Tekstboekje

centraal schriftelijk examen

Engels

vwo

2025
tijdvak 1

Tekst 1

What's so faux about Stella's stance on leather?

(1) Designer Stella McCartney has been criticised for promoting faux leather. *The Great British Sewing Bee* host Patrick Grant says that McCartney was responsible for popularising the material, which doesn't biodegrade. Grant is right – McCartney was extremely influential in promoting faux leather and thank God for that.

(2) Leather doesn't biodegrade particularly fast either and it's the byproduct of the meat industry, which is notoriously anti-ethical on myriad levels, not least cruelty. And while there's a big problem with plastic, perhaps let's discuss that with companies such as Evian (water bottles) or Johnson's (baby wipes) first. Compared with such global garbage pits, faux leather has to be way down the list of offenders.

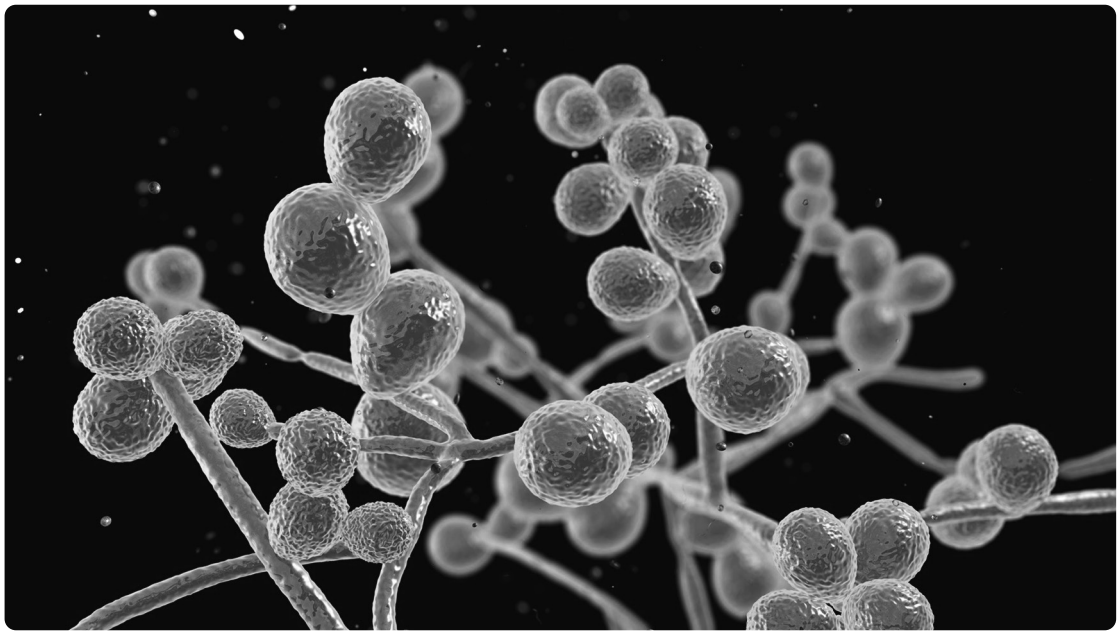
(3) As for McCartney, she pointblank refused to work with leather right from the start, when she first began designing for Chloé. Sure, she has the famous surname, but that wouldn't have saved her if profits had nosedived. Companies blatantly copying her faux-leather stance means that people on limited budgets can now make animal-kind choices. A big deal, these days, when real fur hood trims can sometimes work out cheaper for manufacturers than the fake variety.

(4) With her faux leather, McCartney was prescient, brave and revolutionary and should be commended, not criticised.

