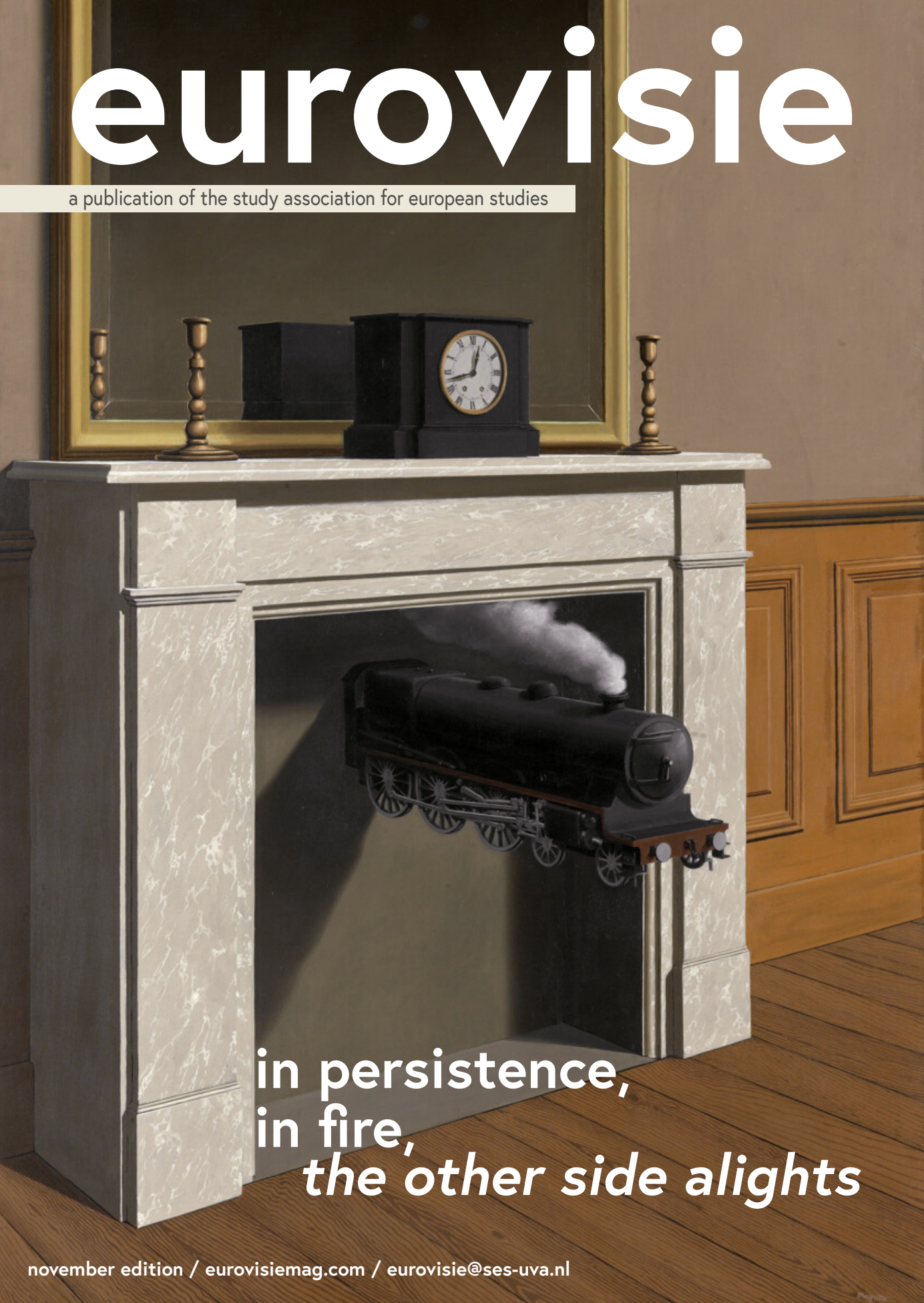


eurovisie

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in persistence,
in fire,
the other side alights

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Editorial

Órlaith Roe

Dear reader,

It is with great joy that I welcome you back once again to Eurovisie's pages. As uncertain as these times are, we will step into the coming winter as one, reacquainting ourselves with the colours of a new season. While it may feel as though we are stuck in a precarious lurch, it is befitting of our writers to present you with works of reflection, discovery, and existence, with voices that persist through the unknown.

With the end of the harvest season approaching, and the looming winter upon us once the last of the autumn fires dwindle, it is only right that our edition aligns itself with the explorations of this season's originators, to reopen the burial mounds, to tread lightly into the otherworld, and craft our returning words with a fiery sun.

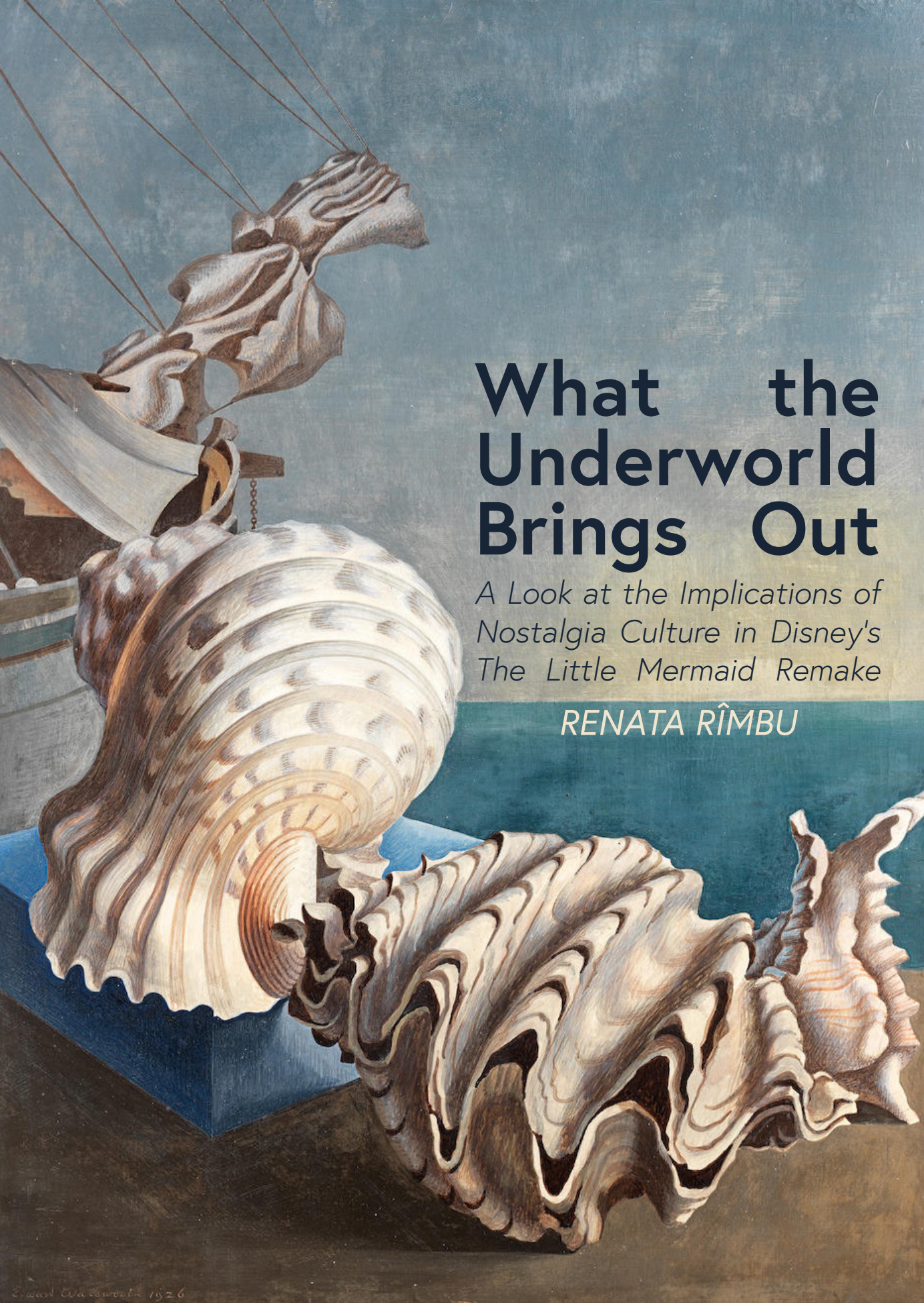
Awaiting you in this new edition are stories of old, new, and the as of yet undiscovered, with our writers delving deep below the surface, treading into murky truths and into the underworld. In a time when consequences are often avoided by those who deserve them most, to probe the existence of the system, and to question those who hide behind their privilege, is as brave a step we can possibly make.

From our relationship with nostalgia to the rotting core of souls that lurk beneath society's foundations, our writers do not mince their words. Renata tackles the racist hypocrisy of Disney's recent release, while Yael takes similar aim at Europe's flailing human rights record. Annelie guides us through the controversial manosphere, and Emilia and Vincent candidly confront the simmering tensions in Poland and the question of gas in Russia. Anna explores misinformation, the tool weaponised by populist leaders, and lays bare the consequences of a lapsing truth. And finally, Nathan presents the life and work of an eternal enigma, and the legacy one such figure forged on European cinematic shores.

