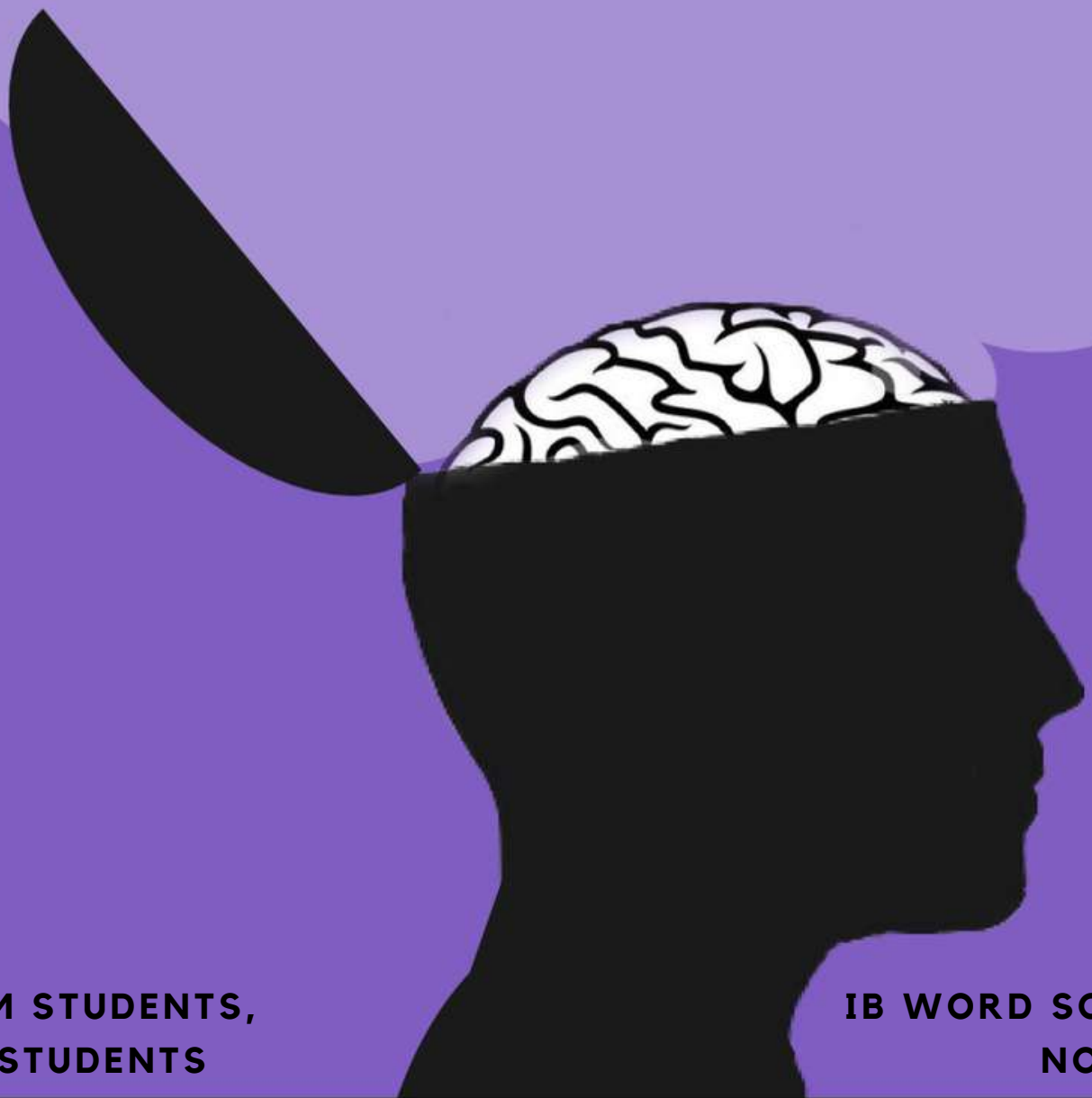


THE IB TIMES

FEBRUARY 2021



FROM STUDENTS,
FOR STUDENTS

IB WORD SCHOOL
NO. 6159

editorial note

Open-mindedness is a *noble* feature. It limits our egoistic nature and allows us to see other people's perspectives. It's a way to broaden our horizons and discover new aspects of life. Being open-minded means to be open to contrary opinions and accept various traditions, religions, and lifestyles, which are the key features in modern society. In this issue, we would like to encourage all our readers to reflect not only on the drawbacks and advantages but also on everything that is in-between. The world isn't only black and white, there are also shades of gray that we tend to ignore. Be open-minded and look from various angles at the problem, perhaps you'll find a completely different world behind the curtain.

open our eyes and see

Aurelia Adamczak

Our team:

Editor in chief - Aurelia Adamczak

Vice editor in chief - Julia Chwatko

Graphic Designers - Jędrzej Wójtowicz,
Kasia Żamojda, Wojciech

Burbula, Szymon Łukaszewicz

Social media - Michalina Anikiej

Contributors in this edition:

Urszula Malecka, Weronika

Gromek, Joanna Godun, Marcin
Andraka, Lena Przybyłowska, Olga

Ryczkowska, Aleksander Skutnik,
Jędrzej Wójtowicz, Magdalena

Alifier, Julia Kotowicz

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MEAT THE FUTURE

Meat has been a crucial part of the human diet for quite a long time. Our cavemen ancestors hunted animals with great determination to obtain a nutritious (if not the only) meal, leather and bones. Animal products are indeed rich in vitamins and minerals but nowadays they are not the only source of essential nutrients. What's most important, however, is the suffering the livestock farming causes. Animals are often held in small, dirty spaces, fed with antibiotics to grow as quickly as possible and then get ruthlessly slaughtered in order to land on clients' plates. Said clients probably don't even appreciate this piece of food that used to be a living creature. Not to mention the environmental impact that stockbreeding carries...

Pretty convincing reasons to give up meat, aren't they? But there's one little thing - it's simply too tasty.

Don't worry, though, science is here to solve this dilemma.



An artificial chicken nugget from Just Eat



Live tasting of the first cultured patty on british television in 2013

Lab-grown meat was first developed in 2013 by a Dutch scientist, who used genetic engineering techniques to create an artificial patty. The concept behind the method is fairly simple - it's based on cellular agriculture and in vitro. The first step is to isolate a small number of satellite muscle cells from an adult animal. The physiological function of those satellite cells is to participate in muscle regeneration: they are not yet muscle cells, but stem cells that are able to multiply and, under the influence of certain hormones, to differentiate into muscle cells. The satellite cells are grown in bioreactors which are sterile enclosures containing nutrient liquids, under stimulation with growth factors to induce rapid proliferation. After the cells have multiplied, they are encouraged to form strips, much like how muscle cells form fibres in living tissue. These fibres are attached to a sponge-like scaffold that floods the fibres with nutrients and mechanically stretches them, 'exercising' the muscle cells to increase their size and protein content.

