

**WHY SCHOOL  
SHOULD START  
LATER**

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*Written by Alexander*

## Why school should start later

Starting the school earlier seems like a good idea at first. Many people believe it helps students become more disciplined and gives them more time to learn. Schools have followed this system for ages now but no one really questioned themselves if an earlier school start really is the most effective option for efficient learning for students.

However, more and more people lately were beginning to question if early school starting is really effective. Multiple studies prove the opposite. They show that a delayed school start by 45-60 minutes improve mental health reduce daytime sleepiness and also increases adolescent sleep duration. The lack of sleep can have serious effects on students' mental health and academic performance. When students are less exhausted, it becomes easier concentrate and perform well in class.

In this article the reasons why school should start later will be discussed including arguments for- and against a later school start.

When students are forced to wake up too early their brains might not be fully "awake" causing them to not be completely able to focus in the first few lessons. Research shows that the teenage brain functions different, compared to when it is later due to a biological shift in circadian rhythms. These shifts trigger the teenage brain to be less alert when being awake at 7:00 am compared to later. That's why it's fair to assume that an earlier school start might cause students to underperform in the first few lessons and therefore affect their academic career negatively.

That's why starting school later has many advantages for students' daily lives and academic success. When students get enough sleep, they feel more energetic and focused during lesson. This improves their ability to understand new topics faster and participate actively in class. In addition, well rested students also tend to be in a better mood and experience less stress, which creates a more positive learning environment. Schools that have already introduced later start times have reported better grades and fewer absences from students. Therefore, it's fair to assume that a later school start will most likely improve both, students' academic performance such as their overall well being.

Nevertheless, starting school later does not only come with advantages. A disadvantage could be that by a later school start, students wouldn't have much free time left for example homework or a hobby. In rare cases, less free time for students could affect them by causing more stress which would be reflected in their sleep. Due to the fact that sleep is extremely important for students too, the combination of much stress and bad sleep let's many people believe that a later school start is not worth it.

In conclusion, school should start later because it helps students feel more awake as well as focused. It also improves their health and performance in school. A later start time would make learning easier and more effective for everyone.

**DEPRESSION: A  
SERIOUS ILLNESS  
AND ITS IMPACT ON  
DAILY LIFE**

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*Written by Julian*

# Depression: A Serious Illness and Its Impact on Daily Life

How depression creates emotional, physical, and social challenges

by Julian Norgall

Depression is a mental illness that affects how a person feels, thinks, and acts. It is not just being sad for a short time. It can last for a long period and make everyday life much harder. People with depression often face different problems that affect many parts of their life.

People with depression often feel sad, empty, or hopeless for a long time. They may lose interest in things they used to enjoy, like hobbies or spending time with friends. It can also be hard for them to focus or make decisions. Many have negative thoughts and feel like nothing will get better.

Depression can also affect the body. Many people feel very tired, even if they have not done much. Some sleep too much, while others have trouble sleeping at all. There can also be changes in appetite, so people may eat more or less than usual.

Depression often makes people pull away from others. They may stop meeting friends or talking to family. This can lead to feeling lonely. At school, it can become difficult to concentrate, do homework, or stay organized, which can lead to worse grades.

In serious cases, people with depression may feel worthless or think they are a burden to others. Some may even have thoughts about death or suicide. Without help, these feelings can get worse over time.

Depression is a serious illness that can cause many problems in daily life. It is important to understand these problems and take them seriously. With support from others and the right treatment, people with depression can feel better and improve their lives.

# POLITICS

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- *Russia - The new North Korea?*
- *The cost of being a woman: Pink Taxes*
- *How fast can we destroy our world?*
- *How Friedrich Merz changes our society*

# **R U S S I A – T H E N E W N O R T H K O R E A ?**

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*Written by Viktoriia*

# Russia - the new North Korea?

by Viktoriia Serhienko

In recent years, more and more people have started asking whether Russia is turning into a country similar to North Korea. This comparison is based on increasing government control, restrictions on freedom of information, and growing international isolation. However, while there are some similarities, the situation is more complex and requires careful analysis.