It is with great delight that we invite you to read, to explore, and to trust us in guiding you on a journey below and beneath, far beyond the surface.

Luminously,

Órlaith Ní Ruaidh. Editor-in-Chief.



What the Underworld Brings Out

A Look at the Implications of Nostalgia Culture in Disney's The Little Mermaid Remake

RENATA RÎMBU

1.5 million dislikes. #NotMyAriel. AI-induced race swapping.

These are just some of the headlines that have been circulating in the media since about one month ago Disney released the first trailer for its upcoming live-action remake of *The Little Mermaid*. The enormous controversy comes as the result of singer and actress Halle Bailey being cast as Ariel. The reason? She is black, a detail far-right conservatives have not shied away from sharing their distaste and rage against. While the notion of being human has long-standing association with whiteness in the "Western world", now it seems to also expand to mermaids, elves, and dwarves – the new *Lord of the Rings* series has been met with the same amount of backlash for casting non-white actors. What is this narrative of white continuity and accuracy linked to?

Originally an animated film from the 90s, *The Little Mermaid* is based on the homonymous story by Hans Christen Andersen: a young mermaid living underwater is enthralled by the lives of humans and their capacity to have immortal souls. She gives up her voice in order to join them, having fallen in love with a prince she had saved from drowning. While Disney's animation stops there, Andersen's story is much more disturbing. Every step the mermaid takes on land feels like walking on knives, the prince does not even care for her, and she ends up turning into sea foam with a broken heart. An analogy for Andersen's own inner pain as a closeted gay man, *The Little Mermaid* was not faithfully adapted in the first place - featuring a crab with a Jamaican accent, an unclear setting in the North Sea and Greek mythological influences. Disney has in fact never been accurate with its portrayals, so why do people care so much about the ra-

cial accuracy of a fictional character who is not even human?

The main arguments of those opposing these types of casting choices centre around two aspects: accuracy in portrayal and forced diversity. The first one refers to the fact that the original Danish tale, which has in fact no setting mentioned, could not have included any black characters. Mermaids also cannot be black since they live underwater and have little to no sun light. These pseudo-scientific concerns are silly in themselves, but act as an excuse to cover up a more overarching societal harm.

"When people crave faithfulness to a reality that has never existed, the fantasy genre suffers an existential threat: is it not supposed to be the realm of all possibilities and imagination?"

The answer is yes, but not in the case of diverse people forcefully infiltrating the stories and spaces of white people. What kind of space is then left for minorities does not seem to necessarily be in question here.

One explanation for these questions could lie within the realm of nostalgia culture – the attitude of cherishing the past, works of art, and even the experience of having experienced them. American philosopher Fredric Jameson talked lengthily about the state of culture and the post-modernism triggered erosion between what was formerly known as high culture and mass culture. He saw culture as being stuck in a loop, with all potential combinations exhausted and no stylistic innovation left possible. All one can do is imitate

what has already been done before, leading to artists and audiences alike being trapped in the past. This bleak viewpoint sees humans constantly seeking what they have already seen and experienced, while it remains forever out of reach. Nostalgia reawakens the past associated with those objects and acts as a source of comfort: when faced with uncertainty, one can always turn to what they know best and seek refuge in that. Such an attitude is particularly prevalent when it comes to what one has come into contact with during their childhood. At the end of the day, everyone is guilty of it to some extent. What is wrong with looking for comfort in something you know will do the job and remind you of simpler times? Nothing, until one defends the accuracy of that material to extreme lengths and uses their nostalgia as an excuse for discrimination, racism, or other damaging behaviour within society. The specific case of *The Little Mermaid* is connected to what many have called the "white mythic space" - a community in which the perceived continuity of whiteness needs to be defended from intruders. In other words, what is historically white must be kept white.

Looking at the last few years, Disney has in fact been blatantly exploiting nostalgia culture in order to guarantee a maintained interest in their projects by turning all of their animated films into live-action remakes. However, it now seems to have backfired and uncovered the growing divide within society. The level to which the backlash of Bailey's casting has been mediated does nothing to help that division: even though Youtube does not even show the number of dislikes anymore, analytical extensions revealed it, and was immediately picked up by the media and sensationalized into headlines. While the impact of the media on such

matters can often be overlooked, it is important to take into account the power it holds over narrative formation and framing - soon enough, all one read about was the hate going around. As a reaction, the internet was then flooded with positivity and videos of children of colour seeing themselves in the first live-action black Disney princess. Another type of comfort perhaps, of reassurance, of discovering yourself in a story.

"To adults, nostalgia culture can become redefined through representation - a space in which you did not exist in your memories has been actualized and infused with your essence."

The profound issue at play is how to bridge the gap between what now seems to be almost two different societies. Nostalgia has many faces: comfort, weapon, a space in which to find yourself in new ways. How can people navigate these multiple facets and, most importantly, make sure a safe, diverse, and welcoming society comes into being? A simple solution does not exist, and as a white person myself the depths of my understanding are limited by privilege. Perhaps the best we can do is understand the dangers of maintaining our prejudice, educate ourselves and each other. Ariel might emerge from the water singing inspiring songs about dreams, freedom and self-determination, but alongside it a dangerous discourse acting under the pretence of nostalgia emerges as well. By listening to the voices of those who have not been heard before and pushing for change, as well as seeing nostalgia culture as a potential way of perpetuating inequality, we might be able to better grasp the exclusionary nature of our shared spaces. This does not mean nostalgic art forms cannot be enjoyed anymore - there will always be a magic associated with them and the comfort they bring; as long as we are informed, aware, critical, and sustain the positive aspects of stories while striving for progress.



The Underworld of Frontex:

How the EU's Biggest Agency Has Caused a Human Rights Crisis

Yael Pless

Take a moment to imagine a scenario where you, or someone you love, is in a life-threatening situation. Already the thought of this would spike your heart rate, have your pulse racing. Surely, you would begin to wonder what you wish you could have done differently, or all the things you would like to have said.

Imagine the place you call home, the neighbourhood you grew up in, the streets that carry the ghosts of your childhood memories, becoming a place too dangerous to roam as freely as you used to. Perhaps the room you fell asleep in night after night and the living room where you would hear the animated laughter of your family no longer exists the way it used to. Why? Maybe your freedom of speech is limited, the freedom to practice your religion, or the socio-economic situation is so dire that you can no longer find means to make ends meet. Then, once you get a chance to flee, going to any lengths to find an exit route, you travel for what may turn out to be months to reach safer conditions. In spite of all of this, upon arrival at the destination you are violently turned away.

For most of us these are mercifully fictitious scenarios, and we remain safe in the haven of our own comfortable, warm, four walls. However, that is not the case for millions of others, and in the relevance of this article, for the countless refugees fleeing abominable conditions in their home countries - only to be pushed back to sea in what could end up as a death sentence. Such fundamental rights violations should be prevented by one of the European Union's largest and well-known agencies, Frontex. Instead, they have been accused of aiding and abetting the abuse of human rights.

Frontex helps EU countries, as well as those in the Schengen agreement manage their external borders, amongst other border management related tasks. They are particularly present in countries that face a large amount of migratory pressure, such as Greece, where the majority of pushbacks have been documented. Frontex also has risk-analysis functions, where it attempts to see patterns in migration trends and

reports these to the European Commission to help tailor their agenda for legislative proposals in relevant fields.

Although the first findings of these so-called pushbacks were first reported by Amnesty International nearly 10 years ago, the issue has repeatedly resurfaced and remains a pressing issue for the reputation of human rights in the EU. In this context the term "pushback" refers to the interception or forceful return of refugees across an international border back into the territory of the country they are coming from. Consequently, they are left without the option to even apply for asylum or protection, and ultimately, it is a violation of international law as well as European Union law. Such pushbacks can take place by intimidation and violence, or literally pushing and turning away the boats at sea, and tugging them away from the border they are trying to reach.

"Since 2013, there have been multiple ongoing investigations against Frontex concerning fundamental rights violations and misconduct."

Recently, classified documents were leaked, revealing that Frontex did in fact cover up, as well as fail to report or investigate, several instances of illegal pushbacks. There were also reports that the planes of the border agency, which are meant as overhead surveillance of the comings and goings of migrants, flew away from a pushback situation in what appears to be an "out of sight, out of mind" attempt to avoid taking responsibility. Following the beginning of an investigation by the OLAF (European Anti Fraud Office) looking into possible abuse of fundamental human rights of migrants, the now former head of Frontex Fabrice Leggeri resigned in April 2022, drawing even more attention to the issue. Finally, the previously mentioned allegations were confirmed by the OLAF as of late.

