is that a lot of people imagine it as something abstract but full of explosions and guns, in addition covered by some kind of mysterious grey dust. The picture they see when they hear the threatening phrase "Third World War" is a mile away from the reality of their everyday lives. Sometimes everything seems well while we do not fully accept it.

The change that touches us personally is so inconspicuous that we are almost not able to sense it immediately. Only hindsight could show us the difference our world underwent since the first conflicts. The question is when and where those "first conflicts" took place? In which point did they all begin? And the last but probably the most important question – since history is not so important as the present and the future in this case – what to do now? (Is it even possible for us to do something useful?)

I do not want to give an impression that I know answers to these questions because I do not. They are just some kind of a starting point for each one of us – the legendary point where we should start thinking about everything. Our society is formed by people and without people's effort it cannot do anything. Who decides about our destiny if it is not us? We are young and we have a future – at least we SHOULD have a future but it will not come to us just because we are waiting for it. If we do not know where we are going, we may come somewhere else. And the last thing we should find about everything (again and again) is the fact that it is inevitable to find out that the war was worthless.

*Martina Pišová*

## Thinking about Poe's "Raven"

What is so unique about this poem, which has just a few verses, and yet, it is ranked as one of the best of its kind? What kind of a literary trick did the author use for creation of this remarkable treasure of modern poetry? Undoubtedly, in this heavily symbolic poem, Poe's very careful and premeditated choice of words as symbols is the basis to his success. However, his idea of how to use these symbols in order to achieve their intended manifestation and maximum effect is equally or maybe even more important.

"The Raven" is a narrative poem by Edgar Allan Poe, first published in January 1845 in the *New York Evening Mirror* (Cummings, 2004). This extraordinary and highly appraised poem is noted for its supernatural atmosphere and high symbolism, which were in line with the popular taste of his era. Poe is well known for his dark and haunting poems and also for Gothic-style short stories (Poe's Short Stories, 2015). "The Raven" can be looked at from many different perspectives ranging from what the raven in the poem symbolizes to figurative language and richly used symbols. Even though Poe claims to have written the poem very logically and methodically, his dark symbolism is so persuasive that a reader may perceive the deep sorrow as the source of the author's motivation prompting him to write it down. Poe does not associate himself with such suffering while he was writing the poem. His objective was to write a morose piece that leaves the audience depressed namely after reading the last stanza. He succeeded in creating that effect in "The Raven" through the use of repetition (adopting a refrain) and heavy symbolism.

Working with symbols is not an easy task. Unlike rhetorically used metaphors, symbols are not specific or definitive in their interpretation. Thus, readers' renditions and understanding of the work may roam beyond the author's intended frame. It seems that Poe found a way how to solve this



problem, and it could be perhaps his most important contribution to creating such work. He realized that a symbol alone, regardless of how well it is connected to the determining context, cannot attain its entire and/or intended impressiveness and be shown in its full beauty unless it is planted into a properly tuned and emotionally perceptive mind of the reader. Thus, it is fair to say that the main clue to his success lies in a very careful and methodical planning and in a rather sophisticated use of symbols, which through a heightened state of mind of the reader reveal their interpretation. The obvious question is how he managed to fulfill such a challenging goal.

Poe did not expect from his readers to get into the desired mind the receptiveness on their own. He knew that it would have to be done through his work. Generally speaking, symbolism is a very interesting and unique linguistic instrument, whose use in prose and in poetry may have quite different purposes. In prose, symbols and metaphors are usually aimed at "entertaining" - making reading jollier. In serious or weighty poetry, symbols are considerably more powerful tools, whose prime function is to create emotionally-linked and yet somewhat fuzzy atmosphere without using too many words. After reading such poetry many readers may ask themselves questions such as: have I interpreted this piece the way the author intended? While reading it, did I reach the altitude of my mind to the level the author may have assumed? Since writers do not standardly submit

papers on their objectives and on methodology of their work, these questions usually remain unanswered. However, in case of "The Raven" we are luckier.

