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# THE IB TIMES

DECEMBER



FROM STUDENTS,  
FOR STUDENTS

IB WORLD SCHOOL  
NO. 6159

# Editorial Note

December has come around, she's changed somehow, however. She hasn't brought enough cold to bring colour to our cheeks this year and her sack of snow is nearly empty but she hasn't forgotten about joy and gingerbread! Even though during this Christmas we may not be able to meet all our loved ones, we should keep our hair on and send postcards to our grandparents. It's the time when people with wide smiles share their love with others. And so do we! On behalf of our whole team I would like to wish You merry Christmas and a happy New Year full of peace and loving people! May 2021 bring You new adventures and opportunities to blossom! All we want for Christmas is Your contentment with this issue of our newspaper!

Aurelia Adamczak, The IB Times Editor-in-chief

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'To care' sometimes stands for 'to love'. That's why many people associate the holiday season with caring about others. In December we usually spend a lot of time thinking about others preparing for Christmas dinner and picking out the best gifts for our close ones. However, does the meaning of 'caring' change when we are unable to spend Christmas time as we normally would? Unable to see each other or show the expression of our love and 'care'. Nonetheless, this 'care' remains in us. It is the thought, a simple call asking about one's health or taking a small shopping-trip for those in need. At the same time we shouldn't forget about the 'care' the medical service gives the needy, often at risk of their own health and life. Recently I have found myself touched by the story of Mrs Maria Lipka from Cracow. She has owned a hat store of a prestigious reputation with various actors, politicians or professors would shop there. However, due to the current situation the store struggled to make ends meet and maybe would have been closed if it wasn't for a Facebook initiative led by her granddaughter. Many Internet users decided to aid the shop and to bestow themselves with a new and fashionable hat. Therefore let's hope for this December to be filled with a lot of care towards the others as well as towards ourselves.

Julia Chwatko, The IB Times Executive Editor

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# IN THE COSMETIC WORLD: All about the ingredients

## Part 1. The basics and surfactants.

Pretty much each and every person uses cosmetics on a daily basis. They form an inseparable part of our lives. We wash ourselves with bubbly soaps, take care of our hair using different kinds of scented conditioners, brush our teeth with whitening toothpastes. There are a lot of such products on the market and we have a huge variety of choices. But do we actually take some time in the store to check their composition? Are we aware of what you apply onto your skin? I think it's high time we became familiar with the basic terms and ingredients that are most commonly used in the cosmetic industry. In this article, we'll learn what the abbreviation INCI stands for and find out what surfactants are and how they influence the functioning of a cosmetic.

Let's start with the official definition of a cosmetic product. According to the EU Regulation 1223/2009, Article 2.1, a cosmetic is 'any substance or mixture intended to be placed in contact with the external parts of the human body (..) with a view (..) to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance, protecting them, keeping them in good condition or correcting body odours'. Each beauty product, in order to be allowed to go on the market, has to have a label with listed ingredients on its packaging. There is a special system called INCI created in order to normalize the labeling names of all ingredients. INCI stands for International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients and is used mainly in the EU, USA, China, Japan and Canada. It uses the English names of chemical compounds and Latin names of plants. The main rule of INCI labeling is listing the ingredients in order according to the quantity of a substance used in a certain product (from the most to the least).

Ingredients are generally divided into three groups. Functional ingredients (water, oils or alcohol) are bases of the cosmetics and solvents to other components. Another group is active ingredients, which cause physical changes in the skin and are responsible for the cosmetic's effect, such as moisturizing, whitening, exfoliating or coloring. There are also additional ingredients such as emulsifiers which prevent the ingredients from separating, preservatives and antioxidants that prolong the storage life as well as colorings and fragrances. Now I'm going to explain the function of substances called surfactants (or the so-called surface-active agents) on the example of micellar water from Uriage which is a part of my personal skin care routine.

Ingredients: AQUA (WATER), POLYSORBATE 20, POLOXAMER 184, GLYCERIN, CAPRYLYL/CAPRYL GLUCOSIDE, CETRIMONIUM BROMIDE, POLYAMINOPROPYL BIGUANIDE, PARFUM (FRAGRANCE), VACCINIUM MACROCARPON (CRANBERRY) FRUIT EXTRACT, CITRIC ACID

As you can see, micellar water consists, obviously, mostly of water. A substance called Polysorbate 20 which works - you guessed it - as a surfactant, takes the second position in the composition of this cosmetic. Surfactants dissolve in water and are very important during the process of removing the dirt and makeup from your skin. When surfactant is added to water, it reduces the surface tension, so the molecules are able to interact with oil, dirt and grease. As you can see in the schematic model of a surfactant molecule, it consists of two main elements: a hydrophobic (water-fearing) tail and hydrophilic (water-loving) head. The tails filter through the particles of makeup and dirt. The ions of the surfactant create clusters called micelles. The particles of dirt are closed in the micelles and removed from the skin. Rubbing the skin with a cotton pad facilitates the removal of makeup. This is how makeup and dirt are removed from your face, but the same process occurs when you're washing your clothes with a washing powder or using a soap when taking a shower.

If you wish to find out more about the ingredients most commonly used in cosmetics, stay tuned for the following issues of the IB Times. In the next part of this series, I'm going to introduce you mainly to the chemical additives called emulsifiers. For now, stay safe and have a merry Christmas. See you in 2021!

Laura Tomczak



# MYTHBUSTING



Considering that the issue of IB Times you're about to read, or have already read, is shifting its focus to yet another trait of an IB student, which is 'caring', I'm presenting you with another article in which I will disprove some of the common myths about closure, physical touch and self-care which all closely relate to the aforementioned looking after others as well as ourselves. So, enjoy the part two of mythbusting! :)

## Small touches as pain-relievers

It is widely believed that whenever we experience the touch of our close ones, whether it's a significant other, a family member or a close friend, then our body does not experience pain. In fact, psychological studies revealed that it actually is due to our brain and the ongoing production of oxytocin that blocks pain signals. In result our body gets hit with a sudden rush of euphoria. It sort of 'overshadows' the pain we feel, so we know that, even though, we don't feel any pain, it's still there.



## Hugging fights viruses



Although I wish this was true and we could just fight the currently raging pandemic with a certain amount of hugs, it is not. The widely spread myth exists due to the simplification of the process of hugging. While we may for sure prove that the action itself improves our immune system functions and boosts its work, it does not in fact cure any diseases, especially viruses. Hugs can help stimulate the thymus gland which regulates the body's production of white blood cells, which fight off disease. That's all they actually do when it comes to improving our health. So stay safe, hug each other if you can so you are able to live healthily.



## Opposites attract



More than 8 in 10 individuals desire a partner with opposite traits that complement theirs. Many people long for a significant other that will somehow be our 'second half', someone who will challenge us, that will disagree with our values so we start to view the world differently, someone who will change us in some way, so, in the end, we become a better person. Well, I have come to explain why this perspective is not only wrong, but harmful. While the myth has been around for centuries, only now psychologists have explained why it is wrong. In simple words: we tend to repel people who disagree with us. In more complex words: we choose people who are similar to ourselves, which is sometimes referred to as assortative mating. It all occurs due to only one word being programmed in our brain at the start: 'Survival'. We need a similar partner with similar needs in order to function similarly. We form relationships and friendships based on those similarities. We thrive off them. So, when you sit at the table during Christmas or Hanukkah you won't have to wonder why some of the family members are closer to you than others, the answer is: you're just opposites that don't attract.

I hope you enjoyed the second part of Mythbusting that I have provided you with in the December issue of our wonderful magazine. If you'd like to dive deeper into the subjects I have mentioned in this edition I have included some of the sources that have accompanied me while I was writing and researching the topics. Have a great break, and, if you celebrate it, happy Hanukkah/Christmas! See you in the January edition. :)



**GABRIELA  
PRZYBYŁOWSKA**





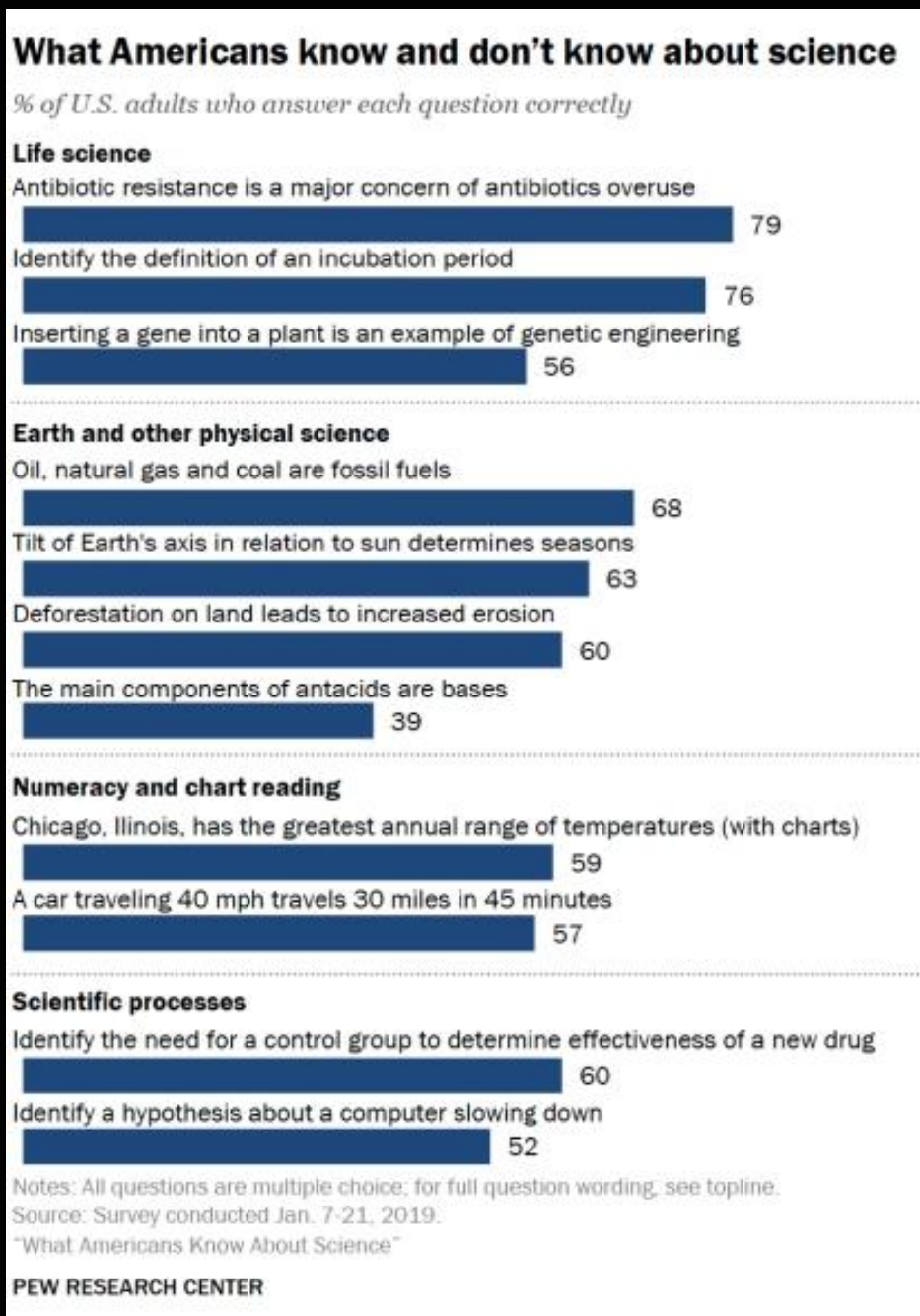
# You should care about science

Everyone has heard the tired old sentiment that our world stands upon the great scientific discoveries of the past. My dear reader, my intention is not to cause any dissent towards that premise; I fundamentally agree with it. I believe we should continue pushing to increase the societal value of science, not by acknowledging more of its applications, but by learning to apply it more ourselves. Science ought not to be merely a black box mentioned wherever it's convenient for the sake of an argument - the work of a single person, the results of which have some merit. Instead, we should engage ourselves in more scientific methods of empirical thought in all that we do ourselves. I propose, perhaps counterintuitively, that we do not increase the status of science overall, or any single scientist specifically, any further, nor elevate the importance of any individual work in a vacuum. Rather, science should be demystified, become more widely used, readily available and better understood by everyone for what it truly is - a way of thinking.




