



IE FOUNDATION  
PRIZES IN THE  
HUMANITIES

# IE FOUNDATION PRIZES IN THE HUMANITIES

Pag 05 .....	I Preface / Prefacio: Diego del Alcázar
Pag 09 .....	II The Foundation / La Fundación
Pag 13 .....	III The Jury / El Jurado
Pag 17.....	The Prizes / Los Premios
Pag 18 .....	About the Prizes / Sobre los Premios
Pag 19 .....	Short Story in Spanish / Relato corto en español
Pag 20 .....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Ignacio Rupérez Larrea
Pag 24.....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Jacobo Felipe Rodríguez Martín
Pag 32 .....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Agustín Pellecchia
Pag 39 .....	Short Story in English / Relato corto en inglés
Pag 40 .....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Sarah Rachel
Pag 46 .....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Alexandra Winkels
Pag 50.....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Alix Heugas
Pag 55 .....	Poetry in Spanish / Poesía en español
Pag 56 .....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Gonzalo Llorden
Pag 58 .....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Stephanie Margaret Heinemann
Pag 60.....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Miguel Donetch Cervera
Pag 63 .....	Poetry in English / Poesía en inglés
Pag 64 .....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Jack Straker
Pag 66 .....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Malak El Halabi
Pag 68.....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Jack Straker
Pag 71 .....	Short Essay in English / Ensayo corto en inglés
Pag 72.....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Víctor Vu
Pag 84 .....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Daniel Bloch
Pag 88.....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Laura McDermott
Pag 93 .....	Photography / Fotografía
Pag 94 .....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Alessandro Fabbrini
Pag 96 .....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Marlene Lantz
Pag 98 .....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Lixuan Guan
Pag 100 .....	Special Mention Series 1 / Mención especial Serie 1: Sara Gonçalves Teixeira
Pag 104.....	Special Mention Series 2 / Mención especial Serie 2: Sergio Martínez
Pag 109.....	Video / Vídeo
Pag 110.....	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize / 1 <sup>er</sup> premio: Marisa Anz
Pag 112.....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize / 2 <sup>o</sup> premio: Carlos Gutiérrez
Pag 114.....	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize / 3 <sup>er</sup> premio: Dylan D’Lima, Jessica Gómez, Eugenia Santaella
Pag 117 .....	IV Epilogue / Epílogo: Carlos Mas





# I PREFACE

As President of the IE Foundation, I ought to say some introductory words to the volume where the best contributions of our current and former students in the categories of video, photography, short story, essay and poetry are gathered. In last year's introduction, I explained why I'd rather write a text that better transmitted "how I felt". Even if I don't achieve it, I am going to try, and in any case I would like to give my congratulations to and my appreciation of everyone who has participated, those who have won and those who have tried.

I would sincerely want, from the standing of the photographed, be the object that someone else's eye is trying to capture and also be immersed in a tender landscape of an unbridled spring, be part of the shifting window a crumbling city and of a reflecting wall of a mirror-like skyscraper. Of course I would like to be the skyscraper, the window moving in a city full of surprises or the passion instilled in a spring dotted with flowers and ambushes.

It would be for me a private and unknown pleasure contemplating the eye looking towards me, aiming at stopping my life at a given instant and, from where I stand, capturing through the lens the soul behind the iris, as much as losing myself in the emotions, in the withering of the skin and in the renewal that every coming wave leaves in the bones. I would like to glimpse at monotonous grain fields rocking the dream of the future, captured by a video full of strange messages and hidden love.

And, of course, how am I going to give up being ink, algorithm, character reflecting a desire, a lost or gained emotion, the purple colours of the Portico of Glory and, finally, the gown slowly falling in hopeless flight or the untied robe of a hotel in Paris.

I think we are here to write about this, about what only we are able to sense or see, what we tell those nearest to us, to others, and those to come. We are capable of creating that unique thing, what each eye sees, what every keyboard types, and a full stop which evokes a smile, or what makes us think sincerely facing the mirrors and facing ourselves.

To all of those marked by my words, all the members of our community, the IE community, I want to say thank you from all the many places where we have managed to find beauty, hope or criticism. We are people striving to be in all corners of a better Humanity.

Diego del Alcázar, President of IE  
Madrid, July 2017

# I

## PREFACIO

Como Presidente de la Fundación IE, debo decir unas palabras que abran el lugar en donde se recogen las mejores contribuciones de nuestros alumnos y antiguos en vídeo, fotografía, en relato, ensayo y poesía. En la introducción que el año pasado hice, explicaba que prefería hacer un texto que reflejase mejor lo que me “pedía el cuerpo”. A riesgo de no lograrlo, lo voy a intentar y en cualquier caso dejo aquí mi enhorabuena y mi agradecimiento por la participación de cada uno, por los premiados y por los que lo han intentado.

Con sinceridad querría, desde la posición del fotografiado, ser el objeto que el ojo de otro está intentando capturar y también del paisaje tierno en una primavera rampante, de la ventana que se mueve en una ciudad desvencijada y ser parte de la reflectante pared que como un espejo pinta un rascacielos. Por supuesto querría ser el rascacielos, la ventana que se mueve en una ciudad de sorpresas o parte pasional de una primavera de flores y acechos.

Sería para mí un placer desconocido y privado ver el ojo que se dirige a mí, que pretende pararme la vida y, desde mi posición, capturar a través del objetivo el alma desde el iris, así como perderme en las emociones, en el desgaste de la piel y en la renovación que cada ola que pasa nos deja en los huesos. Me gustaría atisbar una mies monótona que mece el sueño del futuro, capturada por un vídeo repleto de mensajes raros y de amores ocultos.

Y, por supuesto, cómo voy a dejar de ser tinta, algoritmo, carácter que refleja un deseo, una emoción perdida o ganada, los colores púrpura del Pórtico de la Gloria y, por fin, la toga que se cae lenta en vuelo irremediable o el albornoz desanudado de un hotel de París.

Creo que estamos aquí para escribir de esto, de lo que solo nosotros somos capaces de sentir o ver, lo que trasmitimos a los nuestros, a los demás y a los que tengan que venir. Somos capaces de hacer lo único, lo que ve cada ojo, lo que se desliza en cada teclado y lo que pone punto final a una sonrisa o nos hace pensar sinceramente contra los espejos y contra nosotros mismos.

A todos estos que señalo en estas palabras, a todas las gentes de nuestra comunidad, la del IE, quiero decirles que gracias desde tantos sitios en donde hemos sido capaces de encontrar la belleza, la esperanza o la crítica. Somos gentes que queremos estar en todos los rincones de una humanidad mejor.

Diego del Alcázar, Presidente de IE  
Madrid, julio de 2017

## *La Musique*

La musique souvent me prend comme une mer!  
Vers ma pâle étoile,  
Sous un plafond de brume ou dans un vaste éther,  
Je mets à la voile;

La poitrine en avant et les poumons gonflés  
Comme de la toile  
J'escalade le dos des flots amoncelés  
Que la nuit me voile;

Je sens vibrer en moi toutes les passions  
D'un vaisseau qui souffre;  
Le bon vent, la tempête et ses convulsions

Sur l'immense gouffre  
Me bercent. D'autres fois, calme plat, grand miroir  
De mon désespoir!

Charles Baudelaire  
“La musique”, *Les fleurs du Mal*

## *Music*

Music often transports me like a sea!  
Toward my pale star,  
Under a ceiling of fog or a vast ether,  
I get under sail;

My chest thrust out and my lungs filled  
Like the canvas,  
I scale the slopes of wave on wave  
That the night obscures;

I feel vibrating within me all the passions  
Of ships in distress;  
The good wind and the tempest with its convulsions

Over the vast gulf  
Cradle me. At other times, dead calm, great mirror  
Of my despair!

## II

# THE FOUNDATION

Established in 1997, IE Foundation is a nonprofit organization which aims to enhance IE's impact on society through own resources and collaborations with other partners.

The Foundation's main goals are to provide initiatives and resources to further improve the quality of education, to create and manage applied research initiatives, to implement and fund scholarship programs, to nurture a culture of giving back and social impact, and to bring added impetus to IE's strategic values.

Each year, the IE Foundation awards scholarships to over a thousand students from all over the world thanks to the generous support of its donors and provide backing together with strategic partners to applied research initiatives that impact in fields such as Diversity and Globalization, Demographics and Generation Gap, Entrepreneurship, Families in Business or Social Innovation among others.

IE Foundation has a profound sense of responsibility to society and a deep commitment to the humanities, seen as a core discipline at IE, essential to empower global and well-rounded leaders regardless of their professional profile. IE Foundation's mission fosters cultural inspiration at IE through the IE Foundation Library, Hay Festival Segovia, Support of museums and culture heritage or the IE Prize in the Humanities.

None of the actions performed by the IE Foundation would be possible without the support and the trust of its donors: IE students, alumni, families and staff and corporate and institutional partners.

# II

## LA FUNDACIÓN

Establecida en 1997, la Fundación IE es una organización sin ánimo de lucro que tiene como objetivo aumentar el impacto social de IE a través de sus propios recursos y colaboraciones con partners estratégicos.

Los principales objetivos de la Fundación son proporcionar recursos e iniciativas para fomentar la calidad de la educación, crear y gestionar iniciativas de investigación aplicada, implementar y financiar programas de becas, fomentar una cultura de compromiso e impacto social con la comunidad y reforzar los valores estratégicos de IE.

Cada año, la Fundación IE otorga becas a más de mil estudiantes de todo el mundo gracias al generoso apoyo de sus donantes. Asimismo, junto a patrocinadores estratégicos, apoya iniciativas de investigación aplicada en áreas como la diversidad y la globalización, la demografía y la brecha generacional, el emprendimiento, la familia en la empresa o la innovación social, entre otras.

La Fundación IE tiene un profundo sentido de la responsabilidad hacia la sociedad y un fiel compromiso con las Humanidades, que son contempladas como una disciplina central en IE y que son esenciales en la formación de los líderes globales del mañana, independientemente de su perfil profesional. La misión de la Fundación IE es también fomentar la inspiración cultural de IE a través de espacios y actividades: la Biblioteca de la Fundación IE, el Hay Festival de Segovia, el apoyo a museos y el patrimonio cultural o los Premios de Humanidades Fundación IE.

Ninguna de las acciones realizadas por la Fundación IE sería posible sin el apoyo y la confianza de sus donantes: los alumnos, antiguos alumnos, familias, staff y los socios corporativos e institucionales de IE.

### *La música*

¡La música frecuentemente me coge como un mar!  
Hacia mi pálida estrella,  
Bajo un techado de brumas o en la vastedad etérea,  
Yo me hago a la vela;

El pecho saliente y los pulmones hinchados  
Como velamen,  
Yo trepo al lomo de las olas amontonadas  
Que la noche me vela;

Siento vibrar en mí todas las pasiones  
De un navío que sufre;  
El buen viento, la tempestad y sus convulsiones

Sobre el inmenso abismo  
Me mecen. ¡Otras veces, calma chicha, gran espejo  
De mi desesperación!



# III

## THE JURY / EL JURADO

SHORT STORY AND POETRY IN SPANISH | RELATO CORTO Y POESÍA EN ESPAÑOL

Diego del Alcázar

President of IE

Bieito Rubido

Director of ABC newspaper

Javier Ayuso

Director of El País newspaper

Rosa Belmonte

Journalist

Carlos Fernández Aganzo

Poet, Writer and Journalist

Javier Moro

Writer

Gabriel Albiac

Philosopher and Writer

Isabel Macías

Associate Director of Communication of IE and winner of short story and poetry 2016, IE Foundation Prizes

Sofía Rondán

Associate Director of Admissions of IE and Winner of poetry 2016 and 2017, IE Foundation Prizes

Victoria Gimeno

Director of IE Foundation Prizes in the Humanities and Secretary of the Jury

SHORT STORY, POETRY AND SHORT ESSAY IN SPANISH | RELATO CORTO EN INGLÉS, POESÍA Y ENSAYO CORTO EN INGLÉS

Diego Alcázar Benjumea

Vice President of IE

Santiago Íñiguez

President IE University

Namita Gokhale

Writer, Editor and Director of the Jaipur Literature Festival

Tom Burns

Journalist and Essayist

Susana Torres

Academic Director of Humanities at IE

Rolf Strom-Olsen

Professor in Humanities at IE

Félix Valdivieso

Chief Communications Officer at IE

Gonzalo Garland

Professor in Macroeconomy and Vicepresident of External Relations at IE

Juliana Pereira

Director of Campus Life at IE

Julián Montaña

Professor in Philosophy at IE University

Miguel Larrañaga

Vice-Rector for Student Affairs and Professor of Humanities at IE University

David Moshfegh

Professor in Humanities at IE

Giedre Pavalkyte

Associate Director of Campus Life at IE

Fernando Dameto

Deputy Director of Humanities at IE

Kerry Parke

Associate Director of Communications at IE

Juncal Sánchez Mendieta

Associate Director in Communications at IE and Secretary of the Jury

VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Carlos de Vega

Director of El País newspaper's digital version

Roberto Arribas

Photographer

Ignacio Itarte

Photographer

Viet-Ha Tran

Senior Associate Director of Admissions  
at IE Business School and Photographer

Jean-Marc Manson

Photographer

Enrique Agudo

Architect and Artist

Vincent Doyle

Professor of Media and Cultural Studies and Academic  
Director of the Master in Visual and Digital Media at IE University

David Goodman

Director of the Bachelor in Architectural Studies at IE

Geoffroy Gerard

Director of IE Foundation

Begoña González Cuesta

Dean of Communication and Media,  
IE School of Human Sciences and Technology, IE University

Iona Oliveira

Director of Bachelor in Communication  
and Digital Media at IE University

Teresa García

Associate Director of Communication and Secretary of the Jury

DUMBY:

I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst; the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

CECIL GRAHAM:

A woman who didn't love me?  
Oh, all my life!

Oscar Wilde

*Lady Windermere's fan.* Third Act.

DUMBY:

Pues te felicito, chico. En este mundo hay solo dos tragedias. Una es no conseguir lo que uno quiere y otra, conseguirlo. Esta última es la peor, ¡esta última es una verdadera tragedia! Pero me interesa oír que no te ama. ¿Cuánto tiempo podrías tú amar a una mujer que no te quisiera, Cecilio?

CECIL GRAHAM:

¿A una mujer que no me quisiera?  
¡Oh, toda mi vida!

Oscar Wilde

*El abanico de Lady Windermere*, acto tercero.

# THE PRIZES

# LOS PREMIOS

# ABOUT THE PRIZES

The IE Foundation Prizes in the Humanities are awarded annually in recognition of the best written and audiovisual work undertaken by IE students and alumni.

The vision provided by the humanities is one of the key aspects of the IE mindset and of our entire community, bringing as it does the capacity to have another voice and another way of looking at things, of seeing and articulating possible new meanings. IE Foundation has created these prizes in collaboration with the IE Humanities Center, which specializes in research and teaching in the field of the Humanities, to enable this voice and this other vision, the vision of the Humanities, to be expressed by its students and to be an inspiration for all of us.

Each year a prize is awarded for the three best pieces of work in the categories of short story in Spanish, poetry in Spanish, short story in English, poetry in English, essay, photography, and video. The prizes, awarded by the IE Foundation, are compiled in this edition you have in your hands

# SOBRE LOS PREMIOS

Los Premios Fundación IE en Humanidades distinguen, de forma anual, la mejor obra escrita y audiovisual realizada por los alumnos y antiguos alumnos del IE.

Uno de los valores fundamentales de IE, de toda nuestra comunidad educativa, es la visión que proporcionan las Humanidades, la capacidad para tener otra voz y otra mirada de las cosas, de ver y articular nuevas posibilidades de sentido. La Fundación IE con la colaboración de IE Humanities Center, nuestro centro especializado en investigación y docencia en Humanidades, convoca estos premios para permitir que esa otra voz y otra mirada, la visión propia de las Humanidades, quede expresada por sus alumnos y nos inspire a todos nosotros.

Se premian anualmente las tres mejores obras en las categorías de relato corto y poesía en español, relato corto y poesía en inglés, ensayo, fotografía y vídeo. Los premios, concedidos por la Fundación IE, se recopilan en esta edición que tiene entre sus manos.

# SHORT STORY IN SPANISH

# RELATO CORTO EN ESPAÑOL

Page 20 ..... Ignacio Rupérez Larrea  
Page 24 ..... Jacobo Felipe Rodríguez Martín  
Page 32 ..... Agustín Pellecchia

*Amar.Comer* First Prize/Primer Premio  
*Fiestas del 80* Second Prize/Segundo Premio  
*Los coleccionistas de fantasmas* Third Prize/Tercer Premio



# AMAR. COMER.

Ignacio Rupérez

Master in Business Analytics and Big Data  
Spain

En mi familia, nunca nadie ha sido capaz de decir “te quiero”. Sin embargo, pueden pasarse cuatro horas cocinando a fuego lento tu plato favorito el día de tu cumpleaños. La comida ha sido siempre nuestra manera de demostrar cariño, de comunicarnos. Hemos creado a través de generaciones un lenguaje afectivo en torno a la mesa, un idioma con su gramática, sus acentos y sus matices. Si has estado de viaje y te han echado mucho de menos, te prepararán un gran banquete de bienvenida. Si te marchas lejos por una temporada, te llenarán la maleta de viandas para desearte suerte y que vuelvas pronto. Pero nunca lo van a expresar con palabras. Eso jamás. Solo a través de la comida. Es como si por la misteriosa física de los vasos comunicantes, los miembros de mi familia hubiesen desarrollado un conducto secreto entre los ventrículos del corazón y los fogones.

El centro neurálgico de este sistema gastro-emocional ha sido siempre la cocina de mi abuela. Es una cocina grande y luminosa, siempre impoluta a pesar de la actividad frenética que lleva soportando toda-la-vida-del-señor. Mi abuela, como buena superviviente de una guerra (y de su correspondiente posguerra), se resiste a tirar nada, proporcionando infinitas reencarnaciones a los objetos más inverosímiles. Los armarios de su cocina son una suerte de almoneda que esconden verdaderas reliquias: ollas de latón antediluvianas abolladas por el tiempo –“ya no las hacen así”-, sartenes sin mango, cucharas de palo ennegrecidas, una balanza de las antiguas con pequeños pesos de plomo, una madeja multicolor de gomas elásticas, bolsas de plástico dentro de otras bolsas de plástico, una lata de pimentón de la Vera del siglo pasado –“esas cosas no caducan”-, tazas desparejadas y con los bordes descascarillados, platos amarillos de *duralex* para batir los huevos, cajas de galletas danesas de latón llenas de vaya-usted-a-saber-qué... Esa cocina ha alimentado a padres, tíos, hijos, sobrinos y nietos, y por su puerta han salido los “te quiero”, los “te he echado de menos” y los “qué alegría teneros a todos juntos otra vez” en forma de platos y ollas humeantes. Somos una familia muy “del norte”: parcos en palabras, recios y con dificultades para hablar de sentimientos. Pero de buen comer.

Mi abuela aprendió a cocinar porque su madre jamás lo hizo. Mi bisabuela es para mí uno de esos seres mitológicos que existen en todas las familias: personas que nunca llegaste a conocer, pero de las que creas una imagen fragmentada y mitificada a partir de las historias fascinantes que escuchas sobre ellas. Según cuentan, mi bisabuela -una señora rica y excéntrica- jamás mostró el más mínimo interés por los fogones ni por las tareas domésticas. Por el contrario, prefirió pasar su vida metida en la cama aduciendo todo tipo de enfermedades imaginarias que por arte de magia desaparecían en el momento en el que algún galerista, anticuario o casa de subastas de cualquier punto del mundo le llamaba para anunciarle la llegada de una nueva pieza única. Entonces, volvía a un estado vertical, se ponía sus mejores galas y desaparecía varias semanas. Más tarde, en la posguerra, se arruinó y se dedicó a revender sus reliquias de estraperlo. Eso sí, siempre desde su cama ya que, al no poder visitar más anticuarios, sus enfermedades se volvieron crónicas y pasó el resto de su vida siendo una mujer acostada. Ante este panorama, mi abuela, la mayor de tres hermanas, tuvo que apañárselas para alimentar a toda la casa con lo poco que tenían. Eso sí que es cocina creativa.