These findings could potentially do a great deal of harm to the public image of the EU. The topics and

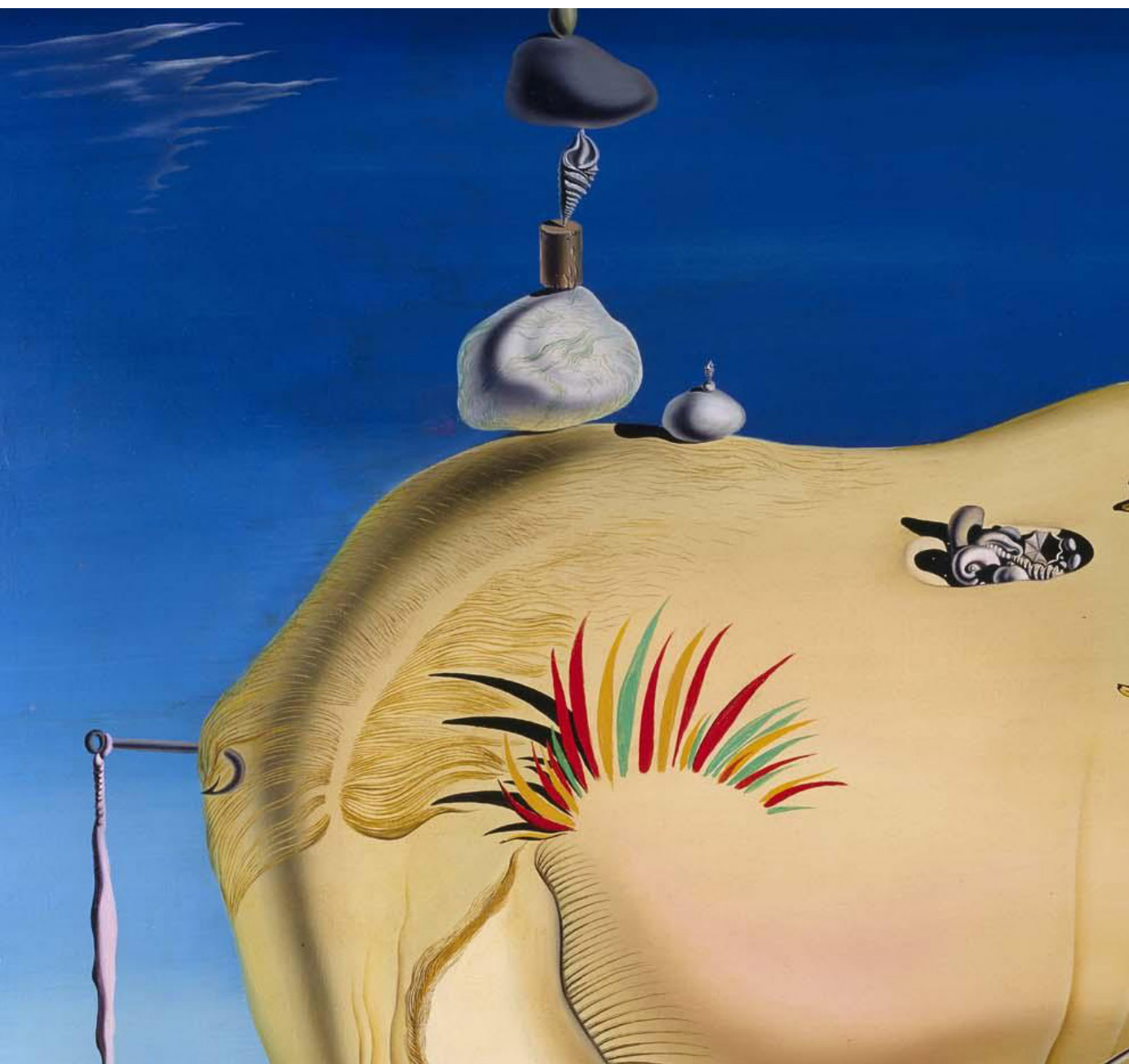
views concerning migration and asylum can be politically delicate, yet this is not necessarily the biggest issue at hand. In my eyes, the more problematic facet of the situation lies in the clear violation of human rights, which will likely be overlooked to a large extent. In a world where there are already countless unethical and unjust actions, repeatedly pushing hundreds of hungry, desperate, likely traumatised individuals back to sea when they are seeking refuge from the conditions at home should be unthinkable. Particularly because at that point, the people in the boats believe they are

in the final leg of their gruelling trip. As per usual, there are always things that are negotiated behind the scenes that lead to such decisions that we, as the general public, are unaware of. Yet does this make blatantly regarding the basic human right to safety acceptable?

The focus of this piece is not to explain the ins and outs of an information dense investigation that could take up pages upon pages in its detail. Instead, the idea is to shed light on the inhumane treatment that many are faced with when simply trying to live safely. Unfortunately,

even the size of the organisation will likely not gather the amount of attention these fundamental rights violations deserve so that there could be remedies for the future. Instead, the incidents will likely blow over without the response and intervention they require. Similarly to the violations of many other organisations, their "underworld" is common knowledge and hidden in plain sight, yet accepted by most.

As European citizens, we must ask ourselves how leading figures in the EU, whether it be the President of the Commission Ursula von der



Leyen, or the elected members of Parliament (MEPs), are complicit in this issue. With an annual budget of nearly 755 million euro, Frontex evidently receives copious support from the Union. One should be able to expect that consequently, they are subject to intervention by EU institutions.

Despite the clear violations of the EU's fundamental rights laws, there has been an underwhelming response from our leaders and very minimal coverage in the media. Neither have there been any significant public statements by Von der Leyen or

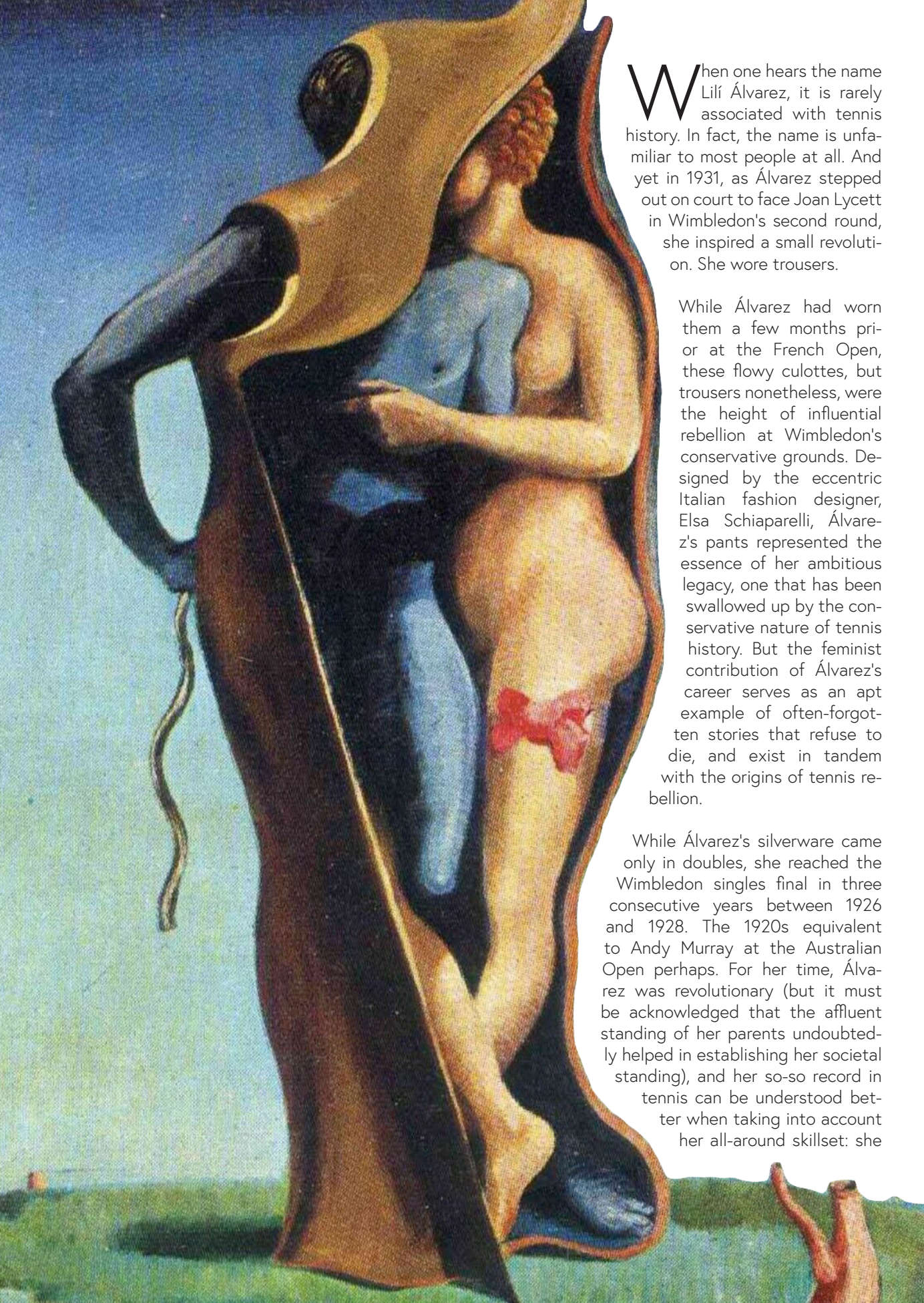
MEPs suggesting any measures to investigate or rectify the situation. This begs the question: how will those seeking asylum be treated in the future, if the current response to the crisis is, for the most part, already being brushed under the carpet? Overall, this will undoubtedly cause European citizens to lose faith in the EU to act swiftly and decisively.

