



Hope & Consequence

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Editorial

Órlaith Ní Ruaidh

Dear reader,

As the academic year draws to a close, it is with bittersweet joy I write to you for the final time as Eurovisie's editor-in-chief. I am indebted to this magazine for life, and eternally grateful for the friends, opportunities, and words it has gifted me over the years. It is with great excitement I look to September and the fresh stories and adventures that Eurovisie's team will continue to bring to life.

This year has seen the continuation of war on our shores, an unstable political climate worsen, and the uncertainty of the future expand. With this, we have crafted stories, critiques, and personal angles throughout our pages. In presenting our final theme for the season, it felt natural to explore something that can be both joyous and bleak, uplifting and threatening: dreams. Our writers delve into this topic from contrasting angles, some personal, some political, some whimsical. In today's turbulent environment, it remains paramount to articulate the possibility of a dream and the consequence of its death.

Yael tackles what happens when dangerous dreams land in the wrong hands, and what the potential power of mobilisation can achieve. Annelie exposes the hurdles that Ukrainians must jump on a path to justice, stymied by a legal system in need of reform, while Stijn and Vincent confront economic realities and hardships, the former in the shape of a critical crossroads for the future of inequality, and the latter in the links between capitalist cultures and the brutal pursuit of success.

The émigré's confrontation with a home they have since left is explored by Emilia, investigating the battles one faces with the internal conflict of a homeland, responsibility, and the navigation of a higher dream. Similarly, Renata analyses the large Romanian diaspora and the connotations surrounding East-West migration, and the stages of a brutal confrontation with reality. While I tip-toe into the literary fantasies and stories that met a premature death, Jade takes a deep dive into the layered dreams of UvA fellow Simone Atangana Bekono's debut novel *Confrontaties* and the surreal nature of dreams, reality, and racism.

It is in dreams and hope that we can achieve progression. It is also in the misplaced dreams of tyrannical figures that we are led to societal divisions, war, and suffering. Our fantasies and ideals are not always grounded or realistic, but the mobilisation of a common goal, a shared love, a need for justice, is never far from reach.

Reader, do not stop dreaming.

Noli timere,

Órlaith Ní Ruaidh, editor-in-chief.



When The War Is Over...

Annelie Ní Dhálaigh

An overview of the potential avenues for Ukrainians seeking justice, and the ways in which systemic flaws in the international system risk dashing these dreams.

I imagine that these words reverberate around the minds of Ukrainians constantly. My dreams of the future are contingent upon different 'ifs' and 'whens'. If I get this internship. When I graduate. If I find housing. I think the dreams of young people stay the same, despite the contingencies. We look to the future, our past not large enough to draw from. Dreaming about the end of the war has a lot of personal uncertainties. Who will be left, what will be left? In this article, I want to discuss the potential legal effects of the war in Ukraine, and what action could be taken now.

With regards to making a dream of justice for Ukrainians a reality, there are five main courts that we can look to. The International Court of Justice at The Hague, The International Criminal Court, the European Court of Human Rights and the Ukrainian domestic courts.

The ICJ is the UN's highest Court, competent to settle disputes submitted by States that have accepted its jurisdiction, in accordance with international law. Neither Ukraine nor Russia have declared to accept the ICJ's compulsory jurisdiction. However, the ICJ has some limited competence in Ukraine, deriving from the Genocide Convention, which both Russia and Ukraine have ratified. Therefore cases regarding the Ukrainian conflict before the ICJ are limited to the obligation of both states to prevent and punish genocide. In light of this, on the 26th of February 2022, the Ukrainian Government lodged a case with the ICJ, arguing that Russia had wrongfully claimed a genocide in Ukraine (Luhansk and Donetsk) in order to justify its invasion. On the 16th

of March 2022, the ICJ ordered that Russia must suspend military operations immediately. The next day, the Kremlin announced that Russia could not take this decision into account. In order for the ICJ ruling to be enforced, the case must be taken to the Security Council, where Russia of course, has veto power. Ultimately, while the decision "marks an important step towards proving the illegality of the war under international law", according to the ICJ press release, the ICJ does not offer much hope to those in the trenches dreaming of justice.

Secondly, the International Criminal Court (ICC), also located in the Hague, is distinct from the ICJ. Rather than dealing with disputes between states, under the Rome Statute, the ICC is granted jurisdiction over the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. However, as Russia has informed the UN Secretary General that they no longer intend to be party to the agreement, they have no legal obligations arising from their signature of the Statute. Moscow has emphasised this, with Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stating that "the decision of the International Criminal Court has no meaning for our country, including from a legal point of view", as Ukraine has accepted the ICC Statute, giving the court jurisdiction on crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine. Following this, the ICC has issued arrest warrants for Putin and for the Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, for the war crimes of unlawful deportation of children and the unlawful transfer of children from Ukraine to Russia. This established that the ICC has legal

jurisdiction over the political leaders of countries who are not part of the ICC, and crucially, that these leaders can be held responsible for the actions of those whom they are in charge of. However, due to the fundamental jurisdictional issue at hand, on a practical level these arrest warrants only hinder potential international travel for Putin and Lvova-Belova.

"While the ICC arrest warrant for Putin and Lvova-Belova serves to legitimise domestic prosecution efforts in Ukraine, in Russia, this plays right into Putin's narrative of a hypocritical West, appealing to "universal" standards while protecting its own."

In the light of the arrest warrants, many continue to call for the issuance of arrest warrants for George W Bush and Tony Blair. They should be issued if not for the crime of aggression, which conveniently, had not been activated in 2003 for the invasion of Iraq, at least for the war crimes committed against Iraqis including the torture of Iraqi detainees, physical and sexual abuse and multiple civilian massacres. As the UK were party to the Rome Statute, an arrest warrant could be issued for Blair. The ICC only has jurisdiction if the UN Security Council requests an investigation as the Rome Statute was not ratified by the US or Iraq. As we know, the US has a veto here, and we return to the same starting point of the system which allows certain countries to do, basically, whatever they want, while point-

ing out the twig in the other's eye.