Tiempo después, cuando mi abuela formó su propia familia, continuó desarrollando sus dotes culinarias y haciendo de la hora de comer un ritual sagrado para mantener a su prole unida. Nada de comer frente a la televisión. Nada de ir con prisas (“hoy en día ya no tenéis tiempo ni para respirar”). En mi familia, una comida puede durar varias horas y dar tiempo a repasar la actualidad, sacar a la luz trapos sucios, discutir, reconciliarse, arreglar el mundo varias veces, reír, llorar e incluso, cuando alguno de mis tíos se pasa con el vino, cantar. Son un poco como

una obra de teatro en la que cada uno tiene su rol definido, un papel del que nunca podrás salirte por mucho que lo quieras. Todo fluye en estos sainetes: todos sabemos lo que tenemos que hacer. Todos sabemos qué teclas tocar para desencadenar rencillas ancestrales. Todos sabemos que pase lo que pase, en unos días volveremos a estar todos sentados alrededor de esa misma mesa. Siempre con deliciosa y abundante comida, más de la que necesitamos y de la que seremos capaces de comer, pero como cualquier miembro de la familia sabe el lema de mi abuela es: “Si no sobra, falta”.

Este hábito del buen comer ha llegado a vertebrar nuestra estirpe de tal forma que podemos pasarnos horas hablando sobre una receta, un restaurante o un plato determinado. De hecho, gran parte de nuestras comidas familiares transcurren hablando, precisamente, de comida. Desde pequeños, nos han inculcado que comer es el mayor de los placeres. Quizá este sea el motivo por el que siempre he sentido un bienestar instintivo y *pauloviano* cuando a mediodía se oye en los patios de las casas -o en los pueblos en verano cuando las calles se vacían- el tintineo de platos y cacharros, ese preludio de la hora del almuerzo.

En los momentos difíciles, la comida también nos ha ayudado a mantenernos unidos y a que los malos tragos sean menos malos. Cuando murió el abuelo, la casa se llenó de gente durante varios días. Yo tendría unos diez años y fue mi primer contacto con la muerte. Seguramente, por eso guardo muchas impresiones de aquel entierro. Fue la primera vez que vi un muerto, algo que nunca se olvida. Y fue la primera vez que vi a mi padre llorar. Ver a un padre llorar por primera vez es como presenciar la demolición de un edificio, ver abrirse una grieta en el tabique maestro de la casa en la que has vivido toda la vida. También recuerdo que, a pesar de ser unos momentos tristes y amargos, mi abuela, mis tíos, mis primos, seguían sin mostrarse cariño entre ellos. Apenas hubo lágrimas ni contacto físico. Sin embargo, no sé si por mantener la mente ocupada o por la necesidad de expresar emociones sin expresarlas, durante aquellos días no pararon de borbotear cazuelas ni de salir bandejas llenas de comida para agasajar a los presentes.

En todo esto pienso sentado en una sala aséptica del tanatorio. La abuela ha muerto y yo pensando en comida. La mente a veces nos lleva a lugares insospechados en momentos insospechados. La abuela ha muerto, y ahora este idioma secreto de mi familia está en peligro. Todo su legado, creado en torno a la mesa del comedor se desvanece. Sus recetas, su juntarnos a comer, el sabor de sus platos cocinados a fuego muy lento. A mi alrededor personas que no conozco de nada hablan de lo buena que era mi abuela, de la levedad de la existencia humana y de los más absurdos lugares comunes. Mis padres y mis tíos asienten, y atienden a todos solícitos. De nuevo, apenas hay lágrimas en sus ojos, ni abrazos ni besos entre ellos. Sin embargo, hay algo distinto en nuestras miradas porque sabemos que esta vez todo es distinto.

# FIESTAS DEL 80'

Jacobo F. Rodríguez Martín

Doble Máster de Acceso a la Abogacía y Asesoría Jurídica de Empresas  
Spain

Bajaron corriendo la escalera hacia el malecón, eran cinco.

—Me cago en la puta, me cago en dios, me cago en todo.  
—¿Tú sabes cuál es el barco?  
—Sí, pero es puto de noche, no sé exactamente dónde lo han atracado.  
—Bueno, hay cuatro en la bahía, nos vamos acercando y el que sea.  
—El del fondo no es, ese es demasiado grande.  
—Está muy oscuro, joder, joder, mierda.  
—Juancho ha ido a por una linterna grande.  
—Necesitamos un foco. Tú, Jorge ¿Vas a traer tu coche?  
—Sí, sí, ahora voy a ver a mi padre y se lo digo.  
—Nosotros no tardamos más de media hora, o cuarenta minutos, en ir y traer aquí a Ignacio.  
—La puta que nos parió.  
—¿Qué le vamos a decir?  
—De primeras, la verdad no, desde luego, es un calentado, nos puede pegar una hostia o quedarse en el sitio.  
—A mí me da un infarto, te lo juro, me muero si me pasa eso.  
—Pobre Ignacio, lo han jodido de por vida, me cago en todo, joder.

Los interrumpieron los fuegos artificiales y una serie de aplausos y gritos lejanos. Las luces iluminaron tenuemente el mar y los acantilados.

—Estas tú que estos suspenden las *jaias*.  
—Claro que no, son unos hijos de puta. Encima Ignacio padre lleva veraneando aquí toda la vida y ha hecho un montón de cosas por los del fútbol. Pero para estos desgraciados...  
—No tienen nada que ver estos con los otros, no seas mamarracho, Juan.  
—¿Mamarracho? Vete a la mierda.  
—A Miren se la han llevado ya en taxi a Durango, a Ana la están buscando.  
—Qué borracha es esa piba, ha salido igual que su hermano.  
—Tú, Álvaro, Ana es de la cuadrilla de tu hermana, deberías ponerte a buscarla, le dices que su padre se ha descompuesto en Durango y la llevamos allí con Ignacio.  
—Yo me voy ya donde mi padre, a por el coche. Venga, Álvaro, quédate a buscar a Ana y si no, en cuarenta minutos aquí.  
—Vale, vale.

El que se llamaba Álvaro tenía el pelo rizado con algo de gel como se estaba empezando a llevar, una camisa ancha de rayas y un pantalón vaquero de campana, no dejaba de fumar. Jorge llevaba el pelo largo, liso, a tazón, y un polo de Lacoste, estaba visiblemente nervioso. Los dos volvieron a subir a la calle desde el malecón.

—Yo creo que Ana está con Etxeba, ve y tócale el timbre varias veces.  
—¿Por qué no vas tú? Nosotros también tenemos el coche aquí y no se lo tengo que pedir a mi padre.  
—No, yo después de llevarlos a estos a Durango me voy a Getxo. Tengo que estar en el puto Neguri a las nueve de la mañana para recoger a mi abuela.  
—¿No sería mejor dejarles en Bilbao?  
—Ni para la hostia, lo tienen en Durango, y tendrán que hablar con la policía o hablar con el juez o esperar a sus tíos, no sé, mejor Durango, y luego, si eso ya los llevo yo a Bilbao.

—Mira, que yo creo que no pueden ver a su *aita* en ese estado.  
 —No sé, yo que sé, los que nos han llamado nos han dicho que avisemos a la familia y los traigamos a Durango.  
 —¿Quiénes eran?  
 —Amigos de mi padre, si estaba el *aita* de Mikel allí. Él es el que ha hablado con nosotros y el que ha mandado a Miren en taxi.

Los otros tres que estaban en el malecón caminaron apresuradamente en una pasarela rodeada de barcas y lanchas. Entraron en una fueraborda blanca con incrustaciones de madera, ya vieja.

—¿Tiene *gasofa*?  
 —Sí, estuvo mi primo esta mañana a pescar, y le metió.  
 —Dale, arranca.

Navegaron lentamente sorteando otras barcas y boyas.

—No se ve una mierda, pero una mierda, el puto Juancho dijo que iba a traer un foco.  
 —No le hemos esperado.  
 —Bueno, da igual, trae la linternita de ahí.

Alumbraron un primer velero, leyeron el nombre de la parte de atrás, El Rayo.

—Este no es, es el de Ramón Lezo.  
 —Bueno, tiene que ser alguno de los otros dos.  
 —Está allí seguro, ¿no?  
 —Sí, me dijo a mí que iba a dormir en el barco con Carlota.  
 —Ya no sé qué hace esa otra vez con él. Este hombre está bobo perdido.  
 —Bueno, da igual.  
 —¿A ella no la llevamos a Durango, no?  
 —No, ni pagando, la dejamos en el puerto.  
 —A mí no me parece mal que la llevemos, va a insistir en acompañar a Ignacio.  
 —Miren no la saluda.  
 —Normal.  
 —Pobre Miren, esa chica es lo puto mejor, vaya desgracia macho.  
 —Ana está con Etxeba, creo.  
 —¿Y por qué no lo has dicho antes?  
 —Porque Jorge lo sabe también.  
 —¿Y cómo lo sabéis vosotros?  
 —Porque nos hemos encontrado antes, a las once o así, con Etxeba en el Cabo Ogoño. Llevaba una buena peste a ron y costo, estaba colocado de los pies a la cabeza, y nos ha dicho que había quedado con Ana para ver los fuegos en su casa.  
 —Ese no llega a su casa. Siempre borracho. Lleva todas las fiestas durmiendo en la playa.  
 —Son unos hijos de puta.  
 —¿Etxeba y Ana? ¿Pero qué dices?  
 —Que dices tú, yo no hablo de ellos, hablo de los otros. Son unos hijos de puta. Por cada uno que ellos maten, los del Batallón Vasco-Español deberían matar una docena.  
 —¿Pero qué barbaridad estás diciendo?  
 —Lo que oyes Mikel.  
 —Yo estoy de acuerdo con él.  
 —Dejaos de decir gilipolleces.  
 —Gilipolleces, ninguna, *Mi-ke*l.  
 —¿Qué mierda pasa con mi nombre, por qué lo pronuncias así?

—Porque esto es todo culpa del PNV, vamos, del nacionalismo en general.  
 —No tienes ni puta idea de lo que hablas, pero ni puta idea, Juan. Eres un impresentable.  
 —Cualquier cosa.  
 —Pues el padre de Ignacio votaba al PNV.  
 —Y una mierda, Ignacio padre votaba al PNV. Vasquista si es, era, vamos, que quería apuntar a los tres a clases de euskera, pero del PNV no es. Que yo le he visto con banderitas de España en fiestas de Bilbao.  
 —Claro, hace años. Sí, sí, el *aita* era del PNV eh, la madre, no. La madre es más facha que Blas Piñar, pero la familia de Ignacio padre sí eran medio nacionalistas. Que son de Durango como mi *aita*.  
 —Y qué más dará eso.  
 —No, por comentar.  
 —¿La madre de Ignacio dónde está?  
 —En Bilbao, o en Marbella. No tengo ni idea. No vivían juntos ya. Se estaban separando.  
 —No sabía.  
 —Sí, Ignacio padre vivía ahora en la casa de la abuela en María Díaz de Haro, o en la casa de aquí, desde hace meses.  
 —Yo no sabía que estaba amenazado.  
 —Igual ni lo estaba.  
 —Yo no he leído nunca nada de huelgas en SESTRA, al menos recientes. Además, el comité de empresa de allí creo que no es *abertzale*.  
 —Da igual.  
 —¿Pagaba?  
 —¿Y yo que sé? Si le pedían y pagaba o no pagaba, a Ignacio no le iba a decir, y nosotros no nos íbamos a enterar.  
 —Mi padre no paga, pero no ha denunciado para que no le pase como Aresti. Vamos, nos reunió un día y nos lo dijo.  
 —Mi *aita* estaba llorando cuando me ha llamado, yo creo que estaba delante cuando ha pasado todo.  
 —Es verdad que tu padre y el de Ignacio son los dos de la misma cuadrilla.  
 —Si hemos estado en su *txoko* en fiestas, el Gure Kabia.  
 —Dios santo, qué putada más grande.

Se acercaron lentamente a un segundo velero, apenas podían alumbrarlo tenuemente con la linterna. Flotaba de lado frente a ellos, en silencio. En lo alto de un mástil titilaba una luz roja diminuta. No había ningún ruido salvo el de la lancha y el de una boya de plástico que entrechocaba una y otra vez contra la proa. Alumbraron el nombre del barco, Usoa.

—Pues nada, aquí estamos.  
 —Con calma, todos tranquilos, le decimos que hay que llevarle a Durango que su padre se ha descompuesto, pero que todo está bajo control.  
 —Aquí no hay nadie.  
 —Estarán durmiendo o follando.

Se acercaron lo suficiente para saltar sobre la escalera de proa.

—Íñigo, quédate aquí.

Subieron de uno en uno. El que se llamaba Mikel y el que se llamaba Juan. El primero se encendió un pitillo y el segundo se sentó en el suelo. Había una escotilla cerrada, Mikel la aporreó varias veces.

—¡Ignacio! ¡Ignacio!



—¿Quién coño es? -una voz asustada bramó desde dentro, seguido de los murmullos de una voz femenina.

—Tú, somos Mikel y Juan.

—¿Qué coño hacéis aquí?

—Tú, sal.

—¿Qué queréis?

—Sal, que es importante por favor, muy importante.

—¿Pero, qué ocurre?

—Que tenemos que ir a Durango, me ha llamado mi padre, tu padre se ha descompuesto en la cena y lo tienen en una unidad de urgencias.

Se hizo un silencio al otro lado de la escotilla que duró un par de segundos, seguido de un largo suspiro.

—Salimos en un minuto.

—Claro.

Juan se levantó y se limpió la ceniza de tabaco del bañador, se dirigió por lo bajo a Mikel.

—Bien, bien. ¿Pero no deberíamos decirle algo antes de llegar a Durango?

—Sí, pero calla.

La escotilla se abrió. Ignacio saltó con rapidez. Llevaba un polo color azafrán y un bañador de la marca Amarras. Detrás de él iba Carlota. Los dos iban con el pelo suelto y largo, húmedo. Carlota llevaba una camisa de manga corta de tela de polo, mojada, sin sujetador, se le transparentaban los pechos. Ella sonreía con algo de sensación de triunfo, él parecía visiblemente irritado y angustiado.

—¿Qué le ha pasado a mi padre?

—No sé bien. He hablado con mi padre, me ha dicho que se ha descompuesto y se lo han llevado a la unidad de urgencias de Durango, nada más. Que te lleváramos. Tu hermana Miren ya está de camino y Álvaro está buscando a Ana. Jorge te lleva en coche.

—¿Pero hace cuánto tiempo ha sido?

—Media hora, lo que hemos tardado entre hablar con mi padre y coger la lancha hasta aquí.

—Vale, vale, vale.

Ignacio bufaba y se rascaba la cabeza, angustiado pero intentando aparentar algo de tranquilidad.

—No va a ser nada.

—Claro que no.

—Yo te acompaño, Ignacio.

—No hay sitio en el coche Carlota, te tendrás que pillar taxi.

Ella le fulminó con la mirada, y Mikel puso los ojos en blanco.

—Bueno, vámonos ya.

Ignacio cerró con llave la escotilla, Carlota recogió un bolso grande de plástico en el que se transparentaba un neceser, una toalla, una radio y un ejemplar de *Hola* con el rostro de Carmen Martínez Bordiú. Montaron en la lancha.

—Hola, Íñigo.

—Epa, Ignacio, tú tranquilo, no va a ser nada.

—Ya sé, ya sé, ¿qué tal vosotros las fiestas?

—No te has perdido nada, yo me quería ir a casa.

—Tú, gracias por venir a buscarme.

—Nada tío.

—¿Quién es al que han avisado por teléfono?

—Ya te he dicho que mi padre me ha llamado.

—¿Y estaba muy nervioso?

—Estaba normal, estate tranquilo.

Ignacio y Carlota se sentaron en la parte trasera de la lancha, junto al motor. Él cerraba los ojos y cruzaba los brazos, ella se apoyaba en su hombro.

—Nosotros ni hemos visto los fuegos, creo que no hemos salido de la tumbona de dentro en todo el día. Encima a media tarde ha llovido un poco. Llevamos todo el día durmiendo -el tono de Carlota se había tornado un poco más desafiante. Sabía que los amigos de Ignacio la detestaban.

—¡Vaya! ¡Enhorabuena!

—Juan...

Se levantó algo de viento, el mar ya no estaba completamente plácido, aún así Mikel, que estaba al mando, aceleró. Se iban acercando a puerto, pasaron junto a El Rayo, el velero que habían visitado antes. A lo lejos se veían difusas las luces del pueblo y la multitud. Salvo la pareja, los otros tres fumaban.

—Odio salir de noche, ahí está la roca esa de mierda. Mi padre chocó con ella en una de las primeras lanchas que hubo aquí hace como treinta años.

—¿Cuándo os vais a Bilbao?

—A lo largo de la semana. Jorge me ha dicho que os lleva luego a Bilbao después de Durango.

—Sí, mi madre viene mañana. ¿Alguien ha hablado con ella?

—No, bueno, no sabemos. La llamas ahora desde Durango si quieres.

Ya estaban entrando en puerto. Los veleros y las lanchas se balanceaban, sonaban chirridos y chasquidos. Arriba del malecón ya estaban Jorge y Álvaro, junto a un BMW oscuro con matrícula de Bilbao. Les hicieron señas con la mano. Atracaron y bajaron.

—Hola Ignacio.

—Ei, gracias tíos.

—¿Quiénes vamos? ¿Y mi hermana?

—No la he encontrado, hay mucha gente, está todo el mundo buscándola, la mandarán en taxi en cuanto la encuentren, Miren ya está allí.

—Ya sé, ya sé.

—Estate tranquilo

—Joder, que sí.

—Venga, vámonos ya.

Se arremolinaron en torno al coche. Álvaro entró de copiloto, Mikel metió a Ignacio en el asiento de en medio de la parte trasera y se sentó junto a él. Antes de que pudieran darse cuenta, Carlota ocupó el otro asiento lateral. El coche quedó completo y Jorge se sentó frente al volante, encendió la radio.

Sonaba (*Just like*) *Starting over*.

*Why don't we take off alone,  
Take a trip far, far away,  
We'll be together on our own again,  
Like we used to in the early days,  
Well, well, well darling,*

Juan golpeó la portezuela del conductor.

—¿Tú eres tonto Jorge? Apaga la puta radio, imbécil.  
—¿Por qué? Que deje la música- Ignacio parecía confuso y miraba interrogante a Juan.  
—Venga, Juan, pírate, ve a por un taxi con Íñigo.

Juan se alejó del coche y le dio unos toquecitos en el capó. El BMW arrancó y salió por una cuesta hacia la carretera. El coche se perdió entre unas ramas de sauces. Quedaron Íñigo y él.

—¿No le van a decir nada hasta llegar a Durango? ¿Están locos?  
—Le van a decir en el coche. Al menos en el coche le tienen que decir que no se ha descompuesto, que está herido por un atentado, algo para prepararle bien.  
—Se lo tendríamos que haber dicho en el barco.  
—No, no. Ahora le explicará Mikel, además, dentro del coche será más fácil controlarlo.  
—¿No hay posibilidades no?  
—No, no, para nada, el padre de Mikel le ha dicho textualmente que lo han matado, tal cual, está muerto.  
—Joder, qué puta desgracia macho.  
—Hay que ir al pueblo a por un taxi.  
—Ahora imposible encontrar uno, habrá que llamar por teléfono.  
—No sé si sería buena idea. Eso va a estar lleno de policías y periodistas. Qué putada.  
—No, hay que ir, habrá que hacerse cargo de Ignacio.  
—¿Ana, no la han encontrado?  
—Todavía no.  
—Bueno, da igual, vamos a mi casa y llamamos a un taxi. Mi madre estará dormida, pero le cogemos el coche si no nos contestan y vamos para allá.  
—Qué puta desgracia más grande.