We are often so caught up in our own lives and political convictions that we cease to remember that those seeking asylum are deserving humans just like everyone else. Therefore, in contested times like the-

se, where our world is torn apart by war and unrest in many corners, it is important to take a less indifferent, more compassionate stance to the news of the world, even if we ourselves do not find ourselves in the same position.

In an ideal world, the desire for justice and good should be larger than those shattering it. In reality, upholding ideals of morality on such a grand scale is often easier said than done. Nonetheless, the goal should be that those with the power to suggest benevolence also implement it accordingly.





When one hears the name Lilí Álvarez, it is rarely associated with tennis history. In fact, the name is unfamiliar to most people at all. And yet in 1931, as Álvarez stepped out on court to face Joan Lycett in Wimbledon's second round, she inspired a small revolution. She wore trousers.

While Álvarez had worn them a few months prior at the French Open, these flowy culottes, but trousers nonetheless, were the height of influential rebellion at Wimbledon's conservative grounds. Designed by the eccentric Italian fashion designer, Elsa Schiaparelli, Álvarez's pants represented the essence of her ambitious legacy, one that has been swallowed up by the conservative nature of tennis history. But the feminist contribution of Álvarez's career serves as an apt example of often-forgotten stories that refuse to die, and exist in tandem with the origins of tennis rebellion.

While Álvarez's silverware came only in doubles, she reached the Wimbledon singles final in three consecutive years between 1926 and 1928. The 1920s equivalent to Andy Murray at the Australian Open perhaps. For her time, Álvarez was revolutionary (but it must be acknowledged that the affluent standing of her parents undoubtedly helped in establishing her societal standing), and her so-so record in tennis can be understood better when taking into account her all-around skillset: she

The Divided Skirt

Lilí Álvarez and the Unsung Trailblazer

Órlaith Ní Ruaidh

the Campeonato de Cataluña de Automovilismo at age 19. It has often baffled me as to why Álvarez has not appeared more in modern popular culture (if not for her progressive and daring career, then at least for her colourful life).

"But so frequently these figures and their stories are forgotten, existing quietly, and pulsing below the surface."

Once Álvarez eventually returned to Spain in the 1940s, she began writing and publishing in the field of feminism and women's liberation, and delivered her *La batalla de la feminidad* speech at the Hispanic-American Feminist Congress in 1951. Simultaneously, the women's movement in Spain began to grow.

After the Spanish civil war, most first wave feminists were either in exile, imprisoned, or sentenced to death. The 1960s saw a second wave that brought with it greater structural change and a lasting impact on Spanish society. During the Francoist years, feminists largely collaborated in underground environments and kept their channel of communication open through established connection lines in various different prisons. These guerrilla groups also had a large rural population, differing from the first wave feminism of mainly urban and middle-class Spaniards.

While Spanish feminists were able to change the accepted definition

of womanhood as motherhood to one involving more choice, an independent narrative of their history, and a shared experience, the end of the Franco regime reflected a 'lull' in the feminist movement that often happens in major historical turning points, and while the end of the Francoist years was a win for the Spanish feminist movement among others, societal momentum eased once the democratic transition began.

Álvarez married the French count and pilot Jean de Gaillard de la Valdène in 1934, and upon losing their first child in 1939, the marriage ended and Álvarez returned to Spain, establishing herself as a prominent writer and activist in the feminist movement throughout Spain and France.

Álvarez was no stranger to criticism. To some in her native country, she was accused of giving Spain a bad name in the world of tennis and politics. The idea that a woman could do it all, proficient in multiple sports, a writer, an activist, a speaker, a journalist, it was simply incomprehensible. The attitudes toward her were often flippant, irreverent, and condescending. But within her own circles, she was adored. As Charlie Connelly reported in the *New European*, when she met the French marshal Ferdinand Foch, commander of the Allied forces at the end of the First World War, he turned to a companion and said, I would not dare to propose a game of tennis with that lady, and Álvarez responded, don't worry, marshal, I probably wouldn't

declare war on you either.

Álvarez's original act of defiance, the divided skirt, is representative of more than just the forerunner to shorts, but of an impactful and important life of activism and progression. Her story, never made into a Hollywood film or re-told to aspiring tennis players, was perhaps muffled by more radical changes at the time and lost amidst flashier rises to stardom. Similarly, the designer of Álvarez's trousers, Schiaparelli, could have been remembered as a bigger name than Coco Chanel had things gone her way with a little bit of luck.

"Small nuances in time and history, as we know, can change the trajectory of remembrance forever."

In today's political landscape, where a party like Vox remains a serious threat to equality and democracy in Spain, it important now more than ever to dig up the figures from the past we want to aspire to and let credible voices surface. Surely that act, in all its perceived difficulty and honesty, cannot be more daring than for a woman to wear trousers at Wimbledon's courts in 1931.

Pills, Cels, and Alarm Bells

The Worrying Theory and Praxis of the Manosphere

Annelie Ní Dhálaigh

Incel, meaning involuntary celibate, for those of you not exposed to this breed before, find their home on less policed online forums, such as Discord, Reddit, and 4chan (R/Incels was banned in 2017 for incitement of violence against women). They have developed a pseudo-scientific world view, which explains why they have not been successful romantically. The stats are in folks... They've crunched the numbers and, they clearly show, there is something fundamentally wrong with every woman in modern society! Why? Women only want to sleep with men they find attractive. Boo hoo.

The incel theory goes further than this and is based on three "pills". Blue pill, red pill, and black pill. The blue pill is a version of reality perpetuated by Disney, your mum, and most of the mainstream. It claims that there is someone out there for everyone. The Blackpill on the other end of the spectrum, according to Youtuber Wheat Waffles, is the pessimistic view of modern romance "markets". It is based on three pillars; female hypergamy, looks, and inflexibility. Basically, all women, deep down, want to be with men that are of higher "status" than them. Looks refers to the idea that someone's physical appearance is the number one factor in status. And lastly, inflexibility is the concept that it is very difficult for a man to move up the scale in

terms of status, as one's physical appearance is hard to change. Red pill lies somewhere in the middle of these two philosophies. It accepts the premise of female hypergamy, but not inflexibility/looks. It claims that men can increase their status through "game" (I hope you cringe as much reading that and I did typing), you see this with pick up artists' 'negging', or through the gym and improving their physical appearance.

Wheat Waffles, one YouTuber who presents a lot of this information, has many videos about women, which use a scatter plot, with purity on the y-axis and looks on the x-axis. You have to laugh at this, the pseudo intellectualism here, all to explain why women aren't attracted to them. I'll give you one hint King, you analyse women on a purity/looks bar graph!

In all seriousness, this pill theory that incel thought is based around is just absurd. Female hypergamy? How often do you see a woman with a man more attractive than her? Moreover, the idea that this is not a two way street is a ludicrous assumption. Incels criticise women for being shallow, as if our entire society doesn't revolve around superficiality. According to William Costello, a PhD researcher on incels, one key point incels fail to realise is the valid reasons for supposed female 'choosiness'.



"For incels, any sex is better than no sex", whereas, for most women, sex with someone they don't want to have sex with, is far far worse than no sex at all."

This is rooted in sex psychology, which of course, pre-dates contraception, when women faced the risk of pregnancy and potential social ostracisation with every sexual partner, meaning, women need to be more selective with their partners.



Andrew Tate could be said to be a bit more "redpilled" than traditional incels, whose response to their hopeless plight is either LDAR (Lay Down and Rot), or seek revenge. Tate has no time for laying down to rot. He does not believe in depression or mental illness, and does not believe men should take time off from working for their mental health. Tate believes that women become the property of their husbands in marriage (because their father walks them down the aisle), and thinks that 'body count' is the number one easiest way to assess a woman's value. He claimed that 99 percent of the world's issues would be solved if women wal-

ked around with their body count on their heads. He bases these claims in the Bible, which, according to Tate, states that he, as a man, can do whatever he wants, while women must remain pure. Firstly, that's not biblical. Second of all, no. Andrew Tate, while easily dismissed as performative, has a dangerous impact on these impressionable young men, who see themselves as the victims of women's liberation. He offers a new way of responding, one of violence, materialism, degradation, and fundamentalist religion.

There are also women representing this cause, in the sometimes ridi-

culous 'tradwives' or the emerging 'stay at home girlfriends', who cook, clean and serve their men through 'day in my life' TikToks. One prominent TikToker, Justpearlythings, often described as 'Andrea Tate', aims to "redpill" modern women, and open their eyes to the plight of men, and advocate for female purity. According to her, men are 'biologically ingrained' to find 'youth and purity' attractive. Justpearlythings is often branded as a 'pick me', and was recently banned from TikTok, for calling a girl a 'whale' in a fight.

It is evident from all these influencers that younger generations are flocking to, that this underworld is



growing, and feels silenced. For a group whose narrative relies on the idea that their opinions aren't allowed, the idea that the mainstream is forcing an agenda onto who they should be attracted to etc, for this group, their exclusion from social media platforms strengthens their position. Their exclusion also creates an echo chamber, where they are rarely debated by their equivalents of the opposite position. In order to not give these, sometimes dangerous, sometimes harmless campaigners a platform, we've made them martyrs, and played into their reality. Surely their fantastical ideas, when up against facts, and not just mere ideology, will fall short, and fail to convince?