Imagine a country where the government controls information, limits internet access and promotes strong propaganda. A country where criticizing the authorities can be dangerous.

Most people would say this sounds like North Korea. But some might argue that modern Russia is slowly moving in a similar direction. In this article I will analyze both countries and compare them, considering the chances of Russia becoming a similarly isolated and authoritarian country.

One of the most important aspects of this comparison is the control of the internet and information. A number of foreign social networks and services have been blocked in Russia, including Meta (designated an extremist organization in the Russian Federation) like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, messaging apps like Snapchat, Twitter (X) and Discord, games like Roblox, and more than 197 VPN services. Services like Patreon and SoundCloud are blocked, as are a number of professional IT tools. About 35 billion rubles (~€373 million) have been spent for blocking or restricting foreign apps so far, and about 60 billion rubles (~€640 million) will be additionally spent by 2030. Russian authorities also released a national app, Max, which was created to fully control users' online communications, what makes Russia's internet more independent and isolated from the global network.

In North Korea, the situation with the control of the internet and information is more extreme: ordinary citizens do not have access to the global internet at all and the only alternative they have is a closed internal network controlled by the government. This demonstrates that Russia is actively restricting its citizens' internet freedom, approaching the insanity of North Korea.

Another important similarity is the use of propaganda and the limitation of freedom of speech. In North Korea, the government completely controls all media and promotes a strong cult of personality around its leader. People are not allowed to express different opinions, and any criticism is strictly punished. In Russia, the situation is less extreme but still concerning. People while protesting are arrested or fined simply for holding signs saying “No to war.” Independent journalists, activists, and even musicians who mention the war in Ukraine or criticize the government are be labeled as “foreign agents,” which severely limits their rights and opportunities, or puts them behind bars. There are also unusual legal restrictions and cultural taboos that suggest a growing cult around the president. For example, some laws in the Russian Federation prohibit the search query "Putin with makeup," which is considered an administrative offense. According to international rankings, Russia is placed around 171st out of 180 countries in terms of press freedom, while North Korea is near the bottom at 177th. For comparison, Germany ranks around 10th. Let alone the rigged elections, when high school and university students were actively encouraged to vote for Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin in exchange for a good grade, or when money was given to the poor in exchange for voting for the “right” one in the elections. This shows that although Russia is not as restrictive as North Korea, freedom of speech is significantly limited and continues to decline.

International isolation and living standards are also important factors when comparing Russia and North Korea. North Korea has been an isolated country for decades. After the Korean War, the country was divided, and North Korea developed into a closed socialist state under the rule of the Kim dynasty. Over time, its leadership chose a policy of extreme self-isolation, limiting contact with the outside world and strictly controlling both the economy and information. As a result, North Korea remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with a GDP per capita of around \$600-1,300 per year, which is extremely low by global standards.

Russia, in contrast, was not historically isolated and for many years remained integrated into the global economy. However, its situation began to change significantly after 2014, following the Annexation of Crimea, and even more after 2022 with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. These events led to major international sanctions and increasing economic and political isolation. While Russia’s GDP per capita is much higher (around \$14,000-15,000), this does not reflect

equal living conditions for everyone. Housing, for example, has become increasingly unaffordable: the average Russian can buy only about 4 square meters of housing with their yearly income, and in some cases people need 7-12 years just to save for a down payment on an apartment. This indicates that buying a home requires dozens of monthly salaries, making it difficult for ordinary citizens to improve their living conditions.

In conclusion, Russia is not the same as North Korea, but there are certain similarities that cannot be ignored. Increasing control over information, growing propaganda, and rising international isolation suggest that Russia is moving in a more authoritarian direction. The regime of North Korea emerged under unique conditions, at a specific historical moment, and as a result of a distinctive combination of culture and the experiences of its people. It is impossible to recreate these factors in another country, especially in one as fundamentally different as Russia. And it is precisely the fact that Russian society is less isolated and more diverse that gives its people the tools, resilience, and opportunity to resist becoming a closed, North Korea–like system from within. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that Russia is not a “new North Korea,” but it may be developing some similar features.