Ambos caminaron hacia la multitud hacia el centro pueblo, entre cuerdas con farolillos y banderolas. Había numerosos borrachos sentados en las aceras. Tras ellos, en las paredes, había algunas pintadas amenazantes.

THIRD PRIZE | TERCER PREMIO

SHORT STORY IN SPANISH | RELATO CORTO EN ESPAÑOL

# LOS COLECCIONISTAS DE FANTASMAS

**Agustín Pellecchia**

International MBA  
Argentina

—¡Ya, quédate quieta! —Henry le gritó a la gallina. Su madre lo había mandado a buscar uno de los pollos, pero al sacarla de la jaula, la cena se le había resbalado de las manos y echado a correr.

El día se estaba quedando sin luz, la temperatura sin fuerzas, y la veintena de familias campesinas que vivían allí sin energías tras otra rutinaria jornada de labores. Durante la mañana los niños no solían salir, ayudaban dentro de las casas o los graneros; ya a la tarde cuando el frío no era tan intenso salían al campo o a la lindera del río y colaboraban con todas las tareas que los adultos les dejaban preparadas. Al terminar el día, la mayoría volvía al resguardo del fuego de sus hogares.

Henry, a diferencia de sus dos hermanos, amaba estar afuera el mayor tiempo posible. Disfrutaba del césped, los árboles, el sol y las sombras, se bañaba en las aguas del río por horas, trabajaba, jugaba, y se divertía con los animales. Su madre se había cansado de remendar ropa, ya que era imposible que la mantuviera intacta, así que a diario lo vestía con sus peores harapos. A pesar de estar llenos de agujeros por donde se filtraban ventiscas gélidas, suciedad y hasta insectos, Henry era el más feliz de todos los niños. Tenía la simpatía de los adultos ganada, les robaba sonrisas a todos. Y no había manera de controlarlo cuando se lo dejaba suelto, tanto en temperaturas cálidas como polares.

Ahora, para variar, estaba enfadado. Tenía ganas de descuartizar a la gallina él mismo. Trabajo que le correspondía a su madre o a John, su hermano mayor. Corrió sobre la tierra húmeda, entre las otras casas de madera, tratando de darle caza, pero la gallina era rápida, y él, perdiendo equilibrio por lo resbaladizo del suelo, demasiado lento. Apurando el paso, y apenas prestando atención a lo que esquivaba, enganchó una manga de su abrigo en el alambre de un corral, dejándola ya casi desprendida. A Henry claramente no le importó. El endemoniado animal estaba muy equivocado si pensaba que Henry se iba a rendir. Le ganó varios pasos cuando salieron de las inmediaciones del pueblo, donde podía pisar césped y friccionar mejor. Dio zancadas más grandes hasta donde sus piernas pudieron extenderse, y estando a medio metro saltó sobre la gallina. Henry aterrizó justo encima de ella, y la sujetó de tal manera que quedó completamente inmovilizada.

—¡Por fin, Henry! —alguien le gritó desde el pueblo. Creyó que era Steve, un chico algunos años mayor que siempre lo andaba molestando.

Sin prestarle atención se puso de pie, con la cena firme entre las manos, y feliz dio unos pasos de regreso cuando escuchó un sonido extraño. Pisadas. Levantó la vista y la fijó a lo lejos. Tuvo que entrecerrar los parpados ya que la puesta del sol lo cegaba un poco. Logró distinguir siete figuras sombreadas acercándose. Forzó la vista cuanto pudo y consiguió ver claramente a siete hombres. Eran altos, torres parecían. Eran más altos incluso que George, el hombre de mayor estatura en el pueblo. Vestían harapos, como ellos, pero limpios, no sucios con tierra o barro.

Henry sintió miedo. En general extraños, significaban problemas, y pocas veces eran bienvenidos.

Aún sostenía a la gallina en sus brazos cuando los siete hombres llegaron hasta él y lo rodearon. Quiso retroceder, pero su cuerpo estaba paralizado.

—¿Qui... quiénes son?— les preguntó. Sabía que Steve andaba por ahí, así que tenía que estar viendo. Podía apurarse y dar aviso de estos siete desconocidos.

El del centro, el más barbudo de todos, dio un paso y se agachó a un palmo del niño. Lo miró fijo, con serenidad, como si fuera a darle una buena noticia, un regalo o un dulce. Mas el aire era diferente, incierto. Incluso el viento había dejado de soplar. Tras unos interminables segundos de silencio, el hombre extendió su mano derecha y le cubrió la boca a un aterrorizado Henry. Los ojos del pequeño se fueron cerrando lentamente. El sujeto siguió presionando. El resto, imperturbable, solo se limitaba a observar.

Al instante, el cuerpo sin vida de Henry cayó inerte al suelo.

\*\*\*

Cornelio saludó con un beso a su mujer, sus dos hijos aún dormían, les permitían siempre dos horas más de sueño, especialmente en invierno, y salió de su casa con su chaqueta y gorra de cuero ya desgastado por los años. A las cinco de la mañana, el sol asomando tímidamente tras el horizonte. El frío se sentía crudamente en la piel. En los pies llevaba sus botas nuevas, aunque el vocablo nuevo abarcaba un periodo que podía extenderse hasta seis años atrás. Mucho tiempo había transcurrido desde la última vez que había gozado de prendas nuevas, que no fueran tejidas por su mujer claro. Tampoco las ansiaba, su existencia era simple.

Cruzó parte del pueblo, acumulando barro en los pies. Como todas las madrugadas el rocío convertía los caminos peatonales en resbaladizas acumulaciones de lodo. A media mañana, cuando el sol llegaba a cada rincón, el suelo solía secarse y la circulación era más segura. A esas horas Cornelio era uno de los pocos habitantes despiertos. La mayoría solía levantarse alrededor de las seis, pero Cornelio no podía permitírselo. Como panadero debía asegurarse que el pan y las masas estuvieran listas antes de que se comenzar a formar fila a la puerta de su panadería. La gente se levantaba con hambre, vivía con hambre el resto del día, y no había alimento más barato, exceptuando algunas verduras, que el pan.

En la puerta de la trastienda ya lo estaba esperando Billy, su ayudante. Billy tenía quince años, y Cornelio no podía estar más agradecido de tenerlo trabajando para él porque el chico era pura responsabilidad. Vestía siempre con harapos, tanto en la panadería como en las fiestas. Pero era guapo, y el trabajo de panadero, levantando bolsas y amasando kilos y kilos de masa, le había esculpido fuertes brazos, por lo que su popularidad con las chicas, y con algunas señoras, era alta.

Esa mañana, como las últimas, Billy mostraba una creciente preocupación.

—Solo nos queda harina para el pan de hoy y el de mañana.

—Lo sé, lo sé, Billy...

—Alguien va a tener que ir allá a ver qué ocurre.

Antes de contestarle abrió la puerta de la trastienda y encendió algunas lámparas ya que la luz del día era todavía muy débil. Dejó su abrigo colgado de un perchero y se arremangó la camisa. Hacía frío pero en pocos minutos ardería todo como los sótanos más calurosos del inframundo. Trabajando juntos encendieron los hornos y dejaron la leña trabajar por si sola.

—Hoy por la tarde —dijo Cornelio, ya lleno de harina y ocupándose en decenas de bollos de masa- cuando cerremos, iremos para allá.

—Si..., algo no..., algo no está bien.

Poco antes de que se pusiera el sol, Cornelio y Billy salieron a galope en dirección al río.

Los separaban unos veinte kilómetros de bosque y terrenos desnivelados. Se dirigían hacia un asentamiento que había logrado instalarse en una zona de tierra muy fértil tras años de allanar el suelo. De esa manera habían creado una extensión de cientos de hectáreas a la linder del río, donde cultivaban y proveían de materia primera a muchas poblaciones cercanas. Cornelio, a pesar de no conocer el proceso de elaboración de la harina que empleaba, había trabajado en el terreno, y había llevado muchos hombres a colaborar. Había entendido que mientras ese pequeño asentamiento no mayor a sesenta personas prosperase su panadería también lo haría. Por lo tanto al no tener noticias de ellos desde hacía varios días y el último cargamento no haber llegado, era lógico que tanto Cornelio como otros estuviesen desesperadamente preocupados.

El viento, que ya había perdido la calidez del día, les daba directo en el rostro. Billy se cubría la boca con una bufanda, mientras que Cornelio tenía la boca descubierta y por lo tanto seca. La tarde ya se retiraba, y aunque quedaba bastante luz, el aura anaranjada del ocaso les teñía de tono monocromático la vista.

—Allí los veo —exclamó Billy, apurando el galope—. Pero... Mucho silencio, no escucho a nadie.

En silencio avanzaron entre las calles de tierra húmeda, abarcando con una mirada sorprendida trecientos sesenta grados de escrutinio. Desmontaron y ataron a los caballos a una columna, y caminaron golpeando puertas, gritando nombres, y asomándose por las oscuras ventanas.

Nadie.

—No entiendo... —dijo Billy. —¿Se fueron todos?

—No creo. Primero, dejaron todas sus cosas—. la voz de Cornelio aseguraba un claro desconcierto- Segundo... Es imposible.

Investigaron un poco más, esta vez abriendo las casas y entrando a cada una de ellas. Revisaron los graneros y depósitos. Incluso se acercaron al río y estudiaron panorámicamente ambas orillas.

—Hay ropa colgada— señaló el joven— hasta comida sin terminar. Esto... esto no está bien. Es... como si hubiesen desaparecido.

Cornelio no escondía su asombro, ni su temor. Llevaba toda una vida viviendo en esas tierras. Había vivido muertes, luchas, climas extremos, robos; en su sexta década podía afirmar que había visto de todo. Pero no esto. No tenía explicación para lo que sus ojos estaban grabando.

—Ya casi es de noche —dijo resignado, subiéndose el cuello del abrigo. Con la cabeza media gacha enfiló hacia los caballos — regresemos.

Esa misma noche Cornelio se encargó de difundir las preocupaciones por todo el pueblo. Pidió a cada persona que pudiera participar de una expedición de búsqueda que se levantara temprano por la mañana, anulara el frío, y lo ayudaran a encontrar a esa gente. Nadie sabía dónde estaban, nadie ofreció una explicación, ni nadie aventuró ridículas teorías. Por el momento, el desconcierto absoluto.

Cornelio no durmió. Se acostó después de medía noche, tras haber dialogado con todos, y permaneció con los ojos abiertos hasta identificar el primer rayo de sol llamando a su ventana. Comúnmente solía desayunar algunos trozos de pan con huevos y carne, pero se olvidó por completo. Aprovechando la más temprana claridad, salió al fresco rocío de la mañana. Miró hacia un lado y hacia el otro, el primero como siempre. Aunque no desconfiaba, sabía que el



resto estaría arriba en cuestión de minutos. La situación, siendo francos, era alarmante. Si en verdad esa gente se había marchado, lo que él creía imposible, estaban en verdaderos problemas, y de ser así, quizás ellos mismos deberían considerar elevar ancla y buscar nuevas tierras más pobladas.

—No hay manera...

Si se fueron, pensaba Cornelio, no se fueron por sus propios medios, alguien los había obligado. Justamente por eso llevaba colgado del hombre su mejor rifle, y suficientes municiones en la bolsa.

—Andando... —susurró.

\*\*\*

Llevaba una hora caminando tras llegar al abandonado pueblo. Recorrió el río arriba y abajo, y hasta se trepó a varios árboles para poder tener una visión más panorámica desde las alturas. Nada. En los últimos minutos mucha gente se había sumado a la búsqueda, y ya estaban todos bastante activos, por lo que consideró algo ineficiente cubrir las mismas zonas. Cornelio decidió cruzar el río. Sabía dónde había un puente. Avanzó una media hora hacia el norte, llegando a una rígida construcción de madera que no tendría más de cincuenta años, mas altamente confiable. Lo cruzó con celeridad y se adentró en un sendero boscoso.

Había caminado por allí con anterioridad. Ese lado era un poco más denso en vegetación que el suyo, razón por la cual nadie se había asentado. Habría costado años despojar la tierra de tan gruesos árboles.

Tras más de tres horas caminando, el sol ya en lo alto del cielo asustando al frío matutino, escuchó pisadas.

Se detuvo y permaneció quieto, agudizando el oído. Sí, eran pisadas. Por lo menos seis o siete pares. Provenían del oeste, en la dirección que se dirigía. Apuró el paso. El sonido de las pisadas se intensificó, hasta tenerlas al alcance de la vista. A lo lejos, cerca del horizonte, vio un grupo de figuras humanas desconocida. Inconscientemente, corrió.

—¡Hey, ustedes !— siguieron en su senda sin aminorar la marcha —¡¡Hey!!

El grupo se detuvo, y se dio vuelta. Cornelio se acercó a paso ligero. Eran siete, desconocidos, un poco más altos que él y de textura similar. Podría jurar que habían sido producidos del mismo molde. Vestían ropa vieja, desgastada, pero limpia. Cornelio debió reconocer que se sintió intimidado. La presencia de extraños siempre le incomodaba.

—No los he visto nunca por aquí —les extendió la mano —. Mi nombre es Cornelio...

Le llamó la atención un gran saco de tela que colgaba del hombro de uno de ellos. Parecía pesado, aunque el sujeto del medio no demostraba esfuerzo alguno. Algo no iba bien.

Silencio.

—¿Qué hacen por esta zona? —aventuró a preguntar.

Silencio nuevamente. Para Cornelio el mundo se había detenido. Los sonidos naturales se habían apagado, hasta había dejado de sentir la leve brisa invernal, mucho menos su propia respiración.

—Recolectando— respondió el que llevaba el costal.  
—¿Recolectando?- intentó darle un tono desafiante a su voz- ¿Qué llevan en ese saco?  
—Nuestras más recientes piezas.

Los siete hombres lo miraban fijamente, pero no de manera intimidante, más bien, de un modo natural.

Sin emitir palabras, el sujeto dejó el saco en el suelo, frente a Cornelio, y desató la cuerda. Le hizo una seña para que se acercara y viera por él mismo.

Cornelio se agachó con cautela temiendo una trampa. Desconfiaba, pero no se iba a quedar de brazos cruzados. Abrió la bolsa y en su interior encontró decenas de pequeños frascos de vidrio. Habría más de cincuenta. Aunque lo extraño, lo que le provocó escalofríos, y una leve parálisis, fue ver que el contenido de cada frasco era un líquido iluminado. Un agua espesa que emitía una leve claridad.

—¿Qué es esto? —preguntó en una voz débil, insegura.  
—Parte de nuestra colección.  
—¿Qué... Qué colección? —Cornelio seguía ensimismado en los frasco. Levantó la vista hacia aquellos inexpresivos extraños.  
—Fantasmas.

Creyó escuchar mal.

—¿Cómo...?  
—Fantasmas, espíritus.

La realidad le cayó a Cornelio como un baldazo de agua helada.

“No puede ser...”

—A caso ellos son...- su voz temblaba.  
—Sí, son ellos.  
—¡Pues tienen que devolverlos!  
—No se puede —dijo con naturalidad—. Es nuestra colección. Y aunque quisiéramos, ya no podrían volver a la vida. Disculpe usted, pero nos tenemos...  
—¿Por qué no nosotros?- Cornelio lo miraba fijo a los ojos, unos ojos neutrales, grises, vacíos.  
—Ustedes no saben hacerla.  
—¿Qué cosa?  
—La harina —por primera vez otro de los siete extraños habló—. Recolectamos conocimientos.  
—¿Y cómo lo usan?  
—No lo usamos, solo lo guardamos.

Cornelio descubrió que no les tenía miedo. Aquellos hombres estaban en paz, no eran portadores de malos augurios ni de malas intenciones. Sostuvo su mirada en ellos, en sus ojos, en esas facciones relajadas.

—Ustedes no lo van a usar —dijo —pero nosotros sí podríamos usarlo. Lo necesitamos. Mi gente depende de ello.

El extraño que llevaba el costal, quien parecía ser el líder del grupo, por primera vez desvió la mirada de Cornelio y meditó. Quizás hayan sido unos pocos segundos, incluso menos, pero para el panadero ese lapso de tiempo se extendió por horas.

Con las manos sudadas a pesar del frío, contuvo la respiración mientras el que se hacía llamar coleccionista de fantasmas metía la mano en el saco y rebuscaba. Extrajo un frasco, igual al resto, y se lo entregó a Cornelio. Este lo sujetó con firmeza y postura interrogativa.

—Solo tienes que beberlo — sus palabras eran melódicas, claras — y quien esté en esa botella te podrá ayudar.

Cornelio jugó con el frasco entre sus dedos. Le resultaba increíble pensar que allí habitaba el espíritu de alguien que quizás había conocido. Era aterrador y fantástico al mismo tiempo. Lo paralizaba pero también le despertaba una vehemente curiosidad.

—¿Si me lo bebo tendré dos personalidades?  
—No. Aunque nunca te sentirás solo. Siempre habrá una presencia acompañándote, como una sombra. Quizás lleve tiempo acostumbrarse. Pero si lo que quieres es conocimiento... Allí está.  
—¿Puedo llevarme más?  
—Una es suficiente —dicho esto, los siete extraños se dieron vuelta y se alejaron. Desaparecieron antes que el panadero pudiera darse cuenta.

Cornelio no lo pensó dos veces. De manera instintiva y con la mente en blanco, como si estuviera hipnotizado, destapó la pequeña botella de líquido lumínico, y bebió sin pestañar su contenido.

Horas más tarde Cornelio regresaba galopando. Detrás, sentado junto a él en la silla de montar, una presencia. No sabía quién era, no sabría nunca, pero allí estaba, y estaría por siempre. Se acostumbraría. En lo único que pensaba por el momento, era que ya sabía lo que tenía que hacer para que su pueblo, al menos, tuviese pan.

# SHORT STORY IN ENGLISH

# RELATO CORTO EN INGLÉS

Page 40 ..... Sarah Rachel Westvik  
Page 46 ..... Alexandra Winkels  
Page 50 ..... Alix Heugas

*The System* First Prize/Primer Premio  
*The Streetlight* Second Prize/Segundo Premio  
*La Mer* Third Prize/Tercer Premio

# THE SYSTEM

**Sarah Rachel Westvik**

Bachelor in International Relations  
Norway

Janice Ng pressed her arms against the railing and looked out over the edge, down at the black coastal roads wending beneath her, gilded by a thousand street lamps and ensanguined by brake lights from shiny taxis and European sports cars. The briny rot of the tide and the sweet, muggy night-smell of the tropics were snuffed away at this altitude. All that remained was liquor, expensive perfume, sweat, and the grossly synthetic vanilla of stage smoke, wafting out from the band making a racket on the stage inside.

It was always bound to happen here, she mused. Someone would reach too far, with aspirations that exceeded the means, and the next thing they knew the ground would be rushing up to meet their blinking eyes and shatter them into blood, brain, and bones. Who would mourn, or change? Not a single person in this club she stood in, high above and apart from the city sprawled all around them. A concentration of lights, melded into one glowing heart, beating together and in sync. Yes, as long as the vessel functioned, the cogs could be overlooked. A slight nick or dent - whether caused by wear and tear or by a falling body - could be forgotten in time and adapted to, like a terminal illness, or an old war wound.

“Janice?”

She stared at her companion. Chestnut skin, raised eyebrow, tall frame fleshed out by his two years in the army. Infantry, specifically, as he would happily remind her while flipping the bird at the sky. He used to be pudgier, wear glasses instead of contacts, abhor cigarettes, throw around a smile rather than a grimace. Her hand tightened round her nearly empty hurricane glass and she pursed her lips, tasting the sweet and sour of the drink that lingered on her tinted gloss.

Passionfruit, egg white, orange and grapefruit, spicy ginger. Bourbon.

“I was thinking about the guy who fell last year,” she rasped. “A few levels below us. The one who leaned over the railing and just fell.”

“What the hell? Why?” Yusof blew smoke in the direction of the wind. “That’s morbid.” Because who else would? Who else would dare?

