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# THE HERALD

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interview with  
the president.

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# HU IN TIMES OF CRISIS: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT

Timoteo Pereira Neves



With a gesture, he beckons me inside his office. He sits in between a neat shelf of books and a table with scattered papers and a pen resting on a green pad.

“So, what are we discussing?” Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian says as he picks the pen up.

## • *What is a university?*

His eyes zoom out of the student who sits before him; he now looks at a wider picture. “It’s a space of ideas, training, and discussions where a young person who is already educated would sharpen their knowledge and skills; their ability to work with, work for, and lead others. All of this brought into a major. It’s an opening of horizons.

“A university cannot simply train people to be certified in a narrow area but to be

conversant with all types of sciences.”

## • *How did Haigazian act as a university after October 17th of last year?*

Here Dr Paul takes me on a flashback. He rewinds the tape not to the year before, but to the beginning of the university. In its 65 years Haigazian has gone through several shake ups and wars “Turmoil, crisis, and inner divisions have been part of our context,” he says. “A university is not just a subculture in itself but is always influenced by its context outside. Haigazian has been very careful to give space, honor, and dignity to its students no matter what their background has been.

“What I am saying now applies to the time I was a student from 1981 to 1984 as well as today.” I try to imagine him wearing something other than suit and tie, seated in front of a Psychology class, taking valuable notes. “The country was divided in everything: religion, politics, dynamics. Yet in Haigazian they tried to recognize why we are students: we are students to be able to think critically, prepare for the future, and keep things going despite all the hindrances.

“In the past 3-4 months, we do realize that Lebanon is going through some kind of transition. These are times when we have to be very reflective, to keep the educational train moving while being influenced by students.”

His phone screen lights up and he shoots a quick glance at it. He will not take that phone call just yet; the train needs to keep moving.

“What was happening was not simply a turmoil, a path to revolution, or an economic crisis. I think it is a questioning of the identity of Lebanon. For this identity to be found, each person should not focus on who is on which group or in which conviction but to be empowered individually instead. “We focus on the individual and their freedoms and respect all those who are highly active in the movements on the streets, because they are our students, they are the next generation. On the other hand, we’re equally appreciative of those who think their education is the best response to the problems.

“However, when it comes to corrupt systems, I don’t believe that any institution, especially educational ones, can be neutral.”

## • *Were there lessons learned during the period on how to act as a university?*

“I reflected on how we operate at Haigazian. Are we blaming others? Are we being efficient? So, yes, there is new learning for the administration in all of this.

“Also, like it or not, big institutions, including universities, are an economy in themselves,” He says, closing and opening his hand like a budding flower.

“If income does not flow, how do we pay faculty and staff? So, we needed to come up with contingency plans.

“What if more collapse follows? This is why we started thinking in a dual way, considering worse scenarios and possibilities of return to normalcy.”

## • *What is your word of advice for students and graduates?*

“I would ask the community at Haigazian to think not how they can survive, but how neighbors, and the rest of the country can survive.

“In Business, if all you care about is protecting your money and your business, then you lose it. My advice to the new generation would be the same on various levels.

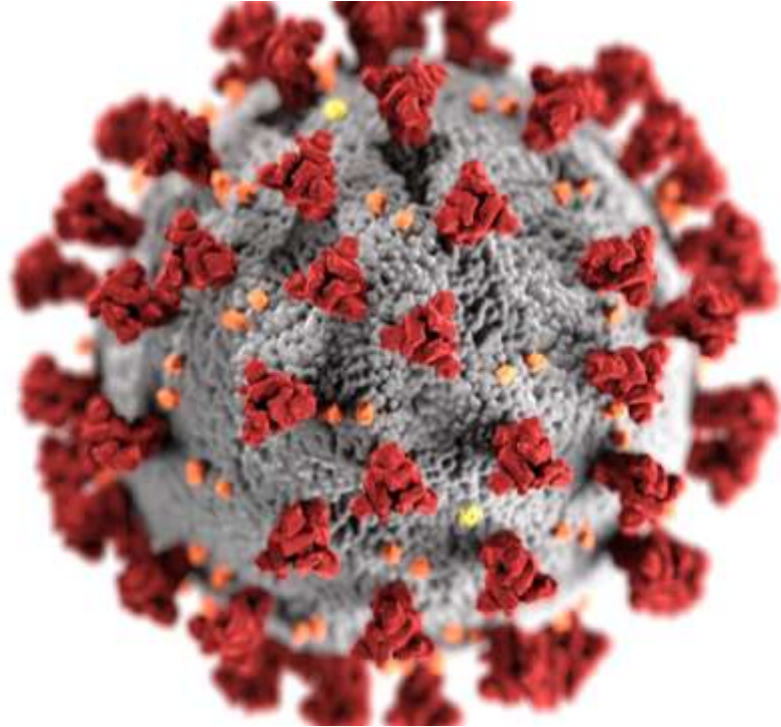
“It’s in exocentricity, being centered on what is outside, that we find a better chance for ourselves.”

[Interview done in 11.02.2020]



# CORONAVIRUS DIVISION-COVID 19

Sarah Mshaymesh



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*Sarah has been trained through the Coronavirus Awareness Campaign done by the Lebanese Red Cross, World Health Organization, and Lebanese Ministry of Public Health. You can also find a video on this same topic on Haigazian University Student Life's Facebook and Instagram pages.*

**A little tribute and a lot of respect to Dr. Liu Zhiming, who was the first to warn against COVID-19, and died of coronavirus-related pneumonia. A huge thank you to all the armed forces, municipalities, and all the doctors, staff, students, and volunteers at the Ministry of Public Health, Rafic Hariri University Hospital, public and private hospitals, and humanitarian organizations across Lebanon!**

**This article was submitted on March 22, 2020; information may be added or changed later.**

Starting the new year 2020, a new member of the coronavirus family was discovered in Wuhan, the largest city in Hubei, located in Central China. The origin of the coronavirus is still unknown, but scientists confirm that it is an animal-transmitted disease. Coronaviruses were first encountered during the 1960s, so what we are witnessing today is only one of its fatal types also known as COVID-19 or 19-COV. The World Health Organization announced it a pandemic on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. Many rumors have circulated the internet in the past few months, many of which are not true and cause unnecessary panic. Therefore, only read and listen to reliable sources.

**WHAT IS COVID19:** All coronaviruses (SARS, MERS, COVID19, etc.) cause respiratory infections that may lead to pneumonia or even death in some cases. What happens exactly to our lungs when we contract COVID19? And what is pneumonia? The virus enters through either the eyes, mouth, or nose. It goes into the respiratory system and causes fever and coughing, which in turn cause inflammation and injury to the respiratory tree (trachea, bronchi, and bronchioles). Circumstances get worse when the virus enters the air sacs, or alveoli, which are the gas exchange units found at the bottom of the lungs.

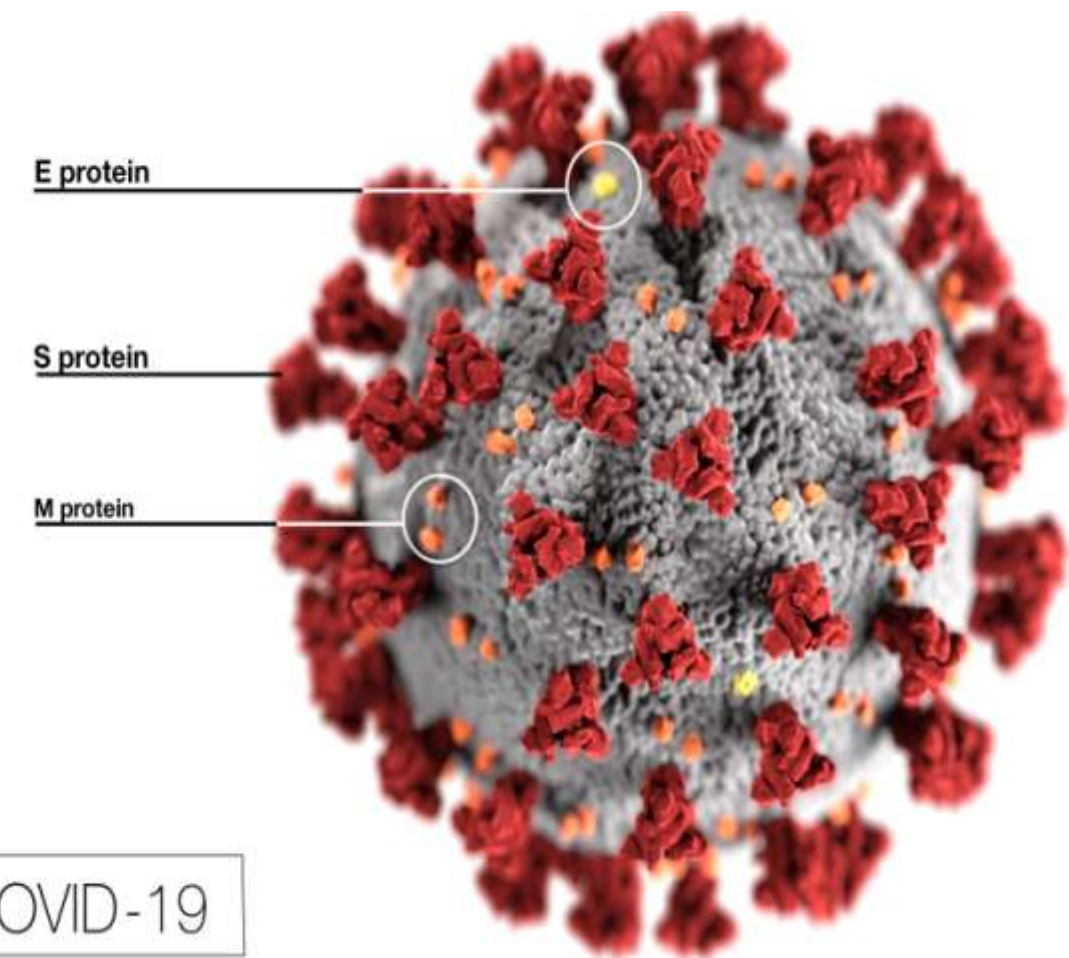
Because of the high inflammation, fluid and puss accumulate and result in what we know as pneumonia. It is also important to note that the genome size of coronaviruses ranges from approximately 26 to 32 kilobases, the largest among known RNA viruses according to Fehr and Perlman's research article *Coronaviruses: An Overview of Their Replication and Pathogenesis*. Other more lethal viruses include the Influenza, Ebola, Hepatitis B, and HIV/AIDS.