As I outlined in my introduction, I believe it is obvious that people should pay attention to scientific advancements since those impact our daily lives in the most profound of ways. Scientists pave the way for groundbreaking inventions. In the past, whether it was the light bulb, the processor, the EEG scan or the nuclear bomb, science has formed and reformed the deepest fabric of societies and will continue to do so in the future with the advent of technologies like CRISPR-Cas9, quantum computing or modern peripheral nerve stimulation. Everyone would certainly do well to keep themselves informed about the latest developments in various fields of science because it is necessary in order to keep up with the ever-shifting world around us, but I must reiterate: that is no more than a prerequisite, showing what is known as **practical**- and **civic scientific literacy**. Polls on general factual knowledge among people, like the one seen further below, are good examples of these kinds of literacy.



Clearly, a society that knows its facts is desirable but we can do so much better than that. Imagine being able to use scientific modes of inquiry in your everyday life, being able to structure your routines around what you consciously tested and what works for you, or being aware of variables influencing your daily life and how to isolate them, if you ever want to conduct a simple experiment in your environment. The name of the game is to become accustomed to scientific reasoning and to use it often for everyday reasons.



Pew Research Center, (2019), What Americans know and don't know about science.



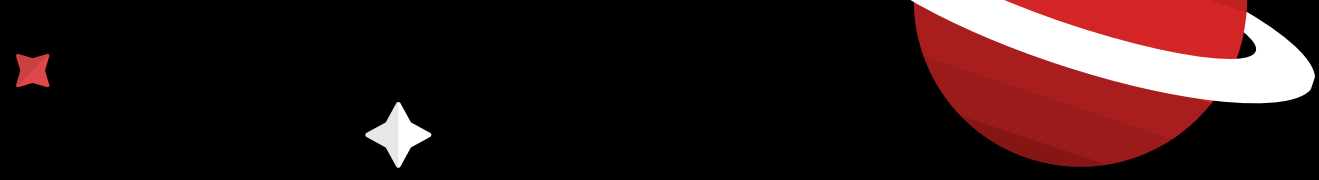
What I and many others advocate for has been described by Benjamin S. P. Shen in his 1975 manifest as cultural scientific literacy: the effort to become more personally involved with science, even if it is not connected with your occupation or field of study. Its most important aspect is learning about the scientific method, the steps of which you have hopefully heard a couple of times already (Khan Academy, 2015):

- 1. Observation**
- 2. Question**
- 3. Hypothesis**
- 4. Prediction**
- 5. Experiment**

The findings of the experiment, once interpreted, should either support or disprove the prediction. In turn, this ought to validate or invalidate the hypothesis and answer the original research question. Thanks to this we are allowed to make newer, more complex observations, based on which the process can be repeated, each time arriving at more refined conclusions about the truths of the surrounding world. As you can see, the scientific method is, in and of itself, unbiased. It makes no knowledge claims; but exists purely as a framework within which we can make such well substantiated claims. Science is difficult. There is a reason why people spend years studying it before they begin their own research.

I know very well that applying the scientific method to everything in your life would be exhausting, but not practicing cultural scientific literacy regularly and the resultant inability to do so in specific, very important points in time, has exceedingly worse consequences for the entirety of a society.

I agree with the likes of Robert E. Yager (1989), that we should use scientific-like methodologies more often and more willingly in our lives. To illustrate a point similar to the aforementioned scientist's, you might find yourself in the unfortunate situation of a student who does not have the luxury of a regular sleeping schedule.

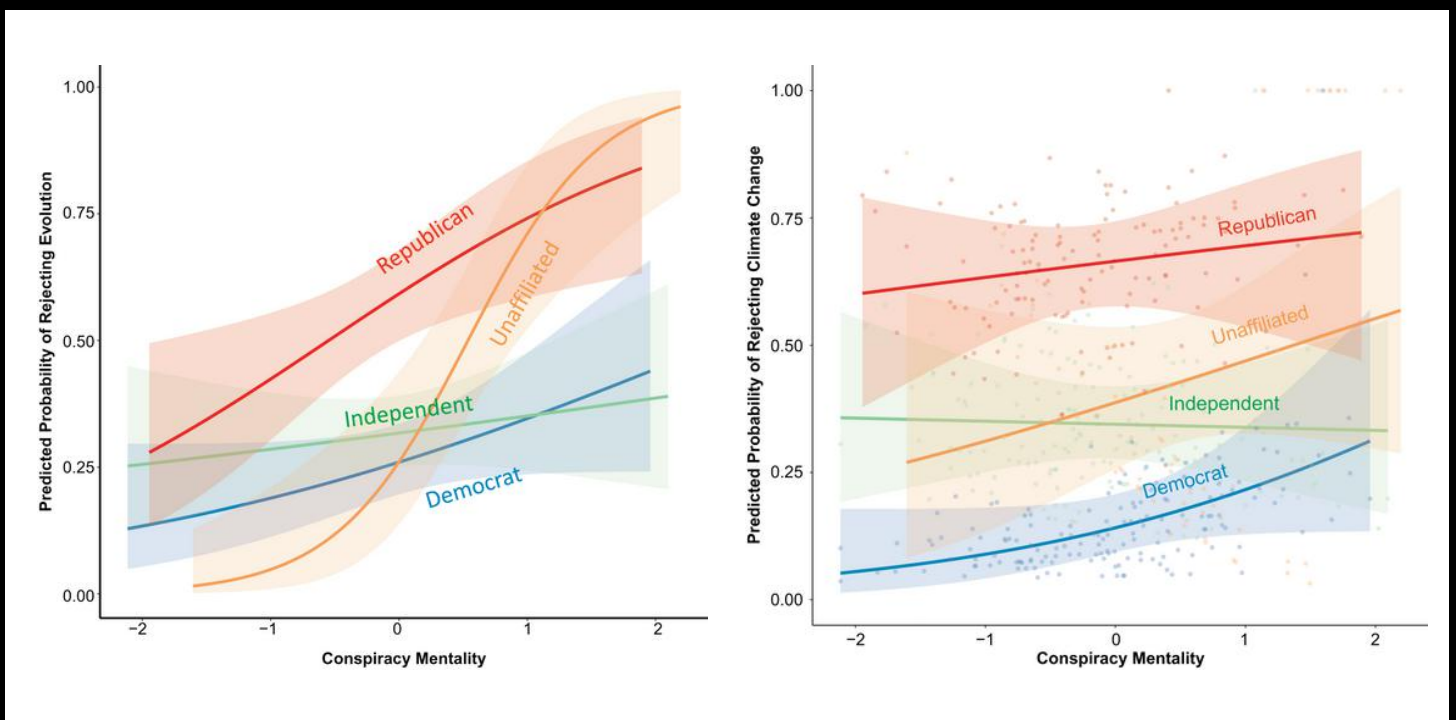


You are getting by on a day to day basis, sleeping in on the weekends, somehow making the metaphorical ends meet. Consider the following: Would it not make sense for you to investigate your chronotype in the hopes of establishing a sleeping pattern that would help to take advantage of it? You could sleep more, and gain more energy, while contributing more productive hours to your work, literally gaining on every front in the process. All you need to do is stop taking things at face value and start experimenting. You are not stuck with your schedule; you are free to change it. Embrace that and take advantage. Take note of how long you sleep, when you doze off and when you wake up. Keep track of any irregularities in your cycle, such as being woken up by a fire alarm at 3 AM and so forth. I used many big words here, but really, it is as simple as being willing to go out of your way to do some exploring in your free time and it will benefit you greatly!

Everyday scientific literacy is hard to learn. You honestly cannot acquire it like factual knowledge; it has to come from a place of personal experience and not everyone is willing to get much of that. How culturally scientifically literate are people in general? Sadly... the state of the matter leaves much to be desired. Many polls report sad findings for many isolated reasons. For example, in the USA specifically: Jon D. Miller (1983) found that as many as 70% of people specifically self-describing as "attentive" to the scientific policy in the US were not scientifically literate. As recently as 2007, Matthew C. Nisbet and Chris Mooney declared that up to 88% of scientific information consumed by an average American came directly from the media, with its intrinsic biases, whichever way those might point. There are numerous psychological accounts of providing people with scientific evidence against their worldview only reinforcing said worldview. Humans are hopelessly prone to selective exposure to ideas they agree with (Freedman & Sears, 1965) and to doubling down on bad opinions due to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962) when faced with competing ideas.

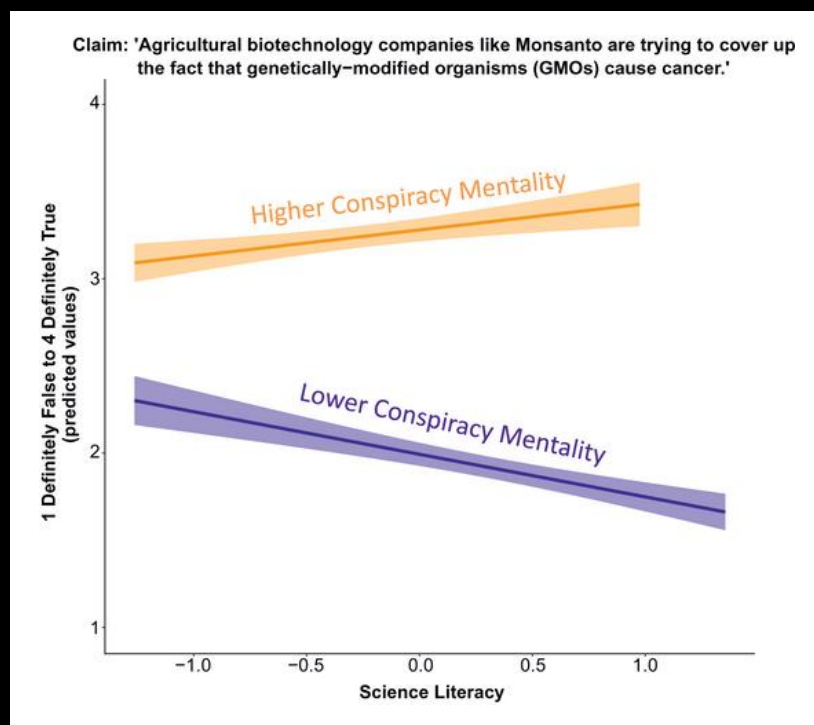
All of this has a very unhealthy result on the state of debate in most democratic societies where discourse can no longer rely on actual, scientifically supported data, because all produced scientific evidence is either wrong, manufactured to fill a need of a certain in-group, or wrongly dismissed, as is often the case with viewpoints seeking objectivity in what seems to be an increasingly polarised world.