“I am unsober,” she said, because it was the easier answer.

He snorted. “That’s not a word.”

“It is if I decide it is,” she shot back.

She frowned at the water below them. That’s how it always was in this place. Anything was possible, lexically or otherwise, when you were stuck on the seventy-second floor, overlooking a bay that glittered with reflections of the skyscrapers and searchlights. Anything could be willed into existence, whether it was a filled wallet, friends in high places, or a renewed desire for life.

She wondered what it had been like looking out over the water two hundred years ago. Those men that had come on their wooden tallships, travelling for months with hardtack and scurvy, unable to shortcut through the nonexistent Suez, rounding the Cape and braving the squalls until the trade winds dropped them here, anchoring off a steaming jungle shoreline. They probably thought they could do anything, too.

This city, this country, this place could drive a person crazy in that invincible, exhilarating, self-destructive way.

She kept her eyes turned from Yusof, lest he see the naked melancholy in her eyes.

He followed her gaze down to the Friday night traffic and scoffed. “Isn’t that a familiar sight? Rush to wait and wait to rush.”

“An army,” she drawled. “An army of ants. Perfect place for us to be. High above them, as if we weren’t among them any other day.”

“Please don’t get metaphorical on me,” he grimaced, rubbing a hand over his face. “It’s Friday night.” She couldn’t help but feel cold at the sight of the heavy gold engagement ring on his finger. She looked down at her own bare hand.

“I’m not an ant,” he went on. “Not anymore. I’m in the clear now, and I’m going to get out of this godforsaken country.”

“With Margot? I can’t believe your family allowed that.”

“The rest couldn’t compete with my mum. If she says she’s fine with her son marrying a foreigner, not much the rest can do. Shun me for life maybe. I don’t care.”

“I wish my parents thought like that.”

“Shit, I’m sorry. I didn’t think.”

“It’s fine. Really.” She turned round, leaning on the railing and extending her chin to the stars, like she was ready for the guillotine but didn’t know the rules. Wind whipped over her cheeks, and blood rushed to her head, making it pound, making her flush with a vibrancy she was sure had already drained from her. “You’re stronger than me. You’re more willing to fight the tide than I am. I couldn’t bear it if my dad saw fit to disown me over dating a white guy. Anyway, I’m glad I’m home now. We can drink it out over the summer and by the time I’m back in London, I’ll be able to face him.” Or not.

“That’s messed up, Janice. I’m really sorry. You know that.” Yusof threw his cigarette over the balcony.

“I do. Fifty dollars,” she murmured, following its descent until the glowing red tip was swallowed up by all of the lights. At least while he sighed in exasperation, it also made him smile. Red gums, white teeth.

“Don’t fine me on a fine evening in a fine city,” he said. “How about I buy us some more drinks instead of paying out more to the big man?”

She nodded as he began to walk off. Sure. That was always the solution. Alcohol or Panadol, whatever fit the bill.

“Janice.” His voice had grown softer.

“I want a Starbucks,” she blurted out.

Yusof spun to look at her, bewildered. “It’s 1:30 AM.”

“I don’t care. I want a goddamn Starbucks.”

“Well you can’t have one,” Yusof asserted.

She followed him to the bar, listening as he ordered an old fashioned, mechanically asking for rum herself - straight, no ice, no water. Hot and hard yet as silken sweet as the old colonial buildings and the orchids blooming in the gardens down in the city below them, a stone’s throw away from mechanical harbours, spitting oil into the sea and trawling commerce out of it.

“Now,” Yusof said slowly, taking her glass for her, “We’re going to find a seat and you’re going to drink this slowly, and tell me what’s wrong.”

“Nothing’s wrong.” Still, she let him lead her to a newly vacated table near the balcony. She clambered onto the black bar stool, tucking her knees under her like a child, and leaning against the railing until it dug into her ribs. Beside them, a couple of friends laughed over something on Instagram.

She leaned over her drink, imagining the gold liquid sloshing in her glass was the new mint peach ice tea everyone was raving about. Not old rum, the kind that sailors and prostitutes used to drink in the Colonies because it was all they could afford, desperate to numb their over-worked muscles and forget everything.

What was the point of having anything if you never got to use it, after all? She wanted Yusof to buy her overpriced American coffee, not hard liquor. She wanted him to stay, not use his new money to spirit himself away to the Alps or Cambridge or Silicon Valley with his new girl. There was no point in this place at all if nobody stayed, if nobody got to use what was theirs. The realisation collapsed in on her like a soon-to-be neutron star, one whose demise she’d been holding off for years, pretending all was well in the stasis of a red giant, a dying dot in the wide night sky. There was no point. She was fighting and fighting in spite of the eventual implosion she refused to acknowledge.

“You’re not an ant either, you know.” Yusof’s voice was gentle, gentler than she’d heard it in a while, but it cut through her thoughts like a rusted razor.

“I think I am,” she said, and found she couldn’t speak louder than a whisper. “Whether or not I wanted it, I was designed to live in this warren of material.”

He laughed, but it wasn’t a humorous one. “Designed? By whom, by your parents? By God?”

“Yes, exactly, by the system.”

Yusof clenched his jaw and rolled his eyes. She rolled her fingers into fists. Her nails cut into her palms, but she’d had too much to drink, and she’d let her head be filled with stuffing over the years thanks to teachers and textbooks, and so she felt nothing. She took a swig of rum, hoping for it to go down wrong and let her choke. It made her cough a few times, but nothing more. Oh hell, she was going to go mad. She wanted to smack her head against the glass of the railing until she began to feel something again, until she shattered, red blood, white bone.

“Did you mean it?” She said, and it terrified her to hear the pleading in her voice. “Are you really going to leave soon?”

“Of course I’m going to leave. But I’m going to come back.”

“I don’t understand.”

“You see, you love this place because you’ve been told to love it.” Inside, the band announced they’d finished their set, and the audience cheered. “You love this place because you think it’s amazing as it is, with all that’s been built around it. That’s not me. I love my people and I love what they could be but they’re not there yet. We’re a country that fears itself. I need to get out, before this plastic metal shell of a city ruins me. I need to build myself up before I can come back and rebuild this place.”

“I thought this was a ‘godforsaken’ place.”

“It is - but even if He has forsaken it, I haven’t.”

“So you’ll pick up the slack? Remake it in your image instead?”

“I’m not that arrogant. Just arrogant enough to get off my ass.” He paused, and concern darkened his eyes. “Janice”.

“I think I should. Forsake it, I mean. We’ve been in a dream, Yusof, and it’s going to become a nightmare before you know it -”

“*Janice*. You’re so sad,” he murmured. “Why are you so sad?”

“I’ve been thinking about it,” she murmured. “And I think I’ll always be sad. Asia makes me sad, Europe makes me nostalgic. Here, I cry out for change. There, I realise the lamps were never relit.”

“Then be the spark if you can’t be the fire.”

“Don’t you dare quote “Star Wars” to me.”

“Come on.” He raised a hand in exasperation. “You always believed you could build a life here. You never stopped believing it. Don’t give that up now. Not because I’m leaving, or because of your parents, or that guy overseas, or anything else.”

“But I have to.”

“Why? You’re luckier than me. You’ve spent two years in the West already. You’ve gotten to see the world out there, and now you can come home without too much of a tragedy.”

“It *is* a tragedy!”

It took the look on his face to realise the shattering glass she’d heard had been caused by her springing from the high chair.

His chewed his cheek, standing up. She was aware of a waiter coming over, of him apologising about the glass, and of the stares that watched them. Her heart rate rose, pounding against fragile ribs, so young, so futile from the beginning. They were staring, and they knew.

She was the weak link. She was the nick in the cog. She’d never be accepted but she would be brushed over. When she came back they’d shuttle her into a cubicle, they’d anchor her neck to a computer, they’d pull a smile from her with their fingers and bulldog clips, they’d teach her to parrot to keep the machinery running smoothly. Yusof looked at her, all concern and

disappointment. He knew, too, even if he was too polite to say it. She was the failure, he the success. She couldn’t handle the dream being over. He’d known it was a dream all along, and he was ready to face the dawn when he woke up. The briny rot of the tide reached up for her.

She clambered onto the bar stool and pitched herself over the side.

\*\*\*

Yusof swirled his old fashioned, listening to the ice clink off sides of the glass. Down here, in the bar district, the scents of hot concrete and sweat and cheap aerosol deodorant surrounded him like a toxic cloud. It was better than being at one of the sky bars. He looked at the one clearing the trees to his right. A party at its peak lit up the cloud cover in shades of pink and neon green.

He gradually became aware of a presence at his side - a woman. Young, pretty, local. She was making eyes at him. Red cocktail dress, white face powder. He glanced down once at his bare ring finger, and she decided that was her cue.

“You’ve been in your head all evening.”

“You’ve been watching me?”

“Hard to look at anything else.”

Coy. He couldn’t, though. The scars were too fresh - all of them.

“What were you thinking about?”

His voice came as a breath, almost lost to the cacophony. “I was thinking of the girl who fell from that building last year.”

The woman blinked at him, then wrinkled her fair, delicate nose. “Oh god, what? Why? How morbid.”



SECOND PRIZE | SEGUNDO PREMIO

SHORT STORY IN ENGLISH | RELATO CORTO EN INGLÉS

# THE STREETLIGHT

**Alexandra Winkels**

Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor in International Relations  
Spain, USA & Germany

I try to keep my balance as I stagger across the terrace, trying to keep one foot in front of the other, my field of vision blurring in and out of focus. I groan internally; maybe coming up here wasn't such a good idea after all. I block out these thoughts and manage to sit down steadily on the edge of the balcony, overlooking part of the city, the starry night sky an imposing view looking down on me, condemning my actions, judging my motives. All I wanted was fresh air. The half-bottle of tequila I'd downed before escaping the party now seems like just a distant memory, so far buried into my past like the clarity of mind which I assume preceded it. I feel happy, like I'm suddenly in control of the distance between my dangling feet and the solid ground. I can hear people talking inside my apartment, laughing, having fun at the party me and my husband Daniel were hosting. I'd been having fun as well, but I came to find the voices, the bodies, all a bit too suffocating. I had left my brightly coloured living room and crawled up a small set of stairs which led to a balcony, overlooking my street, right above the space where all my unaware friends mingled and drank away the evening all the way into what would soon become next day's dawn.

I laugh acidly at the situation. The flashing lights of another, surely larger and wilder, party in the distance seem as alluring as they do accessible. I stretch my arm and wave my fingers; I can feel liveliness, the vibration of souls as lost and confused as my own, giving their sins away to the music. Oh, it is all so close. It all lies just at the tip of my fingers, peace and chaos, intertwined, my own disaster following suit.

I pull my arm away, silence. It is all an illusion, thousands of miles away, always unreachable.

I feel myself begin to shiver. The cold, metal bar which stops my body from precipitating onto the dark, hard, concrete under me feels like an icy torture above my waist. My legs dangle from the spasms of the uncomfortable position I'm sitting in. I laugh again. How can I care? I slide under the metal bar, sitting straight on the other side. Nothing is separating me from a mortal fall now. I feel steady, confident almost. For once, my life is the result of having achieved a perfect balance. I wonder, just for a second, what it would feel like to let myself slip away into the abyss of uncertainty, and it seems as easy to me in that moment as sliding down a toboggan, my parents waiting at the end, arms open. I shudder at the dark energy consuming me. My black nail polish gleams like a deadly, foreshadowing force as I slide back behind the metal bar.

A couple walks hand in hand down the street beneath me. Their elevated tone suggests an argument, a heated one, and I feel like an intruder lurking in the shadows; I am invading the scene of a life which is not mine to star in. The woman is visibly upset, and pulls away from the male figure holding her purse, whispering angrily about the inadequacy of the moment. Inadequacy? I wonder why she would use that word; The Street is deserted. She cannot possibly know they have an audience... Or can she? I smile in the darkness and squint my eyes to distinguish the couple from the mesh of shadows around them, in the dim illumination provided by three lonely streetlights.

The area under one of the streetlights is dimmer than the rest. They stand under it, and I wonder why.

I soon realise it is not just a fight I am witnessing, it is a goodbye. They slowly come together, their uncertain steps separating them by a good fifty centimetres. The man's back is turned to me but I can see her face clearly. The woman's long, luscious black hair is held back and away

from her pale face by a scarlet headband. She is whispering, and unknowingly I lean forward to hear what she is saying, gasping in horror when I realise I am sitting on the literal edge of a building. My sleuthing surely must have death as a boundary. My heartbeat slows down once I feel safe behind the balcony bar once more, and I hear some lost words coming out of the woman's mouth. Lonely, strangers, separate. Separate what, lives? I cannot help but wonder. I begin to construct a narrative in my head. She feels alienated from the man, clearly, and they must be heading to their car after some fancy event; the woman's hot red dress and matching headband give away certain etiquette. Why would such a beautiful woman feel lonely?

I hear the tone of the discussion shift from a lulling sadness to an overwhelming aggressive-ness, the distance between them tingling with the remainder of forgotten memories and blurred sentiments. The man is shouting with desperation, the woman is deaf with indifference. No matter how far I may be I feel closer to them than ever. I can clearly from afar see the remains of a torn curtain of passion between them, in the present merely a piece of cloth blackened and consumed by a slow fire throughout the years. To them it is now barely an illusion, a string keeping both their lives together...

Like she said, separate. Separate people, with separate lives, in separate worlds.

A wave of guilt hits me like a crumbling wall from above. This moment is so intimate, so catastrophic for them both that a stranger should not be experiencing their heartbreak from a balcony like a morbid observer. The man is now weeping, grasping her head, pulling off her scarlet headband accidentally in the process. I watch her look away, trying to contain her tears, turning her back on the man ever so slightly. The man takes advantage of this split-second of loneliness to quickly shove her headband into his suit pocket, crumpled and creased, yet a last desperate attempt at conserving something of her lover. I wonder what he will do with her headband if they do part ways. Will he lay it on her pillow at night, pretend her hair is still underneath it in the morning? Will he use it to wipe away his tears, as a reminder of the fatidic night where they realised they had nothing left in common, as a consolation that he will at least always safeguard something of hers even if just her headband? Before I realise it, I am crying myself.

How can an emotion so pure, Love, end in the saddest of tales?

The rest of their words are lost to me in the thick night air; I can barely make out their murmurs from the traffic, of streets so far away from here that they almost seem normal. They hug. She cries. I sigh. It is clearly a goodbye hug. Will she ever regret ending a life together, no matter how long or short, passionate or dull, under the weakest Streetlight of an anonymous street? One day this Streetlight will falter, its bulb will burn out. Will I be watching, from this same balcony, remembering this same couple, I wonder?

The couple leaves. As abruptly as they interrupted my silent meditation they jump into their car and drive away into the night. A shiny Renault Megane, a trail of disillusionment behind it. I am left alone with my thoughts once again; me, and the metal bar, and the balcony, and the Street. I imagine what it would feel like screaming down onto the line of parked cars and adjacent houses. To pierce the silent night with a noise so loud its echoes would stop the city from ever remembering Silence again. I sigh with the leftovers of a burning desire. Will I regret not doing so? The Street glares up at me defiantly; "Of course you will", it seems to tell me. "So do."

I scream. I cry out for the couple-no-more, so loudly it hurts, so loudly it pains my lungs and my integrity and my sense of decency. The streetlights disintegrate, glass windows shatter, the lights in the distance stop flashing for a split-second: I have never felt freer in my entire life. The burning sensation in my throat reminds me that I have caused complete annihilation around me for one single moment, one defining, tangible instant in which Power pulsed through

my veins instead of blood. I wonder if that is how the Streetlight felt after two people's entire journey together ended underneath it. I wipe away the remaining tears in my eyes, and realise at least an hour has passed. I have to return to my own party, people are probably wondering where I am. I stretch once I am on solid ground again, making my way down the same stairs which had led up to my small adventure. I remember them again for a second; the disillusioned Couple, the dark Street, the scarlet Headband, the dimmest Streetlight.

I plaster a fake smile on my face as I enter my living room once again, reapplying my MAC Cosmetics lipstick before facing a welcome committee of three of my friends, immediately gasping about my runny makeup and cold skin. I cannot help but think of how trivial their concerns suddenly seem, how distant and irrelevant. I feel the need to find my husband, Daniel, to look into his tumultuous eyes yet feel his solid reassurance. I need to feel loved. I make my way between the noisy crowds, inspecting suit after suit, face after face, saying hello after goodbye. I finally spot Daniel near the window, the Streetlight from before visible on the street behind him, casting a lonely shadow. His handsome countenance reflects nothing but seriousness as he engages in conversation with a man I do not recognize.

The twisted reminder of the Streetlight and the couple under it drives my desire to see Daniel even further. I cannot help but feel like the most egotistical person in the world as I make my way towards him. How narcissistic of me is it to strive to find reassurance in my own relationship after witnessing a failed one? I convince myself not to care as I stand less than a metre away from Daniel, my arms wide open, my love for him almost a need, clear in the desperate rhythm of my high heels against the marble floor. He spots my approach and gives me a smile which makes the man he is engaged in conversation with to stand by, and me to stop dead in my tracks before reaching my final destination; His embrace.

His smile is one of sadness, my expression one of confusion. Everyone around us falls into a sudden silence. The tension around us dawns on me with such force I have to make a large effort not to fall onto my knees. I gasp, bringing my hand to my mouth in shock, tears welling up in my eyes as I struggle to block out all the sounds around me. Daniel slowly removes my hand from my quivering lips, taking it in his, and I realise how cold his skin is. Almost as cold as mine. Almost as if he, too, had been out in the freezing night air. Our eyes meet, and I cannot continue the charade. My entire world begins to slowly crack, the crowds around us to dissolve. Daniel reaches into his suit pocket, pulling out a scarlet red headband. My scarlet headband.

"You might want this back." His voice is a faint whisper, but I hear it as loud as a siren.

He wouldn't lay it on my pillow at night, or use it to wipe away his tears. We were... Separate people, and we led separate lives, in separate worlds.

Through the window behind him, I see the Streetlight, our Streetlight, the dimmest Streetlight in the entire street, begin to falter. Its light becomes dimmer and dimmer, until it finally burns out.

# LA MER

Alix Heugas

Bachelor in Business Administration and Bachelor of Laws  
France

May had finally arrived. The first rays of light came dancing through the windows, bringing with them some warmth in the hospital room. The white walls carried some of the glow from the sun and the normally bare place suddenly seemed charged with the intangible decoration of spring’s joy. The curtains were swaying in the slight breeze welcoming a magpie to the window who after peering into the room for a bit, appeared to lose interest and flew off. The TV was on and an old woman was sitting in front of it, staring fixedly at the screen. She seemed oblivious to the bird and good weather, it wasn’t even sure if she was aware of the TV program she was watching. She was completely still, like a wax statue, on whom time had painted the wrinkles on her hands and face. Someone knocked at the door and a caregiver entered carrying a food tray.

\*\*\*

“Hello Mrs. Mumson. It’s lunchtime already”. I turn my head to look at the tall blonde man with lovely blue eyes standing by the door and a smile creaks in the corners of my mouth as I recognise the man who often comes take care of me.

“I was waiting for you Sebastian. What bland food have you got for me today?” – “Colourless peas, dry beef and a watery yogurt” – “My favourite” I joke. He places the tray in front of me and carefully tucks the napkin around my collar so I wouldn’t spill anything as I eat. He then sits in front of me and starts feeding me the tasteless peas. This was our little ritual. As my caretaker, it is his duty to feed, dress, help me go to the toilet and keep me company. Nobody in the hospital has the same bond as the one we share. Of all the caretakers, he’s the one I remember most.

“Any news from your family today?” he asks.

“None. I’ve got no more family. No one comes visit me anymore”.

We both stay silent for a while as I dutifully chew on the peas.

“Where is your family Mrs. Mumson?” he resumes.