Then the fibres are organised into desired shapes and ready to be cooked. So far, scientists haven't managed to achieve structures other than patties, nuggets or one-centimetre-thick steak.



Petri glass containing cultured fibres



Bioreactor

Although at the cellular level both real and lab-grown meat look the same, a true meat lover would surely spot the subtle difference in flavour, as the artificial one doesn't contain certain chemicals that stimulate human taste buds and is not as rich in fat as the traditional meat, what in turn alters slightly its texture. After spicing and preparing it properly, however, distinguishing real from fake is quite a challenge. Feel like eating a synthetic burger now? \$1,000, please.

Unfortunately, price is still the biggest obstacle that hinders introducing a lab-grown meat to the market. The first cultured patty cost \$300,000 to produce and even though, in comparison, the price has been driven down significantly since, it is still quite simply unaffordable. The most expensive part of the process is obtaining a vegan nourishing serum, which must be rich in essential chemicals and thoroughly examined by scientists. The cost of buying and running specially-designed bioreactors also contributes to the price profoundly. Nevertheless, owners of the numerous artificial meat start-ups believe that if the technology is scaled up to the level of an industrial food process, the lab-grown patty would reach the value of the traditional one in a few years. For now, you can indulge in a \$1,000 test-tube steak in some fancy restaurants in Singapore.

Is this how the diet is going to look like in decades? Nobody knows. We surely have to drive meat consumption down, as both the environment and our own health won't stand its effects for too long. And you? Would you give artificial meat a go?

Urszula Malecka

Dog Training 101

Has an idea of teaching your dog cool tricks or making them stop pulling the leash crossed your mind? If so, this is the best place you could've found yourself in!

We need to set the basics first: The most important aspect of the training is understanding your fluffy friend. Observe how your dog behaves. There are no two identical snowflakes - it's exactly the same with dogs. It may feel overwhelming at first, but after a while you'll notice a stronger bond and understanding forming between the two of you. This connection is the foundation to every successful training.

Conditioning:

It has been proven time and time again that reinforcing desired behaviors and punishing the unwanted ones results in solid and satisfactory results. With that being said, when training your dog, always have a pouch of snacks on you, and everytime your dog sits, lays, walks by your side etc., reward them with a piece of the delicacy. You could enhance the effect of the conditioning by adding to the reward- act excited, pet your dog, talk in a higher pitch- dogs love to see their owners proud of them.

Time:

Dogs don't understand the concept of the time and the impending doom of it. Anyways, it is important for you to reward your pet IMMEDIATELY after the desired behavior occurs. Once you get home and give them a snack, they will not understand that it's what happens when they listen and obey to your commands. Dogs need to have a direct listening--->reward example.

A list of tips:

1. Dogs don't speak human language. Giving your dog command is like somebody started talking to you in Thai, while you've never learnt that language. Keep your instructions clear. Set for a way you give your dog orders. While for us, humans there's not much difference in "sit, Peanut" and "Peanut, sit down", our fluffy friends treat them like totally different commands.

2. Patience, patience, patience! Rome wasn't built in a day, and likewise your dog won't learn everything you want them to in a short amount of time. Understand that it takes a lot of practice and effort to get your pet to understand all your commands. Under any circumstances DON'T get mad and scream at your dog. It will certainly discourage your dog or could even ruin all progress up to that point.

3. Don't overwhelm your fluffy friend. Learning one command at a time is definitely more than enough. Take baby steps and you are going to see amazing progress.

4. Always end training sessions on a positive note- leave skills your dog nails for the end of the training for the day. You could also reward them with a larger snack like intestinal bone or anything else they love. That way your dog will have something to look forward to and will likely want to finish the lessons quicker and the results will be more satisfactory.

I wish you a lot of patience and strength on your training journey. Remember you and your dog can do anything you want to! Until next article,

W.G.

A Moment of Calm

It was a Sunday and everything was going wrong.

Which was truly not a surprise at all. It seemed like the universe was dead set on making Sam's life miserable in every possible way that it could think of and every chance it got. His parents had another argument. Because of him. He was failing horribly at school, much to their disappointment. The worst part was that they weren't even surprised. Sam suspected that they always had known that it would happen, given the experiences of their own life. Finishing highschool? It was just not something anyone in his family ever did. But nevertheless, they gave him a chance. And he threw it away. And now, they seriously contemplated letting this pipe dream go, and putting Sam to work. If they could (barely) survive without a highschool diploma, so can their son. The burning feeling of failure and shame was rolling in his chest, clawing at his bones and skin, desperately wanting to get out. And it did. Right into the face of some random man on the street in front of Sam's block. The boy didn't even mean to hit him, but when the man cursed at him for jabbing him with his shoulder, the feeling just sprang out into his fist and with passion connected it with the stranger's surprised face. A second later Sam found himself on the ground, and although the feeling in his hand was gone, it transferred to his red, bruised jaw. Tears filled Sam's eyes, as he sprung to his feet and started to run. It was always the easiest way to cope. Run, far away from it all.

Before he knew it, he was on a different street, the one which led to his school. At the thought of it, the burning tears continued to flow so generously that he couldn't see a thing anymore. He stopped and sat down at the stairs of the nearest building, not really looking where he is exactly. The tears were finally stopping, but the feeling still lingered inside him.

"Are ya alright, son?" he suddenly heard a deep, hoarse voice. He looked up and saw a large man, dressed in a dark uniform eyeing him with a worried look. Near his feet a grey, roughed up cat was lingering. "Y-yes, sir. I'm fine." Sam said, clearing up his throat, and trying hard to wipe the tears from his cheeks. The man raised one eyebrow, but didn't comment. They remained in silence for a while. Sam thought that the stranger was waiting for him to walk away, so he started getting up when the man pointed at something behind them. "If ya want, ya can go in. Today's Sunday." A big grin lazily spread out on his face. Sam looked up at him with a confused expression. "There's free entry on Sundays" The man explained. He walked up to a large wooden door and opened it with one arm, then stayed that way, as if waiting for something. The cat stayed behind and continued to eye Sam with an indescribable gaze. At last, the boy looked around to see where he chose to cry his eyes out. He recognized the building. It was the old art gallery which he passed by every day (or every second - or third day) on his way to the school. He never paid it any attention. He never paid much attention to art overall. It was just not something he would focus on. Food, basketball or school, yeah sure, but never "art".

"Are ya goin' in?" The man asked in a friendly tone. Sam's heart skipped a beat, as he thought to himself: "Why not?". Hesitantly, he went inside, following the man into the old building. The gray cat stayed outside and continued to ponder its own matters.

