

# MAKE

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ISSUE #3 - SPRING 2019

EMBRACE / CREDO

embrace®

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**MAKE BELIEVE:**

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**A PRETENDING  
THAT WHAT IS  
NOT REAL  
IS REAL**



**— JOHN UPDIKE**



# COLOPHON

EmbrACE is the official magazine of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. It connects students and faculty staff with topics related to history, culture and the media industry. The editorial team of EmbrACE is part of International Faculty Association ACE.

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# COLUM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF @ACE

Dear readers,

Time sure flies fast when you're having fun (and mental breakdowns)! As the temperature reaches new heights - thanks climate change! - we look forward to the end of the year. But that also means that I almost have to say goodbye to my position as Chairman/Editor-in-Chief of ACE. But before that, let's experience some new adventures and go hogwild!

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You're currently holding the result of a steady collaboration between Cedo Nulli and our beloved ACE. The two associations have long had a close bond, and we have a lot in common in terms of our academic direction. To solidify this, we thought it would be a great idea to get some of their amazing editors on our team, and send some of our wonderful editors their way. Throughout the magazine, you'll see familiar faces pop up, and also some new ones. Sometimes, getting a new perspective from somebody on the outside can stimulate your imagination and critical thinking skills in a major way.

Which brings us to the theme, which is Make|Believe (yes, the line is intentional!). Everybody has to admit that they have their own little world they disappear in when daydreaming. I always like to imagine that I'm trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic zombie-infested world, and suddenly reality seems a bit brighter. Anyway, all our editors have some theme they like to think about a lot, and they want to share these with you, dear reader! Yes, you should feel honored.



I won't hold you up any longer, I hope you have fun reading this issue and hopefully, when you open this, you'll be on a beach in the sun with a drink (I know I will!).

Love,  
Robin van den Bovenkamp-Roos

# @ACE

Dear ACE,


It's that time of the year again when the sun pokes its head around the corner and the Paviljoen and In de Smitse terraces are once again filled with students that probably should be drinking beer as early as 4PM. Despite the days growing longer with the change of seasons, time seems to have flown by since I joined the board as Secretary in January.

It feels like only a few weeks since we collectively froze our noses off in Helsinki. From the 'Wie is de mol' treasure hunt through which we discovered the city's landmarks, our visit to the National History Museum, our adventures through the frozen wonderland of Nuuk National Park and Suomenlinna island, to relaxing in the sauna and outdoor pools, and dancing the night away at Molly Malone's, there was something for everyone. Next stop, Morocco! From Sunday, July 14th to Wednesday, 24th July 2019, ACE will be travelling to Marrakech, Ouarzazate and Essaouira. See you there!

Aside from exciting travel plans around the globe, ACE continues to have fun here in Rotterdam. Our regular social drinks at Café Stales have been spiced up by the announcement of the Long-trip destination as well as an intense Pub Quiz. Furthermore, in keeping with the Dutch love of Pilsners, we teamed up with the SHARE Faculty Association to organize the 'SHACE' Biercantus on March 21st, hosted by SSR. As a cantrix, I had sunglasses on and couldn't see a thing but it sure sounded like you having fun! We also had a range of events of all kind, from a wine & paint night, to a game of 'werewolves of Rotterdam'.



Our most long term events also came to fruition during these last few months, namely the DIVE Expo and IBCoM Awards. We were all delighted to welcome a record number of attendees in MONO for a groundbreaking and diverse art festival that took place over 3 days. History students also had the opportunity to discover Utrecht, attend a series of guest lectures and network with History students from across the Netherlands with the SGN Day.



Lastly, on a more formal note, our last General Assembly made official the handover of the post of Secretary (to me!). Furthermore, the selection process of the 38th Board of ACE is well underway.

On behalf of ACE, I'd like to thank our members for contributing to this dynamic community of passionate students, and hope you enjoy reading this edition of EmbrACE, perhaps in the sun at Kralingse Bos (PSA: don't forget the sunscreen)!

All the best,

Emma L. Dailey



## E B Y

17 Study associations in Rotterdam, 17 Boards and through the many years Cedo Nulli existed one association's Board remained one of our favourites. ACE, and as my predecessors remember: Histartes, has always kept a special place in our hearts. A bond, often affectionately called ACEDO amongst the Board members, I foresee that will only grow stronger with the years.

12 With a highly likely fusion of our faculties on the horizon, it would only make sense for ACE and Cedo Nulli to reach out to each other even more. I believe that this magazine that you're holding in your hands is only part of a culmination of a lot more handshakes in the future. And who knows, maybe it'll be you who will sit down in the meeting rooms for this.

All sneak Board year promotion aside, in my experience these two words 'Make/ Believe' represent a unity that reminds me back to a more psychological construct: intrinsic motivation. Which basically says that motivation to pursue challenges or complete tasks should ideally come from within. And finally at the end of the day contributes best to one's own mental well-being and the feeling of well-roundedness as a person. Make/Believe relates back to that in the sense that in order to make great works, one should first always believe in oneself, believe in competencies and skills gained in the past, but also believe that past mistakes are also part of the process. I am convinced that the only way to make your ambitions come true is to first believe that you are capable, that you are here to make mistakes, and that you are in a position to do great things. Belief in oneself is ultimately responsible and necessary to turn conviction into conduct, and over time will turn conduct into greatness.



## M A A R T J E

The only thing I can add to you Eby, is 'amen'. I'm honored that my committee can make part of this collaboration with ACE. The things Credo and Ace are writing about are - for me - the essence of 'Make/Believe'. Giving committee members the freedom to write about whatever they want to, result in the best possible and inspiring articles. For me personally Make/Believe reminds me of the journey towards being part of the 'academic elite' of university students. After graduating from college



in Utrecht, I knew I wanted to **do** more, **think** more and **achieve** more. Now I'm here, enjoying every class (true story) and enjoying Rotterdam even more. I really want to stress to make the most of it. Become a hot shot board member, or take part of an almost-as-hot-shot committee, go to ACE or Credo events... Just enjoy your time here. Make the best of it and believe it will get you to an even better point in life where you can reflect melancholic on your great years at uni.



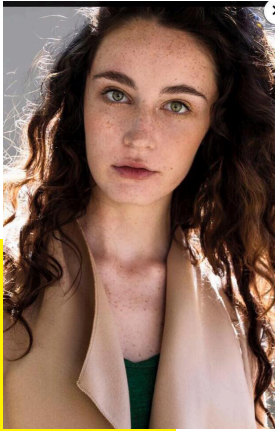
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# SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY – DOES BELIEVING ACTUALLY MEAN ACHIEVING?

KIM KERSTEN



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“You can be anything you want to be!” When you’re a child and your parents said these words, you didn’t question them. You believed in them. In fact, we all believed them so much that we didn’t stop at CEO; instead we reached for princess, Jedi or rock star, with the pure belief that with age, we would become our fantasies. Instead, age only brought limits. We no longer hear that “we can be anything” too often, but rather that we should just be something and earn something. Is this a simple byproduct of growing up? Or are these limits the self-imposed product of those around us no longer believing we can become rock stars? Many people today, who have read books such as “the secret”, would say it is the latter, and that there are no limits to our lives except for the ones we impose, which are internalized from others. Our lives become a result of self-fulfilling prophecy.