The Observer, 2018

Tekst 2

Fungi: The Final Frontier



I enjoyed Hua Hsu's piece on mycophiles – in particular, his discussion of the mycologist and mushroom evangelist Paul Stamets (Books, May 18th). I must admit that I was hoping for a mention of Stamets's twenty-third-century-sci-fi namesake, Lieutenant Commander Paul Stamets, a character on the show "Star Trek: Discovery." In the series, Stamets, played by Anthony Rapp, is a so-called Astro-mycologist who serves as the ship's "spore-drive specialist." His responsibilities include using spores from a particular species of fungus to move the ship instantaneously to any point in the universe, travelling along a subspace "mycelial plane." Real-world scientists have deemed this propulsion system non-viable, but the spirit of the concept – in a show whose purpose was to imagine foreign, even utopian futures – is in keeping with the real Stamets's advocacy for the use of fungi to improve our world. Stamets and other mycophiles seem to intuit that the ability to create such utopias might involve, as Hsu puts it, "giving oneself up to the weft of a connected world, and making peace with one's smallness."

Tracy L. Bealer
New York City

The New Yorker, 2020

Tekst 3

To the Editor

(1) I am exceedingly grateful to Emma Camp (Opinion guest essay, March 9) for expressing an unpopular opinion that must necessarily be harbored (cautiously, on the sly) by countless undergraduate and graduate students. The pressure to bow before majority opinion has indeed become increasingly burdensome. We might well fear for the state of unbounded, undiluted intellectualism in America. Our once eclectic nation is transforming into a tepid, homogenous whole. This is not only the result of self-censorship, but also of censorship from without: coercion, intimidation and silencing.

(2) I implore my fellow students to comport themselves boldly and courageously in the face of this ever more fearful prospect. Do not permit your original, piquant ideas and opinions to be rejected out of hand; when enough iconoclasts stand bravely together, tyranny of the majority loses power. One grows tired of hearing the same hyperbolized viewpoints iterated and reiterated ad nauseam. Collectively, let us attempt to provide balance and restore our fellow citizens to reason and open-mindedness.

Donna Sanders
New York
The writer is a junior at Columbia University.

nytimes.com, 2022

Tekst 4

Child's Play

voorbeeld: ondertitel indien van toepassing

by Laura Boness

(1) There is growing evidence that young children learn and think in the same ways as scientists, according to professor Alison Gopnik from the University of California, Berkeley. Preschoolers test hypotheses against data and make causal inferences; they learn from statistics and informal experimentation and from watching and listening to others, she wrote in a report that reviewed previous studies on how children learn.

(2) She says that people used to think young children were irrational and illogical, but in the 1970s and 80s researchers began to realise that preschoolers had structured thoughts and could make causal inferences about the world around them.

(3) In an experiment conducted by Gopnik and her colleagues, young children aged 2, 3 and 4 were asked to make a blicket detector either play or stop playing music, which required them to place a particular block on the machine. Block A or Block A and B combined would turn the machine on, while block B would have no effect – and the children were able to figure out the correct patterns to make the machine go or stop.

(4) Even babies can understand __**9**__ – another study involved a researcher showing babies red and white balls, then placing a random sample in the bin. This should have given a distribution of colours similar to that of the original bin, but if the researcher deliberately switched the samples and gave the kids an unexpected result, they stared at that sample longer.

(5) Gopnik explained that some of the pressure to make preschools more academic might end up being counter-productive as it may narrow the range of hypotheses that children are willing to consider. __**10**__, they seem to learn best when they explore the world through play. "Look at what your children are interested in. They can learn a lot about the world by putting mixing bowls together, or playing with sand, or through pretend play," she said.

scienceillustrated.com.au, 2022

Tekst 5

A Few Words About That Ten-Million-Dollar Serial Comma

By Mary Norris, who drove a milk truck in Cleveland, Ohio.

(1) The case of the Maine milk-truck drivers who, for want of a comma, won an appeal against their employer, Oakhurst Dairy, regarding overtime pay (O'Connor v. Oakhurst Dairy) has warmed the hearts of punctuation enthusiasts everywhere, from the great dairy state of Wisconsin to the cheese haven of Holland.