“I don’t know. They all left me here to die but that’s okay! This plant here is sturdy” I say pointing to myself with a grin. Despite the joke, it is true that I cannot recall any family member visiting me. Not that I have a very big one, but the situation was such that the memories of them had become cloudy. Whenever I try to think of them, my mind would just shut off. I search in my memories, but instead of finding them, I just see black. All blank.

Later in the day he takes me out to a garden. They say the warm weather is supposed to help old people like me but I would rather stay indoors. Usually it’s an argument I would win, but Sebastian was very insistent today that I should take the air. He is by my side chatting on about the different species of plants situated around us. It is very interesting. I somehow recall knowing at one point in my life a great deal about plants. I remember preparing some in a room with an elderly man, even older than myself! But as soon as I start chasing after a memory, it seems to run away, vanishing in the dust of my mind. I have always held an admiration for the different sorts of flowers I come across and the brilliant magnolia bush in front of me holds my attention. Its white petals with their rosy hues... “Come Lilian! Come closer to the flowers, you’ll look so



pretty” I see a girl wearing a lovely white gown and pink sandals. She looks so proud. Her mother is staring at her with a camera, ready to snap the picture. It’s an important day. What day is it? Everything seems so joyous. The girl is laughing and runs away between the trees. I want to follow but the trees are so dark, they engulf me. I see nothing, I feel nothing. Panic rises, I’m lost.

“Ma’am?” I feel a warm hand on my shoulder and I am startled by the man at my side talking to me.

“Where are we?” I ask “We’re in the care home’s gardens Ma’am” - “I don’t recognize these gardens. Where are you taking me?” - “To the same place we usually go, by the fountain” “The fountain? I don’t recall any fountain. Take me back home! Take me back!” I am so confused. Confronted by my agitation, the walk is cut short. I am brought back indoors, where they try to calm me and tuck me in bed, but not before giving me my pills though.

The next day, a blonde man dressed all in white comes in my room with food. “Good morning Mrs. Mumson” he says. I peer at him, something about him triggering at strings in my memory, but what is it? I know those eyes. They seem very familiar. Somehow I feel like I know what is going on behind them. Like I should know him... “Markus!” I shout as I recognize my high school friend “My goodness I hadn’t seen you in ages! Not since you moved out of town due to your father’s job”.

“I’m not Markus Mrs. Mumson” he replies in an exasperated voice. What a load of rubbish. I know he’s Markus. “Stop trying to confuse me” I scold him. “Do you still bike like you used to?” I ask. He doesn’t answer me and his face takes on a pained expression, as he seems to wonder what to answer. I realise Markus looks older than I remember him to be. More worn out and tired. “I do” he finally says “I go biking every weekend along the coast of Sidmouth. Do you remember Sidmouth?” He isn’t facing me when talking but is facing the window, appearing lost in thought. Sidmouth... it sounds vaguely familiar but I cannot pinpoint it exactly in my head. “No” I say. Markus sighs and turns back from the window. He stares at me for a long time, eyes red and blue, before declaring “Mrs. Mumson, tomorrow we are going on a trip”.

\*\*\*

The drive was tedious but neither the young man nor the old woman in the car seem to care, both appearing too focused or lost in their own thoughts to become bored. After a three hours however, they finally reached the coast. The care giver helped her onto her wheel chair and pushed her to the beach. “Do you remember this place?” he asked her but she shook her head, which was buried under her woollen scarf to shield her from the cold. The few passers-by then watched in amusement at the sight of the care-giver lifting up the protesting old lady, before effortlessly taking off her slippers and gently placing her down in the sea, at a level where the ocean hugged her feet in foam. “Please Mrs. Mumson. Breathe and enjoy the view. The doctors recommend the seaside and many people like it, including you” He held her back against his chest, her weight resting on him. Despite the woman’s earlier protests, the rhythm of the waves with the distant sound of seagulls and a heartbeat stilled her, as she fully took in her surroundings. Surroundings she wasn’t completely unfamiliar with. The elements around her came together like colours to fix themselves into a painting of her past. The picturesque landscape was like a frame in the walls of her memory. The feeling of the cold water by her feet, tickling her ankles as it went to and fro. The salty smell of the sea in the air, filling her nostrils just like her heart, with sudden remembered memories. She knew this sensation. She remembered this place. She grew up here. She had a family here once. She had a loving husband who died a few years ago. She had a daughter who left too soon in a car accident and she had...

Her eyes started becoming watery, as she gripped harder onto the young man holding her. “Simon” she said as she stared straight at him.

“Mom” he whispered and his face distorted with emotions ranging between relief, overwhelming happiness, grief. Grief at how cruel these last few years had been. Joy at recovering something most precious and rightfully yours. The tears came pouring out of his eyes and he clenched on to her as the sobs racked his body. Finally embracing the mother he had thought lost years ago. He held on to her like a child clinging to his parent’s legs after a field trip because he had missed her so much. He was 28 years old, but at that moment he was eight again, he was her son, no longer the stranger he was forced to be all these years and the woman caressing his hair was the exact same one of twenty years ago who did the same soft gesture to console him after heartbreaks or nightmares. He felt weak, but it felt so good. For once, he wasn’t the one anymore to sustain and support the woman he loved circulate through old age. For once, she was the one maintaining him, trying to soften his sobs with the warmth of her fragile embrace.

He was holding her up and she was holding him together.

Time passed but neither of them noticed. The world stopped turning for a moment, where no one turned older but instead old memories came anew.

It cannot be said exactly how much time after, the sobs had begun to diminish, replaced with a rough, quiet breathing and an occasional hiccup. They both breathed in synchronization with the sea, giving rhythm to life’s pace. Simon looked at his mom. How different her eyes looked. They were the same pair of eyes he had greeted for the last few years, yet he was looking at a completely different person, one who at last recognized him the same way he always recognized her from many years past. The lucidity behind the blue orbs gave them a spark, that shone with the wetness of held back tears. He felt the soul staring at him, rather than emptiness gaping back. “Mommy I missed you” he said, his voice like a child’s. “I’m scared of losing you again Mom. I cannot. I cannot.” he cried brokenly, desperation hitting him with the idea that his mother might not remember him tomorrow once more “Simon, darling” she soothed him “I’m scared of not remembering you too but regardless of what happens, my affection for you is always there beneath the disease. We don’t need the memories for us to enjoy each other. I get to see you every day and having you near me, taking care of me is all a mother can ask for. It’s all you can ask for too, faced with this injustice of life.”

She fell asleep in the car ride back home. He didn’t know if she would remember him tomorrow. He didn’t know how much time they had left. Would he still be her son when she wakes up or was he to become a stranger once more? It didn’t matter much, he reasoned. He hadn’t been able to say goodbye to his father or sister. He couldn’t bear the same happening with his mom. He remembered the feeling of their tight embrace, perhaps their last as mother and son. He then knew. Some things can never go lost.

# POETRY IN SPANISH

# POESÍA EN ESPAÑOL

---

Page 56 ..... Gonzalo Llorden  
Page 58 ..... Stephanie Margaret Heinemann  
Page 60 ..... Miguel Donetch Cervera

*La historia de la vida* First Prize/Primer Premio  
*Si lo soy* Second Prize/Segundo Premio  
*Pájaro borrascoso* Third Prize/Tercer Premio

FIRST PRIZE | PRIMER PREMIO  
POETRY IN SPANISH | POESÍA EN ESPAÑOL

# LA HISTORIA DE LA VIDA

**Gonzalo Llorden**

Bachelor in Business Administration and Bachelor in International Relations  
Spain

El suspiro de un tiempo que se perdió.  
La soledad que te produce el haber crecido.  
Un futuro incierto, pero bello.  
La tranquilidad de saber esperar.  
La pasión y el amor.  
Una lucha por tu ilusión.

# SI LO SOY

Stephanie Margaret Heinemann

Master in Visual and Digital Media  
Mexico & Germany

Sé que llevas esperándome largo tiempo,  
No desesperes, falta muy poco...  
Sé que algunas noches me sueñas.  
No son sólo sueños.  
Sé que te preguntas dónde estoy.  
Más cerca de lo que crees...  
Sé que a veces dudas de mí.  
Te entiendo... pero confía.

Sé que te cuestionas por qué he tardado tanto.  
Te pido que me entiendas: no estaba listo.  
Y tú tampoco.  
Sé que te preguntas cuándo me conocerás.  
Será el día en que menos lo esperes...  
Sé que te preguntas cómo soy.  
Soy tan sólo yo, perfectamente imperfecto...  
Sé que te preguntan por mí.  
Muy pronto tendrán respuestas...  
Sé que te preguntas si seré el amor de tu vida.  
Con lágrimas de emoción te lo digo: ¡Sí, lo soy!

THIRD PRIZE | TERCER PREMIO  
POETRY IN SPANISH | POESÍA EN ESPAÑOL

# PÁJARO BORRASCOSO

Miguel Donetch Cervera

International MBA  
Chile & Spain

Me asombrará por siempre  
la lentitud copiosa de tu sueño  
que sigue agregando  
tiempo a mi abrazo  
y a tu beso.

Amaré las sombras cautivas  
del corazón tan leve  
que se marchitan  
tras una hoja de mayo.

Tus andares seguiré,  
pájaro borrasco,  
hasta que la tormenta de tus alas  
de un plumazo borre  
esta noche de verano.

Cuando mis pasos lloren  
alegrías de vidas anteriores  
renacerán las petunias  
bajo las tejas  
de tu casa.

Y buscarás  
¡oh pequeña, infinita dulzura!  
coplas entre las cenizas  
de un corazón abrumado  
por las llamas, tan frías,  
de la sombra de tus alas.

# POETRY IN ENGLISH

# POESÍA EN INGLÉS

---

Page 64 ..... Jack Straker  
Page 66 ..... Malak El Halabi  
Page 68 ..... Jack Straker

*Sonnet* First Prize/Primer Premio  
*Insomnia* Second Prize/Segundo Premio  
*My Little Lion* Third Prize/Tercer Premio

# SONNET

**Jack Straker**

International MBA  
United Kingdom

I shun the eyes that light up cityscapes,  
The smile that launched a thousand ships is dull,  
A tempest's fury seems a quietened lull;  
All clichéd beauty my high gaze escapes.

I could extol the virtues of your nose,  
Or laud your shoulders' feel beneath my lips,  
Or worship the creator of your hips;  
These base descriptions have their place – in prose.

For neither swan nor wearied morning lark  
Are captive beauties of this hurried lake;  
For loveliness there is no trite remark -

The trove of language is exposed as stark.  
The truth is though the world might groan and quake  
We lose ourselves in us for our own sake.

# INSOMNIA

Malak El Halabi

Master in Market Research and Consumer Behaviour  
Lebanon

I call him: *Insomnia*  
His hands,  
larger than my immense dreams  
His hands  
engulfing the stars and the planets in their passage

I call him  
I call him: *Insomnia*

His hands measuring my waist like a restless tailor, swirling around my body like a deadly  
hurricane, planting roses in my hair.  
His hands,  
drenched in my hair,  
ripping  
rose  
petals.

I call him.  
I call him Insomnia.  
His hands, waking up, all the sleeping bats of my heart, with a  
~~single stroke~~  
His hands keeping my weary eyes  
wide  
open

I call him  
and will always call him,  
*Insomnia*,

So that my nights and his days remain forever

the two sides  
of an unfinished moon.



# MY LITTLE LION

**Jack Straker**

International MBA  
United Kingdom

The lion who sits as bastion of the pride,  
Whose subject bows and scrapes as pleases him,  
Does scorn the flowers that from my soul he pried;  
This awful beauty bids me sing this hymn.

Your mane breathes toxic scent which I inhale,  
Like brine to one marooned so bittersweet,  
And on these drunken tresses I set sail  
‘Til fancies flee and foreign shores I greet.

Now ancient columns penetrate the haze,  
The once-clear water’s dirtied by the spume  
And sweat of idle pleasure’s halcyon days;

Yet with your barbs that grip, your tongue that flays,  
You will from where I rest, serene, exhume  
My trembling soul and, gently, it consume.

# SHORT ESSAY IN ENGLISH

# ENSAYO CORTO EN INGLÉS

Page 72..... Víctor Vu

Page 84 ..... Daniel Bloch

Page 88 ..... Laura McDermott

*A Sober Society: How alcohol consumption hinders Vietnam development & What can we do to protect the future* First Prize/Primer Premio

*How China is Losing the World Soft War* Second Prize/Segundo Premio

*The Ethical Implications of Experience Design* Third Prize/Tercer Premio

# A SOBER SOCIETY:

*How alcohol consumption  
hinders Vietnam development  
& What can we do to protect  
the future*

**Victor Vu**

Master in Management, current student, estudiante actual  
Vietnam

• **The Toxic Drinking Culture of Vietnam**

• **Cheap Alcohol & Loose Regulation**

Soon To Be No Import Taxes

Unrecorded Alcohol

• **Negative Externalities To The Society**

a. Private Cost

b. Public Cost

c. Intangible Costs

• **Action Plan For A Sober Society**

1. Higher Taxes On All Alcoholic Beverages

2. On-trade & Off-trade Restriction

3. Social Norms Campaign

4. Tackling Unrecorded Alcohol

5. Advertising Restriction

6. What Can We Do As Responsible Citizens?

• **Conclusion**

**Appendix 1: Drinking Hub of Hanoi**

**Bibliography**

Growing up in a country with a quarter of the population earning less than \$2 a day<sup>1</sup>, I always wonder what is holding us back and where we will go in the future. While the answer to the latter is mysterious, history can help us solve the former one.

Vietnam shares one of the longest histories in the world, starting at half a million years ago, with the first settlements along the Red River Valley. Since the end of pre-dynasty tribal society in B.C 3000, Vietnam have been through 6 foreign invasions, 12 dynasties and no less than 30 wars. Vietnam's culture was heavily shaped by Confucian ideology, a knowledge system established from a thousand years under Chinese colonization. 1887 marked the another turn in Vietnamese history, with the authoritative victory of the French over the Vietnamese, and the colonization of the last independent Vietnamese kingdoms. French rule was marked by exploitation, but also the introduction of the Romanized alphabet, and the rise of a local vernacular culture rather than one based on Chinese classics. The country ultimately gained independence on 30 of April, 1975, this marked a period of economic liberalization without political liberalization (Kiernan, 2017). In 1986, the government rolled out an economic revolution plan and opened borders to globalization. For the next 30 years, Vietnam achieved remarkable economic development with average GDP growth of 6%, moving from a poor to a lower middle income country. Market liberalization, free trade, private ownership, the normalization of political relations with the United States, and the conversion of collectively held institutions to opportunities for private profit have contributed to rapid economic growth (Lincoln, 2016).

However, statistics about economic achievement are subjected to estimations and biases, reality is often repugnant. Abnormal GDP growth widened income inequality gap. Reckless

---

<sup>1</sup> Demombynes, G. and Vu, L. (2015). *Demystifying Poverty Measurement in Vietnam*. World Bank Group.

economic development formed congested cities and impoverished rural areas. Corrupted governing system hindered innovation and neglected human rights. Urbanization fueled by unskilled population led to high unemployment rate and crime rate. Consequently, increased in wealth and social openness brought along a subtle but serious socioeconomic problem, excessive consumption of alcohol. Our history was filled with blood and tears, our future is drown under alcohol.

I. The Toxic Drinking Culture of Vietnam

“A man without spirits is like a flag without wind” – A common proverb shared among drinkers to associate masculinity with drinking. Drinkers, rooted with patriarchy ideology, would classified non-drinking male as homosexual. While male suffers the direct costs of alcohol consumptions, women suffers social harms from intoxicated male partners.

It is uncommon to see a party without alcohol. Alcoholic beverages – beer, rice wine, liquor, and other intoxicants – are consumed during traditional festivals such as the Lunar New Year; they also mark rites of passage such as weddings, housewarmings, funerals, and death anniversaries. The purposes of drinking are diverse. People drink to celebrate, to condole, to socialize, to brag, to do business, or to get drunk. Not drinking at a party is a sign of disrespect and lack of hospitality. Party goer would drink excessively at rapid pace as it is the norm for people on the same table to finish a round of drink at the same time, they often go “bottom up”. People have such a strong appetite for alcohol that they are willing to sacrifice their health and much else for the sake of continued heavy drinking.

Eventually, drinking become a competition in which heavy drinkers earn peer’s respects. As a result, the goal of every drinker is to get the others intoxicated. Peer pressure plays as the major psychologic factor pulling young people to alcohol consumption. Although the legal drinking age is 18, it is socially acceptable for kids to drink at age 15. By the age of 25, there is no longer need for peer pressure, drinking has become a habit. Even worse, non-drinker faces the risk of social exclusion as drinking is one of the very few ways to socialize among young people.

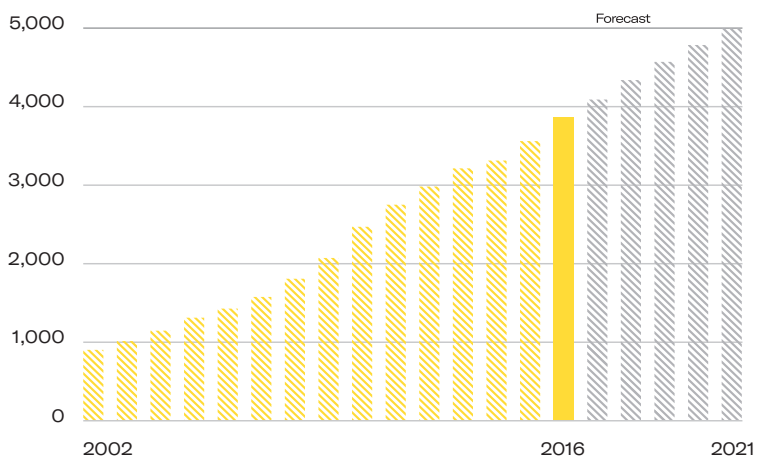


Figure 1: Sales of Alcoholic Drinks from 2002 – 2021 in million litres (Euromonitor, 2017)

The Vietnamese are among the heaviest drinkers in Southeast Asia. A WHO study, in 2014, found average per capita consumption for adults almost doubled from 2003–2005 to 2008–2010, increasing from 3.8 to 6.6 liters of pure alcohol. This rate is higher than the global rate of 6.2 liters per capita. Euromonitor reported that beer demand has increased by more than 300 percent since 2002. However, all these estimates might substantially underestimated the total consumption figure due to the sizable market share of unrecorded alcohol, which accounts up to 70% of total consumption.

II. Cheap Alcohol & Loose Regulation

A litter of homebrew spirit costs no more than 20,000 Dong or €0.6, while a pin of gas beer at any street restaurants costs 5,000 Dong or €0.15. You could get drunk with less than a euro. While domestic produced alcohol is subjected to Special Consumption Tax (SCT) and Sales Tax (VAT), Imported alcohol further subjected to import taxes. As of 1 January 2018, the SCT for alcoholic drinks of 20% ABV and over is 65%. For wine and spirits below 20% ABV, the SCT rate is 35%. These rates have been marginally increased in the past few years. Sales tax in Vietnam is 10% for all alcoholic drinks and has been kept constant throughout.

Unfortunately, regulations without effective enforcement created loophole for opportunistic merchants. To evade taxes, smugglers create black market filled by illegally imported branded spirits from neighboring countries that have lower alcohol taxes. A report from Euromonitor estimated that 80-90% of spirits sold in Vietnam are contraband, since spirits offer the highest profit to smugglers. The prices of contraband spirits smuggled from China and Cambodia are usually 30-50% lower than the prices charged in official outlets. High import tax and special consumption tax will continue to worsen this situation.

Soon To Be No Import Taxes

From 2006, under an integration program with AFTA - Asian Free Trade Area, import tax rates on all alcoholic drinks originating from AFTA members were reduced to 5%, from the previous level of 100%. When Vietnam officially joined the WTO in January 2007, the Vietnamese government committed to cutting the tax levy on imported beer, wine and spirit by half in 2012 (Euromonitor, 2017). Worse, under the TPP Agreement with 12 other members, import taxes imposed on alcoholic drinks will be eliminated in 2026 and 2027. Ultimately, this is the cost for being a developing country in a globalized market.

