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The term “humanity” is defined as compassionate, sympathetic, or generous behavior or disposition. Humanity includes values such as empathy, consciousness, being fair and loving kindness. In our polarized world, humanity gains more important everyday as all of the living beings have been facing a lot of problems that can be considered global, such as poverty, climate change and conflicts among different nations. The concept of humanity reinforces the values that remind us why we exist in this world and why we are here together. We chose such a broad concept as “humanity” as this year’s theme to remind our readers of the value of being human and to bring together different perspectives under this concept. In this issue of Quill, we invite you to reexamine our shared emotions and values, which naturally come together under the theme of “humanity.”

Quill is a space where ideas, emotions, and perspectives come together through writing. In this issue, Quill approaches the theme of humanity not as a single definition, but as a question to be explored from many angles. Through poems, stories, and reflections, it invites writers to examine what it means to be human in today’s world: to feel, to struggle, to connect, and to grow. Our aim is to create a platform that encourages honest expression and thoughtful dialogue, where different voices can coexist and challenge one another. We envision Quill as more than a publication; it is a living conversation-one that embraces complexity, inspires empathy, and reimagines humanity through the power of words.

We had a lot of fun preparing the 12th issue of Quill together. This year’s theme, humanity, increased our awareness of global problems, improved our skills of empathy and analytical thinking, and helped us express our thoughts through literature. While some of us experienced writing and editing in this magazine for the first time our experienced writers and editors encouraged us to take a step into the world of writing. We each had thoughts and ideas on our own and we gathered all of them here as we were putting together pieces of puzzle to create a colorful whole. Each of us brought a different perspective to life and we enriched each others viewpoints with our unique ideas. We sometimes faced challenges, though. However, we always worked hard and created an environment where ambiguity was replaced with certainty, confusion turned into creativity and we who were once strangers to each other got to know each other better. As the editor team of Quill we are honored to introduce our 12th issue to our beloved readers.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our principal, Mrs. Ayşe Serenay Tarhan Güler, our vice principal, Çağrı Yurttaş Dirlik and our advisor teacher, dear İrem Gönen, who have been with us every step of Quill's journey. We must also thank our valuable writers and artists who have made this issue so wonderful. Finally, we wish you an enjoyable reading journey with our articles, written with great effort and love.

Humanity Is Our Territory

Alptuğ Kılıçay 9/B

Love is the progress we make,
While giving happiness through a decision,
A decision that can worth millions,
While not creating chaos.
Care about others,
Help others,
Get help in return,
When it is your turn.
Help is not given only with money,
In a world that is full of people like honey,
Not caring about only money,
But caring about humanity.
Wanting to help is a responsibility,
A responsibility to the community.
Even if it is in sports,
Humanity is the key to unity.
Loving and caring,
Helping and sharing are necessities.
Together we grow, hand in hand,
Building a kinder, stronger land.



THE INFINITE CONTROL OF HUMANITY: KINDNESS



Ayşe İpek İnce 9/D

“Everything I did was for your own good.”

“You would be nothing without me.”

“Is this how you repay kindness?”

These are the classic lies that our friends, families—basically society—tell us. Not all harm comes from hatred; some comes from kindness. Humanity includes an innate instinct for self-interest. Kindness may appear to be a virtue from the outside, but when it is used as a power against a person, it becomes an unquestionable moral superiority.

Doing good deeds to receive something in return creates a sense of obligation, which places pressure on freedom. Furthermore, the use of kindness as psychological pressure is also quite common today. Trying to control someone with statements such as “You could never have done it without me!” or “I did everything for your own good” is a misuse of the power of language, disguised as kindness.

Are not the deepest scars we carry caused not by physical violence but by psychological pressure? Are benevolent acts that create a debt of gratitude truly benevolent?

The quality of being humane encompasses freedom and dignity. In cases where kindness is used as a power over a person and creates a mutual obligation, dignity and freedom begin to suffer. Thus, acts of kindness take away one's humanity when it belittles a person and damages their dignity.

Virtuous acts that do not neglect the values of honour and freedom inherent in human nature and are truly well intentioned do not create a balance of power. It is a fundamental right of humanity for a person to refuse these “acts of kindness,” and everyone possesses that right.

When goodness is defined by power, it requires obedience, enforces silence and elevates conformity. True humanity involves questioning, choice, and resistance, and it exists in this way. Good deeds can only be truly humane when they are free from the obligation to reciprocate and combined with freedom.



Helping With Love

Alptuğ Kılıçay 9/B

With friends, with family,
Just be with the community.
Helping others is a necessity,
Helping while knowing the importance of the community.
Don't be scared, yet be amazed,
Because kindness is how love is raised.
Caring about others is the thing that makes you strong,
When you need to hope more than ever.

Love is the thing that makes you important,
Try to understand your worth.
Know that you are important!
Everyone is equal like how you are not a seagull while others are humans.
Equality is what makes us strong,
It's the place where we all belong.
Kindness is our greatest power,
Blooming like a beautiful flower.



Interview with Mr. Cengiz Çiftçi

Ayşe Tezcan 9/B



Hello Mr. Çiftçi. First of all, it is a great honour for us to have you in this interview. Before we start our questions, could you please introduce yourself briefly?

My name is Cengiz Çiftçi. I completed my education at Middle East Technical University in the Departments of Sociology and Public Administration, and I completed my master's degree in political science and public administration. I started my civil society work after the 1999 Marmara earthquake. I have worked as an expert in different non-governmental organizations and projects. I took part in the establishment of the European Union Civil Thinking (Sivil Düşün) Programme and worked as a team leader in the Civil Society Dialogue and Civil Society Support Programmes of the EU Presidency. Currently, I am involved in the project "Supporting the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations in Disaster Risk Management." I have always been closely connected with the concept of humanity, and I hope to remain so in the future as well.

You started your civil society work after the 1999 Marmara earthquake. How did witnessing a disaster at the beginning of your career shape your understanding of humanity?

Natural and man-made disasters are the occasions when normal life is interrupted and the world we know is turned upside down. The Marmara earthquake was a massive disaster that changed the lives of millions of people and disrupted daily life. On one hand, there were people whose lives were deeply affected. On the other hand, millions of volunteers from different backgrounds came together with a shared sense of humanity and worked for the common good.

The main reason why so many people became volunteers was the desire to support our shared humanity. It was a period that strengthened the feeling of being a family member, a neighbour, and a citizen, and that developed the idea of living in solidarity. The volunteer work I joined became a lifestyle for me; I started to focus on public benefit and social well-being.

This experience taught me that humanity is collective, solidarity is a virtue, everyone has rights even if they are not always aware of them, and we all have responsibilities even if we are not

directly involved. Most importantly, it showed me that another world is possible. Supporting equality and well-being became an important turning point in our shared social memory.

After many years of working with NGOs, do you think humanity is more visible in times of crisis or in daily social life?

Whether natural or manmade, disasters deeply affect all societies. Turkey is a disaster-prone country, and in every disaster, our society has shown strong solidarity. We saw this clearly in the 1999 Marmara earthquake, the February 6 earthquakes, and partly in the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

Our sensitivity increases in times of crisis, but we now live in an age of multiple crises. For this reason, we need to remain sensitive in every part of daily life.

Civil society is a fundamental concept that concerns all areas and periods of life. Throughout history, organized groups have worked to improve living conditions, define public welfare, adapt to changing population and climate conditions, and promote peaceful change. There is no single definition of public benefit and rights, and civil society plays an important role in shaping these definitions.

For example, the women's equality movement took nearly 100 years to develop and the right to vote took around 100 years to earn. The fight against child labour, the development of social services, and the struggle against racism also grew through social movements. Rights are earned gradually. Today, in addition to human rights, we also discuss animal rights, the rights of nature, and our responsibilities toward the world.

In November 2026, more than 60,000 people from all over the world will meet in Antalya for COP31 to discuss climate change.



You worked for a long time in EU-supported civil society programs. How does the concept of “humanity” differ between local communities and large international institutions?

The main motto of the EU and human rights work is “no one left behind.” The tradition I worked in follows a rights-based approach and sees people as active participants in shaping their own lives. International institutions generally adopt this approach, but in practice, equality and participation can sometimes be weak.

Local organizations are important because they understand local needs and can support participation more effectively. Recently, localization has become more important in both humanitarian aid and civil society policies.

In the past, aid was based on a “helper and receiver” model, which sometimes created dependency. Over time, community-based approaches developed, recognizing communities as active participants. Local organizations also play an important role in monitoring international institutions and pointing out their weaknesses.