The European Court of Human Rights has followed a similar pattern. Set up by the Council of Europe Member States, it deals with individual or state applications alleging violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, which has been ratified by both Russia and Ukraine. It rules only on compliance by states and government authorities. As of now, the Court has ruled against Russia and ordered an end to civilian attacks, as well as expelled Russia from the Council of Europe. Ultimately, the Court has no enforcement mechanism, and the dream remains a dream.

In Ukraine, prosecutors have opened more than 80,000 war-crimes cases since the invasion. 30 have led to a conviction. So far these cases have failed to build a strategy against Russian leaders, and have instead focused on individual foot soldiers. They are often impossible to find, and even more so to bring to serve jail time. The soldiers are judged in absentia, which is risky, and could lead to questions over legal legitimacy in the future. For now, Ukraine will continue to charge soldiers, as their criminal code lacks the concept of command responsibility, and be aided indirectly by international advisers, as Ukrainian courts cannot accept evidence directly from outside investigators. They will continue to gather documentation, dreaming of a future tribunal, which may be many years down the line. I hope these dreams become reality soon, and lead to a reshaping of the international system which takes the nebulous promises of distant courts into an earthy hand, concrete and real, like prison cell bars.



Expressing The Emotional Aftermath Of Discrimination Through Dreams In Bekono's Confrontaties

Jade Pauw

This year, the University of Amsterdam named Dutch author Simone Atangana Bekono its newest fellow. A few years earlier she released her debut novel *Confrontaties*, which deals with topics such as racism and creating selfhood as an outsider in the Netherlands. To complement the series of meetings the UVA is currently hosting around *Confrontaties*, this article provides a short analysis of the novel as it relates to dreams and reality. This topic reoccurs in the novel in literal, metaphorical and narratological ways. These instances help us look deeper into the main character's emotional processing of the main conflict.

Confrontaties narrates the experiences of 16-year-old Salomé Atabong as she navigates her new life in a youth detention centre. Here she is expected to reflect on the event which led to her detention: a fight between her and two former classmates in which she ended up severely harming them. Before the fight, Salomé faced many instances of discriminatory bullying from these and other classmates. Her story is about the confrontations between a girl of colour and a society which is still racist, but also about a girl struggling with herself. This is overshadowed by the emotional distress caused by the fight, as well as her complicated living conditions in the centre. This becomes particularly apparent through the duality of dreams and reality.

One of the first things Salomé mentions is the idea that there are two of her. In one reality she fought her classmates and resides in a detention centre. In another she did not. In this fabricated other-world she is free; she travels, gets good grades, and is in no way caught up in the other Salomé's world. This creation of a different self might be understood as an act of depersonalisation. Such acts can be induced by a sense that the living world is too unreal, and may involve a view of the self from an outside perspective. Notably, depersonalisation can be provoked by stress. Salomé is imagining a different self outside of reality, likely because of the stress that comes from processing the fight.

Later, Salomé debates whether things would have been different for her, had she made different choices. She provides the answer to this herself when she debates the word 'rehabilitation'. Rehabilitating, she says, means a return to a previous state, which to her seems impossible. Time doesn't work that way; time continues without remorse. So even though Salomé struggles to face her present situation, she understands that an escape to some alternate reality is impossible. While she is distressed, she is also emotionally mature enough to face reality. She may be thinking of a different self because the present upsets her, but the line between what is and what could have been is clear.

Stories can narrate dreams to investigate a character's deeper emotions. This can reveal hidden fears, desires and wishes in an honest way. Furthermore, dreams can ignore the proper rules of narrative, or *vraisemblance*, because they require no link with the real. They therefore offer ample space for scenes filled with metaphorical elements. Salomé has several dreams throughout the story, which reflect her emotional state and worries. In one dream Salomé sees a terrifying bird-like lady screaming and diving toward the ground. In a later dream, the bird-lady alters the course of her screaming flight, aiming for Salomé and tearing her apart when she reaches her.

Salomé also mentions several myths throughout the narrative. The bird-woman, for example, is later called a Fury, referring to the Greek mythical creature of wrath and revenge. Salomé also explains that Furies would come after murderers to punish them, and at times identifies herself as a Fury or a criminal. Earlier in the story, she recounts the myth of Prometheus, who was punished for bringing fire to mankind. His punishment consisted of eternally being tied to a rock with a hawk picking out his liver.

In the dreams Salomé becomes Prometheus, though instead of a hawk she is punished by a Fury. In the context of the myth of Prometheus, however, the nature of her crime changes. Salomé expresses that

though she realises their severity, she doesn't feel sorry for her acts, seeing them as unavoidable or vengeful. Compared to bringing fire to mankind, however, her lashing out can be interpreted as a morally grey act of necessity. She was reacting against the racist structures that confine her. The fire she brings is the light she shines on reality, the 'lightbulb' she mentions someone should hold over the heads of those who ignore racism. The book and Salomé herself remain ambiguous on whether the acts were right, but the dreams reveal that Salomé feels she is being punished like Prometheus: unjustly. This adds another layer to her emotional turmoil.

The lines between reality and dreams are also blurred in the novel's writing style, which adopts a thought-like structure. Real events are combined with Salomé's ponderings, which are in turn related back to past events. The boundaries between what is real and what is imagined, or what is present and what is past, blur as the story goes on. Sometimes this structuring is further complicated by stream of consciousness writing.