(2) Nothing, but nothing – profanity, transgender pronouns, apostrophe abuse – excites the passion of grammar geeks more than the serial, or Oxford, comma. People love it or hate it, and they are equally ferocious on both sides of the debate. Individual publications have guidelines that sink deep into the psyches of editors and writers. *The Times*, like most newspapers, does without the serial comma. At *The New Yorker*, it is a copy editor's duty to deploy the serial comma, along with lots of other lip-smacking bits of punctuation, as a bulwark against barbarianism.

(3) While advocates of the serial comma are happy for the truck drivers' victory, it was actually the lack of said comma that won the day. Here are the facts of the case, for those who may have been pinned under a semicolon. According to Maine state law, workers are not entitled to overtime pay for the following activities: "The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment or distribution of: 1: Agricultural produce; 2: Meat and fish products; and 3: Perishable foods."

(4) The issue is that, without a comma after "shipment," the "packing for shipment or distribution" is a single activity. Truck drivers do not pack food, either for shipment or for distribution; they drive trucks and deliver it. Therefore, these exemptions do not apply to drivers, and Oakhurst Dairy owes them some ten million dollars.

(5) Judge David J. Barron's opinion in the case is a feast of subtle delights for anyone with a taste for grammar and usage. Lawyers for the defense conceded that the statement was ambiguous (the State of Maine specifically instructs drafters of legal statutes not to use the serial comma) but argued that it had "a latent clarity." The truck drivers, for their part,

pointed out that, in addition to the missing comma, the law as written flouts "the parallel usage convention." "Distribution" is a noun, and syntactically it belongs with "shipment," also a noun, as an object of the preposition "for." To make the statute read the way the defendant claims it was intended to be read, the writers would have had to use "distributing," a gerund – a verb that has been twisted into a noun – which would make it parallel with the other items in the series: "canning, processing," etc. To the defendant's contention that the series, in order to support the drivers' reading, would have to contain a conjunction – "and" – before "packing," the drivers, citing Antonin Scalia and Bryan Garner, said that the missing "and" was an instance of the rhetorical device called "asyndeton," defined as "the omission or absence of a conjunction between parts of a sentence."

(6) Lest we lose perspective, this law on the books of the State of Maine applies to people who work with perishables, and the point is that pokey employees should not be rewarded for taking their sweet time getting the goods to market. Possibly (but improbably) for this reason, in an effort to illustrate (or not) ambiguity in a series, the coverage of O'Connor v. Oakhurst Dairy **15**. *The Times* noted that it would break with style and add the serial comma in the following sentence: "Choices for breakfast included oatmeal, muffins, and bacon and eggs." *The Guardian*, too, would avoid ambiguity at the breakfast table: "He ate cereal, kippers, bacon, eggs, toast and marmalade, and tea."

(7) Contrast these with a dinner described in a recent e-mail from John Pope, the author of a collection of obituaries that ran in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, who remains adamant in his rejection of the serial comma: "The next day, I enjoyed pan-roasted oysters with a tomato sauce over rice, broccoli salad and bread pudding with chocolate sauce." A comma after "broccoli salad" would have cleared the table before dessert.

(8) The case of the dairy-truck drivers' comma has got several things going for it. It's got David and Goliath in the story of the little guy sticking it to a corporate boss. It's got men driving around in trucks with copies of *Strunk & White*[1)] in the glove compartment. And you know what else it's got? Of course you do. It's got milk. For all the backlash against the dairy industry – the ascendance of soy milk, almond milk, hemp milk (note the asyndeton), none of which, by the way, are really milk, because you can't milk a hazelnut – there is something imperishably wholesome about cows and milk.

(9) Got milk? Got commas?

newyorker.com, 2017

noot 1 *Strunk & White* is an American English writing style guide

Tekst 6

Struggling authors

Regarding Joanne Harris's article (Horribly low pay is pushing out my fellow authors – and yes, that really does matter, 7 December), I guess I'm a professional author, though I never really think of myself as one. I've published four books (three nonfiction, one novel), ghost-written another, co-edited an anthology of new writing, and I'm under contract for my fifth book. I have a respectable academic publishing history and have even won an award. I don't have an agent, but I'm currently writing for three mainstream publishers.