The reality of this has been captured in a recent, captivating research paper by Landrum & Olshansky (2019). In an attempt to research the negative consequences of cultural (and otherwise) scientific illiteracy on society mentioned above, the researchers isolated several core beliefs of people, for example their tendency to conspiracy mentality, scientific literacy and political affiliations to name a few, and managed to draw links between them. For instance, they managed to visualise the significance of science literacy and conspiracy mentality as predictors of climate denialism in people of different political affiliations in the US:



Landrum & Olshansky, (2019), The role of conspiracy mentality in denial of science and susceptibility to viral deception about science.

We would like to think that educating people about the world would make us all more likely to believe in climate change, but that is not exactly the case. As the figures above show, for Republicans, being more scientifically savvy is a predictor of climate denial, rather than its acceptance. The same is true for unaffiliated individuals. This is admittedly an isolated example but it allows us to draw one conclusion, regarding the nature of pure scepticism. Some "sceptics" display nothing more than a conspiracy mentality which across the board shows an increase in climate change denial, however, people who draw on science in their scepticism seem to arrive at more desirable (correct? scientific?) conclusions. It is important to highlight how practical and civic scientific literacy offer much less support in finding the truth in this case, than cultural scientific literacy does!



[Landrum & Olshansky, \(2019\), The role of conspiracy mentality in denial of science and susceptibility to viral deception about science.](#)

The closing note of the 2019 paper, underscored by the above figure very neatly highlights the distinction I have been talking about in the previous paragraph. Here you can see it most clearly. An unsubstantiated claim, over-simplified to the extent it hurts the very core of my being, and the task is to either agree or disagree. On the left, the science illiterate end of the spectrum, you can clearly see that people who do not believe in conspiracies and those who do are almost in agreement.

The more scientifically literate respondents, however, have more extreme views. Although it did strengthen the beliefs of conspiracy-obsessed individuals, the general fact remains that an improved science literacy helped the respondents identify the more correct stance on the question.

All this talk of science literacy really comes at a peculiar time. I do not wish to mention any specific instances but there are many hot topics of discussion nowadays in which science is cited very often, sometimes more, and more often less accurately... People seem to hold a very positive view of science in general: 80% of adults say science has improved their quality of life and 70% of people say government investments in STEM usually pay off (Pew Research Center, 2015). At the same time, we clearly see people do not understand what science really is. There are things it just cannot do for us. It cannot really tell us how to live, what to choose, what to believe in. Science is a way for people to arrive at such conclusions and form their own arguments. Be mindful of people exploiting science for their own personal gain and try to build up a better, more intuitive grasp of the scientific method for yourself, too. Start small, but do try!

Marcin Andraka

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# Stranger's Kindness

I was running. Faster and faster, desperately trying to keep up with our mom. I vastly remember that we were sleeping when we suddenly heard a loud noise. It was similar to the horrible banging we could sometimes hear when the cold water was falling from the sky, but it was a lot closer. I was so scared, my whole body was so mortified that it couldn't move. As soon as we heard it, our mom was already up on her feet and urging us to run, to escape. I didn't see any of my brothers and sisters, but I followed mom, still a little dazed from earlier sleep. And then we heard another loud bang and a short whimper that I recognized as one of my brothers'. Then I stopped thinking. Danger, run faster, faster. Don't let anyone catch you. Hide, find a safe place to hide. Why aren't there any holes to hide in? Another thunder growled and I saw my mom tumble to the ground. Panicked, I ran and ran and ran, to get as far away as I possibly could. I didn't know how, but suddenly I found myself on a weird, stony ground, running for my life. The scary, loud danger was behind me and I had to escape. Suddenly, something big and black appeared to my side, and before I could even think it smashed into me. I felt immense, quick pain, and then I felt nothing.

....

When I woke up I was in some dark place, that smelled really peculiar. It wasn't similar to anything I experienced before. My body was wrapped up in something warm, and my movement was heavily restrained. Everything hurt. And the worst of all – I couldn't hear anything. I started panicking and trying to break free from my binds, unfortunately without success. I could see that the place wasn't very big as little glimpses of light were visible in the entire area. I started walking as fast as I could (which turned out to be not very fast at all with the binds) and trying to find some hole to escape. Additionally, I constantly shook my head in hopes of hearing something again. I wanted to go back to my mom and my siblings. My search for freedom didn't bring any results. I was alone in an unfamiliar place, without the ability to move freely or hear anything. My past memories were clouded and hard to reach, but I knew one thing for sure. My family was gone. The certainty of this thought didn't come from my mind, but from my heart. When I realized this truth, my whole body stopped working, and I collapsed in the corner of this weird place. My heart was aching and I couldn't do anything to heal it. I buried my

face in my bright fur and started crying. I just wanted to go back to my family, and to rest with them. I was so tired. With my eyes closed I tried to imagine that I was in the embrace of my mom and my siblings and soon drifted away, still whimpering quietly.

...

I woke up to a quiet creak of wood and a sudden ray of light that filled the room I was placed in. I lifted my head and saw a weird tall creature coming up to me. My ears started to detect at least a small portion of sounds around me. I immediately jumped up on my legs, and backed up into a corner. The creature's smell was a mixture of wood and water and a lot of bizarre odors I didn't recognize. I didn't trust it. From my mouth came a growl of warning, or at least I intended it to. I still couldn't hear. The creature kneeled down, and started to bark something.

"Hey now little guy, I come in peace, I swear"

I couldn't understand it, so I bristled a lot more, in hopes that this bizarre animal leaves me alone. The tone of its voice was soothing and calming, but I still didn't drop my guard. It could attack me at any given time for all I know. However, in its hand there was something that smelled delightful and reminded me of how hungry I was. Despite that I did not dare to approach the creature. Fascinatingly, it set down the food and backed off. I growled a bit more. Finally I decided to taste the source of the alluring smell. It was good. Really good. I completely stopped paying attention to the weirdo nearby. Only once I growled at it to not let it think that I didn't keep an eye on it anymore.

"Wow, you're a very angry little fox, aren't ya?"

I hadn't even noticed when the creature left. This weird behavior continued for a long time. The light in my place of stay was appearing and disappearing continuously never stopping and never faltering. The creature was also coming often. Sometimes with food (which was acceptable) and sometimes it was just staring at me and trying to communicate with its nonsense sounds.

I didn't trust it at all, but after awhile I understood that it didn't want to hurt me, at least for now. As long as it didn't come close I allowed it to be nearby. My hearing was slowly coming back and my whole body was starting to hurt less and less. The weird bindings on my legs were starting to really irritate me. With every visit the creature was getting closer and closer without me even noticing.



One time, after my usual meal I started to feel really sleepy and dizzy. I didn't even notice how the stranger came to me, really close. It started to touch my left leg. Despite the feeling of drowsiness, the fear of the monster overcame me, and with all of my might I managed to bite deep down into the flesh of the intruder. It quickly jumped away from me and I tasted its blood on my tongue...

To my utter bewilderment the stranger kept coming back after that. With time I managed to understand that it wanted to help me. Thanks to the creature, my legs were free of these weird binds (this time I didn't bite it) and everyday I had a good meal. One time I even let it touch my head lightly, before immediately pulling away.

Finally came the day when I didn't have any binds left and was hearing everything perfectly. The creature trapped me in some small prison and took me somewhere unfamiliar, but I found that I started to trust this two-legged weirdo. After a while the way out of the small prison was opened. At first I didn't realize what was happening. Beyond the container I saw... woods. Just like those where I once lived. There were no walls blocking the sunlight. I came out of the prison slowly, but understood that I finally could be free again.

I sprinted towards the trees, and didn't look back, even once. I never saw the bizarre creature ever again, but I remembered its kindness. The gratitude in my heart lasted as long as my life.

**Joanna Godun**

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# Do Animals Care?

Humans have highly developed awareness, self-consciousness and a variety of feelings like grief or kindness. We are concerned about the past and future. It's so obvious that we don't really have to mention it. However, I feel like this topic is much more interesting in the case of animals. Among some popular stereotypes regarding different types of them, there's actual scientific evidence of them "caring", whatever one means by that phrase. I feel like it's worth focusing on that topic and I'd love to do it in this article.

## **Do animals care about their future?**

We, humans, have an obvious ability to go back in time inside our heads or to try to predict some future events. However, such a skill is not that clear and obvious for animals. Despite that, there are a few hints that some of them actually are able to do so.

First of all, I'd like to mention a few studies concerning food. For instance, in one 2011 experiment, chickadees in the experimental group were offered sunflower seeds and then mealworms. On the other hand, animals from the control group were given solely seeds. I need to mention here that chickadees prefer eating mealworms to sunflower seeds but they can consume both. After several days of repeating this pattern, the chickadees in the experimental group ate significantly fewer seeds offered to them, because they preferred to fulfill their appetites with the mealworms they expected to follow soon instead. Such an intentional elongation of hunger was observed even when there was a half hour delay between the offer of seeds and the worms.

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Last, but not least I'll briefly recall a story of a stubborn monkey from a Swedish zoo. According to the story, it kept collecting and throwing stones at visitors. Not only did it use them only for that goal, but it also didn't collect stones during the off-season, when the place was closed. Using this example we might come to the conclusion that the monkey actually "foresaw" the future and knew exactly about an event (in this case, humans visiting the place) happening during a specific time period. The more obvious assumption would be that it was rather unhappy about its limited habitat but scientists for some inexplicable reason prefer the first one. Some have tried to discredit the findings of the studies by saying that the animals may have only been using associative learning rather than having a genuine understanding of the future, or by attributing the animals' behaviors to other forms of cognition other than cognition of the future. However, the authors of the studies mentioned above believe that the future cognition and mental time travel abilities really are present in some animals. In their opinion this is the simplest and most relevant explanation. Even though the situations presented were plain and not that demanding, they allow us to make a really interesting point.