Can humanitarian aid remain truly “human” under time pressure and limited resources?

Humanitarian aid has emerged from different traditions, including religious charity, modern philanthropy, and social movements focused on rights. These traditions have developed and shaped today’s humanitarian aid system.

Using limited resources effectively is important, but disaster response cannot be explained only by efficiency. Compassion is only one reason for helping. Every person has the right to live in minimum humane conditions after a disaster. For this reason, international standards such as the Sendai Framework and the SPHERE standards were developed.

What matters is not only providing aid, but also how it is provided. Disaster-affected people should be seen as active individuals with rights, not as passive victims. Transparency, justice, equality, quality, and participation are more important than speed alone.



When state systems are insufficient or delayed, how does civil society protect human dignity?

At first, civil society organizations were the main providers of aid. Over time, they also took on advocacy roles, such as reporting needs, defending rights, and supporting improvements in public services.

Some disasters are so large that no single state can meet all needs quickly. In such cases, international aid is organized, often coordinated by the United Nations. The February 6 earthquakes are an example of this.

Recently, disaster risk management has become more important. Civil society now also works on disaster preparedness, strengthening local communities, and reducing risks before disasters occur.

What must young people understand about humanity before trying to change the world?

Civil society supports self-organization. Young people should organize around the issues they want to change and defend their rights. Their participation is important not only for youth rights but also for shaping society and the future.

Protecting human dignity and ensuring minimum living standards is the responsibility of every citizen. Humanity is bigger than our apartment, city, or country. Young people should be aware of discrimination based on religion, language, race, and species, and understand that their identities are part of a pluralistic society.

Humanity grows through ethical values, respect, peaceful participation, and universal law. Without the active participation of young people, progress is not possible.



Human with Human

Duru Polat 9/E

Aren't we the same?

Black, white?

Aren't we all the same, human?

Shy, confident, brave?

Don't look at them

Like they are not

The same as you

With all their hearths.

Don't judge

Without knowing or

Without even trying not to learn!



The Courage to Care: Defining Humanity in a Divided World

Zeynep Özatay 10/H

Humanity is one of those words that seem simple yet have deeper layers when dug into. It is not only the human species that we make up, but also the characteristics that define humanity: compassion, dignity, empathy, creativity, and the ability to take care of others. And throughout history, across cultures, humans have tried to understand what it means to live with humanity. Ultimately, it boils down to recognizing that every person matters and realizing that, as different as we are, we have much more in common.

Perhaps the longest-established example of this is the idea of human rights, the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. These human rights include the right to live safely, the right to speak our minds freely, and the right to hold beliefs, as well as other important rights. We have the right to an education, the right to work, and the right to be treated equally by the courts and by other authorities. People around the world believe that all human beings have the right to be treated with respect. Human rights are not meant to be limited to certain groups or countries but are meant to be universal.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the nations of the world in 1948 through the United Nations in the aftermath of World War II, and it outlines the rights to be given to all humans, not only citizens. The first article of the UDHR states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Like other sources of international law, the UDHR is not a legally binding treaty, but a statement of principles and a global standard. It acts as a reminder for governments, communities, and individuals of their obligation to protect human dignity.

Examples of the importance of humanity can be found in formal documents and proclamations, as well as in day-to-day practices: lending a hand to a person you don't know, listening to someone in need, and standing up for the cause of justice. Whenever a natural disaster occurs, people rally together to help those affected. From volunteers serving food to rescue teams saving lives, and communities banding together to rebuild, it reminds us that the human need for love and connection continues even in such challenging times.

Across the globe, teachers volunteer to educate children from poor communities, supporting the right to an education and hoping to uphold the principle of human dignity for all. Healthcare workers in remote and emergency settings, alongside activists and community leaders who promote health equity and social inclusion, are also making the right to health a reality by making sure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, no matter their circumstances. These efforts are not always grand or widely recognized, but they are essential to maintaining a humane society.





How Young Minds Lead Social Transformations

Eylem Naz Uslu 9/İ

Social transformation is defined as the radical restructuring of a society's existing institutions, value systems, and social relations in response to evolving conditions and the necessities of the era. Historically and sociologically, the younger generation has been identified as the primary catalyst for these profound shifts. But how exactly do young people contribute to these transformations in the modern age?

The most critical characteristic of youth is their inherent inclination toward critical inquiry. For any social transformation to occur, the act of "questioning" is the fundamental prerequisite. Scientifically, questioning involves analysing a situation based on its underlying causes rather than accepting it at face value. While "herd mentality" remains a powerful force leading many individuals to conform to the majority without hesitation young people possess the intellectual agency to challenge these social conformities and dismantle long-standing taboos.

In addition to this cognitive trait, modern youth leverage the strategic support of social media. As digital natives in an age of rapid technological advancement, they have adapted seamlessly to these platforms. Social media serves as a critical communication tool that transcends demographic boundaries and reaches global audiences.

Young people who utilize social media effectively act as pioneers of new socio-cultural movements. Influencers and content creators can initiate systemic changes by disseminating critical ideas to their large follower bases. Furthermore, even independent users can share thoughts and critiques easily; when these ideas resonate with the public, they can trigger widespread social trends. Data from the Pew Research Centre supports this, revealing that nearly 70% of Gen Z actively participate in social causes online. For instance; digitally led movements, such as 'Fridays for Future' demonstrate how a single young person's inquiry can evolve into a global discourse, forcing international organizations to reconsider their policies.

In conclusion, the combination of young people's critical thinking skills and the unprecedented reach of social media enables them to become powerful agents of social transformation, shaping the future direction of societies worldwide.

Us

Batu Mutdoğan 9/J

We can be many different things,
sometimes merciful, sometimes imaginary.
But are we really forgiving or helpful?
Because no mouse would make a mousetrap,
no flower would poison a bee,
but a lion couldn't make a plane,
or a monkey couldn't make art.
So maybe our greatest power is the power of thought.
Maybe it is the reason we are so unforgiving.



TRANSFORMATION

Rüya Atasagun 9/R

Humans are curious, social, conscious creatures. Animals simply survive, while humanity wonders why. For all these years, we have had the endless desire to learn more and develop. We crave change, knowledge, and connection. Life is never “complete.” We are unfinished creatures, constantly reaching beyond ourselves. People are always transforming through their needs, wants, love, hate, and failure. You are not only who you are right now; you are also who you are slowly becoming. However, humans aren’t the only creatures that are transforming.

Although transformation can take many forms, such as environmental, technological, educational, global, and social transformation, I will focus primarily on personal transformation. Personal transformation cannot be defined objectively. Personal change is different for everyone. Someone might suddenly find the motivation to go out today, while someone else could quit their job to find one that is more suitable for them. For me, personal transformation is the period when you realize that your old self has started to feel too small or limited for the life that you are yearning for. Just because a piece fits somewhere does not mean it belongs there. Personal transformation is not only about becoming better or improving but also about understanding yourself differently. I changed my perspective on life. I stopped diminishing myself because of something that others could not give me. Instead, I started seeing it as something I deserve. I stopped compromising my self-worth for things that others were unable to give me. I no longer find myself seeking other people's validation. Sometimes personal transformation is invisible to everybody else, but it’s life-changing for you.

Transformation is one of the most fundamental human experiences because it proves that we are not static beings. Human nature isn’t fixed; we are not defined solely by our past. We are shaped by the decisions we make and the changes we experience. We can evolve.





THE GIRL BEHIND THE IRON GATES

Sedef Usluel 10/P

Elena had everything people thought mattered, except for one thing. Her house was a mansion that stood behind iron gates, like a border that kept her away from real life—like a palace that had forgotten how to smile. Chandeliers glowed above marble floors, and expensive paintings won from auctions watched the days go by. Yet, inside that grand mansion, warmth never lived. Conversations were short, affection was rare, and showing love was awkward. The only things that echoed were Elena’s footsteps and the maid’s broom. That grand mansion was no more than an abandoned house. Elena grew up surrounded by luxury but starved of love.

At school, she was the storm others feared. She shoved students in hallways, tore pages from notebooks, and crushed lunches beneath careless feet. Power was the only language she had learned. She wore her cruelty like a mask to cover up the empty space in her soul. She was burning so deep inside that she wanted others to feel it, too. Her confidence was like shattered glass put together: fragile. She was the girl who had the appearance that people envied: a slim waist, a height of 5’10", silky long blonde hair, and blue eyes that even the ocean would be jealous of. She had a few fair-weather “friends” who followed her around, looking eagerly at her wallet. They were minions. She knew they wouldn’t be around her if she were not wealthy, and she also knew they talked behind her back. She, of course, ignored it. She didn’t ignore her problems by choice; it was the only way to mentally survive. Diving deep into her problems would cause her too much pain.