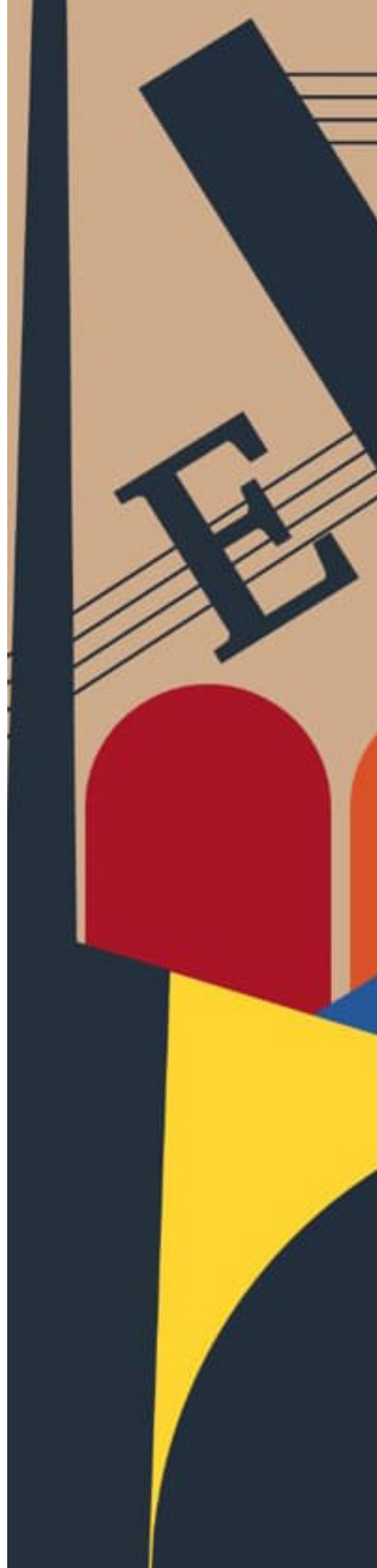
These qualities often appear during moments of personal distress, conveying her emotional state. In one scene, for example, Salomé and some other girls in the centre are watching a movie. One of the girls is agitated, and when things escalate she is forced onto the ground by a supervisor. This makes Salomé remember the way she herself had laid on the ground when she fought her classmates. The fight occurring in front of her blends with the fight in her memory, and the writing slips into a stream of consciousness style. This blending of reality with imagination allows the reader a peek

inside Salomé's mind.

Her inner turmoil is again revealed through stream of consciousness writing when the fight for which she was convicted is finally described. As her classmates assault her, and as she fights back, elements from the scenery and Salomé's thoughts blend with the fight. The whole gains a dream-like quality, representing how Salomé thinks back on the event. The textual confusion demonstrates that she cannot grasp it in any logical way.

"Confrontaties is about a young girl trying to make sense of herself and the world around her."

It is about formulating selfhood within structures which are, as Salomé is told by her aunt, working against you. In Salomé's case, breaking free from them involved taking violent measures. This demonstrates how living in a racist society can lead to desperate acts. The things that are done as a result of discrimination aren't right, but neither are they entirely wrong. Moreover, such acts lead to emotional distress. In Salomé's case, this is given shape through the tension between dreams and reality as featured in her depersonalisation, dreams and the writing style. *Confrontaties* shows, above all, that when a lived reality becomes so surreal it cannot be imagined, the lines between what is and isn't start to blur.





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Michael Tings

Spiralling Dreams:

How the current inflationary shock is determining the future welfare of the working class

Stijn Hoogvoorst

Since the end of the Second World War and the start of the economic rebuild of Europe, parents have always had one main dream: to make sure that their children later in life will be better off than themselves. Due to the constant economic growth in the second half of the 20th century, this was a relatively easy dream to come true, but since the financial crisis of 2008, it seems to have become more difficult. In some cases, this is due to the single biggest failure of a referendum in recent memory, leading to the Central Bank president announcing the whole country will be worse off in the coming years (not naming any country names here). However, in most cases, inequality plays a significant role in the shattering of said dream.

This does not mean income inequality alone, but also urbanization-triggered regional inequality and, more importantly, asset or capital inequality. In most European economies, company profits, dividends, and rent returns on capital far exceed income from labour. The inflation of the past year seems to only have made this worse. To name a recent Dutch example of this, Albert Heijn is under fire at the moment for what the Dutch now call 'graaiflatie', which is the equivalent of the English term greedflation. Albert Heijn's prices have exceeded the average level of inflation by unfathomable numbers, and so have their profits. This is a trend throughout the entire economy: in the third quarter of 2022, corporate profits reached an all-time high after increasing by 9 billion euros compared to the year before.

Therefore, it is not so strange that voices and strikes for higher wages have been increasing and are getting louder. In response to this, the president of the Dutch National Bank (DNB), Klaas Knot, issued a warning in a TV interview last Sunday. He warned of a wage-price spiral, an age-old economic concept which simply put, means that higher wages lead to higher prices, which in turn lead to higher wages again. This trend leads to even higher inflation, that is incredibly difficult to stop for the ECB without putting the entire continent into a recession. The main instrument for central banks to halt inflation is raising the interest rate, an instrument that is sensitive in the EU since it would put some Eurozone countries on the brink of bankruptcy. A warning against this spiral was therefore justified and vital to make for a Eurozone central bank president.

Nonetheless, this spiral has two components, and wages are not the only factor here. The main framework on central bank competencies and their role in a democracy is the book 'Unlected Power' written by Paul Tucker. In this book, he describes how central banks can operate independently because their sole goal is to maximise total welfare in an economy. They just need to make sure that there is a stable price level and that the economy as a whole is as well-off as possible. What they should at all times refrain from, according to Tucker, is making distributional choices. Distributing wealth in a society is an inherently political competence that should always be decided through a democratic process. Putting





Knot's warning in this perspective reveals a more critical picture. As a response to a question about greedflation, he did not just warn about the effect, but also warned about one of its causes, namely the increasing wages. Knot was critical of the speed and size at which unions and individual workers were pushing to increase their wages, with which he is arguably making a case for distributing the inflation burden towards the labour force.