### **Animals and their appearance**

This statement sounds less haunting and more obvious, but is still worth giving a look. Of course many species care about their "looks"- peacocks care about their eyespots, deers about their antlers and astrapias about their ribbon-tails, just to name a few. First person to detect a sense of beauty in animals was Darwin back in 1870's. He named it sexual attraction, basically attributing a look of the animal to its potential to have more offspring than its competitors. The Englishman was also the first person to reckon that things like vivid colors or beautiful plumes came into existence as a result of evolution. However, he didn't give an answer to one question: How did such preferences arise in the first place?

The answer was proposed by Robert Trivers. He connected the preferences with parenting. He argued that animals would be more likely to have strong preferences for beautiful partners if they have to invest a lot in their offspring. Not only that, many beautiful ornaments are also indicators of the fittest mate. Tail of a peacock is probably the most well-known example. The basic rule is that the bigger a male's tail, the harder it is for him to escape predators. Despite that, females prefer the males with the greatest amount of eyespots on their tail, and they actually have a good reason for that. A study published in 1994 showed that peacocks with bigger plumes had healthier and stronger offspring. It means that larger tails, and females' preference for them, are truly favoured by evolution and are a signal of genetic superiority. At the same time, it can be considered as just an automatic response with no emotions behind it. Similar tendencies can be found among other species like seahorses.

## **Do animals care about death?**

The answer for this question widely differs now from the one you'd get a few decades ago. That's because Ernest Becker in his Pulitzer-Prize winning book "Denial of Death" from the early 1970's stated that the image of death is too conceptual and reflective for animals to recognize. With years passing by, he's been proven wrong quite a few times. According to numerous psychologists, we have a justification to claim that chimpanzees have at least a bit of awareness of death. One example of that can be a group of animals from the Scottish zoo in Stirling. After the death of an elderly female the rest kept tending to its body, just to start avoiding it after some time. That behavior gives us an impression that chimpanzees can actually understand the change from being alive to being dead and have some "schemes" or, at least, a variety of reactions to it.

Special reactions toward the dead appear among other species as well, but their significance remains more elusive. Elephants commonly linger over the bones (especially tusks) of the dead of their own kind, sometimes even becoming agitated. They also tend to touch the remains with their trunks and feet (which bear sensitive receptors), making it even more interesting and mysterious. Birds like crows and ravens sometimes gather around, but rarely touch their dead companions, though they quickly eat the dead of other species. Orcas and bottlenose dolphins may try to keep dead calves at the surface of the sea, which looks like an attempt to give them a chance to breathe. On the other hand, none of these types of behaviour can truly mean that the animal is "aware" of death. A dolphin trying to keep a dead baby afloat may even suggest the opposite tendency, and for now it's open to interpretation. Teresa Iglesias, a biologist at the University of California–Davis, studied western scrub-jays gathered in groups of 2 to 10 around dead birds of their own, as well as other species. "The calls attract other scrub-jays, and they either join in calling or watch silently in the trees," she said. Concentrations, which lasted from a few seconds up to even 45 minutes, don't necessarily mean the birds understand death, according to the biologist. Perhaps they fulfill another purpose: Seeing a dead bird and its surroundings may give jays clues about what risks to avoid. Even if creatures as intelligent as elephants and chimpanzees really recognize that the dead are gone, they may not recognize that death eventually will come for all of them. This might be attributed only to humans. Also, it's said that grieving for a dead relative is possible without any knowledge of death whatsoever. It's a crucial claim, because if some species share our, human-like, painful awareness of the permanent loss mortality brings, then death may be a greater equalizer than anyone previously suspected.

## Why and when do animals adopt?

Firstly, it's worth talking a bit about adoption between animals of the same species. Such phenomena is highly connected with Kin Selection. What hides under this name is a process of adopting young animals of the same species to take care of and protect. However, this is explained as a result of certain instincts to protect representatives of the same group. It allows the family DNA to be passed and to survive. At the same time this can be explained by looking at it as a mutual link. For instance, adding more members to a group might help to find and secure food or just to create new social relations and add new companions. Many scientists believe that adoptions among animals might happen due to some kind of empathy. Some argue there is no actual proof of it, but their arguments are squelched by the evidence presented by the National Geographic scientists stating that "mammals have the same brain structures, the same system, related to emotion that we, as humans, have...Sometimes we don't give animals as much credit as they deserve for being complex, thinking, empathetic beings." Maybe animals, just like humans, can be empathic in order to find a release for their negative feelings or to help the lonelier ones among them?

Even though it works against the "survival of the fittest" concept, such examples are well documented among many different species: wild cats, dolphins, elephants etc. What's more interesting for me is cross-species adoption, which is much less common, especially in the wild, yet scientists still try to analyse behaviour of animals fully raised by other species. This was well-documented using cats as an example. A kitten raised by a hen actually didn't try to hurt any hen which would be unlikely in any other situation. The same goes for rats and parrots. It leads to a conclusion that it's possible to create unique, even surprising relationships between different species. Many friendship adjacent and positive interactions show that animals might have quite a high range of emotions because such relationships are rather against the basic concepts of survival and "egoism". Or maybe they are just instincts we're yet unable to understand?

## Ending

Can we say that animals are caring? That question seems to be too broad, and there's no easy answer, even though we do have some data and results of observations to base our assumptions on. We can't really give 100% confirmed statements about the emotional range of our companions on planet Earth. Maybe the vision of animals having developed feelings sounds more entertaining and sophisticated, but like in case of many things, we should give the smart people time to figure more things out in order to create a clearer perspective on that topic and stick to our predictions or imagination.

# HOW TO MAKE A HOMEMADE GARLAND?

With winter just around the corner and holiday season upon us, we will soon be cozying up in our homes with delicious food and warm drinks, surrounded by our loved ones. An important aspect of celebrations are the decorations we put up, which allow us to feel the holiday spirit – whether it's putting up a Christmas tree or lighting the menorah, we seldom could imagine our celebrations without them.

Furthermore, decorating our homes is an opportunity to bond with family, as we put on some seasonal music and light apple cinnamon candles. Speaking of fruit and beautifully aromatic condiments: orange and cinnamon hangings is a simple decoration you can throw together with a loved one this holiday season. It will allow you to spend some quality time together and will please the eye.

First, you will need a few oranges. Cut them into thin slices and lay them out on a baking tray lined with parchment paper. Bake them in a preheated oven at 140 degrees Celsius for an hour, flipping them over halfway through. Check every now and then to make sure they aren't burning and adjust baking time as needed – the thinner the slices, the faster they'll be ready. Once done, you should have a batch of dried oranges that will fill your kitchen with a pleasant aroma.



Next, you will need some cinnamon sticks. Edible cinnamon sticks are expensive, but no need to worry – you can get decorative cinnamon for a way more affordable price. They're available in larger supermarkets around the holiday season, sometimes in home decoration stores or online. If you want more variety in your decoration, you may also prepare some dried herbs that you find suitable for this project.

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After that the only thing left is to hang your new decorations around your home and enjoy your holidays!

***Gather your supplies and happy crafting!***

# THE ODD ONE IN THE BUNCH

Ancient Greece was home to many esteemed poets and thinkers whose works have in many ways impacted modern science, literature, and ethics. It shouldn't surprise anyone that the term 'philosopher' also originates from the Greek phrase 'philein sophia' meaning 'lover of wisdom'. You've surely heard of such great minds as Plato, Homer, Socrates, or Pythagoras (some lucky ones also got to work with his theorem during their math classes). Among analysis, critical thinking, and the development of thought (or ideas) one of the most representative notions of ancient Greek philosophy is the distinction between the different types of love.

We can distinguish three main 'loves' - eros, agape and philia. Each had a god who was representing it and also looking after people bound by this type of love.

'Eros' is passionate love or desire, typically sexual passion. It was often depicted as fiery, selfish, possessive, or even dangerous. The patron of lovers was none other than Eros - the god of lust, desire, and fertility.

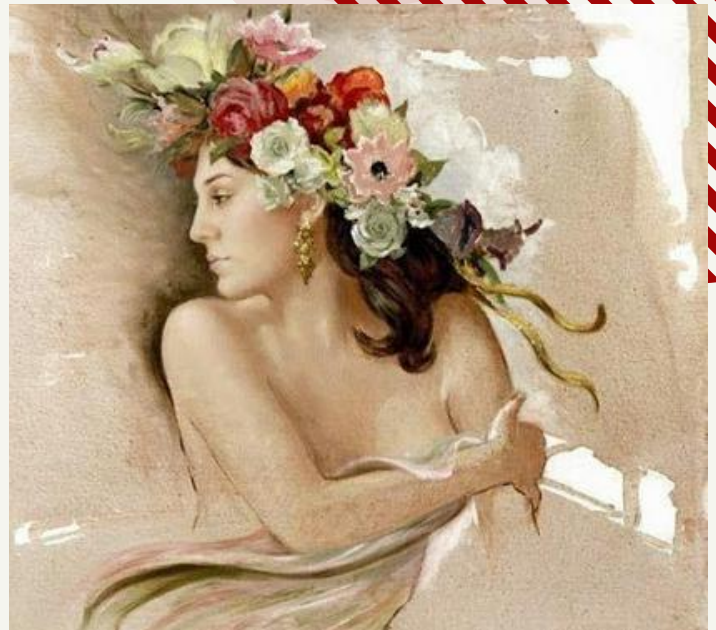
'Agape' is a more romantic love. It is unconditional and selfless, just a universal loving kindness. Through the Christian tradition 'agape' has also come to mean the sort of love God has for people. In ancient Greece, the goddess of romantic love and beauty was Aphrodite.

Last but not least, 'philia' the caring, friendly love. It was greatly valued by ancient Greeks - perhaps even more so than the previous two. 'Philia' could occur between friends, comrades, or close family members (most often siblings). Unlike Eros or Aphrodite, Philotes - the friendship goddess - tends to be forgotten. I find it a great shame, since she was truly unique among her family. But let's start at the beginning.

Philotes (roman equivalent - Amicitia or Gratia) was said to be a goddess or a spirit - personification of friendship, affection, and brotherly love. She also represented social interactions, relationships, comradeship and was described to be the force behind good things and creation (as opposed to the Neikeia - spirits of arguments and destruction).

The family tree is where Philotes stands out the most. Her siblings were quite the unappealing bunch. They belonged to the second generation of primordial pantheon of gods. Their mother Nyx - the goddess of night and darkness herself - apart from friendly Philotes, bore many children, most of which were rather gloomy beings:

'[...] the hateful Moros (Doom) and black Ker (Violent Death) and Thanatos (Death).



And again, the goddess murky Nyx, though she lay with none, bare Momos (Blame) and painful Oizys (Misery), and the Hesperides . . . Also, she bare the ruthless avenging Keres (Death-Fates) . . .

Also, deadly Nyx bare Nemesis (Envy) to afflict mortal men, and after her, Apate (Deceit) and hateful Geras (Old Age) and hard-hearted Eris (Strife).'