Unrecorded Alcohol

According to the World Health Organization's 2014 Global Status Report on Alcohol, unrecorded alcohol makes up 70% of total consumption in Vietnam. Firstly, local brewed alcohol is easy to obtain due to fewer restrictions on where or when it can be purchased. Secondly, Vietnamese prefer to drink traditional beverage. Most importantly, it is cheap, with nearly 50% of drinkers reporting the much lower price of homemade alcohol as an important reason for its consumption (IARD, 2018). As this segment of the alcohol market is largely unregulated, control measures like pricing, taxation, and restrictions on the availability of recorded alcohol beverages are of little use because they do not affect the production, sale, or consumption of unrecorded alcohol. Figure 2 illustrate the gigantic market share of unrecorded alcohol compare to recorded alcohol.

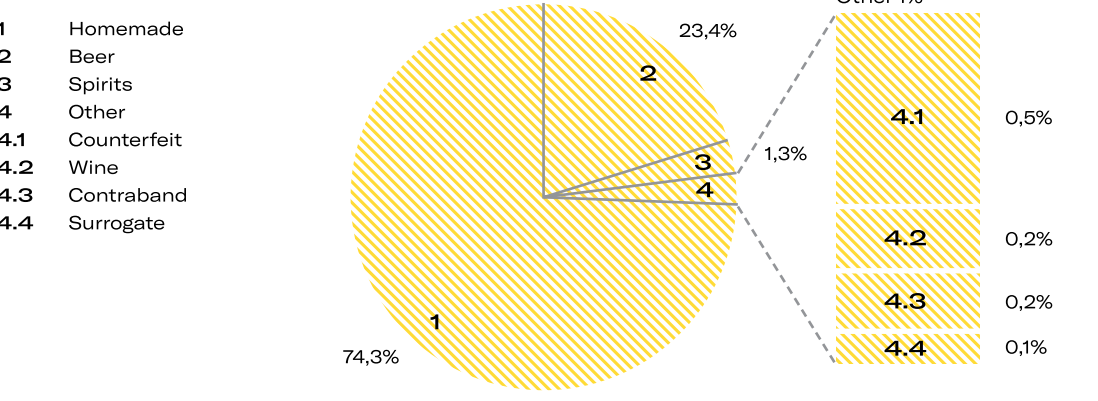


Figure 2: Alcohol Market Share in Vietnam (IARD, 2018).

III. Negative Externalities To The Society

Alcohol consumption can have both health and social consequences for the drinker. The harmful use of alcohol can also result in harm to other individuals, such as family members, friends, co-workers and strangers. Moreover, the harmful use of alcohol results in a significant health, social and economic burden on society at large. Estimates of the economic burden of alcohol use are \$224 billion per year, which composes of private cost and costs to the wider society (Maclean, 2013). Another research shows that the economic burden of alcohol on society is substantial, costs attributable to alcohol represent from 1.3% to 3.3% of the GDP of a country (Rehm et al., 2009a).

a. Private Cost

Alcohol is typically a valued commodity, which means that drinking usually uses resources which would otherwise be available for other purposes. Where earnings are low, heavy drinking may further impoverish the drinker, the drinker’s family, or a whole community, thus increasing health or social harm (Schmidt et al., 2010; De Silva et al., 2011).

According to the National Wage Council of Vietnam, the average income of factory worker is around €120 a month (Hung, 2015). A heavy drinker in Vietnam has a drinking budget of roughly €30, which is 25% of the disposable income. The lower one income, the larger proportion of that income being spent on alcohol, and the longer one trap in the poverty cycle. A report from WHO highlights that individual drinkers will incur socioeconomic problems such as loss of earnings, lower productivity, unemployment, family problems, and especially increased healthcare costs. Alcohol accounted for 5.9% of all deaths and 5.1 % of the global burden of disease and injury in 2012. These figures translate into 3.3 million alcoholattributable deaths.

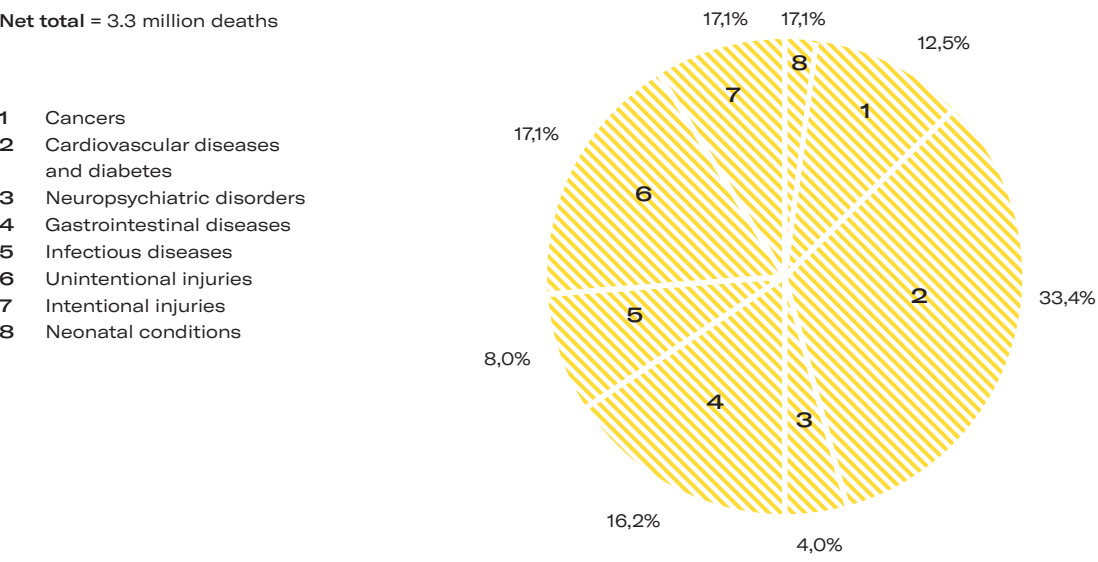


Figure 3: Alcohol Attributed Deaths (WHO,2014).

The most common mean of transportation in Vietnam is motorbike. Motorbike accidents are much deadlier than car accidents as riders are fully exposed to the surrounding environment. Under the influence of alcohol, drinkers are prone to rule breaking behaviours such as speeding, not wearing helmet and reckless driving behaviours. A report from the medical council of Vietnam revealed that out of 21,500 traffic accidents in 2016, 9,000 riders have high alcohol blood content (Loan and Viet, 2017). Worse, this estimation has not account for unrecorded traffic accidents in rural areas, which are more prone to excessive alcohol consumption.

b. Public Cost

When private consumption generates more external costs than private costs, negative externality arises. In term of alcohol use, particularly excessive use, negative externalities include traumatic injury and property damage from accidents, increased utilization of health care, lowered productivity in the labor market, criminal victimization, domestic violence, unwanted sexual encounters and venereal diseases, and hangover. Under the influence of alcohol, a parent may be provoked to strike an irritating child; soccer fans may riot in response to an unsatisfactory outcome; a college student may forcefully insist on having sex with his date; friends may escalate an argument into a bloody fight; a robbery victim may foolishly attempt resistance in the face of a loaded gun. These problems are common among drinkers as alcohol consumption decreases cognitive abilities and increases risky behaviours (Rehm et al., 2012).

A distinctive characteristic of negative externality is that the private party who enjoys the benefit does not bear the full societal costs. In the case of alcohol-related traffic motor vehicle accidents, the outcome for which the costs to society are particularly high, yet much costs created by intoxicated drivers are borne by victims. He pays the price of purchasing the alcohol, and any injuries and resulting lost work that he sustains. If caught and convicted he will pay some portion of the victims’ costs. In Vietnam, a country held back by bureaucratic inefficiency and political apathy, injustice fuels the magnitude of negative externalities.

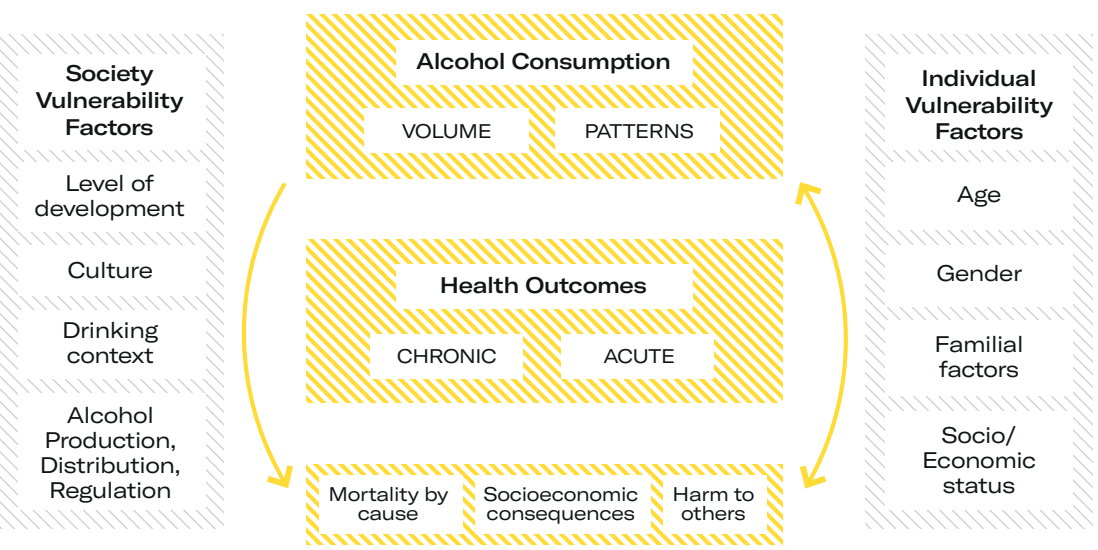


Figure 4: Conceptual Casual Model of Alcohol Consumption & Health Outcomes (WHO, 2014).

c. Intangible Costs

While private costs and public costs could be calculated and estimated, a third category, which is poorly measured and for which the practice of adding estimates is disputable, is intangible costs. Intangible costs are the costs assigned to pain and suffering, and more generally to a diminished quality of life. Such intangible costs are borne by the drinkers, as well as their families and potentially by other individuals linked to the drinker (Anderson et al., 2006; Thavorncharoensap et al., 2009). Intoxication, dependence or alcohol withdrawal states can result in poor performance in major social roles – in functioning at work, in parenting, in relationship and friendship roles. This in turn can result in harm to physical or mental health, caused by the role functioning impairment itself, others’ reactions to the impairment, or both (Schmidt et al., 2010).



#### IV. Action Plan For A Sober Society

##### 1. Higher Taxes On All Alcoholic Beverages

One strategy to reduce negative externalities is to increase the cost of drinking. The law of demand tells us that when the price of a good increases, individuals will consume less of this good. Indeed, several research have concluded the negative correlation of monetary price of alcohol and alcohol consumption. Drinkers with high price sensitivity such as student react the most when faced higher drinking costs. Alcohol is a commodity with inelastic demand, thus a change in price will lead to a smaller change in demand (Selvanathan, 2017). Therefore, from an economic point of view, government should impose higher tax on alcohol. Even though demand for alcohol will fall at a lesser rate than the increase in price, the increase in government tax revenues could be allocated for other alcohol cutback programs.

Product with inelastic demand indicates that price will not matter much to those who have become addicted. In response to a general price increase for alcoholic beverages, alcoholics without much income could preserve their habit by seeking cheaper sources of ethanol: drinking off premises rather than in bars, or buying fortified wine instead of table wine. In the case of Vietnam, majority of heavy drinkers are low income earners in rural areas, thus higher costs of alcoholic beverage might lead to the expansion of unregulated alcohol market. However, and despite these plausible speculations, the evidence is clear that alcoholic beverages do obey the economists' dictum after all: An increase in price results in reduced consumption, not only of the volume of beverage but also of ethanol (Cook and Moore, 2002). Further government intervention may be warranted to protect low income earners and avoid expansion of unregulated market.

In order to determine the appropriate level of taxation placed on each alcoholic beverage, the demand elasticities are used as key inputs. Consequently, obtaining estimates of demand elasticities is of crucial importance for taxation purposes at the micro and macro level of the economy. Additionally, it is only fair that drinkers should compensate the public for the external costs of their choices. If alcohol prices do not reflect the full social costs of consumption, including the external costs, then consumers will drink too much, in the technical sense that at the margin their drinks will be worth less to them than they cost (Cook and Moore, 2002). In other words, alcohol tax should eradicate the spillover cost to society created by private party.

##### 2. On-trade & Off-trade Restriction

Much of the drinking that leads to drunk driving occurs on-premises, at bars, clubs, and restaurants. There are no defined operating hours for the sale of alcoholic drinks in off-trade outlets, and consumers can buy these products during outlets' regular opening hours. Ontrade outlets are banned from operating between 24.00 hrs and 08.00 hrs. Only bars in tourist accommodation rated three stars or higher are permitted to operate after 24.00 hrs, but no later than 02.00 hrs (Euromonitor, 2017). However, reality is far from policy. Any restaurant serving alcohol enjoys high profit margin, and thus afford to lobby the regulators. Restaurants in big cities would typically open until 4:00 hrs on a busy day. As a personal experience, pubs and bars in Hanoi's tourist hotspot have to close at 24:00 hrs, so street vendors would move all the tables on the sidewalk in-house at 23:55 hrs. After the police check at 00:15 hrs, business would roll on as normal (Appendix 1 shows the crowded atmosphere at Hanoi drinking hub).

There need to be firm and consistent policy enforcement campaigns to temper the supply side of alcohol. Trade outlet owners are especially sensitive to regulatory fines that would cut profit margin. Thus, increase fines could be an option constrain restaurants' operating hours. Another strategy is the enforcement of responsible service training and policies denying alcohol

service to those who are already intoxicated or underage. Assessments have generally shown that training in itself has little effect on behaviour of servers. However, clear positive effects have been noted on indicators such as rates of customer intoxication when server training and policies are backed up by active enforcement, including evidence of reduced drink-driving casualties and violence. A related strategy with promising results is to combine server training with training of pub staff as a means of reducing violence in and around the premises (Room, Babor and Rehm, 2005).

In parallel, government should regulate opening hours of off-trade outlets, where consumer purchases alcohol to consume in-house. The risk of alcoholic intoxication is typically higher for in-house consumption. Therefore, alcohol sale should be halted at 24:00 hrs. Additionally, it should be restricted to supply beverages with alcoholic contents to underage consumers or consumers with signs of intoxication. It is important to note that alcohol consumption after 24:00 hrs often results in low rationality and risky behaviours. To protect society benefits, it is equally important to tackle alcohol market from both demand side and supply side.

##### 3. Social Norms Campaign

Since peer pressure has an important implication on alcohol consumption, social norms campaigns that aim to alter attitude and perceptions of drinkers could be a promising strategy reduce alcohol consumption among young people. Social norms campaigns should highlight not only how much students actually drink but also how much their fellow students disapprove of alcohol abuse. A research from Paek and Hove showed that social norms campaign is more effective than educational programs in tackling excessive alcohol consumption among students.

The most effective way to deter underage students from drinking would be to combine efforts to counter various types of alcohol promotions with a variety of policy approaches, such as strict campus alcohol control policies, consistent community enforcement of proof-of-age identification, and consistent police enforcement of underage drinking laws. Good enforcement of minimum legal drinking will increase the difficulty with which underage drinkers face when attempting to purchase alcohol. They must spend time to find someone of age to purchase the alcohol or acquiring a fake ID. Also, given the strong effect of reward motives on underage drinking, it's important to inform students about activities other than drinking that would enable them to relax and socialize with peers (Paek and Hove, 2012).

##### 4. Tackling Unrecorded Alcohol

Empirical evidence have shown mixed effects of increase in alcohol taxes. During World War 1, Russia and Great Britain were greatly concerned about alcohol consumption, as they feared that drunkenness may hamper the war efforts. For example, Russia outlawed the sale of vodka and the British government restricted the availability of alcohol by imposing restrictions on the Public Houses opening times and increased alcohol, which increased to five times what it was before the war. Due to these restrictions in the UK from 1914 to 1918, total alcohol consumption fell from 89 million gallons to 37 million gallons and the number of convictions of being drunk in London fell from 67,103 in 1914 to 16,567 persons in 1918 (Selvanathan, 2017).

However, a similar attempt by the Russian government to control alcohol sales ended up in failure as people started producing their own alcohol which resulted in only the reduction of the government's tax revenue. In other to avoid Russia's flop, there should be a comprehensive strategy aimed at unrecorded alcohol includes educating consumers of unrecorded beverages and changing attitudes and perceptions. Successful interventions are those that include bringing the production and sale of traditional beverages into the regulatory environment, involving communities where unrecorded consumption is most prevalent, and changing social norms



around its role in society. Additionally, there need to be strict border control to temper the inflow of contraband alcohols. Regulators should do frequent check of outlets that offer spirits to provide prove of source and impose high fines on distributer of contraband spirits.

5. Advertising Restriction

According to the Institute of Strategic and Health Policies, alcohol ranks fourth of eight factors which carry the highest health risk in Vietnam, and is also the main cause of domestic violence and traffic accidents. Thus, in accordance with the Law on Advertisements, which came into effect in January 2013, advertising is prohibited for alcoholic drinks with an ABV of 15% or higher. Meanwhile, there is still no ban on beer advertisements.

Unfortunately, the law is not strictly implemented. Players in spirits and wine advertise their products through on-trade establishments such as bars and restaurants. Commercial posters and promotional girls are common practices used to attract consumers in restaurants. Meanwhile, wine traders take advantage of advertising posters in retail outlets, as well as wine-tasting events (Euromonitor, 2017).

Advertisement plays as an dangerous incentive to alcohol consumption because it is relatively easier to promote rewarding and hedonic behaviors than to influence people to abandon them. It is recommended that advertising is prohibited for all beverages with alcohol consumptions to temper the accelerated increase in alcohol supply. Rigorous fines should be given to business that fail to comply with the regulations. Along with strict policy, the government need to actively control the enforcement strategy, thus maintaining the momentum of the campaign. It is essential to educate alcohol suppliers the rationale of the policy as to protect the wellbeing of the society.

6. What Can We Do As Responsible Citizens?

A vital economic concept that alcohol drinkers need to grasp is diminishing marginal utility. The first drink will typically generate the highest marginal benefits in term of satisfaction, thirst relieve, and enjoyment. However, as the number of drinks consumed increases, the marginal benefit from each additional drink decreases. Drinker will not enjoy similar satisfaction level as the first drink. At the “turning point”, the increase in alcohol consume will generate negative marginal returns when drinkers feel intoxicated, lose cognitive control, impose health damage and show risky behaviours. This concept is important as drinkers will generate negative externalities to society when their consumption level reach to the level of negative marginal returns.



“Turning Point” Graph 1: Diminishing Marginal Returns of Alcohol.

It is important for alcohol drinkers and non – drinkers to realize their personal “turning point” and act responsibly to restrict oneself from crossing to the negative marginal returns zone. As a society, we have to come to a realization that excessive alcohol consumption diminish the quality of our life and the lives of others. We have to acknowledge that imprudent cultural norms and social pressures are among the key drivers of alcohol consumption. From these realizations, every one of us need to question our belief of what is right and wrong, and act in consistent with what we believe is optimal for the wellbeing of the society. For shop owners and direct suppliers of alcoholic beverages, obsession with short term gains cloud them from the long term sustainable development. As responsible business owners, it is important for us to understanding and comply with government regulations on alcohol restriction. These policies do not aim to eradicate alcohol from the market but to restrict excessive alcohol consumption, which are extremely costly to society. There need to be cooperative actions from both demand side and supply side to uplift this intoxicated society.

V. Conclusion

How remarkable is it for a small country suffered thousand years of warfare and colonization to be among the fastest growing economy? How upsetting is it for such a promising economy to be among nations with highest rate of alcohol consumption and traffic accidents?