***SYMPTOMS:*** COVID19 symptoms include fever, coughing, and breathing difficulties. They begin to appear between 2 to 14 days after contracting the virus. In some cases, only one or none of the symptoms may appear. People at higher risk include those who are above the age of 60, immune-compromised (Cancer patients, diabetics, heart-disease patients, etc.), and/or healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, etc.). The coronavirus is transmitted through the droplets of coughing or sneezing, by touching contaminated surfaces *and then* touching our faces, or direct contact with a suspected or confirmed case. It is *not* a seasonal virus. Concerning animals, no studies or cases have shown any risks from pets, therefore, they are safe to be around. Do *not* throw away your pets in the streets as it is completely inhumane of any pet owner to do so! *Only* farm and wild animals are to be avoided.

**QUARANTINE:** Travelers and people who have been in direct contact with suspected and/or confirmed cases are immediately asked to put themselves in quarantine and inform the Ministry of Public Health. Quarantine includes a room with a window where the person can completely self-isolate themselves away from any other family member for 14 days. It is recommended that the person uses their own bathroom and toiletries, if a separate one is available. If not, everything the suspected case uses *must be disinfected and cleaned after each time*. The room they choose must be cleaned by the same person, *not* any other family member, and they must *never* leave it, except for emergencies. They should eat alone, have their laundry and eating utensils disinfected separately, and their room trash bags must be put in another bag and thrown out of the house.

**PREVENTION:** How do we prevent this entire issue from happening? First and foremost, SOCIAL DISTANCING, which does *not* mean hanging out with family or friends at home. I urge everyone to abide by social distancing as several studies, including one done by the Lebanese American University, clearly state that around 170,000 people in Lebanon will die in the next months if we do not take this seriously. In addition, we must wash our hands frequently for 40-60 seconds each time. We must also use disinfecting products that contain 60% ethanol and above, such as Dettol, Clorox, Ariel, and Persil. Those who leave their houses are asked to wear gloves and facemasks if they are sick or dealing with sick people. Clothes should be changed as soon as the person is back home and they are requested to shower to reduce the risk of infecting other family members and/or contaminating the house. *(Note that a facemask must be changed every 2 hours)*. As of today, no specific medical treatment is available yet, although some trials are being done worldwide. Consequently, it is completely up to the individual's immune system to fight off this virus. Other important precautions include staying away from raw or uncooked food.

**STATISTICS:** “It would be impossible for every coronavirus infection to be tallied. Epidemiologists agree the confirmed cases represent only a part of the total amount of cases, the real number of infections is most probably higher for a variety of reasons including the fact that patients with less severe symptoms may not seek treatment, testing limitations, lack of resources, data collection and underreporting (accidental or intentional), and other factors.” – Pulmonologist Dr. Seheult. There are currently 340,408 cases of COVID19, 97,571 of which have recovered, and 14,573 deaths have been confirmed thus far (as of March 22, 2020). Countries that have been most affected are China, Germany, Italy, Iran, Spain, and USA, with Italy having the highest number of death cases of 5,476.





**VACCINES:** Well, what about the vaccines?! Creating and producing the suitable vaccine requires a lot of research, trials, and *time* before it can be released to the public. Currently, laboratories are of course looking to create coronavirus antibodies. This is where we begin to discuss the fascinating beauty and complications of Science. Basically, our body is composed of trillions of cells, some of which are responsible for our immunity. One example is the B cells. These smart guys produce antibodies and have a variety of receptors, which make the contact with the virus. It only takes one B cell to make the right conformation with the virus and call its other friend cells to fight along. Because of its partners' help, T cell cytokines, the B cell will produce antibodies that will in turn go out and attack the virally infected cells. Chosen B cell gives rise to memory cells and anti-body producing plasma cells (it literally installs in them a memory of this virus and, therefore, the immune system will remember and detect it quickly if it is ever exposed to it again). After infection passes, plasma cells undergo apoptosis, otherwise known as programmed cell death. Interestingly, instead of making mouse antibodies in mice, scientists are actually using human immune system cells to make fully human antibodies in them. The next and final step is to inject these coronaviruses into these mice and check whether or not this antibody is against the COVID19 disease. This is just one of the many different approaches that scientists are trying out.

**A REQUEST:** As a trained volunteer and a human being, I am begging you to please think of yourself and others. Think of your community, old people, and those who are helpless. Do not take this pandemic lightly! Do not wait until someone in your family is dead! Do not leave your house unless it is for an extremely urgent matter! Please keep in mind doctors and volunteers who could also get infected and can no longer treat or help others. The Lebanese Ministry of Public Health is doing a great job with the resources available in Lebanon. However, things can escalate quickly like other countries and we may enter an even more difficult state. Please if you suspect any symptoms, do not feel ashamed or embarrassed to

*seek help and get the proper treatment.*

Any and every person can catch any illness and it is always best to get treated early on. Do not worry about the ignorant people and what they have to say. The only priority during these times is to protect yourself and take care of your health, so you can correspondingly keep others healthy too. Take advantage of your time at home: spend time with your family, reconnect with old friends, read books, learn a new language, study more, watch series/movies, draw, write, redecorate your room, just do anything that makes you happy. Finally, please stop the racist and insensitive jokes about Chinese people and considering any Asian-looking person a threat to your health.

**If you have any questions, contact MoPH at 01594459 or send an e-mail to Sarah at [stmshaymesh@gmail.com](mailto:stmshaymesh@gmail.com)**

HU students were asked how they are spending their time in quarantine, and here are some of the responses:

- Ali A'bed\_Business Administration – Senior  
"With you".
- Bahaa Makarem\_Medical Laboratory Sciences – Junior  
"Staying safe is what benefitted me in this quarantine, and I'm mostly spending my time by helping my mother and playing video games. Oh, and studying too".
- Dania Boukhary\_Medical Laboratory Sciences – Sophomore  
"Exercising again, continue learning a new language, reading, and finishing course-related material".
- Lilas Chehab\_Psychology – Sophomore  
"I guess studying and catching up on things I should have done, like decluttering and making new routines".
- Manoug Antaby\_Political Science – Senior  
"Reading books".
- Mazen Awwad\_Business Marketing – Sophomore  
"Spending time with my family".
- Nour Nashawati\_Early Childhood Education – Sophomore  
"More study time, more family quality time, and more self-reflection".
- Razmig Derounian (Biology – Junior)  
"I'm honestly helping my mom whenever I can, usually preparing Manti".
- Yara Kleit\_Political Science – Sophomore  
"Reading books that I could not, because of university, watching series and movies, and eating".
- Zeinab Al Darwish\_Social Work – Sophomore  
"Taking my space away from people".
- Zeinab Mehanna\_Psychology – Senior  
"Movies".



## EMPOWERED WOMEN EMPOWER WOMEN

Araz Pamboukian

The entertainment industry is at the core of pop culture and whatever it portrays cultivates the belief system of those following it. It is something that people all around the world are exposed to daily. Even for those who try to avoid mainstream media, there is always something that is keeping them entertained. Whether they are interested in music or showbiz, one way or another, they will inevitably come across the buzz of a new viral story about the entertainment industry that is circulating the web. For this reason, the words that roll off the tongues of celebrities leave an enormous impact globally. Such has been the case in the past few years thanks to the continuous conversation famous women have brought up about the double standards they face. Their experiences have resonated around the world, and brought up conversations online that have triggered conversations offline. Among the many women that have been vocal about their experiences are Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, and Jameela Jamil.

Taylor Swift was notorious for the masking tape she wore over her lips when it came to controversial issues. That was until the singer-songwriter won the sexual assault case against radio DJ, David Mueller, after a week-long trial in August 2017. By publicly fighting for herself and asking for \$1 in damages, Swift sent a loud message. As part TIME magazine's silence-breakers issue, she was asked what advice she would give to her fans, to which she replied, "My advice is that you not blame yourself and do not accept the blame others will try to place on you. You should not be blamed for waiting 15 minutes or 15 days or 15 years to report sexual assault or harassment, or for the outcome of what happens to a person after he or she makes the choice to sexually harass or assault you."



“

*I'm so sick of  
running as fast as I  
can, wondering if  
I'd get there quicker  
if I was a man  
- Taylor Swift*

”

Swift did not stop her battle against misogyny there. In 2019, Taylor Swift was named Billboard's Woman of the Decade where she used her acceptance speech to highlight the double standards that exist in the music industry. "Some people will have slight reservations about you. Whether you deserve to be there, whether your male producer or co-writer is the reason for your success, or whether it was a savvy record label. It wasn't." Swift used her platform to address the fact that no matter how successful they are, women get discriminated against. "This is just what happens to a woman in music if she achieves success or power beyond people's comfort level." She carries on to highlight an issue that's often left in the dark: discrimination against women behind the scenes of the music industry, stating, "We need to keep advocating for women in the recording studios, behind the mixing board, in A&R meetings, because rather than fighting to be taken seriously in their fields, these women are still struggling to even have a chance to be in the room."

In her latest single, "The Man," Swift plays upon the idea of how people would perceive her if she were a man. She sings, "I'm so sick of them coming at me again, 'cause if I was a man, then I'd be the man." She later calls out the public for scrutinizing unimportant details about women to undercut their success by singing, "What I was wearing, if I was rude, could all be separated from my good ideas and power moves." Women of all ages can relate to Swift's lyrics. As one Tumblr post liked by Swift pointed out, "I can't help but think of the little girl who will hear the song on the drive to

school while her dad sits in the driver's seat telling her brother how smart he is. I think of the woman sitting in her cubicle who can overhear her boss giving praise to a male coworker for something she's done a hundred times with no recognition." This song has the potential to not only raise important conversations but also become a source of strength and empowerment for women daily. It makes women feel heard.