Inside of the building was nothing like Sam thought it would be. He expected some grand stairs, marble statues and paintings in golden frames like those on the photographs in his friend's history textbook. Regal, cold and intimidating. However, before him appeared something completely different. The art gallery was actually rather inviting. The man who turned out to be working here, led Sam to the big room which was full of paintings, screens and strange installations. "C'mon, don't be shy. Not a lotta folks here lately, ya can marvel all ya want". The man smiled again. He seemed to do that very often, judging by the wrinkles around his eyes and mouth. Sam looked at the title of the exhibition. "Red skies and yellow dreams". He didn't know what that meant. He began to eye the contents of the gallery and he thought that all of this was just plain nonsense. Those "artworks" as others called them didn't make any sense to him. Weird installations seemed like they belonged more in the trashcan than to be on a display in such an important feeling place. He didn't understand it. Trash and nonsense. Reluctance overcame him, and all he wanted to do at that moment was to just leave this place. He strolled the corridors of the large room with hesitancy. That awful feeling felt stronger again, scorching his entire being from inside his chest, to the still painful bruise on his jaw. And then... then he saw a painting. Later, when Sam was trying to recall what exactly was on it, he realised, he couldn't. He didn't remember. The only thing he knew was that it was very colorful and at the sight of it, something inside him moved. Not in his chest, but in his heart. He also realised that that was the most cheesy thought that ever crossed his mind. But it was true. It did not occur to him at first. Several minutes escaped as he was standing in the same place, with his sight glued to the... artwork. Yes, it was truly an artwork. Although he wasn't entirely sure what that word meant, he knew that it was accurate. With no small surprise he caught himself thinking that this whole place wasn't really that bad. The bizarre videos displayed on various screens showing people doing just the most absurd things like suggestively eating a mushroom in a dark room were silly. And maybe it was a little bit appealing to see dull, everyday objects being put on pedestals and referred to as "art". Not royal or intimidating in any way. Just sort of... different. And, in a weird way, reassuring. The burning in his chest weakened, and then, eventually it disappeared.

Sam didn't know how much time passed, but when the sun started to set, he thought it would be a good idea to return home. His problems didn't stop bothering him at all, but amazingly, his mind was clearer, and his heart - calmer. As he was leaving the building the nice man asked: "See ya next week?" Sam was startled at first, but then he raised one corner of his mouth and nodded. "Yeah."

The grey cat was watching him as he walked away.

Joanna Godun

Brain opener

Open-mindedness is the receptiveness to new ideas and ability to consider them only by their merit, without one's judgement being clouded by irrational or baseless thoughts. However, we often come across sentiments such as this one, voiced originally by prof. Walter Kotschnig: "Keep your minds open – but not so open that your brains fall out". This humorous statement highlights the need for a solid grasp on our reality. One ought to be open-minded, but not to the extent of becoming "foolish" due to "bad" ideas infiltrating their brain (whatever that really means). In this article I will highlight the human imperfections that make thinking a skill that's difficult to improve. I hope this piece will deconstruct what you might think you know, my dear reader, and forcefully expose you to ideas you may never have considered before.

The aforementioned innate need for being in touch with what is true is a reasonable response to our constant doubts and conflicting ideas, of which most of us hold several very dear. It is my belief that the more we think about the limitations of a single person's brain: isolation, cognitive biases, perspective, the more we all yearn for an objectively pre-agreed moral, intellectual, etc. reference frame that we could all confidently learn to share. I would love to create a logical framework that would be self-consistent, broadly applicable and well... just demonstrably true. However, that is naught but an irrational wish, a notion so perfect it could never be correct in a world as vast and messy as ours. For example, we could never solve this problem by modelling our logic and discourse purely using mathematics, as some of you, my dear readers, might already be thinking. While doing away with many linguistic inconsistencies, such an approach would fall prey to Kurt Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem – a ground-breaking result in modern mathematics, which shows that for every axiomatic system, there are true claims which can never be falsified within that system. Even mathematics as a field is not and will never be perfectly "complete". There are surely problems we have already encountered, which are impossible to solve with our current mathematical understanding, and once we have learned to expand on our systems to prove these, others will swiftly take their place. Although this is far from an exhaustive proof, it is in my belief sufficient to demonstrate our inability to create a perfect logic system to shield us from falsehoods, or rather to allow us to find objective truths.

While on topic – to the problem of objectivity, I do not have any good answers, either. All I hope to bring your attention to is that, my dear reader, most likely neither do you. The teapot analogy, devised by philosopher Bertrand Russel, shows us the issue we face at the borderline of objectivity and truth. At the heart of the analogy lies the burden of proof. Suppose I said a lone teapot orbited the sun between the planets of Earth and Mars. Obviously, it is my responsibility to prove this statement or substantiate it in a reasonable way. Otherwise, no one has to contend with my assertion or go out of their way to disprove it. In the case of the teapot, it is clearly impossible to prove or disprove the statement in any empirical way, but that does not mean that the teapot exists or that it does not. To be sure: an absence of evidence is evidence but not proof of absence. The key idea is that this is a red herring – it throws us off the real question of whether we should believe something exists in the first place. It is surprising how often we all forget about the burden of proof when considering more complex ideas than the teapot analogy. The burden of proof is what rightfully informs the basis of all just judicial systems – presumption of innocence, but it is also something that we regularly ignore, for instance when debating the existence of god. Regardless of the truth of individual statements in the above examples, it is only through them being proven that we can even begin considering them if we wish to foster productive discourse. This revelation, coupled with the proven true fact that there are true facts we cannot prove, is why objectivity is difficult to achieve, and this is not even considering our other human pitfalls: bias, expectancy, whether something is objective just because most people agree, or even if our human minds are supreme arbiters of objective truth in the first place. Just because we are the most intelligent creatures we know of in the universe, are we allowed to define what is objectively true in any way? Again, without clear reasons to believe there are advanced alien lifeforms somewhere in the universe, we do not have to accept the burden of featuring them in this debate, but seeing the absolute vastness of space can we justify excluding them? As per Russel's analogy, yes we can and we must, but we ought to stay vigilant of just how many things we do not yet know or understand, whether those be god or aliens, as funny as this juxtaposition may sound.

Glaring mistakes in the very fabric of modern logic notwithstanding, we still have to live, make judgements and exchange ideas somehow. Let us consider another contentious aspect of human thought: value systems. Values feature heavily in political and social discourse, always with the same underpinning goal and inherent bias, whether the values one calls on are humanist, judeo-christian, individualist, socialist, buddhist and so on... Arguments from values are very persuasive because they rely on what makes us part of a group and there is little social animals like humans like more than clearly distinct groups and hierarchies. However, I have always had difficulty accepting them for that specific reason. If suddenly everyone changed their minds, would the objective truth of something change? Would it be determined by the most numerous social group? Would all other views be considered useless or wrong fringe ideas? Most importantly, how would one even be able to change their mind?

Many in our culture despise moral relativism, but consider what it would be like to embrace it. Maybe it is viable to believe that we all have our own value systems in accordance with which we act, so as to maximise our and others' happiness, again according to our own definition thereof? Or maybe you should subscribe to the view that there is an objective value, but one which we should all agree on? Maybe it is that everything we do should lead to less pain and more happiness in the world. If either solution to the values problem sounds enticing, consider their extreme logical implications: the former provides no solid basis for why someone should not brutally murder a person who stole their pencil, while the latter promotes ideas that might seem odd to you: veganism, since animals ought not to be exploited because they feel pain, but also abortion, since a foetus in early development does not have the capacity to feel, while its mother does.

