



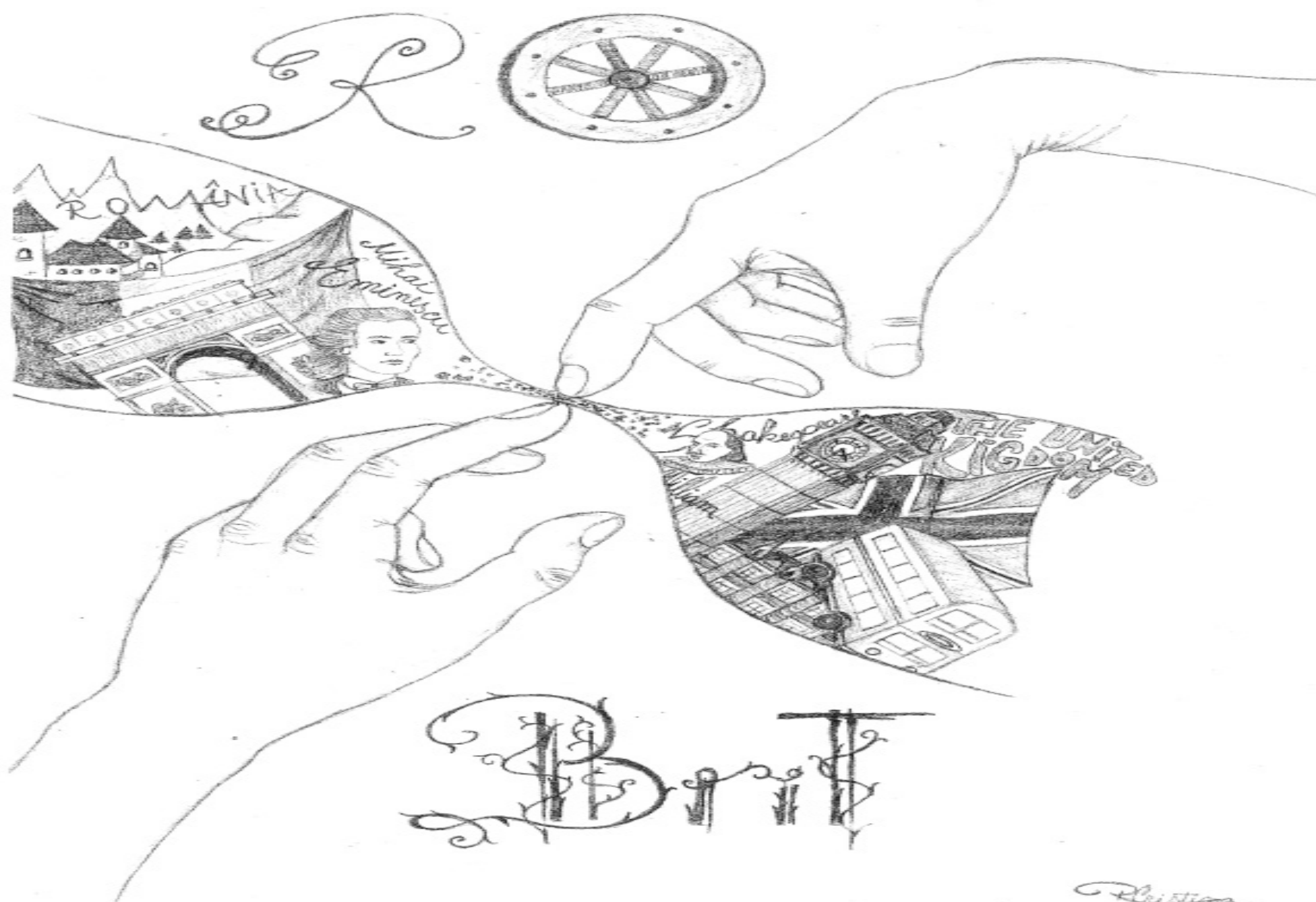
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# RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL

English Annual Review  
of the Romanian Students from  
“Vasile Alecsandri” University  
Bacău



ALMA MATER  
BACAU

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## EDITORIAL

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL is an annual English journal dedicated to publishing papers written by students in the Faculty of Letters (and not only), under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures from “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău. This journal intends to encourage students to take more initiative in engaging in the English studies, providing at the same time the opportunity for them to have their research and creative writing published. Thus, RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL invites English-speaking students to contribute to the journal through submitting original articles. The journal welcomes submissions on English language, literature and culture, its purpose being to provide a channel for the publication of original work by Romanian students who love the English language. This is an excellent opportunity for students to allow their research to be seen by their colleagues and to participate in a promising endeavour.

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL este o revistă anuală în limba engleză dedicată publicării lucrărilor scrise de către studenții din cadrul Facultății de Litere (și nu numai), sub auspiciile Departamentului de Limbi și Literaturi Străine de la Universitatea “Vasile Alecsandri” din Bacău. RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL intenționează să încurajeze studenții vorbitori de limba engleză să scrie și să publice în limba engleză articole cu privire la limbă, literatură și cultură, scopul principal al revistei fiind acela de a oferi un canal pentru publicarea de lucrări originale de către studenții români care iubesc limba engleză. Aceasta este o oportunitate excelentă pentru studenți de a permite ca cercetarea lor să fie văzută de colegii lor și de a participa la un efort promițător.



## A Confederacy of Dunces and John Kennedy Toole's (Self-portrait of an) Anti-hero

**Denisa Gherman, RE, III**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

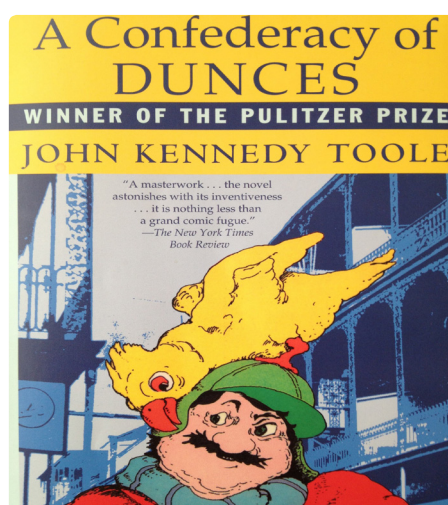
John Kennedy Toole's novel *A Confederacy of Dunces*, written in 1963 and published in 1980 after the author's death and also winner the Pulitzer Prize in 1981. It is a picaresque novel, introducing a typical modern anti-hero. Our article will try to analyse the incipit of the novel and understand just that: what makes and anti-hero?

The novel begins with the portrait of the main character, Ignatius Reilly. He is seen waiting in front of the D.H. Holmes department store for his mother. His appearance is not exactly spectacular, giving the appearance of an unkempt person: "The green earflaps, full of large ears and uncut hair and the fine bristles that grew in the ears themselves, stuck out on either side like turn signals indicating two directions at once", "the bushy black moustache". (p. 1) Not incidentally, he is wearing a hunting cap. As long as he was waiting for his mother he was hunting people in the street. Obviously, not in a literal way, but he analyzes the way in which people are dressed. He directs his critical view on people and categorizes them according to the way of dressing. The paradox lies in the fact that he considers himself superior in terms of clothing, and looks in an arrogant way over the crowd despite him displaying a poor and unkempt appearance. For him the external aspect reveals the cognitive capacities of a person. From his point of view, the saying according to which the coat makes the man seems to be true. However, we feel that the narrator resorts a somewhat sarcastic tone in creating his appearance: the strange looker-on talks about how strange others are. Therefore, a first feature of the anti-hero emerging is that the hero is not prince charming.

In the following paragraph, the narrator focuses his attention on the Ignatius' fashion style. Unlike the others around him, he is dressed according to theological and geometric standards, so that his inner wealth can be seen. And in this context we could talk about the irony of the author. A young man dressed comfortably, but at the same time dubious and difficult to understand falls within a certain pattern imposed by himself and despises the world/people around him as not corresponding to his dress code. The superficiality of the matter renders the character's own superficiality.

It is interesting to observe how the narrative perspective unfolds within this incipit. The narrator can be seen as a director organizing his characters on stage. Furthermore, he can be a cameraman who moves his lens from the individual to the outside world. He focuses in the first phase on the figure of Ignatius. And the outside world is analyzed from Ignatius' perspective and understanding.

The character's personality is gradually revealed not only through the presentation of the relations with the world, but also through the relationship he has with his mother. The fact that he is waiting for his mother for a while, the fact that the reality does not correspond with his ideals creates a discomfort both on a psychological level and on a physical level. He feels the need to reprimand his mother because she makes him wait so much, and he wants to bring her to the level of repentance. It is at this point that we recognize in the anti-hero aspects of falsely-claimed superiority, anxiety and unjustified desire for vengeance and subduing the others.





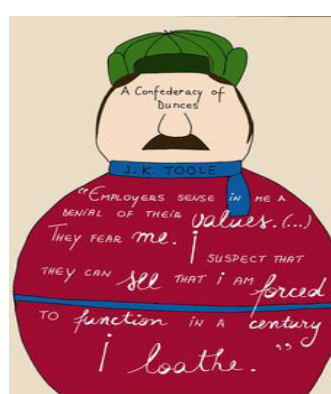
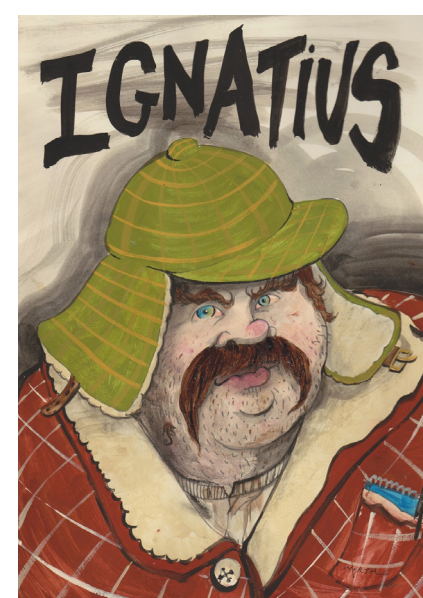
The funny incident mentioned further on about him allegedly, at least, having damaged the baseball machine, paints the portrait of a caricatural, clumsy appearance, blamed for trifles and never rising to the level of serious actions.

He lives in his world, according to his own laws and actions, and suffering from a self-induced marginalization. Internalization of external events is well marked by the narrator. But because he is consumed by petty incidents as the one mentioned previously, the anti-hero cannot even dream of seeing personal accomplishment.

The next incident – the “interrogation” by the police officer – positions Ignatius in so much more a ridiculous and funny stance. He places himself on a position of a child, but paradoxically he launches later in a bold and violent outpouring against the policeman. He seems not be anchored in a conventional reality, and builds a distorted representation in which he is both a victim and a bully.

Another level of the hero’s development is illustrated through the relation he develops with his mother. The meeting between mother and son is almost pathetic. He sees in his mother salvation, protection, warmth and safety. The close relationship between them explains many aspects. For example, in terms of Freud’s psychoanalysis we could talk about the Oedipus complex. He sees in his mother the special force of attraction. This attraction can be interpreted sexually (him being unable to find another woman to embody the female ideal represented by his mother), in terms of family (she is seen like a perfect mother), in terms of psychological superiority (it is she who has power over men, she can save him from any situation, she is his protector). Thus, it can be said that many times the anti-hero is dependent on another stronger (from one perspective or another) figure. He permanently leans on somebody else, awaits for help or salvation.

Literature gives us examples of countless models of characters. However, most of these are classified as true exemplary models (heroes), but there are also anti-examples models (anti-heroes). Not to understand that the anti-hero is a villain. The anti-hero is a response to the types of characters (generally heroes in the true sense of the word) already widespread throughout the entire literature. John Kennedy Toole proposes to break the stereotypes and prejudices according to which the main character must be a model or a way for the narrator to shed light on certain spiritual values. Kennedy’s anti-hero does not cause readers a negative reaction to him. As the narrator portrays him, as he captures the way in which Ignatius works in difficult moments we are surprised with irony and humour. The reader does not judge him for what he says and does because he realizes that he is limited in some ways. Kennedy’s character is not an anti-hero because he does some immoral facts. He is an anti-hero because he deviates from the common type of construction a character. Ignatius does not correspond to the reader’s expectations. He is a rebellious hero that comes out of formal patterns. If we were to set a diagnosis for Ignatius, we could oscillate between dissociative identity disorder and the Oedipus complex.



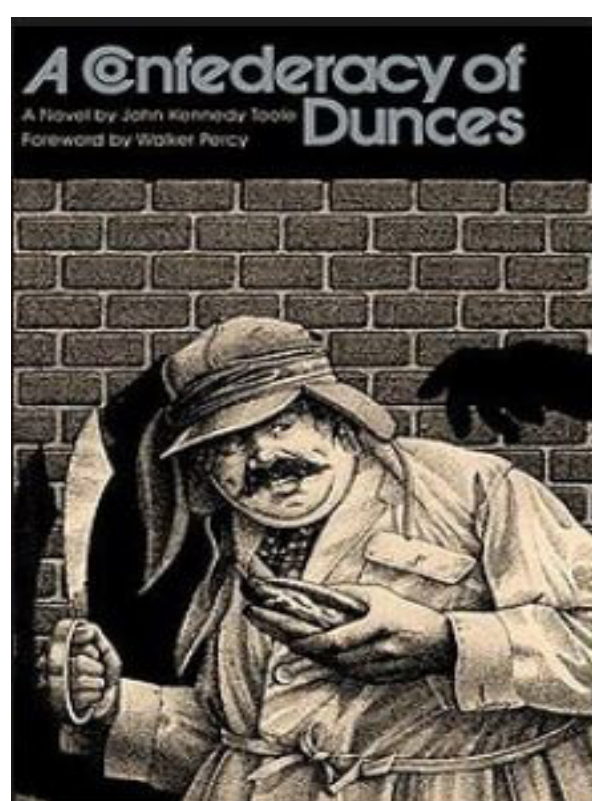
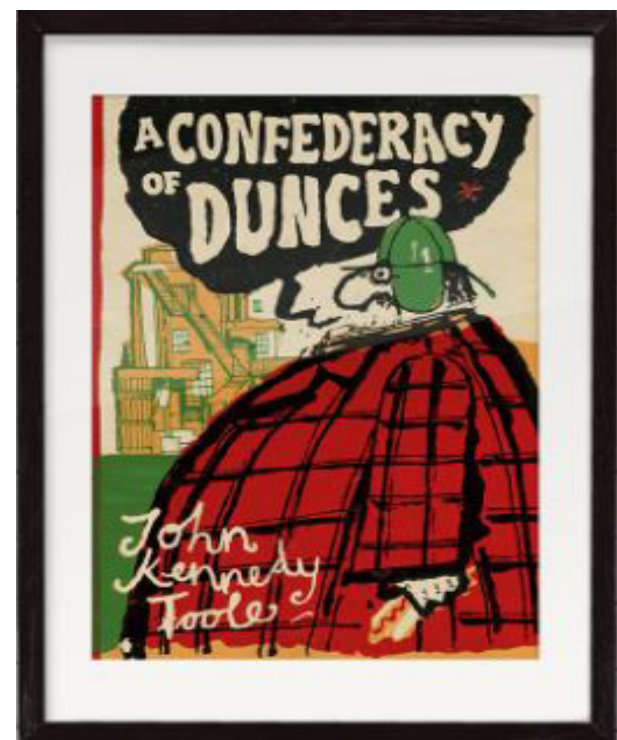
I must confess that I was caught by trap of the incipit. I chose to exclude the rest of the action and watch the way in which the “director” (re)presents his characters on the stage. Like in the world outside the book/literature, I think the first impression is the most important in building a vision of a particular person. Probably Kennedy also wanted to draw attention to Ignatius’ first hypostasis. He could have introduced Ignatius into an extraordinary formula that would gradually depreciate. But he chose to bring us the image of anti-hero from the very first page. This label cannot be discarded even if the continuation of the novel would suggest something else. The incipit is, in this novel, a key to interpretation. It is a manner of saying “Not in this way!” or “Don’t be like this/him!”.

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## The Two Catherines from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

**Alina Cernacovschi, EF, II**  
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Catherine Earnshaw, the female protagonist of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, exudes a powerful force upon every character in the novel even after her death.

Catherine lives a real war with herself and oscillates between two worlds. On the one hand, Catherine is deeply in love with the wild Heathcliff. Their love begins and develops on a higher spiritual level because they are soul mates – two people who have an affinity for each other and/or are attracted towards each other irresistibly. Catherine loves Heathcliff so intensely that she claims they are the same person. On the other hand, Catherine's desire for social advancement motivates her to marry Edgar Linton instead. She is aware of what a marriage to Edgar can do to her socially, and she enjoys those things that Edgar can provide for her. This way we can affirm that she is bound by Edgar on the one hand and by Heathcliff on the other hand: "My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being." (p. 25 )

Thus, we have 2 sides of Catherine: Catherine Earnshaw and Catherine Linton, which are very different: one is Heathcliff's Catherine and the other is Edgar's Catherine. Catherine contains a little of both of the two men: there is some part of Heathcliff, the passionate ruffian in her, and there is also a touch of the nobleman that Edgar represents in her character. So, she is bound by and to Edgar on the one hand and by and to Heathcliff on the other. Her social ambitions compel her to marry Edgar but she is also motivated to violate her social desires – to love Heathcliff and attain her freedom and innocence of childhood.