Moving on to the music industry's newest occupant of the #1 seat on charts, Billie Eilish made headlines with her choice of style. The singer-songwriter has opted for loose-fitting attire throughout her career to avoid being sexualized and objectified. Her reasoning raises fundamental questions about society and its perception of women. Appearing in Calvin Klein's ad campaign called 'I Speak My Truth In #MyCalvins,' Eilish gets candid about her baggy clothes, "It kind of gives nobody the opportunity to judge what your body looks like... You don't know what's underneath and you don't know what's on top." However, the chart-topper made clear that she does not appreciate positive comments about her choice, stating that they "have this slut-shaming element. Like, 'I am so glad you are dressing like boys so that other girls can dress like boys, so that they aren't sluts.'" Eilish's message is not in her baggy clothes. It is in her refusal of praise. By standing against any sort of comments about her attire, not only is Billie Eilish protecting herself from being objectified, but she is also clarifying that someone's choice of attire or sense of style does not define her sexuality. More recently, on the opening night of her 'Where Do We Go?' tour, Eilish addressed her experience with body shaming, stating:

***"If I wear more, if I wear less, who decides what that makes me? What that means? Is my value based only on your perception? Or is your opinion of me not my responsibility?"***

Another public figure who has tremendously influenced people's perception of beauty is the actress and activist Jameela Jamil. Jamil, who suffered from an eating disorder during her teenage years, is a passionate voice in calling out diet culture. The biggest message she strives to send is not 'love yourself,' but rather 'not thinking about it.' "I'm all about body neutrality. I almost teach body ambivalence," stated Jamil. Jamil has been vocal about the higher goals of diet culture: Hindering women from achieving meaningful goals and feeling good about themselves. One of the greatest controversies that surrounded Jamil was after she called out the Kardashians for promoting unhealthy habits and diet products. In an Instagram post, Jamil did not hold anything back, writing, "It is morally dubious to push this messaging and these products so people will buy them to get a face and body that you got with personal trainers, starvation, juice fasts, Face tune and surgery." The actress draws on her experience to tackle the issue. She recalls listening to celebrities and trying their toxic and unhealthy diet tips only to damage her metabolism, digestive system, and fertility for life. Jamil has launched the Instagram account @I\_weigh as a platform where women share what they really weigh: a full life, careers, relationships, hobbies...

“

***"It's insane and criminal to have a platform and not use it for good."*** -  
***Jameela Jamil***

”

not numbers. Jamil also worked with Facebook and Instagram to prevent diet and cosmetic surgery advertisements from reaching audiences under 18 years of age in addition to the ban of any advertisement that promotes bogus claims.

Sexual assault, misogyny, double standards in the workplace as well as everyday life, sexualization and objectification of their bodies, and diet cultures that induce eating disorders are only a few of the mass amount of problems that women are bound to face in a society that judges their worth in terms of their sexuality, beauty, and size with no

regard of their intellect or accomplishments. Thus, since a vast majority of the consumers of the entertainment industry are teenagers, it is imperative for women in the business to be vocal about the obstacles they face and use their platforms to educate the younger generation about sexism and how important it is to tackle these problems to move forward towards a future of equal rights, opportunities, and safe environments for everyone.



## SENSITIVITY

Albert Geokgeuzian

We currently live in a world full of algorithms. Whether it's YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, or any other social media, they are all run by algorithms. We may not realise it, but we are all fed whatever posts the algorithm thinks we want to see. That's the nature of the online world. A side effect of this fact is that we are always surrounded by the things we want to see, we like to see; we rarely see posts that we would disagree with. The posts that we like, that we interact with, tell the platform that these posts make us comfortable. The more comfortable we are, the more we stay on a platform; the more we stay on a platform, the more ads we can see, the more money they make.

First I'd like to explain what I mean by sensitivity, people are so ready to bring out their virtual pitchforks and burn someone to the ground whenever a public mistake is made. This willingness to criticize is due to a multitude of reasons, most importantly it's due to the way social media has trained our brains to get attention from people. Unfortunately, the thing that garners the most attention is usually a hateful post that will elicit anger from someone, compelling them to share the post and so on.

We tend to enjoy scrolling through our social media killing time without paying any attention to the psychological effects it tends to have. Letting third-parties decide what we see without our conscious

input does not bode well for our growth as people either. While it's satisfying to be surrounded with opinions and ideals that agree with ours, it isn't healthy.

'If you don't change, you won't grow, and if you don't grow, you aren't living.' This quote by expert journalist Gail Sheehy refers to how staying within our comfort zone hinders our growth. Which is why, in today's online world, we need to be actively searching for posts that challenge us because seeing differing opinions can help us grow more as individuals.

If we don't actively interact with posts we dislike, we will condemn ourselves into a bubble of our own opinions and ideals. Staying within our bubbles might be comforting, but they also offer protection; to, both, the people within the bubble and the people outside of it, even to those who don't deserve it. This was shown in early 2019 when Facebook was under a lot of scrutiny because it had allowed Neo-Nazis to operate on its platform. One of the issues that was prevalent when all of this was happening was the fact that these communities were present for a long time, and the only reason that people noticed those posts was because the algorithm made the mistake of spreading the posts to individuals outside of their bubble.

Our bubbles have made us more reactive, we now live in a world where

hating on someone can generate you views, likes, shares and make you more popular. Over time we have become more and more ruthless with our criticisms of others online, we are even less forgiving to mistakes now more than ever.

The individuals who fall victim to this sort of reaction are those who garner the most attention, celebrities.

'Cancel Culture', the attempt of cancelling a celebrity's event as soon as they are under scrutiny. For example, Kevin Hart was going to host the Oscars until ancient homophobic tweets of his emerged and the Oscars went hostless. Kevin Hart acknowledged the severity of his tweets and understood how wrong they were, yet that didn't stop people from criticizing him and not allowing him to show that he had grown from his mistake.

This has transitioned into the real world, people are so easily outraged and are so used to being confined in their own personal bubbles that any idea or opinion that disagrees with their own is immediately pushed to the side. We don't listen, we don't talk, we only yell, we always want to be in the right.

“

*“If you don't change, you won't grow, and if you don't grow, you aren't living.”*  
-Gail Sheehy

”

This has led to valid debates descending into a shouting contest, sometimes even leading to physical altercations.

It is difficult to see how we change, but we must take a first step, educational institutions must take it upon themselves to teach individuals on how to be good debaters, how to listen, how to argue, and most importantly, how to distinguish our opinions from ourselves.

I'd like to end this by saying I like people, genuinely do, I like talking and getting to know them, having open minded discussions with people I don't agree with is something I enjoy doing very much. Not only because people are fascinating to me, but also because it is only by talking to people with different opinions than mine can I actually manifest a positive change in my mindset. I'd hope, if you are not already, you can also join me in challenging ourselves everyday so that we can have a chance to grow each day and not take every disagreement to heart, whether online or in the outside world.



# HOW TO STAY PRODUCTIVE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

*Mary Krikorian*

To say that we as Lebanese are facing difficult times would be an understatement. We have been dealing with the repercussions of the deteriorating financial situation for months, and experts expect that the crisis will last a while. However, despite how hard it is, it is important for us not to let these circumstances that are out of our control, make us unproductive. I have compiled a list of tips for students and/or fresh graduates of things they can do in order to not waste their time.

## 1- Manage your money

First, you should look at your finances and cut down any unnecessary costs, especially if you manage your own money. Try to eat at home and buy local (to help our economy). Furthermore, it is better to save as much as you can, as no one knows what will happen in the upcoming months. You can download a spending tracker app to help you keep track of your expenses. Try to share costs like transportation and housing with others.

## 2- Support your family

The crisis is sparing no one, so even if you are a student, try to find job opportunities to help alleviate the burden on your family. If you find that your family is having a hard time meeting

its basic needs, do not hesitate to contact local charities to see how they can help. There is no shame in asking for help when you need it. Try searching for internships or part-time jobs, like tutoring other students (contact your school or download the Synkers app and sign up as tutor). You can also join Facebook groups where they share job opportunities. Even a small effort might make a huge difference.

## 3- Build your professional profile

It's important that as a student, you don't lose sight of your goal, which is to graduate and either continue your studies or find a job (or both). If you wish to do the former, try researching and applying to scholarship programs. You'll find that most instructors at university will gladly guide you if you ask for help. Additionally, try updating your CV (you can set up an appointment at the Writing center in the Heritage building) and setting up a LinkedIn profile if you do not have one. Try finding internships or part-time jobs in your field of interest. You will be doing your future self a favor, as employers favor applicants with experience. Lastly, you can sharpen your skills by taking free online courses (check Idraak, Coursera, or Edx).

# “ 5 WAYS TO STAY *POSITIVE & PRODUCTIVE* IN TIMES OF *CRISIS* ”

## 4- Give back to your community

If you're lucky enough to be unaffected by the crisis, think of giving back to your community and help those less fortunate than you. Launch your own project or consider volunteering at an NGO. You can create a profile on The Volunteer Circle's website and you will be matched with volunteering opportunities that suit your interests and skills.

## 5- Take care of yourself

Although the situation may feel overwhelming, you are strongly encouraged to take care of your physical and mental health. Work out as regularly as you can: walk, stretch, run or utilize the gym we have at Haigazian (Pilibossian Student Center). Talking to

others, like your family or your friends can take off some of the pressure you are feeling. If you don't want to share with others, you can make an appointment at the Counseling office (second floor of the College building) where you can talk with a professional who will listen in a nonjudgmental way.

