

An intro

As an English teacher with passion for reading, watching and writing, I always encourage my students to read, watch and write, too. Reading and watching are seemingly passive – you just absorb what others have produced. Writing provides an excellent chance to respond actively to what we have absorbed: to tell stories, to interpret existing ones, to review, to ask questions, to reflect on what we see, hear, read, talk about. The purpose of the present journal is to **get the writing together** and **share it** with anyone eager to read – I hope some of you will be 😊

For the first issue, I have collected two reviews and one essay – all produced by EKOLA IB1 students. I hope to get more of Junior High students to write for the next issue.

Enjoy!

Ada Mitas, teacher of English and History and Culture of Anglophone Countries

LOVE IS BLINDNESS - *The Great Gatsby* by Luhrmann

Author: *Polina Marinkina, Year IBI (International School of EKOLA)*

A book which will make you feel warm and feel love, while you're reading. The amazing language and plot, which is at the first sight quite simple and common, will make you empathize with the characters, feel sad or happy along with them. A love story with no happy-end, contrary to what usually happens in other love movies that I have seen or read so far. You'll find out how the book can take you away into its own world. You're reading it and you already can't stop. However, there're a lot of cinematographic interpretations of this book and not all of them can be good comparable to the original idea and story. In my opinion, one of the best interpretations of the book was directed by the well-known director, Baz Luhrmann, in 2013 - the one who also made such movies as *Moulin Rouge!* and *Romeo+Juliet*.



The Great Gatsby was written by the American author F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925. The action takes place in fictional town of West Egg in the summer of 1922. The story tells us about a young and rich person, Jay Gatsby, his carefree life and immortal love to his beloved Daisy Buchanan. The narration itself is led by a character Nick Carraway, who was a World War I veteran. He rents a small house next to the big Gatsby's villa with frequent parties which last until dead night, although Gatsby himself never participates in them. The plot doesn't go that fast, on the contrary, it moves on slowly. Despite it, you can't become tired of it. You're enjoying reading those long discussions and thoughts of the narrator. Why is it so, one could ask? Only because of the genius talent of F. Scott Fitzgerald who managed to shape the story in such a way like you're talking to someone, just like having conversation. That's exactly what you feel while reading this.

In 2013 another film adaptation based on the book was released. It was produced by Lucy Fisher, Catherine Knapman and others. The amazingly written screenplay was done by Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce. The most attractive thing that you could have noticed when the movie was announced was the name of an actor who is loved by everyone - Leonardo Di Caprio (Gatsby). Also, Tobey Maguire in the role of Nick (well-known from the movie *Spiderman*), Carey Mulligan as Daisy and many other perfectly matched actors and actresses. To say that the movie was shot wonderfully or beautifully is simply to say nothing! Breathtaking acting from the first minute of the movie can make you feel the same emotions as the characters do. The excellently shown contrast between the characters - the adventurer, Gatsby and his shy friend, Nick and as a negative personage - Joel Edgerton. Still, watching Luhrmann's *Gatsby*, you can notice that some things were added to the movie, so as to make it brighter and more colorful, or vice versa - some elements were removed. But it wasn't too much or too little, it has a balance, thus you're totally enjoying watching it! The scenes of Gatsby's parties in his villa, with loud music of already popular

contemporary artists, like Fergie, Lana Del Rey and Beyonce, give the movie eccentricity and special appeal. Many people in lovely dresses and costumes, their gladness because of champagne and wine – make the movie so bright and memorable. It reflects Gatsby himself, it shows how he loves, lives, what he does and feels. The spirit of the book was grasped and skillfully put in the movie.

Overall, in my personal opinion, the Luhrmann's interpretation was absolutely fantastic! And I recommend watching it to every single one of you so that you can feel the atmosphere of the film. If you haven't read the book yet, then you need to do it as soon as possible and after the movie see the difference and decide for yourself what you prefer more.

What is meant by active and passive euthanasia and why some people might want it?

Author: ***Nina Brocka***, Year IB1 (*International School of EKOLA*)

To answer this question, we must first define the meaning of the word “euthanasia” and the difference between its two forms: active (direct) and passive (indirect). Also in this essay, I will bring reasons standing behind euthanasia as well as Christian and Muslim attitudes to it.

The word “euthanasia” comes from Greek, where “eu” means “good” and “thanos” stands for “death”, so direct translation would be “good death”. The dictionary definition says that it is a termination of human life as a way of removing pain and suffering, either with or without their consent. We consider active euthanasia when it is caused directly by an action being taken by person (doctor giving patient directly an injection that causes death). The passive euthanasia is when the only action that is taken is stopping lifesaving treatment (doctor turns off patient’s lifesaving machine).

There are several issues and reasons behind euthanasia. One of them is that the patient doesn’t want to be a burden for the family and at the same time wishes to end his own suffering, which reminds the Tony Nicklinson case, who described his life as ‘living nightmare’. Tony was paralysed and wanted to end his suffering by asking a doctor to kill him as he was not able to do it by himself. His case was taken to the court, where his legal team argued that the only way to end his suffering was to allow him to die. However, the court case was lost and in 2012 Tony died because of natural reasons. Euthanasia gives to a patient a sense of autonomy, because everyone should feel free to make a decision about their own lives. Another reason might be the doctor who thinks that it is better to end the patient’s suffering, but then the question arises if the doctor has got the right to make that type of decision. In 1994 the British Medical Journal published a survey that showed some doctors who already helped patients to die, as for example Jack Kevorkian who brought about the euthanasia of 130 patients and was later called “Dr. Death”. He was sentenced to 10-25 years in prison.