An open-minded person is one who has not stopped reading this article, even if some ideas presented therein strongly clashed with their own or made them uncomfortable. An open-minded person is not necessarily one who will immediately accept any one of them. To do so would be rather foolish, although by now you should realise how meaningless my personal opinion of them truly is in this infinitely complex reality of ours. As I have once heard a wise person say: "What you think about me says more about you than it does about me." I would hate to finish on such a sombre note, however. Humanity has made it far and has a long way to go yet. Even if there are limitations that will stop us from ever experiencing the wonders of life in their entirety, we will continue to get closer and closer, unveiling secrets of reality one after another. You should not let someone call you foolish for what you believe, but do not forget to criticise every single thing coming out of your mouth as much if not more, than the words of other people. Be informed, be interested and I hope I managed to open your mind just a bit.

Marcin Andraĳa

The paradox of tolerance

As we are approaching the most progressive decade of the twenty-first century, and most likely, of all time, it is important that we have a clear vision of what's ahead of us. And that is a way of life that is tolerant. However, while being more open-minded to the ideas of others and working on accepting them we must also remember that the aforementioned tolerance can't be challenged. What I'm going to introduce to you in this article is the paradox of tolerance, also known as unlimited tolerance.

The paradox of tolerance is a theory proposed by Karl Popper in 1945 in Vol. 1 of 'The Open Society and Its Enemies'. In its essence, the claims show that tolerance itself is an act of acceptance towards the ideas that are in no way harmful towards any social group. It proposes the idea of intolerance towards the hurtful ways the human minds, as well as acts, work. The overall idea is that, in simple words, the main conservative argument: 'If you're so tolerant, you should tolerate my views' is simply ripped to pieces.

'Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.'

- Karl Popper, 'The Open Society and Its Enemies'

So we know what the theory itself is made to be, however, how can we apply it in everyday life and how are we supposed to actually link it to some of the claims we were led to believe.

Let's start with the freedom of speech. Even though it might, and I'm sure it is, extremely shocking, freedom of speech does not mean everyone else around you has to tolerate whatever a person has to say. Naturally, a truly democratic government can't arrest you for whatever issue you choose to speak up about, however, the free speech law won't protect you from the criticism or consequences that will arise while you will be doing so.

The moral philosophy of Mr. Popper is one of the best-known paradoxes that each and every member of a fully functioning society should make themselves familiar with. Use of force, hatred, abuse, severe manipulation should never be tolerated as it itself is intolerant towards different masses. I believe that after this article you will know when to question tolerance certain individuals tend to show. You might also consider this a rage driven rant put together by a teenager. Your choice how you choose to perceive it, just remember you're not entitled to me tolerating it ;). If you want to read up a bit more about the whole paradox, here are some of the resources:

- 1) <https://player.acast.com/free-thoughts/episodes/use-and-abuse-moral-talk>
- 2) <https://www.openculture.com/2019/03/does-democracy-demand-the-tolerance-of-the-intolerant-karl-poppers-paradox.html>
- 3) And of course, the book that comes in two volumes that I have devoured recently - 'The Open Society and Its Enemies' by Karl Popper

Lena Przybyłowska

MYTHOLOGY'S DARK HORSE

Ancient Greek mythology is full of exciting and fascinating stories of not only gods, but also brave mortals and mighty heroes. Their adventures and skills are highly admired or desired. However, the one that stood behind our favourite heroes' greatness is rarely mentioned.

Chiron (also spelled Kheiron or Cheiron) was a centaur, the son of titan Cronus and sea nymph Philyra. Upon seeing the half-horse baby the titan left her with, Philyra abandoned her son on Mount Pelion out of fear and disgust.

While the decision may seem to have been cruel or wrongful, it was not made without reason. Centaurs were considered barbaric - widely known for their brutality and wilderness. They lived outside of civilization, drinking, fighting, and pillaging whenever they got the chance. It's not surprising that most people were terrified of them.

Fortunately, young Chiron was found by the god Apollo, who, with the help of his twin sister Artemis, taught him the art of prophecy, archery, and medicine.

Thanks to the divine upbringing, the centaur grew up to be just like the others of his kind. He was kind-hearted, intelligent and led a peaceful life. Homer in his *'Iliad'* called him the *'wisest and most just of all Centaurs'*.

Apart from being recognised as a skilled healer, astrologer and archer, Chiron was also the first among centaurs to be respected and renowned as a teacher. Among his students are such great heroes as Achilles, Heracles, Jason, Odysseus, Asclepius, Theseus and, according to some sources, even the god Dionysus.



'Chiron and Achilles' – John Singer Sargent (circa 1922-1925)

Chiron was glad to help or heal anyone – no matter if mortal or divine, common, or noble. His selflessness is further reflected in the story of his death. Prometheus – the titan hero – defied gods by stealing fire and gifting it to humankind and as a result was sentenced to eternal torment. Recognising the titan’s bravery and sharing his fondness of mortals, the centaur renounced his immortality for the freedom of Prometheus.

To honour Chiron’s sacrifice, Zeus placed his soul among the stars as the constellation Sagittarius. From above he now watches over healers and teachers of this world.



'Centaur carrying off a nymph' – Laurent Marqueste (1892)