Advocating for the labour side of the spiral to take responsibility is nothing new, since prices have always been framed as merely a market effect. If demand goes up because people earn more money, prices will go up as well. However, this way of framing the spiral disregards the fact that the demand and supply of labour is also a market. It can be the case that wage increases have a higher effect on inflation over a certain period than profits. Between 2007 and 2019 (a period of relatively low inflation), wage increases were responsible for about 58 percent of inflation, while rising profits were only responsible for 13 percent. Contrastingly, in the period between 2020 and 2022, increasing profits were responsible for 34 percent and wage increases were responsible for only 32 percent.

"Would it in this case not be more fair to share the burden of the current inflation shock between these two factors?"

The frame that Klaas Knot outlined sounds all too familiar to

the working class. One could even argue that historically, labour has almost exclusively had to bear the burden of inflation and that, in order to battle inequality, it is now corporations' turn to carry the weight of this shock. Knot is also not the only central banker who holds this view. When Jon Stewart, former host of the Daily Show, sat down with former head economist of the World Bank and former Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers for an interview for his new show 'The Problem', he got to hear a somewhat similar story. In this interview that I would highly recommend watching, Summers suggests that it is ridiculous to think that with high demand, companies should not make higher profits. At that point, Stewart counters this with what is at the heart of the inflation issue: "You are saying that when demand goes up, do you think Apple should just ask for less than they can charge? But when there is a tightness in the labour market, you are asking workers to do exactly that."

If European countries want to keep the dream of parents improving their children's socio-economic status compared to their own alive, inequality has to be limited. The current inflationary shock is a key moment in determining what will happen to inequality in the coming years; it is both an opportunity and a danger. If the decision is made to take the burden off the working class, this could bridge an important share of the current inequality gap; if the burden is put on the working class again, we might create a larger gap that will be very difficult to close again.

Death And Its Chapters

Mantel, Austen, and the lost work of literary heroes

Órlaith Ní Ruaidh

After Hilary Mantel's unexpected death last September, the literary world collectively wept, united in sudden shock and a common grievance. It was the kind of monumental loss that only Mantel herself could have found the words to articulate. Mantel, two-time Booker prize winner and author of the epic Wolf Hall trilogy, was one of the greats. And so when the Guardian published a small extract from the unfinished novel she was working on at the time of her death, a sense of simultaneous heartbreak and delight could be heard ripping

through the literary world akin to the coat ends of Mr Darcy flapping across the Hertfordshire fields.

Provocation was to be a modern-day Austen fan's dream: a re-writing of *Pride and Prejudice*, told from the perspective of the overlooked middle sister Mary Bennet. Characters from all of Austen's novels were set to make 'guest' appearances. Even writing this now, I am in agony at the genius we will never get to see.

Certainly, a deviation from Mantel's more historical driven work

in that of Wolf Hall, this was to be a true passion project, full of satire and mocking and endless 'in' jokes for readers of the original. Mantel's Mr. Darcy was set to fall victim to a dizzyingly fantastic re-evaluation, a wicked takedown of literature's most fancied lad.

In the opening paragraph of the small extract from *Provocation* released to the Guardian last month, Mantel is riotous: "His silence in company proceeded, not from a conviction of natural superiority, but from a solid, sterling stupidity, such as an English gentleman al-



one dares to display." I would give a limb to be able to conjure up a burn so hot.

Reading such satire and wit in an unfinished state, one cannot help but be reminded of Jane Austen's own unfinished final work. *Sandition* was shaping up to be an unsparing commentary on human place, purpose, and foolishness, perhaps the most daring of Austen's work to date, brimming with humour and daggers in the eleven chapters that had been written. Austen stopped writing it in March of 1817, probably due to illness. In some ways it is comforting to think of *Sandition* and *Provocation* swirling around in varying levels of incompleteness, teasing readers about what could have been. Such ironic agony would undoubtedly be greeted with a smirk by Mantel and

Austen alike.

There have been many attempts of continuation with *Sandition* along with a current tv series and various other creative projects in its spirit. Austen had already finished setting the scene and introducing, presumably, most of the central characters, making it a favourite of modern-day 'continuator' to tackle. And while these attempts are appreciated, and some offering substance, none have ever stood out to me as an authentic Austen voice, and I have resigned myself to the novel's unfinished state. Moreover, some attempts at *Sandition* have been so dire that it poses the question: should we leave such works alone? While a case can be made for both sides of this debate, it should be universally embraced that the author's original voice and spirit be incorporated into any attempts to continue their work, and to acknowledge that when such attempts fail it is best to leave it be.

As unfinished works go, Charles Dickens' *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is up there as one of the most suspenseful non-endings in literature. While *Sandition* was frequently given drab continuations, *Drood* was turned into a Broadway musical by Rupert Holmes where the audience chose a murderer themselves (it marked the first multiple-endings musical on Broadway). It proved interactive, imaginative, and retained the mystery surrounding *Drood* by providing an ending that was forever changing.

Are great artists cursed by time? Who knows. But there has certainly been some meta moments. Mantel died with an unfinished work on Austen, who herself died with the incomplete *Sandition*. If anything, it sweetens the link between two outstanding authors of their respective times. Similarly, Robert

William Buss died before he could complete his *Dickens' Dream* painting in 1875, depicting Dickens in his library surrounded by characters like Edward Drood, a work that was likewise unfinished. Certainly, it would make one tilt their head.

"The question of whether or not one should continue someone's incomplete work will never be a closed case."

Elliot Smith's final and posthumously released 2004 album, *From a Basement on the Hill*, was completed by those close to him in a manner that one can only hope respected his wishes. It remains a fan favourite, certainly one of my go-to listens. But it will always be linked with a sense of melancholy and sadness, yet there is no doubt we are grateful to have it.

If Donatello's *non-finito* method can teach us anything, it's that sometimes the incomplete is sublime. In the literary world, the incomplete leaves us wanting more and in a perpetual state of wondering, what if? The sooner an avid fan, a reader or an analyser can accept this *non-finito* state, the sooner the blossoming of possibility and imagination begin to manifest.