I don't think of myself as a professional author as it has never paid the bills. I survive by teaching other people how to write, through freelance mentoring and manuscript appraisal, supplemented by copy-editing and proofreading. I'm part of what you might call "blue-collar literature". You won't have heard of people like me, but we keep on banging out text anyway. My writing is what gets done around the day job, in the evenings and at weekends. The fees from this are pocket money at best.

Now, our son wants to be a writer, and while we're encouraging this, we're also trying to steer him towards a back-up profession that will keep him alive while he writes. Like many other things, writing is **19-1**.
Dr Stephen Carver, New Costessey, Norfolk

Joanne Harris writes that an author's career is ruled by luck. While luck plays a part, a writer's success is often determined months before their work makes it to market. Every year, the industry places substantial marketing resources behind its "lead" titles – these books are pitched for commercial success. While this cannot guarantee their success, more often than not it does. It has been explained to me that these books pay for everything else. The difficulty with this model is that pretty much everything else sinks without trace.

Until publishers step back from this model, the majority of authors will struggle to build a readership. Their books won't sell because most readers won't know these books exist. These authors face **19-2**. None of this is down to luck. It's how the business operates.
Guinevere Glasfurd, Costa-shortlisted author

What does Joanne Harris want? Should professional authors receive government pay funded by taxpayers? Should publishers be forced by law to pay more in royalties to authors? Presumably, it is the market at work, with publishers selecting those manuscripts that they consider will bring them sufficient financial returns, while choosing to pay authors as little as possible so as to increase profits. Authors have little market power until they are firmly established.

Are publishers to be forced to print "worthy" manuscripts and, if so, who is to judge what is worthy and who is to determine the right financial recompense to authors? At the moment it is the market, as viewed by publishers, that decides. What is **19-3** when nobody is forced to become a professional author?
Brian Needham, Alston, Cumbria

The publishing world is so disfigured by the market that it's almost impossible to get your second novel published if your first wasn't a commercial success. It's all about creating **19-4**, not about backing novelists in their career. If your first book didn't sell, the start of your career is also the end. Agents and mainstream publishers abandon demonstrable talent if it's not profitable. They scupper creativity and destroy writers' lives.
Jo McMillan, Berlin, Germany

guardian.com, 2022

Tekst 7

Why Societies Need Parody

By Alexandra Petri

(1) One great thing about being alive right now is that it is very easy to tell parody from reality, which is why it might have escaped your notice that the actual satirical newspaper The Onion honestly did file a real amicus brief[1)] before the Supreme Court – in defense of a man who got arrested for parody. In the United States! In the present day! I wish I were making that part up.

(2) The man in question maintained a fake social media page for his local police department and wound up spending four days in jail in 2016 after the page made the department mad and he was charged with "using a computer to disrupt police functions." The jury found him not guilty, but he subsequently sued, **21**.

(3) *The Onion*, self-styled in the brief as the "single most powerful and influential organization in human history" with a "daily readership of 4.3 trillion," agrees. As someone else whose job hinges on the ability to write parody without being detained by the state, I also wanted to chime in.

(4) "Ah," you are saying. "Thrilling! The only thing better and funnier than actual comedy: people talking earnestly about the social importance of comedy!" You are right. I will try to keep it brief, as *The Onion* did. "Even better," you are saying, "Puns!" You are saying a lot. If it weren't for you, I would already have gotten to my thesis.

(5) As is customary in arguments of this kind, I am now going to quote an ancient writer. I have chosen Horace, the ancient Roman satirist: "When you live in a time like this, it's impossible *not* to write satire." The world is so whacky that you wind up writing satire whether you want to or not. One man's ominously heightened, on-the-nose parody is another man's straightforward accounting of the news. When the world is continually absurd without being funny, you want to turn to a form that tries to allow other people to recognize the absurdity with you.