Every night, Elena felt something strange when she lay awake in her big, soft, white silk sheets, placed right in the center of her room: emptiness. She was desperate for attention, hungry for love.

One gray afternoon, while walking through the city streets, Elena noticed a familiar face. It was her—Elena’s main target, whom she’d been torturing for months. She turned around in shame. Hope was wearing the same clothes she wore to school: the same shoes, the same everything. She was holding her two younger brothers' hands as if they were fragile pieces of glass. “No, we can’t eat that today, sorry. We have some Eggos at home, though!” said Hope. Her maturity mixed with frustration could be heard in her tone.

For a moment, Elena froze. And then, something happened for the first time. A sudden pain struck her chest, sharp and heavy, like a stone pressing against her ribs. It wasn't the pain of sickness. It was the weight of something older, combined with other emotions that she couldn't define: regret. The girl she had been bullying had nothing to eat at home, let alone a present parent. Memories rushed like a bad film roulette through her mind: a lunch tray thrown to the floor, notebooks ripped apart, and the emotionless laughter she let out after every single episode of bullying. She remembered every cruel moment. The pain grew stronger, and her chest heated up just like a volcano before an eruption. Elena's back was facing the girl; she didn't want to face the truth. She wanted to run away and avoid it, just like she always did. She felt uneasy as panic crept into her thoughts and her eyes blurred. *What have I done?*

For the first time in her life, Elena realized something terrifying. She had everything, and yet she had become someone small and evil. Before she could stop herself, she felt the need to walk toward the girl. She turned back and started walking, each step feeling heavier than the last.

"Hey..." Elena said softly. The girl stopped walking when she saw Elena, her eyes widening with confusion. Elena forced herself to continue. "Do you... need help getting somewhere? I could take you."

The girl stared at her as if she had just spoken in another language. "Are you joking?" she asked quietly. "Is this some kind of game?" Her voice carried the careful distance of someone who had learned not to trust kindness, and her eyes reflected her sharp awareness.

Elena shook her head quickly. "No, it's not a game. I promise," said Elena. "I know this amazing restaurant down the block. They have the best burgers in town. Shall we go?"

Hope looked down at the floor immediately. "Umm yeah, I'm sure they are the best, but uhh!"

"It's on me," said Elena. "Don't worry about that."

"No, no, thank you Elena, but..." But then they heard a voice they both couldn't resist. "Hope, please. I'm really hungry," said Hope's younger brother. Hope looked embarrassed.

"Well, I insist. Come on!" After a moment of hesitation, they walked into a fancy restaurant where usually only the rich could afford to eat. Elena paid for the food, but the silence between them was thick with unanswered questions.

Finally, the girl asked, "Why are you helping me, Elena?"

Elena looked down at her hands. For the first time in years, her voice felt fragile. “I’m sorry, Hope. I truly am. I regret doing those things to you. I can’t even imagine how terrible you must have felt when I did them. You don’t have to forgive me; you have every right not to.” The words were heavy, but at least they were out. She felt her soul lift, as if someone had just dusted it. She hadn’t felt like this in a very long time. Did this indicate something? Were new doors opening for her?

Hope studied her carefully and realized Elena was being honest. Then, she smiled, a small smile, but real. “Thank you for apologizing,” she said. “That means a lot.” Hope’s heart was like the ocean: it was clear, washing the dirt outside with its waves. She didn’t allow bad emotions to stay inside her. It was deep, blue, and infinite, containing all sorts of things inside it. It was mature, just like the ocean. And of course, she was going to forgive Elena.

Elena hesitated before asking the question that had been quietly haunting her for years. “Would you... maybe want to be friends?” The girl didn’t hesitate. “Yes.” And just like that, a bond was formed and something new began.

At school, Elena had never cared about her grades; her future was already written in wealth and inheritance. But her new friend was different. Hope studied late into the night, driven by something Elena had never experienced before hope. “*Doing something other than making people’s lives miserable can help me feel good about myself...*” Elena thought. Little by little, Elena began studying, too. Her friend became something more than just a companion; she became a mirror reflecting the person Elena could become. She reflected who Elena was deep inside. Her grades slowly climbed, like a phoenix being reborn from its ashes.

Except for one subject: Math. No matter how hard she tried, it always seemed impossible. But this time, Elena refused to give up. For once in her life, she worked harder than she ever had. And when the math test results were announced, something unbelievable happened: Elena got an A+.

Just as she was about to run and tell Hope, the teacher called her to his desk. He looked down at the paper, then at her. “Is this really your grade?” he asked in a mocking tone.

Elena nodded proudly. “Yes. I studied.”

The teacher frowned. “I know you, Elena. You don’t study.”

“I did this time.”

The classroom grew quiet. “Well,” the teacher said, crossing his arms, “if you didn’t cheat, then tell me whose answers you copied.”

“I didn’t cheat,” Elena said again. The teacher sighed impatiently and rolled his eyes. “Since you won’t admit it, I’m giving you an F.” He wrote the grade instantly.

The red letter on the paper felt like a wound, and something inside Elena snapped. Her classmates knew she didn’t cheat, but nobody defended her. Elena didn’t care; she had earned that grade and she was going to fight for it. Her chest burned again, but this time, the pain was different. It wasn’t regret anymore; it was strength. Elena realized something important in that moment: the girl she used to be would have laughed and walked away, but the person she was becoming? She was ready to fight for the truth. And she did. She defended herself because she knew her rights. Ultimately, Elena got that A+.



That day, they went out to celebrate. “I can’t believe this is happening, Hope! I got an A+ in math, and I fought for myself instead of just laughing and brushing it off!” Her joy and pride could be heard through her voice, and her ocean-blue eyes lit up. She knew she was becoming a new person, someone who was hardworking, confident, and caring.



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“I always knew you could do it, Elena. I’m so proud of you! Keep it up, girl!”

“This is all thanks to you, Hope. Thank you for entering my life and giving me a hand. I am so grateful.”

Just as Hope was about to answer, someone accidentally bumped into Elena. “Watch where you’re going!” Elena said, slightly annoyed.

The boy quickly turned around. “Sorry about that. It was an accident.”

Elena paused for a second. The boy had dark hair, warm brown eyes, and a noticeable Spanish accent. “It’s okay,” she said after a moment. “Just be careful next time.” He smiled politely and walked away.

Hope looked at Elena and smirked. “Interesting reaction.”

“Oh, stop,” Elena laughed, slightly embarrassed.

A few days later, Elena was sitting in her usual café, drinking her favorite cappuccino, when she heard a familiar voice ordering at the counter. “One extra-hot cappuccino with lots of foam, please.” She turned around and realized it was the same boy from before. After a moment of hesitation, she walked over. “Hey... weren’t you the one who bumped into me the other day?”

He smiled. “Yeah, that was me. I promise I’m usually more careful.” They both laughed and started talking. His name was Juan, and he had recently moved from Barcelona. What started as a short conversation quickly turned into a long one. They discovered they had a lot in common, and talking with him felt easy.

Over the next few weeks, they continued to see each other at the café and around the city. Their friendship grew romantically, and Elena realized how much her life had changed. Not long ago, she had pushed people away, but now she was learning how to connect with them. And for the first time, Elena felt like she was truly moving forward.





A Seemingly Flawless World: The Giver and The Illusion of Dark Utopia

Ayşe İpek İnce 9/D

Authors in literature create a variety of contexts for their readers. Some include real life contexts while others tend to include imaginary and far-fetched settings. The lives of the community members are presented with unreal elements, and the emotions and personal relationships are described in a distinct way. After reading the novel *The Giver* through my English Literature course, I was both fascinated and apprehensive at the same time. *The Giver*, written by Lois Lowry, takes place in a world which is extremely ideal and perfect. In this community, order and security have been placed ahead of individual feelings and experiences. Through this book, Lowry makes the reader question whether a world lacking in emotions and individuality is truly human.