**THE COST OF BEING  
A WOMAN: PINK  
TAXES**

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*Written by Henrieke*

## The cost of being a woman: Pink taxes

If you have ever walked through a drugstore you may have noticed that some feminine products that basically do the same as the men's version are more expensive. That is what we call "Pink taxes". Pink taxes aren't real taxes but more like a marketing strategic to sell products directed towards women for higher prices than for men. The name Pink tax resulted from the fact that companies produced pink products as they found them to be more appealing to women, but is also often used when talking about feminine products being more expensive in general.

While some people might argument that pink taxes aren't real and the products are more expensive, because different ingredients or materials were used but a study proves this wrong. The magazine "sheknows" compared the prices of the same children's toys, just in different colours and the result of a little glowworm stuffed animal is shocking. The blue one costs \$15, while the pink one sells at \$27. The pink one costs nearly double the price of the blue one, even though they are identical, except for the colour. So not only do adult women have to pay more for their stuff, but little kid's toys are also affected.

But of course it doesn't end there because when it comes to day to day items that nearly every human being uses, this bad horror movie just continues. A wonderful example are razors and razor blades.

Women pay up to 27% more for a razor just because it's directed towards women. The two razors?

They do the same. It gets even crazier because medicine directed towards women? Yeah, their expensive.

We probably all know Buscopan-plus, a pill you can take to fight your stomachache. Well the developer of this pill also invented Buscopan-plus pink. It's the exact same pill, with the same ingredients.

The only difference? The colour of the packaging, the amount of pills and of course the price. The pink one has only half the amount of pills the normal one has, but the price per pill is 17% more expensive just because the packaging says it's to soothe period cramps. How can it be normalized that women have to pay more for their hygiene and health than men?

In society women have more inequalities than men. First there is a big gender pay gap. On average, women worldwide earn up to 20% less in comparison to men. In addition women also have to buy themselves menstrual products, which to many is a financial burden. So while women already have less money to spend, because of the pay gap and a natural process they can't change, pink taxes are just another

burden for them. An analysis from the year 1994 shows that women pay up to over \$4000 per year more for products and services like hairdressers and dry-cleaning than men. The higher prices for women are a financial threat to many, especially if they don't earn much money.

Because of the large financial burden they bring upon women, pink taxes should be cancelled or even illegal. In New York and in California there luckily already exists a law that prohibits price discrimination against a gender. In order to fight against the pink taxes even more, we should be aware of what we buy. If possible we should also opt for the cheaper product instead of buying the prettier one. Another important step is to spread information and awareness about the topic. That can also be done by supporting projects that openly fight pink taxes.

Henriette Liebnitzky

**HOW FAST CAN WE  
DESTROY OUR  
WORLD?**

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*Written by Adele*

# How fast can we destroy our world? by Adele Mubur

In the last years, fashion has become more and more important for many people. But at what cost?

When you compare a closet from an older and a younger person you see that the closet from the older person is probably less filled and when you look at the tags from the clothes you will see that most of them have a higher quality and that they are from local shops. When you look in your closet do you see the same or are most of your clothes from other countries like Bangladesh and do not have a high quality because they are made out polyester?

In the past, people didn't buy clothes because they were trendy or they just wanted to go shopping. Clothes were there so you wouldn't have to freeze or had to go outside naked. That's why they had a higher value and every item was a favourite piece that the person loved to wear. They were made by hand and with materials that had a high quality so that they could last longer. Clothes were more expensive, so people only owned a few items. It is called slow fashion because only so many clothes are produced as needed.

A lot has changed since then. Since the 20th century, there has been so-called fast and ultra fast fashion. Fast fashion means that clothes are made very quickly and sold at low prices. As soon as something is trendy, the companies immediately produce a lot of items so that the people can keep up with the trend as quickly as possible. New collections are released every few weeks, which encourage people to constantly buy new items. The factories always are producing large amounts of one piece and do not even look if the new items are well received. Many of clothes are made in countries like Bangladesh or China where labor is inexpensive so that the clothes can be sold at a low price.