Last but not least, do not ever blame yourself for the situation. Making the most of a difficult situation is the best thing you can do in this case. Don't lose hope or sight of a better future. Through perseverance and dedication you can surmount the challenges the dire situation has inflicted upon you by taking care of yourself and others.



## IN QUARANTINE

Rev Wilbert van Saane

This academic year we are spending much time away from campus. As a result, we are having less interaction with our fellow-students, colleagues, and professors. We are spending our time in relative isolation at home.

The Corona-pandemic has confronted many with the reality of full isolation, or quarantine. This is a daunting experience, especially while fighting a dangerous disease.

Withdrawal and isolation may bring renewal and blessing. I hope and pray that many of us are able to use this time of diminished social engagement to rethink and recharge.

Interestingly, the current lockdown coincides with the Season of Lent. In the Christian tradition, the *quarantina giorni* (forty days) before Easter are intended to disregard distractions and focus on our spiritual growth. We examine our lives and concentrate on the compassion of Christ.

Yet humans are made for community. We grow and thrive when we engage with others. This is one of the reasons why a college education is such a great investment. It helps us forge lasting ties. It makes us part of a learning community. A vibrant campus community is one of the values of Haigazian University.

So, although at times we may temporarily be in isolation, it is our call and destiny to live in community with others. That means we will fight isolation. Consider what this means to you in very practical ways. Do you need to seek out the (online) company of others? Do you know of someone who is at risk of becoming isolated and who needs your support?



The Gospel of Luke tells a story about ten people who lived in permanent quarantine because they suffered from a contagious disease. Jesus met them on the outskirts of a village, which they were not allowed to enter, and healed them. This was much more than just a physical healing: it broke their isolation. They were part of their communities yet again.

The implications of this story are worth pondering in a time in which we face not only an economic recession and a medical emergency, but also a social crisis. The story certainly tells us that we should not allow disease to break solidarity and community spirit.

How can we, as Haigazian University community, find creative, countercultural ways to sustain and deepen our solidarity with each other and with those who are finding themselves in dire straits today?



THE HU COMMUNITY  
DEDICATES THIS PAGE  
TO APPRECIATE THE  
HEROISM OF HEALTH  
WORKERS WHO ARE  
RISKING THEIR LIVES  
FOR OUR SAFETY



## The Effect of Corona-virus on The Global Economy and Main Currencies

Let's talk about China the most involved country in the global supply chain. Over the past 15 years, it has been the major spender in the international economy. So Corona happened and hit the Chinese market by shock, this clinical virus that hit the Wuhan area initially and spread around some of the major parts of the country affected the Chinese economy tremendously. So is the Chinese dragon in danger and should world trade be concerned?

The financial effect of the infection is as yet difficult to determine, however several state news sources and a few business analysts have said that China's growth rate could drop two percent this quarter only because of the situation, which has brought huge sectors of the nation to a standstill. A decrease on that scale could mean \$62 billion in lost growth. The growth rate wasn't at its peak right before the virus spread, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, the country had barely accomplished normal growth rate of 6% in 2019, so it is facing some difficulties at the start of the New Year, especially on the week of celebrations of the upcoming Chinese lunar year. When trying to measure the effects of the outbreak on the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economy, top forecasters look back to the 2003 SARS epidemic, which blew an estimated 1 percent from China's growth rate. But the problem is now that the coronavirus will have an even greater impact than 2003 SARS.

International businesses those who are reliant on Chinese blood and soil to produce their products have ceased their production. Apple, Starbucks and Ikea have briefly shut down their stores, labors at General Motors and Toyota factories stopped going to work after vital spread of the virus. Hyundai of South Korea concluded its car production from its Chinese Counterpart. International airlines like Delta, United and British Airways, have stopped their flights to China, several hotel chains have presented refunds to its clients because of the situation. Huge shopping malls are found empty which is threatening the sales of big investors like Nike and McDonalds.

The Corona virus fallout is scattering all over the world, starting with China's receiving raw material from China, the country's largest airline All Nippon airways has cut Tokyo's ties that are attached to China's capital Beijing. The outbreak reached European shores as well, work already started from the European Commission as it has assured to finance 10.9 million dollars to support health organizations to create a serum. Arab countries are not bystanders in this global situation; countries that were set to meet with China for the 4<sup>th</sup> China-Arab States Expo in Yinchuan city are (revamping) their relationship status with the Chinese Dragon as Dubai, Saudi Airlines and Qatar Airways have all halt

their travels to China with also the UAE stating it will yet cut its carriers to there. Egypt air and Oman's Public Authority for Civil Aviation cut all flights heading to China. The proliferation of the virus is expected to dent crude and Brent oil demand and since China is the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> major oil consumer it would mean major loss for Gulf countries that export oil. Another Neighbor of China is Australia, and for Australia there's an interesting story in which includes Chinese students, Chinese students who are enrolled in Australian universities who went for vacation to their home country are banned from entering Australia at least until the cure is found, Universities that depend primarily on Chinese students are not handling the loss of money caused by their students not registering for current semester, meanwhile students who are found in the country and are continuing their education and are forced to stay in the country, they proclaimed that they're been looked at like "Cash Cows" for the ban is refusing their return to home so you can consider these Chinese students missing their free right of movement wherever they want, they're no more than a source of income for the country of Australia, these restrictions also caused losses in the travel industry of the country as the Tourism Research Australia claimed "every month the travel ban remains in place could amount to billion-dollar losses for the sector."

Relating the situation to Lebanon the outbreak has reached the country at the start of the first couple of months of the new year of 2020, the situation reaching Lebanon wasn't a surprise for many, the corona virus as Mohamad Ali Khadra a student at Haigazian University tweeted: "trying to contain the virus is like trying to nail a Jell-O to a wall". Lebanon wasn't and isn't ready to face such a pandemic. To put it into simple words, China, Russia and Italy couldn't handle this spread, where does leave our beloved Lebanon, our weak health organizations and equipment can't handle it, but pursuits to try to halt the disease spreading by holding infected personnel's and put them in Quarantine, this might be the most relevant way to decrease the spread of this monster virus. Economic recession already hit Lebanon prior to the pandemic, and with the shutting of all stores and shops that will lead to the hold of the economic cycle, but all this is being fought by the newly found Government that is dealing with current economic situation by the help of federal reserves and the funds that are being taken from wealthy people and banks.

### *So where does that leave the United States of America, China's main trade competitor?*

Chinese diplomats have accused the United States of publicly hurting the image of the Chinese causing hysteria and panic on a world basis, as the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua

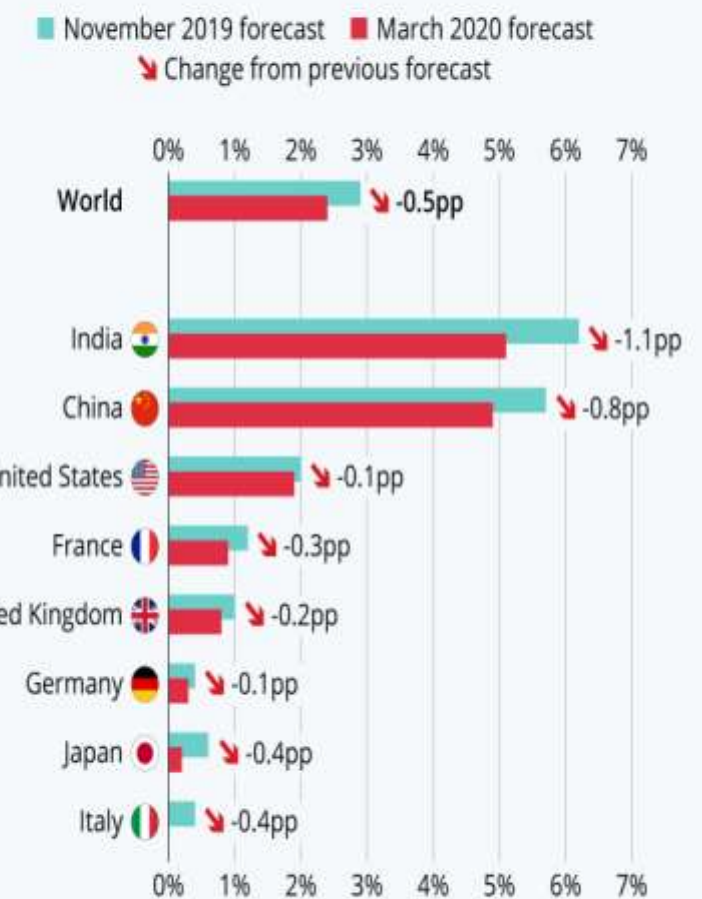
Chunying declared that the US are overreacting on the case of the virus spread, the US is promoting border closures as the solution to contain the spread as Hua said, more countries are using the American way of facing the virus rather than standing with china and finding a cure or vaccine. The Trump Administration is openly proud of its accomplishment of closing the borders early at the beginning of the virus spread, Trump's conference came as a felicitation for US hardwork of closing borders with China and banning US citizens to travel there, knowing that the US government was the 1<sup>st</sup> who ordered its citizens to evacuate the Wuhan area, this is an indicator that the US directly pulled its hands out of this world health problem. People criticized the Trump administration at first but the voting showed that the Americans are happy with the action after a voting has taken place and ended in congratulating president Trump for his (tireless) efforts to stop the spread, meanwhile Secretary of State Mike Pompeo proposed solutions as in to inject a 100 million \$ of health aid to some poorer countries like Senegal and others where the US administration is found as in efforts to reduce the spread of the virus. Trump's administration had talks with Chinese president Xi as in attempts to discover where are the Chinese in the pathway of finding a cure for the virus rather than proposing a helping hand.

Concerning the trade wars between China and the US, in 2017 Trump's Administration declared that China and Russia are considered strategic rivals of the US, and by that the weakening of the Chinese means gain for the US, as the U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said that probably with the virus spread a lot of international factories will leave Chinese soil and would come to the US promoting for jobs.