Edgar Allan Poe offers such answers in "The Philosophy of Composition," published in 1850, in which he dedicated a significant section to "The Raven." In this work, he mainly focuses on "how" the symbolism was employed to achieve his intended goal. Unfortunately, he does not dwell on specific interpretation of various symbols. It seems that he (perhaps erroneously) presumed their unequivocal interpretation: *"A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent"* (Poe, 1850). Therefore, analyses of various symbols used in the poem are largely taken from a different source: percept from "Qrisse's Edgar Allan Poe pages" written by Christoffer Hallqvist in 1995 – a devoted admirer of E.A. Poe's work.

Poe's revelation of how systematically he wrote the poem and used the symbols in The Raven is truly amazing. In his composition, he stated, *"It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition - that the work proceeded step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem"* (Poe, 1850). In the very early stage of his planning he recognized that the best effect would be achieved through manipulation of readers' mind gradually elevating it to a heightened receptiveness. Thus, he purposely wrote the poem as "one sitting" limiting it to 108 lines only. As the key mind-controlling tool he selected Beauty, *"I mean that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem"* (Poe, 1850), which he amplifies to its highest manifestation by the poem-overall-tone – Melancholy. Indeed, Beauty is a powerful witch. The popular saying that most men "melt" in front of beautiful women is very much true. The word "melt" symbolizes an elevated state of mind as a result of exposure to an eye appealing object. As Poe (1850) expresses it, *"When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect - they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of soul - not of intellect, or of heart - upon*

*which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating the "beautiful"*. As it is noted, Poe links and conditions the intended interpretation of symbols to an elevated state of mind. To understand such a presupposition, the following example may help to perceive it. It should not be difficult to see that in a matter-of-fact state of mind, we may view "doe eye" merely as an almond-shaped object; however, in a state of greater sensitivity "wisdom and innocence" – attributes we seemingly see in animal's eyes - may occur to us first. To get readers gradually to such a mind disposition, Poe is using this remarkably effective vehicle – Beauty and Melancholia is a current (tone) carrying it away.

Poe is not only using symbolic expressions in every single verse, but the whole poem is a symbol, which readers, despite the author's alleged intention, may interpret differently depending on their capability of understanding it. "The Raven" could simply symbolize death, which the bird of an ill-omen can certainly represent, or a more sophisticated symbol of mournful and never-ending remembrance, from which the narrator has no chance to escape or to an even more complicated scenario - irrecoverable fall into the narrator's definite madness. According to Poe (1850), the second interpretation was his intended aim, *"the intention of making him [the raven] emblematical of Mournful and never ending Remembrance."* The key element to the poem's plot is the state of the narrator's mind, whose identity Poe does not reveal. However, he leaves some clues. Magnitude and depth of his sorrow can easily be viewed as a loss of his very first love, which only early-age can feel so intensely. Also, this lonely man tries to ease his pain by distracting his mind with old books (Hallqvist, 1995). Therefore, many readers view him as a young man, most likely a student.

Poe uses several significant symbols in this poem. Among them the most obvious is the raven itself (Hallqvist, 1995). Its symbolic significance – a dark ebony bird – stands as the embodiment of grief caused by loneliness and separation. He symbolizes the loss of the narrator, whose heart longs for his beloved Lenore. The raven, which enters the room high-handedly, holds domination over the narrator. The bird's dark color symbolizes

death and, furthermore, a constant reminder of never leaving this imperious intruder. Poe also considered a parrot instead of the raven. Poe finally chose the latter because it evokes a melancholic tone, it picks carcasses, it is a sign of ill-omen, and it is black (Poe, 1850). Black is a reminder of sorrow, darkness, evil, death, lack of insight, and mourning. These are all disturbing attributes of this bird and they show that a raven is not something you would want at your door in the middle of the night. When Poe first started writing this poem, he knew he had to have a bird that could talk, yet was non-sentient, non-thinking, and non-reasoning. Obviously, the raven was more fitting for his intention.