"This underworld continues to be pushed into the corners, and the mainstream refuses to do anything but laugh at and ridicule them."

Olivia Wilde, director of 'Don't Worry Darling', claims to have based the villain of said film on "pseudo-intellectual", "hero to incels", Jordan Peterson, PhD. Wilde here is clearly torching the wrong strawman. In an attempt to criticise the incel community, who "believe they are entitled to sex from women", she has literally villainised one of the rare people who take them seriously, speak to them on their level, and attempt to pull them out of a hopeless pit. Peterson does not believe men are entitled to sex from women, though he understands the social changes that have seen the majority of men pull significantly less in recent years. Peterson said "If you're a young man, and all women are rejecting you, who's got the

problem? It's not all the women." and "women have every right to be choosy". When recently asked about his representation in the new film, Peterson broke down crying, claiming that people had been against him for a long time, due to his speaking to disenfranchised young men.

It's clear that we have a problem in our society. A surplus of unmarried young men has also historically caused many issues, and we have dealt with them in various ways. Some theorise that the Portuguese Age of Exploration and the Viking conquests were in part motivated by the need to deal with young male syndrome. We've come a long way since then. While groups of men who feel hard done by in relationships with women can sometimes be hateful, violent, and angry, laughing at them, or ignoring them, virtually sending them off to sea, is not going to help. We need to think about what we value in society, looks, money, status, and consider what type of people it produces, when they are unashamed to openly pursue these ideals, or, openly admit that they never can obtain them. There is certainly a danger of the influence of certain Tate-like figures on young men, but are platform-wide bans the answer? Kanye, Trump, Tate, Peterson, love them (as many of these young men do) or hate them, they have continued to make their voices heard despite their bannings, and in doing so, expand their underworld, while the mainstream breathes easy. 'Out of sight, out of mind', is easy to advocate, with your sights focused far far away from the ever growing fringes of society.

Is the Lack of Atonement Contributing to Poland's Growing Xenophobia?

Understanding the Underlying Causes of a Disturbing Phenomenon

Emilia Juchno



Since the election of the conservative right-wing Law and Justice party in 2014 and its re-election in 2019, Poland has seen an unsettling increase in openly xenophobic attitudes on the side of party members as well as its supporters, whose eagerness has been steadily increasing over the years. The xenophobic remarks made by members of the Law and Justice party are directed predominantly against immigrants or foreigners in general.

These attitudes echoed especially loudly during the 2015 Refugee Crisis in Europe when the members of the European Union faced a major task to provide shelter for refugees coming from the Middle East, which Poland sturdily refused to do. While the world bared witness to this humanitarian tragedy, many voices have come forward criticising Poland's isolationist policy on immigrants. The words of Jan Gross, a reputable Polish-born historian, have caught significant attention as he argued that the growing xenophobia, which can be observed across Eastern-European countries, is a result of the inability of those countries to confront their populations' "active and even enthusiastic participation in the extermination of European Jews and other ethnic minorities" (Gross, 2015). He compared the attitudes towards immigrants in Eastern European countries to those in Germany. Gross argued that Germany

has become conscious of its historical crimes and through them has been able to learn how to approach modern-day challenges. I would like to analyse Gross's statement, which has caused great controversy across Eastern-European societies, and its relevancy seven years later, with a particular focus on the example of Poland.

Since the very beginning of the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022, the Polish government has displayed such eager support to the incoming Ukrainian refugees, even the opposition praised them for it. They have been able to motivate the entire Polish nation to receive Ukrainians with open arms. They continued to support the individual efforts of Polish civilians, who have been looking for every possible way to help. As beautiful and important a gesture the Polish government had made, something does not sit right with me about its sudden generosity.

Although it has been months since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the Polish people still seem to be unaware, or in denial of the duality that is occurring in our willingness to help. While Poland has already accepted almost two million Ukrainian refugees, every day it is allowing men, women, and children of Middle Eastern descent to die on its border with Belarus. This crisis began in 2021 as a result of a political game in which Belarusian

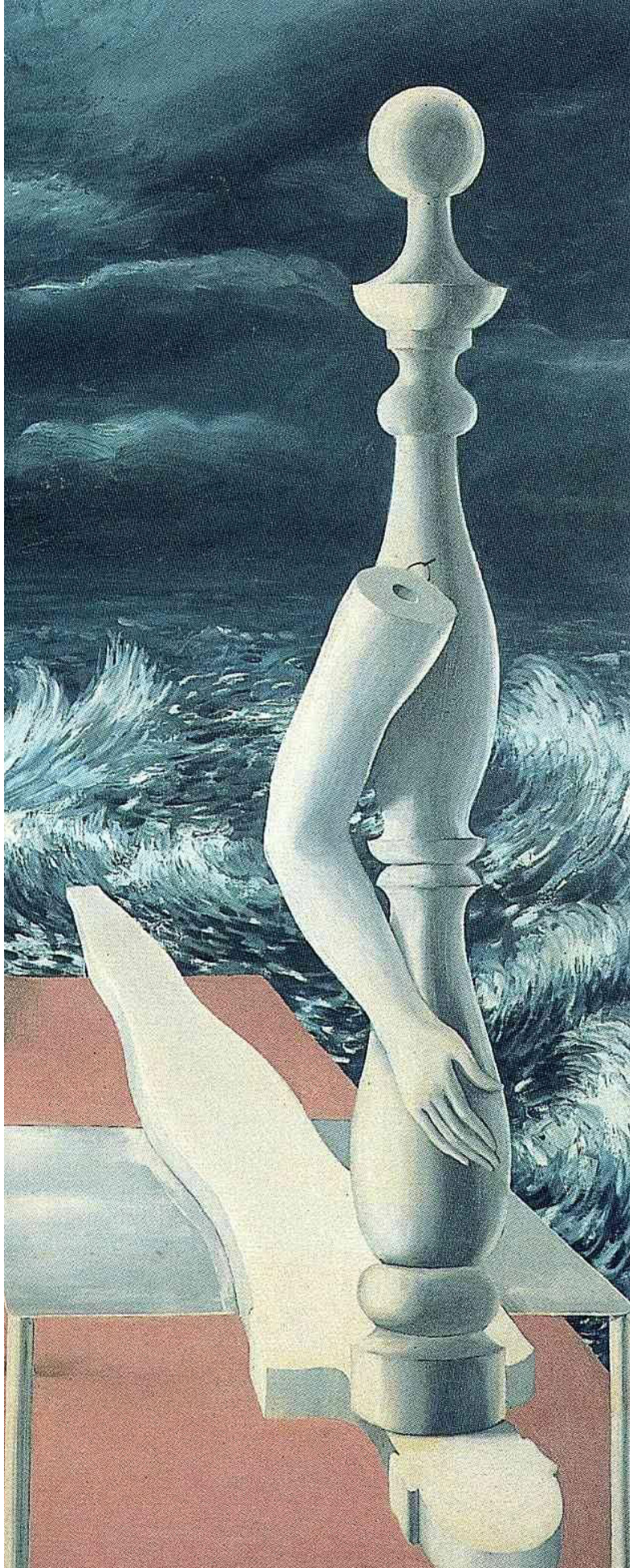
president Lukashenko threatened to "flood" the European Union with refugees, mainly from Iraqi Kurdistan. His government invited the refugees to Belarus and then sent them off to bordering EU countries, providing precise instructions on how and where to cross the border. At the Polish border, many of them were met by a wired fence and armed border guards. The refugees were denied by the Polish government the possibility to file an asylum claim, as well as the government did not allow independent journalists, medics, and volunteers of non-governmental organisations to the border. There seems to be one logical enough explanation as to why Poland's arms are only open to some while closed to others - the power of xenophobia in this country.

It is crucial to point out that in Poland there is a strong tendency to take on a 'victim' narrative regarding historical events. Through its undoubtedly tragic history of annexations and loss of nation-state, Poland has become reluctant to address its own historical crimes. The infamous Jedwabne Pogrom is surely an example Jan Gross had in mind. The Jedwabne massacre was carried out against over three hundred Polish Jews by ethnic Poles in collaboration with the German military police. Of course, no one would ever use this example to understate the scale of the tragedy that Poles themselves have

experienced throughout the twentieth century on behalf of condemned xenophobia at a crucial moment in European history.

Nevertheless, the Jedwabne Pogrom is a moment in the Polish history which has never been properly settled in our historical consciousness. In this way, Gross may be right in his argument that Germany - although responsible for far more humanitarian crimes during World War Two - has never rejected the darkest episode of its history. Instead, it made sure that the awareness of the legacy of the German Nazi regime never dies. By admitting to their nation's historical crimes, of which the burden will probably never be entirely lifted off of the contemporary generations' shoulders, the German people have recognised the danger of xenophobia and its spread in their own 'backyard'. While its attempts at abolishing internal xenophobia and racism may not have succeeded entirely, Germany has been able to do what Poland still has not - that is, it admitted to the cruelty of its past. By recognising its population's historical tendency to shift towards extremist ideologies, Germany

The growing xenophobia in Poland, including the country's continuous and stubborn reluctance towards accepting immigrants of non-European descent or non-Christian affinity, is surely related to causes much more complex and numerous than merely an aspect of history-telling. It seems, however, that the problem is intricately connected to the lack of atonement of the country's internal ugliness. Jan Gross might have been right when he suggested that countries like Poland have yet to come to terms with certain chapters in their national history they would rather erase. And only then will they be able to develop an appropriate approach towards the modern-day challenges of immigration, refugee-seeking, and cultural clashes.