Focusing on the trade war, it hasn't been long enough since China agreed with the US on buying 200 million\$ worth of goods in the period of 2 years, but after the epidemic, the fear is that these promises aren't on the target list for China this year. The Chinese-US trade has been put to a stop, no sources from Beijing or Washington have contacted concerning the trade tariffs anymore. The foremost focus for the two nations is to find a cure that will put a stop to the global fear of China. In January the USA tried to include American scientists from the Disease Control and Prevention in the international team of experts that are located in Wuhan but the Chinese authority declined that proposal, president trump tried to press the issue through a phone call to the president of CHINA Mr. Xi only till the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February till the Chinese government responded and allowed two American experts on the team.

## Coronavirus: OECD Slashes Forecast for World Economy

GDP growth forecast for the world's largest economies in 2020\*



Source: OECD





China's ruling communist party is thought to have hidden the first outbreak of the disease, but when things got out of control the Chinese declared a global epidemic. So, are the Chinese responsible for the outburst of the clinical virus? This question brings us back to the 2003 SARS pandemic, when China refused to expose the disease until it was spread all over the country, this secrecy that tired up the country's economy and health, was caused by a solid yet weak government that neglected its care for its citizens. The Chinese Government left its people ignorant of a disease that's wrecking the country which is dreadful. The Chinese government response to the SARS was related to the country's political system, a deeply rooted system that likes to maintain secrecy, in union with a performance-based obsession with growth and expansion during political succession, that contributed to China's initial failure to expose the outbreak, to compare it to the Corona virus global spread the Chinese did the same, where they weren't able to withstand the blow on their own, their failure in creating a vaccine and taking that much of a time to interpret the virus and expose their weaknesses of not finding a cure exposed a soft spot on the dragon's body.

Now with the global dissemination of the virus and a trade war with America, adding to that all the prolonged protests in Hong Kong, analysts are starting to doubt Chinese

power of holding everything together, this probably is the strongest blow since the SARS outbreak which was then the regarded as the biggest challenge that the Chinese has ever dealt with.

As for financial and economy solutions the Chinese government is yet to cut taxes, boost spending and slash interest rates to prevent the corona-virus outbreak wreaking havoc on an already fragile economy. The central and local government have allotted 12.6 billion\$ to spend on medical treatment and equipment. Major Banks have lowered interest rates for minor industries and personnel's that are found in severely infected areas.

The bank of China will let the people of Wuhan province postpone their loan payments for a couple of months if they lost their jobs and wages because of the situation. The People's bank of China, the country's central bank has declared it will supply enough liquidity for the financial markets to function after the start of the new Lunar year; When Hong Kong's markets reopened the Hang Seng Index (HIS) jumped about 6% in few days of trade.

Without any sign of Chemical trails, the world is in a confused state, fingers can't be pointed towards anyone, and no solution is presented to the world. Global trade was in trouble even before the spread of the Corona virus, people should be prepared for an economic war between the World Giants China and the USA, some refer to it as "World War 3", and it's not going to be tranquil, the world will be put to a huge fight in economy and trade, with every country nowadays going towards extreme privatization and depending on protectionism as its sole way to defend itself, the old ways of cooperation and giving a helping hand in economy and in human care are not *"trendy"* nowadays, this selfishness of the Big countries will not bring benefit to neither big nor small countries, and we will see that in the upcoming year or two, the greedy capitalist system that is controlling the world is leading humanity towards its end, we need wise men to lead humanity towards its breakthrough, the way the world economy is going now is pointing towards a crash ,let's hope for a better tomorrow, but till now it's not looking that great.

### Prior Epidemics Were All V-Shaped



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2019. Data for 2002 SARS and 1968 Hong Kong Flu are from the World Bank. Data for 1968 Hong Kong Flu and 1918 Spanish Flu are from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. All data are in US\$ Billions.

## INTERVIEW WITH A SATANIST

Annette Jinawi



*Have you ever wondered what that stranger that just walked past you on the street is thinking? What are their beliefs? What worries them? What do their daily routines consist of? Is there something that distinguishes them from the masses?*

Suppose you were granted the opportunity to ask them anything that came to your mind. What would you be interested in asking? Now suppose the person sitting across from you in class is a Satanist, would you be too scared to approach that complete stranger with a question? The unknown frightens even the bravest of spirits, yet the truth is too

precious to be so gravely disregarded. The goal is to face unfamiliar concepts, and to not limit ourselves to mundane, conventional ideas.

Below are a few questions I had the chance of asking a Satanist that I was previously unacquainted with (the interviewee will remain anonymous due to Satanism being illegal in Lebanon, and its practitioners facing the risk of imprisonment). I applied my curiosity throughout this interview on the basis that assumptions, general statements, and stereotypes almost always merely reflect pejorative connotations that are engraved in our minds from an early age.

*Satan is simply a word that means the adversary, or the opposition, or the accuser. It doesn't necessarily mean evil or brutality, or cruelty. It simply means the dissenter.*

*- Anton Lavey*

*Could you define the different types of Satanism and specify which you abide by?*

The first book I came upon was Anton Lavey's "**Satanism**". His form of Satanism is not really a religion in the sense that Satan is worshipped. Laveyans are basically atheists that enjoy performing rituals. One of the key rules is to not believe in non-scientific things. Calling it "Satanism" is a form of marketing. It is just a marketing scheme to attract people and show a sense of mock religion. Their ideologies stem from the belief that rituals influence human's subconscious. They are useful but not in "**magical sense**" to fulfill desires, but in working towards the goal. Satan is the key character because he represents freedom honoring, and acknowledging the animalistic side of humans. Their key amendments consist of not believing in anything without a reason, to not be ignorant, and to steer away from ignorant people as much as possible.

They value facts, knowledge and science. You cannot be biased. You also need to have a "style" or "aesthetic" because it helps you build on your creative side (which they value). Respecting your animalistic side and honoring the human body, and not being ashamed by it or looking at it as a disgusting vessel.

Another type is the hardcore devil-worshipping Satanism. They worship "**Lucifer Morningstar**". They originated in Europe and are very extreme in the sense that they perform sacrifices and burn churches. This is where the bad image Satanism came from.

Paganism is another form. They believe that "**Lucifer**" is stolen from a pagan god that many tribes used to worship, and that he is not what religions make him seem. They acknowledge bad and good and they believe in performing rituals but it is not extreme.



### ***Do you consider people who worship Lucifer evil?***

They are not evil; they just gave up on life in a way. Their key ideas are based on speeding up the apocalypse. Their actual practices rely primarily on murdering their soul. They probably went through a lot of trauma. Some actually think they have committed enough atrocities that Satan promotes them into demons that torture people in the afterlife. They don't believe in reformation because they think god is just tricking us, and it is impossible to be good in this world.

### ***When did you join Satanism, and what triggered these thoughts for you?***

I was 9 when I started thinking about these things and it stayed in the back of my mind. I joined Satanism when I was 11. I was just interested in the idea of Satan because he is against what everyone preaches about. I was in my rebelling years and I was susceptible to everything. I had no true beliefs in the system and I started reading about it. Reading about it provided a more logical explanation for me. It honored science and logic so it was more convincing.

### ***Did the way you grow up affect your beliefs?***

My parents were not religious, so I wasn't rebelling against that, I think that I am just more drawn to things that the majority hate.

### ***Is there a place to go to join or to exercise Satanism? How is it possible to join?***

In Lebanon, there is obviously no church of Satan, you can just find the individuals that follow it, and make a "coven". You can join the church of Satan online, but you have to pay for a membership, and this can be annoying. They do support each other with these memberships, but the system of it has changed a lot through the years and now a lot of knowledge and information is retracted from you unless you exert more financial efforts into the church to become a higher member. In the original book and system, all you have to do to join Satanism is to read. Read a lot and practice it.

### ***Do you perform any rituals and sacrifices, or abide by any traditions?***

I used to perform rituals. They are just symbolic. There are a variety of rituals like spells similar to witchcraft in a way. They did get inspired by pagan rituals but it is reformed in a way that makes more sense. They change your subconscious to actively seek the things you desire. For example, one ritual is writing on a piece of paper your career choice and deconstructing the alphabet into lines, and assembling the lines in the way you feel like, so the result would be some sort of symbol, and you tie the paper and keep it with you in a book you like.

It is a symbolic way saying you will achieve that. It focuses your subconscious.

There are no guided spell books, you just choose. Some spells rely on herbs; you could even make your own spells depending on what is logical to you. There's a lot of usage of earth elements to symbolize your connection with the animal world. I have done some spells with oils, some with soil, and fire. We like fire because it is honestly just nice and calming to look at. But you don't really have to do them; some of them are just nice to do to trick your subconscious. When it comes to animal sacrifices, they are rarely used, and a lot of Laveyan church members are actually vegan; there is no real use for them.

They are mentioned in the book but they are not necessary.

### ***Are you open about your beliefs? What is people's reaction?***

It is not easy to open up to anyone about this, especially in Lebanon. My mom used to suspect that, she used to burn my metal shirts because she thought I was a Satan worshipper. I would never open up to someone about this if I thought they would not expect it because everyone assumes it is negative. It might be a fun test to see how open people are. In my experience, they just avoid the topic.

### ***How do these negative connotations affect you? Does it bother you that some people label you as "witches"?***

I kind of like it because I'm more drawn to everything that is rejected. I also think it is Anton Lavey's way of advertising it because he does use big terms in his books, like "sacrifice", and "luring men" and so on. But they are very symbolic just to attract people to read it.

We like the term "witch" because we've read about witches, we know what they are. They are not bad people. What makes them "witches" is that they are responsible for their own empowerment.

### ***Does this affect your daily life as a student?***

It made me feel a bit empowered because you have a secret that people fear. But it makes me focused.

### ***How would you say your daily life is different than others'?***

Everyone has their own beliefs. In Laveyan Satanism we rely on ourselves more than another power, which made me more confident.