The theory behind this is that other people’s expectations and our own expectations form us into who we are. Many psychologists have taken an interest in this phenomenon and therefore many observational social studies have taken place in order to test it, the majority of these experiments taking place in the classroom. In this setting, the teacher’s expectations of the student’s grades and the resulting grades were analyzed, usually resulting in a correlation between the two and a conclusion that the self-fulfilling prophecy effect could be real. It has through this become apparent that the human mind is more powerful than originally thought, especially when it comes to our own lives and the lives of those around us. It is attractive to think that we have control, not only over our own personal destiny, but those around us as well. However, the implications of this train of thought may not always be overtly positive.

Let’s not forget that some people receive more kind words than others, and many experiments have confirmed that negative expectations are much more poignant in results. One study examined the effects of those who suffered bad breakups. The study managed to confirm that those who have suffered rejection from others, do in fact, learn to expect it and then proceed to act in ways that



elicit rejection. This self-fulfilling prophecy effect leads people to subconsciously sabotage their relationships out of the self imposed idea that they will always be rejected. The point is that the self fulfilling prophecy effect is positive when one is exposed only to kind words and is treated only with care. Of course, this is almost never the case and most of us have experienced the sting of harsh words that could impact on our idea of self worth. This makes one wonder, which occurs first: do we become who we are or is it dictated to us through experiences and beliefs?



Many of us, however, hear the same words and feel the same rejection from others, and do not become a product of it. There have yet to be experiments which aim to disprove the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy, and when psychologists aim to prove it, they generally do so -At least to a mild extent. There is, however, always the possibility that this phenomenon is not real. It is not difficult to pin the results of such studies to coincidence. This, on the other hand does not explain why people who practice visualization (the process of imagining oneself with one's desired success) tend to achieve their goals more than those who don't. Whether or not self-fulfilling prophecy is real is a highly debatable topic that has yet to be resolved. Though, it can't

be debated that it is mostly effective in those who choose to believe it, and it is a choice that should be made carefully. There is great comfort in believing in fate, believing that we are free to think whatever we want and we will still be headed down the same path, with the same future. It is also a beautiful thing to believe that our thoughts and our lives are intrinsically linked. But do our thoughts need to actively and constantly alter our environment and ourselves to be linked to our lives? Regardless of what you believe, there is no argument in the fact that changing your perspective on life makes you happier. That is where the real power lies. In the words of John Milton, "The mind is its own place and in itself, can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Whether or not the mind plays a big role in our environments and our futures, it is undeniable that the mind controls our outlook and perhaps, therefore, our happiness.

See: Jussim, L., Harbor, K.D. (2005), Teacher Expectations and Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: Knowns and Unknowns, Resolved and Unresolved Controversies. *Personality and*



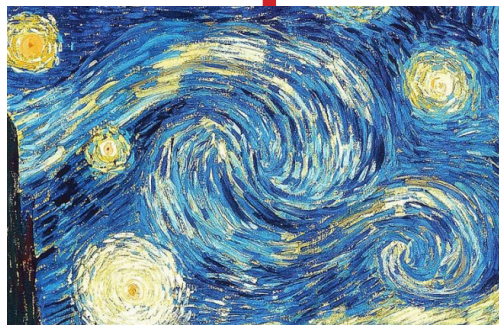
# SHOULD YOU START EATING YELLOW PAINT LIKE VAN GOGH?

BY MAX PEETERS

JULY 07, 2014

“Yellow is a happy color”, my aunt mutters to herself as she adds another stroke to the canvas that represents her attempt at painting. A cluttered canvas blankly stares back at her. As the yellow line is quietly drawn, it joins other colors previously flung at the canvas in agitation. A hemorrhage in my aunt’s brain has left much of her mind filled with shooting stars. These starts are different though, not the kind you can make wishes on.

16 They’re knives, pointy enough to drive a sharp pencil dull. Painting is one of the skills she lost among many others. I often wonder about what thoughts must fill her once-artistic mind. “How come you say that?” I remark gently after having pondered her comment about the paint.



NOVEMBER

29,

2017

I am swishing through the hallways of the van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam laughing at a joke my friend just made. On the walls hang paintings of disformed fields accompanied with stark figures drawn in families of swirly lines. Daydreamer thought: “Is this man a great genius or a tormented psychiatric patient we just so happen to praise?”. I skim the tags which accompany the paintings, a well-known students’ alternative to investing in an audio guide.

“VAN GOGH CLAIMED  
TO PRODUCE A NEW  
PAINTING EVERY DAY”, a tag reads.

One could speculate he was in that sense a pre-industrial photocopier running on overdrive. How come this museum isn't 365 times as large then? I've been ripped off. As I continue walking it isn't long before I find myself face to face with one of van Gogh's famous self-portraits. My eyes meet that of a sunken man yielding a blank expression. The background of this self-portrait is made-up of a halo of baby-blue lines. A foreground features a neatly trimmed coper beard. That was before the ear episode.

**MAY 01, 2032**

You may be wondering what my aunt and a famous Dutchman have in common. I suggest both these people were drivers of their own intuition. Starry night silhouettes searching for the sun; only to later realize they themselves were artwork all along. In the same sense that van Gogh poisoned his hollow stomach with yellow paint wishing to deceive true happiness, we fill our own lives with artificial joy.

It's the future and Amazon packages are delivered to us daily by drones. Virtual classrooms have taken over leaving virtual art the new hip. The term yellow is old, and sunflower has become a more appropriate term to describe the color. We've all been searching for ways to differentiate ourselves from the old. Olive hair is a trend and others go for lilac. I heard our neighbor dyed his cat lilac to match his own hairstyle. The sun is a sunflower and the moon a marshmallow. Have we all gone mad?



**MAY 15, 2032**

Have we gone 'van Gone'? Are we bonkers for recognition? Why on earth has someone dyed my cat's hair purple? These preoccupied sunflower thoughts are making me forget the dandelions. Is that a twinkle of acknowledgement or are my eyes bleeding pop art? Pop art is still hip right? The canals of Amsterdam seem like a peaceful place for a crazed psychiatric patient, but they're a far stretch from peaceful for a person crazed with self-admiration.