But now the question is why people buy new clothes so often? One reason is social media. Every day people see how influencers always wear a perfect and new outfit or go shopping every second day and buy an entirely new wardrobe. Many people then think that they also need new clothes in order to be able to belong in their own group of friends.

Another reason is that buying new things became something you do when you want to reward yourself.

Also people become happy when they have new things, so when they are sad they can order clothes online directly from their bed.

Except that people think that they are more happy when they own a lot of things, fast fashion has a lot of bad sides. First of all, the conditions for the people that work in the factories are very bad. They have to work very long hours a day and most of the time also seven days a week.

If they are lucky they get one free day in a month but some of the people have to work every single day. Horrifyingly not only adults work in these factories but also children. For example, the concern Shein even admitted in the past that children work in their factories.

Fast Fashion is also very bad for the environment. Producing many clothes needs a lot of water. For example, up to 11,000 liters of water

are spent to produce one single jeans. About 80% of it is spent for the growing of cotton and the remaining 20% are spent in coloring and other things. In addition, a lot of clean water is contaminated by coloring and other chemicals and made so useless.

The climate change becomes more and more clearer and fast fashion only makes it worse. The production of clothes emits a lot of  $\text{CO}_2$  - emissions and also the way from China to Europe is very bad for the environment. If clothes are not made of cotton but of polyester and is therefore plastic, it is made of petroleum. As a result, the clothes have a very bad quality and are quickly no longer useable. That is why clothes are sometimes only worn a few times before being thrown away, which creates enormous amounts of textile waste.

So what can we do? We can buy less clothes but with a higher quality that last longer. Or you can buy second hand because then you can still buy many clothes but they do not have to be newly manufactured. You can also repair your clothes, for example, if you have a pair of jeans with a hole, you can make a patch on it and so you can wear it longer. If we continue like this, we are not only destroying our world but also supporting unfair working conditions. So it is really important to rethink our consumption habits.

**HOW FRIEDRICH  
MERZ CHANGES OUR  
SOCIETY**

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*Written by Theo*

How Friedrich Merz changes our society:

Back in February 2025, Germany held elections for the next chancellor and the winning party was CDU. One year later, the candidate was Friedrich Merz. He faced growing inflation and other major problems in Germany and worldwide.

I asked myself what Friedrich Merz and the new government have done since the election. Since becoming chancellor of Germany, he and his cabinet have focused on topics like the economy and finance, migration policy, and finding solutions for high energy and fuel costs. They quickly set their sights on making the German economy grow again.

For example, they did not want to raise taxes for medium-sized companies. He also focused on stricter migration rules and a more active foreign policy. At the same time, migration policy has become more restrictive, which has led to criticism from various political groups.

In foreign policy, Merz presents himself as a strong leader who wants to improve international cooperation, especially with key partners.

Many young people are critical of these developments. They often feel that their concerns, such as climate protection, fair pensions, and modern working conditions, do not get enough attention.

His idea that people should “work more” does not always align with the values of younger generations. This can create a gap between young and older people and lead to frustration.

Because of this, his policies can both change and divide society.

A stronger economy can create stability, jobs, and new opportunities for the future. However, differing opinions on issues like climate change, migration, and social justice can heighten tensions, especially among young people who may feel unheard. Looking ahead, these policies will likely bring more responsibility for the younger generation. They may need to save more for their future and meet higher expectations in the workplace.

However, there are also opportunities, such as better career prospects in a stronger economy. To improve the situation, it is crucial that young people become more involved in politics and that their opinions receive serious consideration.

More dialogue between generations can help reduce conflicts. Through this approach, there is hope for a future that balances economic success with fairness and good opportunities for all.