- fragment of Hesiod's Theogony

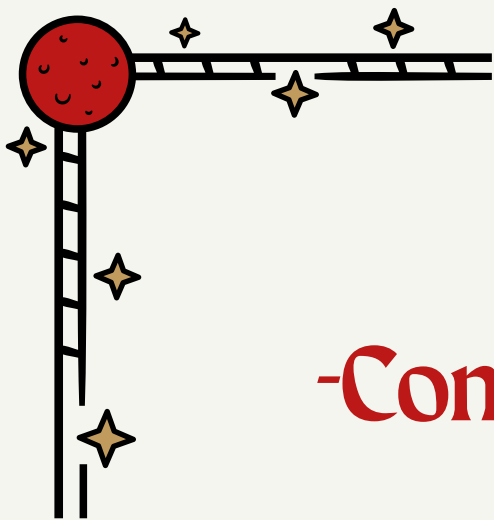
Philotes truly couldn't get any more different from her siblings. Apart from being generally depicted as gentle, bright and caring, the goddess was also strictly against blood or animal sacrifices. It is mentioned in many ancient Greek poems that she felt hurt and offended by life-destroying offerings and demanded such practices be stopped.

Sadly, the caring goddess is easily forgotten. She is only mentioned in poems. No temples, sculptures or vase-paintings (if any existed) survived to this day. That may be because she wasn't involved in any riveting scandals or wars like other gods were - we people often tend to prefer the amusing stories to the pleasant ones. Even nowadays, when we think 'love', friendship isn't usually the first thing to come to mind. But however plain or common Philotes or philia may seem, there is no denying that they influence people's lives greatly.

While her lovely family wrought havoc on humanity, Philotes looked after friends and companions and blessed them with harmony and peace. She is the case in point that being the odd one out is not always as bad as it seems.

**Olga Ryczkowska**

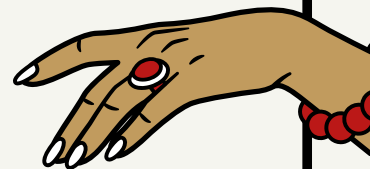
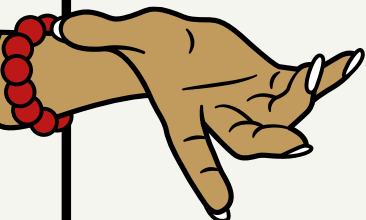




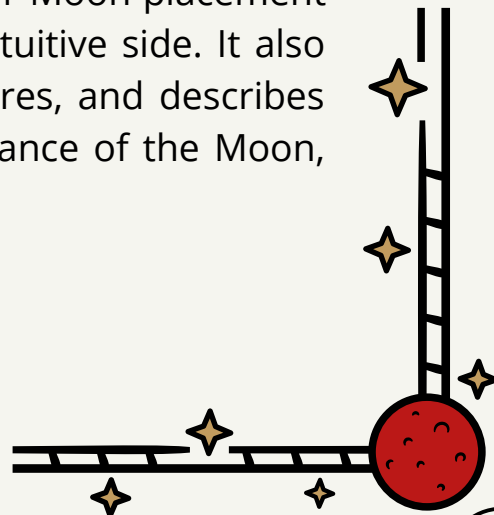
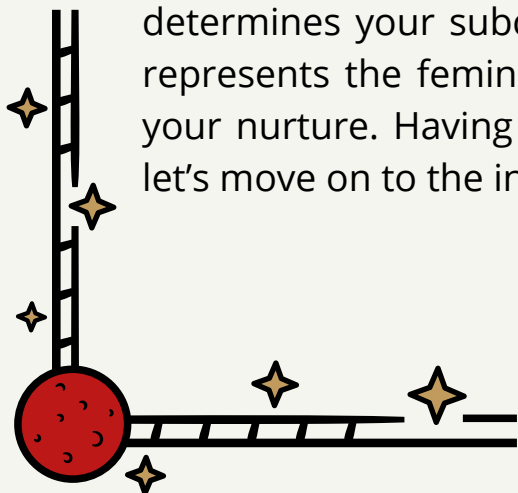
# -Complete Guide to- Astrology

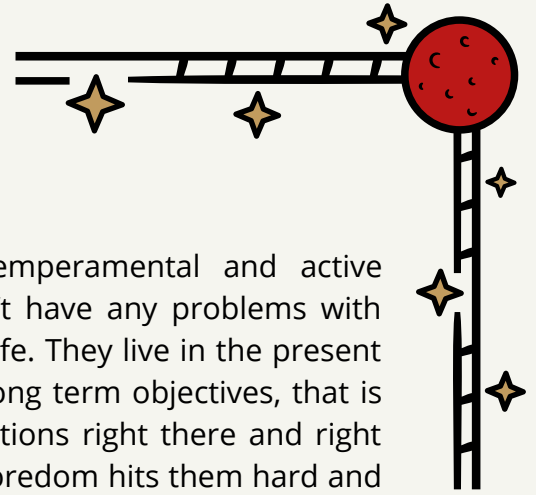
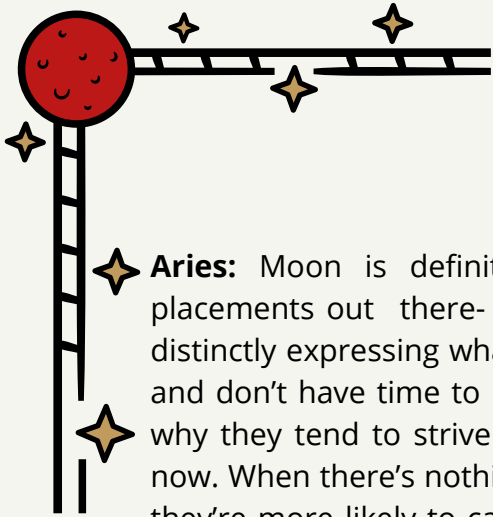
By Aleksander Skutnik  
Part 2: Placements' Meaning: The Moon

Hi! I'm Alex and I'm glad to have you here at our December issue of The IB Times. As usual, I brought you yet another dose of astrological knowledge and divination. Today, we're moving onto the next sign of the big three: The Moon. I hope you'll enjoy! :)



The Moon placement primarily defines your emotions- how you react to things, process your thoughts and express what you want to say. In contrast to the Sun, your Moon placement determines your subconscious and your intuitive side. It also represents the feminine and motherly figures, and describes your nurture. Having explained the significance of the Moon, let's move on to the individual placements:

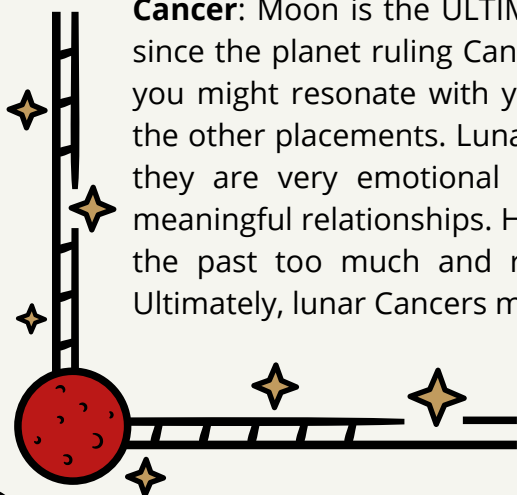




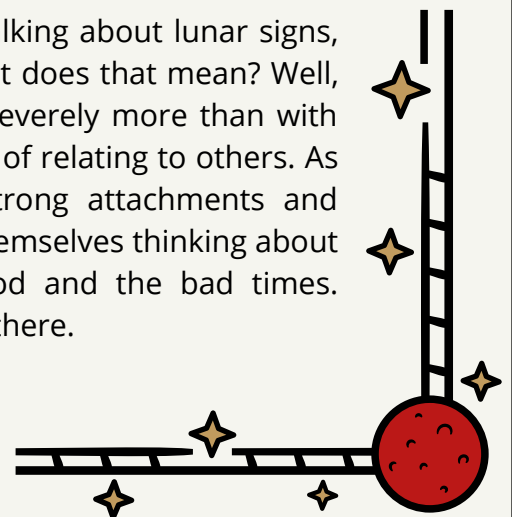
★ **Aries:** Moon is definitely one of the most temperamental and active placements out there- these people usually don't have any problems with distinctly expressing what they want and need in life. They live in the present and don't have time to look at the future or the long term objectives, that is why they tend to strive for the pleasurable sensations right there and right now. When there's nothing interesting going on, boredom hits them hard and they're more likely to cause mischief definitely not the most peaceful people to live with!

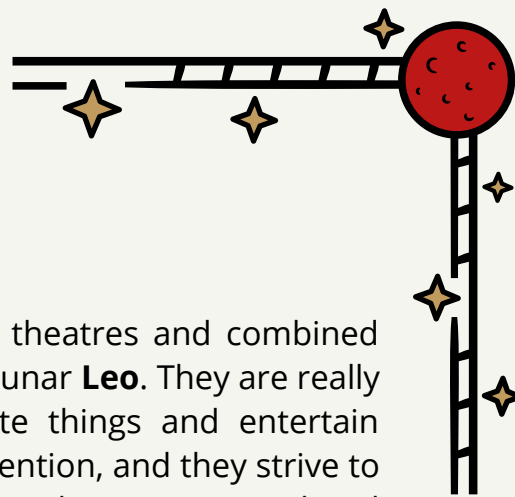
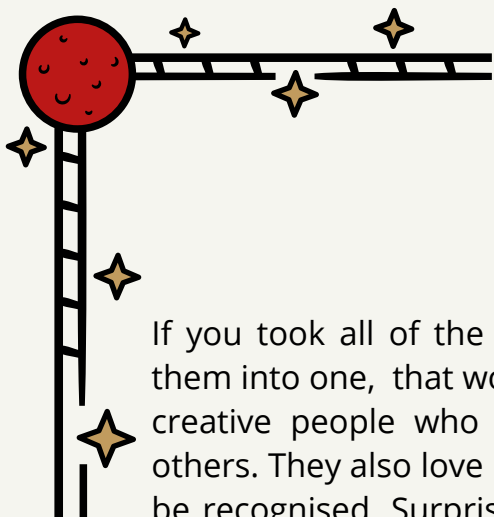
When talking about lunar **Taurus**, we predominantly see stability as their main principle. They are really careful when making new connections with other people, but when they really devote themselves to someone, they are loyal and won't walk away that easily. That is because Taurus value a safe and secure life and try to stay out of all the possible mess. They ADORE a little bit of self-indulgence and material goods, and their five senses are the key point here. However, they are prone to tedious routine and lack of development due to their distinct comfort zones and limits.

Curiosity, wittiness and everything that's nice - these were the ingredients chosen to create the perfect lunar **Gemini**. But the Universe accidentally added an extra ingredient to the concoction - constant stress and worry! I hope that this Powerpuff Girls reference helped you grasp a view on the lunar Gemini; they are communicative people in general who have a way with words, and are love meeting new people, although they might distance themselves a bit at first. They are said to be outstandingly social and feel comfortable in big groups of people, as this brings them new opportunities to experience new sensations and gain knowledge. Unfortunately, they can become really moody and irritable due to their constant restlessness and lack of stimulation- most of their personalities are in fact really expansive.