*The aim of this interview is to provide insight into other people's lives, and to promote the search for truth and open-mindedness.*



# REVOLUTIONARY ARMENIA

Garen Kazarian



However as the years passed, things were appearing to stabilise, yet the limitations of geography, a perceived cultural gap between the diaspora and the local Armenians, an ongoing cold conflict, a cultural shock of the Soviet era mentality and populace to the ideals of the western world, etc., did not allow for Armenia to sustainably grow and develop. This forced many people to immigrate to other, more sustainable countries, as well as created a power struggle within the Armenian political sphere and elite, having different visions and interests on the current and future state of the country. This all came to a head, when armed individuals/ terrorists, stormed the parliament on October 27 1999, murdering individuals who they saw as threats, such as Garen Demirjian and Vasken Sarkisian. This created an opportunity for the opponents of the individuals killed, such as Robert Kocharian and Serge Sarkisian, to usurp power, and be the country's second and third presidents respectively. However their eras were and are not popularly seen as sustainable, as it was and still is mired in allegations of corruption and electoral fraud by both individuals themselves, their inner circles, and various allies.

## *The "Velvet Revolution":*

Throughout its history, Armenia as a state, has had numerous forms of government. These forms include kingdoms, a semi-empire, provinces of other states etc., with the current "second" republic being the modern form. However, this was not an easy inception, as neither the geography of the country, nor its circumstances allowed it to prosper in a sustainable and healthy manner. To begin with, being landlocked and surrounded by genocidal Turkey and Azerbaijan in the east and mostly west respectively, a struggling and bipolar Georgia on the North, and a traditional but sanctioned companion Iran, on the south, makes Armenia's neighborhood quite challenging and unforgiving. In addition, circumstances, including both the tragic and devastating Spitak earthquake, as well as the defensive struggle against the aggressive Azerbaijan for Artsakh, more commonly known as Nagorno-Karabakh, also added pressure on the newly formed independent "second" republic.

Nevertheless, in the spring of 2018, after years of fighting for change, the people had enough. A referendum held in 2015, where allegations of voter fraud occurred, aiming to transfer Armenia from a presidential system to a parliamentary one. Being seen by many as a tool by Serge Sarkisian to extend his rule, at the end of his terms in the spring of 2018, forced the people to peacefully rebel in a demand to prevent this, led by then opposition MP Nigol Pashinian. After many days of peaceful demonstrations and protests, the "velvet revolution" succeeded in its demands of preventing a third consecutive Sarkisian term, while making Pashinian an interim prime minister and paving way for snap elections in October of the same year.

During the October parliamentary elections, Pashinian officially became prime minister after his party won 70% of the seats in the parliament. After taking control of both the executive and legislative bodies of government, numerous developments and changes have occurred in the republic of Armenia. This article seeks to evaluate any and all possible events and developments, since the October elections, as it is during this period that the "revolutionary" government has taken control. However, the shortcomings in the judicial branch, will be taken into consideration, as it is deemed by many individuals, including Pashinian, to not be under the "revolutionary" banner.





## *Personal Note:*

Even though, I intend to be as objective as possible, I personally admit that it will be quite challenging. Other than my potential bias on the topic at hand, it is somewhat hard to find any negative developments, as some have been around for a long time, and most developments have been quite impressive. I would also like to note that another factor is in play, where many of the possible criticisms being such as "a better job can be done", can easily be discarded through the belief that even "Rome wasn't built in a day". Though this does not mean negative things don't mean and should not be subject to change. However, I shall try presenting as many facts as possible, though I apologise if I miss anything or present wrong information. One last thing, even though I have not cited anything, all sources are available. If you want to know more, contact me.

## *Positive Developments:*

To begin with, many positive changes have occurred ever since the "velvet revolution" took place and the "revolutionary" government was formed in after the October elections of 2018. That is why, to begin with, the positive developments shall be discussed. In terms of healthcare, medical care for all children (ages 0-18) as well as cancer surgeries and acute stroke treatment, for all ages, is now free of charge in Armenia. This may be seen as positive as it may highlight the newly founded importance of healthcare from the government. In terms of economics and business many developments have also occurred. According to the Armenian government, the annual GDP growth for Armenia in the year 2019 from January to December has been around 8.2%. If true, it is the highest in Europe. This has caused the IMF to forecast Armenia to have the highest GDP per capita in the Caucasus, in the year 2020 with a value of \$4,760. Both higher than sea-based Georgia and oil and gas rich Azerbaijan. These numbers may seem mediocre to some, however with the circumstances Armenia faces in contrast to its neighbours, it can be seen as quite impressive. In addition, around \$105,000,000 has been restored to the budget as a result of anti-corruption crackdowns and activities by the government. Cases of anti-corruption crackdowns include numerous high profile officials from the previous two presidents' administrations including ongoing prosecutions against Kocharyan and Sarkisian themselves, as well as their inner circles. This in addition with improved tax collection, has increased Armenia's tax revenue of about 20% in contrast to 2018. This increase in tax revenue, can be seen as more impressive as income tax in Armenia has been lowered to a 20% flat tax as opposed by the previous 23-28-38 progressive taxes. These additional incomes in the government have been used to increase the minimum wage by 20%, while offering agricultural businesses reimbursement of 30-50% of their costs, in addition to allowing small producers with annual sales of less than \$55,000 to pay 0% in business tax. These measures can highlight the business friendly nature of the current government. In addition, the increase in tax revenue has allowed for numerous investments in infrastructure, with around 350 kilometres of new roads constructed. In addition, around \$63,000,000 has been allocated to renovate 22 schools and 8 colleges in rural Armenia, thus advancing rural development. In brief many more positive facts which can be highlighted about the "revolutionary" government's role in the recent development of Armenia, but this is beyond the scope of the article.



### *Negative Issues:*

When it comes to the negatives, the current government also has their fair share. As mentioned above, the fact that "Rome was not built in a day" can prove to excuse some shortcomings of the new government as they haven't even reached their mid term, and time is needed to repair the damages done by the old governments. However, there should always be room to criticism, as a way to ensure accountability and make sure the government stays on a positive track. To begin with, an example of a valid criticism by some commentators, can be the perceived impunity for some members of the new government. These include allegations of corruption in the Yerevan city council, which were shut down after being raised by an opposition figure. This has raised some concern in Armenia, where fears of the old governments have been somewhat reinvigorated, because of worries of chances that a new generation of corruption are being enabled instead of being completely destroyed. In addition, regardless of how this may predate the current government, and that the current government has claimed to have developments in it, the situation of the armed forces of Armenia may be worrying. To begin with, the two year conscription of men to the armed forces can be heavily criticized as it has many negative aspects to it. For example, it may distract young men from their education, while creating discrimination against both sexes for the male only approach. In addition, recent tragic events of non-combat deaths, may highlight how being forced to serve for two years may create room for "dedovshchina", which basically is constant bullying against junior conscripts by their senior colleagues and officers. This is why, it is high time that the conscription law should be reformed. One solution could be to include both sexes in a maximum year long service.. In addition to the inclusion of both sexes in conscription, another solution could include, the option to either to continue serving, after having general training lasting 1-3 months, or doing community service during/ after allowing the youth pursue their education, thus giving everyone chances at either learning and developing their handy skills, and/ or practicing their professions in the field by helping the community. A final solution could be the complete removal of conscription to form a purely professional army with the newly found funds of the government. In brief, even though some shortcomings of the government could be overlooked based on the circumstances, major problems such as the state of the armed forces because of the conscription law, as well as worries by some commentators on the fear of impunity, allow for their to be criticism on the negatives of the current authorities.



### *Concluding Remarks:*

In conclusion, "revolutionary" Armenia has seen numerous positive and negative developments. However, in my opinion, thankfully the positive developments outweigh the negative ones. Nevertheless, this does not mean the negatives should be ignored. On the contrary, the government should definitely work on tackling and solving them as if properly dealt with, can convert the negatives into a stream of positivity that has come through this "velvet revolution". For by being honest with ourselves, as well as acknowledging our true selves in terms of our strengths and weakness, do we progress. This also applies to Armenia. Thanks for your time and hope you enjoyed.



## THE LISTENER

Build trust and  
establish rapport.



Ask specific questions.



# Active Listening Skills

Demonstrate concern.



Use brief verbal affirmations like:



Active listening techniques can  
help you truly understand  
what people are saying  
in conversations  
and meetings



I was recently asked an unusual question: “What is the worst thing that could happen when you share your feelings?” – Well, I’ll tell you what. Not being heard, and subsequently validated. *Isn’t validation ultimately what we really seek?*

Even though communication is basically at the foundation of our society, it is not given much thought, at least not more than *getting our point across* and *getting the information we need*.

We fail to remember that communication consist of both **talking** and **listening**, and both are equally important.

However, I have noticed that I rarely feel rewarded after a conversation, especially one where I share my feelings with others, and as a result, I started being more aware of **what is being said**, and **how**. I’ll share with you some advice I found very useful to follow in order to get better at listening to others.

### Listening and Hearing

There is a distinction to be made here. Look more closely into yourself: are you *hearing people* like you hear street noise, or are you *listening to them*?

Hearing is stops at the **sensory** part, but listening is a **choice**: it takes up effort from our part. And if you’re still taking part in that conversation, doesn’t that mean that you deem it worthy of your attention and energy? I just love listening to people sometimes, something my boss doesn’t often appreciate, let me tell you. Why? Because people love to be listened to just as much as I love hearing them, and when one of my costumers encounter a listener (in this case, moi), waves of stories come rushing all at once. And all I can do is stand there, in my uniform, holding my empty tray and listening. Here’s a short guide on how to both listen to people, and in my case, drive your boss insane:

“

*Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.*

- Stephen R. Covey

”

### Active Listening

This type if listening consists of **taking part in the conversation**, with *passion*! Do you want to know what happened next? Or why he decided to make spicy pasta instead of meatballs? Ask! Don’t hesitate to show engagement and care for the topic discussed.

Try to also keep in mind:

Have a correct **posture**, and keeping your hands away from your face or crossing them on your chest, keep your body language open and receiving.

Make proper **eye contact**, if you don’t know where to look, you can look at their mouth or the space between their eyes.