**IT'S THE FUTURE NOW,  
JUST BE CAREFUL OF  
CONSUMING YELLOW  
PAINT**

# ROMANTICIST PERSPECTIVE APPLIED TO AFRICA: ENCOUNTERS WITH 'RICH' PEOPLE IN TANZANIA

BY MILAN WEBER

EXTRACT THE ETERNAL  
FROM THE EPHEMERAL –  
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

In the summer of 2017, I spent one month in Arusha, Tanzania to work as a volunteer around several projects in the region. Tanzania is known for the Masai, the Swahili language, Mount Kilimanjaro, but unfortunately also poverty, low medical standards and to a certain extent political tensions. Although democratic standards are high in comparison to other African nations, freedom of speech is still far away. 'A European who works as a volunteer in such a country should be there to educate,' is what so many people think. That would seem logical. Especially from our point of view. 'Tanzanians are uneducated, AIDS is a problem, and the lack of monetary means drives them into everlasting poverty,' that is the general image for many. From this general, oversimplified idea of Africa on, volunteers assume that they have to take a certain responsibility to change this society. I have seen people making this mistake. If you want to educate others, you should be open to learning something yourself as well.





As a human, you can't help bringing your biased personality with you, wherever you go. While working in Tanzania, you see your own personality reflected in the reactions of people who have other opinions and other values. Whereas we as volunteers wanted to improve the quality of education, it was the local teachers at St. Margareth Academy, the school where I was situated, who showed me to appreciate the school how it was by that moment. 'See the students, they are happy. That is all that matters and as long as this is the case, no improvement is needed.' Personally, I felt that some things asked for improvement. Students were beaten up whenever they didn't pay attention, educational goals were not achieved and the general thought was that achieving those goals wasn't important either. Personally, for me as a teacher, all these principles were the world upside down. All the values we learned at the university to become a teacher were totally different in Tanzanian schools. Although I never accepted or understood the need to punish children so badly, I started to understand something of the Tanzanian culture. Although people there were interested in Europe and the Western style of living, I recognised some Romanticists characteristics in the way they perceived the world.



One day, I accompanied other volunteers for a project with Masai women. At first, we had to go through the absolutely desolate outskirts of the Arusha region to reach villages in the middle of nowhere where the Masai tribe lived. The previous day, an appointment was made to meet the Masai women at 3 o'clock on this very day. The purpose of this meeting to educate about AIDS and in line with the general thoughts about volunteering, the attitude of the volunteers was that it was the Europeans who taught the Africans, so no other way around. Way before 3 PM, we were there and we were waiting. It seemed that they were a little late and there we sat, in the middle of nowhere, sun shining on all of us amidst the beautiful African landscape. As we were waiting and waiting, the volunteers were getting angrier. The only one who didn't care was the Tanzanian guide. She knew that this could happen. She knew the Masai tribe. Instead of being angry or



disappointed because the Masai people didn't show up, she lay down in the grass and enjoyed the moment. It was this moment in which I really learn something from these people. What would you rather do? Worrying about the fact that the appointment was cancelled or enjoying this moment of sunshine?

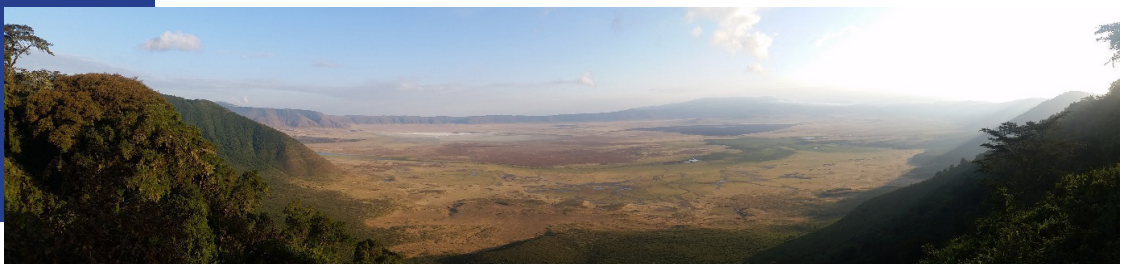


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The attitude to enjoy the sun and not to worry reminded me of a term coined by Charles Baudelaire, *Flaneur*. The flaneur was an idler who didn't have a job, wandered around the streets. But instead of condemning the person for doing nothing, instead of using rational theories of being productive and placing him in the negative sphere, romanticism as a movement defended this flaneur because it embraced natural impulses and defended irrational values. The best thing to do is to make the best of a situation when others do not live up to your expectations. Rationally, we wasted a day if you consider the goals we wanted to achieve to teach others about diseases. The guide should have been angry as well, just like we. We could have helped others! Instead of this, she threw off this disappointment with a shrug. It is no coincidence that 'Hakuna Matata' actually is a Swahili sentence.

Of course, one could easily argue that this comparison flaws because Romanticism was a more or less deliberate rejection of consumerism, industrialisation and modernism. The problems Romanticists faced in the previous three centuries were never experienced in the same degree as in Tanzania. For that reason, one might recognise some features of this movement in Tanzanians but for them, it has another origin. Romanticists characteristics are to be seen in the restraint attitude regarding pressure to obtain targets, live up to appointments or even the value of being on time. If you ever visit Africa, open up to their values. Do not make the mistake that you would be able to change this society, it is impossible. Instead of this, look at Africa from a Romanticist perspective. The thing I learned in Tanzania is not to worry in all situations, even though this seems irrational. Hakuna Matata.









# QUIXOTIC

BY DOĞA BILIR

"I'm still waiting on your pitch, you know a half-assed character description won't do anything."

I vacantly stared at my agent.

"You really have to give me something by Friday, Morgan, the publishing house is expecting at least an outline."

I turned my head away to the window to gaze into the rain pouring down.

"I'm very well aware that you're going through a rut, but if you're not feeling yourself, please tell-."

"I told you I will, I just need a bit more time," I cut her off abruptly.

"You don't have that much, let me tell you that."

I dragged myself out of Brigitte's office. My head was dizzy, my heart was heavy, and I felt all over the place. Sat down near the river, dangling my feet, I let out a slow breath, closed my eyes, trying to ground myself.

"You gotta be careful," I had heard a soft but cheery voice say. "You are sitting a little too close to the edge."

"I will be just fine," I brushed off.

"This is a very unconventional time to hang out at the port." I glanced at the shapeless blob sitting down by my side. "What made you come here and dwell at 2 pm anyway?"

"Life, I guess."

"Oh, come on! There's gotta be more than that."

"Aren't you a little too nosey about a complete stranger's turmoil?" I could feel the heat on my face, my ears must be getting red, it was my body's way of manifesting my emotions. A small rebellion of my physics towards my mind's constant demands to hide them. Did they realize?

"Your ears are getting red," they said simultaneously. "Am I annoying you?"

"A little bit."

"Would you rather be alone?"

"You know what, I actually would," I jumped on my feet. I had brushed my jeans off. My mind was jumping up and down by victory. Was I that helpless to want to escape that bad?

"I'm Kay," I heard the blob say.

"Morgan."

"Nice to meet you. Now tell me, Morgan, who made you this thoughtful?"

"My agent." I couldn't wait for them to leave me alone.

"Agent? Are you like a model or something?"

"Writer." Leave me alone already.

"Ugh, I hate books and anything that has to do with them." You don't say. "Really annoyed with trees, even, just because they are the source of paper."

That sounds intriguing and mildly familiar.

“Why?”

“Why don’t I tell you over dinner tomorrow?”

