

Bedroom secrets

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Every morning when the alarm goes off, Victorine and I tell each other our dreams. This morning my dear dreamed that every person had a pouch in which we carried the little children. However, there were quite a few people who did not want that because you would get a less taut tummy. The wealthy could outsource it, to servants. The less wealthy could eventually buy textile belly pouches...

A symbolic dream. Our planetary footprint has become so incredibly large, precisely because we have been doing less and less ourselves; our entire culture revolves around outsourcing. First to slaves, then to wage slaves, machines and now also to AI.

We let others produce (often industrially) all sorts of things, in clean-looking production lines. For example, in the factory farming industry, from rearing, via slaughter, processing, marketing and selling to that pork chop on our plate, or from monocultures via breweries to the beer in our jugs, all of this revolves around outsourcing. In our daily lives we outsource muscle power to machines (cars, bicycles, drills, kitchen mixers, etc.), search and thinking power to Wikipedia, Google or ChatGPT, and agenda and collection power to online platforms and meeting rooms.

The people at the bottom of the social ladder have the fewest opportunities to outsource, they do most of the work themselves. When our countries recovered quickly after the war and started to grow, we got the labour from countries less affected by the outsourcing virus, who still used their own pockets, to stay in my love's dream metaphor. Countries whose prosperity lagged far behind ours, whose working population was tempted to come to the wealthy west, to also be able to feed themselves on the "progress" and to get their own TV or car. In 1970 we already crossed the border in the Netherlands, if every person on the planet had our material and energy consumption, we would have needed more than 1 planet to reproduce the resources used every year. Now that is 3.6 planets. Outsourcing became a life goal: the higher our children's education, the more they can outsource later.

Fortunately, the realisation that we need to change course has grown enormously in recent years. Ecologically responsible business is in the spotlight. But how do we know if what seems responsible today will not turn out to contribute to tomorrow's downfall? Aren't we, with the best intentions in the world, trying to straighten the seats on the Titanic?

But suppose we no longer outsource the rectification of chairs as we did on the Titanic in 1912, that we are not merely partying on the ship, distracted, drunk, or intoxicated with wealth and prosperity. Would we then no longer have been part of sailing? Would we perhaps have seen that we were passing very close to other coloured water, perhaps ice rocks? Could we perhaps have sounded the alarm effectively, or was it all our extra eyes that had made the helmsman (politicians, Big Tech entrepreneurs) look differently? If things had gone wrong, we might have been alert, and we could still have reached the coast much more rationally in much larger numbers. But even more likely, if we had the mentality to arrange the seats ourselves, even with "high" origins, or "high" diplomas, we would not have boarded a ship for mere entertainment, which was probably never even built.

So, even though we rearrange the seats on the deck of the Titanic, it's fundamentally different from outsourcing that too, so that we can surrender in laziness to an unsustainable luxury. We're awake! In the light of outsourcing, Victorine and I come to Easter and Pentecost. Did we even have to outsource the dying? Did he sacrifice himself for our limitations, or did he set the example so that we would learn to recognize our own mortality and thus carry our own cross or own pouch? We must live our lives ourselves!

Then we get out of bed, roll up our sleeves, and get to work!

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