Russia's Web of Gas Pipes

Vincent Lubach

It is almost like liquid gold, flowing through large underground pipes like a spider web stretched throughout Europe. Russian gas. Since the war in Ukraine started, relations between the West and Russia have deteriorated rapidly. Most European nations are siding with Ukraine, and the EU has imposed several packages of tough sanctions on Russia. However, European nations must be careful, as Russia still has one powerful tool at its disposal: the European Union's dependency on Russian gas. How has the EU become so reliant on Russian gas? And perhaps more importantly, what would be the solution to break away from this dependency? The solution to the latter requires some sense of urgency as we are already suffering the consequences.

It certainly does not come as a surprise that Russia has developed into the largest supplier of gas to Europe, as Russia has by far the largest reserves of natural gas in the world. On top of that, it is quite easy to transport, considering its proximity to the EU which would allow it to always be accessible, and its geopolitical importance. Angela Merkel, former Bundeskanzlerin of Germany, has argued in a recent interview that the choice to switch to Russian gas, at the time, was both rational and understandable. Firstly, it is much cheaper than importing gas from other countries, such as the United States or Qatar. Furthermore, she points out that even during the Cold War, Russia proved to be a reliable energy supplier.

So how has the need for natural

gas come about? The importance of the use of natural gas has grown in recent years as many European countries started to embrace the transition to green energy. This means moving away from polluting energy sources like coal and nuclear power. Although natural gas still produces 58,5% as much carbon dioxide as coal, the European Union has kept the specific uses of natural gas in its taxonomy of sustainable energy resources. It paves the way to a short-term greener solution until the 2050 goals to become fully climate neutral. Hence, Russian gas was key in this transition.

"Up until the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Russian gas deliveries made up about a third of all the gas consumed in Europe. For some European countries, Russian gas was a much needed and reliable source of energy."

Especially for Germany, which in 2021 depended for 49% of its total natural gas supply from Russia. Another example is Italy, which depends for 38% of its gas supply on Russia.

As mentioned before, Russia was considered to be a very reliable energy supplier to the European countries, however, since the war in Ukraine has started, this has fundamentally changed. As the EU imposed successive packages of sanctions and started to supply Ukraine with weapons, Russian

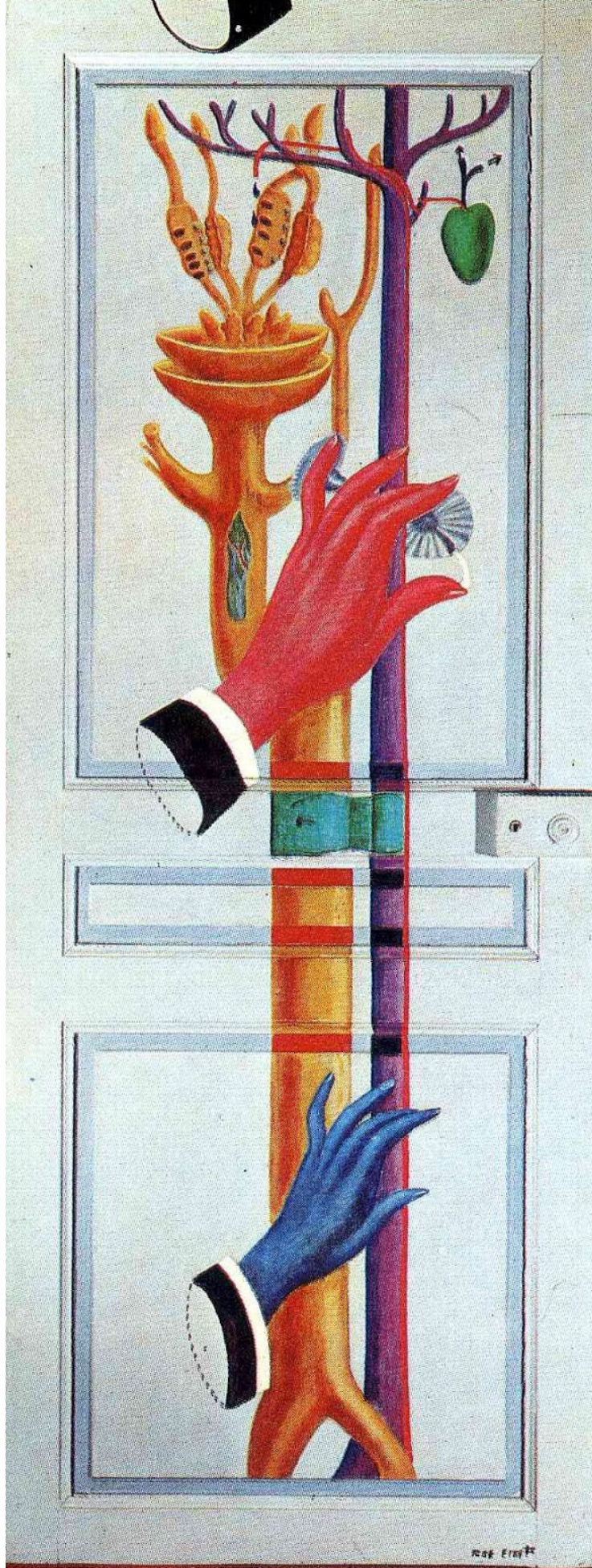
aggression has increased towards NATO countries. In response to the EU's economic and military support to Ukraine, Russia's threats to cut off the supply of natural gas have become more serious by the day. Although not officially established, the late explosion of gas pipes, Nord Stream 1 and 2, are thought to be an act of aggression from Russia meant to put further pressure on European nations. Also it could be interpreted as a reminder to the EU they are heavily dependent on Russia for the supply of gas, and therefore should not intervene in the war.

Since the invasion of Ukraine, Russia has reduced its gas supplies to Europe significantly, causing energy prices to soar all across the continent. Inflation has risen up to 10,9% in the European Union last September. The rising prices of gas and oil, leads to higher transport costs, higher production costs and consequently higher prices for consumer goods, have impacted many European economies. The high inflation rates have risen well above the rates prescribed in the Stability and Growth Pact, a stable rate of up to 2% inflation. Consequently, families are struggling to pay their energy bills and governments are scrambling to draft new legislations to help out their citizens financially. Therefore, it is in Europe's interest to find new energy partners as quickly as possible.

There are certainly other partners who can supply European nations with gas. However, in order to diversify away from Russian gas, certain technical and political obstacles must be overcome. An

example of short-term alternatives are the United States, which is already delivering Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) via large tankers, which is then converted to normal natural gas. This is a good alternative, however, using ships for the supply is not as a stable and convenient way to transport gas as using pipelines. A more long-term solution would be the Baltic Pipe, a pipeline from Norway to Poland, which has opened in September. Norway is part of NATO and is therefore an reliable ally that can aid the EU in its move to diversify away from Russian gas. Furthermore, as Norway already makes decent revenue as major fossil fuel producer, it could even offer the EU some discount on its gas. This might sound as a illogical financial proposal, but the current critical situation could push the EU into a recession, which would not benefit Norway economically. For these reasons, Norway would be the ideal partner. According to the Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki, the new pipeline marks the end of an era of Russian domination in the field of gas. As of now, Norway is the largest supplier of gas to Europe.

The war in Ukraine has made the EU aware that the historical reliance on the supply of Russian gas is dangerous for Europe. Nevertheless, the need for this energy resource remains important for achieving the goals in the green energy transition. The rising tensions between Russia and the EU following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the sudden explosion of the Nord Stream pipelines are reason enough for the EU to look for new reliable partners other than Russia to acquire its gas imports. Furthermore, it would simply be the wrong decision to keep importing gas from Russia as the payments would indirectly support Russia's war effort. Luckily, the EU is surrounded by other potential partners, like Norway, which could, in the long-term, prove to be the solution to the Russian gas dependency. Although we might suffer the consequences of decisions made in the past, the possibilities are there to overcome these and move towards a greener and hopeful future by making use of more reliable suppliers.



Trick or Truth

The slippery slope of anti-misinformation laws

Anna Hatzius Sarramona

It is said that the first casualty in war is the truth. Indeed, it seems that crises are breeding grounds for misinformation. We saw that during the Covid-19 pandemic. And we see it right now in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The statement that there is no war in Ukraine was propagated as the 'truth' in Russia, while in Germany it is false information. Yet Russia and Germany have almost identical laws against misinformation. They are similar in both their structure and substance: both laws prohibit the producing and dissemination of false information and the support of terrorist organizations. The Russian "anti-fake news" law of 2019 is even said to be modelled on its German counterpart. Yet, their consequences couldn't be more different.