These days I have been thinking a lot about the dream of Mantel's *Provocation*, a book I feel was my divine purpose to read. Its plot, its characters, its satire, and its origins could simply not be any more appealing to me. And often times I wonder, might it have been better to have never known? To not have had that fantastical Austenite carrot dangled in front of me and forever out of reach? Perhaps. But then again, life would be so boring without a little bit of longing and a long-lost dream.



One Small dream For A Man, One Giant Nightmare For Mankind

Yael Pless

One only has to analyse the recent century to see that history is repeating itself cyclically. Where one totalitarian leader is taken down, another rises. Democracy has become increasingly threatened, and many would go so far as to ask: has it ever really existed? Regimes that are retrospectively condemned all began with a dream. Second-level history courses often focus on the rise and fall of leaders like Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, and Adolf Hitler. As I contemplated their influence, I noticed a trend among the cause and effect of their time in power. They were able to take advantage of desperate populations tormented by struggle and who yearned for a solution, understandably so. Between post-war resentment, economic crises or political vacuums, it was an ideal environment for an ambitious dreamer to sink their claws into. In times of hopelessness, we tend to look toward anyone who promises strength. Who does this? A persuasive, assertive figure who dreams of a different world - although the methods of achieving this have historically been nefarious, to say the least.

The former examples were different "dreamers", whose ambitions ended in a nightmare. The ideals of embittered Austrian-turned-German Adolf Hitler had cataclysmic results for the whole world. He too, had dreams for the future of Germany and slowly, deliberately, and carefully managed to transform the political and judicial system. He did this until it legally granted him near-dictatorial

powers. Lenin and Stalin's dreams caused mass death and laid down a rocky road for the future of Russian politics and post-Tsarist life. Presently, we see the names of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden headlining the news. Former US President Trump's famous slogan was "Make America Great Again" - after all, who else could save the coveted American Dream if not an old billionaire with little to no previous political experience? Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine could also be described as an element of his dream to restore the Soviet Union, which is causing enormous destruction. While we cannot change history by angrily reminiscing on it, we can learn tremendous lessons by analysing it. If we cannot prevent history from repeating itself in the future, then we can learn how to navigate these turbulent waters better than in the past.

These days, the media we consume can be overwhelmingly negative and fear-inducing, rendering many of us apathetic to the issues our world faces. It seems as though in every corner something is crumbling, amid a global pandemic, climate change, wars...you name it. Nonetheless, we cannot forget the positive developments that have unfolded. There have been individuals with dreams where they succeeded in making impressive steps forward in the face of unimaginable resistance.

When I view the footage of Martin Luther King Jr. and his "I Have A Dream" speech, I am continuously awed by how powerful his words

were, and we see that they have had a long-lasting impact on our world. With his dream, he had an irreversible effect on the civil rights movement in the United States. This was something that many had long deemed unattainable. This sort of change is neither linear, nor easy, and it does not take place overnight. But with the courage of one, future generations benefit. Parallel to MLK, we can also remember Eleanor Roosevelt, who dreamt of advancing human rights and women's rights and facilitated a significant step forward. Not too long ago, Malala Yousafzai famously risked her life as she fought for women's rights and consequently received a bullet to the head by resisting the oppressive regime she faced. Did it ultimately rid the country of the Taliban or reform the entire system? No, it did not. But, she woke millions up to the reality she and countless others faced. Currently, the Me Too movement, climate activism, voting rights, and working toward gender equality represent optimistic changes that will mark this century as a turning point.

"Those who dreamt of change did not solve every single issue, but what mattered was that they tried."

Not all dreams go awry, and while observing the chaos and terror that plagues many facets of our planet, we can also use it as a reason to fight - either for those who will actually amplify our voices or in a small way that is possible



for us as individuals.

Truthfully, perhaps it is time for us to stop betting all our money on a single person to save us from every bad dream. When Joe Biden emerged victorious from the 2020 election, many thought the nightmare of Trump's presidency was over. Nonetheless, a few years into Biden's presidency the sweet newborn phase has worn off and it appears as though the population once again rages in the sort of anger seen in the 'terrible-twos' and 'threenager' stage of childhood. The country is screaming for change to issues that are rooted deeply and systemically in the American system, and will realistically not be salvaged by this, or the next president to whom people tend to attach a Messiah-like status out of desperation or disillusionment. Neither of the two presidential candidates, nor their terms in office, are exclusively "good" or "bad". Unfortunately, while people get caught up in who is better or worse, their attention fails to fall on the stubborn issues that do not involve strictly who is at the helm.

During a recent episode of "Room for Discussion" at the University of Amsterdam, renowned human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson AO, KC suggested how university students could mobilise in an effort to boycott the invasion of Ukraine in the likes of the resistance that took place to the Vietnam War. I found this an interesting comment, as a well-known and respected lawyer was accrediting students with the potential power to be a voice loud enough to be heard. I do not mean to sug-

gest that university protests will halt the war in Ukraine. However, it is worth remembering that collective action can, in certain instances, save people from the nightmares they live and give them an opportunity to dream again, rather than be haunted in their sleep by the atrocities they face.

In this life, there is always another side to the coin. Even the most well-intentioned actions can adversely affect someone else. If we focused on the essence of every dream and the nightmare it could cause, we would be stuck in a vicious cycle for eternity. Nevertheless, we must take as many lessons as possible from history far past and recently created. We will then recognise that what is preached by powerful voices as being dreams that will alleviate everyone's suffering may not always be what they seem. It is easy to fall into empty promises of a better life, but we must always look twice and consider the bigger picture. When you cross the street, if you do not pay enough attention, you could be hit by a car before you realise it. The same goes for whispers of a better life that serve to fulfil another agenda. For those who are held back by the idea that most things are beyond our influence, you may not be wrong. Nonetheless, many of us have the luck to pray that catastrophes such as war will remain our worst nightmare. No matter what, it is crucial to stay informed and think critically about what we learn, and use our voices - individually or collectively - when there is an opportunity.