I watched them walk away without waiting for any response. How come they were annoyed by something so familiar? Who else do I know that has the same thing?

“No,” I said to myself, “It can’t be.”

They fit the description as well. I had rambled all the scrap paper on the desk, trying to find my outlines, trying to find all the planning I had done so far. Could it be, that what I had to write, what I had imagined, had found me? Could it be that I wanted them to be real so bad that they had found me? Could it be that, at last, I had crossed the line between being hyper-imaginative and being schizophrenic? I sat back to my computer, defeated by the shame of being unable to find any leads. Could Kay be the main character I had created? Could they be the person I had created, the person I thought I was deciding every action of, the person who is purely fictional?

“Every writer is a little mad,” said Brigitte. “No one can be normal if they are hearing dialogues in their heads, and living in different worlds in every waking of the day. I don’t expect it to be any different for you either.”

“Are you listening to me? Do you hear what I’m saying?” I burst.

“It is perfectly normal to have delusions, especially if you have been thinking about the pitch constantly.”

“I don’t think you understand me. Or you’re trying particularly hard to not to. I told you, I think I wrote them.”

“It is also perfectly normal to be inspired by the real people in your life,” she said without taking her eyes off of her agenda. “you wanna know what I understand?”

“Yes, please,” I said, discouraged.

“Honestly, Morgan, I am failing to understand why you are making a bigger deal out of this than it already is.”

She didn’t believe me. Of course, she didn’t believe me. I wouldn’t believe myself if I were in her shoes. The only option left was to go to the dinner and see it myself. I turned on the document I had and started typing the protagonist’s backstory.

"So, " I said as I laid my fork down, "what's new with your life?"

"Not much," they looked disinterested. "I have been enjoying my new life."

"New life? I thought you grew up here." I tried hiding my smirk. Could it be the lead I need to get them confess? Did they know who they are? Were they getting anxious?

"I did, but I have been living abroad before I came back." Did their voice start cracking? "I told you the other day, remember?" I didn't. They never told me.

"Why are you annoyed with books?" I asked.

"I find them very" they paused, "limiting."

"Limiting how?"

"Knowing a writer telling you what to think and who you like..."

"Or what to say or what to do?" I asked, hoping they will break soon. They nodded.

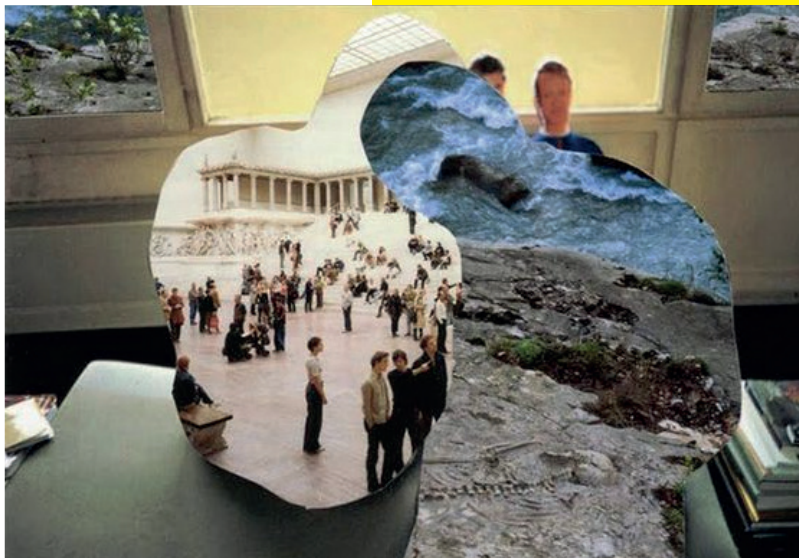
"Or when to exist or when not to," I raised my eyebrow.

"Exactly."

"How are you here?"

"We met yesterday, remember?"

"But how are you here?" Silence. "You know I am unable to write anything sin-





ce I met you.”

“I beg to differ.” They are onto me.

“Why are you here?”

“I have to protect myself, first. I have to find a way to stay. I can’t stay if you finish writing my story.”

“But you will be unfinished, undeveloped.”

“I am willing to give up them for a chance in real life.”

“Don’t you wanna see how it ends, what happens next?”

“Please don’t let me go, please.” Kay dropped on their knees, holding my left ankle tightly, trying to stop me from reaching to my laptop. “Please, please. I’ll do anything. Please don’t go back to writing. Write something else if you must, please.”

“I don’t have the time to come up with a new story arc.”

“You don’t get it, I will be gone once you type the last full stop. I will be gone.”

“What are you even saying? Listen to yourself.”

---

“You heard me,” I could hear them getting defensive. “I am the only one who’s there for you, who cares for you, who actually listens to you. What will you do once I’m gone? Are you gonna dwell in your sorrow dangling your feet off the river? Maybe this time you will be courageous enough to actually jump.”

The final words hit me like an avalanche; so cold and yet burning hot. It was particularly fascinating to see how something so flakey and delicate, like a snowflake or a thought, a daydream,

to be this devastating and deadly.

I pulled myself strongly from their grasp, grabbed my laptop and fled to the bathroom. Sat down on the floor, panting, my back supporting the locked door, started swiftly writing accompanied by a symphony of pleading shouts and knockings on the door.

“I can feel change,” I heard Kay screaming. “Please stop writing.” Their voice got progressively panicked, transforming mor into a helpless plea.

“Please, “, I heard them beg, out of breath, given up.

“Please,” as I hit save and closed my laptop.

# BLOCKED AND REPORTED

BY EMMA LOUISE DAILEY

On March 21st, 2019, I, along with most of my international friends, spent our morning attempting to interpret the tidal wave of outraged Instagram stories and Facebook posts that flooded our feeds. A somber IBCoM-student briefed me on the situation as we headed to class. Thierry Baudet's populist, anti-immigration party, 'Forum voor Democratie' (FvD), won 13 seats in the Dutch government's upper-house, which is now divided between 12 parties, an all time high. "I'm just so frustrated by my friends who voted FvD. One literally told me that his reason for voting was that at least FvD is overtly terrible. How does that make sense? I asked him to unfriend me on Facebook." He was not the only one to do this.

The days following the elections saw a surge in social media posts where students requested FvD voters to unfriend and unfollow them, with varying levels of civility. Social media spring cleaning came early this year. What drives this behaviour? I interviewed one Erasmus University student from the Netherlands with strong views on the FvD, Robin, who posted an Instagram story requesting voters and supporters of the populist party to unfollow her. She stated her reasons for this as being the following: "I think we as a developed country should not allow political parties to come to power that alienate big parts of the population, such as people of color, women and LGBTQIA+ people. As a bisexual woman with a multicultural background, I take a stand against all kinds of discrimination. (...) I would like to cut these people out of my personal life for my mental health and because I think that if somebody has those kinds of opinions, they are also against my own well-being in some ways."