In the society, the Committee of Elders has permitted the superficial display of emotions and eliminated individual bonds. The memories Jonas acquired as The Receiver represent the human qualities suppressed by the society in the book. The erasure of the past makes it impossible for individuals to distinguish between right and wrong, and strengthens the Committee of Elders, an authoritarian society. One of the main characters in the book, The Giver, sends Jonas's memories that include scenes of war and injury. Jonas, who has lived a life devoid of strong emotions, and the previous Receiver, Rosemary, cannot bear what they see in these painful memories. The inability to express emotions strongly and a highly detailed, planned life has caused people to behave, dress, and even speak in the same way all the time. In the society, individuals' professions, families, and life paths are determined for them. This situation eliminates free will in society. Lowry argues that the basis of being human is the right to make mistakes and choices. She conveys that if there is sameness, people cannot choose between two options and therefore cannot make choices. Jonas's journey consists of realizing, after being chosen as The Receiver, that the order followed by this society destroys freedom and humanity. Thanks to the memories sent to him, he realizes that the society must be questioned ethically. With Jonas's decision at the end of the book, Lowry reminds the reader that humanity is not a privilege to be protected, but a conscious choice.

There are two elements that make this book special: what a world where everyone lives the same way would be like, and the creation of a world where people are not even aware of whether they are happy while trying to create a perfect world. When we were young, we were constantly asked questions at school like, “What if we were all the same?” or “What if there were no differences?” and everyone would give negative answers, but we never discussed why that would be the case. This book best explains to us that as long as sameness exists, people cannot choose between two concepts, and personal preferences cannot be made. Furthermore, in the world of the book, everything is planned and organized in a way that won't confuse community members or harm them. The author leaves us in a quandary from the beginning to the end of the book. It makes us question whether this world is truly perfect or not. This also helps the reader better understand that humanity is only possible by accepting both good and bad feelings, differences at the same time. This book does not merely describe a dystopian world; it shows us how valuable it is to be able to freely express our feelings, embrace our differences, and exercise our freedom to make choices.



A HUMAN THINKS (CALIFORNIA)

Gülgüzel Özdemir 12/1

The edge of the building questions him about his philosophy one sunny day in 2024,
As his fingers become seasoned, the thinker's hold on his chin;
He can only introspect on days at the city's edge where the void calls—
And from the voids, there come shouts,
Happy bustles and angry traffic. Thoughts
For building roofs in California;
It's what he's brought,
Stances, he thinks, of human might,
His ponderous what-nots.

The edge of the building listens,
And he debates his blight;
That to be is to be perceived,
And to be good is to perceive.

So, he must've preceded being
When he saw these human beings,
One California day in the sun,
Their human feelings.

So, arguments for building roofs in California he's brought,
The chill of the southern breeze;
From there, he'll explain:
How the elote man will always give out free samples,
The kids stumble but never fall over that step into sand,
How the salaryman will ponder on purpose
During his sunny days in Californian land.

Because once he heard that what's real is rational,
He's come to learn what real is human.

So, when he thought of what rational is,
Human is not;
It was with the rooftops he talked—
A human thought.
California.

Voice Of Kindness

Ali Ateş Aksöz 9/J

Kindness is not loud.

It does not ask to be seen,

It lives in small moments,

Which people often miss.

But it is not about being recognized

It is about helping,

Letting someone speak,

Without rushing away.

Kindness is holding space,

When words feel heavy,

Saying when walking away,

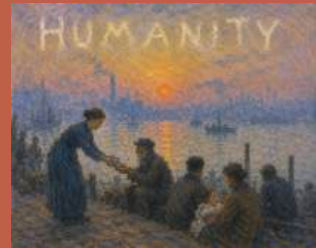
Could be easier.

In these little choices,

Humanity shows,

Not in grand actions,

But in small things,



The Lost Humanity

İdil Su Uluoğlu 9/B

What makes us human? What does the wide-ranging species called humans consist of? Could it be explained biologically, or is there something far beyond that? These kinds of questions have surely crossed your mind in some way, even if you are not the type of person who gets lost in an existential crisis. However, even the word "human" did not exist in their vocabulary, nor did those questions. They were quite far away from us—too far away for even enormous spacecraft developed with advanced technology to get close to them. Nor had they really tried to reach us, to where they belonged, until that day.

The Moon began to rise gently like a blooming flower through the wide night sky, leaving thousands of black shadows under the spotlight, as if unveiling dark secrets hidden in the depths of raven cloaks blowing slightly with the gentle breeze. Thousands of people, regardless of their age, gender, or identity (those words did not exist in their vocabulary either), gathered at the Great Hall of Moonrise. This was a routine followed every time the moon rose to connect the fading lunar day to the eerie darkness of the lunar night. They did not do this consciously, however; they never thought once about its purpose. They knew nothing about it.

It was just a gathering to hand in all the work they had done as teams, preserved in tiny capsules attached to their work uniforms. Each job had a specific color to make things easier. Except for their diversely colored collars, their uniforms were identical: long cloaks that reached their feet, bearing the huge emblem of the letters L and T. This was an abbreviation for Lunar Town, where they existed—a man-made planet that had agreed to claim the Moon and leave the Sun to humanity once upon a time, though no one knew exactly when. Everyone had to wait in line without making a sound until their team names were called, barely breathing the artificial oxygen they were provided. The only things left of their humanity were their physical proportions; otherwise, they possessed only automatically moving limbs and empty stares.

After the waiting session was over, everyone would be called by a huge white machine named “Moongod.” This was the only time they were addressed by something that made an actual noise, as they were normally given signals through microchips injected into their foreheads.



Moongod called the first team to submit their work: the Moonlight Chasers, who were in charge of collecting light energy from the Moon to use in several ways, mainly those less important to society. Then came the Energy Stockers. The main difference separating them from the chasers was that they were supposed to store energy for the charging process that took place after the gathering.

Later, the Strategists—the ones collecting and using data for the Improvement & Innovation Department—entered the stage, followed by the Supervisors, who observed, and the Reporters, who reported if anything ever went wrong. After them, many more lower-class teams with fewer members followed.

Finally, it was the Hunters' turn. After leading the new arrivals beside them to the Construction Room, the Hunters were sent directly to the Memory Erasing Department. Hunters were the only members of society allowed to leave Lunar Town and possess human skills, such as communicating through words, for a limited time, so they could choose new members for the city from Earth every Lunar week. For this reason, they used different microchips from the rest of the teams, meaning they required extra sessions to empty their microchips and erase their memories as soon as possible, before they attempted to interact with anyone in the community.

Hunters were treated differently from the rest; they were given more time to charge. However, they carried an enormous weight on their shoulders: choosing the right people. Society's need and demand for more members had been increasing day by day, and to keep everything functioning effectively, they had to observe well and choose wisely. "One single mistake could ruin it all," they were told. On workdays, they would be woken up and activated before the charging of the others was complete. Sent to Earth, they would return with the chosen ones, send them to the Construction Room to build new citizens from scratch, and then enter the Memory Erasing Department one by one, each lying inside a capsule perfectly designed for their flawless bodies. That day was no special exception; they followed the routine as always and took their places in the glass capsules. Cables were attached to them on one end and to a huge screen on the other. Then, the start button was pressed, and the bodies of the Hunters shut down as the shiny capsules filled with dense vapor. Everything was perfect; it looked as if little kids were sleeping together in a small, cozy dormitory. Twenty-five green lines covered the screen, each belonging to a capsule and showing its stability.



Suddenly, one of the bright green lines faded from the screen, leaving a blurry trace behind. While everyone else lay unconscious, one of the identical capsules suddenly shut itself down. It all happened in the blink of an eye. Number 21 slowly opened her eyes. She was breathing in and out loudly and intensely, as if she were suffocating from being trapped inside the capsule full of heavy vapor. Her pale, expressionless face was now even whiter, with obvious signs of fear in her eyes. The warm, humid vapor had made her whole-body itch. Finally, she managed to push the glass lid of the capsule away and got out without hesitation. She looked around, taking a few seconds to understand where she was.

She did not know much, but she was almost sure that something was wrong with her. She should not be standing in the middle of the room. She forced herself to remember; this was the only thing she could do at that moment.

She moved uncomfortably. She was not alone; someone was talking nonstop. At first, she only understood the simple emotions the speaker had been talking about for a while. Later, she started to recognize some of the words and their meanings. She looked around nervously but could see nothing except the huge machine and the capsules. Even the sight of them irritated her, and as if reflecting her thoughts, a voice said, “How disturbing.” Number 21 jumped back. She was startled by this creepy voice, which slowly started getting on her nerves. She tried to say something out loud, but before she could, the voice repeated it. *How funny*, she thought unpleasantly. Now it was starting to imitate her. She closed her eyes, forcing herself not to think about anything. To her surprise, the voice stopped too. This situation felt familiar. “Mad clock,” she thought alongside the voice. No, that wasn’t it. “Man lock.” That wasn’t the right phrase either. “Mono—monologue!” she whispered. It wasn’t anyone else in the room; it was her inner voice. She had only been able to use that during her travel to Earth. No one had an inner voice in Lunar Town.