Written by: Theo Kronisch

# PHILOSOPHY

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- *AI - The Oracle at Delphi 2.0?*
- *Inside the mind of a psychopath: Who are they and what makes them so different?*
- *Is free will just an illusion?*

# AI – THE ORACLE AT DELPHI 2.0?

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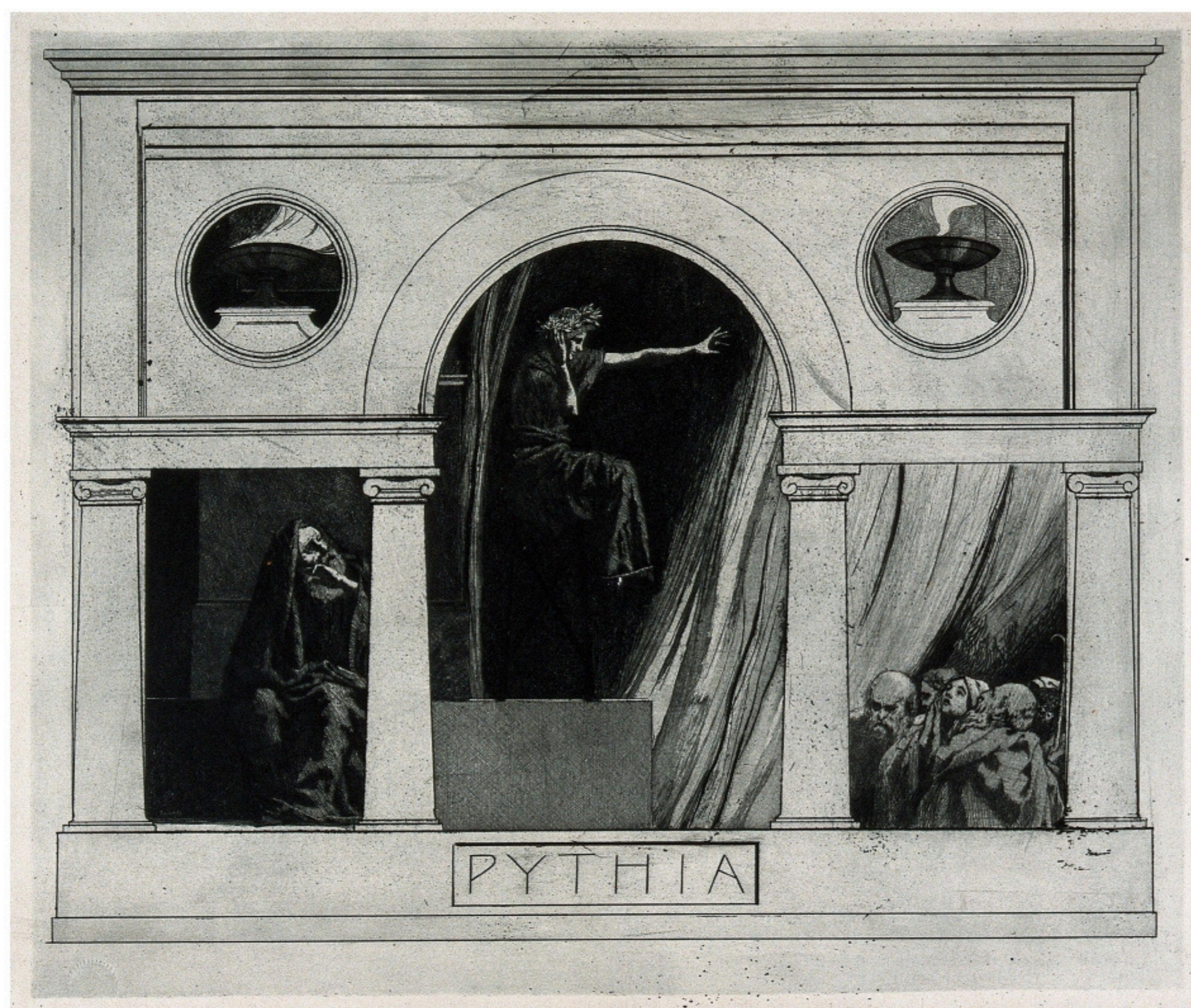
*Written by Elizabeth*

# AI – The Oracle at Delphi 2.0?

by Elisabeth Dushko, April 16, 2026

*For thousands of years people have been consulting oracles, who delivered cryptic prophecies, to make the right decision and find navigation in life. Not much has changed since then, other than now this oracle lies in our pocket, ready to give answers at any time.*

The Oracle at Delphi is probably the most notable oracle there is and goes back as far as the 8th century BC in Delphi. This sanctuary was dedicated to the Olympian deity Apollo, and his guidance could only be received by a holy woman, a so-called Pythia, who would then translate it to its visitants. The Pythia would not be solely asked for visions of the future per se, but for directions as to whether to launch a specific military campaign or adopt a new law, as well as other more personal queries. Here a parallel may be drawn to our modern use of artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT or DeepSeek.