Another outstanding symbol is the "bust of Pallas" – the Greek goddess of wisdom – on which the raven settled after entering the room. The reason could be to make the narrator believe that the bird would speak from wisdom and not only from his one-only-word stock. It is peculiar that Poe himself, as he claimed later, did not use Pallas for its significant symbolic effect but simply to emphasize the scholarship of the lover, and for the sonorousness of the word. Somewhat less significant symbol might be the use of "midnight" and "December." Both words symbolize an end of something and an anticipation of something new. Therefore, the midnight in December, might very well be New Year's eve – a day of anticipated change and religious significance. The chamber in which the narrator receives his visitor has also a vast symbolic meaning (Hallqvist, 1995). It signifies the loneliness of the man and sorrow he feels for the loss of Lenore. The room lavishly furnished with a sitter, in which, Lenore used to sit, helps to create an atmosphere of beauty in the poem. Poe purposely chose a non-reasoning creature (raven) for uttering repeated words "nevermore." He realized that it would be more effective to use the raven's obviously limited vocabulary to this particular word. Thus, answers to these questions are already known, and that illustrates the self-torture to which the narrator exposes himself.

There are other, perhaps less glaring symbols, hidden in the poem. In the first strophe, the narrator's state of mind (*"pondered weak and weary, over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore"*) symbolizes his remembrance of

Lenore and the draining effect it has on him. Also, the darkness beyond his door could symbolize two things. Yes, it is night, and it is safe to assume the lights would be out, causing this darkness, but there is more to it than that. His peering into the darkness could be said to symbolize his standing on the brink of madness – or even death, if we factor in the nepenthe. It could also symbolize his search for Lenore, as she has faded into the darkness and has become another lost soul, according to the raven. And the silence and stillness that follow his opening the door represent his coming to understand the fact that she truly is gone and will never again answer him.

Another symbol that is quite obvious is "Lenore" (Lorcher, 2015). The narrator gives no description of her. We do not know what she looks like or what exactly the relationship between Lenore and the narrator is. All we know is that the narrator really misses her. The lack of details regarding Lenore makes her a likely symbol. She may represent idealized love, beauty, truth, or hope in a better world. We are being told several times that she is "rare" and "radiant," which suggest an angelic description, perhaps symbolizing heaven. On the other hand, Lenore may also symbolize truth: the narrator cannot help but think of her, and her ubiquitous, yet elusive, nature, which tortures and haunts him. Another rather dark symbol is "Night's Plutonian Shore." This phrase incorporates all the negative aspects associated with death. According to Hallqvist (1995) Pluto is the god of the underworld in Roman mythology; hence, his shore would be the underworld. Combined with "night," a common symbol for death and nothingness, and shore, representative of the vast ocean and all its mysterious inhabitants, Plutonian takes on an enhanced meaning (Lorcher, 2015). The narrator's desperate need for relief in his suffering is symbolized by using the word of "Nepenthe" – an ancient drug used to help to counter fight sorrows (ibid.). Even though the narrator's torture appears to be self-inflicted, he is still looking for something to remove his pain and suffering.

The most catching symbol in the poem is the repeatedly used word "nevermore." It is used to increase the tension of the poem as the speaker continues his story. At first, the word is used in a humorous way when the narrator asks the bird for



its name and it replies with "nevermore." He thinks that it is a strange name for a bird. As the bird continues to sit on the bust of Pallas, the Greek goddess of wisdom, the speaker is still not very affected by its presence because he thinks that the bird will just leave the next day. But then the bird says "nevermore," making the speaker think the bird is telling him it will never leave. The speaker becomes a little concerned but simply thinks "nevermore" is the only word it knows. Gradually, the tone of this word changes dramatically. The speaker begins to think there is something more to its meaning and begins to wonder what "nevermore" really means. As he thinks, he becomes more agitated, first when he realizes that in this world, he will see Lenore "nevermore." Finally, the speaker begins to think the bird is a messenger from the dead so he asks the bird if he will see Lenore after his decease. Of course, the reply is "nevermore." He repeats the question in several different ways and receives the same reply. Now the narrator is incensed. He tells the bird to leave and receives the reply "nevermore." Thus, the meaning of the word has gone from an odd name of a raven to a prophetic warning that he will never again see Lenore nor will he ever get rid of the bird. In the end, the speaker decides he will be happy, "nevermore."