Catherine is a mirror with two faces which combines the passionate, but reckless sensibilities of Heathcliff with the calm and withdrawn manners of Edgar. This combination of Heathcliff's and Edgar's characters grants her qualities that neither of them is capable to possess on their own. She wants the luxury, security, and serenity of Edgar, even when she runs wild across the moors with the foolish and unkempt Heathcliff. Maybe this is why this gorgeous woman with dark curls and penetrating eyes, is in a perpetual inner conflict, which was not extinguished even after her death.



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## The Orphan's Condition in Great Expectations

**Ovidiu Mirăuță, RE, II**

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During the Victorian Age, Great Britain witnessed huge technological and economic progress due to the Industrial Revolution. Because of these events a distinct class, apart from aristocracy, evolved. This class was the middle class.

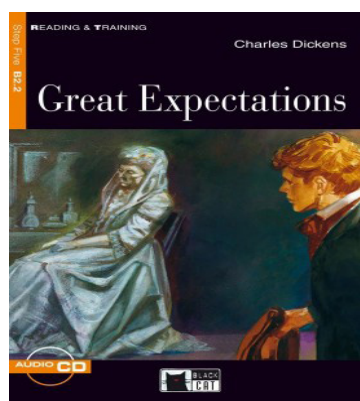
But during these times of wealth and economic growth not everyone earned a distinct status. Unprivileged beings were exposed to hard work, misery, reproach, abuse and lack of respect. Despite the way they were seen, orphans were respectable, but troubled heroes and heroines in Victorian literature, the authors being the only persons who took interest in their condition.

The orphan's condition is a motif of great interest for Victorian authors, developed in many novels of that age. We can go so far to say that Victorian literature is a reliable source, or maybe the only source of history that has a chapter dedicated to the orphans. Some orphans desire a better life than that offered by society, but there are a few orphans lucky enough to have bigger dreams, lucky enough to afford the luxury of having 'great expectations'.

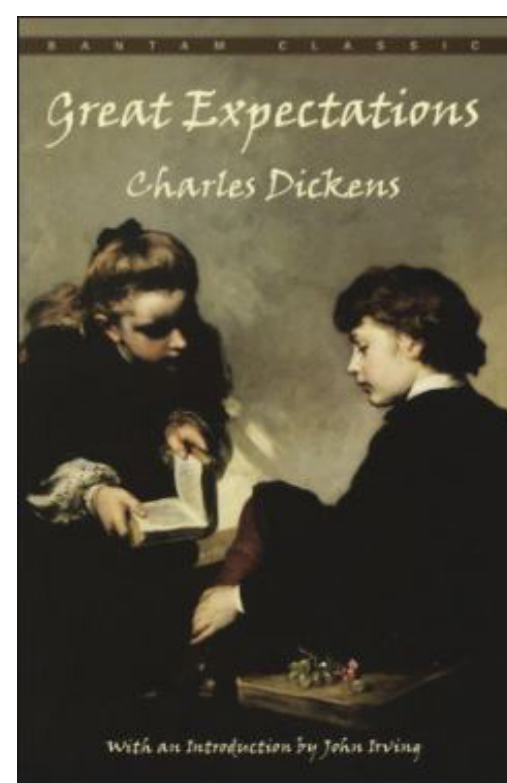
Philip Pirrip, better known as Pip, an orphan brought up "by hand" by his sister, the protagonist of Dickens' novel is one of the few lucky ones mentioned earlier. A portrait of ambition and curiosity, of a suffering youth, Pip overcomes his condition being a portrait of development as well. His sister's object of abuse and authority domination in the beginning, then of a wealthy, respected and feared spinster, Pip, with some help received from a mysterious benefactor, becomes a gentleman in an abstract way because he does not inherit this status.

Another example of this kind is Biddy, being almost Pip's age and sharing Pip's condition. An orphan lucky enough to be the clerk's second cousin and receiver of education (because the clerk has access to educational works, she also has access to them). A kind, intelligent and poor young woman, Biddy can easily portray the Victorian 'angel of the house' (and she will be...later), or in simple words the ideal of womanhood in Victorian Age. Among the attributes she is praised for are: dutiful, meek, domestic, humble, kind-hearted (all these features are also mentioned in Coventry Patmore's poem, whose title – Angel in the House – established this cultural type specific to Victorianism). In some critical works Biddy is the role model that a Victorian female reader should look up to.

Besides the earlier mentioned the angel of the house, now is time to talk about its opposite condition. The castrating woman, portrayed by Biddy's 'rival', Estella. The only thing she has in common with Biddy and Pip is the orphan condition. Adopted by Miss Havisham, Estella is taught to be cold and domineering, her lack of affection enhancing her power over the others. An instrument in Miss Havisham's hands, Estella still fails to break her husband's heart due to his lack of interest in her. Despite her display of power and chillness, Estella is attributed the worst ending of three orphans in Great Expectations because she expected a lot from her social status, her being and her development, but she was doomed to failure because she did not evolve spiritually and financially, she becomes in the end the victim of stagnation and marginality.



In the end my paper about the orphan's condition in Victorianism reflects that struggle and ambition are the major drives in obtaining what you desire the most, regardless of your condition, if you want to succeed in life. You always have to evolve and overcome what you were in the beginning of your journey in life. So, otherwise said, if you lost your path in life and feel hopeless and lost, you have to keep wandering not to get back to the path you wanted. You may also find a better path and you will definitely evolve even if you do not see that when it happens, but when you look retrospectively of what you were, you will realise, you end up following the best path you could take.

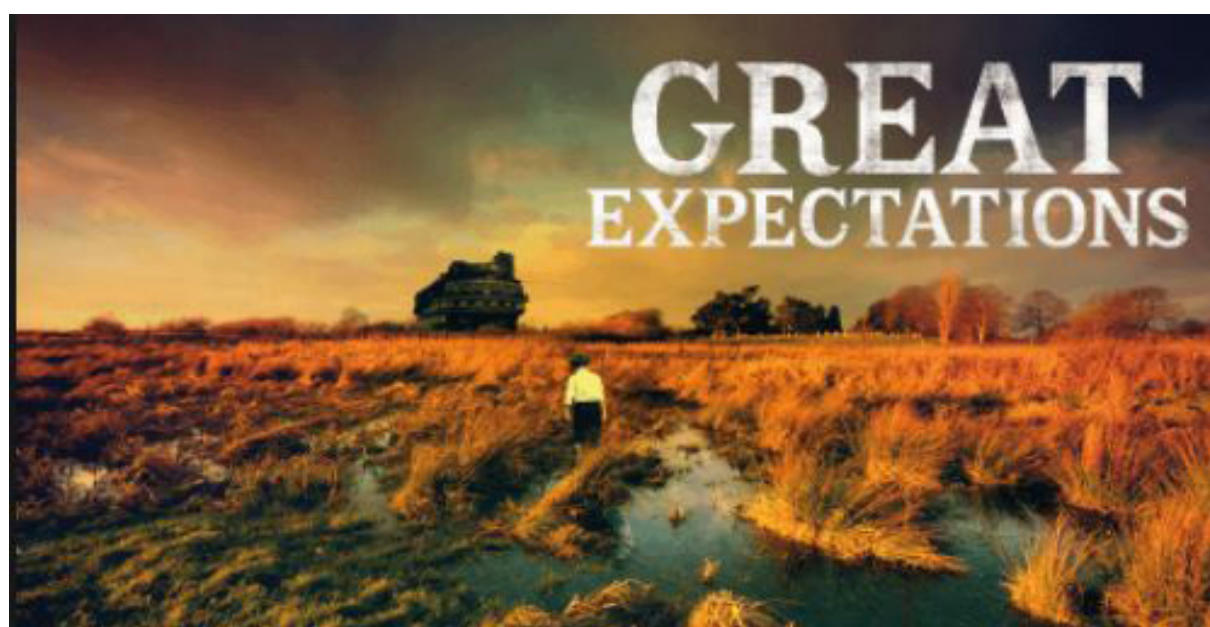
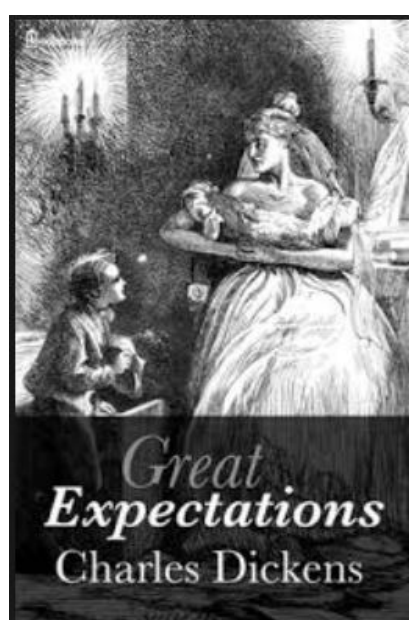


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## The Puppet Show in Great Expectations

Diana-Ştefania Eva, RE, II

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Charles Dickens' novel presents among other things the existence of two major puppeteers: Miss Havisham and Abel Magwitch. The two puppeteers are the creators of a show which involves the art of handling destinies. I will try to show in my paper this process through which destinies are changed and to analyse whether certain 'puppets' become "more flexible in the joints" or they do not manage to surpass a doll's condition.

In Dickens' novel both Pip and Estella represent some puppets whose fate is subject to other characters' will. They are easily handled due to their common condition: they are (considered) orphans. Their destiny is not drawn by anybody, they have no benchmark or support.

Estella is the daughter of a woman with a dark past and Pip is raised by his older sister, who sees him as a burden. Even the two puppeteers share a common feature: they missed their fate. Miss Havisham was jilted at the altar by the man she loved and Abel Magwitch was sentenced to jail for various infractions.

The thirst for revenge on men affects Miss Havisham who in her turn influences Estella's destiny. She offers Estella an upbringing, gives her the opportunity to get out into society and offers her all kinds of fine jewelry to delight the eyes of all. Estella becomes a femme fatale who seduces and breaks the men's heart. Miss Havisham remarks with regret that the girl she created has a heart of ice. She enjoys herself when she sees men's eyes ogling the girl and becoming her victims.

In the women's game, Pip becomes a marionette playing for her adoptive daughter. Miss Havisham notices Pip's eyes full of love and hope but she is excited when she sees how Estella treats him with contempt. From her desire to see the boy's suffering, she encourages him to love Estella. Miss Havisham explains Pip what love means and tells him that love is based on humility and complete submission. Estella and her destiny stand under the sign of revenge based on Miss Havisham's wish.

Abel Magwitch is the puppeteer who controls the orphan Pip's fate. Pip's mission is to become a true gentleman, because Abel could never be one of them. On the other hand, I think that in Magwitch's case the parent instinct appears. He adopted Pip from the moment when he observes the child's innocence who brings him stolen food from his sister's house. Thus, in Abel appears the desire to take care of Pip's future out of pity and gratitude.

In an initial phase, Pip is handled by his older sister, who raised him "by hand". When Abel appears, Pip's desire to become a gentleman, to win Estella over is fulfilled. He does not know who is taking care of his future, but he hopes that Miss Havisham is the one who sets the wheels in motion. He believes that Miss Havisham wants him to marry Estella. The boy does not understand that he is just a piece of the puzzle in Miss Havisham's game.

In Estella's case, destiny is fulfilled according to the puppeteer's will. She is getting married out of interest, remaining the same girl with the heart of ice. After finding out the truth, Pip cannot accept that his destiny is controlled by a convict with 'dirty' money. Why cannot Pip become a true gentleman: out of vanity and pride?

Unlike Estella, he is brought up in an environment where he is taught moral values such as unselfishness, honesty, condor. Therefore, he himself becomes a puppeteer for Herbert's destiny. Ultimately, the wheel turns, the puppeteer becomes puppet and Pip juggles even with his adoptive father's fate.

In a society where the material side and false appearances dominate, Pip comes with moral values and he cannot integrate completely. In an attempt to become a gentleman, society's conventions overwhelm him. Pip reveals his human side full of emotions and he cannot hide behind appearances.



If Estella followed her fate after Miss Havisham's death, Pip is a puppet that comes to take his life in his own hands when the puppeteer is trapped/dead. After the thread is torn he becomes independent and he wants to build a future even if he must accept a fresh start.  
In my opinion, these apparent happenings create a spider web, where the characters are interconnected.

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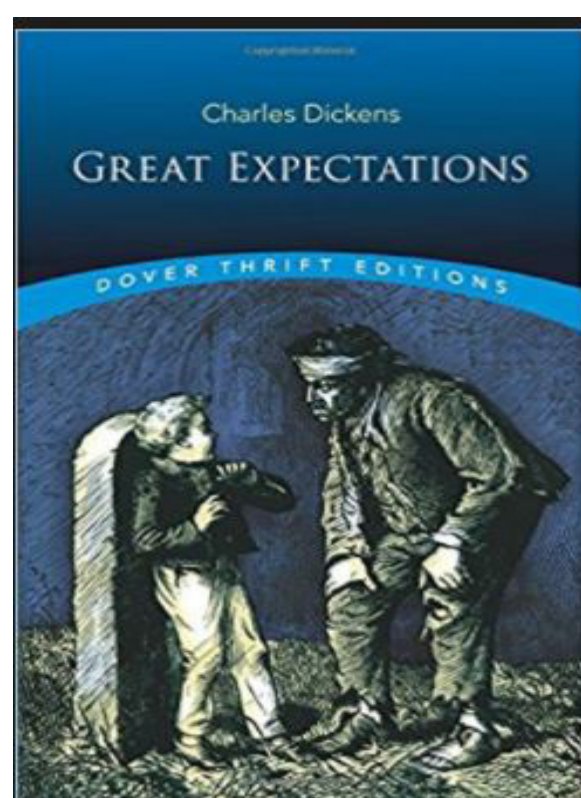
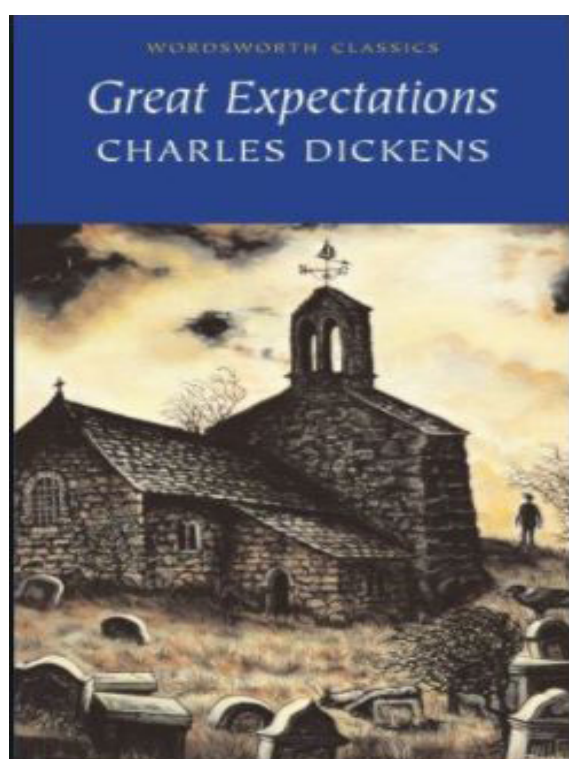
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Zamfira-Maria Petrescu, Denisia-Maria Pleșcău, Adina Prisacariu, Alexandru Roman,  
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Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

## 1. Introduction

Known not only for its many positive events that took place at the time – artists, writers and poets flourished, but also for its many social, religious and political movements which boosted border expansion and socio-political reforms, the Victorian Era is considered by many people as the “Second Renaissance Age”. This article presents a number of these many forms of social and cultural vivacity and political reform.

## 2. Early years

Alexandrina Victoria was born on May 24, 1819, at Kensington Palace, London. Her father was Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III, and her mother was the Germanic princess Marie Luise Victoire of Saxe-Coburg. Victoria’s Christianization took place a month after her birth, when she was named after her godfather, Tsar Alexander I, but she was always called Victoria, after her mother.

The family lived a happy life until January 23, 1820, when Victoria’s father, Edward, died. She was only six months old. Six days later, King George III, Edward’s father, also died. In June 1837, Victoria learned that William IV had died. She was still only 18. Although she was an independent girl, Victoria always needed a father figure. That was why, throughout her long life, she came to depend on a string of male advisors, most of them older than herself, to whom she was unreservedly devoted.<sup>1</sup>

Victoria ascended the throne. Bound to the concept of “duty”, the words that remained were “I should try to do what is fit and right”<sup>2</sup> with the promise of a new age. Lord Melbourne was her first prime minister who turned out to be a trusted counsellor, guiding Victoria throughout her first years as a Queen.