"Fake news" was born as a term in the last decade to describe primarily social media sites, disguised as news platforms, that knowingly offer misleading information. The term was then hijacked by Trump and soon it became an ambiguous expression covering everything from false information to facts we don't like. 'Fake news' became fuzzy and so became the distinction between true and false on the internet. Most misinformation targets (members of) state institutions. While this threatens government credibility, state administrations have relied on self-regulation of social media platforms for a long time. Who could have thought that commercially driven media platforms would have the same self-regulating competences as a toddler? In a media monopoly driven by profit, the more popular a post, the better. And captivating

misinformation has proven to be wildly popular.

After self-regulation proved ineffective, states resorted to laws. In 2018, Macron drafted a law banning any "inexact" information which aims at interfering in elections. Germany went a step further and drafted a law to remove any post that is "obviously" illegal, election or not. It soon turned out that illegality is anything but obvious. The courts' tasks cannot be taken over by data analysts or algorithms, let alone by governments. Montesquieu is turning in his grave.

Both the German and French law have been criticised by Human Rights Watch for moving dangerously close toward censorship. Now, if states with strong constitutions and functioning separation of power run the risk of limiting Human Rights, it's no surprise that in countries which lack such democratic foundations, "anti-fake news" legislation has far more serious consequences.

In 2016, China introduced a law condemning the spread of rumours on the internet that would "undermine economic and social order". Two years later, the Philippines passed a bill that made it illegal for government officials to spread misinformation online. For something to be considered misinformation in the Philippines, it does not even have to undermine public order. It is enough that the post either engages in it or that it harms the interest of the state. In other words, anything coming from the opposition. In the same year, Russia approved a bill that bans

the dissemination of "unreliable socially-important information". Effectively this means that any information that could endanger lives, disrupt public order or hinder the proper functioning of infrastructure is punishable by imprisonment.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it a new wave, or rather a tsunami, of misinformation. Governments felt compelled to take action against misleading information, especially in the light of health risks.

"While some states acted in an honest effort to minimise misinformation, others saw an opportunity to impose even greater restrictions on freedom of expression and information."

All anti-misinformation legislation, whether in democratic or authoritarian states, whether aimed at censorship or upholding democratic principles, essentially boils down to one problem: state authorities acquire the power to decide over truth and falsity. What does it mean to say that something is true in the context of anti-misinformation laws? In this context, truth isn't to be understood in a Kantian sense, whose correspondence theory assumes that there is one truth that we can discover. To understand the legal truth in anti-misinformation laws, we need to turn to Foucault. He claims that truth is shaped by power and that every society has its own "regime of truth". This regime determines

both which discourses are true and the method of obtaining the truth (e.g. which media is considered trustworthy).

Truth and power go hand in hand. That is, it doesn't matter whether Putin really believes that there is no war in Ukraine. All he needs is enough Russians to believe him and it becomes Russia's truth. Any information on the internet claiming otherwise is spreading misinformation. Essentially, every misinformation law aims at upholding the state's "truth", and a state's truth means nothing more than a narrative.

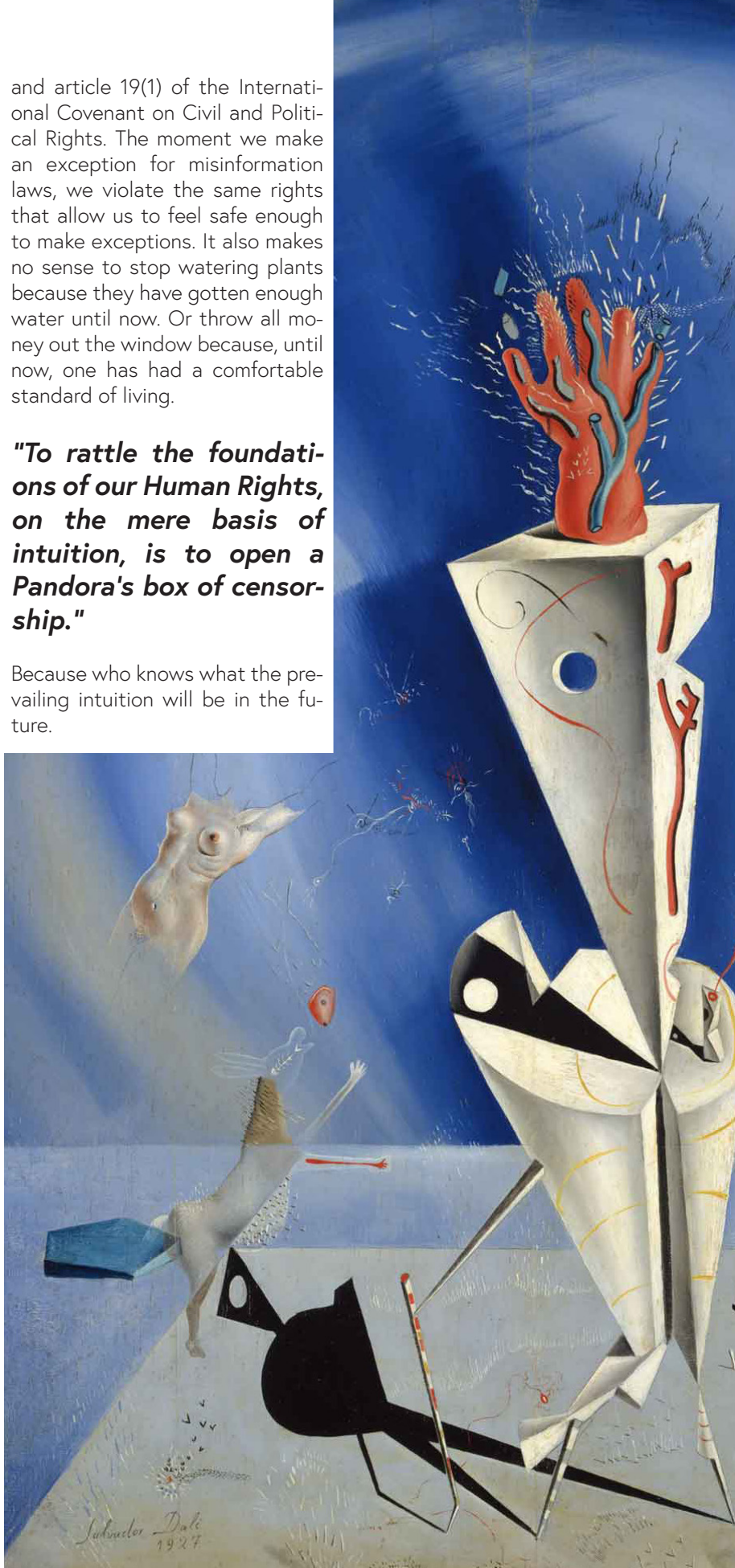
The relativity of truth is philosophically defensible. But when we hear that China stole the Corona virus from Canada and weaponized it, we can intuit it to be a lie. We don't want people to fail to act on climate change based on the claim of its non-existence. We know it to be wrong when one claims that the Dutch health ministry is a criminal organisation. This intuition prompts us to believe that it should be forbidden to say these things, "just in this particular case, of course". Because what if we morally agree with our state's regime of truth? We might be so lucky to live in a state which bases its regime of truth on scientific studies. Is it really so bad to have anti-misinformation laws in a state with strong democratic foundations?

Yes. We cannot afford censorship because we live in a state which respects Human Rights. It is precisely these Human Rights that prohibit us from introducing such laws. Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU says that everyone has the right to receive and impart information without interference by the state. So does Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights

and article 19(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The moment we make an exception for misinformation laws, we violate the same rights that allow us to feel safe enough to make exceptions. It also makes no sense to stop watering plants because they have gotten enough water until now. Or throw all monee out the window because, until now, one has had a comfortable standard of living.

"To rattle the foundations of our Human Rights, on the mere basis of intuition, is to open a Pandora's box of censorship."

Because who knows what the prevailing intuition will be in the future.



Godard Is Dead, Long Live Godard

Legacy of a European Artist

Nathan Domon

"To become immortal... and then die." The New Wave film director Jean-Luc Godard left this world on 13 September 2022. He takes to the Underworld a part of Europe's film heritage, and joins the pantheon of those artists whose oeuvre will be eternal. His revolutionary spirit left an indelible mark on European cinema.

Jean-Luc Godard made his debut in the aftermath of a disastrous war that left Europe morally, economically, and culturally bankrupt. On its knees and emotionally lost, the post-WW2 Old World welcomed American frivolous consumerism and its panoply of light-hearted Hollywood movies with open arms. Pushing against this flow, the Swiss-French film director was one of the first ones who sought to break away from the creeping Americanisation. Whereas Hollywood was supposed to please, with a clear plot, fluent dialogues, character development, and genre conventions, Godard's conception of cinema was unorthodox, to say the least: plotless and illogical, his films often formed a discontinuous and disjointed collage of dialogues, images, and sounds, a world of fragments in constant flux. They were abstract and did not have a clear script – sometimes scribbled the night before shooting, like for the cult classics *Breathless* (1960) or *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), as Godard was more interested in the moments and interactions rather than the story flow. With this new style, he tore the American rule book apart and created a new way of describing life: "The Americans are good at storytelling. The French are not. Flaubert and Proust can't tell stories. They do something else. So does cinema..." Godardian cinema was anti-realist; it broke the Hollywood tradition of matching

the reality of life with the illusion rendered on the screen. It was a revolution of forms, an explosion of colours, a reversal of values, not a pale imitation of a fixed reality. "Americans like to say: "What do you mean exactly"? I would answer: "I mean, but not exactly". His iconoclast vision became an art film movement that took over European cinema in the latter half of the 20th century: the New Wave.