Imprudent social norms, cheap alcohol, and unregulated market are among the key drivers of Vietnam’s toxic drinking culture. Drinkers suffered from private cost of rising health expenses and financial burden, while society suffered from spillover costs of traffic accidents, low productivity, violence behaviours and rising public expenses. To eradicate the issue, strict regulations and active enforcement campaign are recommended. Specifically, tax increase should be accompanied by other alcohol control policies such as restricting youth access, refusing sales to intoxicated persons, restricting advertising, and targeting drinkdriving, making it difficult to disaggregate the effect of each policy. Social campaigns are especially useful to reshape the young’s perception of alcohol consumption, while education programs have proved to be effective to reduce the consumption of unrecorded alcohol.

Actions from the authority alone would not solve the problem, every consumer and supplier of alcohol need act responsibly in respect to the wellbeing of oneself and of the surrounding community. This country was built with blood and tears, let us not drown our future under alcohol.

Appendix 1: Drinking Hub of Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam.



Bibliography

Anderson P, Baumberg B (2006). *Alcohol in Europe – A public health perspective. A report for the European Commission*. England: Institute of Alcohol Studies.

Cook, P. and Moore, M. (2002). *The Economics Of Alcohol Abuse And Alcohol-Control Policies*. Health Affairs, 21(2), pp.120-133.

Demombynes, G. and Vu, L. (2015). *Demystifying Poverty Measurement in Vietnam*. World Bank Group.

De Silva V, Samarasinghe D, Hanwella R (2011). *Association between concurrent alcohol and tobacco use and poverty*. Drug Alcohol Rev. 30: 69–73.

Euromonitor (2017). *Alcoholic Drinks in Vietnam*. Euromonitor.

IAFRD (2016). *Taxation of Beverage Alcohol*. International Alliance For Responsible Drinking.

IARD (2018). *Unrecorded Alcohol in Vietnam*. International Alliance For Responsible Drinking (IARD), pp.3-6.

Kiernan, B. (2017). *Viet Nam: A History from Earliest Times to the Present*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press.

Lincoln, M. (2016). *Alcohol and Drinking Cultures in Vietnam*. Drug Alcohol Depend.

Loan, D. and Viet, H. (2017). *Traffic accidents kill over 8,000 people in Vietnam in 2017*. Vnexpress.

Maclean, C. (2013). *The Impact Of Alcohol Through The Lens Of Economics*. [Blog] UPENN Perelman School Of Medicine’s Blog.

Selvanathan, S. (2017). *The Demand for Alcohol, Tobacco and Marijuana*. London: Routledge.

Schmidt, L.A, Mäkelä, P, Rehm, J, Room, R (2010). *Alcohol: equity and social determinants*. In: Blass E, Kurup, A.S, editors. *Equity, social determinants and public health programmes*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Thavorncharoensap, M., Teerawattananon, Y., Yothasamut, J., Lertpitakpong, C. and Chaikledkaew, U. (2009). *The economic impact of alcohol consumption: a systematic review*. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 4(1), p.20.

WHO (2014). *Global status report on alcohol and health*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Paek, H. and Hove, T. (2012). *Determinants of Underage College Student Drinking: Implications for Four Major Alcohol Reduction Strategies*. Journal of Health Communication, 17(6), pp. 659-676.

Rehm J, Mathers C, Popova S, Thavorncharoensap M, Teerawattananon Y, Patra J (2009a). *Global burden of disease and injury and economic cost attributable to alcohol use and alcohol use disorders*. Lancet. 373: 2223–33.

Rehm J, Shield KD, Joharchi N, Shuper PA (2012). *Alcohol consumption and the intention to engage in unprotected sex: systematic review and meta-analysis of experimental studies*. Addiction.

Room, R., Babor, T. and Rehm, J. (2005). *Alcohol and public health*. Lancet 2005, 365 (519– 530).

Hung, M. (2015). *Vietnam’s minimum wage to increase \$14-18 per month in 2015*. [online] Available at: <http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/vietnams-minimum-wage-to-increase1418-per-month-in-2015-29590.html>.

Thavorncharoensap M, Teerawattananon Y, Jomkwan Y, Lertpitakpong C, Chaikledkaew U (2009). *The economic impact of alcohol consumption: a systematic review* (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2791094/pdf/1747-597X-4-20.pdf>).

# HOW CHINA IS LOSING THE WORLD SOFT WAR

**Daniel Bloch**

Bachelor in Business Administration and Bachelor in International Relations  
Australia

We have heard of The Great War, we have heard of The Cold War, but is it about time that someone coined the phrase: The Soft War? An oxymoronic attention-grabber at least, the word soft in this instance is of course referring to the notion of a nation's soft power. Soft Power, in its most basic sense, is a given nation's ability to attract and influence others at an international level and can often be found within the likes of a country's language, way of life or even something as trivial as its film industry. As such, with international conflict currently plateauing at historically low levels,<sup>1</sup> one of the most effective weapons that a given state has to increase its global power and relevance is that of its soft power. With this in mind, my paper will hereby argue that until China's culture, lifestyle and political system can be understood and appreciated at an international level, it will fail to become the great soft power that it so desires.

If one were to suggest that declarations of war were a thing of the past, supporters of my Soft War notion might be inclined to disagree by referring to the statement made by the Former President of China Hu Jintao, who in 2007 oversaw the first usage of the phrase Soft Power in official Chinese policy. For all intrinsic purposes, Hu's declaration regarding the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" through the "peaceful rise" of its "harmonious society"<sup>2</sup> was essentially a clear statement of China's intention on becoming a dominant global force in soft power. Despite being less damning and direct than the likes of Roosevelt and co., Hu's statement nonetheless did lead to a series of strategic offensive manoeuvres so to advance the force of Chinese soft power. As luck would also have it, the nation was preparing to host the 2008 Olympics, which would serve as an invaluable opportunity for China to showcase its new image to the world, symbolised by its state of the art Bird's Nest Stadium in the heart of Beijing. In turn, the world was captivated by the mesmerising Opening Ceremony, with viewers watching on in awe as traditional Chinese dance and dress were combined with the most technologically advanced light and sound display that one was likely to see at the time.<sup>3</sup> This marked the beginning of China's ongoing battle against the world to seize and expand its global soft power.

Since then, the incumbent President of China, Xi Jinping, has aimed to "better communicate China's message to the world" by creating a "good Chinese narrative" centred around a new concept of the "Chinese Model."<sup>4</sup> Despite this model still arguably lacking a definitive framework<sup>5</sup>, one of its pillars would be a significant investment into the systematic marketing campaign of the new and improved Chinese brand. Such investment into this campaign has been reported to be as high as USD\$10 Billion per year<sup>6</sup>, which when compared to the USD\$670 Million that the US annually spends on its public diplomacy,<sup>7</sup> can be recognized as a genuinely astronomical amount. One of the major sources of this expenditure are the infamous Confucius Institutes, a state-run educational organisation that seeks to promote Chinese culture, philosophy and language. Such is the widespread nature of the setup, there are over 500

---

<sup>1</sup> Roser, M. (2017). *The Visual History of Decreasing War and Violence*.

<sup>2</sup> Albert, E. (2018, February 9). *China's Big Bet on Soft Power*.

<sup>3</sup> Lautz, T. (2016, September 30). *The Rise of Soft Power in US-China Relations*.

<sup>4</sup> Albert, E. (2018, February 9). *China's Big Bet on Soft Power*.

<sup>5</sup> China Model: Essentially the notion of partially Liberal Economics, in association with Authoritarian Politics.

<sup>6</sup> The Economist. (2017, March 23). *China is spending billions to make the world love it*.

<sup>7</sup> IBID



Confucius Institutes, across 142 different countries.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, the institute is named after a Chinese philosopher whose work focussed on the globally appreciated concepts of morality, justice and benevolence. Crucially however, Confucianism was up until recently neglected in Chinese governance, especially given that it was labelled as a promoter of feudal thought by the latest Chinese dictator, Mao Zedong. It was President Xi himself who encouraged the re-emergence of Confucianism into Chinese political rhetoric, a decision that tied in perfectly with China's soft power strategy; as such, it is no surprise that students are not attending their Chinese classes at the Mao Institute.

Beyond the marketing of the rejuvenated nation, China is also pursuing the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), which is seeking to improve the country's regional likeability. The BRI is largely derived from China's own development approach, which successfully saw 100s of millions of people brought above the global poverty line. The project aims to synergise the Silk Road economy<sup>9</sup>, which dates back to the Eurasian trade routes of the middle ages, via a "vast network of railways, roads, pipelines, ports and telecommunications infrastructure."<sup>10</sup> As lead financier of the project, Xi has committed USD\$65 Billion to the initiative, whilst pledging USD\$50 Billion and USD\$41 Billion to the Asian Infrastructure and New Development Banks respectively.<sup>11</sup> Resultantly, one can observe just how committed China is to increasing its global soft power, even through this non-exhaustive list of examples; but just how successful has China's been to date?

As such, measuring Soft Power is a rather ambiguous task. In turn, I want to begin with a rather symbolic, if not revealing measurement of China's growth in soft power, or lack thereof. In 2017, the Chinese Film Industry failed to draw the significant global audiences it had hoped for, continuing its spell of reduced global supply and low success rate.<sup>12</sup> With this in mind, China has failed to gain significant global soft power on the basis that if their culture, language and philosophy had greater global understanding and appreciation, it would result in higher international demand for the Chinese Film Industry. To back up my rather abstract example, one can also reflect upon the highly-acclaimed Soft Power 30 Index, which measures a nation's attractiveness through the categories of education, government, global engagement, culture, digital footprint and enterprise. In considering the enormous amount of investment China has invested into the development of its soft power, a 2017 rank of 25th is sure to be a disappointing one for President Xi.<sup>13</sup>

In overviewing the situation as a whole, I arrive at the well-known social science theory of falsifiability. My belief, with direct regard to this theory, is that China must be willing to honestly accept its own limitations and weaknesses as a country, or more specifically, publically address and falsify their public diplomacy measures, so to win the respect and greater acceptance from the international community. As such, these aforementioned public diplomacy measures are often complete with statements that seek to glorify the nation in a near faultless manner, whilst concurrently painting over the cracks of China's inherently crippling problems such as poverty, pollution and corruption. With this in mind, I see China's propaganda-filled authoritarian system as its greatest impediment to winning the Soft War, which is symbolised through their denying of citizens the right to engage in public political dialogue, or more specifically, public political criticism. Ironically, these efforts often lead to domestic doubts in

the Chinese regime, rather than reinforcing the local soft power, which is symbolised through the high level of local demand for such aspirational Western staples as a Starbucks coffee or a non-counterfeit pair of Nike shoes.

On the note of domestic issues, it is vital for China to address their extensive problems with pollution, food-safety, and battles against corruption if they are to ever be truly admired at a global level. Undoubtedly, these issues have been and are continually in the process of being addressed by President Xi. Equally however, one might interject that if it is soft power that Xi desires, he might not bother; as such, the highly illiberal decision made this week to extend Xi's tenure beyond the typical two-term rule<sup>14</sup> already creates an unmissable disparity between China's claim of a rejuvenated nation and its public actions. In a world that for the most part values democracy, the connotation of an Authoritarian regime is very much negative, and not a political structure that a country seeking an increase in global soft power should implement. In turn, this brings me back to my original assertion, that until China's culture, lifestyle and political system can be better understood and appreciated at an international level, it will fail to become the great soft power that it so desires. However, if I might offer the Chinese regime some Confucian wisdom during these testing times in the Soft War<sup>15</sup>; it does not matter how slowly your soft power grows, as long as it doesn't stop (growing).

<sup>14</sup> T. (2018, February 26). *China's leader, Xi Jinping, will be allowed to reign forever.*

<sup>15</sup> The advice can be attributed to the Westphalian System, which requires healthy competition between rival states. As such, it can certainly be perceived as a positive to have multiple "super powers" when it comes to soft power. Especially when that soft power is focussed towards positive initiatives.

Bibliography

Albert, E. (2018, February 9). <i>Chinas Big Bet on Soft Power</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/chinas-big-bet-soft-power">https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/chinas-big-bet-soft-power</a>	Liu, C. (2017, July 18). <i>China's soft power rises while Trump pulls America's down</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2103133/china-climbs-soft-power-index-while-trump-pulls-us-down-gaps-still-yuuuuge">http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2103133/china-climbs-soft-power-index-while-trump-pulls-us-down-gaps-still-yuuuuge</a>
China Daily. (2017, October 7). <i>Over 500 Confucius Institutes founded in 142 countries, regions</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2017-10/07/content_32950016.htm">http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2017-10/07/content_32950016.htm</a>	Roser, M. (2017). <i>The Visual History of Decreasing War and Violence</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="https://ourworldindata.org/slides/war-and-violence/">https://ourworldindata.org/slides/war-and-violence/</a>
Council on Foreign Relations. (2017, April 21). <i>Chinese Cinema's Absent Allure</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="https://www.cfr.org/asia/2017/04/21/chinese-cinemas-absent-allure/">https://www.cfr.org/asia/2017/04/21/chinese-cinemas-absent-allure/</a>	The Economist. (2017, March 23). <i>China is spending billions to make the world love it</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="https://www.economist.com/news/china/21719508-can-money-buy-sort-thing-china-spending-billions-make-world-love-it">https://www.economist.com/news/china/21719508-can-money-buy-sort-thing-china-spending-billions-make-world-love-it</a>
Cutmore, G. (2017, October 12). <i>Trump is giving up a crucial part of American power to China, think tank says</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/11/trump-giving-up-us-soft-power-to-china-sco-tt-morris-center-for-global-development.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/11/trump-giving-up-us-soft-power-to-china-sco-tt-morris-center-for-global-development.html</a>	The Economist. (2018, February 26). <i>China's leader, Xi Jinping, will be allowed to reign forever</i> . Retrieved February 28, 2018, from <a href="https://www.economist.com/news/china/21737447-countrys-politics-have-taken-another-turn-worse-chinas-leader-xi-jinping-will-be">https://www.economist.com/news/china/21737447-countrys-politics-have-taken-another-turn-worse-chinas-leader-xi-jinping-will-be</a>
Lautz, T. (2016, September 30). <i>The Rise of Soft Power in US-China Relations</i> . Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <a href="https://www.uscnpm.org/blog/2016/09/30/the-rise-of-soft-power-in-u-s-china-relations/">https://www.uscnpm.org/blog/2016/09/30/the-rise-of-soft-power-in-u-s-china-relations/</a>	

<sup>8</sup> China Daily. (2017, October 7). *Over 500 Confucius Institutes founded in 142 countries, regions*.

<sup>9</sup> Silk Road & Maritime Silk Road Economy: Consists of Asia, Middle East, Africa and Europe.

<sup>10</sup> Albert, E. (2018, February 9). *Chinas Big Bet on Soft Power*.

<sup>11</sup> Created by and for the BRICS States.

<sup>12</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. (2017, April 21). *Chinese Cinema's Absent Allure*.

<sup>13</sup> Liu, C. (2017, July 18). *China's soft power rises while Trump pulls America's down*.

# CONSCIOUSNESS:

## *The Ethical Implications of Experience Design*

Laura McDermott

Master in Customer Experience & Innovation  
Ireland

*Good design starts with an understanding of psychology and technology.<sup>1</sup>*

Experience design, in its essence, is ethically questionable because it uses an understanding of human behaviour to affect an individual's experience.<sup>2</sup> In ethics, libertarian paternalism assumes that we as humans are imperfect beings and prone to ill judgement, over optimism and ignorance on certain topics. Thus, we need external parties to help guide us in the right direction without taking away our freedom of choice.<sup>3</sup> It is easier to apply the concept to a system like the welfare state, since its function is to look after the interests of its people.<sup>4</sup> However, applying libertarian paternalism to traditional business, whose objectives focus not on the welfare of the customer but instead on optimising financial performance, appears more complex.<sup>5</sup> This essay will reflect on the ethics of designing customer experience (CX) in business, as well as how it affects us as CX professionals.

### Establishing the Fundamentals

Today consumers want experiences as opposed to merely service offerings. In response, businesses are shifting towards an experience economy, whereby they:

Intentionally use services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event.<sup>6</sup>

Nespresso Boutiques are a prime example of experience design at work. The company took the sale of coffee capsules from being transactional to experiential by modelling their stores on coffee shops. Customers enter and can enjoy a cup of coffee at the well-designed Nespresso Boutique, engaging in a memorable event while also conducting their purchase.<sup>7</sup> Enthusiasts may use colourful adjectives to describe experience design, but we must be clear about why companies are shifting towards this model; enjoyable customer experiences are proven to have commercial benefits for business.<sup>7</sup> Speaking about the shift towards an experience economy, Pine and Gilmore warn that:

Unless companies want to be in a commoditized business...they will be compelled to upgrade their offerings to the next stage of economic value.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Norman, Don *The Design of Everyday Things: Revised and Expanded Edition* [Hachette UK, 2013].

<sup>2</sup> "Experience design is the practice of designing products, processes, services, events and environments with a focus placed on the quality of the user experience and culturally relevant solutions." Aarts, Emile H. L. and Marzano, Stefano *The New Everyday: Views on Ambient Intelligence*. [OIO Publishers, 2003] p. 46

<sup>3</sup> Sunstein, Cass R. *Why Nudge?: The Politics of Libertarian Paternalism* [Yale University Press, Mar 25, 2014] p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Definition of government in a welfare state: [the government] *plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social wellbeing of citizens*. See: [www.britannica.com/topic/welfare-state](http://www.britannica.com/topic/welfare-state)

<sup>5</sup> Porter, Michael E., and Mark R. Kramer., *Creating Shared Value* in Harvard Business Review 89, nos. 1-2 (January–February 2011): 62–77.

<sup>6</sup> Pine II, B. Joseph and Gilmore, James H. *Welcome to the Experience Economy in Harvard Business Review* (July–August 1998).

<sup>7</sup> See more on Nespresso Boutique: <https://www.nestle-nespresso.com/newsandfeatures/the-unique-nespresso-experience-drove-once-again-thecompany-to-strong-performance>.

<sup>7</sup> Rawson, Alex, and Duncan, Ewan and Jones, Conor., *The Truth About Customer Experience* [Harvard Business Review, September 2013] p. 4

<sup>8</sup> Pine II, B. Joseph and Gilmore, James H. *Welcome to the Experience Economy* in Harvard Business Review (July–August 1998).

The Playing Field

Companies have access to one-of-a-kind datasets, specific settings with which to test interventions, and access to large populations of people working toward the same goal.<sup>9</sup>

CX professionals working in business have an array of tools at their disposal, those mentioned above account for just a few. With industry experts predicting and promoting the use of machine learning, we become yet another step closer to understanding exactly how to affect the customer based on their personality, context and timing.

We can think of machine learning as the next step in unlocking a “behaviour genome.” By factoring in personality traits, situational features, and timing, we can better persuade people...<sup>10</sup>

On reflection of the tools and power CX professionals have at their disposal, we might easily confuse our modern world for an Orwellian dystopia. The average customer, on the other hand, might be savvy to business/marketing techniques and have freedom of choice, at best.

Implications for CX Designers

Designers have power over other people and must exercise that power in an ethical fashion.<sup>11</sup>

With such tools and capabilities at our disposal, we must consciously consider how we intend on using them. On one hand, the value created by a great experience could benefit both the customer and business equally; in the sense that business objectives would be met while the customer fulfilled their needs in an enjoyable and transparent way. On the other hand, companies could exploit its resources and manipulate the behaviour of the customer into buying something that they later realise is useless, or perhaps even dangerous. In relation to the design of interactive systems, Benyon, Turner and Turner argue that:

Fundamentally, ethical design is needed because the systems that are produced should be easy and enjoyable to use, as they affect the quality of people’s lives.<sup>12</sup>

Before discussing challenges and approaches to ethical experience design, there is something that we must acknowledge. Every CX professional is ultimately an individual with his or her own inclinations and preferences, and is also prone to bad judgement. Although we have the knowledge and understanding of ethics, we may still fail to use our tools for the better.