★ **Cancer:** Moon is the ULTIMATE combo while we're talking about lunar signs, since the planet ruling Cancer is the Moon itself. What does that mean? Well, you might resonate with your lunar Cancer slightly/severely more than with the other placements. Lunar Cancers are the masters of relating to others. As they are very emotional themselves, they value strong attachments and meaningful relationships. However, they might find themselves thinking about the past too much and reminiscing about the good and the bad times. Ultimately, lunar Cancers may be the best friends out there.



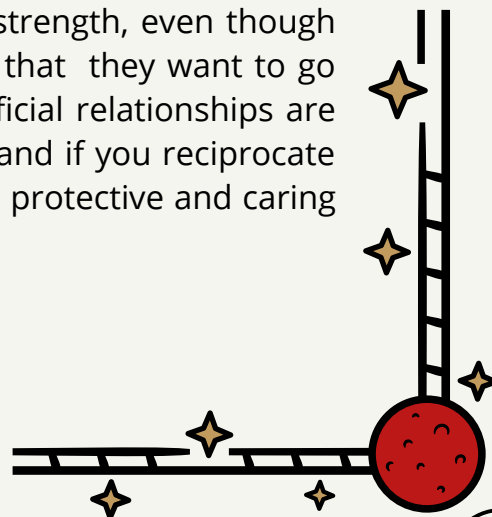
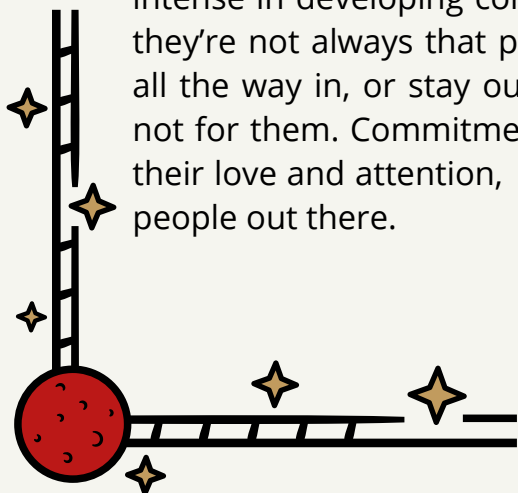


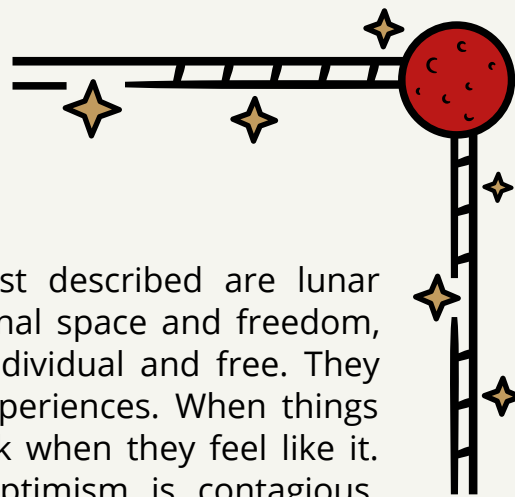
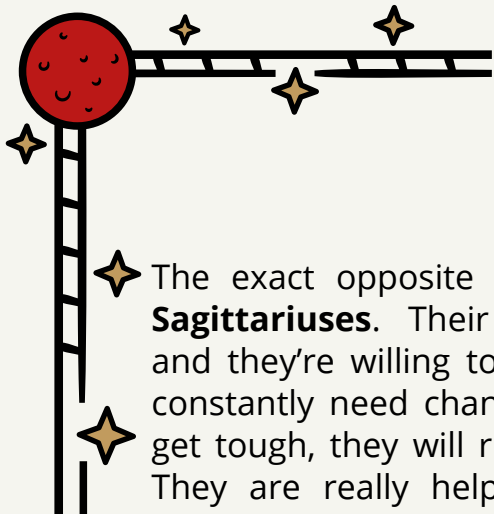
If you took all of the world's greatest musical theatres and combined them into one, that would be the epitome of a lunar **Leo**. They are really creative people who were destined to create things and entertain others. They also love being in the centre of attention, and they strive to be recognised. Surprisingly, they are inclined to take more control and possession of their significant others. If you know how to talk to them, you won't have any major problems with communication.

I really admire lunar **Virgos**, personally. What they value most is a plain life, yet they pay a lot of attention to details- and they also show love and affection to the small things. You can always rely on them, as they're really practical and reliable. Unfortunately, they tend to have problems with self-confidence and are sometimes skeptical towards life. Their work ethic and precision gets them the best results. If you want to enjoy a nurturing and mutual relationship, a lunar Virgo is more than perfect.

A really specific sign when talking about lunar placements is **Libra**. Compared to the other signs, lunar Libras genuinely look for someone to share their life with, as alone they will always feel dissatisfied. They find connections with others to be really beneficial and simply can't get enough of those. They are, in fact, really charming and sociable. Another aspect is their visionary outlook on life and the will to fix everything around them; because of that, they sometimes lose the joy of living in the moment.

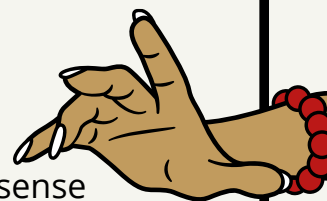
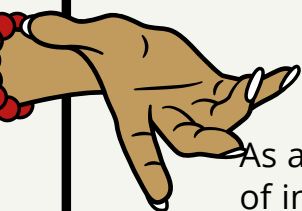
Lunar **Scorpios** redefined the concept of relationship; they have no barriers when it comes to emotions whatsoever and are extremely intense in developing connections. They radiate strength, even though they're not always that possessive. You could say that they want to go all the way in, or stay out of it completely- superficial relationships are not for them. Commitment is the key word here, and if you reciprocate their love and attention, they are one of the most protective and caring people out there.





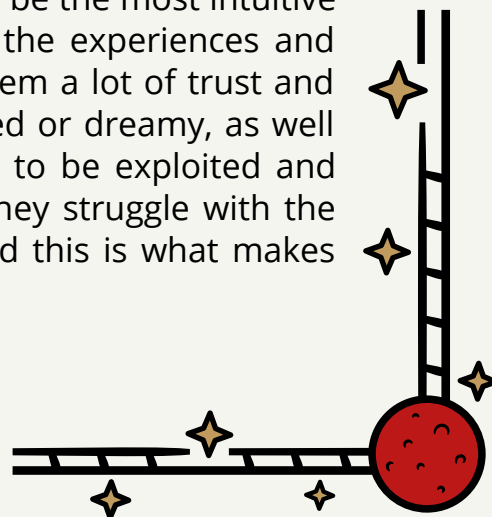
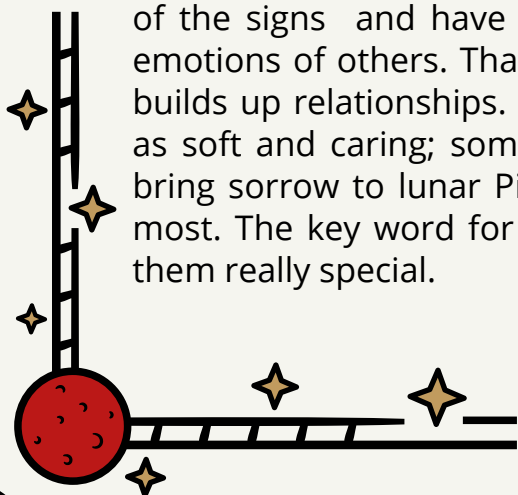
The exact opposite of the Scorpios I've just described are lunar **Sagittariuses**. Their greatest value is personal space and freedom, and they're willing to do anything to stay individual and free. They constantly need change, new people and experiences. When things get tough, they will run away and come back when they feel like it. They are really helpful spirits and their optimism is contagious. However, be aware while settling down or getting into a deeper relationship with a lunar Sagittarius, as things may change greatly when you won't even have the time to react.

Lunar **Capricorns** are probably the most emotionally distant of all of the signs out there, which often leads to distress while forming relationships with them. They are cool-headed and have great capacities of handling all sorts of emotions, and won't show them that easily. But that also has a lot of positives- calm and composed, they avoid getting hurt and succeed in gaining control. Their will to be essential overcomes all of the limitations they encounter.



As a lunar **Aquarius** myself, our most noticeable trait is a great sense of individuality and rising above the negative emotions. Growing up is the hardest part for lunar Aquariuses, as they often isolate and detach themselves from others in their strive for independence. When it comes to personal relationships later in their life, they give a lot of freedom to people around them, but pride themselves with kindness and holding a helping hand out for others at all times. In the long run, they are the most unusual and interesting people to be around.

Last but not least, lunar **Pisces** are considered to be the most intuitive of the signs and have no problem relating to the experiences and emotions of others. That's what usually gains them a lot of trust and builds up relationships. They may seem detached or dreamy, as well as soft and caring; some see it as a weakness to be exploited and bring sorrow to lunar Pisces, and this is what they struggle with the most. The key word for lunar Pisces is faith, and this is what makes them really special.



# A movie for the month & a month for the movie

December: three movies (we lied!)

1. The Handmaiden (2016)
2. The Favourite (2018)
3. Portrait of a Lady on Fire (2019)

(spoiler alert!)

short summaries of the movies:

## 1. psychological thriller/caper movie

A woman is hired as a handmaiden to a Japanese heiress, but secretly she is involved in a plot to defraud her.

source: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4016934/>

## 2. a period black comedy

In early 18th century England, a frail Queen Anne occupies the throne and her close friend, Lady Sarah, governs the country in her stead. When a new servant, Abigail, arrives, her charm endears her to Sarah.

source: [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5083738/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5083738/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1)

## 3. historical romantic drama

On an isolated island in Brittany at the end of the eighteenth century, a female painter is obliged to paint a wedding portrait of a young woman.

source: [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8613070/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_srsq\\_4](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8613070/?ref_=nv_sr_srsq_4)

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In the Christmas edition of our magazine, we would like to introduce You to as much as three movies - Santa came early this year and yes, You're welcome!

The reason for this particular choice of the pieces is rather obvious. All three films present romantic relationships between women and they all have been produced over the course of the last five years. Still, I'd rather get into the details that allow each of them to stand out and enjoy the well-deserved spotlight.

To weigh the movies against each other I watched the three of them all again on the same day. The Handmaiden was my first course, since this almost-3-hour-long masterpiece cannot be called an appetiser. Directed by Chan-wook Park and inspired by the novel *Fingersmith* by Sarah Waters, it raised a few eyebrows and quickly became one of the most recognisable works of 2016.

The movie, despite its poetic use of symbolism was met with general disapproval in Korea, since one of the characters involved in the affair is said to come from there. Several scenes from the film elicited general discomfort amongst the public, but also turned some heads.