While Victoria wanted to weaken some of her mother’s influence, social convention was still asking of her to live with her mother. Thus Melbourne advised Victoria that the only way for her to remove the Duchess of Kent out of her day-to-day life<sup>3</sup> would be if she got married with someone. Out of a whole range of candidates, Prince Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, son of King Leopold I of Belgium, was the most suitable. He was her cousin. She thought he was handsome. Due to social protocol since she was Queen, she proposed to Albert. And they were married on February 10, 1840. At first, Albert was able to do little, but then became Victoria’s confidant and advisor and he undoubtedly shaped her thinking<sup>4</sup>. He believed that the monarchy should be strictly neutral in politics, but also that it had an immense moral responsibility to watch and control government. Their family grew to nine children by 1856 and they grew quite popular.

## 3. Effervescence and reform

When Albert died at the age of 42, in December 1861, Queen Victoria mourned him for a long time, and she withdrew from all of her public engagements, leaving a void in the monarchy: “My life as a happy one has ended, the world is gone for me”.<sup>5</sup> However, after 15 years, Victoria resumed the frames of political issues. During her age of reigning, Victoria had some disturbance through a series of acts passed in Parliament, but she eventually managed to lay down a monarchy that would carry on, still being able to wield political influence. In 1876, Benjamin Disraeli proposed that she take the title “Empress of India”. Victoria loved the name “Empress” so much that she used it whenever she felt like it. Even though she never actually visited India, Victoria was fascinated by their culture and the affection of the Indian people. She hated public life, but she loved being the Empress of India.

<sup>1</sup>Channel Five series Kings & Queens: Victoria, 1837–1901, Part 1, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEOtVXydiEI>, accessed 13.02.2018.

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<sup>3</sup><https://britishheritage.com/queen-victoria/>, accessed 14.02.2018

<sup>4</sup>Channel Five series Kings & Queens: Victoria, 1837–1901, Part 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-sFMTZ09Fo>, accessed 13.02.2018

<sup>5</sup>Channel Five series Kings & Queens: Victoria, 1837–1901, Part 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-sFMTZ09Fo>, accessed 13.02.2018



*The Industrial Revolution* symbolized a crucial milestone and a pivotal point in the history of Great Britain, but also in the history of mankind as a whole. The significant changes that came along with it were not reflected only in the astounding technical developments, large-scale enhancements associated with a change of pace in the production process or the economic growth that marked that period, but it was as well intertwined with major shifts in the life of the society, since this transition influenced in a way or another every aspect of the daily existence.

This process is defined as a “scaled technical and economic transition from the agrarian handcraft based economy to the one dominated by industry and machine manufacturing”<sup>6</sup>, started around the second half of the 18th century and made its way around the globe later on, the prodigy that brought the wind of change with his innovations being James Watt and his steam-based engine. Developed between 1763 and 1775, it marked the cornerstone of the Industrial Revolution, the key element that brought a change of background.

During the 1800s the Industrial Revolution spread throughout Britain and, by 1837, when Queen Victoria began her long lasting and prosperous reign meant to reshape the image of the United Kingdom, 80% of the population still lived in the countryside, working at their own farms and handcrafting goods that we usually see mass produced nowadays. Harnessing the power of steam, various mechanisms were created in order to reduce the number of people involved in the making of the goods, and thus lowering the costs and gaining pace in the production process. In this way, many workers were either hired for their skills and capacity to adapt to the new working conditions in the large factories built during the period, or discarded, since the demand was too high and there were not enough jobs for the fast growing population that almost doubled in less than half a century, from approximately 18 million people to 30 million. The growth of factories brought prosperity for certain people but it faded the earnings of the ineligible or unqualified workers. The use of steam-powered machinery further led to the expansion of factories. With an impressive number of factories being built, people left the countryside and proceeded to towns, trying to make a better living. Manchester, also named Cottonopolis, is considered to have been the first industrial town.

Besides the fact that the economy was registering an unprecedented growth due to trade and commercial development, many of the working people, who actually produced the wealth, lived in miserable conditions, having no choice but to struggle and even perish. Furnaces were operated without proper safety checks. Workers in factories or mills were affected by the deafening sounds produced by various devices. The working schedule was rough and the holidays were inexistent. Since the workforce was widely available and easy to hire, the factory owners were able to keep the remuneration for the workers as low as possible and earn as much as they could by exploiting the people that represented the backbone of businesses and, as well, of the self-interests of the employers.

As the population was constantly growing, the cities were overpopulated, the living space was scarce, and the people had to deal with the troublesome inconveniences that were making their already doomed fates seem even farther from a light that may never come. The majority of the cities and towns were not properly prepared to host the large waves of people that were in search of accommodations to live near the factories they had to work in. The employers were building houses in the enclosures of their factories, but those were basically cramped for the proportions of a family from the Victorian Era, with a household having usually 5 or 6 children and even more. Moreover, those houses lacked in utilities, since there was no running water and the inhabitants from 50 to 100 houses had to share a water pump that was, in most of the cases contaminated, and a common toilet.

<sup>6</sup>According to <https://www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution>, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/industrial-revolution.html>, accessed 13.02.2018.



The widely shortage of available houses often determined families or groups of workers to live in a single room of a house already owned by other people. Moreover, the garbage was not disposed in a proper manner or not disposed at all and the smoke rising from the chimneys of the factories can be listed among the factors that caused a heavy blow to the precarious health condition of the people. These, as well as others, were among the major 'sins' of the Industrial Era.

*The abuse against children* in the Victorian Era is like a black spot in history, a fact that cannot be eradicated, forgotten or forgiven since those poor souls were neglected and exploited, exposing how gruesome the humans can be when the money runs low. Many of them were sent by their families to perform different tasks and earn a little amount that could often stand as a line between life and death back in the day. The long working hours, the lack of safety measures in the factories and the necessity of using hazardous materials often exposed the children to severe health issues and even put their lives at risk, since they did not possess the resistance, resilience and the necessary skills set to work in such harsh conditions.

Some decided to take action and shine a light over the grim situation by means of some *social reforms*: in 1853, the tax on soap was taken off in order to make the people have a better personal hygiene and to be more aware of its importance in relation to their health state; in 1833 The Factory Act was issued by the government with the aim of ensuring better conditions for the children working in factories. More documents were issued under the same name during the century in 1844, 1847, 1864 and 1867 with further points regarding *the working hours for children and women* and the availability of the acts for factories that had a certain number of workers engaged in activity; The Mines and Collieries Act of 1842 represented an act issued by the Parliament of The United Kingdom that banned all children under the age of 10 from working in mines; The Public Health Act of 1875 banned open sewers, and established a rubbish collection system.<sup>7</sup>

The Victorian period is marked by a wonderful change concerning *literature*. The fight for power between the new social class which appeared – the bourgeoisie – and the traditional aristocracy, together with the feeling of emptiness brought into the people's souls by the fact that they were being replaced by machines, these two major events were outlined by the social-realist novels which were brought to life in this age.

A remarkable change (which anticipated the features of Modernism) outlined in the new type of novel was the evanescence of the author, the evanescence of that Demiurge who controlled the lives of his characters, who transformed them into puppets. It is the time when the narrator begins to take part in the action, dominating the entire text with his presence. Sensibility, sensitivity, the level of knowledge and the emotional structure<sup>8</sup>, all of these attributes are shaped by the narrator, who creates the new universe according to them. Narrators present the reality in the manner in which it is perceived by their minds. The traditional novel is gradually left behind (together with its traditional omniscient author) and the psychological novel (which analyses the essence of the human being) takes its place. The Victorian narrator does not show each detail of the Victorian society. He shows the facts from his perspective, and that is why, when we dive into this vast period, we need to observe it through many pairs of glasses (and the entire universe changes while we play with all these pairs of glasses); we need to analyse it by looking for all the pieces of the puzzle – these pieces of the puzzle being depicted by the all perspectives of the novelists.

<sup>7</sup><http://primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/victorians/industrialrevolution.html>, <http://www.victorian-era.org/victorian-era-factories.html>, <https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/education/factory-actdoc.pdf>, accessed 13.02.2018..

<sup>8</sup>Cuțitaru, Codrin-Liviu, *The Victorian Novel*, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University Press, Iași, 2004, pp. 5-11, 43-45, 14-15.

Charles Dickens is the one who, in an original manner, replaced the omniscient perspective with the first person narrative. He understood the fact that the human nature is contradictory, that the human pendulates between good and evil, and integrated this truth in his work, giving up on the idea that the characters are either heroes or villains. Even if at first this resembles a chaos, it is true-to-life, and it also allows us to see fragments of reality.

*The emancipation of the woman* in a universe dominated by men brought to light the female cultural identity. As Virginia Woolf says, the women have always had obstacles when it came to creation: the sacrifice of her time (for a husband, children, family), the financial aspects – which made her dependent socially on a man, plus the mentality that a woman is not capable to create and, when she does so, she becomes superficial, because she writes things without value, these three things represented the greatest impediments. Fortunately, in the Victorian era, the woman succeeds to express herself in culture, art and literature – where she begins to write herself. The Victorian female writers who enlightened an era through their creations are: Charlotte Bronte, Anne Bronte and Emily Bronte.<sup>9</sup>

At the start of the Victorian Age *men and women* were even more clearly divided into “two nations”. The rights, responsibilities, and duties of each were quite different. “Ladies” were not supposed to work (if they were part of a “respectable” family), otherwise the society would have presumed that the husband or the father could not afford to support them. Therefore, idleness was encouraged from the country mansions of the nobility and gentry down to the townhouses of the middle classes, leaving the household chores to domestic servants.

As their independence grew, women demanded equal legal and political rights, one of the most important being the one regarding ownership of property. When a woman married, all her possessions (including money and children) belonged to her husband. The Parliament took action in 1870, allowing the wives to keep their own earnings; but it was not until 1882 that this right was granted to the wives.

Even Queen Victoria opposed the granting of full political rights to females, considering that politics should not concern women. Ms Emmeline Pankhurst, who founded the Women’s Social and Political Union (W.S.P.U.), thought otherwise and organised public demonstrations in favour of women’s suffrage (voting rights). The members were soon known as suffragettes and fought for their political rights, supporting smoking, adopting ‘rational’ dress, and rejecting double standards in sexual behaviour (men being allowed to cheat on their wives, whereas a wife could not have been unfaithful, or she would have been judged and even imprisoned).<sup>10</sup>

The Victorian Era left its mark on the British society in every sphere that characterizes life as we know it: culture, politics, economy, industry and the quotidian life of the society, reshaping the face of this nation, particularly, and of our world, generally, in some particular and significant aspects. Everyone knows that along with the progress there are more risks to foresee and withstand, but even if it is burdensome to face harsh changes, people must carry on and go on with the flow, since there is no other direction than forward. The people from the period mentioned in this article survived the transition, coped with the abuses and the low standards of life and managed to rise from their own ashes and redeem slowly, but steadily, and get what they truly deserved. They proved that even after being humiliated, forced to live and exploited like livestock, dealing with terrible shortcomings and crushed by the authority of the employers, as supreme judges of their star-crossed destinies, they can rise up and continue the journey, even though they had to pass through the “Caudine Forks” in order to reach their objectives.

<sup>9</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup>Cootes, R.J.; Snellgrove, L.E., Britain since 1700, Longman Group Limited, London, 1968, Chapter 20, “The Two Nations’ Social Life, Attitudes, Reforms – from the Victorian Age to the First World War”, pp. 244-247.



## Conclusion

Throughout her reign, Victoria carefully watched over her people, by visiting, for instance, Dublin in 1900 and the returning wounded in hospitals. Having reigned almost 64 years, Queen Victoria died, after some strokes, at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, on January 22, 1901, but at the time of her death she was at the head of the greatest Empire the world had ever seen. She put her remarkable stamp on the 19th century, bringing Britain through “a period of great changes – the Industrial Revolution, the expansion of the British Empire, and a shift of direct political power away from the monarchy”<sup>11</sup>. Her long reign demonstrated that even a determined queen could not stand the tide of Parliamentary progress. But it also showed that the monarchy could be important as a symbol of national unity and empire, setting the tone for political, social and family life. The day she died she was much revered and utterly missed.<sup>12</sup>



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## Is the World Still a Vanity Fair?

**Maria Botezatu, EF, II**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suciu

Is the world still a vanity fair? We can truly say that the world has always been a vanity fair because the world has been dominated by something more powerful and attractive than the good and the moral.

People nowadays are the same as the people presented in past literature. As W. M. Thackeray presents in his novel *Vanity Fair*, the world is a place full of lies, hypocrisy, contradiction between the reality we truly inhabit and the world people imagine to live in.

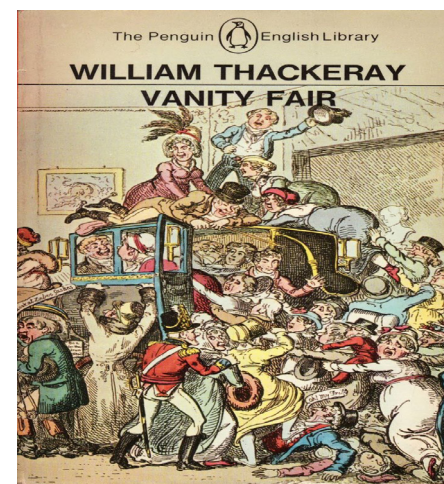
From the beginning God gave men the power to change and dominate the things around, but men understood it in a wrong way.

Even though men are complex beings with different opinions and different ways of reacting, they have always had almost the same ideals: happiness which they have always and almost indissolubly to the desire to have money.

Money, as father of luxury and pleasure, has remained the centre of men's interest all through the history and it is more and more evident that all the things turn around. The idea of social success and recognition has remained the same. Men are treated in relation to their money. Thackeray presents an orphan who wants to reach a higher position on the social scale, and who gives up being who she really is. In the behaviour of this character we can find many similarities with the behaviour many people have today.

Even though we do not want power, we desperately need money, properties, and we like to live in luxury. This is the starting point of all the flaws of society. There is no correctness, and people need to fight for living. That is why many people become immoral, they lie, disregard rules and so on.

Being created as a social being, the individual needs to live in groups and to be accepted by them, but it is not easy. Each group creates its own rules and culture and somehow excludes the others. The rich of today behave like the aristocrats from the past. For them, the others are not important and they do not help them, as long as they do not gain something from this.



This world teaches us to be selfish, competitive, to envy the others and to lose love, respect, pity, kindness, and all which means quality.

Everyone is preoccupied with what the others feel and think about them and they waste time and energy to become someone, about whom people do not really care. Appearance is more important today than essence. Everywhere we can see people who pretend to be different from the others, but they dress the same, speak the same and if you do not conform to this, you are marginalized. Hypocrisy has become a virtue and sincerity a flaw.

Politics, as usual, does not solve the problems of this world, in fact, it amplifies them. The old thirst for power has not stopped at all and it will never stop.

In conclusion, we can say that we inherited the flaws of our ancestors and people pretend to be blind and to create the illusion that we have learnt something from the past.

## What Wonderland Is... for Me

Victoria Gulica, EF, II

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

I cannot say that I don't believe in magic or miracles... On the contrary, I know it would be a great shame if I didn't... How can I try to confirm my own existence in any another way? It's all magic or at least a magic story. Let me tell it to you, too.

Alice's mishaps in her W/wonderland helped me find the answer to my wondering. We live in a world where we are the main protagonists, where the "wonder land" is inside of us, in our hands, our eyes, our mind and spirit, but we do not understand this until one moment...



The first wonder which happens in our life is our birth... From the beginning we are like rabbits: small, nice, fluffy, gentle and sweet. Being humans just descended from paradise, we exist in an absolutely unknown world, but still have the power to survive here. This is the first step of our adventure: we live in a magic "(w)hole" – our family. Here we start to grow and to form as a personality. This way, our adventures continue, and now, with a little bottle of magic potion, that we taste and find very nice, in fact a mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pine-apple, roast-turkey, toffy and hot buttered toast, we gain a new perspective. This is just our mysterious childhood where our friends look like a Duck and a Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet and several other curious creatures. On this stage of life, I would compare us to small mice who come out of their hiding places to search for "food", food to grow: kindness, protection, friendship, love and courage.

We grow and the tale continues – we become wiser, things start to clarify, then we dream, we meet out justice and like a caterpillar we move among life's problems crystallizing our mind, our thoughts.

When we become adults our whole life transforms into a desire to possess and a space to overcome. Everything we see is in bright colours, and the impossible seems be possible. We are full of adventures and it is the time of our personal bloom; it is also the time of the acquisition of the most precious experiences. It's the time when we can make the distinction between us and others, we negotiate positions. It's the time for our mad tea-party in order to get used with the strangest things in the world and to accept that this is how things are.

At one point we arrive at the queen's croquet-ground, and what does that mean? It means that now, in this stage of our life we are independent to manage our life and to be responsible for our actions due to the experience we have achieved until this point.

We finish with the mock turtle's story, the last paragraph in our life. Then we make a balance sheet and prepare for the great "evidence" of becoming.