I also interviewed Cris, a Dutch-American law graduate student and intern at the Asser Institute, researching (among other things) anti-discrimination law and freedom of expression. He published a post on Facebook asking that FvD voters unfriend him, explained his decision was a personal one, informed by his experience as an American. Indeed, since living through the election of Donald Trump to the American presidency in 2016, he states that “This discussion, about whether to ‘cut off or engage’ with extremism, isn’t new for me.” Having friends that supported, and continue to support Trump, he has already experienced what many Dutch citizens have been grappling with since last Thursday. When asked what his reaction to this first blow was, he testified that, “At first, I was adamant that I should remain friends with them, keep talking to them, engage in dialogue. But what that actually looked like was a series of Facebook arguments where no one was persuaded, and which were quite taxing on me emotionally. It also ended up with me checking social media and seeing quite upsetting things from people I considered friends. It began to have a cumulative harmful impact on me to debate supporters of politicians whose political aim is to invalidate my way of life.”

The statements of these two students highlights the emotional pain and feeling of personal betrayal that comes from being confronted on a daily basis with posts and debates that invalidate them as individuals. Freedom of speech and expression is of course, an important democratic value, but these students point freedom to listen, or not. Social media lets us choose who we hear and when we hear it, without preventing anyone from posting. These students decided to take advantage of this. Indeed, Cris expressed to me that it would be unfair to marginalized social groups, targeted by populist parties, to not let them chose to filter their feed. “It’s asking marginalised people to do a lot of emotional labor. (...) People who innocently demand I “engage!” are really asking me to become an activist, which involves a lot of emotional labor and comes at the cost of my own wellbeing. In the case of the recent Dutch elections, it’s the second time that I’ve been through this. Frankly put, I don’t want to.”

Students have every right to create their own virtual safe space. Both Cris and Robin were polite in their message, and their primary purpose is to protect themselves from the emotional labour of being reminded every day that people you consider friends stand against you in their political views. However, this protective bubble, just like the filter bubble created for us by algorithms, has its downsides. In 2017, Bill Gates was quoted in Quartz as saying that social media “Lets you go off with like-minded people, so you’re not mixing and sharing and understanding other points of view ... It’s super important. It’s turned out to be more of a problem than I, or many others, would have expected.” The extremes of this would be filtering out all individuals holding opposing views from one’s circles, to the point of living in a distorted reality, an illusion, just waiting to be shattered by the next election. But the students I interviewed remained quite lucid on the matter. “I’m not afraid to end up in a bubble, since I do read up on political opinions on both sides of the spectrum, both in my profession and as a hobby. But I would like to cut these people out of my personal life for my mental health”, Robin insisted.

Cris on the other hand, rejected this terminology: “To be clear, what we’re talking about here is removing extremism from social media feeds, nothing more.” He continued, stating, “I’m not creating a ‘safe space’ or a ‘bubble’. I still have tons of Facebook friends of various political views. I just draw the line at neo Nazis and white supremacists. I don’t think that’s an unfair line to draw. (...) And again, I lost about 7 friends since that post, which is a miniscule amount of my total network. So it’s not exactly isolationism.” He also pointed out that this decision to cut contact with extremists would not prevent him from being active politically, and would in fact allow him to be more effective. “I’m also still going to be participating in the political process, still going to be going to protests, still going to be studying human rights and anti-discrimination law. Asking FvD voters to unfriend me is the same as refusing to address extremism. It’s a self-protection measure I’m taking for myself. Otherwise, as happened to me after Trump, I know I will get fatigued, jaded, and have to ‘check out’ of politics entirely. That is worrying to me more than any issue to do with my Facebook friends.”

Stressing that this is not a stand against individuals with different views but a personal decision to protect oneself, he neither encourages, nor discourages others from doing the same. His closing statement leaves us with food for thought. Despite the importance of dialogue and communication with individuals of all political opinions, it is important to understand the emotional aggression that affects minority groups online. "I think people who are being targeted by white supremacy and extreme right views have a right to curate spaces where their existence isn't up for debate. I think it's unfair to expect someone to civilly discuss whether they deserve rights. I think it's cruel to expect marginalised people to be the ones to have to change the minds of those who support extremism - and anyway, social media isn't the forum where that happens. And I think it can be a healthy way of protecting yourself in emotionally traumatic political times. So if someone wants to unfriend neo-Nazis, I'm not about to judge them." said Cris, and neither will I.

# IMAGINARY SITUATIONS: ALARMING OR HUMAN?

SAM VAN DER KAMP

I always call my mind a blessing and a curse. On the one hand I love it, because it gives the ability to analyse anything that comes across my path. It's lovely to have the capacity to anticipate. On the contrary, it's a curse. Because I overanalyse as well. Create scenarios that might happen, but are not likely. Come up with situations that are pretty much impossible to occur, yet created in the mind. The same situation that keeps you up at night. The forty ways you can tell a story, all with a different outcome or response, but none of them being positive. About time we got to understand this concept and tried to get a little more regulation.



Even though the process of overthinking is not clear to scientists, there are a few presumptions about it. The cerebral cortex is the root of all sorts of thinking, so overthinking is one of them. Clinical psychologists said that overthinking itself is not necessarily a bad thing. It is only becoming less healthy as soon as the problem-solving disappears and you get stuck in a loop of thinking.

Another important aspect of overthinking is recognizing the symptoms of this concept. So here are a few things that I recognize mainly from myself and people around me:



## • YOU SUFFER FROM INSOMNIA:

this one is pretty obvious. Due to the endless thoughts in your head, your mind will not shut down, keeping you awake at night.

## • YOU ARE AWFULLY TIRED:

this might be an effect of not being able to sleep. However, it might also be a result of constantly thinking and overanalysing your own thoughts. This sucks up a lot of energy, making you feel weary all the time.

## • THERE IS A NEED TO BE IN CONTROL:

people who tend to overthink, want to be in control of everything in their life. Simply because they want to regulate their ~~own behaviour as well as~~ the behaviour of other people. This will help not to get caught by surprise.

## • THERE IS A FEAR OF FAILURE:

overthinkers tend to be perfectionists. This is in line with the need to be in control: control means no failure. But if we do fail, there is no going back, let alone accepting the loss. Not happening.

## • YOU FEEL ANXIOUS:

apart from the fact that overthinking often comes hand in hand with anxiety or depression (perhaps both), anxiety also kicks in when you fear the future. It is scary, as it is as unpredictable can be. And what cannot be predicted, can be overthought. So that's what is going to happen instead.

There are tons and tons more of symptoms to ramble about, but there is one matter that is way more important: how can we reduce this cycle?

Now that you are aware of the symptoms, it is important to be aware of the symptoms. As soon as you realise you are getting stuck in a cycle of constantly worrying about something that hasn't even happened yet – and might not even occur in real life – try to cut it out. Another tip is that you can focus on solving the problem rather than wait until the cows get home. Some questions that you might ask yourself when realising this are: 'am I focusing on the problem or the solution?' or 'what am I accomplishing by thinking about this so intensely?' when there is a moment of awareness that you are focusing more on the problem than the solution, you can easily change it. When overthinking gets turned into a solution, you break free from the loop. This makes it more healthy. This last trick might be obvious, but sometimes overthinking gets triggered by certain situations. The key to solving overthinking, is knowing these and understanding them. Once you are capable of this ability, the overanalysing will decrease within a heartbeat.