She was distracted from her thoughts when a small light flickered in a glitch for a second and disappeared. It wasn't the light the room was usually filled with; it was unique. Then, another vision came, clearer than the previous one. Now the light was brighter, and a figure was moving under it. In a flash, it disappeared too. Number 21 could recognize this more easily: it was a sign of a memory. She was replaying it in her head. She couldn't fully figure out the memory, though. Something about it was familiar, but at the same time, it felt entirely strange to her. However, she didn't dwell on it since there was nothing she could do. The big machine had stolen that from her, and trying to get it back could be risky. She didn't even know how to do it.



Somewhere deep inside, she sensed something was about to happen. She knew neither how much time she had spent there nor what would happen when the other Hunters were ready to wake up. She would obviously get caught (this was another word she had been taught before going on her weekly mission), but she didn't know how. As far as she could remember, she would usually receive signals along with the rest of her team, but that was more like programming a robot. She had never felt anything related to this world before, and she began to wonder about it. She had to find out more. *Instinct*, she thought. Every living organism had instincts, didn't they? She had been warned about this too. She decided she had better trust her instincts and left the room through a hidden underground tunnel she had just discovered, trying to remain silent throughout her journey.

To her surprise, the tunnel was extremely dark, contrasting sharply with the neon lights used all around the city and the Moon shining above in the night sky. It was as cold as ice, too—cold enough to make her shiver—and it had a low ceiling. Her nervousness increased with every step she took. She figured out that she did not like narrow places. She walked for about ten minutes without knowing where she was going until she suddenly bumped into a hard object. For a moment, she lost her balance, tripped, and fell. When she stood up, she realized she was no longer in the narrow tunnel. She was standing in the middle of a room that did not look like the rest of the town. It was entirely different. There were no neon lights hanging everywhere; the lighting looked more like that on Earth. The only thing that reminded her of Lunar Town was the moon shining through the glass ceiling. There were dozens of bookshelves everywhere, each holding thousands of black rectangular objects. She couldn't decide whether they were little boxes or books; neither was common there.



She stepped forward to see the bookshelves more clearly. At the top of each shelf, complex numbers and letters were written. She could only recognize a few of them.

With her curiosity increasing every second, she grabbed one of the black objects. It was bigger than she had thought. On the top of it, the number 5 was written. Inside was a smaller object consisting of two round screens. On the object, she could see the face of a girl with brown curly hair and emerald eyes, along with a symbol probably instructing her to put it on. It was like the devices she used to wear on her weekly missions. They were called glasses, and they helped with her vision. She put them on as she usually did and suddenly saw all the lights disappear. Everywhere became dark, just like the tunnel.

After a moment, the lights appeared again, but she was no longer in that large room. The lights shone brighter, and she could feel a soft breeze brushing her skin alongside the sound of crashing waves. There was a young woman sitting on the sand. She was alone, holding a cone-shaped object topped with other colorful, round objects. Number 21 felt very strange. It was not an ordinary feeling for her. Something inside her felt happy, joyful. She was experiencing one of the most common human feelings: comfort. She was enjoying the beach, the sun, and the children running and laughing everywhere. *Children...* with the memory of the word, her joy shifted to a restless feeling. Something was annoying her inside, but she hadn't named it yet. Then her mind shifted back to the sight of the bright light she had seen in the room where she woke up, as if she were struggling to remember something she desperately needed to.

She took off the glasses and picked up another pair, Number 13. This time, the memory was about a young man. He was wearing a turquoise suit and a mask. He seemed tired, his shoulders slumped. He looked frustrated. In front of him stood a couple who looked at him as if their lives depended on him.



They were older compared to the young man. The man suddenly hugged the old woman and whispered, "Sorry. I couldn't save them. I'm really sorry." This was the feeling of sorrow mixed with regret. It was a touching scene, and Number 21 was not just watching; she somehow related to it, though she didn't know the reason yet. This must be what they call empathy, she thought. Later, the old man walked away slowly, and the setting shifted to a terrace. Number 21 could see the view below and was now sure that it belonged to a hospital, meaning the young man was a surgeon. The young man sat alone for a while. Then, she saw nothing but black.

A hand appeared and grabbed the old man by the arm. Another hand appeared and covered his mouth. She could feel the tension. She was just as frightened as the old man—maybe twice as much—because the person grabbing him was wearing a black cloak just like the one she was wearing at that moment. She didn't have to watch the rest; she knew it. The mysterious cloaked person was probably taking him to the large spacecraft. Number 13... wasn't he the driver of the spacecraft for the last mission? She was horrified. She went on to try multiple glasses containing human experiences like sharing, jealousy, a sense of achievement, making mistakes, nostalgia, and support. Everyone had a story of their own, but each one ended with the same tragic conclusion: a black-cloaked Hunter came in and somehow ruined their lives. She even saw the consequences. She saw dozens of friends, parents, and family members missing their loved ones, searching for them for a long time, and mourning them in despair. She was no longer the cold, soulless Hunter she had been moments ago. She was a weak, vulnerable human being drowning in the depths of the aching truth behind the life she had led up to that day. However, she was not yet aware of her own past.

Then she realized she was holding the glasses with the number 21 on them. She put them on immediately. She saw the curly-haired woman she had seen on the other glasses. They both had emerald eyes. A reflection, she thought. It was her own reflection. She couldn't even recognize herself, having had no idea what she looked like from the outside. She had never thought about it. She had a bright smile on her face, and the calm breeze was gently blowing her soft, curly hair. It was a lovely spring day, and she was riding a bike with a little girl who had similar, soft facial features. "I didn't know I had a younger sister," she whispered in shock. She felt her heart flutter for the very first time since she was taken to Lunar Town. Unfortunately, the feeling didn't last long. The face seemed extremely familiar. Whenever she saw a child in the memories, she felt sorrowful for no reason, but this feeling was much deeper. Whether this girl was the cause of that emotion, she did not know.

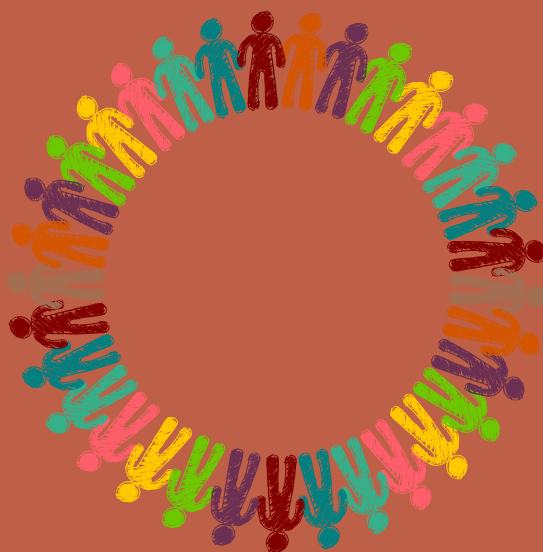
She kept watching the memory. While she and her sister were riding peacefully, she heard someone calling, “Lisa!” That was obviously her name. She had never known that she once had a human name. Who would name their child Number 21 straight after birth? She had never thought about it from that perspective; Lunar Town left no room for either questions or answers. The voice kept calling, and Lisa stopped her bicycle. “Wait for me a little bit, Laura. I’ll be right here. Don’t go anywhere. Well, you know the rest of the rules.” She stroked her head and winked at her. Laura smiled at her sister, and then Lisa walked away. Next, she was in a dark, narrow street with fewer people. The sun was no longer shining. Lisa was obviously nervous, but she was trying hard to hide it. She looked around but couldn’t see anyone except a guy in a black cloak. He was grinning at Lisa. There was something deeply disturbing about his face; he didn’t seem trustworthy at all. He observed Lisa’s actions carefully before he started to speak.