Whether the narrator killed himself at the end of the poem or his soul was just forever encased in the shadowy grip of depression that was sent from the raven, or was he even suffering mental deterioration, we may never know. Poe is masterly showing all the symptoms of the narrator's suffering by using quite vivid and captivating expressions. He is also using evocative figurative language as well as symbols, plot twisting, and interesting characters to create one of the finest masterpieces of all time. Despite Poe's claim about his rational and methodical approach to his work, many readers and scholars wonder what truly went on in the mind of Poe as he was writing this poem. Was he really immune to the mind manipulation of his own invention? Was it really possible to express sorrow so persuasively without being affected by such brain twisting? Through in-depth analysis of his use of language, symbols, and overall themes, one striking premise can be established wandering why Poe actually felt the need to write such a tragic piece.

Undoubtedly, Poe's diligent preparation and careful consideration of how to write the poem yielded an extraordinary success that will live on in the literary history forever. The only possible drawback in his strategy may lie in his understanding of the human mind. The ability to think and feel emotionally is a peculiar and unique possession of human beings manifesting itself rather unpredictably across our population. Poe's expectation that it is possible to manipulate the mind of all readers to the same elevated spheres and thus to achieve uniform interpretation of his work is likely the only overestimated prerequisite in his meticulous planning. Nevertheless, his sophisticated (perhaps revolutionary at his time) employment of symbols brought him such an exceptional fame.

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**John Mark Chavez Opon**

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## ...or do you still believe human is the most intelligent creature?

Because life is not only about serious things, I prepared for you some examples of the most curious and daft human acts. Till now, we were laughing at various human duds but let's deal with something more prosaic. And what is more prosaic than the language itself? Therefore, I've made a serious research for this issue and I prepared the best English idioms used along decades.

Just in case, an idiom is a phrase or a fixed expression that has a figurative meaning, which is different from its literal meaning. Idioms occur in every single language all over the world. In English, we can find more than 25,000 idiomatic expressions. I think every non-native English-speaking person (and maybe native as well) is more than confused about all idioms lurking in the language.

*... I'd like to put a bug in your ear about something that just has me rolling in the aisles. It's been a month of Sundays since I heard it through the grapevine but if I don't dish the dirt on this soon I'll be beside myself...*

Don't you understand? Me either! That's how idioms work!

## ANIMALS, PLANTS AND OTHER CREATURES

**Bark up the wrong tree** - waste one's efforts by pursuing the wrong thing or path, to make the wrong choice, to ask the wrong person; to follow the wrong course, to misdirect one's energies or attention

**Bear in mind** - to remember a piece of information when you are making decisions or thinking about the matter (*Is there enough space for a bear and knowledge at the same time? Because if not, I definitely want to keep a bear.*)

**Cash cow** - a dependable source of income (*OK, I definitely need to find that cow!*)

**Cat got your tongue?** - to compel someone to speak, say something or give a response when they are usually quiet (*Now you see, why I don't like cats. Nobody can touch my tongue!*)

**Cat nap** - short sleep

**Chicken out** - to decide not to do something out of fear, usually just before it is about to happen

**Copy cat** - a person who does the same thing as someone else

**Cry wolf** - to call for help when you don't need it

**Dead duck** - a plan, an event that has failed or is certain to fail and that is therefore not worth discussing (*Well, cat, chicken, wolf - I got it, but what did that poor duck do to you, guys?*)

**For donkey's years** - to do something for an awfully long time

**Happy as a clam** - very happy and comfortable (*Clam?? Have you ever seen a smiling clam?*)

**Have skeletons in the cupboard** - to have a shameful secret (*Oh, and I was wondering why there is too little space in my cupboard.*)

**Have a whale of a time** - have a very good time, have an exciting or fun time

**Hold your horses** - wait a moment (*How long is one moment? They are too heavy to carry.*)

**Love rat** - somebody who has an affair while in a relationship

**Raining cats and dogs** - it is raining heavily (*Is it possible to rain only dogs? I really need one.*)

**Rat race** - an exhausting and repetitive routine, a hectic struggle for success

**Top dog** - the most important person in a group, somebody with the dominant position or highest authority

**When pigs fly** - something that will never happen (*Maybe after Redbull?*)

**White elephant** - useless possession, something that is of no use

## BODY PARTS

**Blue in the face** – weakened or tired after trying many times (*So no make-up needed?*)

**Elbow room** – enough space to move or work in, freedom to do what you like (*So that's not the room full of elbows??*)