If there is a problem, there is a solution. A lesson I taught from the endless overthinking is that it gets you nowhere. It makes deciding a lot harder and especially living in the moment is unbearable, as you need 3 workdays to analyse all the pro's and cons about everything. As a manner of speaking, of course. And remember: analysing is not necessarily a bad thing. It is a blessing. It only turns into a curse if you create it yourself. I know that you do not have to. You will get through.



# THE ART OF MAKE BELIEVE

BY SARA HAVERKAMP

*make-believe*  
/'meɪkbiːlv/  
noun

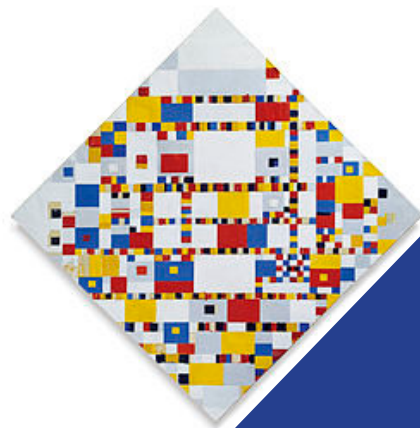
## THE ACTION OF PRE-TENDING OR IMAGINING THAT THINGS ARE BETTER THAN THEY REALLY ARE.

36 If someone is living in a make-believe world, they are pretending that things are better, different, or more exciting than they really are instead of facing up to reality. Everybody makes believe for particular reasons at some points in their lives, often starting from an early age on. Remember being a kid and playing make-believe? Remember how easy it was to make believe you were a famous actor or singer, or an astronaut or a dazzling painter? You could sit anywhere, in some room or under a tree or in your sandbox and be that person. Everything about it would be crystal clear, it would be as if you were really there: all the sights and smells and noises would be right there in your head. Remember?

A lot of people stop doing this when they grow older. Why do we quit sitting under that tree and stop letting our imagination bloom? Make believe is a powerful phrase and can very well be used as a motivator too, because who would not want to turn their dreams into reality? One of the most cliché examples for this is probably the invention of the wheel, which completely changed our way of living. Such a simple yet so very useful idea sti-

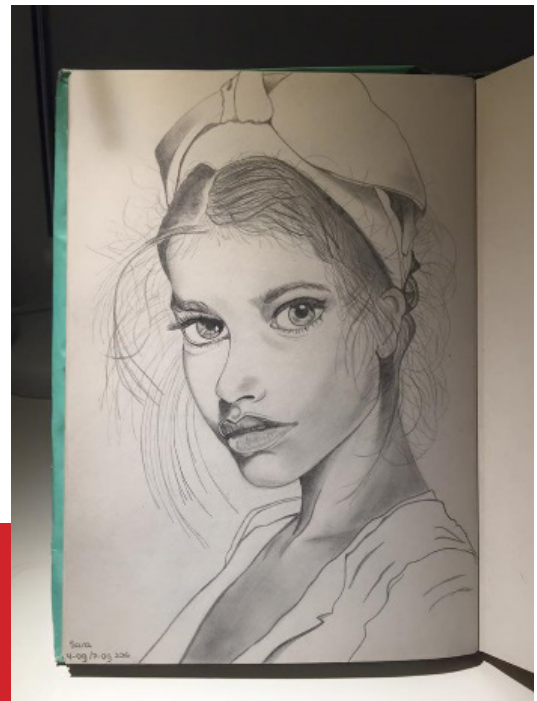
mulated our evolvement over time. Can you imagine being unable to get to the university quickly and instead having to walk, or being unable to take a taxi to your hotel and instead footing several miles with tons of bags? But how do you think it started before it was actually created? It all began as a simple idea, merely a thought. And then... It just was.

Losing a sense of make believe while growing up is something that many artists do not do. The theme of make believe is predominantly visible in the modernistic artistic movements of Bauhaus and the Dutch art collective 'De Stijl', of which Piet Mondriaan is probably the most well-known member. In all these forms of art, larger ideas are processed and hidden behind unsuspecting shapes, figures and colors. At first sight, since nothing is depicted as how it appear in the real world, the artists' real intentions are not visible to an unknowing audience, allowing the viewers to draw their own conclusions and interpretations.





However, when talking about Bauhaus and De Stijl, we are talking extremes. With the use of mainly primary colors and the most basic shapes, ideas and thoughts are tucked away behind an entire world of make believe. Some artists have tried to find a middle way in the movement of escapism, in which distraction and relief from unpleasant realities is sought, especially by looking for entertainment or engaging in fantasy. At one point in my time in high school, I found myself subconsciously following the escapism movement in my own work. I had been trying to draw a normal, human girl, and initially thought I had succeeded fairly well. It was not until I received feedback from a teacher that I realized the girl was not quite human at all, since my teacher told me I had made the eyes too large, which would have messed up the proportions of a standard human face. A classmate remarked that my figure almost looked like a Disney character, and I started wondering why I had done this without noticing. I discovered a similar pattern in some of my other drawings and realized that proportionally bigger eyes are one element of making characters look more beautiful than they are in reality. I had tried to depict an ideal type of person. While drawing, I participated in a process of make believe so that the drawing would be prettier. This might be a consequence of social constructions or glorification of specific figures that we are taught from a young age on, in this case Disney figures, since it is true that I have been raised loving every Disney princess there is!



In the end, I was still happy with the drawing, even though it did not turn out the way I initially wanted it to be. I think the process of make believe is a beautiful thing and that we should never overlook our ability to do it, just like all these artists that went before us and never quit exploring their imaginations and creative minds. When times are troubling, art could be used to escape from reality by diving into the beauty created with our own hands, and simply share the joy it brings. Art is like that. It wraps around you and makes you feel safe. In societies that sometimes seem as if they have gone crazy, escaping into your own little artistic world and blocking out the horrors that unfold around you could be desired effects. The rest of the world won't even matter...

# A REFLECTION ON BRATZ AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO POPULAR CULTURE

BY MINH NGUYET NGUYEN

36 Growing up, I only played with Barbies. I remember the kitchenette set, composed of a tiny stove with tiny led bulbs that would lit up and mimic the blue flames of real fire. Hours of entertainment were ensured and if it was not for the constant moving houses, I think my mom would have kept this set in our attic. So the other day, when my roommate told me that I dressed like a Bratz doll, to which I automatically answered “Thank you” assuming that it was a compliment and nothing else, it struck me that I would not answer the same way if she had compared me to Barbie.

Barbie did monopolize the market for over 3 decades. It was by the end of the 90s, beginning of the new millennial, that other dolls (Bratz included) have surfaced and shifted young girl’s attention towards them. Bratz have ridiculous body proportion, oversized eyes and lips, but a minuscule nose. What they were really known for, were their outfits. Since the very beginning, they were fashion oriented. Tiny checkered crop tops, miniature flared pants, insect sized leather boots, Bratz had detailed and interesting outfits. Cuter and edgier than barbie’s, which to be honest, I always associated with a very traditional, feminine almost conservative look.