(6) Unfortunately, when you write parody, or try to, people do not usually say, "Ah! Thank you for this vital service! Just like Horace! You are elevating the culture." Instead, for as long as people have been writing satire, other people have gotten mad about it – both its

noot 1 amicus brief = een verdediging van een gedagvaarde door een persoon of organisatie die zelf geen partij is in de rechtszaak, maar wel een belang bij de zaak heeft

targets (such as the police department!) and others. Or, sometimes worse, people have been … not mad. If 17th century satirist Jonathan Swift's inbox was anything like mine, he had to deal with a few; "Solve the famine by eating the Irish babies? FINALLY! SOMEONE SAYING WHAT WE'RE ALL THINKING!!!!"

(7) *The Onion*'s motto is "Tu stultus es" – you are dumb. Its filing says the slogan gets to "the very heart of parody: tricking readers into believing that they're seeing a serious rendering of some specific form … and then allowing them to laugh at their own gullibility when they realize that they've fallen victim to one of the oldest tricks in the history of rhetoric."

(8) To me, that second piece is even more crucial than the first. It's not actually that the reader is a fool – but that the reader is capable of being fooled, recognizing it and laughing at it.

(9) Fundamentally, parody is an act of optimism. As *The Onion* says, it depends upon the "reasonable person" standard. Have you met the country, recently? Have you met the world, recently? Only an optimist would look around right now and feel convinced that there existed such a thing as a "reasonable person," let alone one who could be used as a standard in legal cases.

(10) But if you stop believing in reasonable people – even a person who is occasionally, initially fooled by something parodic – you stop believing that democracy is possible. If you don't believe that most people are ultimately reasonable, why on Earth would you want them to be in charge of everything?

(11) Democracy, like parody, presumes that people are capable of noticing when someone is trying to dupe them. I have to think this is among the reasons dictators distrust parody; not just because it shows them in a bad light, but because its underlying assumption is that people can see what is in front of them.

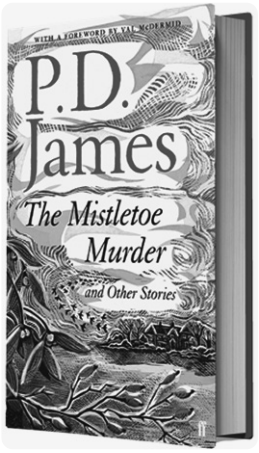
(12) Obviously, bad satire exists. Sometimes, if people don't understand what you're doing, it is not because they are goofs but because you haven't done your job as a satirist correctly. But, broadly, we write parody with the belief that people can laugh, **28**. Satire says that deep down, we are reasonable. At its best, it's like the package of art and music and scientific facts we put into the Voyager capsule and sent into space: a vote of confidence that someone out there is capable of understanding what we're putting down. And, we hope, not showing up to arrest us.

washingtonpost.com, 2022

Tekst 8

Preface to *The Mistletoe Murder and Other Stories*, 2017

by P.D. James



(1) In her introduction to an anthology of short crime stories published in 1934, Dorothy L. Sayers wrote: 'Death seems to provide the minds of the Anglo-Saxon race with a greater fund of innocent amusement than any other single subject.' She was, of course, writing not of the horrifying, messy and occasionally pathetic murders of real life, but of the mysterious, elegantly contrived and popular concoctions of crime writers. Perhaps amusement is hardly the word; entertainment, relaxation or excitement would all be more appropriate. And, to judge from the universal popularity of crime writing, it isn't only the Anglo-Saxons who evince enthusiasm for murder most foul. Millions of readers throughout the world are at home in Sherlock Holmes's claustrophobic sanctum at 221B Baker Street, Miss Marple's charming cottage in St Mary Mead, and Lord Peter Wimsey's elegant Piccadilly flat.