## A Lesson from Croesus

King Croesus of Lydia, one of the richest men of the ancient world, once asked the Pythia whether he should attack Persia. Upon this query, she answered, “If you attack, you will destroy a great kingdom.”

He marched to war, full of confidence, and lost everything. The great kingdom in question, as it turned out, was his own.

## The Hidden Agenda

The pythia sat on a tripod over a small fissure in the earth. From this crack rose sweet-smelling ethylene gas, which sent her into a drug-induced trance state. She spoke in cryptic verses, and priests nearby translated her words for the waiting seeker. Interestingly, no ancient record shows her ever being wrong. This could be explained by the way people perceived her. To the supplicant standing in the innermost sanctuary, her words came from Apollo himself. If a prophecy seemed to fail, the fault could never lie with the god. Perhaps the king had not sacrificed enough or perhaps he misunderstood the

verse. The layout of the sanctuary only played further into it. Besides, the priests of Delphi were regarded as some of the best informed people in the ancient world. Together they formed an intelligence network of spies. They used gathered information to guide foreign policy, maintain the balance of power, and support specific political agendas, rather than receiving a direct message from Apollo.

### **Consulting the Pocket Oracle**

The design of our contemporary "oracle", such as ChatGPT, Deepseek, or Gemini, isn't inherently much different from the ancient oracle. Similarly to how priests of the ancient world gathered information through a wide network and then made predictions, filtered through their own or someone else's political and religious agendas, the engineers behind modern AI train their models on selected data, apply safety filters, and use reinforcement learning to shape responses according to their own guidelines and priorities. AI works by analysing vast amounts of data to identify patterns, using these to make predictions, recommendations, and create new content. Therefore, neither the Pythia, the priests, nor our contemporary AI was or is ever telling the objective and unfiltered truth. They don't actually know the future and what actually has to be done; they simply make predictions that are tailored to the individual asking. Nevertheless, people have been falling for it since our existence because we are uncertain and seek any possible hints for directions in what to believe in and what to do. Be it trying to find the truth among a vast flow of information, which is updated around the clock, difficult work-related decisions, or understanding our personal relationships with each other. Furthermore, according to recent studies, the authoritative tone of AI often bypasses our critical thinking, and we even unconsciously have a bias, thinking that AI should know certain things better than we do. The priests at Delphi, who dedicated their whole lives to Apollo, as it was believed, and were in the second-highest position after the High Priestess, had the exact same effect. We believe that AI is objective and knows how to use the vast amount of information that he is able to access in a short amount of time. Unfortunately, this is not exactly true, as explained above. Overall, technology might have replaced religious institutions as the respected Oracle at Delphi of the 8th century BC, but our behaviour stayed the same. Hence, we have to be more critical about what we believe in and who we believe, or else — just as from the lesson from Croesus — there will be immense consequences, and we are left to blame ourselves. It is easier to ask an oracle, or in our case an AI,

than to rely entirely on our own knowledge, critical thinking capacities and logic, which are skills that are trained over time, but it leads to loss of our autonomy as individuals who can think for themselves and learn from mistakes.

**INSIDE THE MIND  
OF AN PSYCHOPATH:  
WHO ARE THEY AND  
WHAT MAKES THEM  
SO DIFFERENT?**

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*Written by Lea*

# Inside the mind of a psychopath: Who are they and what makes them so different?

Have you ever wondered why some people seem to have no empathy or guilt?