The Seduction Of Wealth: How Capitalism Stimulates Our Dreams of Financial Success

Vincent Lubach

In today's culture, the pursuit of wealth and financial success has become deeply ingrained in our collective consciousness, as we are part of the dominant capitalist cultures that shape the global economy. Our dreams and aspiration in life to become wealthy have been created by capitalism, which places a strong emphasis on individuality, competitiveness and financial incentives. Does capitalism truly stimulate our dreams for riches and success? And more interestingly, where can we find these influences?

Capitalism, the foundation of our current economic system, focuses on self-interest and the pursuit of personal wealth. It attracts us with the promise that we may succeed financially if we put in the necessary effort to achieve our goals, like taking risks and displaying an entrepreneurial spirit. Furthermore, this system of economic incentives motivates us to pursue our dreams of making money as a way to improve our quality of life, raise our standard of living and perhaps even help us rise in social standing. The theory of meritocracy, which claims that success can be gained based on a person's skills, efforts and original ideas, further supports this idea. This fundamental principle of meritocracy provides the motivation

behind people's hopes and goals in our Western society. As people work to realize their full potential and improve their financial situation, it feeds a deep-seated desire for riches and happiness. In addition, it is fuelled by the confidence that financial success is within grasp via persistent hard work and strong determination. This would eventually allow one the possibility of moving from a lower socioeconomic position to a higher one. Furthermore, it allows us to picture a future in which success is decided by our own work and skills, rather than predetermined by birth. This empowering idea fires a passionate pursuit of professional and financial achievement, inspiring people to go beyond their perceived boundaries and seize the chances offered by the capitalist system. Particularly in countries that emphasize individual success and opportunity, the fantasy of upward mobility resonates strongly within the collective consciousness. It stands for the physical manifestation of the "American Dream" and comparable ideals shared by people all over the world.

Furthermore, consumer culture has spread to every aspect of our lives, permanently altering our aspirations and ambitions. We are constantly subjected to a

barrage of commercials that intimately tie success, fulfilment and pleasure to the purchase of material goods. In other words, our fantasies are successfully exploited by the relentless marketing apparatus of capitalism, which effortlessly convinces us that having money is not only desirable, but also a necessary condition for living a life that is genuinely fulfilling and meaningful. Especially on social media platforms, this influence is clearly visible.

"Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become virtual stages where people showcase their wealth, success and luxurious lifestyles."

Consider going through your social media account and coming across a glamorous influencer resting on a pristine beach surrounded by expensive yachts and exotic locations. As you glance at the lovely sights, a spark of aspiration ignites inside you. You imagine a life in which financial success opens doors to such experiences, where material prosperity and status go hand in hand. This attractive picture, skilfully designed and propagated through social media, is proof of capitalism's seductive power in fuelling our desires for financial success. All in all, the allure of financial success, magnified by these glamorous portrayals on social media, serves as a powerful driving force behind our dreams and ambitions, pushing us to work harder, take risks, and strive for personal wealth. Therefore, it is important to evaluate these messages critically and consider our own interests and beliefs. True happiness frequently comes in meaningful connections, personal development, and a feeling of purpose that transcends beyond the chase of riches, even while goods and luxurious experiences could temporally satisfy.

Ultimately, capitalism will keep pushing people to pursue material prosperity and success via hard work, calculated risk and business ventures. By encouraging the notion of upward mobility and meritocracy, our ambitions for financial wealth and success will be fuelled to strive for these goals. Fu-

thermore, the role of social media plays a big part in this as we are constantly reminded of what it looks like to be satisfied with material goods and how financial success could be achieved. Consequently, our desire for riches is sparked by the appeal of luxurious lifestyles and luxury items, which stimulates us to pursue our dreams of financial success within the framework of capitalism.



Long-lost, Home

Emilia Juchno

When the abroad calls, you go: you leave your country, the only one you have ever really had a chance to know or call home. You do it for the sake of becoming part of a larger, international community - what an exciting opportunity! As personal of an experience moving abroad is, you eventually realise the broader implications of your decision as you find yourself becoming part of a larger wave of immigrants, which consists of multiple individual "hopes and dreams". Perhaps a specific locus on that wave with which I could personally identify myself is the Eastern Europeans' journey toward the "promised land" of Western Europe. A somewhat exasperating journey that might turn out to be, filled with the embarrassment of exchanging your local currency for the Euro and realising how little you can actually afford, and a never-ending hope that the new "home" accepts you with your rustling English accent (the "sh" sound never quite leaves your pronunciation if your first language is Polish).

But this life, the life of an émigré, with all of its enviable multilingualisms, multiculturalisms, and other "multi-" worlds, is exactly what you have been looking forward to since you were a teenager. Moreover, you grow to understand that moving to study abroad is a dream which many share but relatively few have a real opportunity to follow through. So, on top of fear and hesitation, you feel grateful and honoured, and you follow this dream of a life filled with new opportunities while recognising that you are the one

singled out. This in itself puts you in a position of great responsibility - those who return from abroad having failed there with whatever fulfilment they were expecting to achieve, are rarely looked upon sympathetically (at least that is the impression I am under).