My roommate's comment grew on me. I started exploring the dark web for more possible outfit inspo. I then spiral down the rabbit hole that is Bratz subculture. I made it out alive and here is my reporting.

Bratz style has remained pretty consis-

tent throughout the year. Unlike the human world, in which fashion for the 2000s and 2010s were very painful and cringy, Bratz style has prevailed and stayed very 90s. From time to time, you could see details borrowed from the real world to attract buyers, but they have done a good job creating a very distinctive fashion sense. Today's Bratz style happens to match with current trends, which is not surprising as we have been doing throwback fashion for a while now.

Down the rabbit hole, I realized I was not the only one. On the contrary, there are quite many of us. There are thousands of blogs and Instagram accounts dedicated to Bratz. I saw a fair amount of Bratz memes and bratz pinterests boards. The rabbit hole is big and densely populated. It is, like any subculture really, a source of creativity and undeniable talents. I found an account with high quality pictures of bratz doll, with hair and outfit carefully curated, and styled, to mimick real life fashion editorials. There was a Rihanna inspired look, a Gigi Hadid one, even one with Bratz size calvin klein underwear. Someone out there are hand stitching these outfits, dressing collectible bratz dolls, and setting up a whole account for it, which reassured me and validated my new-found fascination for these dolls. In all honesty, this account has more diversity than most brands' Instagram accounts, which is always appreciated in today's woke culture.

Overall, I think revisiting the Barbie and Bratz world was a trip down memory lane that I did not expect. One that I came back with more sympathy towards Bratz, and a fond but blurry memory of Barbie. Until this day, dolls are still somehow contributing to my imagination. I might not play with them anymore, but they still manage to influence my fashion choice, even unconsciously.

# THE MISSING SHADE OF BLUE

CASSANDRA LANGENSKIOLD

How many times have you tried to translate a word into a different language, only to find that it really didn't mean what you wanted it to? For many bilingual, trilingual and even multilingual individuals, this is an almost daily occurrence, and one that often sparks an internal struggle.

Linguistic relativity refers to the basic idea that language is essentially relative, and that language determines our thoughts, experiences, and even our senses. This essentially means that language also determines the range of our expressions and even actions – our worldview is therefore dependent on the language, or languages, we are able to master. Though language is grounded in cognition, itself a universal trait among human beings, linguistic relativity rests on the premise that different language represents different ways of thinking about the world.

The term was coined by American linguist Benjamin Whorf, who 's student Harry Hoijer eventually dedicated the name of his theory to his former mentor, Whorf, and Whorf's own colleague Edward Sapir. Already in Ancient Greece, the idea that language and thought were fundamentally intertwined was being pioneered by philosophers such as Plato and St. Augustine. In the 19th century, German Romanticists such as Humboldt were examining the concept of language as the expression of culture and basis of our internal thought processes.

Scholars have developed this theory into two camps: one which states that



language is entirely responsible for the range of cognitive processes we possess, the other contending that language only constrains some areas of cognition but is by no means decisive. Though the prior form has been largely disputed and even falsified, linguistic relativism still holds some truth to it.

If languages shape how we see and experience the world, this effectively means that our sense of reality will be different depending on what language we speak. Though there is more subtlety to this than simply saying we cannot understand one another if we do not speak the same language (and it is also the case that we cannot understand one another within the same language), there are still certain experiences that speak to the



fact that linguistic relativity prevails.

I myself have grown up hearing an assorted mixture of languages right from when I was born. My mother tongue is Swedish, yet I have a Finnish passport. However, I never attended school in Finland, leaving me without any Finnish language skills whatsoever. Growing up abroad, I learned English at an almost faster pace than I could learn proper Swedish, and eventually learned both French and German while living abroad.

I often joke that I speak Swenglish – a bizarre concoction of Swedish interlaced with English words and phrases. Sometimes, I catch myself unable to fully explain a word or meaning. To others, it seems strange that I can't conjure the word in my mother tongue, but this is me, this is my identity – this is who I am. Language seems to be our primary mode of communication, yet there are countless flaws and shortcomings that we are often ill-equipped to

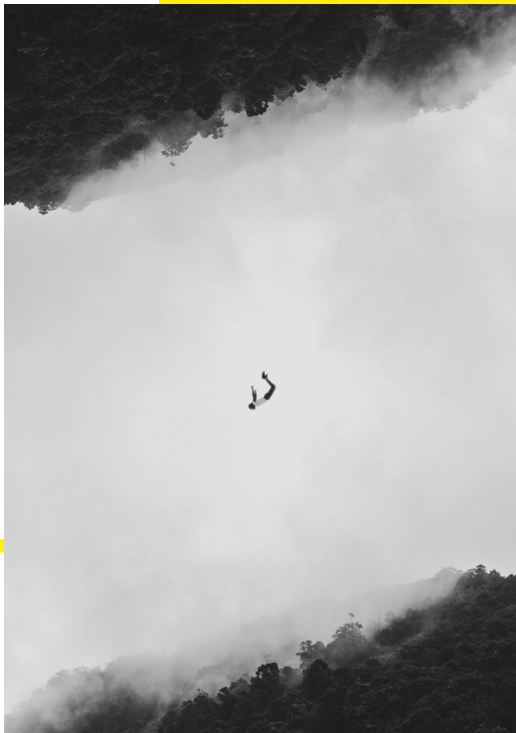
deal with. Often frustrating, language presents a paradox to those speaking more than one language, or even communicating with others who do. Can we really, truly communicate in this way?

Colours, for instance, are often more nuanced in some languages compared to others; in Russian, there are more tones of blue than in English. In the Pirahã language, spoken by the indigenous people of the Pirahã in the Amazon of Brazil, only categorizes colours as light or dark. Spanish and German, for instance, project different genders onto the sun and moon. In German, the moon is masculine, whereas it is feminine to Spanish-speakers. Far from arbitrary, the gender assigned to nouns changes the way in which we talk about them; the moon may be strong and bold, or it could be beautiful and mysterious, according to some.

What are we missing? What if there are shades of blue we cannot see, characteristics of nature we cannot experience?

Some languages die out. Akkala Sami, the most endangered of the Sami dialects found in Russia, is currently only spoken by two people on this planet. Moreover, it remains one of the most scantily documented languages to date. Perhaps when it becomes extinct, which it very well may become, we will lose another worldview and accompanying knowledge, previously passed down through generations.

Sometimes it feels as if we make believe when we speak. The words we say are not definitive, nor are they concrete; what one thing means to me may not necessarily mean the same to you, but we play along regardless. Perhaps someone, someday, will speak every language imaginable, and understand everything this earth has to offer.