Show the right **facial expressions**, the ones that are appropriate to what is being said. Oohs and Aahs a re more than welcome.

People tend to want to contribute to conversations by voicing their opinions about it or giving advice, thinking that by relating to others people’s situation will somehow help the speaker. Or worse yet, they think that by diminishing s omeone else’s problem, it’ll somehow make them deal with it better.

*Newsflash, no.*

When I confide in someone saying that I’m overwhelmed with my lifestyle, they start talking about themselves, their experiences, opinions, how they got through it and to top it off, spill their advice!

*But this is not what active listening is*, in fact, it is actually more like saying things such as “That sounds difficult, how are you managing your time?” or “What do you think is making you anxious the most?”

I find that it is more helpful to ask people questions that **encourage them to look at their situation from different points of view** instead of voicing our own. And sometimes, if there is nothing to say, not to say anything, *and be okay with that*.

### Empathetic Listening:

Try doing these when you find yourself with someone venting to you (and if you’re a naturally passionate listener, you might find that you do these unconsciously in a conversation already!):

**Repeat** what the other person said – it says “I hear you”.

**Rephrase** their comments – says “I listen to you, and I understood what you’re saying”.

**Reflect** – Try putting their feelings into words for them.

**Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_**

I have been a waitress for 6 months, and it’s curious: I remember every single person that calls me by my name. There is something special about it, thus my next advice: say the person’s name. It catches their attention, helps them be engaged and feel included.

Not excessively though, that just becomes weird.

### Let them talk, talk and talk

And talk some more. It is rewarding to talk. In fact, brain imaging shows that it is as rewarding as sex, eating and money. **Our brains light up lie a Christmas tree** when we speak, so do your friend a favor and let them express themselves. Ask them for advice, probe elaborations, keep them talking for a change.

Not only did I just help you learn how to strengthen your bonds with your friends and/or create meaningful and deep friendships, you now totally know how to pretend to be listening in class when you actually really want to be sleeping on the grass with your friends!

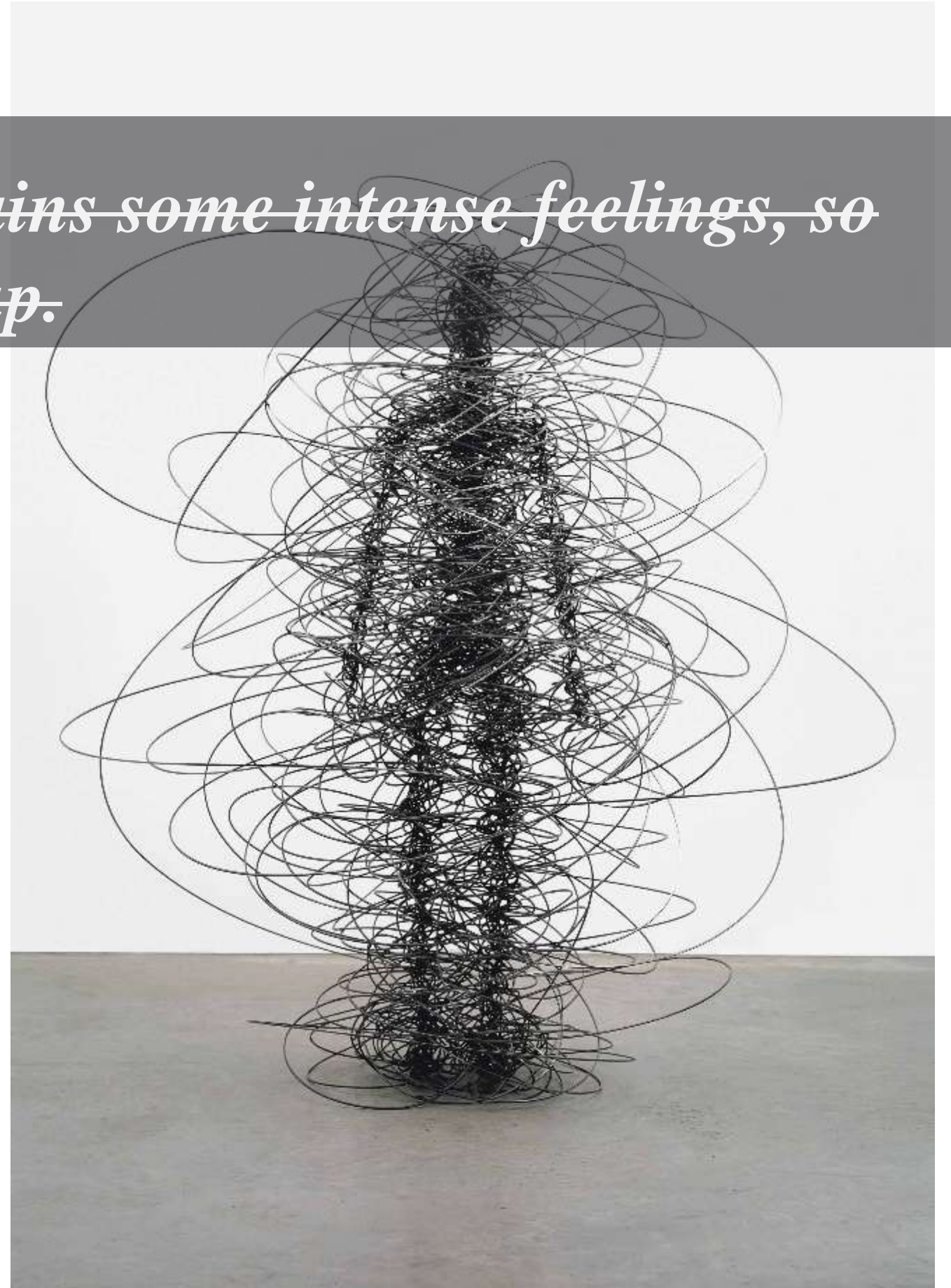
You are welcome.

*Warning: the following piece contains some intense feelings, so buckle up.*

“Air paused in my lungs, stopping me from breathing...  
Ideas crowded and scattered all over my mind, making me certain  
that my brain might explode at any given moment...  
Emotions burnt in my heart, triggering its blood vessels to detach  
so these feelings go away...

Every part is screaming to be separated from me  
No matter how much I sob, nothing within me really changes  
Even screaming or running, they don't do anything  
Even if I consider to open up to someone, who can I go to?  
Although this world is filled with people, I can't seem to find one  
person I can get rid of my feelings with  
I'm left with the paper I'm writing on and I doubt it understands  
what I fill it with

At least when I leave, this paper will leave too carrying every  
sensation I had on it as if it never existed  
But that's the only choice I have...”





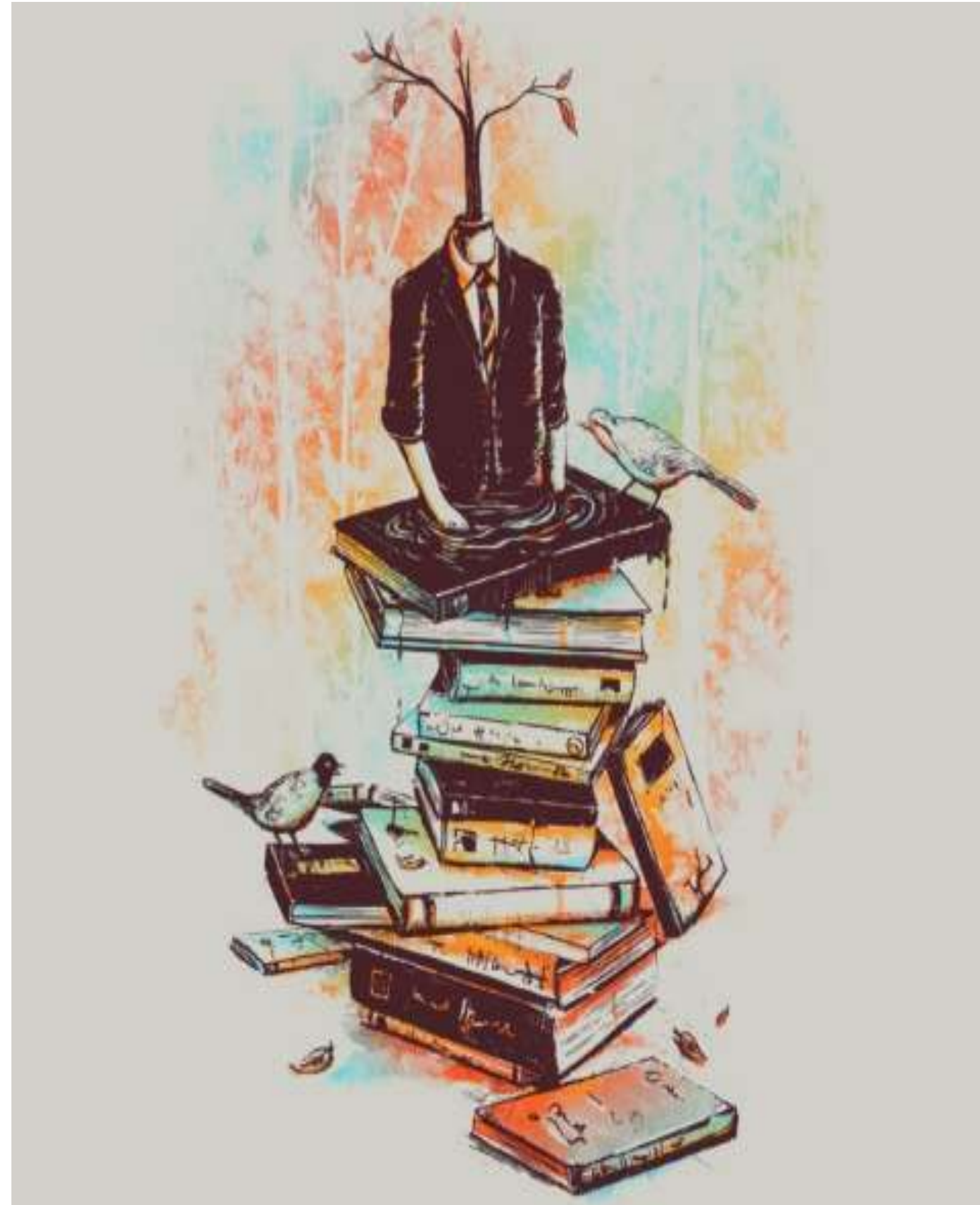
The greatest majority of my school years were spent in a tiny black box inside my head which my friends always worked on making bigger by time. I had no friends, no close ties with my family, and no cousins to spend time with; I literally had nothing and sadly I still do. That's why I chose a paper and a pen to be my company in my insomniac nights and these were literally the stars in my darkness and what you've just read is only a little sample. I decided to share this because I want to remind you that you can help yourself when you can't find help around by occasional writing that doesn't force you to be committed with especially that pain is an integral part of everyone's growth process.