(2) In the period leading up to the Second World War, much of crime writing was done in the form of a short story. The two writers who can be regarded as the founding fathers of the detective story, Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, were both masters of the form, and the former adumbrated most of the distinguishing features not only of the short story, but of the crime novel: the least likely suspect as murderer, the closed-room mystery, the case solved by an armchair detective, and the epistolary narrative. Eric Ambler has written: 'The Detective story may have been born in the mind of Edgar Allan Poe, but it was London that fed it, clothed it and brought it to maturity.' He was, of course, thinking of the genius of Conan Doyle, creator of the most famous detective in literature. He bequeathed to the genre a respect for reason, a non-abstract intellectualism, a reliance on ratiocination rather than on physical force, an abhorrence of sentimentality and the power to create an atmosphere of mystery and gothic horror which is yet firmly rooted in physical reality. Above all, more than any other writer he established the tradition of the great detective, that omniscient amateur whose personal, sometimes bizarre eccentricity is contrasted with the rationality of his methods and who provides for the reader the comforting reassurance that, despite our apparent powerlessness, we yet inhabit an intelligible universe.

(3) Although the Sherlock Holmes stories are the most famous of this period, they are not the only ones worth re-reading. Julian Symons, a respected critic of crime fiction, pointed out that most of the notable practitioners in the art of the short story turned to detection as a relief from their other work and enjoyed using a form still in its infancy which offered them infinite opportunities for originality and variation. G.K. Chesterton is an example of a writer whose main interest lay elsewhere but whose Father Brown stories are still read with pleasure. And it is surprising how many other distinguished writers tried their hand at the short crime story. In the second series of *Great Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*, published in 1931, the contributors included H.G. Wells, Wilkie Collins, Walter de la Mare, Charles Dickens and Arthur Quiller-Couch, in addition to the names we would expect to find.

(4) Few detective novelists writing today are uninfluenced by the founding fathers, but most crime writers produce novels rather than short stories. Part of the reason for this is the greatly reduced market for short stories generally, but the main reason is perhaps that the detective story has moved closer to mainstream fiction and a writer needs space if he or she is fully to explore the psychological subtleties of character, the complications of relationships, and the impact of murder and of a police investigation on the lives of those characters.

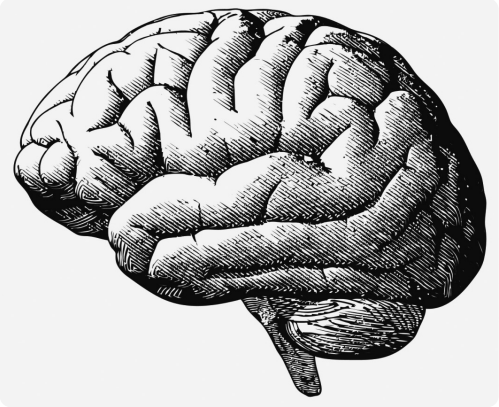
(5) The scope of the short story is inevitably restricted and this means it is most effective when it deals with a single incident or one dominant idea. It is the originality and strength of this idea which largely determine the success of the story. Although it is far less complex in structure than a novel, more linear in concept, driving single-mindedly to its denouement, the short story can still provide within its smaller compass a credible world into which the reader can enter for those satisfactions which we expect from good crime writing: a plausible mystery, tension and excitement, characters with whom we can identify if not always sympathise, and an ending which does not disappoint. There is a satisfying art in containing within a few thousand words all those elements of plot, setting, characterisation and surprise which go to provide a good crime story.

(6) Although most of my own work has been as a novelist, I have greatly enjoyed the challenge of the short story. **34** There is not space for long and detailed descriptions of place, but the setting must still come alive for the reader. Characterisation is as important as in the novel, but the essentials of a personality must be established with an economy of words. The plot must be strong but not too complex, and the denouement, to which every sentence of the narrative should inexorably lead, must surprise the reader but not leave him feeling cheated. All should command the most ingenious element of the short story: the shock of surprise. The good short story is accordingly difficult to write well, but in this busy age it can provide one of the most satisfactory reading experiences.