I think this is the true W/wonderland for me, and for all of us. It all happens in our own minds, souls and eyes, we should only make an effort to feel it. In fact, Alice's Wonderland was a secret which I had to discover on my own, and a motivation to be creative.

*Find, build and live through your W/wonderland!*



Books will always be a big mirror of the world, in which anyone can see his or her life. Maybe someone sees Harry Potter or Jane Eyre in the mirror, but, in what I am concerned, while looking in the mirror I found that the one who represents me and some of my experiences was Alice.

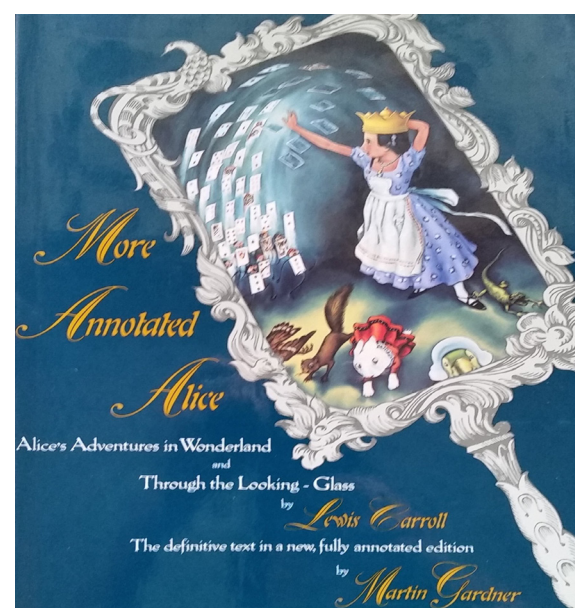
When my adult life began, I felt that soon I would reach Alice's Wonderland and it really was an amazing adventure. I invite you to discover how my trip was.

Last year, when I had to choose the University and the Faculty I would attend, I felt like Alice while falling down in the rabbit-hole – I was lonely because my parents were abroad and my future Wonderland was one full of non-sense. I became more and more confused, and all I wanted to do was to solve the big puzzle that later would materialize in my future. At the beginning I wanted to stay in Moldova but all around me there were signs with big red letters TASTE ME and DRINK ME – I was being invited to try something new. This way an idea crossed my mind, and I began to be curious; then I asked myself what if I searched my Wonderland in another country – and that is why and when I applied the University here, in Bacău, Romania.

I began my new life, far from my family in a small and silent town, where I wanted to integrate and feel comfortable. I wanted to learn how to be more courageous and after drinking the first potion I thought that I could find the key that would open any door towards my integration but... BOOM!!! I became again afraid and very shy. Later I tasted a piece of mushroom, and tried a new experience, thinking that I could make some friend, but I failed again.

I thought that it would be like this for ever, but for one moment I remembered the dialogue between Alice and the Rabbit, when she asked "How long is forever?" and the answer was: "Sometimes, just one second!" and then I started seeing everything from this new perspective. Space changed... I now started to perceive time differently so that I could cope better – and I did: step by step I made friends and succeeded in my studying at the university. It had been a bumpy beginning, but since then, the journey has been running smoothly.

Finally, I woke up from my that dream and now I feel here like home... I've created my reality as I wanted, and now I am prepared for new challenges and I am eager to discover what my next adventure will look like.





If you ask one thousand people how the world is divided, almost everybody will answer ‘That is simple; the world is divided into continents’. But if among those one thousand people there are fifty who will answer ‘The world is divided into countries’ you can easily figure out that those people studied abroad with Erasmus at least once while they were students. Erasmus students know that the world is more than 7 continents, it is 196 countries.

That’s what I found out as soon as I started spending some time in the Czech Republic, due to my Erasmus+ scholarship. Apparently, Romania, the country I am from, and the Czech Republic are more than just countries, but individualities. I know that this point of view may sound a little bit too modernist for the 21st century, due to my subjectivity too, but once I got to see things below their surfaces and tags, I actually got to know more about these two countries. And this is what has been happening with me during the past five months.

First of all, when I got here, I expected to see a smaller Romania, seeing Prague as a small Bucharest, but in spite of the fact that both countries that we have in view dealt with the Ottoman invasions in the past (in the 15th century, respectively in the 18th century), then both were parts of the alliance formed during World War I (Little Entente) and dealt with communism in the previous century, they are really different in terms of culture. Of course, both of them started to develop in terms of the economy during the communist period and after that, too, but we have to keep in mind the way they did. For example, if Czechoslovakia introduced the term ‘Socialism with a human face’ (a political programme announced by Alexander Dubček), Romania’s leader from that time, Nicolae Ceaușescu, was totally against it. In fact, it seems that Dubček’s decision made his country one of the most developed countries in Europe, targeting internal liberalization, while Ceaușescu was taking risks by independently involving Romania in the external policy, trying to get close to the United States of America, China, and other countries. At this point, the Soviet Union was kind of threatened and it had to choose one of the two capital cities to prove its power. Prague was considered a better target due to its geographical placement (central Europe), its smaller population and the principles its people sustained. This period gave rise to plenty of stereotypes, but the most popular tag that both countries still have is Cold War = cold people.

It is obvious that the facts mentioned in the previous paragraph justify the Soviet influence and its marks on the economy, culture and contemporary lifestyles with their consumerism, but what about the French influence, which manifested especially in architecture? Doesn’t it sound a little bit absurd to mix the elegant French influence with the rough Russian one in order to obtain something beautiful but original? Well, not anymore; not after you visit either the Czech Republic or Romania.

Frankly, I have always declared myself as being a fan of Bucharest, not because of its typical hustle and bustle, but because of its architecture (at a time, it was also said that Bucharest was ‘Little Paris’ due to it). In fact, starting with the 19th century, Bucharest has been in search of a vibrant architecture, new forms of expression, seeking to avoid baroque or renaissance elements; it adopted more modernist elements, and later in the century the neoclassical and the neo-romanesque styles, being inspired by Paris, the capital of France. On the other hand, Prague seems to be against this revival of architecture, the buildings not being so much affected by history. In other words, Prague is a melting pot including all of the major styles of the past: baroque, gothic, renaissance and so on. I have to admit that this city fascinated me in the deepest way possible and made me explore the other cities of the Czech Republic in search of other hidden jewels, as Prague is, which I managed to do by converting my Latin accent into a Slavic one with the aim of looking like a local at the railway station.



Last but not least, what would a country be without its customs and traditions? If Romania's culture is divided according to its counties and is mostly based on the orthodox religion, in the Czech Republic the religion does not have such a big influence, almost 50% of the population being atheists or unaffiliated. The strong point of this country seems to be, in to my opinion, instead of architecture, its symbols, which can be easily figured out during a one- hour walk in the right place. If at least once in your lifetime you pass on your way home through streets 'invaded' by Bohemian crystal or absinth showcases and by restaurants with pork, beef and beer offers or if a Skoda van that transports Bata shoes honks you because the traffic lights changed too fast from green to red, you can know for sure that you are in the Czech Republic. And if you ever find yourself in a group of thirty other people, in the middle of spring, going to a hockey game to support HC Dynamo team, you can know for sure that you are in Pardubice, on the best Erasmus that has ever existed.

To sum up, Romania and the Czech Republic are pretty different, sharing only the communist file of history and its influence on contemporary economy and lifestyle. In other words, we can affirm that the culture of these countries represents the kernel, while the historical context and the stereotypes attracted by it represent only the shell. It depends on us which part we value the most. Finally, it looks like a country is more than a territory – for a local, it is home and for a foreign student it may be the host of the best time of her life.

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As I was scrolling through the Internet, in search of a subject for my article, I came across a website containing an article from 2015, called “*Romania, sold by acre*”<sup>1</sup>. The reality presented in there bore a striking resemblance to the everyday life of each one of us. The article started with a symbolical statement: “*We do not sell our country! We give it by the acre! And to our successors, we leave as a legacy the supermarkets full of potatoes brought from Egypt, onions from France, and Polish apples.*”<sup>2</sup> In Romania, there are no official statistics about the infields owned by foreigners but, according to data coming from different sources, up to 10% of the infields belong to investors from outside the EU, about 20 – 30% is controlled by the investors from the EU, as it was stated in a study conducted by the Transnational Institute for European Coordination Via Campesina and Hands off the Land network in 2013, named “*Land concentration, land grabbing and people’s struggles in Europe*”.

This left me doubtful, suspicious and, ultimately, wondering. What is Romania coming to, when so much of its terrains belongs to foreign companies, not to mention natural resources being illegally exploited, woods cut down mercilessly and train transported off the border by companies such as Holzindustrie Schweighofer, or IKEA, or springs with such high flow rates that could easily supply the whole country, so pure that the communists kept them secret, NASA declared them the purest on earth, all of which has been sold out to other nations?! Or underground resources that, with help from corrupt politicians, by exploiting, have polluted and destroyed lives of hundreds in our villages where cyanide was left behind, because, who has not heard of Roșia Montana? Yes, there is evidence for each and every one of these stated facts, as I am going to show in the next lines, and we are aware of them, but who really cares about these harrowing truths? We are to blame for our future, the children’s and grandchildren’s future, which does not look quite bright. In Romania, there are more foreign companies than Romanian ones, which means that we are going to work for them.

They will soon own our Everything, and what will be left for us to do? We will be foreigners in our own country.

In this context, the aim of this article is to raise awareness upon such facts. It is our life. It is now or never, because someday it may be Too Late.

A first aspect is the current situation of Romania’s arable terrains and how these were sold out to foreign clients. The previously mentioned study, realised by Transnational Institute (TNI) in June 2013, presents the current situation of natural resources being massively sold out to foreign buyers in the past decade throughout European states, such as France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, Ukraine, Ireland, and, of course, Romania. The chapter “*Scramble for land in Romania: Iron fist in a velvet glove*” portrays a vivid image of our country’s current situation, its natural resources being sold out to foreigners, exploitation of lands having effects that the study describe as “*far-reaching and often irrevocable*”.<sup>4</sup> The consequences of massive land investments include the weakening of local economies, as foreign investments do not create new workplaces; the exploitation also affects the natural and cultural heritage.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.activenews.ro/economie-agricultura/Romania-vanduta-la-hectar.-Oficial-40-din-terenurile-agricole-sunt-in-posesia-strainilor-120230>, accessed on January 10, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Transnational Institute (TNI), “Land concentration, land grabbing and people’s struggles in Europe” (2013), Study coordinators and editors: Jennifer Franco and Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., [https://www.tni.org/files/download/land\\_in\\_europe-jun2013.pdf](https://www.tni.org/files/download/land_in_europe-jun2013.pdf), accessed on January 10, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 146.



Some of the companies that bought Romanian properties and are exploiting natural resources mentioned in the study are the following: Transavia, which, by cultivating 12,000 ha of cereals and monopolising all uncultivated land of the locals through a lease contract, has affected the local farmers possibilities to extend or to develop their activity within normal parameters, Emilliana West Rom, located in Timis, which, by having cultivated more than 10,000 ha from 2011 to 2013 used modern actions of irrigation that polluted the waters of area which led to the death of the fish, and Agro Chirnogi, a Lebanese company that exports an immense amount of cereals to Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, and has been exploiting over 70% of the Chirnogi village.

A good example of Romanian lands being massively sold out is the one illustrated in a press report<sup>5</sup> done by the journalists from *France 24*, where they discussed the situation of a 19-year-old man from France, Maxime Laurent who, in 2009, bought 1,400 ha of land in Măceșu de Sus. He claimed that this would be impossible for a person to achieve in a lifetime in France, saying that, in his country, he would need about three generations to pass in order to own so much land. That was not an isolated case, as many other foreign farmers came to Romania, encouraged by the prospects of low priced lands with highly fertile soil. Lucas Kelterborn, Director of Development at Bio Farmland, near Arad, claimed that the company bought 800 ha of land where they produce 600 t of cereals which are being exported to Germany and Switzerland. *“So far, these products have come from China. It is natural that we start to produce them here, in Romania.”*<sup>6</sup> We, on the other hand, are consumers of imported vegetables and cereals, due to the fact that we do not take advantage of our lands. Foreigners export our products to their countries. How does that sound?



Perhaps one of the most controversial problems in our country is the massive deforestation. Ro-

mania produces annually 18 million cubic meters of raw wood, one-third of which represents the firewood. Of the remaining 12 million cubic meters, only the wood from the coniferous forests, half the quantity, spruce, and fir, can be used in manufacturing companies. Six million cubic meters of logs remain. According to data from the Holzindustrie Schweighofer company's website, about 4 million cubic meters are processed in the company's factories (71% of the total). The difference goes to exports or is purchased by the investors in our country.

The so-called King of Wood, the Austrian Gerald Schweighofer, came to Romania in 2003 as a foreign investor, planning to enter the wood business in these lands. He started with opening a factory in Sebeș, and, so far, he has opened four more. Today, about 89,000 train wagons filled with wood are annually being taken out from our woods. The firm is annually processing around 4 million cubic meters of wood. The businessman is not involved in any criminal investigation, he is unsuspected of any break of the law, despite the obvious resemblance of his acts to an act of crime. It is true that, ever since he started his business, he has benefited from the help of some 'good-willing' politicians of ours. What took Schweighofer out of Austria *“was the Law 440/1957 modified through the Government Ordinance 59/2002, that established the strict control of tree cuts.”*<sup>8</sup> The businessman sold all his shares held in the Austrian company to his business partner and started travelling to the East.

<sup>5</sup><http://www.bucharestherald.ro/economics/40-economics/32904-romania-noul-el-dorado-al-europenilor>, accessed on January 12, 2018.

<sup>6</sup><http://infopuls.ro/2016/07/21/regele-lemnului-austriacul-gerald-schweighofer-termita-ce-devoreaza-padurile-romaniei-ce-legatura-este-intre-schweighofer-si-klaus-iohannis/>, accessed on January 10, 2018.

<sup>7</sup><https://www.schweighofer.at/index.php>, accessed on January 10, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> <http://infopuls.ro/2016/07/21/regele-lemnului-austriacul-gerald-schweighofer-termita-ce-devoreaza-padurile-romaniei-ce-legatura-este-intre-schweighofer-si-klaus-iohannis/>,

accessed on January 10, 2018.

What brought him to Romania was the urgent adoption of two normative acts through which there were created the conditions for starting the massive exploitation of the forest fund by any firm in Romania or anywhere. An Emergency Ordinance was promulgated by the Prime Minister of the time, Adrian Năstase, with the conclusion by the National Forest Directorate of long-term contracts for the sale of timber, approved in the same year by law. In 2003, when the auctions started, only Schweighofer's firm had the ability to take over these contracts – which actually happened.

Schweighofer owns five factories in Romania, although he once stated in an interview: *“In Ro-*



*mania, we will never have businesses of one billion euro. There is not enough raw material for five factories here.”*<sup>9</sup> But then, he seemed to have changed his mind. He now owns five woodworking factories. No wonder the profit he made reached 330 million Euros in the period 2008-2013 (net profit), and a cumulative turnover of 1.9 billion Euros. The equivalent in wood is huge. *“To give us an idea, let's assume that all the wood processed every year in the Austrian factories is concentrated on mountains of 2000 hectares each. Thus, its factories chop all wood from ten mountains annually.”*<sup>10</sup>

### Schweighofer's factories

Siret (Suceava). The Siret plant was taken over in 2009 from Swedwood Sweden (IKEA). Here, spruce, fir, and pine are processed. The factory has 5 hectares.

Comănești (Bacău). At The Finnish Finnforest company taken over in 2010, 75% of the processed wood is from Romania, and some species (fromager) are imported. The factory has 17 hectares.

Sebeș (Alba): 90% of the processed wood (spruce and fir) is cut in Romania, and the difference comes from import.



The unit has a debt capacity of 1.45 million cubic meters per year.

Reci (Covasna): Holzindustrie Schweighofer built another woodworking factory in Reci (Covasna County). Commencement of operations was scheduled for the first semester of 2015. It was the largest plant of the company (70 hectares) and used raw material from Romania and import.

Rădăuți (Suceava). Established in 2008, the factory manufactures spruce and fir from Romania (60%) and imported pine (40%). The unit occupies 50 hectares. They are made from pine wood and are special premium prod-

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup><http://infopuls.ro/2016/07/21/regele-lemnului-austriacul-gerald-schweighofer-termita-ce-devoreaza-padurile-romaniei-ce-legatura-este-intre-schweighofer-si-klaus-iohannis/>, accessed on January 10, 2018.