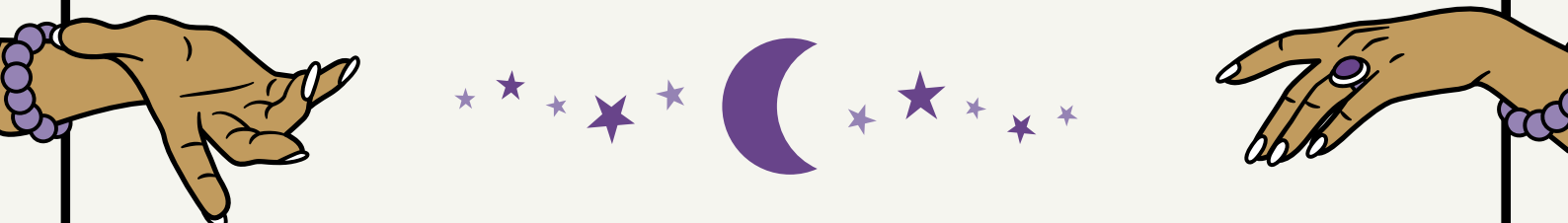
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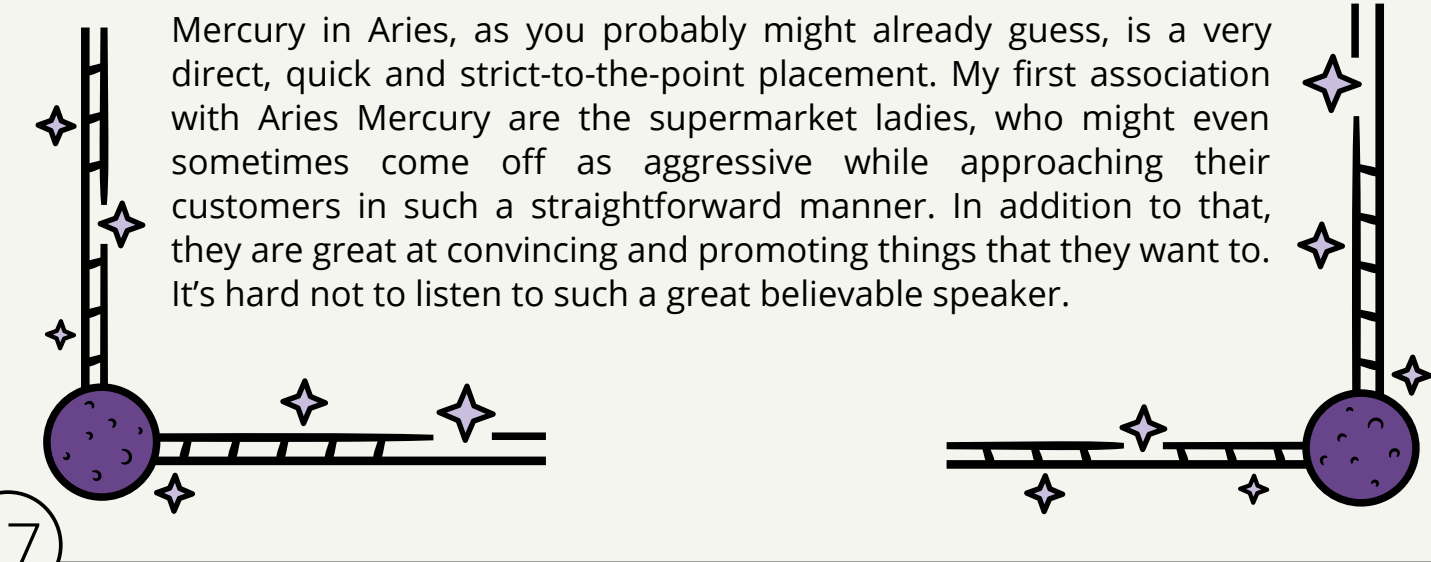
-Complete Guide to- Astrology

By Aleksander Skutnik
Part 5: Placements' Meaning - Mercury

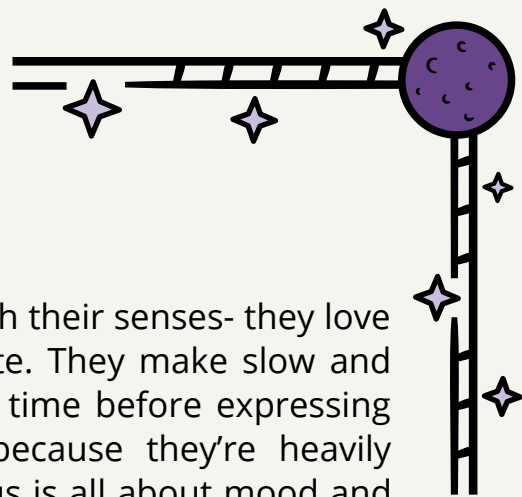
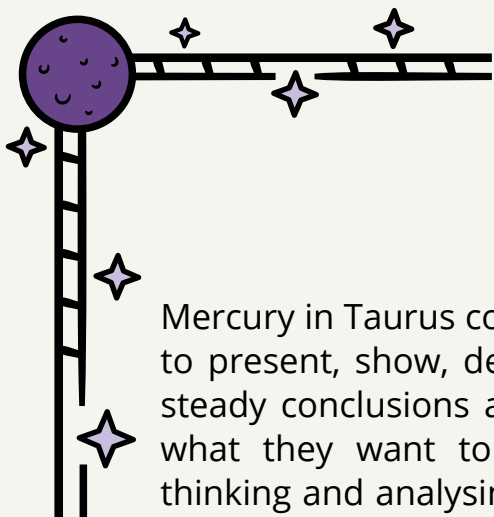
Hi! I'm Alex, and welcome back to yet another edition of my Complete Guide To Astrology! If you're new, I highly encourage you to check out my previous articles, since that will give you a great understanding of the topic, and if you're a regular reader, welcome back :) Today, I will be focusing on the Mercury placement of your natal chart.



Mercury is another very important placement in one's chart. It's all about communication and how we get our point across. We can see how it affects our everyday communication with others and how we convey our message; whether we're professional and bold with words, or flowery and verbose. As always, I will now analyse each sign individually.



Mercury in Aries, as you probably might already guess, is a very direct, quick and strict-to-the-point placement. My first association with Aries Mercury are the supermarket ladies, who might even sometimes come off as aggressive while approaching their customers in such a straightforward manner. In addition to that, they are great at convincing and promoting things that they want to. It's hard not to listen to such a great believable speaker.

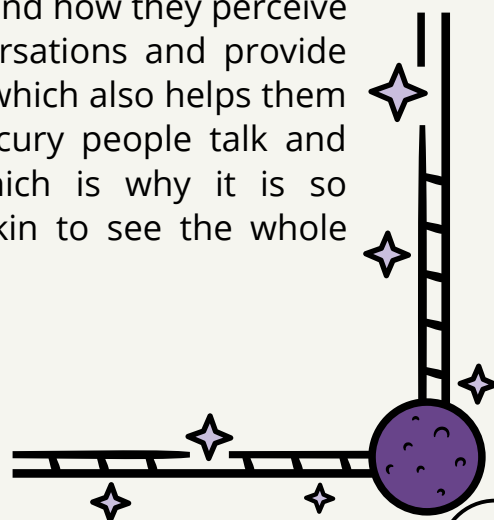
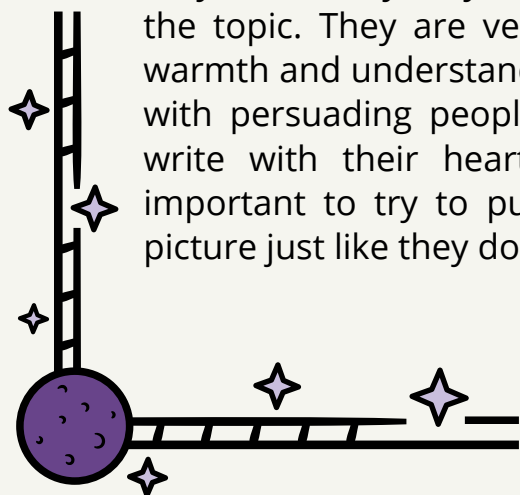