The relation between Lady Hideko and Sook-Hee seems more coherent in the extended cut, which is approximately 167 minutes long. The theatrical simply lacks the long stares and subtleties that really allow the viewer to digest the complexity of the connection between the mistress of the house and her maid. Hideko and Sook-Hee share a unique and complex kind of love. Kim Min-hee and Kim Tae-ri seem to have a great on-screen chemistry and form one entity with their characters. The women display signs of interest in each other from the start and the apparent power imbalance probably just adds fuel to the fire. The 'famous enemies to lovers' trope is rather significant in this case. The contest between the two is not clearly expressed from the very beginning, hence a later plot twist. Their roots differ considerably, yet they share a mutual understanding of one another. Everything just falls into place when the two finally manage to escape together - it simply fits.



Nonetheless, I wouldn't describe their love as eternal. Their feelings flourish when they are both bewildered with a thus far unknown level of affection and develop when both characters continue their schemes under partial coercion. When they see an opportunity, they jump right in and conspire against their common oppressor. I think their relation was the effect of the (much deserved) hatred towards men present in their lives and the possibility of liberation rather than true and deep infatuation.

Another factor one might consider crucial is the power the sex holds in the movie. The plot itself revolves around deceit and desire and so those concepts pretty much guide the viewer through the story. The sexual aspect of femininity and how it reigns over people, mostly men, is visibly stressed here. The representatives of the female sex were portrayed in the movie as powerful and tragic, sexualised from their earliest age and ordered around to their oldest. This brings attention to another issue: the treatment of women as an accessory or as an accessible tool to earn a living. Although not really discussed, the piece mentions this problem in a short, yet blunt manner - after all, you reap what you sow.



My second choice was *The Favourite*, another Academy Award winner starring Emma Stone (she's not the only star of the story, though!), this time directed by Yorgos Lanthimos. The film presents an example of partner- and companion-ship disrupted by yet another relationship of the 'master and servant' dynamic. Queen Anne and the Duchess of Marlborough, Sarah, are involved in an ongoing affair when a new maid, Abigail Masham, arrives. She happens to be Sarah's cousin, which makes their competition over the queen's attention even more bitter.



The film itself brought me close to no joy. Contrary to *The Handmaid*, it left me feeling incomplete and miserable - but it's absolutely worth it. The viewer gets to admire how the shots, the editing, the costumes and, finally, the acting form a riveting and terrifyingly real image of egoism-driven manipulation. Olivia Colman does an impressive job as the queen herself, however, I must admit I was caught off guard when she was awarded the Oscar. Nonetheless, the on-screen connection between her and her first partner, played by Rachel Weisz, looks convincing and natural.

We are presented with two relations in this piece. I find the one between the queen and the duchess much more persuasive. Despite their frequent quarrels and unnecessary frowns, they seemed to be truly heartbroken when parted. In comparison, the bond between the queen and Abigail was rather shallow, since both the ladies had their own interest at heart. And while it may be suggested that Abigail manipulated Anne, they are both to blame. After all, it was Anne who decided not to look for Sarah, certain she is not returning home out of spite.

The dynamic between those two is another great example of an ongoing battle between lovers. Tender at times, they both seemed to be capable of immense cruelty committing it with no hesitation. A thing one cannot deny them is the devotion Anne and Sarah had to one another. They were each other's relief, anger, first gasp of air in the morning and night's final sorrow. Their lives revolved around the relationship. Although dysfunctional, it was beneficial for both of them. The toxic symbiosis bought them some happiness before it brought them to ruin.

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Portrait of a Lady on Fire, written and directed by Céline Sciamma, must be my personal favourite out of these three. Perhaps because despite the surprisingly moderate complexity of the plot, the actresses managed to gracefully perform a wide array of emotions and made me wish the movie lasted longer. To say the movie is beautiful would be an understatement. The divine landscape of the French coastline combined with some great use of simplicity is all a romance needs. One must take the time to appreciate the aesthetics. The warm-toned house, the sun bouncing off the rocks, the typical yet captivating blue of the sea, the softness of the fabrics the characters wore - it all feels effortless. The perfectly gentle scenery focuses the drama on the course of action and the characters as well. Red and green dresses seem to be beaming surrounded by the mellow background. The choice of the colours draws attention to the differences between Marianne (Noémie Merlant) and Héloïse (Adèle Haenel). Maybe opposites do attract?





Portrait of a Lady on Fire briefly addresses the issue of inequality as well. Héloïse, despite no will of her own, is destined to marry a Milanese man she has never met before. She could oppose the marriage, however that would probably result in her family name covered with infamy and possible disinheritance. Her decision (or lack thereof) is realistic, it simply expresses the norms of the 18th century.

Same as in *The Handmaiden*, symbolism is of great meaning when it comes to the story. Referencing the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice gives the movie a poetic touch and summarises the connection between the two women. Although rather succinct and unpretentious, the dialogue is filled with timeless agreement and mystery kept away from the eyes of the audience. The longing stares constitute a big part of the romance. Against all appearances, the silence only strengthens their connection. Over the course of just several days they managed to create an incredible attachment to one another. It would be a lie to say they loved each other, but they most certainly were in love. The feeling was so ethereal it felt like a fairytale - probably because they only had so little time together. Each moment was precious and each moment seemed wasted at the same time.



To create a distinctive type of romantic connection between the characters, in the times of massive production of love stories, is tricky, to say the least. None of these movies could be described as easy or shallow and they do demand a lot of engagement from the viewer. It is, however, a profitable transaction. Try and see for yourself! Although the films we've suggested are not exactly unheard of, maybe there's one you haven't seen yet? In that case, consider this article a sign. After all, it might be a great alternative to yet another rewatch of *Home Alone* ;)

m.a.

# GET ENTERTAINED!

LIGHTCRAFT PRESENTS A FILM BY NORMAN LETO  
**PHOTON**



with ANDRZEJ CHYRA

PHOTON is a three-part mockumentary giving off huge Ex Machina vibes. The first part summarises all the current knowledge about the development of matter. The second one depicts the biological and psychological knowledge about human beings, and in the last one, the scientist tries to show his divinations about what the future may look like. In my opinion, the film is worth watching especially for the scenes with Andrzej Chyra. It is certainly not a movie for everyone but if you are interested in physics, the creation of the world and the intricacies of all living beings, you should definitely give it a try.

## Photon

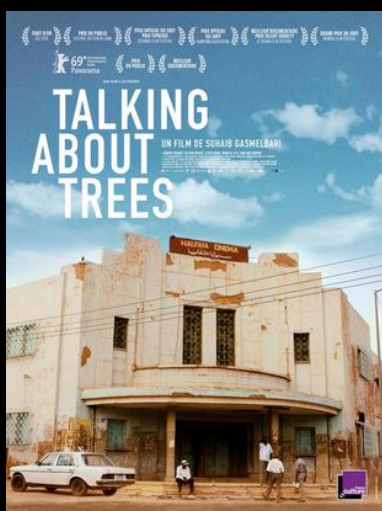
**Norman Leto, 2017 Poland**

**DOCUMENTARY, SCI-FI, DRAMA**

**IMDB 7.3/10 - AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX**

A three-part mockumentary giving off huge Ex Machina vibes. The first part summarises all the current knowledge about the development of matter. The second one depicts the biological and psychological knowledge about human beings, and in the last one, the scientist tries to show his divinations about what the future may look like. In my opinion, the film is worth watching especially for the scenes with Andrzej Chyra. It is certainly not a movie for everyone but if you are interested in physics, the creation of the world and the intricacies of all living beings, you should definitely give it a try.

Try also: *Ex Machina, The Wild Blue Yonder*



## Talking About Trees

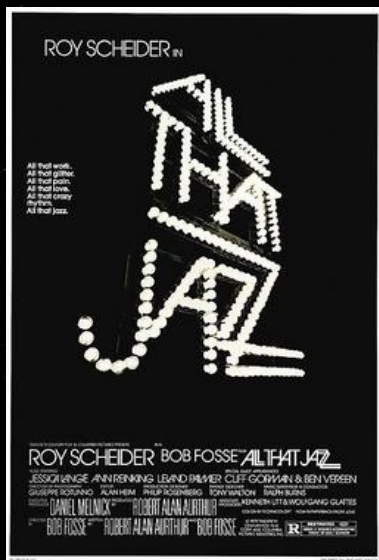
**Suhaib Gasmelbari, 2019 Sudan**

**DOCUMENTARY, BIOGRAPHICAL**

**IMDB 7.5/10 - AVAILABLE ON PRIME VIDEO**

A touching story about four elderly friends from Sudanese film club trying to revive a cinema during a time when making and showing movies is barely legal in their country. The movie fabulously depicts all the struggles that directors from Africa have to overcome to create anything in a country where artists are strictly controlled by the government.

Try also: *Arab Blues, Under The Sun*



# All That Jazz

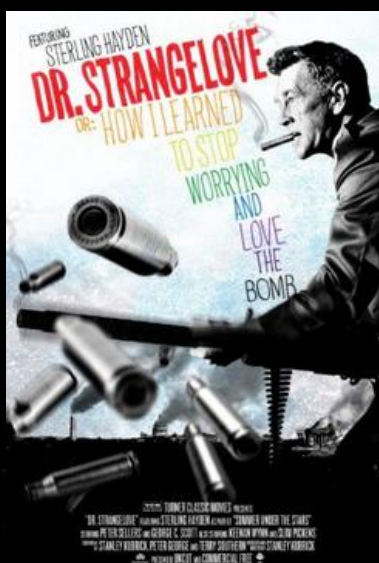
**Bob Fosse, 1979 USA**

**DRAMA, MUSICAL, ARTISTIC**

**IMDB 7.9/10 - AVAILABLE ON HBO**

Director and choreographer Bob Fosse uses a fictional character to depict a story similar to his own in a splendid, semi-autobiographical fantasy. A tragic story of a drug addict and workaholic, Joe Gideon, who is trying to create his magnum opus and find his own place in the world. Joe tries to balance his job and his complicated personal life. The story was inspired by real life: Fosse tried to make a well-known musical Chicago and edit his movie Lenny at the same time. Simultaneously, the author describes the brutality of Broadway in the 80s.

Try also: *Birdman, Chicago*



# Dr. Strangelove

**Stanley Kubrick, 1964 UK/USA**

**COMEDY, SATIRE, MILITARY**

**IMDB 8.4/10 - AVAILABLE ON HBO**

An insane USA military general gives an order which may possibly result in worldwide nuclear holocaust. Politicians and other generals do their best to prevent it from happening. An old-time, hilarious satire which shows how differently things could have turned out during The Cold War. Dr. Strangelove is, unfortunately, the only comedy created by the director because he would surely find great success further in the genre. Great casting and marvelous satire on the American 60s nuclear paranoia only bring out the universality and greatness of the movie.

Try also: *Inglourious Basterds, Jojo Rabbit*

**Jędrzej Wójtowicz**

# MUSICK - YOUR MONTHLY MUSIC FEVER

As a temporary break from my usual format, being a monthly selection of fresh albums, I want to shine a spotlight on one particular musical project - one some connoisseurs might already be familiar with, either unexpectedly or thanks to purposeful research, while some music lovers have been unaware of it.