## Harvard and IKEA, or doing business with trafficked wood<sup>11</sup>

Over a third of the forests owned by these large companies is located in Vrancea County and these forests were investigated by prosecutors for illegal retrocessions and claimed by the Romanian state. Ikea claimed they checked the property history before buying it, but problems occurred only later. Harvard has transferred several court cases to new subsidiaries it controls through offshore companies. Local intermediaries who facilitated the sale of forests to Harvard are prosecuted for several offenses: deception, corruption, organized crime, and money laundering.<sup>12</sup>

### “France 2 investigation: Romanian virgin forests become furniture in the homes of rich Europeans”<sup>12</sup>

A press report released by France 2 on 28.01.2017 reveals data on the purchasing of timber illegally harvested by large companies such as the IKEA, Schweighofer, and other large furniture manufacturers in the world. The ‘Cash Investigation’ journalists *“started from a common sofa, produced by Ikea and followed the production chain which led them to Romania, the site where the pieces of furniture are produced and wherefrom the timber is supplied. Ikea sofas are made of virgin wood in Țarcu Mountains, Caraș Severin County (south-western Romania).”*<sup>13</sup>

Gabriel Păun, chairman of Agent Green, an organization that fights for putting a stop to the cutting of virgin forests in Romania, took part in the investigation, helping France 2 to reveal the actions that harm the woods. He said he has been working with the French journalists for two years. *“The idea was rather simple. We went to a virgin forest, we followed the timber down to the storage house, from there to the company which cut it, to a factory in Sebeș, further on to a storage house in Cluj and from there on to the entire planet, where the timber becomes furniture”*<sup>14</sup>, Păun said. He stated that there are problems not only with the illegally cut woods but also with the legally cut ones. Although it would not seem so, the legal cuts are also abusive, irrespective of the form of property: *“We do not agree with most of the forestry agreements. The cut is above the level of manufacturing, generally, and is done poorly,”*<sup>15</sup> France 2 stated.

## The mining project from Roșia Montană

Roșia Montană is a multi-billion dollar project extended on a 1,500 ha and it involved the destruction of *“four mountains, forests, 740 farms, a village of 2,400 inhabitants, 10 churches, 9 cemeteries, 50 buildings classified as historical monuments of national value, 7 km of Roman roads, 80 km of mediaeval and contemporary mining galleries and other archaeological relics.”*<sup>16</sup> Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) was established in 1997 in Alba County, having 80% Canadian capital. Roșia Montană is composed of 16 villages.



<sup>11</sup>The translated title of the article „Harvard și Ikea, afaceri cu păduri traficate”, available at <https://www.riseproject.ro/articol/harvard-si-ikea-afaceri-cu-paduri-traficate/>, accessed on January 14, 2018.

<sup>12</sup>The title of an article by Valeriu Lazăr, fully available here <http://www.romaniajournal.ro/france-2-investigation-romanian-virgin-forests-become-furniture-in-the-homes-of-rich-europeans/>, accessed on 6.02.2018.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Transnational Institute (TNI), “Land concentration, land grabbing and people’s struggles in Europe” (2013), Study coordinators and editors: Jennifer Franco and Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., [https://www.tni.org/files/download/land\\_in\\_europe-jun2013.pdf](https://www.tni.org/files/download/land_in_europe-jun2013.pdf), p.158, accessed on January 10, 2018.



The corporation has worked ever since, with help from corrupt authorities. The previously mentioned study *“Land concentration, land grabbing and people’s struggles in Europe”*, conducted by the Transnational Institute (TNI), stated the following: *“According to the company’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report,<sup>19</sup> would consist of four pits for gold and silver, two for construction material and waste dumps, including a large-scale tailings management facility (TMF). At full production (24/7 operation), the mine would extract 500,000 tons each week. It would emit 134kg of cyanide per day and use between 13 and 15 million kg of cyanide per year during the 16-year life of the mine. While mining will take place at Roșia Montană, the Corna village in the adjacent valley would be turned into the TMF to hold 250 million tons of unconsolidated tailings. It is supposed to have a surface area of roughly 4 km by 2 km and the tailings would be contained by a rockfill dam over 1 km long and 185m high. The environmental risks are significant and imply water grabbing. According to EU regulations, the concentration of cyanide in the tailings pond should not exceed 10mg/l so the company promises a concentration of 5–7 mg/l. Even at this level, the possibility of an accident releasing this cyanide into the local water would produce an environmental disaster, also affecting Bulgaria, Hungary, and Serbia. There are also concerns about the size of the tailing pond: with a storage capacity of 215 million tons of waste material and 12.3 million m<sup>3</sup> of used waters, the consequences of a dam failure due to slides or heavy rain would be disastrous. For instance, the town of Abrud, with over 6,000 inhabitants located 2 km downstream from the proposed tailing pond would be practically wiped off the map.”*<sup>17</sup> The company needed land to extend its area of activity, so they started to buy land and houses from the inhabitants of the village by starting the so-called project of “Relocation”. By 2013, the RMGC had already bought 78% of the 1,600 ha of the land they needed to start the project. Starting with Alburnus Maior, a community NGO founded in 2000 by the local villagers, the resistance expanded and went national with the campaign *Salvați Roșia Montană*, or *Save Roșia Montană*.

The project consisted in the opening of the largest auriferous surface exploitation by cyanide in Europe. In the Corna Valley, a decanting pond was built, covering an area of 367 hectares.

The Prime Minister wanted to withdraw the Roșia Montană file from UNESCO<sup>18</sup>, so as to no longer be included in the world heritage list. The announcement<sup>19</sup> made by the former Prime Minister Mihai Tudose on 29.08.2017 was criticized by the associations fighting for the rescue of the area.

### **The so-called ‘Immortality springs’ from Bucegi over time<sup>20</sup>**



In 1927, the first researches were made in the Bucegi Mountains, which targeted the area known as The Seven Springs waterfall. After a water analysis was performed, the results were astonishing, concluding that it had no bacteria, no nitrate, being considered the purest in the world. Other researches made by foreign institutes had the same results. The legend states that the seven springs could be the holy water of the Dacians who believed that the springs had miraculous healing powers. In the years 1981-1982, Hidrotehnica Company carried out studies on “the mysterious waters from the heart of the Bucegi”, and after the results were found, the entire area was closed at the orders of President Nicolae Ceaușescu. During communism, water from there was consumed only by the Ceaușescu family.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.romaniacurata.ro/premierul-tudose-reaprinde-scandalul-rosia-montana-retragem-dosarul-de-la-unesco-acolo-sunt-zacamințele-noastre/>, accessed on January 10, 2018.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup><https://identitatea.ro/izvoare-din-bucegi-cu-cea-mai-pura-apa-planeta-unde-exista-nicio-bacterie/>, accessed on January 17, 2018.

With a flow of about 400 liters per second, the water springs form a cave where there is a huge underground lake that has never dried. The researchers have two hypotheses about the purity of the Seven Springs water, one referring to the fact that it possibly passes through a magnetic field, which eliminates all of the potential impurities; the other hypothesis involves the existence of a silver deposit near the springs, which would be preventing the bacteria from developing. However, it is unclear which one of the two is the real theory, so the area remains wrapped in mystery. According to bioenergetic findings, there are very strong positive energies in the area. In December 2006, the company Furry Infor SRL from Campina auctioned the spring and the land from Bolovani for 49 years. The director of the company said in an interview with the journalist Laura Pistol from *Ziua* Newspaper: *“We haven’t won the auction yet, this happened earlier this month, and a letter was mentioned that suggested collaboration, the NATO representative wanted us to bottle and distribute water from Bolovani to troops on mission in our country”*<sup>21</sup>

We live in a country full of controversy. Along with the beauty and treasures we stumble upon with every step we take, there comes a great amount of ignorance towards the immense importance of them all, a sense of misinformation and lack of interest that have scared the foreigners who took action themselves in order to raise public awareness (such as the France 2 investigation on our woods being massively cut). They were astonished to find such marvellous views, impressed with the opportunities we have for changing something for the better, and very surprised to understand that we simply ignore them, those chances, as we have done along the time. It is not a matter of blaming someone else, such as our corrupt politicians, the ones who lack sympathy towards this state and its people, but it is about each one of us, who has the power to choose, to choose to protest, refuse, and take action for the great Change for the Better to occur. I, for example, believe that our protests and marches have not passed unheard, things are slightly different now, and things have changed. What we should be doing is signing petitions, going to the country leadership and change laws; replace those who refuse us and our pleas with others who actually care about something. It’s high time for us to take action, because later on, in vain all our struggles will be.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.



## The Internet and the Influence over the Society

**Adrian Tudor, Information technology, II**

Coordinator: Professor's assistant Gabriela Andrioai

Advances in technology have brought us on-line banking, smart cars, smart TVs, lightning fast computers, and the latest buzz: virtual reality. Since Internet has entered our life, our world has changed in both positive and negative ways. The greatest merit of Internet is that it opens up a whole new world of information on any topic, in a matter of seconds, reducing our effort and time. It is highly beneficial for the students, businessmen, government agencies and/or research organisations.

Nowadays, we can send letters and emails to anyone, in any part of the world just by clicking a few buttons on our computer; we can keep in touch with our friends and family around the world, just sitting comfortably in our chairs. Internet has made communication highly fast, cheap and safe; it has also widened business opportunities. You can advertise your goods and products on the internet as well as seek jobs, place orders, attend international business conferences, deal with stock markets, buy and exchange currencies, make online transactions. We can make new friends and learn about new cultures, study online, search for information, practice our knowledge of the foreign languages.

It has reduced the usage of paper by making everything computerized in the offices, schools, hotels, airports, universities, colleges, shops, industries, businesses and so on.

Advances in technology also brought us cyber warfare, hackers, identity theft, cyber stalking, and a host of other bad things. The Internet also has a dark side: the deep Web. Its content is hidden behind HTML forms, and includes many common uses such as web mail, online banking and services that users must pay for. They are protected by a paywall, such as video on demand, some online magazines and newspapers, and many more. Another disadvantage is that criminals may steal people's personal information and play with their lives, while others trick people into downloading viruses that can harm their computer.

Internet has made everyone's life very easy and accessible, we no longer need to go outside in order to pay a bill, to shop or see a movie, etc. Nowadays, we can find everything on the Internet. Instead of playing some football or having a fun snowball fight, children are playing video games for hours. This is not a good thing because children should spend more time outside, play with children of their own age, practise sports and enjoying their youth.

Although the Internet has become one of the most powerful and interesting tool all across the world,

we should be careful not to use it excessively if we do not want to become addicted to it.

By far, the greatest advantage brought by technology refers to the numerous job and career possibilities. Global competition demands individual contributors to have broad access to what's going on in their profession, trade and industry – to see trends and issues that shape their future work and to visit new thinking and new possibilities. Smart and successful careerists control their success and well-being through their knowledge of technology.



In conclusion, it is difficult to imagine our life without technology and internet especially now, when everything relies on them. I think many of us would agree with me in saying that our life would be a disaster.





## My Erasmus Experience in Turin

**Laura Andros, CRP, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

My name is Laura and I am one of those lucky students who got the chance to participate in the Erasmus program. I had wanted to win this exchange mobility since my first year in university. Thanks to my high marks and a successful English test, my name went up on the list of participants; so by the end of the first semester, I had already packed my books and, full of enthusiasm, I had sat on the plane to Torino, Italy.

Italy is not very different from Romania, which means that it was not difficult to get used to the Italian lifestyle. I did not face problems with the Italian language, because I had learned it before moving to Italy, which is why I recommend all students to be familiar with speaking and comprehending the language spoken in the country they are going. However, it was quite a shock to hear teachers all day speaking only Italian. The efforts to understand and then learn the material were substantial. Lucky for me, I was not alone. I found a huge help, support, fun, but most important, friendship in my Romanian classmate, Vlad. I guess that going together made my mobility easier and brighter. I dare to say that our memories together are priceless and irreplaceable and I will remember for a long time the fun we had.

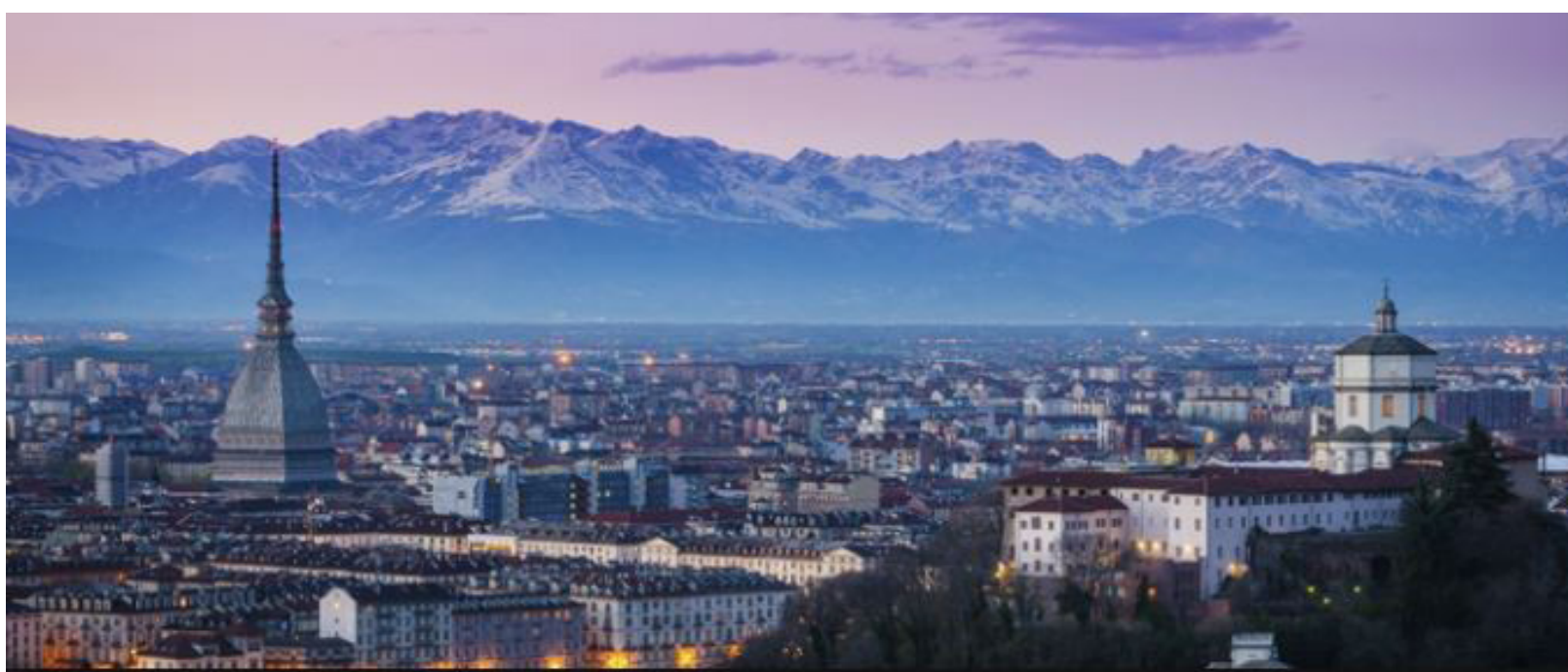
The lectures were not difficult at all. Some of the subjects I had were very interesting, during which I could have been sitting for 3 hours and not get bored. Also, some topics I studied in Italy, I had already learned in Romania, so there was less anxiety about the following exams.

People ask me about Italian friends, as well. What I have to say is that Italian people are like artists, they truly enjoy their life and being with them, observing, talking to them, made me change my world and my priorities. I wanted to travel more, taste their amazing cuisine, learn about their traditions, be romantic and my fulfillment went from possessing material things to real, precious values in life. Yes, they are noisy, but in a pleasant way.

Spring in Italy was a real fairytale! I celebrated my birthday on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, with a soft, warm breeze in my hair and my favorite person next to me!

For those who are in doubt if going with Erasmus or not, I honestly recommend you to accept this awesome opportunity. One always grows as a personality when he leaves his comfort zone. You will taste the real life in the heart of Europe, you will become more responsible and independent, you may even learn a new language. And oh, you will be so proud of yourself, believe me!

**Good luck, future Erasmus students! May your Erasmus be awesome!**



## My Erasmus Experience

**Vlad Ermurachi , CRP, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

Being in high school, I was always dreaming about becoming an exchange student in a foreign country. “Vasile Alecsandri” University from Bacau offered me this life changing experience. I got involved in the Erasmus program and I had the chance to go to study abroad!

I started my researches about studies, housing and transportation in the host country in December and after 2 months of information, I arrived in one of the most amazing cities from Italy-Turin. The city is situated in the north of the country and it offers to its guests an awesome view of the Alps, that can be admired from any point of the city because of the special architecture that excludes high buildings.

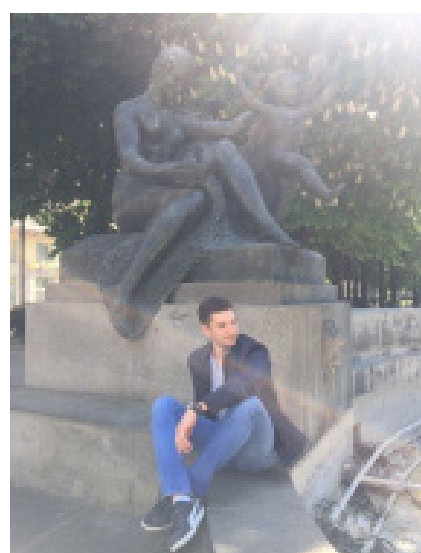
The biggest integration problem in a new culture for me was the language barrier. I had a very bad level of Italian at the beginning, but I always managed to find ways to communicate with locals, and this fact was the reason of a lot of funny stories.