The scene was suddenly interrupted by heavy alarm blares and bright red lights flashing everywhere. Her vision froze with a glitch, and an artificial voice began to repeat: “Unidentified organism detected!” Lisa froze with fear for a moment. She was caught, and she could not escape. She didn’t know what would happen to her. Once again, she let her instincts lead her and ran toward the shelves to find a way out of the room. She could hear robotic voices pursuing her. Now, the entire building was shaking with the footsteps of countless robots, the mechanical voice screaming “Track lost!” nonstop amid the flashing red lights. Finally, she found a tiny opening and forced her body inside. However, she hadn’t noticed that there was no floor beneath it, causing her to fall into a room filled with capsules releasing intense vapor and purple light. There were about twenty people lying inside them motionless, all wearing glasses. Millions of wires were connected directly to their capsules and their brains.

“I have to make a plan ASAP”, she thought. She was sure she could not stay in this cursed town any longer, though not because of the punishment she would receive. She simply didn’t want to be a part of this anti-humanist system anymore. She was aware that she only knew a little and that there were many secrets left to unveil, but she didn’t care. The only thing she knew for certain was that Lunar Town was built to harvest the vulnerable. It was designed to eliminate the human side of Earth and rid it of the thoughtful and pure ones. What hurt the most was that she herself had harmed many of them countless times; she couldn’t even calculate how many. One of her victims was the little girl lying expressionlessly inside the capsule. Feelings of sorrow and regret completely took over her. This was the girl whose memory made her emotional and miserable, the one who had always stayed somewhere in the back of her mind. Now, she was absolutely determined.

Without thinking twice, she tore away all the wires tied to the girl's capsule, removed the lid, and freed her. The girl looked at her with blank emerald eyes for a moment, but Lisa knew she had no time to waste. "Let's go, Laura!" she whispered, grabbing her hand as they started to run. The red lights were still flashing everywhere, and the alarms grew even louder. While running, Lisa turned to Laura, who was looking around nervously. "How are you feeling, Laura?" she asked, trying to sound as reassuring as possible. Laura looked at her with wide eyes and said, "I feel as if this place is about to explode." Lisa stared at her for a second. "Laura, you are a genius!" she exclaimed victoriously.

As they ran, she began pressing every emergency button she could reach. The number of buttons was far greater than she had ever imagined; she had never thought she would need them one day. Now, the building was violently shaking with the unbearable noise of absolute chaos. Despite Lisa's countless efforts, nothing changed at first. She saw Moongod rushing toward them with its enormous body. She covered Laura's eyes with her hand, trying to protect her. To her surprise, Moongod suddenly stopped, began to spin round and round, and started repeating the phrases: "Yes sir!", "I will make sure no one has access to the memories, sir!", "They will never know about it, sir!" nonstop before finally collapsing to the ground. After it crashed, all the lights failed, and the entire system shut down. At that exact moment, every Hunter woke up. Feeling dizzy at first, they stopped for a minute to question their lives. Every new member of society witnessed the collapse of Lunar Town, and every other citizen woke up without the dictates of a huge, ugly machine for the very first time.



“The Reader on the 6:27”: Monotony and Alienation

Erdem Batu Küçük 10/T

“The Reader on the 6:27,” written by Jean-Paul Didierlaurent, clearly distinguishes itself from most contemporary literary works both in terms of its subject matter and the themes it explores. Drawing from the lives of people one can easily encounter in everyday society, the author skillfully touches on themes such as loneliness, monotony, and alienation in the modern world. A secondary theme explored in the novel is class differences, which, as in every era, continues to be present in the 21st century. In this essay, these themes will be analyzed in relation to the characters and the setting.

The author begins by showing us the daily life of the main character, Guylain Vignolles. Every morning, after waking up and getting ready, Guylain takes the 6:27 train to commute to his workplace. His duty at work is to ensure the proper functioning of the Zerstor 500, a machine that shreds books into pieces. Guylain spends this commute reading aloud to the passengers on the train the leftover paper fragments from old books he rescues at work. This part of the story is significant because it highlights the methods Guylain has found to escape, even if slightly, from the monotony of his life. By reading any salvaged book page aloud, Guylain attempts to make the unpleasantness of his small, simple, yet dangerous job bearable, and by doing so, he brightens those tedious 20 minutes of the train ride. After working at the factory until the evening, he takes the train back home again. The continuous repetition of this cycle throughout the story demonstrates to the reader how monotonous and devoid of variation Guylain’s life truly is.

Guylain lives alone, accompanied only by the fish he keeps in his home. The fact that the character has only two friends, the factory guard Yvon and Giuseppe, who lost his legs in a workplace accident involving the shredder Zerstor 500, and that he often prefers to voice his problems and worries to his fish, Roger, rather than a real person illustrates how far Guylain has distanced himself from society. Guylain is alienated not only from the people around him but also from his family. Although we frequently witness Guylain’s thoughts and inner world throughout the narrative, we receive almost no information about his parents. In this state of isolation, despite the deep loneliness he experiences, Guylain remains loyal to his routines and continues to go to work every day.

Even though Guylain is disgusted by the way the Zerstor 500 operates (he constantly refers to this machine as “it” in the novel), he does not leave his job or his routines, because these very routines and his job are also a way to escape his loneliness. This part of the story clearly conveys to the reader how the modern world drives individuals into isolation, even within crowds. Furthermore, Guylain is alienated from his labor. Although he loves words and reading, he works in a factory that operates by grinding books. In this role, Guylain is not depicted as happy; the work he does contradicts his own values and has lost all meaning for him.

The turning point of the story occurs when Guylain, on an ordinary day while traveling on the train, finds a USB stick. Upon opening it, he discovers diary-like texts signed by “Julie T.” As he begins to read the diaries, Guylain develops a strong desire to find Julie, the owner of the texts. Julie is a woman living a monotonous life similar to Guylain’s, working in Paris. She has no close friends or partners, and since she has no one to confide in, she has turned to keeping these diaries. In this regard, she closely resembles Guylain. Another similarity between Julie and Guylain is that she, too, is alienated from her labor. She does not enjoy her job—she cleans the toilets in a shopping mall—and she even plays small pranks on customers to make the work more bearable for herself. The shopping mall serves as a setting to expose the dark side of consumer culture. While people in the rest of the mall shop and consume, Julie, a simple cleaning worker, remains in the background, and her labor is completely undervalued by others. As Guylain reads the diaries Julie keeps, he hears the distinct echoes of his own loneliness. For this reason, he begins to develop an interest in Julie without actually seeing her or talking to her, having realized that he has found someone kindred to him. In the later parts of the story, Guylain, together with his close friend Giuseppe, tries to locate Julie. After great effort, they manage to find the place where she works.

The class differences utilized as a subtheme in the novel are another indication of how accurately the book portrays the 21st-century world. The oppressor–oppressed relationship in the story is generally described through the dynamics between Guylain and his factory boss, Kowalski. Kowalski is depicted as a harsh boss who constantly tries to oppress his workers. The sentence in the novel, “At the smallest sign of danger, at the tiniest mistake, he would immediately climb the ladder and give orders or hurl insults at the top of his lungs,” helps the reader understand Kowalski’s general attitude toward the workers more clearly. Kowalski sees himself as superior to the employees and treats them rudely. In addition, the described physical structure of the factory serves as another symbol of the class hierarchy within the workplace. The sentence, “His glass cabin, ten meters above the ground, hung from the factory roof,” while describing the setting, also serves to visually portray this class structure. While Kowalski

represents the upper class, which holds power and capital, Guylain represents the lower-income group with highly limited access to financial resources compared to the upper segment.

“The Reader on the 6:27” is a work that depicts the 21st-century world and human life in this new era in a realistic manner. Throughout the story, the reader witnesses the lives of characters who, due to their monotonous existences in the modern world, have become no different from the cogs in a clock. The characters, especially Guylain, experience loneliness among crowds, allowing readers to experience the perspective of the modern human from an alternative angle. Ultimately, the themes of loneliness, monotony, and alienation are thoroughly explored throughout the work through deliberate choices of setting, plot progression, and character traits.



The Lasting Impact of Transformation

Deniz Divrik 9/1

Transformation can be seen everywhere, from something as simple as a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly to something as significant as the development of technology. Change has always been a part of our lives, affecting us slowly but surely, and it has affected me as well. A moment that I believe transformed my way of thinking forever was the day the Covid-19 quarantine ended and I started going back to school. The difference was nearly instant, as the two years of being stuck at home in front of a computer had severely diminished my social skills. Although it didn't affect me much on the outside, it helped me understand that there are specific actions, time periods, and inventions that universally change us as humans.