## THE CARETAKER'S EVERYWHERE AT THE END OF TIME - A DEEP SONIC VENTURE INTO THE HUMAN PSYCHE

### A PECULIAR DISCOVERY

I came across *The Caretaker* by pure chance. During one of my regular evening searches for more or less any music that would spark my interest, the YouTube algorithm intrigued me with an album by the name of *An Empty Beyond This World*. This 45-minute-long ambient LP released in 2011 filled me with some warm nostalgia with

a side of an intangible sense of worry and tension. Comprised of mostly British ballroom jazz samples interspersed with glitches, vinyl scratches and echo topped by sudden, sharp progressions between tracks, the entity of the album for some reason left me in low spirits and an ethereal déjà vu I could not rid myself of. I must have heard at least one of these tracks before, I thought. I just could not remember when and how.

To be perfectly frank, it did not take me long to almost entirely forget *The Caretaker* (which might sound a bit tongue-in-cheek after you'll have read the full article) until I ran into a yet another project of his, which was once again brought to me by the mighty YT algorithm.



Everywhere at the End of Time first lured me in with its length - a hefty 6 hours and 30 minutes; second, with its unusual cover art, which was a painting of an object I was unable to accurately identify. Those two clues were somehow enough to gain my attention and click the play button. And oh boy, was it a listen.

#### WHO IS THE CARETAKER? A BRIEF FOREWORD

At that time, I chose to take a step back before listening and first research the mysterious Caretaker character a bit; thus, I discovered the man behind the moniker - James Leyland Kirby. I skimmed through descriptions of his discography and familiarised myself with reviews of both An Empty Bliss... and Everywhere... What I found there intrigued me. The *déjà vu*

I had previously experienced was, of course, a desired effect chosen by the musician. Forgetting and remembering is a constant trope in Kirby's work as The Caretaker, who is fascinated by human memory and specifically how it gradually declines. The use of various glitches amongst the vintage samples is not accidental - every piece from the project is supposed to replicate the effects of memory loss, and it does so in a piercingly haunting way.

#### EVERYWHERE AT THE END OF TIME

Everywhere... was released in the timespan of 2016-2019 and it consists of six interconnected stages composed of 50 tracks in total. Each stage matches a certain stage of dementia - a set of symptoms experienced by those suffering from it. The stages are complemented by artwork by Ivan Seal; his brilliant paintings really match the levels as they are progressively more ambiguous. Kirby has succeeded in portraying this bone-chilling image of a disintegrating mind through, yet again, the use of samples and motifs from ballroom music, some of which had already made an appearance on earlier albums of The Caretaker. Altogether, this extensive record is nothing short of soul-crushing; as one progresses through the stages, they get a glimpse of what might happen to their psyche in their distant future - their own End of Time.

## THE MUSICAL EXPERIENCE - A BREAKDOWN OF THE STAGES

Stage 1 exudes tender feelings of nostalgia with a hint of uneasiness. The sounds of old fashioned jazz by itself could be named a sonic equivalent of sitting in a rocking chair by a fireplace, looking back on one's life and reminiscing on the best of memories. That being said, the variety of distortions and reverbs used throughout the stage plants an ominous seed in one's ear; the memories, as fond as they may be, are noticeably blurred. The stage is, as described by one of the track titles, "beautiful and transient". Still, however warm might the initial impression of the stage one be, something is distinctly off about it. There is a crack in the retrospections; a crack that is not going to retreat).

Stage 2 resembles Stage 1 to a certain extent. The sound effects of reverberation, white noise and crackling increase our awareness of the fact there's something wrong happening. If we stick to the narrative of the tracks symbolising memories, those memories are now more drawn-out and heavy; it's as if the person reminiscing on them is slowly but surely getting overwhelmed and tired, entering an almost dreamlike state. Warped or not, it clearly sounds like music. The overall perception as of now can be described by the title of track D1 - I still feel as though I am me. The way ahead feels lonely, though.

Stage 3 is the last awareness stage. Static and distortions deepen even more; some of the tracks are unexpectedly ended or start off with white noise alone. If we continue to compare this phase to a patient experiencing dementia, they are still conscious - however, this grasp on reality is short-lived. The jazz is still here, but it is progressively more conspicuous that confusion is starting to set in. This state is reflected in the track names, too; they are more disorganised and absurd than before, consisting of seemingly metaphorical phrases with an increasingly ominous feeling.

Stage 4, the first of the post-awareness stages, where the patient is no longer aware of the problem, is ridden by chaos and forgetfulness. From this point onwards, there is no proper musical structure; actual instruments or melodies grow beyond recognition, with only brief snippets of jazz that last a mere few seconds. Although by now it is apparent that the memory has become highly defective, this stage is the last one when we can still make out some bits and pieces of hope for the future of the mind; a state of a peculiar bliss peeking through the worrying confusion and disorder. The memories are still here, they just no longer make any sense. The mind has become.

Stage 5 gives in to complete disarray. Any remainders of music are now blocked by the ambient darkness of the music effects being used. The stage is more or less akin to drone or noise music; there is no faith or optimism to be found here, except for a handful of the last considerably stable points in the duration of the fifth level, where the memory seems to return for a few final times before surrendering to an absolute turmoil. The track titles now reference biological changes taking place within the brain of those affected with variations of dementia - for instance, synapse retrogenesis.

### The Finale - Stage 6

The sixth and final stage of Everywhere... is the one that horrifies me the most. The entirety of Stage 6 seems like it has been specifically aimed to drive the listener insane. Layers upon layers of careful music manipulation have now reached a distressing point where we fully comprehend how severe the degeneration of the mind has become.

Unpredictable drones, roars and inharmonious noises appear to be emanating from a bottomless pit; swirling notes feel like they are entailing a barrier separating the listener from comprehensible music, which now feels painfully out of our reach. Kirby, to some extent, tests our patience; listening to the Stage 6 feels like watching a dreadfully long sunset and trying to make out when exactly day becomes night. The power of the whole project's length manifests quite evidently here - we cannot quite tell the point where the sensation of the unending isolation and irksome confusion proceeds to fade away and unfolds to display what the memory has ultimately turned into: nothing but a dull, grey pulp of what once was a functioning mind; a blank slate. The last track of Stage 6 has a bit of a different atmosphere to it - Place in the World Fades Away seems a tad more peaceful and lucid. It is the final point of coming to terms with the engulfing deterioration, accompanied by organ drones. It feels painfully lonely, though; like a never-ending, yet somehow light abyss, equivalent to a bright lit room with no walls and an inaccessible ceiling. Almost when Place in the World... ends, a choir resembling sound materialises, performing something like a mournful hymn, a deeply upsetting melody which cannot quite be put into proper words. This is the last piece of what's left of any self-awareness of the mind. What follows is absolute, unmitigated silence - a minute of emptiness, completing this profound 390-minute-long project with a symbolic image of death. The Caretaker has now passed away, and we are left on our own to ponder the heart-wrenching experience of someone who is in the process of losing their mind.

## ORIGINS & INFLUENCES

The roots of *Everywhere at the End of Time*, as well as the whole *Caretaker* project, could be traced to several different sources of inspiration. The entire *Caretaker* persona taken on by Kirby could provide material for several separate articles like this one, thus I will focus only on the project reviewed by me this month.

*Everywhere...* and its components quite visibly parallels the stages present in Alzheimer's disease, as a decline that ranges respectively from mild, through moderate and moderately severe, ending with a very severe disintegration. The artist behind *The Caretaker* identifies himself as mesmerised with memory and its recall; when working on his records, Kirby studied the topics of amnesia and dementia closely. This curiosity drew Kirby to convey the difficult subject of memory loss through a unique, sonic approach.

Kirby has pointed out multiple different influences that led him towards this approach to the human mind and how it can shatter. One of them is an excerpt from a well-known soundtrack, *The Shining* - specifically a fragment taken from the haunted ballroom scene. This small snippet mainly inspired the first *Caretaker* records, but certainly set the grounds for his later work I am describing here today. Kirby also mentions the musical drama *Pennies from Heaven* and the 1960s horror *Carnival of Souls* as his sources of inspiration. Some have accused the artist of unduly aestheticising dementia, as he depicts it through music that could still be viewed by a few as something enjoyable. Kirby responded to these claims by saying he respects the subject of this illness too much to romanticise it. After all, there are experts in the field of dementia who have highly praised the musician for bringing light to the subject.

## EVERYWHERE... REVISITED: THE CARETAKER & TIKTOK

In September of 2020, *The Caretaker's* project resurfaced on the TikTok platform. This comeback manifested mostly through teenagers sharing their experiences with the lengthy piece, most of them describing their perception of it as severely distressing, if not borderline traumatising, as they documented their encounters with each stage. The act of morphing the record into some sort of a challenge might raise some eyebrows, as people who have had experiences with memory loss in their lives might find this as too light of an approach.



Individual experiences do not seem very lighthearted, though: multiple users reported feeling numb, crying, or even undergoing minor memory problems. The challenge, which to some extent was also a test of perseverance, could also trigger upsetting personal memories in some. Kirby himself has made a stance on the rising popularity of his project due to social media. The author of the project responded to the situation in quite a positive way, as he agreed that the 'challenge' form the record has taken is a starting point for shared experiences, needed now more than ever. To be frank, out of all the modern social media platforms, TikTok might be the one that's the most successful in reaching the younger generations, and if that sort of a challenge raises awareness of dementia and Alzheimer's disease amongst people who would have otherwise neglected the subject, the outcome of the overall situation seems positive as far as I am concerned.

## CONCLUSIONS?

Everywhere at the End of Time is a project that could inspire hundreds of pages of musical and psychological analysis. While, of course, some might consider it just a pretentious ambient album, I am of the opinion that it does a marvellous job at blurring the line between a drone record and an experience that goes beyond music. Hours upon hours that Kirby devoted to manipulating samples of music and turning them into an unrecognisable unit have paid off - the six and a half hours of material, when listened to in their full configuration, can really have a profound emotional impact on the listener. They left me feeling helpless - as if I were frantically struggling to recall a memory that was no longer there. If listening to Everywhere at the End of Time bears at least a little resemblance to what the actual dementia patients go through, memory loss is certainly one of the most terrifying experiences that could happen to the human mind.

- AMS



THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WAKING UP IS THE HARDEST PART OF MY DAYS.



I THINK I DESERVE MORE TIME TO SLEEP. SLEEP IS THE ONLY TIME I'M EVER REALLY FREE.



FREE FROM CAPITALISM... FREE FROM EVIL INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE GOVERNMENT OR SCHOOL.

BEING AWAKE IS TORTURE, ESPECIALLY NOW, WHEN EVERY DAY FEELS THE SAME.



BUSY WITH THE SAME MEANINGLESS TASKS,



NO PURPOSE OR DIRECTION,

JUST WAITING FOR WHEN I'LL BE ASLEEP AGAIN.





# SABAISM

i relish the wonder of stars  
the gaseous atoms  
each and every one  
the families of various kind  
the pride  
the link  
that survives every moment  
every thought  
every heart  
just to become spread out  
every night

g . p .