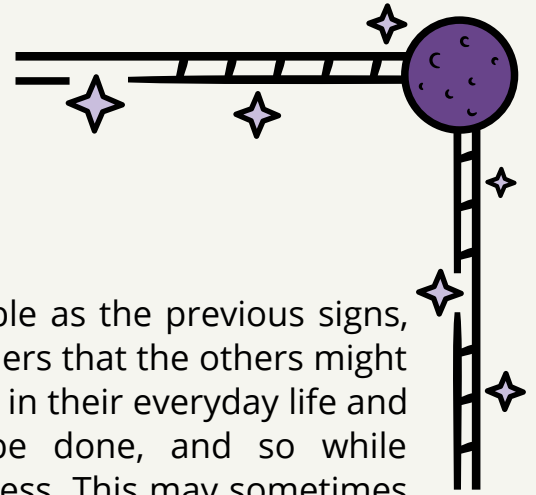
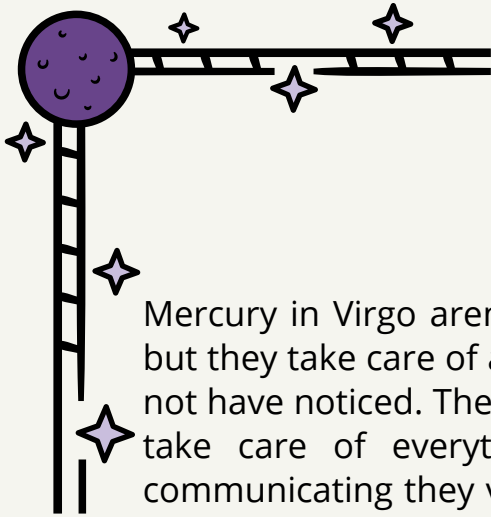
Mercury in Taurus communicates mostly with their senses- they love to present, show, demonstrate and illustrate. They make slow and steady conclusions and need to take some time before expressing what they want to say, but it's simply because they're heavily thinking and analysing in the process. Taurus is all about mood and feeling, that is why they tend to use very expressive, artsy language and metaphors- there definitely is a lot of charm to it!

Mercury in Gemini are very interesting speakers who definitely will grab your whole attention. They have a lot of knowledge on various topics, and their list of fun facts doesn't seem to ever be ending. Taking that into account, while presenting their knowledge they tend to strive to be logical a *bit* too much sometimes. This leads to lack of emotions and detaching themselves from others. Even though because of that they may seem as insensitive, their logical thinking and open-mindedness never fails.

Mercury in Cancer probably won't stand a slightest argument without crying. Emotional, personal, sensitive and intuitive are the best words to describe people with that placement. Their strong side is their memory, as they remember everything, both the good and the bad events. They can get a bit defensive while communicating due to their caring and vulnerable nature, but once you find their soft spot, you can enjoy those very sensible rather than logical discussions.

Mercury in Leo has that immaculate class and style while speaking; they want everybody to know what they think and how they perceive the topic. They are very comforting in conversations and provide warmth and understanding to their audience, which also helps them with persuading people effortlessly. Leo Mercury people talk and write with their heart and imagination, which is why it is so important to try to put yourself into their skin to see the whole picture just like they do.



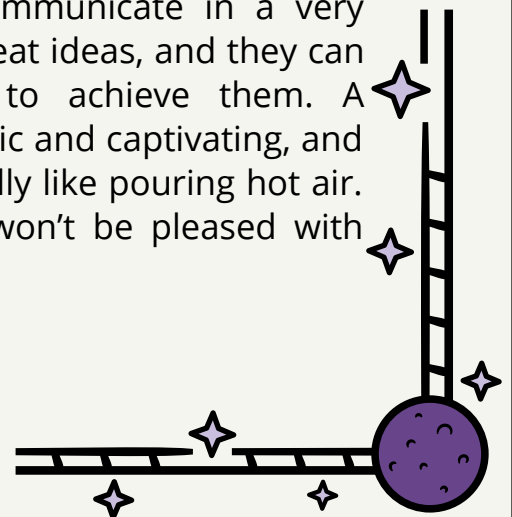
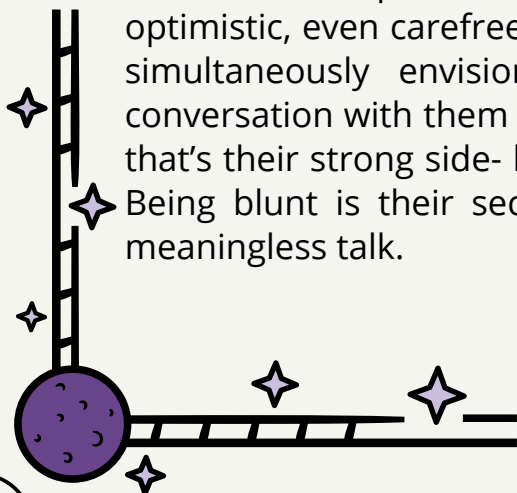


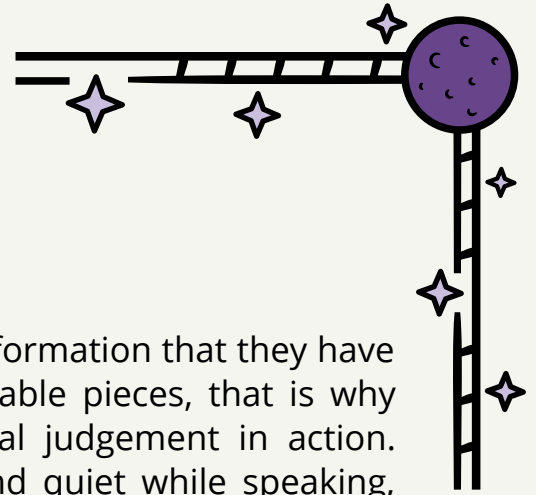
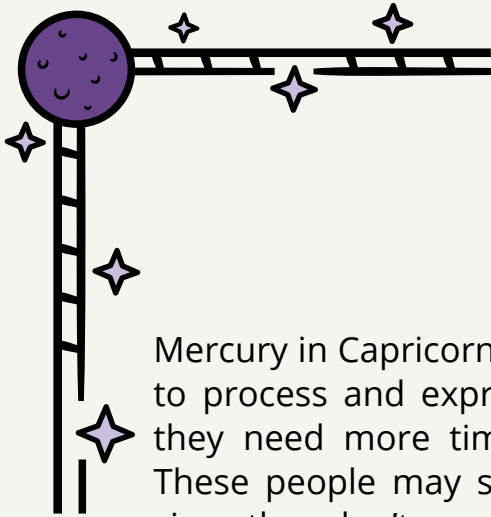
Mercury in Virgo aren't as vivid and noticeable as the previous signs, but they take care of all the details and manners that the others might not have noticed. They strive to keep balance in their everyday life and take care of everything that needs to be done, and so while communicating they value order and steadiness. This may sometimes lead them to get impatient or irritated when their organisation ideas and inner peace are not satisfied. They know their ground and they are reliable people.