That's how it is sometimes, we just feel things we can't really explain to ourselves or others which makes us live under this cloud of unexplained emotions. At these times, our tears tend to pause in the corner of our eyes, lose their way, and stop there. Our breath slows down making it difficult to let foreign intruders enter our bodies. Our thoughts seem to be restless while they go back and forth for more than a thousand times. It is normal at such a state to find it hard to speak about what is happening inside of us, so we decide to let these events sink inside and hope that they find their way down to the bottom and never back to the surface. Such a decision of silence comes from the belief that retaining our "bad" emotions inside is better than letting them out to affect others negatively. It is in these situations that we find that a piece of paper is our best friend. Perhaps it's because we trust it and we think that what is engraved on this paper will never find its way to others unless we decide to.

If we think about it, allowing our inner world to be released on paper gives us a chance to untangle and open space for logical and reasonable plans and actions. After being done with liberating our locked emotions, a sense of accomplishment starts running through our devastated veins that tells it that things can and will go back on track for our will is young, alive, and loud. As previously stated, ink on paper won't unleash what we wrote unless we allow it to. So if we keep these papers to ourselves, they can be our reminder of parts of our journey of self-growth and how we got over many bad days in our lives; thus giving us-yet again- another refreshed sense of achievement. Most importantly, opening up to paper will supply us with a bigger space for us where we can get rid of our "bad" emotions and gain a new world where we can unleash our inner heroes and become the people we aspire to be.

Who knows? Maybe a small piece of paper in a temporary dull state of mind can assist us in discovering new pages within ourselves. Maybe it could reveal new talents we never knew we ever had. Maybe it can be the start of a career and a life we never imagined we could get. But isn't the most important question to ask ourselves is what could happen if we don't decide to open up, even for paper?

*P.S. if you're interested more in regular writing (i.e. journaling), you can check last issue's article about journaling*





# ARMENIAN SUPERSTITIONS

*Vana Agopian*

We all know growing up in kids' cartoons they'd show us that by crossing under a ladder you'll get bad luck, or for Europe if you see a black cat you won't get to finish your tasks of the day as it is seen as an omen of bad luck and death. But the superstitions that exist in the Armenian world, are just quite the cherry on top.

Starting off the superstitions, we Armenians all have had that moment where our mothers or grandmothers basically shout "NO! Don't you dare open that inside the house, someone could die" when we tried to open an umbrella inside our house. An umbrella that is used outside of our homes shouldn't be opened inside because otherwise, someone very dear to the heart could pass away.

Second superstition is related to fights. And what could cause a fight exactly? Let's picture it: You could be at a dinner with your friends or family and suddenly your sister asks you to pass on the bread to the other side of the table, while doing so, if you knock over the salt shaker, then that in fact implies that a fight is going to start.

Third superstition and probably the weirdest and funniest one yet, is the one Armenians have with regards to simple chewing gum.



The saying goes as such: if you are chewing gum after 6 p.m. then you are chewing a dead man's skin. We don't know who came up with these but all we know is that they've been transmitted to generation and generation for thousands of years through the grandparents and now through this article! Now are you wondering what you can do if you're having a nice chill day at home and suddenly you get surprise visitors at home?

We Armenians have got just the perfect solution for you: simply take a needle, your most basic needle used for sewing and shove it into the loose ends of a broomstick and according to legend, it should work.

Fourth is the problem Armenians have with rice.

Growing up, if we had any dish with rice for lunch at home and I couldn't bring myself to finish all my rice, my mother would tell me "the amount of rice grains left, is the amount of children you're going to have in the future" which automatically left me into eating every single bit of rice I had on my plate, well except for 2-3...

Lastly we have the whole incident with mirrors that even the Romans believe in. When you break a mirror, may it be by accident or on purpose, you are subjected to 7 years of bad luck, that's it, you're doomed.

These superstitions are a part of culture and brings members of the same community together as weird and as funny as they seem. We should keep these small important traditions alive and allow for different generations to bond and continue passing it onto the next one.



## LEFT FOR IT

*Serge Nasr*

Sometimes you desire to enter that airport gate with your luggage in one hand and a backpack hanging from behind and just leave all that you know behind, all your problems and misconceptions and messed up feelings and a life you have changed the meaning of too many times to keep track.

Instead, you enter that gate but with someone else's luggage, you walk those long airport halls with your hands shaking saying goodbye to so many people that have managed to become part of you of who you are and all the plans you have for this world. You walk down thinking of how you're going to survive, scared of what is yet to come and trying to wrap your head around how you're going to manage to walk this line of trials and bumps on your own, nearly naked, mostly falling apart.

But then, you look around and take a glimpse at another life, at a mother holding her child in despair refusing to let go as he leaves on a new journey or a loving wife clutching to her husband as she pretentiously grasps his last scent and holds on to the warm sensation as she touches his hand and dreams of a future together. And then you instantly feel some kind of consolation that you are not alone in this, that there are other people going through the feeling of pain that you are trying to learn from and the authentic tears of sorrow and fear of what is going to happen once they're gone. It all felt a lot, the package of fear and pain and bewilderment striking at the same time. It was the last time that we were going to meet like this, the last time that we are who we are, the last time we are so grounded in the most reviving aspect that we could've ever had. I guess that is what scared me the most; the thought that entered my mind a thousand times and the questions that shook me were whether we will ever have this again, if we will ever genuinely live the life of reaching the peak of wanting to stay where we are again. It's going to keep on changing and growing; we will, too. It's some sort of comfort in it never again staying the same.



So, yes, I have changed the meaning of it once more, and in the most unexpected manner, the desired walk on that airport carpet and the smell of freedom striking through my body reviving the spine that was once bending to a bleach of tiring explosions is now straightening. I could finally sense a crack in those airport gates. And I run, I run out of thirst, out of frustration, out of instincts, to tear down the gate and walk the walk that I have been mastering for so long, but for myself this time. Maybe they weren't the actual gates and maybe my luggage wasn't as heavy as I always expected it would be, but I have learned to escape with a taste of divinity that is of my own creation. I have finally escaped the cycle.

## WINDS OF CHANGE

*Alyag Momjian*

All of us closed chapters in order to open a new one, all of us went through many ups and downs in order to be here. Some of us crossed countries, some crossed streets. But what we all have in common is that we are here. Starting a new chapter was never on my fears list, I mean why would it be? Or should I ask, why wouldn't it? Being an active person back in Kuwait, where I come from, never made me worry about meeting new people or feeling lonely, but I somehow did, I felt lonely.

Whoever knows me, knows the amount of love I carry in my heart for Lebanon. So, I was not afraid of what's coming, I was definitely where I should be, everything seemed almost perfect, but what was it that made me feel lonely?

It was all about time, it was all about patience. It was my first time in Lebanon, my first impression was not bad, I wasn't sure what I was expecting actually, but mainly I was impatient to start off the new chapter, to finally get the chance of being a student at Haigazian. Haigazian which I left everything for. Haigazian which I've heard nothing but literally the best about.

Haigazian which already felt like home while following online.

I stepped to Haigazian with mixed emotions, but having my dad beside me gave me the strength. It wasn't crowded like I imagined, in fact it was so serene. Well, maybe because the university was still on a break. But I was looking around, crossing different things in my mind and smiling.

It was the place to be.  
And obviously I had this major relief because I knew that I just made the right choice.

Days passed by, my dad returned back to home, I was all alone now, with mixed emotions, loneliness hit and I low-key started to panic. I started walking in Hamra, explored around, it reminded me of my family because that's what we used to do back home.

I couldn't find a way out of the situation, it felt like a trap.  
Eventually, I started university, that made me realize why I came here in the first place, then slowly the loneliness hit a different road and left me.  
And this is the main reason you're reading this today, I write to relieve my stress, I joined this particular club to find people who somehow relate to what I do.

But let me tell you this, find your comfort zone and then break it, don't stay there, it won't take you anywhere. Go to places you're afraid to go, take the risk or else you'll lose the chance.  
Go meet people, talk to them, ask questions, discover, love, spread positivity and live.  
This is life, it's complicated in a way, but that's the beauty of it.

Listen to the wind of change and it'll lead you. Have a safe journey, enjoy!



# WHAT IS UNIVERSITY?

TIMOTEO PEREIRA NEVES

Forget about grades.

It's the words that pierce you like X-ray,  
slice your worldview in two,  
leave you with nothing to say,  
and make you crave what's true.

It's the collective fight against bore  
When your teacher takes over time,  
Beating an idea until it's sore,  
And giving your mouth a taste of lime.

It's the legwork and daily hassle  
Of exercising mind, body, and soul.  
Daydreams of your graduation tassel  
When you come out of traffic jam whole.

It's the relationships you lace in classes,  
Financial work, events, clubs, or teams  
As you speculate exam guesses  
Or laugh at memorable memes.

It's the countless sleepless nights  
Which make caffeine a near-addiction  
As you cram work between sandwich bites,  
And feel tempted to write fiction.

It's the realization that you grew:  
A pebble rippling your lifespan.  
A long-awaited breakthrough  
To converge your dreams into a plan.