Psychopaths are often shown in movies as dangerous criminals, but in reality, they are much more complex. In this article, we will explore who psychopaths are, how their brain works, and how you might recognize one.

## What is a Psychopath?

A psychopath is a person who has a personality disorder that affects the way they think and feel. They often have little to no empathy, meaning that they do not understand or care about other people's feelings. Many psychopaths can appear charming, confident, and even friendly at first. However, they may also be manipulative and dishonest.

It is important to know that not all psychopaths are criminals. Some live normal lives and even have successful careers.

## How does Psychopaths brain work?

Scientists have found that the brain of psychopaths work differently from others. One important area is the amygdala, which is responsible for emotions like fear and empathy. For psychopaths, this part of the brain is often less active.

Another important area is the prefrontal cortex, which helps with decision-making and controlling impulses. If this area does not work properly, a person may act without thinking about consequences.

Because of these differences, psychopaths do not feel guilt or fear in the same way as others. This can make them take risks or hurt others without feeling bad about it.

## How can you recognize a psychopath?

It is not easy to recognize a psychopath, but there are common signs.

Psychopaths are often very charming and good at talking, which can make them seem likeable at first. They also tend to lie or manipulate others in order to get what they want. Another important sign is that they feel little to no remorse or empathy, meaning they do not feel sorry when they hurt someone. In addition, they can be impulsive and irresponsible. Still, they seem to stay calm in stressful or dangerous situations.

However it is important to remember that having one of these traits does not automatically mean someone is a psychopath. Only trained professionals can make a real diagnosis.

## Psychopaths in every day life:

Not all psychopaths are violent. Some can be found in everyday jobs, such as business or politics, where confidence and risk taking can be helpful. These individuals are sometimes called "successful psychopaths". Still, their lack of empathy can cause problems in relationships and society.

Psychopaths are not just movie villains, they are real people with different brain functions and behaviors. Understanding them can help us to recognize their traits better and deal with them in a safe and informed way.

# IS FREE WILL JUST AN ILLUSION?

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*Written by Ahad*

# Is free will just an illusion?

## How science and philosophy question whether we truly control our decision

By Ahad

Free will means that we can make our own choices and decide what we want to do. In everyday life, we often feel like we are in control of our actions. But is that really true? Do we actually decide freely, or is something else controlling us? Scientists and philosophers have different opinions on this question, which makes the topic very interesting.

First, from a scientific point of view, free will might not be as real as we think. Some experiments show that our brain makes decisions before we are even aware of them. A well known example is the experiment by Benjamin Libet. In his study, he discovered that brain activity starts a short time before a person consciously decides to act. This means that our brain already "chose" something before we feel like we are making a decision. Because of this, some scientists believe that free will is only an illusion created by the brain.

In addition, our decisions are influenced by many different factors. For example, our emotions can change how we act. When we are angry or stressed, we might make different choices than when we are calm. Our past experiences also play an important role. Things we have learned in childhood or situations we have experienced before can shape our decision without us noticing it. Even our environment, like other people or our surroundings, can influence what we do. This shows that our choices are not completely free, but affected by many internal and external factors.

From a philosophical perspective, the question is more complicated. Philosophers argue that we first need to clearly define what "free will" means. Some people think free will means complete independence from all influences, while others believe it only means that we can act according to our own desires. Depending on which definition we use, the answer to the question can be very different. Because of this, philosophy shows that the problem is not only about science but also about language and meaning.

Another important aspect is our everyday experience. In daily life, we strongly feel that we are making our own decisions. For example, we choose what to eat, what to wear or how to spend our free time. These choices feel personal and voluntary, which makes us believe that we have control over our actions. However, this feeling might not always reflect reality. Even simple decisions can be influenced by habits or unconscious thoughts. This raises the question whether our sense of control is real or just something our brain creates.

In conclusion, there is no clear answer to whether free will really exists. Science suggests that our decisions may be controlled by the brain, while philosophy shows that the question depends on how we define free will. Even though we feel free, our choices might not be completely independent. So free will could be limited or maybe even just an illusion.

**THANK  
YOU FOR  
READING!**

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