Mercury in Libra are very enjoyable in conversations, provided that you're willing to cooperate and work on a compromise with them. Diplomacy comes naturally to them and they mostly value agreement in communicating, that is why they are the perfect mediators in group nuisances. Due to their nature, they sometimes may get a bit too wound up in trying to make everyone happy and content with the conversation's outcome, that they forget what actually is important to them. Expect many "okay, but..." and "that depends..."

Mercury in Scorpio are probably the boldest and down-to-earth speakers out there. They want to settle every matter thoroughly and won't be afraid to push others into speaking their truth. This is especially good while resolving problems, since no mysteries will be left unfolded after a Scorpio Mercury gets to action. They are naturally pretty sceptical and wary, they make their steps carefully while having their guard up ready to defend their opinion.

Mercury in Sagittarius mostly values their personal space and full freedom to express what they feel. They communicate in a very optimistic, even carefree manner. They have great ideas, and they can simultaneously envision 50 different ways to achieve them. A conversation with them seems really enthusiastic and captivating, and that's their strong side- however, they don't really like pouring hot air. Being blunt is their second name, and they won't be pleased with meaningless talk.



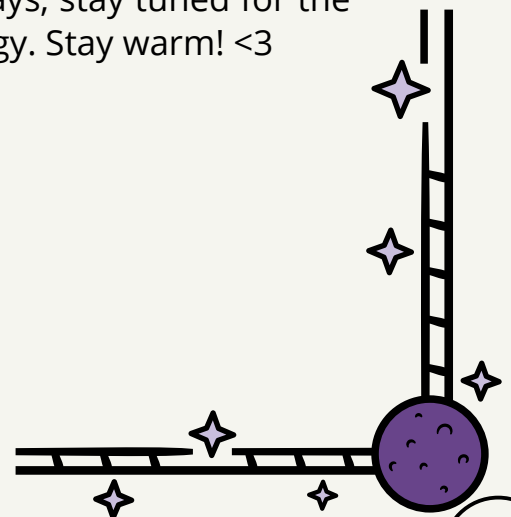
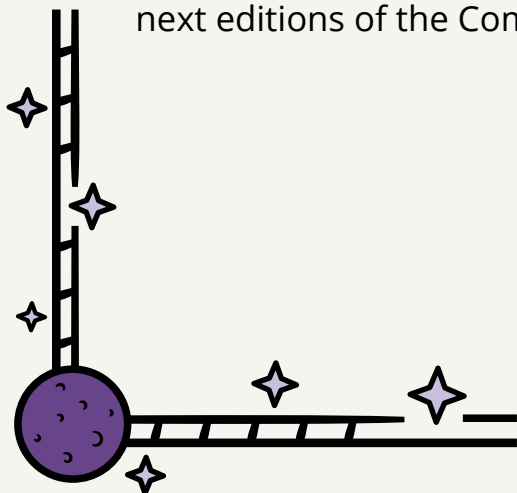


Mercury in Capricorn likes to chop up the information that they have to process and express into more manageable pieces, that is why they need more time to use their practical judgement in action. These people may seem really reserved and quiet while speaking, since they don't want to come off as unprofessional or incompetent. If you don't mind their cold nature, they're great people to discuss the future and real-life goals and actions.

Mercury in Aquarius love intellectual discussions and offering different perspectives to one problem or topic. They don't fear confrontation or discord in a debate, as they were probably the ones to stir things up in the first place. Rebellious and quirky, they love to implement some scientific elements into their speech. If you're up for a conversation on a higher level with someone with an open mind and a spirit for challenging knowledge, these people are the ones to talk to.

Mercury in Pisces are vague, imaginative communicators, almost in a poetic way. You might be surprised by how dreamy and detached they might seem, that's because there's always something going on in their colourful minds. They are *great* listeners, who approach others gently and with care. Surprisingly, they tend to get moody in everyday conversations, and you don't know what to expect from them. Their motto and supreme value is faith, in different contexts.

That was all for this month's issue! Thank you all for your attention, and I hope that you enjoyed the article. As always, stay tuned for the next editions of the Complete Guide To Astrology. Stay warm! <3



Get entertained!

MY OCTOPUS TEACHER

Pippa Ehrlich/James Reed, 2015 RSA

MOVIE - DOCUMENTARY

IMDB 8.3/10 - AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX

All artists need to cope with creative crises sometimes. One particular filmmaker found an unusual friend who helped him overcome his stasis. The friend is an octopus living in kelp forest who decides to introduce the human to the underwater world.



NEVER LOOK AWAY

Florian Donnersmarck, 2018 Germany

MOVIE - ROMANCE, DRAMA

IMDB 7.7/10 - AVAILABLE ON HBO

Based on a real-life story, the movie depicts struggles of a German painter trying to find his place right after the war. The protagonist needs not only to deal with his turbulent past but also find a way to escape to Western Germany.

WOLFWALKERS

Tomm Moore, 2020 Ireland

MOVIE - ANIMATION, ADVENTURE

IMDB 8.2/10 - AVAILABLE ON APPLE TV+

A young girl and her father move to Ireland to finish off the last wolf pack in the region. Instead, they learn the value of life and wilderness. The movie paints the medium of an animation and uses this to its advantage brilliantly. Both the music and the dash are marvelous.



MY THOUGHTS ARE SILENT

Antonio Lukich, 2020 Ukraine

MOVIE - COMEDY, DRAMA

MDb 8.1/10 - AVAILABLE ON HBO

A once-in-a-lifetime kind of opportunity opens for a young, Ukrainian sound designer. He dreams of leaving his home country and all he has to do is record a bunch of wild animals. His mission gets complicated when his mother turns out to be his only companion.



LOVE, DEATH & ROBOTS

Tim Miller, 2019- USA

TV SERIES- ADULT ANIMATION, SCI-FI , ANTHOLOGY

IMDb 8.5/10 - AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX

A collection of multiple stories, each in different genres and in different styles of animation. The episodes are really brief but usually they are long enough to portray either a horror, a comedy or a dystopian story.

SUPERLIMINAL

Pillow Castle, 2019 USA

GAME - SINGLE-PLAYER PUZZLE

METACRITIC 75/100 - AVAILABLE ON STEAM

You need to escape from a different and really complicated reality where the perception is reality. The player needs to manipulate their view and overcome multiple optical illusions.



A movie for the month & a month for the movie

February: La Haine (1995)



Mathieu Kassovitz's innovative take on French criminal drama, *La Haine*, is filmed in black and white. The film is only about an hour and a half long - we're taking it easy on you in the shortest month of the year:)Kassovitz presents the reality of 90s French suburbs in the span of 24 hours taken from the life of three teenagers: Saïd (Saïd Taghmaoui), Vinz (Vincent Cassel) and Hubert (Hubert Koundé).

The plot itself is rather hassle-free. The scenes seem spontaneous and real. The boys guide us through the story with no external narration at all, but I'd say it's the emotions

that point the viewer in the right direction. To aid us in ordering the events chronologically (which isn't even that hard, honestly) the film is divided by black screens displaying the time.