Another difficulty we had to face was the very long way to university. It was taking us more than one hour to get to the academy by tram, but we turned this into an advantage because we were using this time for reading.

The schedule was very well organized, it excluded classes early in the morning so we were getting enough sleep and coming always on time at the university. All the lessons were in Italian and even if at the beginning I could not understand much, I had never skipped any lessons, I think this fact helped me in performing my language skills faster.

The manner of organizing the exams was another thing I liked. We had exams at the end of each course, this thing put less pressure on the studying process and gave us the chance to get prepared better for each assessment.

I consider this Erasmus mobility one of the most useful experiences in my life, because it took me out of my comfort zone and offered me challenges that made me stronger and more open minded.





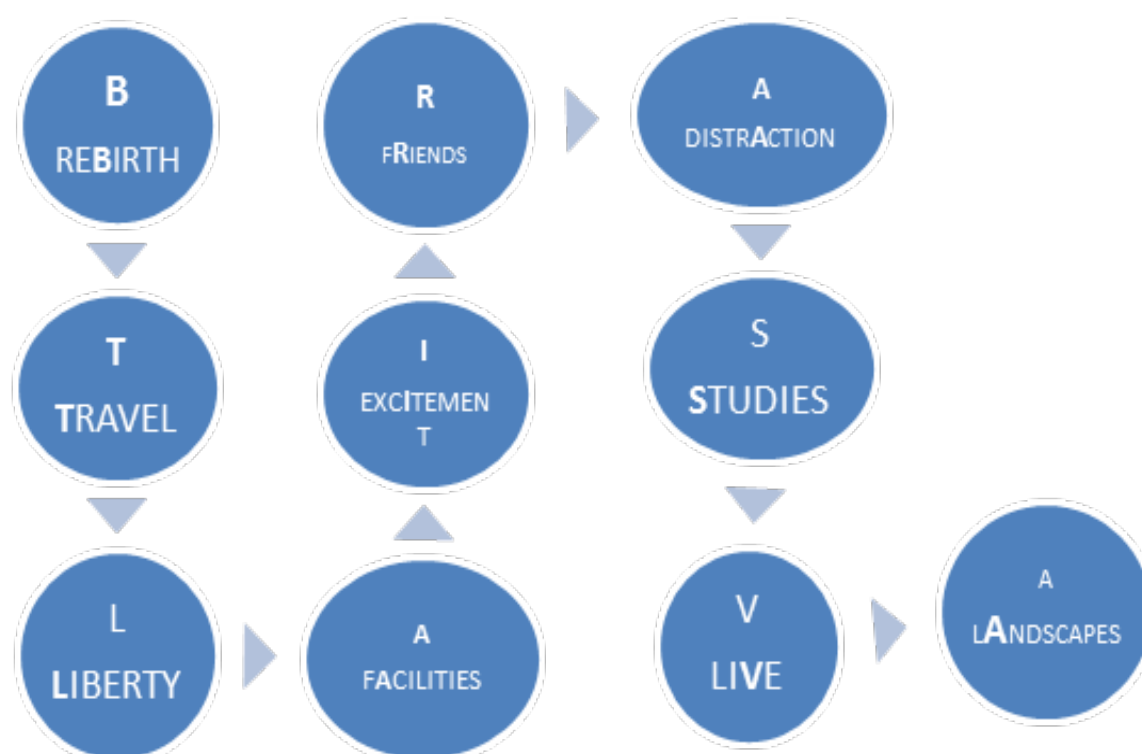
## We All Have Big Changes in Our Lives that Are More or Less a Second Chance<sup>1</sup>

**Adina-Ionela Toma, LEPC, II**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

People say that if you see a movie for the second time, or if you visit a country for the second time, it won't be the same. In this respect there are those who consider that the experience will be dull, because you have seen the most interesting parts already, therefore, the country will not present the same interest for you as the first time, and there are those, like me, who say that the second time is the best chance that could have happened to you.

Why? The answer is simple and you can find it in the word game that follows, which I created because I wanted to summarize my second experience in Bratislava, Slovakia, during my Erasmus + at Comenius University, which happens to be the oldest university in this country.

Therefore, read it carefully and remember the words because if you say Yes to Bratislava, you can apply them to your life.



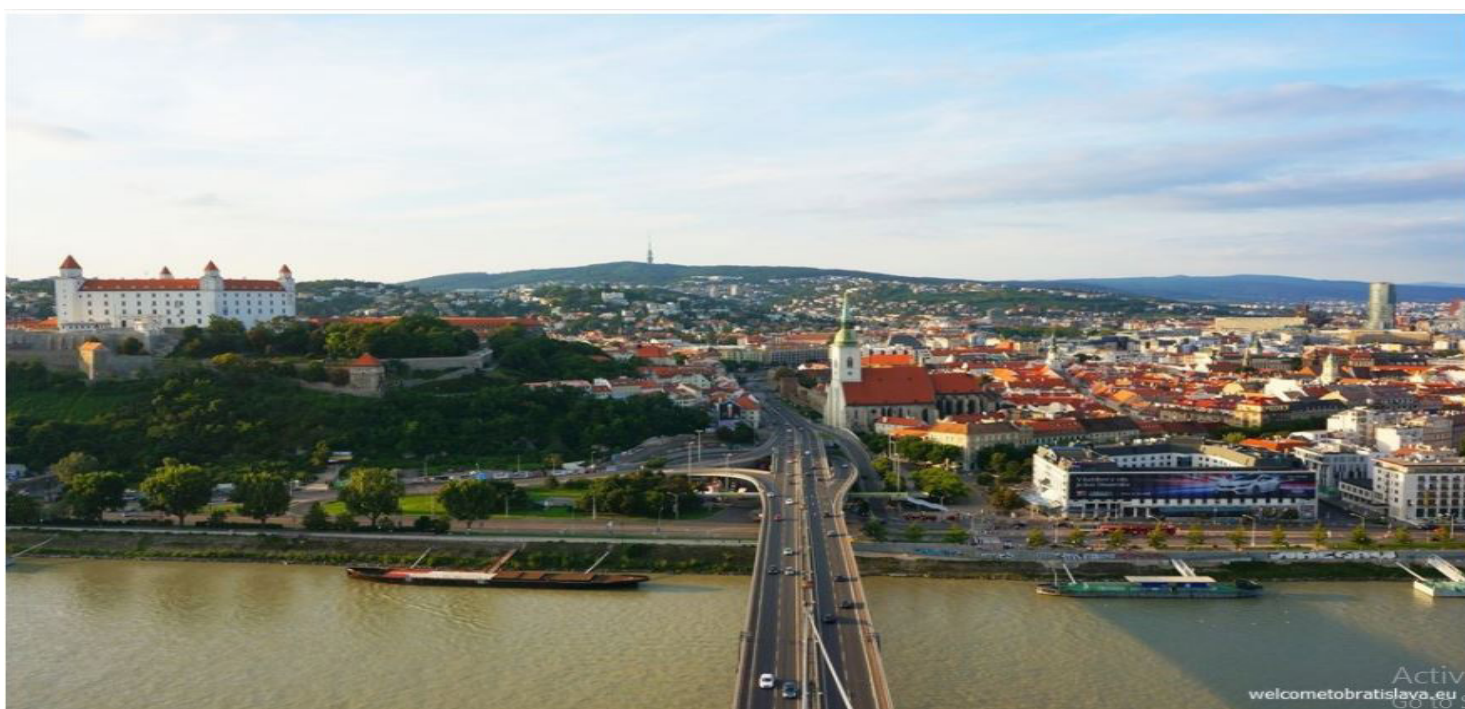
For me, all words were and are important, but I want to concentrate on those which concern the actual studies which I took there. The university has some amazing teachers who can teach you many things and amazing, well-prepared students. A student is really lucky when he/she can learn from different teachers, because in this manner he/she sees and observes different styles and it is very useful to change the manner of studying from time to time.

The students are really well-prepared and competitive and you will have the chance to become better in what you are doing by communicating and cooperating with the others. Some of the teachers are engaged in extracurricular activities, such as theatre plays, which are held with much professionalism, therefore, you will learn from the best. You have the possibility to do research on what you are interested in for their magazine.

Moreover, the university has many libraries with books that you could need for your papers back home, thus, you can take advantage of being there and study for what you need, gathering all the information which in your hometown may be harder to get. The libraries have a system which allows you to study their books at home, therefore, you can make yourself comfortable in your bed and study what you need.

If you have an artistic soul, you will be glad to find out that there is a bridge near the university which contains a platform on which you can sit and study in the sunshine, watching and hearing the river and the Danube can be your study-partner.

<sup>1</sup>Harrison Ford, [https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/harrison\\_ford](https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/harrison_ford), accessed February 7th, 2018.



As it was my second experience in Bratislava, I can easily say that I was more prepared for it, because I knew some important aspects which were problematic for me the first time, therefore, I hope that whoever reads this article appreciates some pieces of advice which could help him/her in times of need. Even though every one of us is different, these tips can be applied to us all.

**1.** Do your homework before leaving! There is Internet which provides almost everything that is to know about a country, so **CHECK, SEARCH** for information in order not to feel lost when you arrive there.

**2.** Always keep in touch with your coordinating teacher from Romania, because he/she can provide you with really important pieces of advice, especially in the first month there when you have to finalize your schedule and your courses. Therefore, even though you encounter many problems concerning this aspect, stay calm because there is always a solution and the receiving institution will help you since you are a guest.

**3.** Be more organized than ever! You are on your own there and you have to prove that you are an adult, thus, you have to plan everything carefully. Pay attention to the deadlines at the university (they truly care about this aspect), and to the assignments (do not forget that you are representing your home university and that you went there to **STUDY**)!

**4.** Be careful with the rules and the laws of this country! If in your hometown you could break some rules, in Bratislava you can get a 50€ fine when caught without a ticket in the bus.

**5.** Ask for help! Register for a **BUDDY**, because even though you are an independent person, you will need somebody who can show you some important places, who will help you with your arrival and the orientation, so a local is the best option.

**6.** If you hate Mathematics, take some lessons before your departure, because you will need it there when it comes to money! You will see yourself in the position of having lots of money and the things that you love so much seem to be extremely cheap, but do not get fooled because you have other priorities which you have to take into account! Therefore, be like a grandmother: value money and do not waste it!

**7.** Do not enroll for an Erasmus with prejudices! Be open-minded and remember that people around you are going through the same stages as you, so if one is mean sometimes, do not take it too personally.



8. Take your time and think about what it takes to live in a dormitory! If you cannot bear the idea, do not quit on your Erasmus, search for a more expensive accommodation which is better than the dormitories.

9. Go out! Explore Bratislava and the surroundings! There is no better way to spend a sunny day than visiting a remote part of Bratislava. Remember that you have **FREE TICKETS** in all Slovakian territories, so take full advantage of this and travel!

10. Do not waste your time with staying too much in the dormitory all by yourself! Speak! Connect with people around you and you will see that boredom will go away and that you will learn more of a culture than you would have learned from 10 books.

11. Be prepared to experience some moments when you feel disconnected and lost! It is a natural feeling, because even though you have friends there is no one who can really replace your family (even the toughest person misses his/her beloved ones).

12. Be prepared to be overwhelmed by everything in the beginning! Novelty is good, but there are so many new things that you will have to go through that you can come close to a nervous breakdown (especially during your exam session). Embrace the new but be careful not to be asphyxiated by it!

13. Whatever happens in Erasmus, stays in Erasmus! It is a good thing that nobody knows you there, thus, if you trip and fall you won't be laughed at as much as you would have been at home!

14. First and foremost, **SPEAK and CONNECT!** If you have Romanian friends, do not spend time only with them, because otherwise you will not improve your English. Try to improve your English by speaking with foreigners and enrich your mind by interacting with them.

In conclusion, try not to waste this life-changing chance given by the Erasmus+ programme and take full benefits from your youth, energy and wish to experience new things, because you will be left with no regrets after it, only with awesome memories and with an enriched mind and soul. Dare to dream of a new life and take the first step in the process of obtaining it! You will see that from time to time dreams do come true!



## How Does Erasmus Feel Like?

Iustin-Theodor Ianău, RE, III

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

My name is Iustin-Theodor Ianău and I studied abroad as part of the Erasmus programme in Bratislava, Slovakia. What can I say? Nothing bad, that's for sure. It is worth a try and is definitely a life-changing experience. I think you need more details though, so I will start by giving you reasons to engage in such a trip.

Where do I even start? I think it is appropriate to start with the centre of attention for such a trip: the university. I was enrolled in Comenius University in Bratislava, one of the most prestigious universities in Slovakia. If you are expecting harsh rules, old-fashioned teachers and the infamous “academic arrogance”, I would tell you to relax. The teachers are open-minded and technology is used in their lectures quite often, all of that being combined with a very relaxed manner of teaching; this is a significant difference between Slovakian and Romanian academic teaching. I am not saying that one is better than the other, but you have to be very vocal to be noticed by teachers in Slovakia: they will not really force you to talk, so you have to bring your contribution to the lectures from your own initiative. As for the material, they have a platform that allows both teachers and students to share their files that contain lecture notes and other precious resources.

Of course, the university is not everything. You have to eat, and fortunately you can do so at very low prices (unless you are fancy and want to buy a honey cake for 2 euros). Not too many local dishes, sadly, but they do occur from time to time. You can choose either the lunch room inside the university, or the one next to the dorms; either way, the food is pretty tasty. It does have a strict program, so watch out for that!



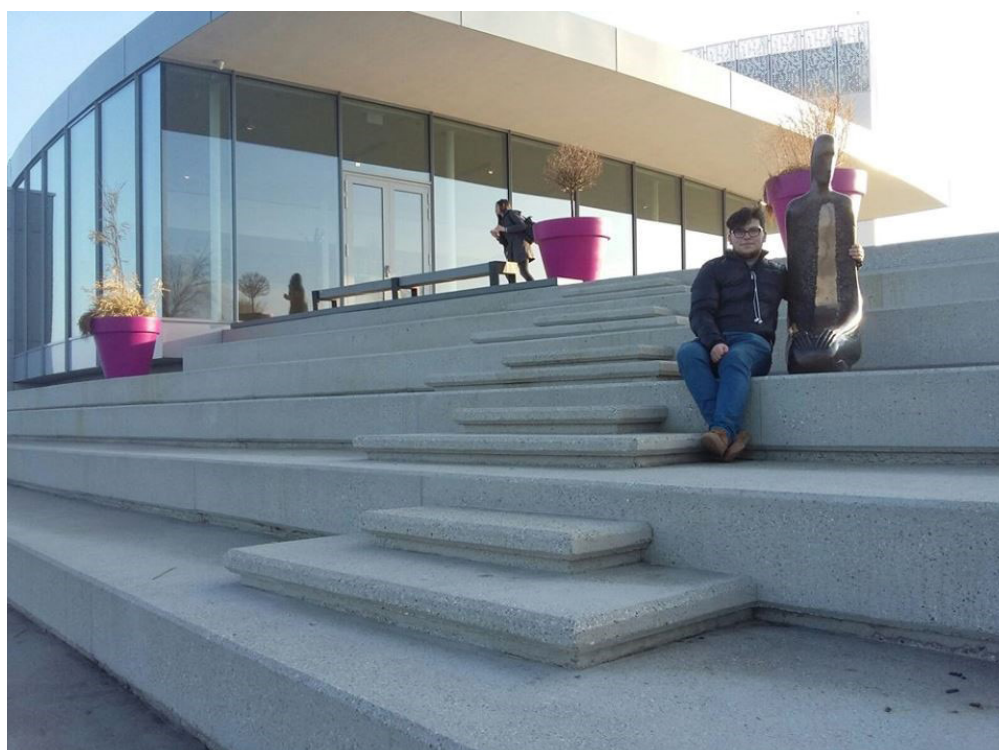
*Picture of me eating for the first time in Erasmus, in the welcome week*

When you arrive in Bratislava, you will be shown the way to the dorms. The room you are going in is pretty basic: nothing extraordinary, really. The only opportunity this opens is the fact that you will be put in the same room with another Erasmus student. That might open you up to another potential circle of friends, so that's exciting! Pretty cheap, too: only around 300 euros for all the 5 months (you will pay it all at once). You also have various facilities, such as kitchen (one on each floor), laundry room (one per dorm) and shops in campus (pizza restaurant, fast-food, mini-markets, ice-cream stand), and you also have a night club in the campus, where you may meet with your friends and endeavour to work on academic projects, of course...

But all that stuff can be done at home. Well, do you know what you cannot do in Romania? Explore Slovakia (obviously). You have touristic objectives in Bratislava, such as Slavin, a monument for the fallen in WWII, the Danubiana museum and many others.