However, lets assume that as CX professionals we will use our resources and skills for the better, and perhaps even adopt a paternalistic approach in business. One of our fundamental objectives might be to ensure that shared value is created between the customer and business; that is, generating economic value in a way that also produces value for society by addressing its challenges.<sup>13</sup> This can be achieved in a number of ways, but particularly through designing experiences transparently, and challenging tradition.

<sup>9</sup> Jachimowicz, Jon and Matz, Sandra and Polonski, Vyacheslav *The Behavioral Scientist’s Ethics Checklist in BehavioralScientist.org* (October 23, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Risdon, Chris., *Scaling Nudges with Machine Learning in BehavioralScientist.org* [October 25, 2017].

<sup>11</sup> Benyon, David and Turner, Phil and Turner, Susan.,*Designing Interactive Systems: People, Activities, Contexts, Technologies* [Pearson Education] p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Benyon, Turner and Turner., p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Porter, Michael E., and Mark R. Kramer. “Creating Shared Value.” *Harvard Business Review* 89, nos. 1-2 (January–February 2011): 62.

Transparency

Being human-centred also ensure(s) that designers are truthful and open in their design practice. Now that it is so easy to collect data surreptitiously and to use that data for purpose other than what it was intended for, designers need to be ever more vigilant.<sup>15</sup>

Our duty as ethically minded CX professionals is to bring a human element to business. Rather than employing clever techniques or using personalised persuasion tactics to impact financial performance, we can harness our knowledge of people to communicate with their “system two” level of thinking.<sup>14</sup> A prime example of this approach can be seen in Patagonia’s “Don’t Buy This Jacket” campaign on Black Friday 2011.<sup>15</sup> The company targeted the crisis of overconsumption by creating a disruptive campaign during one of the busiest shopping days of the year. The campaign discussed the effects of overconsumption and waste, as well as providing information about the quantity of resources required to produce the featured jacket. By doing so they engaged the rational minds of their customers, prompting them to consider the effect the Black Friday shopping experience has on the planet. A traditional approach might have been to use the adjustment and anchoring heuristic to steer customers towards “bargains”.<sup>16</sup>

Challenging Tradition

Traditional companies might equate ethics to regulation or compliance. However, one of our duties is to challenge this misconception and bring pure ethics to the discussion. Behavioural Scientist recently published The Behavioral Scientist’s Ethics Checklist as a framework from which to approach questionable business choices. As CX professionals, we might tailor this approach by using storytelling techniques.

Story is less direct, more gracious, and prompts less resistance. A roomful of stubborn executives locked in an impasse can be a dangerous place for a truth teller - unless you know how to tell a good story.<sup>17</sup>

Consider a company that wants to hyper-personalise the supermarket experience, but confronts GDPR obstacles.<sup>18</sup> The traditionally minded CEO encourages her staff to find regulatory loopholes, because hyperpersonalisation will lead to a better experience, higher footfall and inevitably more revenue. As an ethical CX professional, we could humanise the scenario by using the CEO’s grandmother (Betty) as the persona in this hyper-personalised experience. By telling the story of how Betty feels threatened by the constant and scarily accurate messages she receives on her walk to the shop, as well as the prompts she receives to buy certain products in-store, the “persona” becomes human. The experience design proposal then turns from being an awkward regulatory issue to an ethical issue affecting someone we hold dearly. What we have done is harness our intrinsic CX skills to present Betty, as opposed to the number, and thus nudge the CEO towards rethinking her brief.

It seems that there is a lot of “catching up” in today’s society. Innovation is flourishing, new industries are being created overnight, and we can now acquire vast amounts of data and resources in a matter of clicks. With these rapid movements, ethics can become an after- thought.

<sup>14</sup> Kahneman, Daniel *Thinking, Fast and Slow* [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011] p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix for Patagonia advertisement in *The New York Times*, Friday, November, 25, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Tversky, Amos and Kahneman, Daniel/*Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases*, p. 1128.

<sup>17</sup> Simmons, Annette *The STORY FACTOR Secrets of Influence from the Art of Storytelling* [Hachette UK, Mar 17, 2009] p.28.

<sup>18</sup> For more on he EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) See: <http://www.eugdpr.org/>



A case in point is the GDPR, which has taken two years to develop and will only come into effect from 2018, after countless data-protection scandals. From this we can conclude that many companies race to get ahead in the market, only adjusting their approach when regulation forces them to do so. However, a new generation of CX professionals marks a great opportunity for change. Equipped with an understanding not only of human behaviour but also of ethics, we have the opportunity to incorporate good-practice from the very first moment of experience design. If this approach is adopted at scale, we could create a society that not only demands shared value, but also fosters a paternalistic approach towards the world as a whole.

Appendix



Bibliography

Aarts, Emile H. L. and Marzano, Stefano *The New Everyday: Views on Ambient Intelligence*. [OIO Publishers, 2003].

Arch G. Woodside, Jagdish N. Sheth, and Peter D. Bennett, eds., *Why we buy what we buy: A theory of consumption values* in Journal of Business Research [Elsevier North-Holland, New York, 1977] pp. 167-177.

Benyon, David and Turner, Phil and Turner, Susan, *Designing Interactive Systems: People, Activities, Contexts, Technologies* [Pearson Education, 2005].

Gore, Adrian and Harmer, Peter and Pfitzer, Marc W., and Jais, Nina *Can Insurance Companies Incentivize Their Customers to Be Healthier?* in Harvard Business Review (June 23, 2017).

Jachimowicz, Jon and Matz, Sandra and Polonski, Vyacheslav *The Behavioral Scientist's Ethics Checklist* in BehavioralScientist.org (October 23, 2017).

Kahneman, Daniel *Thinking, Fast and Slow* [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011].

Newbery, Patrick and Farnham, Kevin *Experience Design: A Framework for Integrating Brand, Experience, and Value* [John Wiley & Sons, Aug 8, 2013]

Norman, Don *The Design of Everyday Things: Revised and Expanded Edition* [Hachette UK, 2013].

Patagonia advertisement in *The New York Times*, Friday, November, 25, 2011 <https://www.patagonia.com/blog/2011/11/dont-buy-this-jacket-black-friday-and-the-new-yorktimes/>

Pine II, B. Joseph and Gilmore, James H. *Welcome to the Experience Economy in Harvard Business Review* (July–August 1998) See: <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy/>

Porter, Michael E., and Mark R. Kramer., *Creating Shared Value* in Harvard Business Review 89, nos. 1-2 (January–February 2011): pp. 62–77.

Rawson, Alex, and Duncan, Ewan and Jones, Conor., *The Truth About Customer Experience* [Harvard Business Review, September 2013] pp. 1-10.

Risdon, Chris., *Scaling Nudges with Machine Learning* in BehavioralScientist.org [October 25, 2017] <http://behavioralscientist.org/scaling-nudges-machine-learning/>

*Sheth, Jagdish N. and Newman, Bruce I. and Gross, Barbara L., Why we buy what we buy: A theory of consumption values*, [Journal of Business Research, 1991, vol. 22, issue 2] 159-170.

Simmons, Annette *The STORYFACTOR Secrets of Influence from the Art of Storytelling* [Hachette UK, Mar 17, 2009].

Sunstein, Cass R. *Why Nudge?: The Politics of Libertarian Paternalism* [Yale University Press, Mar 25, 2014].

Thaler, Richard H. and Sunstein, Cass R. *Libertarian Paternalism* [The American Economic Review Vol. 93, No. 2, May 2003 ] pp. 175-179.

Tversky, Amos and Kahneman, Daniel *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* in Science, New Series, Vol. 185, No. 4157. (Sep. 27, 1974), pp. 1124-1131.

Patagonia's "Don't Buy This Jacket" Campaign, Black Patagonia advertisement in *The New York Times*, Friday, November, 25, 2011.

# PHOTOGRAPHY

# FOTOGRAFÍA

Page 94 .....	Alessandro Fabbrini
Page 96 .....	Marlene Lantz
Page 98 .....	Lixuan Guan
Page 100 .....	Sara Gonçalves Teixeira
Page 104 .....	Sergio Martínez

<i>Juxtaposed</i>	First Prize/Primer Premio
<i>Ethereal</i>	Second Prize/Segundo Premio
<i>Backlight</i>	Third Prize/Tercer Premio
<i>Through the Looking Glass</i>	Special Mention Series 1/ Mención especial serie 1
<i>The Revival of Craftsmen</i>	Special Mention Series 2/Mención especial serie 2



FIRST PRIZE | PRIMER PREMIO

PHOTOGRAPHY | FOTOGRAFÍA

# JUXTAPOSED

**Alessandro Fabbrini**

Master in Customer Experience & Innovation  
Italy





SECOND PRIZE | SEGUNDO PREMIO

PHOTOGRAPHY | FOTOGRAFÍA

# ETHEREAL

**Marlene Lantz**

Bachelor in Information Systems Management  
Italy & USA



THIRD PRIZE | TERCER PREMIO

PHOTOGRAPHY | FOTOGRAFÍA

# BACKLIGHT

Lixuan Guan

MIM + Master in Market Research and Consumer Behaviour  
China





SPECIAL MENTION SERIES 1 | MENCIÓN ESPECIAL SERIE 1

PHOTOGRAPHY | FOTOGRAFÍA

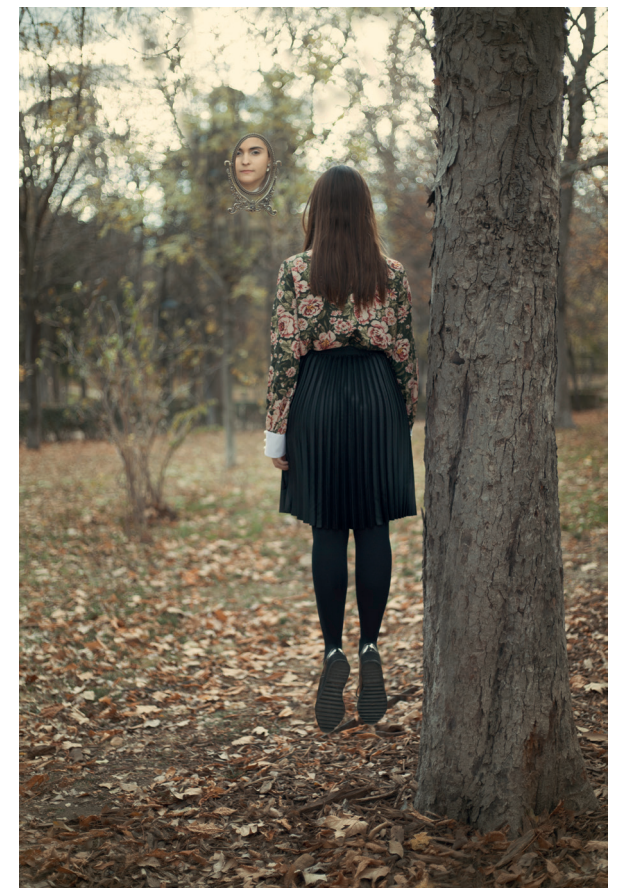
# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

**Sara Gonçalves Teixeira**

Master of Visual Digital Media  
Venezuela









SPECIAL MENTION SERIES 2 | MENCIÓN ESPECIAL SERIE 2

PHOTOGRAPHY | FOTOGRAFÍA

# THE REVIVAL OF CRAFTSMEN

**Sergio Martínez**

Master of Visual Digital Media  
Spain











# VIDEO

# VÍDEO

Page 110 .....	Marisa Anz	<i>The Unheard</i>	First Prize/Primer Premio
Page 112.....	Carlos Gutiérrez	<i>Sin cobertura</i>	Second Prize/Segundo Premio
Page 114.....	Dylan D'Lima/Jessica Gómez/Eugenia Santaella	<i>Slice of Life</i>	Third Prize/Tercer Premio



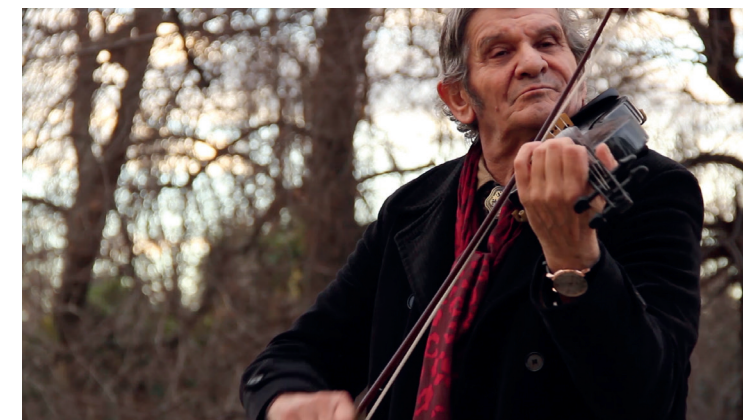
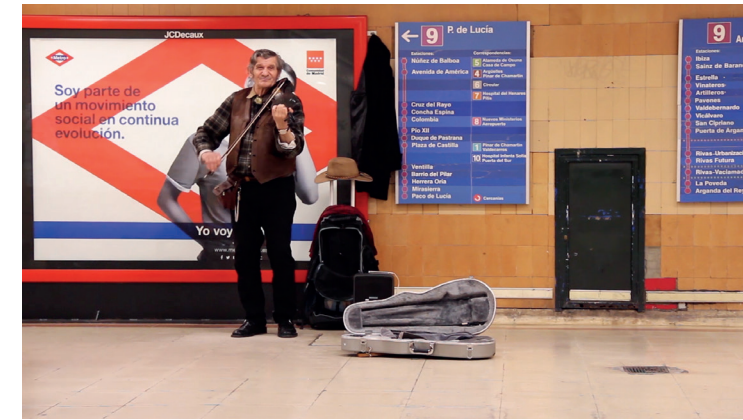
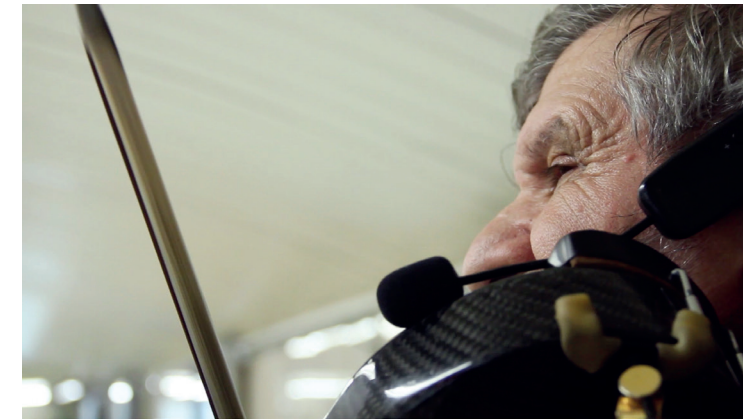
FIRST PRIZE | PRIMER PREMIO

VIDEO | VÍDEO

# THE UNHEARD

Marisa Anz

Master of Visual Digital Media  
USA





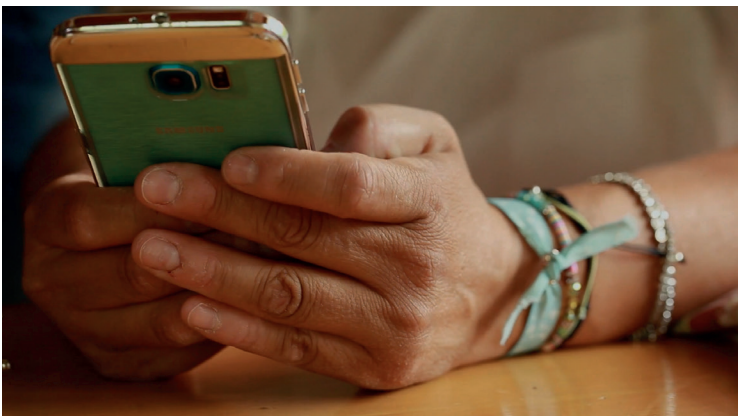
SECOND PRIZE | SEGUNDO PREMIO

VIDEO | VÍDEO

# SIN COBERTURA

**Carlos Gutiérrez**

Master in Management - Marketing & Sales  
Spain





THIRD PRIZE | TERCER PREMIO

VIDEO | VÍDEO

# SLICE OF LIFE

Dylan D'Lima, Jessica Gómez  
& Eugenia Santaella

Master of Visual Digital Media  
Canada | USA | Venezuela



# IV

## EPILOGUE

Dear Reader,

I trust this book had fulfilled its ambition of rendering due acknowledgment to its authors for provoking and inspiring us by making us enjoy suggestive short stories, photographs going beyond the mere captured image, and stimulating poems from the creativity standpoint and the clever use of linguistic difference.

We award all authors for their talent and attitude, if ever these two concepts can be disentangled. We value their capacity for critical thinking, for their endeavour in acquiring a unique education with a whole range of insights, capacities and aptitudes that characterise our students.

“You see things; and you say “Why?” But I dream things that never were; and I say “Why not?” This reflection, which I fully share with its author, George Bernard Shaw, famous writer and dramatist who also stated “The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can’t find them, make them”, because an aptitude enriched with a fertile and robust attitude can make a difference.

We firmly believe in the value of Humanities in education. An education that fails in not incorporating the Humanities with the necessary strategic emphasis, is a lost opportunity. Our compromise is to remove the barriers between Science, Technology and Humanities, trusting entrepreneurship, innovation and diversity as essential values that we consider ours. This is why the IE Foundation is proud to award one more year the talent, in a most holistic sense, of the winners of these Prizes: they embody masterfully the reason why Humanities deserve to be cultivated, something we could certainly not do without all the friends, donors and collaborators that encourage us and allow us to do so. Our most sincere thanks to all of them.

Carlos Mas  
Vice President of IE Foundation  
Madrid, July 2018

# IV

## EPÍLOGO

Querido lector:

Confío en que este libro haya cumplido con su ambición de dar un justo reconocimiento a sus autores por provocarnos e inspirarnos a través del disfrute de relatos sugestivos, fotografías que te transportan más allá de la mera imagen capturada, poesías que estimulan desde la creatividad y el hábil empleo de la diversidad lingüística.

Premiamos a sus autores por su talento y actitud, si es que ambos conceptos pueden ser desligados. Los valoramos por su capacidad de pensamiento crítico, por su empeño en adquirir una educación única con todo el abanico de conocimientos, habilidades y aptitudes que caracteriza a nuestros alumnos.

“Ves cosas y dices, ¿por qué? Pero yo sueño cosas que nunca fueron y me digo, ¿por qué no?”. Está reflexión que comparto es de George Bernard Shaw, reconocido escritor y dramaturgo que también afirmó que “sólo triunfa en el mundo quien se levanta y busca las circunstancias, creándolas si no las encuentra”. Porque la aptitud cultivada con una actitud fértil y robusta puede marcar la diferencia.

Creemos firmemente en el valor de las Humanidades en la educación. Una educación que falla al no incorporar las Humanidades con el énfasis estratégico necesario es una oportunidad perdida. Estamos comprometidos en remover las barreras entre Ciencia y Tecnología y las Humanidades, confiando en el emprendimiento, la innovación y la diversidad como valores esenciales que hacemos nuestros. Por ello, la Fundación IE está orgullosa de premiar un año más el talento, en el sentido más holístico, de los ganadores de los Premios, que tan bien personalizan el porqué del cultivo de las Humanidades, algo que no podríamos hacer sin todos los amigos, donantes y colaboradores que nos animan y permiten hacerlo. Nuestro más sincero agradecimiento a todos ellos.

Carlos Mas  
Vicepresidente de la Fundación IE  
Madrid, Julio de 2018

Check all the info about the prizes at  
[www.fph.ie.edu/winners](http://www.fph.ie.edu/winners)

*Puedes ver toda la información de los premios en  
[www.fph.ie.edu/galardonados](http://www.fph.ie.edu/galardonados)*

Direction .....	Victoria Gimeno
Design .....	Koln Studio
Texts edition .....	Saila Marcos

This book was composed with the typefaces Saol and GT America.

ISBN 978-84-09-04040-7  
DL M-25309-2018

© All photographs belong to the authors.  
© All texts belong to the authors.