One of the most incredible transformations in this world is the constant advancement happening in technology. For example, the first official smartphone was sold around 1994, which was about 32 years ago. In those 32 years, smartphones have advanced significantly, to the point where they now have the capacity to run complex software, store up to two terabytes of information, and perform countless tasks far better than early computers ever could. It is unimaginable to me that AI, which could barely function 10 years ago, can now create videos and images capable of fooling most people and can improve and learn by itself.

To sum up, change will continue to exist and affect our lives forever. Without change, improvement would not be possible. Without transformation, our ancestors could not have adapted to their living conditions, a failure that would have caused their extinction. If we had never changed, we would never have reached the point where we are today. As Heraclitus once said, "The only constant in life is change."



Cleaning The Paper

Erdem Batu Küçük 10/T

Humanity is very interesting; it is the only species that brings extinction upon other species and then mourns them. We are also the only species intelligent enough to be capable of bringing about our own extinction. Humanity holds the power to change the world to its liking in the palm of its hand, yet it uses this power without thinking about the future or the consequences that may arise from its actions. Being human is no longer about dominating the Earth but rather about finding ways to live in harmony with it. What will remain of the Earth in fifty years if we continue down this path?

Since 1945, humanity has progressed at a rate never seen before in history. Historians have called this period "The Great Acceleration." During this time, technological progress has advanced at incredible speeds; however, this advancement has come at a significant cost.

In biological terms, a parasite is a living organism that depends on a host for survival while exploiting the host's resources. Humanity has behaved like a parasite, and the Earth has been the host. We have been using the planet's resources as if they were infinite, but they are not. This exploitation is also destabilizing our climate and natural habitats, both of which are essential for our survival. Humanity must start acting as part of the Earth and must repair its ecosystems if we want to ensure the survival of future generations.

Humanity needs to transition from being parasites to becoming protectors of our planet.

However, this change will come at a cost to the way we use technology and resources.

In the end, humanity's history is still being written. Our species underwent a period of rapid growth known as "The Great Acceleration," but this rapid progress was accompanied by an equally rapid deterioration of the environment and its resources. We must transition from being parasites to becoming protectors of our planet by investing further in renewable energy, reforestation, and other initiatives that replenish rather than merely consume the Earth's resources. Humanity must change if it wants to continue living on this planet. Just like a sheet of paper that has been scribbled all over, we must start cleaning it before it is too late.





“If humanity were a feeling rather than a concept, what would it be? Why?”

Ayşe İpek İnce 9/D

Thoughts From the High School Students

“If humanity were a feeling, I think it would be cruelty because in this era, people can hurt animals, other people, even their own siblings without mercy.”

-İzem Pilavoğlu

“Humanity is not something that can be limited to just one feeling. The definition of this word is different for everyone because everyone's experiences are different. I think it would be happiness.”

-Ege Törüner

“Humanity would be both responsibility and conscience because being a human requires being responsible not only for oneself, but also for others, and humanity is being able to do the right thing even when no one is watching.”

-Alisa Ece Gürelik

“It would be pride because humans are the most intelligent creatures on Earth, and therefore should be proud of themselves.”

-Hasan Afacan

“If humanity were a feeling rather than a word, it would be a feeling that reflects kindness or selflessness because humanity is also a concept used in daily life that means showing empathy and respect towards someone.”

-İrem Akakçe

“Humanity would be compassion because when you are a human, you can understand not only your own pain but also the pain of others; you can think not only of yourself but also of others.”

-Aras Topçu

“If humanity were a feeling, it would be pride. Humanity has achieved so much to reach this point, and many remarkable accomplishments have been made. Without these, humanity wouldn't exist.”

-Mercan Demirkan

“Humanity can be many things, but if it were just one thing, it would definitely be conscience because what makes a person human is not only their own feelings, but also their ability to feel the feelings and pain of others.”

-Memduh Sarp Aslan

“Humanity can never be just one feeling or just one word. After all, what makes people human is the ability to experience emotions and accept everything that comes with it.”

-Gece Maya Algün



MARIE CURIE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMANITY

Ela Ergül 9/J

Marie Curie was one of the most influential scientists in history. She was born on November 7, 1867, in Warsaw, Poland, and her real name was Maria Skłodowska. At that time, Poland was under Russian rule, and many educational opportunities were limited, especially for women. Even as a child, Marie was very intelligent and hardworking. She loved mathematics and physics and dreamed of becoming a scientist. However, women were not allowed to attend university in Poland. Because of this unfair rule, she had to study secretly in an underground school and later worked as a governess to earn money for her education.

In 1891, she moved to Paris to study at the Sorbonne (the University of Paris). Life in Paris was difficult. She lived in a small, cold room and often did not have enough food. Despite these harsh conditions, she studied day and night and eventually graduated at the top of her physics class. In 1895, she married Pierre Curie, a French scientist who shared her passion for research. Together, they began studying radioactivity, a term Marie herself introduced.

Marie Curie's greatest influence on humanity comes from her scientific work. After years of careful and exhausting experiments, she discovered two new elements: polonium and radium. These discoveries were not simple laboratory findings; they completely changed how scientists understood atoms and energy. Her research showed that atoms were not solid and unchangeable, as many had previously believed. This new understanding opened the way to modern atomic physics and nuclear science.

Another of her major contributions was her research on radioactivity and its medical applications. Radium was later used in radiation therapy to treat cancer patients. Even today, many modern cancer treatments are based on the principles she helped to establish. During the First World War, she organized the use of mobile X-ray units, often called "Little Curies," which allowed doctors to examine wounded soldiers directly on the battlefield. She also trained nurses and technicians to operate these machines. It is estimated that these X-ray units helped save thousands of lives by making medical treatment faster and more accurate.

Marie Curie also changed the scientific world by breaking important barriers. In 1903, she received the Nobel Prize in Physics together with Pierre Curie and Henri Becquerel. In 1911, she received a second Nobel Prize, this time in Chemistry, for isolating radium and polonium. She was the first woman ever to win a Nobel Prize and remains the only person to have received Nobel Prizes in two different scientific fields. Her success encouraged universities to

accept more women scientists and helped create fairer opportunities in education.

Ultimately, Marie Curie's life was marked by hard work, courage, and strong determination. Her discoveries transformed science, improved medical treatment, and helped save countless lives. She not only expanded human knowledge but also proved that women can succeed in areas that were traditionally reserved for men. Her legacy continues to benefit humanity to this day.



ALBERT EINSTEIN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMANITY

Ela Ergül 9/J

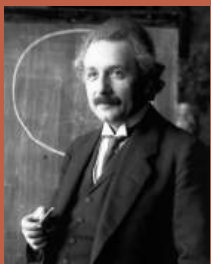
Albert Einstein was one of the most influential scientists in history. He was born on March 14, 1879, in Ulm, Germany. As a child, he was very curious and always wanted to understand how the world works. Although he did not always do well in traditional schools, he showed great ability in mathematics and physics. Later, he moved to Switzerland to continue his studies, and there he began to develop ideas that would completely change modern science.

Einstein is especially important for how his work still affects our lives today. In 1905, which is often called his "miracle year," he published several important scientific papers. One of his most famous achievements is the Theory of Relativity. This theory changed the way scientists think about space, time, and gravity. His well-known equation, $E = mc^2$, showed that mass can be converted into energy. This idea became the basis for many modern technologies.

Another major contribution Einstein made to humanity is his explanation of the photoelectric effect. This discovery helped scientists understand how light can create electricity. Today, this principle is used in solar panels, which turn sunlight into clean and renewable energy. Solar energy is vitally important for protecting the environment and reducing pollution, so Einstein's work continues to support modern efforts to create a more sustainable world.

Einstein's theories are also used in technology that people rely on every day. For example, GPS systems in phones and cars need the Theory of Relativity to provide accurate location information. Without Einstein's corrections to how time and space are measured, GPS signals would be inaccurate and much less useful. His ideas also play a role in nuclear energy, which provides electricity to millions of people around the globe.

Besides his scientific work, Einstein cared deeply about human life and moral responsibility. He spoke publicly against war and supported peace between nations. After he understood the terrible power of nuclear weapons, he warned the world about their destructive effects and encouraged governments to use scientific knowledge for peaceful purposes instead of violence.



In conclusion, Albert Einstein's influence goes far beyond theoretical physics. His discoveries are used in many modern technologies, such as solar panels, GPS systems, and nuclear energy production. He not only helped improve daily life through science, but he also tried to guide humanity toward a more peaceful and responsible future. His work continues to shape the world we live in today.