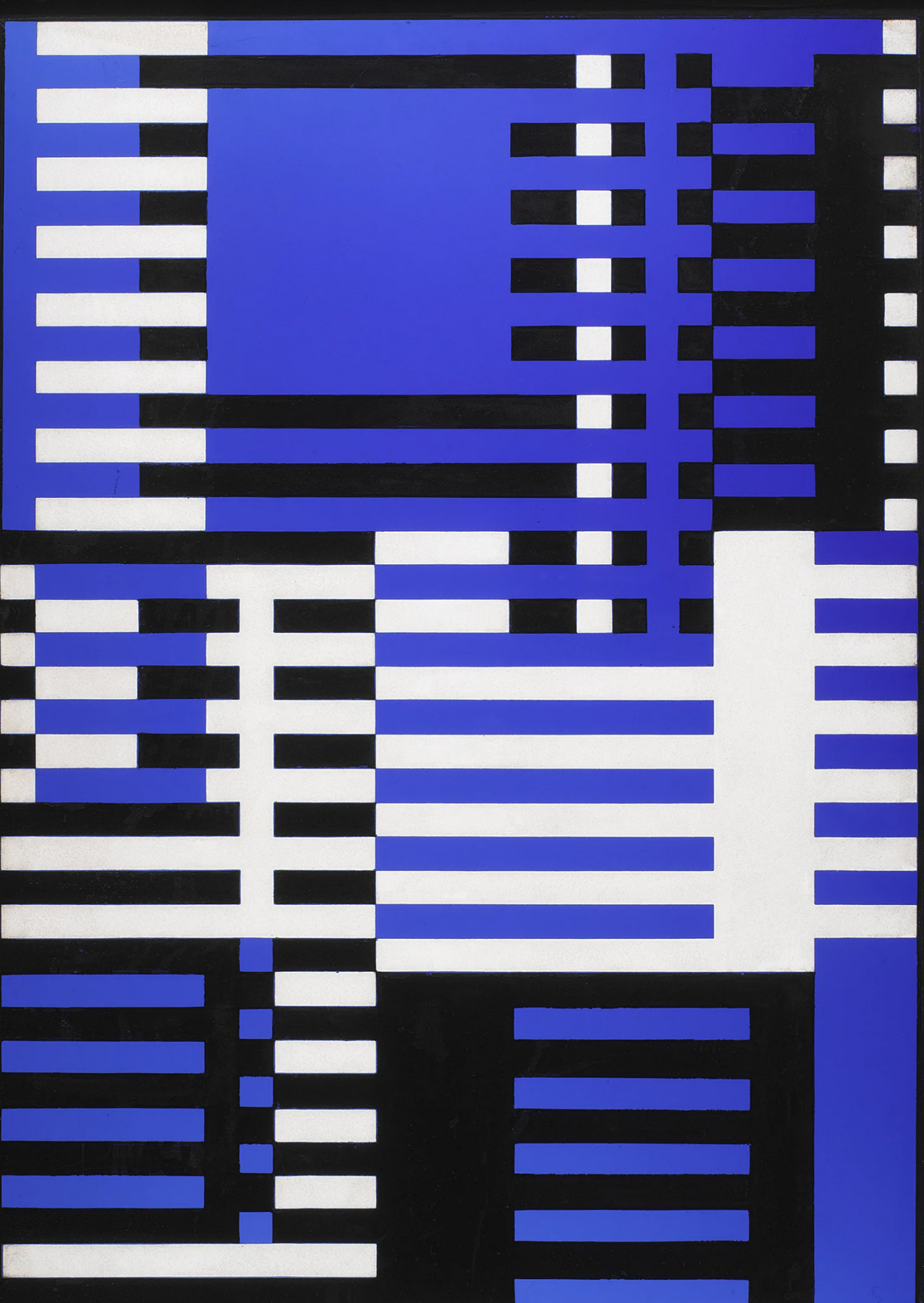
And yet sometimes you look around you, and you become overwhelmed by the feeling of alienation, one which you might never entirely get rid of. Now, some people seem to be more bothered by feeling estranged living in a foreign country while others deal with it more effortlessly, but it is mostly an experience that all of us, immigrants, share. Eventually, somehow, in the midst of learning a foreign language, beginning to understand the foreign culture with all of its peculiarities, and perhaps finally learning to enjoy the local cuisine (even though you will never understand having a single Kaasbroodje for lunch), you become aware of an unexpected feeling. You miss home.

"The very country you thought of as "backwards" or not "Western" enough, one which might have made you almost ashamed of your own nationality, you now long for."

At this point an interesting thing occurs, whereby you, the emigrant, having returned to your country, may find that, somewhere between walking through the too-well-known streets and squares

and eating the pierogi made by hand by your dear grandma, you finally feel home again. The relationship between an emigrant and their "old" and yet fundamentally "new" home country, is very distinct from any relationship that is formed between a nation and its permanent citizen. The emigrant embarks on a nearly spiritual journey which can be thought of as a "postpatriotism" - having initially rejected their national and cultural past, the emigrant eventually finds comfort and solace in rediscovering it. This new approach to patriotism resists the part that leans you toward nationalism while allowing you to look at your home country from a perspective enriched by dissimilar experiences. Suddenly you find yourself defending your country whenever you witness it being subjected to stereotypes and you tell people how beautiful your hometown is and how they should visit it because it so fun and yet much more affordable than any of the Amsterdams, Parises, or Londons.

When I first came to Amsterdam and attended my first class, I was asked why I had chosen European Studies, to which I, like many other international students in the room, replied, that in a way I identify more as a citizen of Europe than of my home country, Poland. Today I know I no longer feel that way - as much as I appreciate the benefits of carrying a European passport, I no longer doubt that I am first and foremost Polish.





I Had A Dream, So I Left A moral X-Ray of East-West migration

Renata Rîmbu

Firstly, a story of migration. 1989, Romania. The fall of communism after the Romanian Revolution meant that strict controls on travel and relocation were lifted. As a result, the 1990s brought about a great increase in Romanians moving abroad, an increase which only curbed towards the end of the decade. This was just in time for another major shift: joining the European Union in 2007. The added rights as European citizens led to a new rise in people leaving. As of today, around 4.3 million people form the Romanian diaspora, out of which 3.5 million live in Western Europe alone. They make up a fifth of the country's entire labour force.

Yet this story is an impersonal one. It is a story of numbers, and numbers often do not mean anything palpable. As such, I would like to turn to the year 2019, when over two hundred thousand Romanians emigrated to other countries. One of them was me.