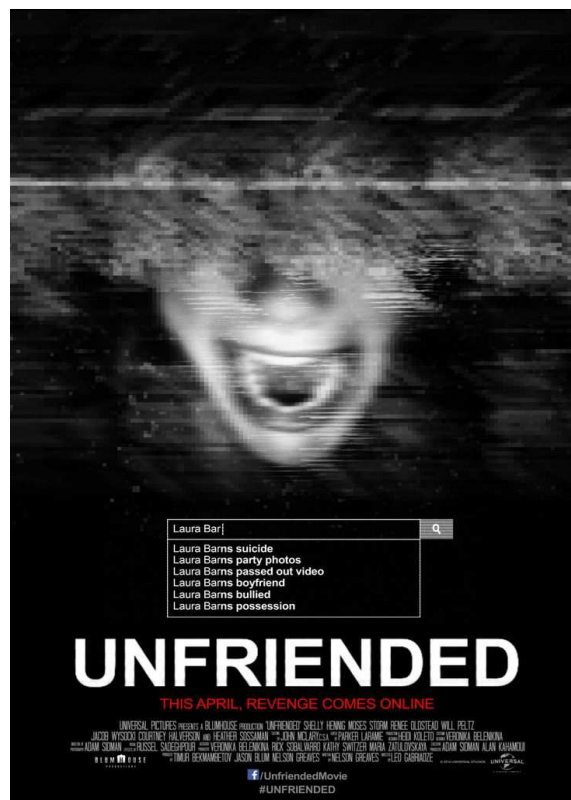
There are other issues involved. We must consider if everyone should have the right to euthanasia, for example criminals or people with no serious physical disease. Frank Van Den Bleeken, Belgian, who spent 26 years in prison for rapes, wanted euthanasia because of unbearable psychological suffering. However, at the time when the case was taken to court he changed his mind. The question in this particular case is: should euthanasia be kind of escape for criminals from prisons and their punishment? There is a possibility that the decision hasn’t been thought through well enough and it can be too late to change it. The decision should be definitely made with the help of two doctors judging if the euthanasia is really needed, for example in the serious diseases, not when a person isn’t terminally ill or isn’t in unbearable physical pain.

Another issue is religious approach towards euthanasia. Islam is against euthanasia, as Muslims think that life is sacred, as it says “do not take life, which Allah made sacred, other than in the course of justice” (Quar’an 17:33). It is given by Allah and thus only He can choose how long a person will live, which is supported in Quar’an 3:145: “And no person can ever die except by Allah’s leave and at an appointed term”. Christian approach towards euthanasia is not as direct or radical as in Islam, however it sound largely similar. The Sanctity of Life principle, which is in the centre of the Roman Catholic teaching states that human life is sacred, because we are created in the image of God, as it says in the Matthew

1:18 “child of a Holy Spirit” and in Jeremiah 1:5 “Before you were formed I had knowledge of you, and before your birth I made you holy”, also that every human life is valuable and so it cannot be taken.

There may be different reasons for euthanasia, the consequence, however, is always the same and always irreversible. Before letting it happen, we should thoroughly consider the logic behind the process and not let it become a common act, easily available for everyone who wants it.

UNFRIENDED - review of a horror movie by Hsiao-Chi (Chi Chi) Hsu, Year IB1 (International School of EKOLA)



The movie which I am going to introduce is called *Unfriended*. It's a fantasy, horror, mystery type of movie. A 2014 American film directed by Levan Gabriadze written by Nelson Greaves. The film is told entirely through a high school student's Macbook screen. The main character, Blaire, is one of several friends who find themselves terrorized online by an anonymous person.

The plot focuses on a humiliating video of a high school student Laura Barns which is uploaded to YouTube, causing her to endure mockery and ridicule until she takes her own life. A year later her closest friend, Blaire Lily, views the video of Laura's suicide and then gets in contact over Skype with her boyfriend, Mitch. They are joined by their classmate Jess, Ken and Adam. During their conversation, they notice a random user dubbed 'billie227' in their chat, who was not invited by any of the participants. After several unsuccessful attempts to get rid of the stranger, the five friends suspect a sixth classmate, Val, is playing prank on them, so they invite Val to their chat. Suddenly, Jess's s updated with photo of Val drinking and smoking at a party. As Val loses her temper and Jess is struggling to delete the photo, this photo reappears on Adam's account. They are curious who is 'billie227' than Blaire opens the 'billie's' information interface and the shocking

truth is that the account is Laura's: "Guess Who's Back? No Lying. No Quitting. One Year Ago Today, Laura Barns Died. Five Days From Now.. SHE RETURNS."

Mostly films that are shown on small screen and dialogues typed out on screen may be kinda boring to watch, the story, however, is OK. Music is very limited, couldn't be woven into the storytelling - so it cuts out half the usual effect of a horror. But the scary effects weren't the point of the movie; it's a revenge thriller first and foremost. The storyline was a pretty basic ghost revenge story and yet with a modern twist. The Internet offers a new form of bullying that unfortunately is all too real and this movie shows the consequences of such actions to the extent of driving someone to commit suicide.

I really like horror type of movies, although this movie doesn't seem that bloody, scary or violent to catch your attention that much, but the message brought forward by the movie is quite connected with modern youth using the technology to communicate, After watching it you may get some sort of warning and get more careful typing in the social network. So I would recommend you watch it mostly for its message.