You do not have to stay in Bratislava, of course. You can go to the Devin castle, a pretty legendary castle in Slovakia, and also the High Tatras. The most fun is in finding your own objectives to visit; if you are that passionate about travelling, you can also go abroad for a couple of days or weeks (when you do not have lectures at the college, of course....) and enjoy (I did not, but now I regret it, honestly). As a matter of fact, Vienna is only three hours away from Bratislava on bike, or 80 kilometres away!



*Picture of me hugging a statue, Danubiana museum*



*Me being some kind of old warrior, Bratislava castle, Bratislava*



*Me taking a picture of Danube with some friends in the background, Bratislava*

As a plus, you also have the Danube flowing through the city, which is pretty nice!

For me, it was quite a life-changing experience. I had the opportunity to make friends, and I also saw places and people that totally changed my perspective! I can say that someone else returned from that country! I definitely recommend studying in Slovakia, but also trying to make the most out of it, because I know that I could have done so much more in this Erasmus stay, and I now regret that I wasn't more open-minded and willing to experience. But I absolutely loved the experience and be sure that I will take the next opportunity to enrol for an Erasmus mobility, preferably in the same place!



## (Re)discovering America

**Dan Scutaru, E-F, III**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu

Being a foreign student in Romania, I already had the chance to experience a change in my life when I decided to study here instead of the Republic of Moldova, but that was only the beginning for what there was to come. Feeling that I have always wanted to escape my comfort zone, I applied for the Work&Travel program and I went to the U.S. for two summers in a row.

Together with some of friends, I was imagining what kind of life we would have, far away from home, supposed to work all the summer, break the language barrier and just willing to live the well-known “American Dream”.

I was supposed to be working in Montana, in a small town by the West entrance of the Yellowstone National Park, called West Yellowstone. I was surprised to discover such a small, tourist place, but a nice and a welcoming one. It is generally known that Americans are different from the others by their always smiling face and friendliness, but I think that, on the West Coast, it is even more obvious. I was welcomed by my employers who are native Americans and they were extremely nice and friendly, saying “thank you” and “please” all the time, even when they were passing by and seeing you doing your job.



The first month was a cultural shock to me. I realized that my English was quite poor compared to the native speakers and, most of the times, I wouldn't understand their way of pronunciation or some complicated words. It was all good after I spent more time with them and working as a front desk receptionist helped me the most to get used to American English. It was also incredible how many people coming from all around the world and sharing different lifestyles and beliefs can live together in a community and care about each other. Seeing people smile on the streets, even if they don't know you, was a nice feeling and it always gave me positive energy and the strength to work hard.

The most captivating and exciting was probably to live in the J1 community. J1 is the type of visa we get for



this kind of program and that's how we call each other. I had the chance to meet students from China, Turkey, Russia, Colombia, Bulgaria, Jamaica and Romania as well. With most of them we are still friends, we are still looking forward to going back again and spending time together. Among them, there is the person I even think of going together in life with.



This mixture of Americans and J1s allowed us to get wider perspectives on life, creating strong relationships no matter the gender, race or sex. It helped us get rid of all sorts of stereotypes and prejudices about other nations, showing that all the people just want a quiet place where they can live in peace, a better world for everyone, that's why the U.S.A. is the country where I think I fit the most, where culture is global, as it was created by different nations.



## My Erasmus Experience at the University of Limoges

**Cristina Andrițchi, EF, III**  
Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

Hello, my name is Andrițchi Cristina; I am a student at the Faculty of Letters, “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău, and I want to share my Erasmus + experience.

During the second semester of the second year of my BA programme, I lived in the world of Erasmus +, in a destination unknown to me at that time - the University of Limoges, France.

I remember with emotion the days of the Erasmus +, the warm way I was received, the help given for the accommodation, as well as the different learning system. I was very excited when I went to the first class; it seemed odd to hear people speaking French everywhere, but after a few days I felt comfortable and familiar and everything seemed easier.

The Erasmus student life was rich in events and activities.

The University of Limoges offers programs for French students as well as for Erasmus students. However, the most I liked was the international environment, the cultural experience and the constant exchange of ideas with students from countries like China, South Africa, Thailand, and USA. The subjects studied were very interesting.

I was amazed by the lifestyle of people, I noticed that they are very free, they were not afraid to expose their ideas; they felt good as they were.

Of course, the cost of living in France is higher than in our country, but Erasmus teaches you how to manage your money, how to enjoy it when you do not have it and how to cook.

I must admit, and I am very happy about that, that at the base of every success lies a mentor, a person with experience in this field and with a great willingness to lead himself/herself and others to success, once that he/she succeeded. Therefore, because my mentor encouraged me to take this Erasmus course, I also invite you, dear students, not to be afraid, to take everything that life gives to you and at the same time, to make the most of the international experiences offered to you. Study or practice then, because only these things will make a difference between you and your colleagues along the way towards a successful career.





## My Little Adventure in the Country of Chocolate, French Fries and Beer

Ecaterina Apostu, EF, III

Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

The academic year 2016-2017 brought me many surprises, discoveries and new knowledge.

During the second semester, I went to Belgium to do my Erasmus + internship.

I knew almost nothing about my new home, but I was very motivated to take full advantage of all the opportunities that were going to open for me and of every moment in Liege.

My new school allowed me to discover a totally new world for me until then, that is pedagogy. I was very surprised to see people excited about their future as a teacher; it was not just a job for them, but a dream ready to come true.



All the little details that I have never been able to observe before, or which I have never paid attention to, represent for them essential subjects of study: how to make the students write, how to make them read, how to form good citizens, how to teach the French language to students coming from foreign countries, etc.

We tried out many methods and strategies, first in the classroom and after that, we imagined we could apply them in practice, as future teachers.

Some of the students had the opportunity to do it; I had the pleasure of helping them. Thanks to my experience at HELMO Sainte-Croix, the prospect of becoming a teacher has taken shape, and my negative perception of this field has disappeared, leaving room for creativity, determination, passion and energy.

The group work, the free communication, and the warmth displayed by the students and professors did me a lot of good, and helped me to integrate and progress within my class.

Another aspect that I really liked was the fact that we took part in the courses of integration and discovery of Belgian culture and heritage. We learned a lot about local customs, about the way of interacting with people, about the current educational system and the history of Wallonia and Belgium in general.

We went on trips and we also enjoyed the Belgian delights. I also liked the international week, during which we met people from all over Europe (Belgium, Austria, The Netherlands, Czech Republic...) and, together, we played games, or organized debates, We went for walks together, and we became good friends.

At the end of my fun and productive stay, the turning point came, and as everywhere in the world, the exam period arrived.

In fact, the majority of the examinations were based on long, hard work prepared in advance that had to be presented to our teachers during the oral evaluation.

The preparations were sometimes harsh, sometimes hopeless, or fun opposites, and I'm proud that in the end I was able to say with pride that « yes, I did a good job, and all my effort had the deserved results » . and Bastien who generously made me discover the Belgian culture, refinement, aesthetics and humour).

For me, Belgium has now become a second home, the place where I will return each time with pleasure, to see the streets full of memories, smell the delicious smell of waffles, enjoy the fiery life of Liège and meet good friends and people who have now become a second family for me (as my very good friends Florian and Bastien who generously made me discover the Belgian culture, refinement, aesthetics and humour).





## My Erasmus Experience in Spain...

**Teodora Ciobanu, EF, III**

Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

I started my first Erasmus experience at the University of Oviedo, the Northern point of Spain.

What can I say about their system? It's a good one. But even if it is a powerful University Center in Spain, it has its weak points, too. They put the accent on the students' individual learning; for example, you are given an exercise book with theory (for grammar) and you have to learn it by yourself. The teacher did not explain to us the grammar rules in class; we watched Ted talks, we had to explain the things we saw in a picture or to discuss the pronunciation of a word. Being used in our university to have a teacher to explain us the fundamental rules of grammar, it was quite hard for me to be my own teacher at home. Their system is based on how students can prove their knowledge. The teacher talks less and the students talk more if they want to get a passing grade.

This system makes students be more ambitious and independent. We worked in pairs for our projects and by doing so, I learned very much about team working. We had a platform on the internet, which was called "Campus Virtual". It displayed all the courses and the documents we had to print for the following day or week. We were compelled to constantly check our account in order to be prepared for courses, test papers, projects, and exams. If you are an Erasmus student at the University of Oviedo, you have to do your best, to let the teachers see that you are prepared for the class, interested, and that you do everything you can; this way, things will be great.

I have an ambivalent feeling regarding their system, maybe because I was used with ours. Anyway, these changes I encountered made me appreciate our teachers from the "Vasile Alecsandri" University more than I did before. I learned very much from this experience at the University of Oviedo and I do not regret my Erasmus experience.



## Unforgettable Experience of the Erasmus Program

Nicoleta Gurin, EF, III

Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

Erasmus experience is one of the most beautiful and unique experiences I've ever had. Being admitted at the University of Oviedo, Spain, my life has completely changed. I got into a new world, filled with new rules, new people and new subjects.

The University of Oviedo is an ancient and powerful university. Every year, this university receives more than a thousand foreign students. In 2017 I became a part of this big number. From the first day, I met my new teachers and learned my new subjects for the semester ahead. Some of the subjects that I was going to study were new for me, some of them I was already familiar with.

I can say it was a pretty rich semester, both emotionally and educationally. I developed my abilities of working in group, of giving a speech in front of an auditory (one of the hardest things for me, because I'm so nervous when I have to give a speech, but at the end of semester I think I became a master of it). This university promotes self-studying. You have to be conscious and study by yourself. Teachers were talking and explaining less than I was used to in my university. From the beginning, I thought it was a disadvantage but, after a while, I understood that this was a good method that enabled students to become more confident and develop their skills of studying.

To be honest, it was a hard semester for me but, looking back, I do not regret anything about it and I would repeat the experience again. Once again I convinced myself that no matter how different we are, friendship unites us. I'm so thankful that Erasmus program gave me the chance to meet and make friends from different countries and of different nationalities. We helped each other, encouraged each other and studied together.

The Erasmus program gave me the chance to see Spain, this beautiful and charming country, to learn a bit from its people's melodious language, to interact with their culture, to taste their delicious food and just to be a part of their society.





## My Erasmus Experience

**Mihaela Haruța, EF, III**

Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

My name is Mihaela Haruța and I am a student at “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău. During the second year of study, I enjoyed, for 5 months, the Erasmus mobility in Bordeaux. –France. The Erasmus scholarship was an opportunity for me to improve my French language level and to visit the dream country of my childhood.



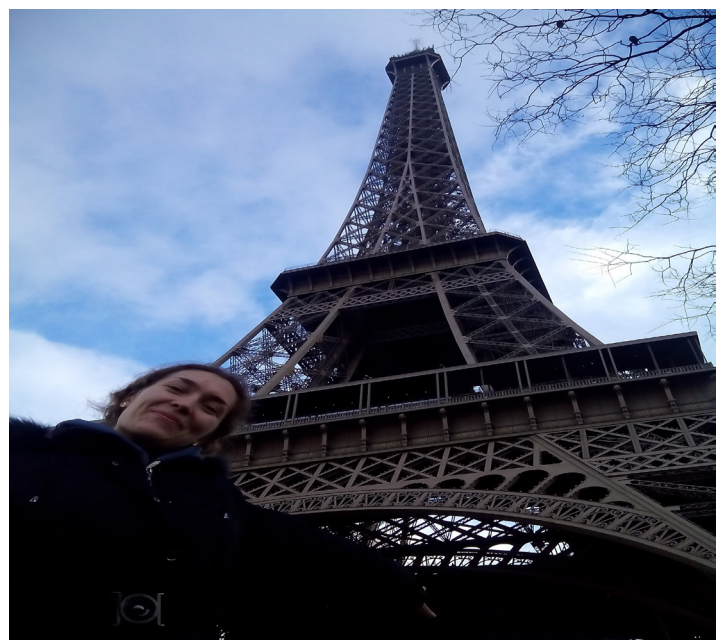
I set off on my way full of curiosity and fears, but also of enthusiasm for everything new. I was lucky to live in a story town, a city that conquered me from the first moment, seducing me with the epoch scent that persists on its streets. I was fascinated by the gorgeous cathedrals that rise amongst the buildings with magnificent architecture, by the savory cuisine and the friendly people I met. I had the opportunity to test a variety of French cheeses and pastry specialties that I fell in love with, especially: pain au chocolat and macarons.

The Erasmus experience was one of the most beautiful experiences of my student life, because it gave me the chance to meet wonderful people with special character traits, from which I had what to learn and which opened my appetite for everything new. My life was changed by a decision and a chance. I learned that change should not be expected but provoked, and the most valuable thing I learned is that we are all human beings, no matter the country of origin. I communicated not only with French people but also with Erasmus students from all over the world. Moreover, beyond the cultural differences, we were united by a common experience, by the desire to show others a part of our culture, by the pleasure of discovering new things and by the nostalgia for home.

At the university, I experimented a model of learning which was a little bit different from what we have in Romania, much more open, based on argumentative discussions, practical case studies and feedback from teachers and colleagues. The education system is more adapted to the time in which we live; it follows the evolution of society, gives access to online



courses and self-assessment tests. In return, I met there a bureaucracy as dense and opaque as here, especially in the first weeks, when we did not know anything, and had to fill out many documents.



I travelled a lot. The best part of this program was the opportunity to travel. For me, travelling is the best way to learn more about people, countries, places, history, life, etc. I finally saw Paris, I walked in its streets, admired its monuments and I felt happy. I visited Toulouse, Nice, but I also crossed the border of France; I went to Spain, to Barcelona, a city with a particular charm, where I pampered my eyes with the spectacular works of art of Antoni Gaudí.

Yes! It was a complex life experience that opened my horizons and taught me to have more confidence in myself and in my ideas.

Looking back, I realize that the personal benefits of a mobility program are: self-awareness, developing skills for solving problems, and the ability to always see the best part of things. I rediscovered myself and realized that the limit is only where I want to stop.



## Stop Wondering, Start Wandering

Roxana Obreja, EF, III

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

It is said that not all those who wander are lost. If you try to search for a definition of the verb “to wander” you will find plenty of explanations and interpretations of it but nobody can assure you that this is a safe and ‘out of the risk zone’ thing to do. It is true that you can wander, you can roam forever without finding a worthy reason to stop, but what if this is the purpose and the beautifulness of wandering, being in a continuous search of something as being in a continuous desire to achieve more and more as well?

Hello! My name is Roxana and I suffer from wanderlust or, as I love to call it in Romanian, “dor de ducă”, that powerful force of the Universe, that urge to explore and travel the world. You know what they say, if we were meant to stay in one place we would have roots instead of feet.

My life started 21 years ago but I started to live last year, when, after years of dreaming at it, I finally got the opportunity to go and study abroad with the aid of an Erasmus+ scholarship, which was offered to me by Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacău, Romania, where I am a student of foreign languages.

When I heard of the Erasmus programme for the first time, I was around 13. My brother, who was 20, was packing in the middle of the living room some warmish clothes and some Romanian–German dictionaries, because he was about to leave to Emden for the next 5 months, to study informatics. I remarked the way my parents were looking at him and I got goose bumps. Not only them, but I was very happy for him, too. We were all so proud of him and that is how I found out that I wanted to see that look on my parents’ face again.

7 years later I was writing a letter of intent to my coordinator paying attention to each and every detail on the application form for the University of Pardubice, in the Czech Republic. The registration for the Erasmus+ scholarship was the very first step of something huge. I had no issues with it, everything was ok as some months later I was asking my brother to lend me his suitcase. From the moment I landed in the Czech Republic I started to feel a strong desire to see, a strong desire to know, a strong desire to discover more and more.

My Erasmus experience was amazing. I am not going to enumerate the benefits of a scholarship like



this because they are obvious and I am not going to disclose here the Czech mystery regarding how to have a great Erasmus in terms of travelling, eating and meeting people. I want to point out the main reason I was there for: studying, wandering, this time, between the pages of some language books. These reasons taught me to combine the pleasant with the useful and to realize that if you do what you love you will never work a day in your life.



The Czech system in terms of education is included in Bologna follow-up group so I did not encounter any massive changes. The courses were divided also in lectures and seminars but comparing with Romania, the lessons lasted only one hour instead of two. The teaching staff were friendly with their students and most of them were coming to lectures very well prepared, with Power Point presentations, with worksheets, matching games and a lot of other interactive activities. Their lectures were very well developed but the written support was sometimes incomplete or missing. On the other hand, the library was very accessible for students. With plenty of books and works, it was filled by more or less motivated students with more or less original purposes.

I did not see the Erasmus student life at the University of Pardubice as being difficult or very different from that of the University of Bacau. The fact that they were speaking the same language as I did during classes sometimes made me forget that I was actually studying in another country and that I was surrounded by people that I could not actually understand. More than this, at a point during my time there, I had the huge surprise to be taught about literary modernism by one of my teachers in Romania who had been in the university I was studying for one week. Can you imagine the feeling I had when this teacher entered the classroom according to the fact that I was 1000 kilometers away from my home university?