I knew I wanted to move abroad since I was probably around ten years old. "Go, go so that you do not have to deal with everything here," my mother once told me. Things are better, and life is easier. We have established that Romania has an enormous and

ever-increasing diaspora. But why are we leaving? The quintessential answer is the very thing my mother said: looking for a better life. There is a fantasy attached to moving to the West, a dream surrounding it. A perception that all the hardship, poverty, corruption, and close-mindedness can be escaped. Once you arrive to your destination, there are several stages of being confronted by reality. Firstly, you suffer from an inferiority complex. You watch people's expressions when you say you come from Romania and wonder what they think of you now. You internalize a dislike for your own country – the accent, the habits, the ways of thinking – anything that shows you are from "there". Yet you never feel you truly belong, no matter how hard you try. Then, with time, you realize that "Western Europe", the way it is built up to be in our fantasies, suffers from its own issues, has its own complexities and frustrations. It is not the perfect, ideal, dream-like world we are making it up to be. We attach this aura to it out of need: a need for a fantasy, for a place that is so different from ours – for the better – that it is almost unrecognizable. But it is also not real; it cannot be. We need an escape, but life does not work that way. The next stage is disillusionment. However, with time

come clarity and perspective. The final stage is reaching a sad conclusion. Things are not perfect, and they are not dream-like. But even so, they are still so much better. That is a painful reality to live.

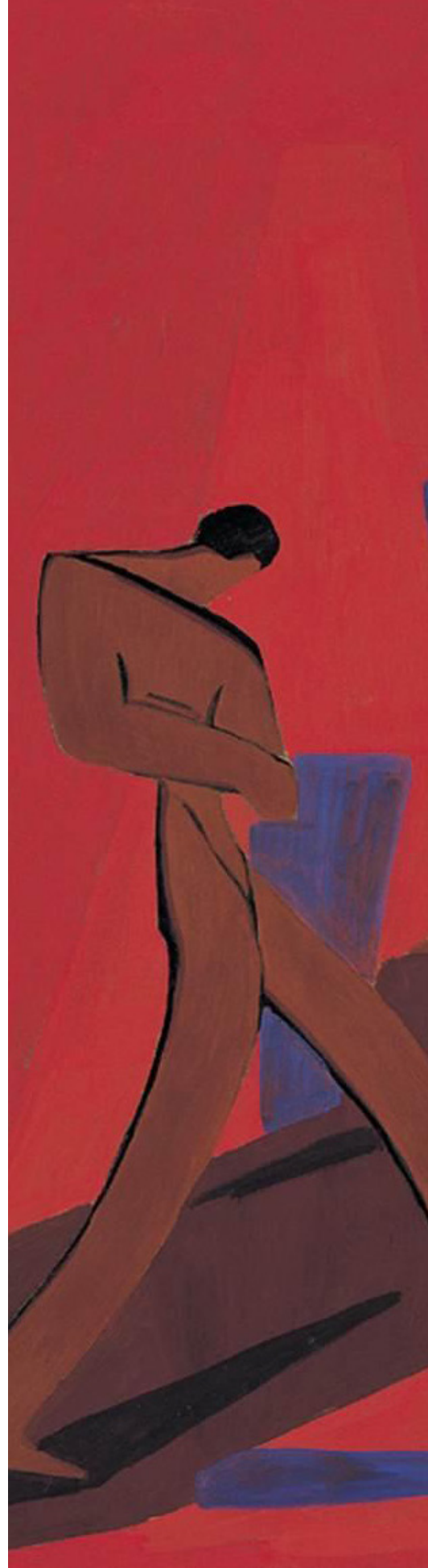
I remember having classmates who lived their whole lives with their grandparents and saw their parents maybe once a year. They were working abroad to be able to send money home. For decades, the majority of Romanians occupied lower socio-economic positions when living abroad. They took up any job that can provide for themselves and their families. That has been slowly improving since joining the EU – the right to study in other countries and benefit from EU fees changed the game. However, most of the Romanian students abroad come from the upper middle class – otherwise they would not be able to afford leaving in the first place. There are class divisions in place, and some are favoured over others. Some are given an extra chance.

When you know all of this, when you know you are privileged enough to leave, when you know you have better living standards than those at home, what do you do with it? I have often wondered if I have a duty to come back home and try to change things for the better. If the reason I left is because the conditions are not good enough, am I not a hypocrite and a coward for staying away? Am I turning my back on the problem instead of fixing it, when I was lucky enough to benefit from advantages others only dream of? This brings about a two-fold moral dilemma for emigrants. On the one hand, how strong are one's patriotic ties? How much can your nation of birth

claim from you? On the other hand, there is a duty to future generations to consider here. If we all leave and none of us come back, how can we expect change to occur? Can we simply stand by and wait for something to improve, for a better life to fall into our laps? Or do we have a duty towards those who did not have the means to leave, a duty towards their children and their children after that? A duty to create something better ourselves.

"We have seen better, experienced better – what do we do with that knowledge?"

Am I running away by following my dream – my dream for something better for myself? Or is coming back home supererogatory? Is it going above and beyond one's duty? In the end, can I choose myself? Can I selfishly choose an easier life for myself? If the answer is yes, if the answer is that this moral duty cannot be claimed from me, I am left wondering – why does it sometimes feel so hard?



SES Calendar

Active Members Weekend 2023- 9th-11th of June 2023

Active Members Weekend is just around the corner! This is the time to give back to our beloved Active Members who make SES what it is and who make all the great events throughout the year possible. If you've been part of a Committee this year you are more than just welcome, you are morally obligated to sign up unless you want to experience the biggest FOMO of the year! It is the highlight of the year and everyone will have fun! Except the Candidate Board of course! Think Danish beer bowling, flunkyball and even a themed evening, all with your favourite active members in a house close to the beach.

To spice things up this year, the Board is organising a special surprise for the second evening so look forward to that! Does this sound like your kind of weekend in June? Then make sure to sign up quickly as the spots are extremely limited! It will take place from the 9th to 11th of June and will cost 45€, including accommodation, food and beer.

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