**Green thumb** – a special ability to make plants grow (*Don't forget to use organic colour to paint it!*)

**Hairy at the heel** – someone who is ill-bred, dangerous or untrustworthy (*Lesson: First, look at the heel and then to the eyes.*)

**Have your head in the clouds** – to be daydreaming and not paying attention

**Old hand** – a person with a lot of experience in something

**Put your foot in your mouth** – to say or do something that offends, upsets or embarrasses someone else, to say something inappropriate (*Sounds like a Yoga time!*)

**Wind your neck in** – a rude way to tell someone to be quiet and/or calm

**Yellow-bellied** – someone who is seen as a coward or extremely timid

**Zip it** – keep quiet about something

**Zip your lip** – close your mouth and be quiet

**Zip your mouth** – keep your mouth shut and don't say anything (*Hopefully, now you know the difference...*)

## CLOTHES, VEHICLES AND OTHER "STUFF"

**All in the same boat** – in the same situation, with same problems

**Ants in one's pants** – unable to sit still or remain calm out of nervousness or excitement

**Beat the clock** – succeed in something before time is up (*Does it work? If yes I will make a ritual from it.*)

**Burn the candle at both ends** – to work from early in the morning until late at night with very little rest, to work more than you need to or should, to overwork

**Dead as a doornail** – completely dead or unusable (*Well, how can you tell who is dead and who is completely dead? And why are those poor doornails involved?*)

**Hit the books** – begin to study hard (*This part is so violent...*)

**Kick the bucket** – to die (*Even if the whole road is covered with buckets, do not ever kick it!*)

**Let your freak flag fly** – to let others see your uniqueness (*Then I have the whole colonnade of flags to show.*)

**Pink slip** – a termination notice received from a job (*Is there a possibility to have another colour? Pink doesn't match with my blankets.*)

**Pound the pavement** – to walk the streets looking for a job

**Put a sock in it** – to tell someone noisy to be quiet (*Well, I would expect some kind of a different meaning.. the rest I can tell you after 10 p.m.*)

**Put a thinking cap on** – engage your mind (*Wait, where do they sell them?*)

**Sit on the fence** – when a person does not take sides in an argument or is hesitant to choose between two sides in a dispute

**Tie the knot** – get married (*Tie until the last breath. Or?*)

## CRAZY

**Go ape, Go ballistic, Go bananas, Go bonkers, Go nuts ...**

(*But where we go??*)

## LET'S CALL IT FOOD

**As cool as a cucumber** – very calm, untroubled by stress (*Who said that cucumber is cool?*)

**Big cheese** – an important and influential person (*And what happened with top dog?*)

**Chew the fat** – to chat in a friendly and leisurely way, engage in casual gossip sessions (*No, no, no! No more gossiping for me...*)

**Couch potato** – person who spends a lot of time watching TV with no physical activity (*I'm not a couch potato but I love couch and potatoes.*)

**Egghead** – very studious, intelligent person (*So then before an exam you have a mashed-egghead. ☺*)

**Icing on the cake** – something that makes a good situation even better or a bad situation even worse

**Storm in a teacup** – a big fuss made about something of little importance (*Don't forget to follow the fire protection steps even while drinking tea!*)

## TICK-TOCK

**A month of Sundays** – very long period of time (*In my case I would call it a month of Mondays...*)

**On cloud nine** – really, very happy and cheerful time (*And what about clouds 1 to 8? Does anybody know what can I find there?*)

## MUSIC

**Blow your own trumpet/ horn** – proudly boasting about your own talents and successes (*But be honest, who else can blow it for you?*)

**Blow the whistle** – reporting an illegal or unacceptable activity to the authorities (*Don't mix it! Trumpet = good, Whistle = bad, bad, bad!*)

**Fit as a fiddle** – someone in a perfect health

**For a song** – buy or sell something at a very cheap price (*I'm not a good singer, but if they accept it in the clothes shop instead of money, I would sing all day & all night.*)

**See you on the big drum** – a goodnight phrase for children

**Tickle the ivory** – play the piano

NOTE: As the source of the idioms used in this article, I used <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.



ENJOY ☺

Kitty Vyparínová

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