Tekst 9

The brain's method of spring cleaning

By neuroscientist Dean Burnett



(1) Pretty much everything we do, everything we are, is based on the connections between cells, the synapses, that form in our brain. Indeed, for a long time scientists believed that the adult brain was essentially 'fixed', and couldn't be changed in any significant way.

(2) […]

(3) Phagocytosis is a process whereby cells will envelop and consume smaller cells or molecules, in order to remove them from the system. It's basically cells eating other cells, or substances. Our immune system is based on this; dedicated white blood cells consume pathogens, thus getting rid of them and their disruptive influence on our bodies.

(4) A lot of phagocytosis is happening in the brain, at any given time. While keeping pathogens and other invaders out is obviously very important, phagocytosis is happening just to keep the brain running as is, i.e., maintaining homeostasis. It's important to remember that the brain is an incredibly busy and demanding organ. Estimates suggest it uses up about a third of the body's ready energy supply, **37-1**. This means that the brain is something of a cellular powerhouse; there are countless complex processes happening between and within our brain cells, all the time.

(5) The thing is, all these processes will have unusable byproducts. The brain's workings create a lot of debris. And this debris has to be got rid of, because otherwise it builds up and disrupts things, **37-2**. A lot of this clearing away of cellular detritus happens when we sleep (that's one theory as to why we sleep at all), and processes involving phagocytosis are how it's cleared.

(6) But it's not just everyday housekeeping. A lot of the time, the connections in the brain need to be removed. When we hit adolescence, a process called 'pruning' is initiated, **37-3**, and the resources they were hogging unhelpfully are redirected to more useful things, making the brain more efficient and ready for adult life. And all this happens because the brain is, in a very real sense, eating itself. But in ways that make it better, not worse.

(7) Our brains aren't static. They're flexible, adaptable, constantly reacting to what life throws at them. That's largely the source of their power. But they wouldn't be able to do this if they weren't willing to eat parts of themselves on a regular basis.

sciencefocus.com, 2021

Tekst 10

Reaction to Editorial by Maureen Conway, executive director of the Economic Opportunities Program at the Aspen Institute and Shelly Steward, director of the Future of Work Initiative at the Aspen Institute

(1) The Sept. 14 editorial objecting to California's Fast-Food Accountability and Standards Recovery Act, "This labor law needs some work," recognized that workers in the industry are experiencing real harms: wage theft, discrimination, harassment and other violations.

(2) The idea that we should tolerate poverty wages so that consumers can avoid a 17 percent increase in fast-food costs is morally problematic. Is it right to perpetuate a system that exploits people so that other people can save a buck on a hamburger? Although some franchise owners are technically small businesses, they operate in the context of large corporations whose onerous rules push them to adopt these abusive labor practices. Industry-wide standards raise standards as a whole, and as such do not place individual franchises at a competitive disadvantage.

(3) The proffered "better way" of enforcing existing labor law and expanding the earned-income tax credit would certainly be a good thing, but we should also ask ourselves how far we want to go in asking taxpayers to underwrite the paychecks of working people. Moreover, one of the enforcement challenges is how difficult it is for workers **39** violations. The Fast-Food Councils created by California's new legislation would create a far better vehicle for workers to surface violations than currently exists.

(4) Fast-food is big business. It has been hugely profitable and should pay its own bills. And if it has a habit of not following the rules, then new structures to bring it in line should be celebrated.

washingtonpost.com, 2022

Department of Health & Social Care

As Minister of Health, I would like to apologise sincerely for mistakes made many years ago by the health service under the watch of previous ministers who have now moved on.

The victims of these catastrophic errors have had to fight for many years for this apology and I cannot overstate how delighted I am to say sorry about all these appalling blunders which weren't my fault at all.

The lesson to be learned from this is quite clear, and I can assure the public that it will be a very different Health Secretary who apologises for all my mistakes in about 20 years' time.

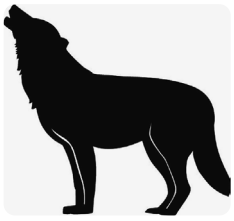
Insincerely,
MATT HANCOCK
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Private Eye, 2020

! Let op: lees eerst de opgaven voordat je naar de tekst gaat.