THE LIGHT OF FRIENDSHIP INSIDE US

Çınar Ay 9/J

Our hearts shine like lanterns in the night,
Casting a soft light that pushes shadows away.
Goodness starts like a hidden fire, so bright;
From deep inside, it changes hurt to joy today.
Kindness flows like rivers, fast and free.
It grows strong through you and me,
Joining hearts in a friendship that's always there.
We stand like old oak trees with roots tied together,
Strong against storms, never pulled apart.
Our friendship whispers peace, heart to heart,
A quiet power right from the start.
This inner fire burns like the morning sun,
Welcoming all with its happy, bright shine.
Brotherhood begins—the adventure has just begun.
From inside us, it lights up our time.



As the seasons passed, leaves gave way to towering buildings, and cold, hard metal replaced human warmth. A couple beamed with joy upon hearing the news that they were expecting a child.

The couple began taking supplements and eating nutritious food. As the baby inside the woman developed, her appetite grew. She consumed more food, took more supplements, and became increasingly excited as the time of labor approached. However, along with her excitement came anxiety, not only about the baby but also about her body. As she consumed more food, more desserts, and more high-calorie drinks, she felt herself gaining weight with every bite and every sip. She was happy that her baby was receiving the nutrition it needed, but deep down, she blamed the child for everything. She felt undesirable because of the baby's impact on her appearance. Hormonal changes led to breakouts and mood swings. These mood swings left her emotionally distressed. Her emotional instability caused her husband to grow more distant with each passing day. She felt enraged, and her thoughts began to take unimaginably violent forms. The moment the last trace of love she felt for her baby disappeared, something inside her snapped. Her feet carried her involuntarily toward the medicine cabinet. Her limbs no longer seemed to belong to her, as though she were a puppet controlled by invisible strings. Her hands moved as if directed by a different being, separate from her own mind. She frantically searched through the cabinet, throwing empty brown glass bottles onto the floor. Each shattered the moment it struck the ground. Her mind was clouded. She could no longer think clearly. Her expression was disturbingly difficult to read—a mixture of confusion, pride, rage, and pain. If someone looked closely into her eyes, they would have seen innocence wrapped in wrath. The moment she found the pills she had been searching for; she poured them into her warm, sweaty palms. Just as she was about to swallow them, she hesitated. Only for a second. Yet that second felt like an eternity.

In that brief moment, her mind envisioned a possible future with her baby. Perhaps she would live a peaceful life. Perhaps she would become the mother of a beautiful little girl. She imagined her daughter's scent lingering in the air, somewhere between sweet milk and freshly baked bread. She imagined soft giggles filling the room.

For a moment, her heart nearly softened. But she quickly pushed the thought away and swallowed the pills. Her hatred of uncertainty, betrayal, and doubt overwhelmed the only positive thing left in her life: hope.

No hope. No second guesses. No regrets.

A single tear rolled down her cheek, leaving a damp trail behind. The moment it mixed with the sweat on her face, she wiped it away with trembling hands. Her shaking fingers curled into a fist. Without even taking a breath, she slammed her fist against her stomach.

Once.

Then again.

And again.

Her numb body barely reacted. She continued until pain finally answered her violence.

Looking at herself in the mirror afterward, she saw tangled brown hair, swollen eyes, flushed cheeks, and bruised hands. One glance was enough to break her. She collapsed to the floor and cried, not from sadness, but because there was no turning back.

No baby.

No happiness.

No hopes.

No dreams.

Only agony and the illusion of a perfect body. Her stomach ached with every breath she took. She no longer had a baby. The only comfort she could find was the thought that her figure would eventually become slim again. Her slender body and clear skin, she believed, would make her cheating husband regret everything.



The sound of a door unlocking interrupted her thoughts. A weak smile appeared on her face, almost as if she were proud of herself. Her husband called her name into the endless corridor. The only response was the echo of his own voice bouncing off the cold cream-colored walls. Confusion spread across his face. His eyes searched desperately for an explanation. As he approached the bathroom, confusion quickly transformed into horror. His stomach twisted violently. The sandwich he had eaten for lunch seemed to rise into his throat. The sickeningly sweet scent of his mistress's cheap perfume lingered around him, burning the bridge of his nose. Combined with the sight before him, it triggered an overwhelming wave of nausea and a pounding headache. Acidic vomit surged up his throat, burning as it came. He could no longer hold it back. After vomiting onto the blood-covered floor, he collapsed and lost consciousness. His body struck the cold marble tiles beside his wife's lifeless form.

At that exact moment, his phone buzzed. A message that should have arrived hours earlier finally appeared on the shattered screen.

"Am I as pretty as Lily?" Just before the phone died for the last time, it vibrated again across the floor. An incoming call. The screen, only for a minute, revealed a call coming from Lily.



Humanity

Ezgi Erensu 10/O

Humanity means caring about other people and treating them with respect. It is about kindness, empathy, and helping others when they need support. Throughout history, humanity has helped people build communities and live together in peace.

One important part of humanity is understanding others. Every person has different experiences, cultures, and ideas. When we listen to each other and try to understand these differences, the world becomes a better place. Small actions, such as sharing, helping a friend, or supporting someone in trouble, show true humanity.

Humanity is also important in difficult times. During natural disasters, wars, or pandemics, people often come together to help those who are suffering. Volunteers, doctors, and ordinary citizens work hard to protect and support others.

In everyday life, humanity can be shown through simple actions. Saying kind words, respecting others, and helping people in need are all examples of humanity. If everyone practices humanity, society becomes more caring, peaceful, and hopeful for the future.



Quotes of Famous People

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is like an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

— Mother Teresa

“Humans see what they want to see.”

— Rick Riordan



“The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices”

— Jimmy Carter

“Science without humanity is listed as one of the seven social sins that damage society”

— Frederick Lewis Donaldson

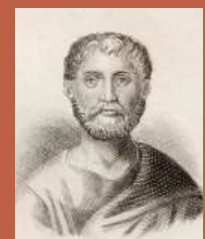


“Be certain that you do not die without having done something wonderful for humanity”

—Maya Angelou

“I am a human being; nothing human can be alien to me.”

— Terence





“The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter.”

— Mark Twain

“The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity.”

— Leo Tolstoy



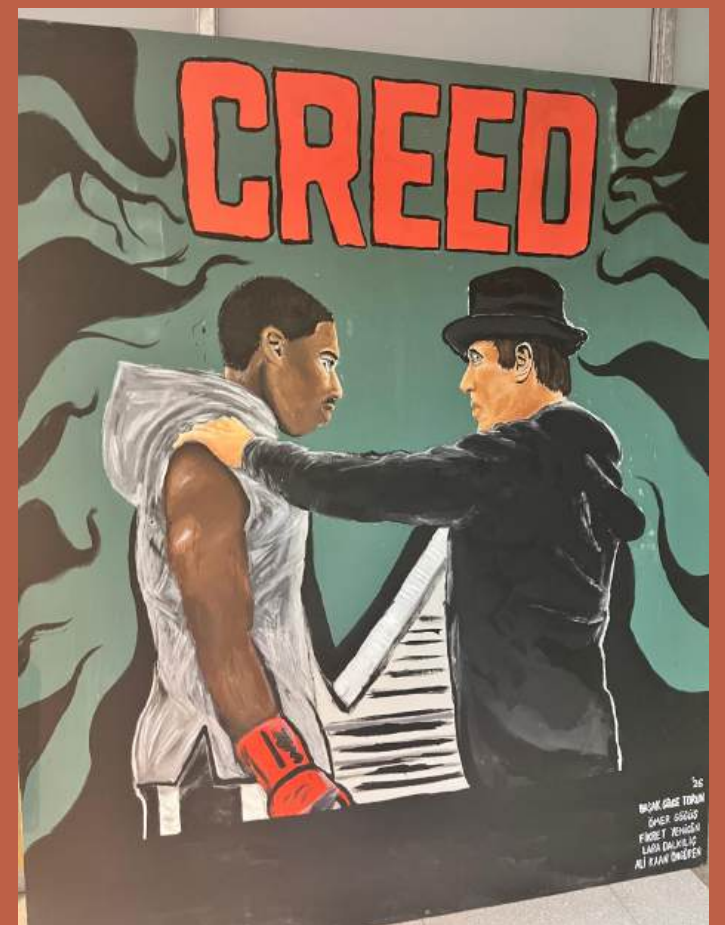
A Glimpse Into Life at TED Ankara College High School













“Peace at home, peace in the world.”

MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK

QUILL



2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

ANKARA TURKIYE

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