To sum up, time passed apace and I really enjoyed every second of this Erasmus experience. With small difficulties, with huge progress and with new moments to live, this scholarship was everything I needed to open the gate to self-improvement. More than this, I really encourage everybody who has the chance to go for this huge opportunity that is being offered to us, students, for us, students. For the time being, I am very thankful for the existence of this Erasmus programme and I am waiting to see what the Universe has prepared for me in my second Erasmus, this time in Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia from where maybe I will go one day to wander, to roam amid the buildings of University of Pardubice's campus.



## Studying Abroad for a Year

**Cristina Stratulat, Business Administration, I**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

In this article I would like to present my student life for a year in Great Britain, an amazing experience that I have been through and also to present the advantages and disadvantages that studying in the United Kingdom involves.

First of all, I would like to tell you that I had never wanted to study abroad before it actually happened. This is because I knew that in Romania there are many universities with very good and devoted teachers. So, I never thought that I would study abroad, especially in England because I had never liked their accent until my dad decided to go and work there. I do not even know why I said yes at that time, but probably it was because I wanted to experience something new. And trust me, this turned out to be the greatest decision of my life.

Secondly, we all know that the university tuition fees are very expensive in England and you have to apply for a loan from the Government, called precisely “Tuition Fees”, and they will pay you the costs for your studies, which amount to approximately 9.500 £ per year. Also, you can apply for a “Maintenance Loan”, they can pay you the living cost but you can benefit only if you have a part-time or a full-time job.

In this case I applied for both loans because I received a job offer from the same agency that helped me apply for Roehampton University in Manchester at the Business Management Course. I started working as a Trainee Marketing Manager at Elizabeth School of London, an agency that was in collaboration with Roehampton University. So, technically I was working with the university where I was studying. Everything was perfect, I had an amazing job, my own office and I was working with kind and professional individuals. I was working so much and I did all my best to achieve this level and when I finally succeeded I could not believe it. That was an incredible experience for me.

In my group, I had twenty extraordinary colleagues from different parts of the world and of different ages. My teachers were very dedicated and professional and I simply loved the way they were trying to explain and train us. There are a few facts that I want to present to you, facts that I really appreciated about their educational system and I will describe them in opposition to the Romanian system or in agreement with it.

While the Romanian educational system is oriented to expose pupils to over 30 hours of classes per week, excluding their homework for each subject, and have to take over 15 modules per academic year, in the UK students have about 12 hours of classes per week, 4 or 5 modules per academic year and face more individual work through readings and extracurricular activities. Here, in Romania, the school period is divided into semesters, while in the UK the school period is divided into quarters or terms.

The exams format, frequency, and grading are also extremely different. In Romania, you have to take a test at each subject once a week, or once every two weeks, while in the UK I had to take 1 preparatory language test, three formative essays in the 1st term, 3-4 summative essays in the 2nd term and 3-4 summative essays in the spring break of the summer term. In Romania, you have final exams at each semester's end and at the end of the academic year, you have to calculate the average of the marks received in the two semesters to get your overall final mark.

All in all, I do think that it is important to have overall general knowledge of many subjects, but most of the Romanian students already know what they like, what subjects they feel truly attracted to and enjoy, thus they do not need to be overloaded with information that may be useless in their future careers.



As for youth life, I know that it is very hard as a student to sustain yourself financially because you have to find a job, you have to work and study at the same time, and that is really difficult. For example, I had no support from my family or friends, I was on my own, I had to pay the rent, the bills, everything, and being in a foreign country all this was much harder than in Romania. And I confess that you could become depressive if you do not have a strong and healthy thinking. But in case you have the support of your family, both financially and emotionally, the only thing you have to worry about is learning.

Why did I return? Well, after exams I received a call from Student Finance and I found out that my student loan was not approved and I had to wait until the next year to apply for a new one. The problem was with my salary because I earned only 700 £ and it was supposed to be more than 800 £. I tried so hard to fix this problem and to continue my studies, but I had no other option, they told me to wait one more year. That is why I decided to come back to Romania and apply for a similar university here.

In my opinion, the British educational system is impeccable and I am extremely glad I chose to study there for a year, it was an enjoyable experience for me and most likely I will opt for the United Kingdom again in future.



## Spain – a Unique Experience!

**Emilia Avrămiea, LEPC, I**

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Mihaela Culea

Persuaded by my professors at our University – “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău – that an Erasmus experience would be beneficial, I finally said yes. I will never regret the answer because the experience turned out to be a blessed one and a great adventure. From my arrival in Spain at the International Student Office I met friendly smiles of people willing to guide my way through the unknown.

Once I arrived at the University of Oviedo, Spain, it was a shock for me to hear our teachers encouraging us in the classroom to call them by their Christian name. Hearing my classmates every day calling the teachers Goretti, Karla and Roberto I finally tried it and survived the experience. The teachers’ willingness to help us feel near their hearts was a great stepping stone for my life. I came to regard them as my older sisters and brothers who knew more and were willing to share it all with us. I was amazed of their high academic level and was impressed by the continual online support they were willing to offer. We could always contact them and get guidance. That was an excellent experience and gave me lots of courage.

I appreciated in Spain the many workshops we had during the seminars. We got plenty of time to speak among us on various topics and then share the main points with the class. During some classes we had to prepare our homework together by discussing the issues and thus getting lots of nice ideas from everyone. The subjects discussed varied from geography to history, from physics to chemistry and from business to economy.

Another academic challenge that I learned to love in Spain was team work. Most of the projects involved a team of at least 2 students and bigger ones 4 to 6 students. The most challenging project I was involved in was the Erasmus project that demanded each student in the group to interview fellow Erasmus students from various countries about their academic life in Spain, about the culture shock, accommodation and so on. This project united us students as nothing else. We had to discuss, make decisions together and to fight through difficulties in order to reach the goal set before us. Finally, we had to share with the class a Power Point Presentation all as one in order to obtain the best mark for the group. I wish we had had such a project in the beginning of my studies there in order to make friends faster with the fellow students.

All I can say in the end about my academic experience in Spain is that it was very challenging and at the same time very rewarding. I rediscovered myself and found out that my level of English proficiency was a good one in spite of the fact that I had to encounter so many changes: of country, of University, of a very different teaching style. I returned home with joy, with good grades and full of enthusiasm to thank my teachers who pushed me out in order to make me fly. My heart is filled with gratitude and I have deep respect and great appreciation for their hard work both in teaching us and in giving us wings to fly further and achieve more.





## THE ERASMUS EXPERIENCE

*One by one letters run  
Into books made with fun  
From them slowly  
Erasmus gathers lowly  
Knowledge, info and much more  
'til the brain is a well-filled store.*

*Oviedo, University of Spain  
Greatly changed my inner treasures' gain:  
From a little student greatly scared,  
Into bookstore worm who gently dared  
Add to knowledge, love and faithfulness  
Progress silently, obtained in lowliness.*

*Going home a little changed in measure,  
Yet, completely modified in inner treasure,  
I consider an Erasmus "Man of Letters",  
Who is able to unfetter fetters  
Slow and sure, climbing the knowledge ladder  
Books invading all of his white matter!*





## My Erasmus Experience

Răzvan Dobrin, RE, II

Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

I cannot describe my Erasmus experience in just one page, but I will try to summarize it. Erasmus is definitely one of the best exchange programs created for students that can allow them to see the world, learn new things about themselves and improve their skills. For me, those five months were like hell, in the beginning. In the first week my only thought was to come back home to my family and never leave again. I was alone, I had never travelled before, especially to a country where the majority of people did not speak English. I was scared at first, but I was also relieved because I knew that I could do well on my own. Erasmus proved to me to be not just a travel and a study opportunity; it is also a maturity "exam". An exam that made me stronger, independent and helped me to gain more confidence in myself.



For this kind of experience, I wanted the best location, because the place is important and, also, it can make this experience more fun. Therefore, I chose Torun, Poland and I will never regret my choice. Torun was one of the best places in Poland; I loved that city from the first day I was there. In five months I made many friends there from different countries, friendships that will continue all my life, and I learned the Polish language and some sentences in other fourteen languages. I also saw 6 capitals of Europe and 6 different cities of Poland. I went to an orphanage with sweets and toys for kids, heard their stories and, also, to a shelter where I played with dogs and laughed a lot. I am very grateful to the Erasmus Student Network and International Programs Office which helped me and other Erasmus students to integrate and to experience the Polish culture.

The Polish education system from Nicolaus Copernicus University is totally different from the Ro-



manian one. The teaching method is different from ours; they have modern technology; they have an online system USOS in which the students can see their grades and interact with teachers and MOODLE, an online platform in which the students send their homework or their essays to be checked by the teacher.

In five months I saw more than I saw in 20 years, I made more friends than I could imagine and some of them even came to Romania. I learned to take risks, to be more independent and to cook Turkish food. Moreover, I ate a lot of pancakes from Manekin, the best restaurant in Torun where I went with my friends and stayed all night, talking and hav-

ing more adventures together.

This was the experience that changed me completely in thinking and speaking, improved my English and let me be free. In the end, I want to thank my coordinator, Prof. Elena Bonta and Mrs. Roxana Popescu for the fact that they motivated me and supported me, to the Polish professors, who helped me and to all the people that I have met during this experience. My advice is to take advantage of this opportunity and never be afraid, no matter how hard it is.



## Take a Day of SPA!

**Diana Pușcașu, CRP, I**  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

Probably you are always on the run and put up things. But, of course, your body also feels the fatigue accumulated during the day. Our skin is extremely important, it tells us when something in the body does not work properly, it also attracts attention. So it is important to keep it young and clean. Salon spa sessions are expensive and you will probably wipe out the idea of throwing money out of the window. I have prepared some ideas below to help you get rid of extra expenses and give you and your body a few moments of spoil!

### 1. Detoxifying bath

A relaxing and detoxifying bath for the skin can be prepared easily by adding a cup of salt in the tub. It is a very simple treatment that detoxifies your skin, makes it brighter and firmer.

### 2. Moisturizing bath

For a bath that moisturizes your skin in depth, you need a cup of hot water, three cups of powdered milk and four slices of mussel tea. All the ingredients are put in the tub and left for a few minutes in the water. The bath should last at least 15 minutes.

### 3. Homemade scrub

There are more scrub recipes that you can try. The simplest is to mix a cup of olive oil with 3-4 tablespoons of sugar, until a paste is obtained. This is a perfect scrub especially for sensitive areas - face, neck and breasts. If you want an effective scrub against cellulite, mix in a cup of olive oil and a couple of coffee spoons.

### 4. Facial treatments

If you have troubles with the pimples, you can try a honey and cinnamon treatment. Mix a teaspoon of cinnamon with a teaspoon of honey until a paste is formed and apply it on the skin. Both honey and cinnamon have anti-inflammatory properties so they will do you good. Fruit masks are very effective for people who have sensitive skin. To combat bags under the eyes and dark circles, apply slices of cucumber or potatoes on the eyelids.

### 5. Body lotion

If you are bored with your old lotion, you can add in your old cream a quarter of cup of coconut milk and a little vanilla oil. Even if you do not use this lotion right away, you can use it within five days.



## The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (book review)

Ovidiu Lazăr, EF, II

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Andreia-Irina Suci

With all the publicity of this classic title thrown around from the theatre, to fan stories, comic books and movies one would expect something intriguing from the original work.

Instead I've found it quite bland at a first reading, if not disappointing. In my initial reading I found it needing more length and action. That is when I realized that my expectations had been greatly hyped from before. Thus, on my second reading I took my time to understand the novel, to immerse myself in it, to savour it and to read it from the point of view of a citizen of the 19th century.

The novel revealed to me its mystery, its drama, its horror, and all wonderfully blended with the new rising current of science fiction. It satisfied me on an intellectual level and held up to its moment of being once a best seller.

One important point of view to understand is also the fact that this is a Victorian literary piece. What may seem not so impressive in today's standards, was, during the 19th century, a literary "hit". The 19th century, being times when the population held a more conservative nature, with a more sensible disposition and with much more importance being put on a proper and mannered vocabulary, found itself in the presence of a surprising work, to say the least. Despite the standards of the time, Stevenson has managed to create this gothic novella that engulfed the attention of the read folk while skilfully avoiding any scandalous offenses in his work.

In a twist of today's modern depiction (done through various milieus), the characters' bodily features are reversed. As such, Dr. Jekyll is now usually depicted as rather a frail man, with a weak health, and, at best, a gentleman of no impressive bodily features. On the other hand Mr. Hyde is nowadays shaped as a large and imposing monstrosity with outstanding strength. In other words, while in the novel the good doctor is imbued with a high and solid stature contrary to his pale and wimpy looking evil half, in the modern times Mr. Hyde is instead given overwhelming form to his originally weak and sickly appearance, now often depicted as a veritable "Hulk"-like character, whereas Dr. Jekyll is seen as the frail man. This shift of change that happened in time can be attributed to the general image people give to the notion of anger, and the fact that Mr. Hyde did not embody it physically. But this change could have also been brought by the shifts of current entertainment, where more emphasis on action is sought upon, to the point of changing the horror and mystery of the initial novella into more of the action-packed movies and comic books.

The science fiction theme of the novel and the amazing circumstances of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde put the work in a certain entourage of the 19th century fictional characters that are referred to as the "League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" of which the most important are: Allan Quatermain (from H. Rider Haggard's 1885 novel King Solomon's Mines), Hawley Griffin (from H. G. Well's 1897 novella The Invisible Man), Mina Murray (from Bram Stoker's 1897 novel Dracula), Captain Nemo, also known as Prince Dakkar (from Jules Verne two novels of 1870's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea and 1874's The Mysterious Island).

The Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde earned its place as one of the classics of the Victorian novels, an intriguing reading to those who have patience, a taste for mystery and look for a carefully constructed case of events.





## Black Panther - A Nation's Hope

George-Cosmin Cristea, CRP, I  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

February 16th, 2018 was a long-awaited day for many superhero-movie fans around the globe. On this day, “Black Panther”, a movie packed with action, politics and a bit of drama hit theaters. Chadwick Boseman stars as the protagonist, King T’Challa, also known as the martial arts master, the Black Panther, while Erik Killmonger, the main antagonist, is played by Michael B Jordan.

“Black Panther” comes out as a movie that is part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe created by Marvel Studios, so the plot is set right after a previous Marvel movie, but it can also be watched as a standalone movie. Prince T’Challa, or the Black Panther, was first introduced in 2016’s “Captain America: Civil War” movie and he is now seen returning home in the fictional African country of Wakanda, in order to claim the crown after his father’s death. He will be challenged by other throne contenders before claiming his inherited position and among his challengers we can also see his cousin, Erik Killmonger. He is the most fearsome challenger T’Challa will face because Erik bears a hatred for the Wakandan people that casted him off after his father betrayed the previous King, T’Chaka. Having trained the Marine in the US and the military in Iraq, Erik became a vicious killer and poses a threat to T’Challa’s wish of becoming the King of Wakanda. T’Challa’s enemy isn’t to be feared just for his killing capability, but also because he wants to reveal Wakanda to the rest of the world if he becomes King. This fear comes from the fact that Wakanda isn’t just a regular country, but a technologically advanced and highly weaponized one. Will T’Challa overcome his deadly opponent, or will his country lose its safety?

Besides the plot, this movie is also great for other reasons. For instance, the distribution consists mostly of black people, so this is the kind of movie that also stands against racism by highlighting black people’s culture. The soundtrack is also on point, including tracks from artists like “The Weekend” or Kendrick Lamar. The actors’ performance is another thing this movie can be praised for. Michael B Jordan’s interpretation of Erik Killmonger is truly spectacular because he portrays the hatred Killmonger has for his old people so well that you would think he was made for this role. The action is set in the present day and takes place in various locations, including London, Oakland, South Korea and the fictional Wakanda.

In the end, I would recommend this movie to everyone, especially to those who like a good superhero movie. You will get everything from this movie: action, drama, humor and a bit of politics. You don’t have to be worried of not understanding what happens in the movie because of its relation to the previous Marvel movies, it can also be watched as a standalone movie!





## Unlimited Power: The New Science of Personal Achievements

Alexandra Diana Lazăr, CRP, I  
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

‘**Unlimited Power: The New Science of Personal Achievements**’ is a self-development book written by Anthony Robbins, an American author, entrepreneur, philanthropist and life coach. The book became a bestseller after more and more people recommended it as a life-changing tool.

‘Unlimited Power’ contains powerful concepts which are extremely helpful for every human-being who struggles with various problems such as financial, professional, emotional or even health issues. It makes you understand the power of your mind, how your emotions function, including practical tips for controlling them and also the way our personal beliefs are seriously affecting everything in our life.

Using the power of example, Tony Robbins included in his great book numerous successful stories about ordinary or famous people, and a lot of powerful quotes which will help you understand that it is practically possible to change your life in the way you really want. You will find excellent advice for everything you want to accomplish, and more than that: it motivates you to make daily efforts in order to become the best version of yourself.

After having read it twice, I really recommend you to read ‘Unlimited Power’, especially if you want to use your full potential, or want to have a better financial/professional status and well-constructed relationships with the people around you. In my opinion, it is the best motivational and self-development book, which will highly change the way you see things in life.