The New Wave helped elevate cinema into an art form and paved the way for an arthouse style that still defines modern European film d'auteur tradition today. Godard was the quintessential European auteur: he infused his films with self-conscious references to European cultural heritage, from classical music to literature, painting and philosophy, and witty and incisive comments about sex, war, religion and politics. His films were intellectually demanding and paid tributes to the great writers, poets, painters, and film directors of the continent. For him, the very idea of art was European, whereas culture was characterised by the crass commercialism associated with America: "Art is, in essence, an almost strictly European notion. Culture is something else entirely. Culture has been a business for a long time and the Americans understood this from the start. The notion of art is not expressed in America [...] Beethoven is art; broadcasting it on CBS is culture, a certain form of art distribution. All we said with the New Wave is that cinema is also art." Godard saw the distinction between highbrow art and lowbrow culture as a rift in the middle of the Atlantic. "Europe has memories, America has t-shirts." While his distinction art/industry was somewhat stereotypical, Godard had the merit to be one of the first who lucidly resisted the growing



commodification of cinema largely imported by Uncle Sam. He always refused to deal with features marketing or film distribution agreements and showed no sign of interest in box office sales. He often said that "Cinema is not about making money, but about losing money" and tiredly scorned what he saw as an Americanisation of European cultural industries. "Nowadays there is no difference between an American, a German or an Italian film... Everything is domesticated by the United States, everything is Americanised... All European cinema is a cinema made only to sell itself, to make money." Vehemently anti-American, he described in an interview the Normandy landing as "an invasion" that brought uniformity and conformity. "It's unbearable to always hear American things in the lifts or on the planes, and not Italian music in Rome. There is a resignation from the people [in Europe]". He was antiglobalist avant la lettre.

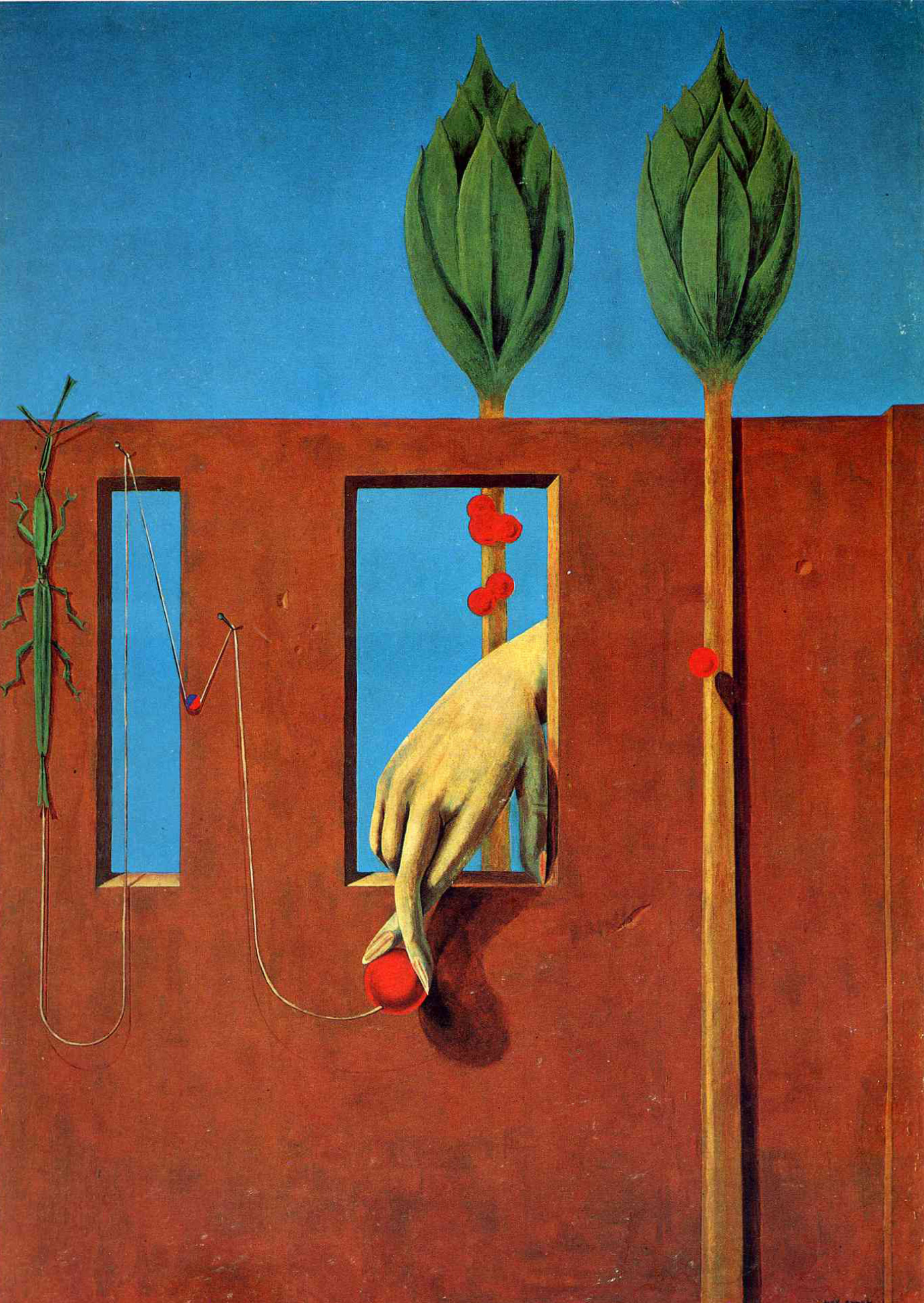
"His animosity towards American globalisation and his deep love for European cultural diversity were two sides of the same coin."

His films painted a Babylonian Europe: *Contempt* (1963) is a goulash of languages, with dialogues in English, French, German and Italian, and direct translations from a character – Godard admitted later that he wanted to make a film impossible to dub. Characters in *Love* (1967) understand each other despite speaking their respective languages. In *Passion* (1981), Godard juxtaposed several European languages and gave roles to actors from France, Poland, Germany and Italy. During the presentation of *Our Music* (2004), Godard asked his actors and actresses to ad-

dress the press in Serbo-Croatian or Spanish and derided the gibberish subtitling of the film. "Films are now subtitled in American English of a Pakistani taxi driver in New York", he said ironically. For the first screening of *Film Socialisme* (2010) at the Cannes Film Festival, Godard did not want subtitles, and after he was forced to add English subtitles, he only translated words that seemed meaningful to him, sparking a mini-controversy: how does a film director dare refuse to translate his film into English? Godard replied laconically: "Don't translate; learn languages". His long career reveals a constant rejection of a globish world and a nostalgic longing for a continent where people debate, read, and write in different languages. "What is Europe? A German musician, an Italian singer, a French writer," says one of his characters in *Film Socialisme* (2010). While this romanticisation of a golden age trapped between the Enlightenment and *La Belle Époque* might be out-of-date, it has at least the virtue of bringing back multilingualism on the table.

Polyglot and without a homeland, Godard was thoroughly European, yet he saw the continent as a sum of diverse parts rather than a whole. In 2004 at the Cannes Film Festival, he mocked the idea of the European Commissioner for Culture to create European filmmakers, comparing this creation to Dr Frankenstein. For Godard, Europe was complex, diverse, and local. It was a transnational space bringing together disparate elements. "We have in Europe more or less lost our identity, mainly through an acceptance of American culture. [...] But I don't think the cure for this lost identity is to try to construct a bigger identity and call it European." The Godardian conception of European culture was not a uniform style, but a concert of different voices leading to a disharmonious

harmony, a unity in diversity. "The day when every television station in Europe regularly broadcasts a Greek, Portuguese or Slovak film, whether insipid or not, Europe will be made." He believed that European cinema should facilitate communication between different cultures, rather than homogenise them: "They made a shared currency before they made a shared culture. [...] It's not possible to see a Norwegian film in a cinema in the south of France, so it can't work." In his films, Europe was never taken for granted; it was a chaotic mosaic of cultures, a multifaceted story full of beauty and tragedy, a confusing medley of interconnected destinies. An eternal enigma. "I don't want to die without seeing Europe happy again": Jean-Luc Godard died on 13 September 2022, but his legacy reminds us that European cinema is a hill worth dying on.



SES Calendar

SES General Committee Assembly - 15th of November 2022

Calling all Committee Members! On the 15th of November, from 18:00 to 20:00, SES will have its first General Committee Assembly of the year in PCH 1.05. Here every committee will present their plans and budgets for the coming year. This event is mandatory for every committee member, so you can support your committee and be informed on how the year will look. On top of that, the board will also give you more information on the yearly Active Members Weekend, which you are all invited to, so more than enough reasons to join us before the borrell!

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