Wolf protection in Europe: a political topic

by Hanna Pettersson, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of York



Over the past decade alone, wolves have expanded their range on the continent by more than 25%. This resurgence was brought into sharp focus in September 2023 following a controversial statement by Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission. She said: “The concentration of wolf packs in some European regions has become a real danger for livestock and potentially also for humans. I urge local and national authorities to take action where necessary.”

But what is the right action to take? Recent decisions by EU member states do not reflect a consensus on the matter. The Swiss senate has voted to ease restrictions on culling their roughly 200 wolves to safeguard livestock that roam freely in the Alps. Spain, which is home to more than 2,000 wolves and boasts extensive livestock grazing systems, has adopted a contrasting stance. An examination of Spain’s motivations for protection may provide some insight into what motivates countries to adopt such different approaches to coexistence.

WHAT DOES COEXISTENCE MEAN?

In new research we investigated how people in Spain interpret and experience coexistence with wolves. Our findings revealed three distinct and, to some extent, conflicting views of what coexistence means and how it should be achieved. Traditionalists cared deeply about the landscapes, livelihoods and biodiversity that evolved together throughout millennia of free-range pastoralism. They saw people as a part of nature and interpreted coexistence as a state where the wolf was controlled to not disrupt pastoral activities. Protectionists wanted to restore “wild” nature (with minimal human influence) and believed that the wolf would catalyse this process. They saw coexistence as a state where human activities were controlled so that wolves could roam free. Pragmatists were less fixated on a certain type of nature and more on the relationships and context within each location. They regarded coexistence as a state where the needs of different groups (including wolves) were balanced. Relaxing or increasing wolf protection has come to represent these different visions of the future.

THE POLITICS OF WOLF CONSERVATION

In Spain, the proposal to protect wolves was put forward by protectionists, and aligned with the agenda of the incumbent left-wing government. Podemos, one of the left coalition parties, submitted a proposition for strict wolf protection in collaboration with pro-wolf advocacy groups. By contrast, Spain's right-wing political parties were firmly opposed. The government ultimately endorsed the proposal based on wolves' "scientific, ecological and cultural value" – largely subjective criteria. For instance, one could argue that the fox, which is not protected, possesses similar values.

Spain's decision was also influenced by the protectionists' view of the wolf's conservation status. A species that is classified as having a "favourable" status (adequate to guarantee its long-term survival) in the EU Habitats Directive can, in some instances, be hunted. However, conservationists disagree about the criteria and data on which this status is based. For example, an assessment submitted to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List in 2018 indicates that the Iberian wolf population is large, stable and slowly expanding. By contrast, a report published by a pro-wolf advocacy group in 2017 claimed that more wolves were killed than born in Spain during that year.

The latter has been accused of being biased and unscientific. However, it did not stop the Spanish Environment Ministry from using the report to reclassify the conservation status of wolves from "favourable" (as it was in previous reports) to "unfavourable". In other words, information was interpreted, selected and presented in a way that justified increased protection.

THIS NATURE OR THAT NATURE?

To bridge the political divide between protection and persecution, as well as between the restoration of "wild" versus pastoral landscapes, a re-evaluation of how decisions are made and what evidence is considered is needed. Science plays a crucial role in evaluating various policy options and their consequences, such as the effect of an increased wolf population on sheep or deer behaviour. But it cannot determine the "correct" course of action. That choice depends on what people, livestock and wildlife in a particular place need to live well. In other words: context matters.

Reconciling various interests and finding a way forward requires public participation and, usually, professional mediation. These are the actions that the European Commission should encourage among member states. With this in mind, it is concerning that this approach is largely overlooked in the debate. Ultimately, the sustainable coexistence of humans and wolves does not hinge on whether wolves are hunted or protected, or even on the size of the wolf population. Rather, it hinges on how these decisions are made.

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