La Haine basically used up all of my patience, so I'm just going to go straight to the point.

Did I like it? Yes.

Did I enjoy it? Yes.

Would I recommend it? Yes.

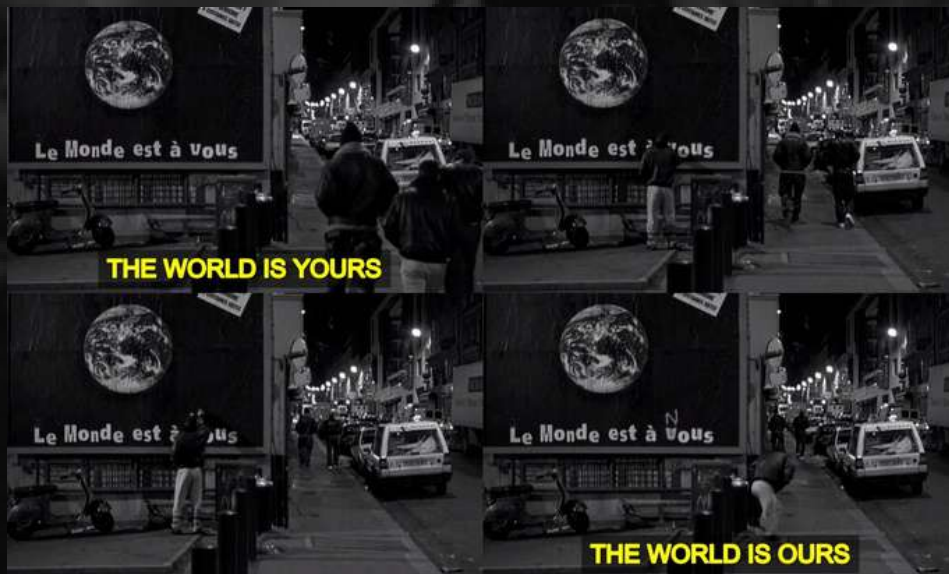
Would I watch it again? Doubtful.

The title translates to 'hate' and the piece is indeed overflowing with the emotion. The rage seeps through the dialogue and makes it seem raw, inspired by real-life encounters. The characters are dynamic figures and fuel the action with their vehemence. And, I must admit, the plot is vibrant and aggressive despite its short length.

The movie is undeniably interesting and tackles both current and compelling issues. Yet I can't escape the impression that it could've been achieved equally well (or better) without the suffocating level of pretentiousness.

It feels like Kassovitz failed to address the actual problem and instead focuses on an intellectual portrayal of the radical youth, indirectly disparaging them, wittingly or not.

The figure of Vinz presents this stereotypical image of a violent, short-tempered suburb hooligan who happens to participate in the ongoing riots against the police. Both his friends, Hubert and Saïd, represent the same social stance, but express their anger in a slightly less combative manner. What La Haine fails to stress, though, is that their anger is justified. The attention of the viewer is channelled to the sole concept of hatred rather than the disturbing malfunctioning of the legal system.



The boys are constantly chasing or are chased, never really escaping the approaching (everlasting) decay.

A measure used in the film that speaks for its authenticity is the choice of the names of the main characters. They are in fact the real names of the actors, which may only symbolise how truthful and relatable the experiences depicted must be for the French society.

The recurring theme of the movie is the story of a person falling from a skyscraper, who passes the descending floors of the building with the thought 'So far, so good' in mind. Quite frankly, this is precisely the life-saver factor for La Haine.

It gives us a rather vague but explicit perspective on the course of action and the general meaning behind the events. It also plays the role of a leading metaphor, hinting at a more profound message of the film.

While the film mentions rather controversial matters, such as gun ownership or police brutality, they are intended to form a background, a context for the real problem. Kassovitz depicts how we as a society keep on falling down, constantly approaching the ground. The act itself suggests the intent behind the jump, though the motive of the action is never really explored, seemingly left for us to interpret. The jump has an only purpose - to land. Nonetheless, it seems as though we didn't want to meet our destination - landing might as well mean our demise. The downfall of the society is coming and we may not be able to stop it from happening. The idea itself sounds a little cliché, but veils a subsequent paradox: while we want the falling to last as long as possible, so as not to shatter in the collapse, we thereby postpone our impending crash, giving it time to gain momentum. The concept portrays humanity as a group existing by a self-destructive mechanism, ingrained in our brains. The only way out leads through the wreckage of our morals.



Another aspect that I believe deserves some applause is the use of aesthetics to bring out the process of development of the characters. Black and white frames might sound like a convenient trick to enhance the artistic dimension but here they do in fact serve a greater purpose. The colours underline how joyless and transparent the world in which the

boys live is. There's a bit of humour, but no silver lining. The reality is portrayed in the most objective way possible: with a drop of hopeful optimism, but settling for melancholic expectations. The boys are undeniably rude and vulgar and their mannerism may seem a bit excessive at first, but the trio definitely grows on the viewer as the story progresses. Over the course of just 24 hours presented in the movie we are essentially bound to change our minds (which might have actually been the original intention of the director).



As much as I personally agree with the general message of La Haine, I do wish the idea was executed a bit differently. I loved the sharp remarks exchanged by the characters and the subtle nod to Scorsese, yet I expected more. The film was in fact enjoyable, but if it wasn't for some particular deciding moments, I wouldn't really bother mentioning it to anyone. The thing I disliked the most was the absence of any strong-minded critique against police brutality and discrimination. La Haine vaguely introduces the issue,

entertaining us with side quests the boys need to fulfill, but does not directly put blame on either of the sides, desperately trying to prove how faulty the 'eye for an eye' approach is. I simply wish the movie was more radical and open.

All in all, you should definitely watch it. The film is amusing and tragic in its simplicity, bearing an incredible weight of social injustice. La Haine presents us with an opportunity to take a stance and stand our ground - and you better not miss out on it.

- m.a.

but then, in the end,

*it's not your breath on my neck,
just the warm autumn wind
your soft touch was nothing
but merely skin.*

*your whispers no longer muffle the melodies
of sparrows i watch on winsome balconies
or a depth so clandestine;
that i always showed,
but you've never seen*

*now my chest swells with the air of sweet votives,
blowing out candles along with your tainted motives*

*in hindsight, i'm glad the impasse we reached
was so unwavering i could cross it to find
my mind's tranquility.*

Jules

AUBADE

**EVERY DAWN THE SAME SONG
SINGS IN MY HEART
WHILE THE LEAVES TURN GOLDEN
WHEN THEY ARE GONE
WHEN THEY'RE REBORN
I HOPE TO FIND THE SOUL I ONCE LOST
IN THE WIND THAT STUMBLES UPON THEM
A REVENANT THAT CARRIES THEM HOME
A PIECEFUL FRACTION OF REMAINING SPIRIT
LOST ALONG THE WAY**

L.P.