# TROMPE L'OEIL

JULIAN BELTRAN

The possible emotions, thoughts and ideas a frame of film can elicit on us, it's audience, are endless. From art house to Hollywood blockbusters, through comedy, drama and everything in between, films really do come in all shapes and sizes. They can be good, they can be bad. To some an elite few are classics which should be safekept for future generations, to others just another movie that you will probably forget about in the weeks following the screening. Nonetheless, this artform can have profound and lasting repercussions in the way we see and perceive the world around us. Whether millions or thousands are spent on production, these collections of moving images can make us reflect on what it means to be a human and much more. Whatever its content, films always, however obvious or covert it may be, have cues of how we as social beings make sense of our world.

Interestingly, the phrase "I have to see it to believe it" captures the power of visuals. As humans we rely greatly on our sight, it makes us feel safe as well as making us aware of what or whom is around us. Funnily enough, we don't really contest our sense of sight and we tend to believe everything we see without any second thoughts. This great paradox is clear in our of confusion when seeing an optical illusion. That which we see seems impossible, yet, it is right there in front of our eyes, and so, we begin to second guess ourselves. So, it is interesting that even if we are rationally aware of the fact that most everything we see in film is make-believe, as in, it is a staged interaction between people who have trained to make illusion seem as real possible, the themes in these movies are very much real.



Love, loss, illness, war, power, amongst many other topics, all serve as subject matter to film; presented to us through different lenses and carefully curated perspectives of directors, editors and writers. So, movies are arguably a micro-cosmos of our society, representing individual or collective ideas on whatever its subject might be as well as holding a mirror up to the way society functions. As such, movies can shape our understanding of history as well as current events as much as news media. In fact, it acts as another actor involved in the dialogue of what has happened, what is happening and what will happen. For instance, films like *Moonlight* or *Green Book* are insightful and become relevant illustration of what discrimination based on race or sexuality look like. In this way they make us realize the horrible yet standard forms of bigotry or inequality many people in our societies face.

Moreover, movies that touch upon subject which can be controversial and spark debate can help in normalizing and bringing exposure to the mainstream conscience. The film industry is arguably one of the most visible and far-reaching creative industries in the contemporary market. This makes it a very powerful art form as it touches and inspires millions of people all around the world. By having a point of view and creating real life consequences and discussions around certain topics, that which was made as make-believe becomes very much real, turning that which was staged in production into something volatile once delivered. Film then, sort of, places a ball in the middle of the court and just waits for all players to leap in hopes of making the best move. It then becomes clear that those glamorized versions of reality which grace our eyes in the big screen have the power to instill ideas in our mind and be agents of social change at the same time.

# REJECTION OF BISEXUALITY BY MEN: HETEROFLEXIBILITY

BY ANDRES DE LA CRUZ LOBATON



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For anyone who doesn't know Grindr; it is an app for men to meet other men, more specific: men who like men. It is actually a pretty big thing. There is even an Instagram account called '@best\_of\_grindr'. A funny thing about this account is that it sometimes shows that 'straight' males also use this app. So, does that mean that these 'straight' men are bi? They say that they are not.

Heteroflexible men are men who show some homosexual behavior, but still insist on being straight, because they mainly show heterosexual behavior (Carrillo & Hoffman, 2018). According to the Dorland's Medical Dictionary showing homosexual and heterosexual, thus being sexually attracted to both men and women, is the same as being bisexual. It seems that these men are rejecting the definition of bisexuality and are trying to redefine heterosexuality. And it is redefined in a way that it is fully compatible with having same-sex desires.

By not accepting the bisexual 'label' and redefining it as heteroflexible, these men are seeking for a way to not lose their heterosexual label. For some reason these men are not feeling comfortable with being bisexual. So, why is it hard to accept bisexuality as a 'label'?

Due to the decrease of homophobia in the previous decades, it seems as if more men are experimenting sexually with other men. However, it seems as if same-sex desires or behavior are still only associated with being gay. Dyar and Feinstein (2018) argue that having same-sex desires is perceived as a violation of the concept of heterosexuality and therefore an individual should be exclusively gay. This can be explained by the Western Construct of Binary, which supports mono-sexuality only (heterosexuality and homosexuality) (Flanders, 2018).





Flanders (2018) also shows that when a male comes out as bisexual it is perceived as an intermediate phase. People expect that these men will eventually come out as 'only gay'. Together with the Western Construct of Binary, this will lead to a fear of being perceived as gay, and not bisexual. Which makes it difficult for a male with same-sex desires to come out as bisexual.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity states that a man should have a certain role. For some reason being male and straight implies that an individual should have this specific role and that a gay man is allowed to change this role to feminine. However, when it comes to bisexual men it is not that simple, because the gender role is not defined. This is often seen as a gender role violation. Sadly, a male gender role violation is perceived as more severe than a female gender role violation.

Furthermore, this gender role violation is not only perceived by men, but also by women. Some women report to feel less feminine if they would be involved with a bisexual man. This can be interpreted as if fewer women would want to be involved with bisexual men. Since bisexual men are also attracted to women, this could be seen as a threat to their sexual behavior and would rather not come out as bisexual.

Fear to come out as bi is not the only problem, Anderson and Adams (2011) found that cisgender straight males tend to find bisexuality less attractive as an identity, even while they are involved with bisexual behavior. However, this negativity is not only seen with cisgender straight males. Homosexual communities tend to see bisexual people as not committed to the LGBT rights movement and only having an advantage with their heterosexual privileges, which is not really true (Swan & Habibi, 2018). Both findings result in an increase of binegativity and stimulate the rejection of bisexuality as an identity.

In summary, it is difficult for men to come out as bisexual even when they are involved with some homosexual behavior, but mainly show heterosexual behavior. Because of this, heterosexuality has been redefined as heteroflexibility for these cases. This can be attributed to three things that were previously discussed: (1) bisexuality is still perceived as an intermediate phase between heterosexuality and homosexuality; (2) male gender role violations could possibly lead to a threat of these men's sexual life; (3) binegativity perceived by society makes it more difficult to accept bisexuality as an identity.

Although this new label makes a specific group of men feel more comfortable, it does not seem to me that it helps to improve the perceptions of bisexuality. On the contrary; it could contribute to bisexual erasure. And this might even increase binegativity. What do you think? Is the redefinition of heterosexuality a good thing? And does this really overshadow bisexuality?









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# FROM MAKE-BELIEVE TO REAL CHANGE

BY LENA MINGZHU WEIBERLENN

Cece Dao, 21, is a third year IBCoM student from Vietnam. Over the course of the past two years, she has been trying to find ways to get justice and peace of mind for what happened to her. Fighting her way through many twists, turns, misinformation and detours due to systems that were not designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of survivors of sexual assault, she decided to speak up about what was happening and fight for her justice. I sat down with her to get a bit more insight into what her motivations were throughout her journey and how the petition, regional and even national press coverage have impacted her cause.

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**FOR ANYONE THAT DOES NOT  
KNOW YOUR CURRENT SITUATION,  
WOULD YOU MIND EXPLAINING IT  
TO US AGAIN?**

Well, 2 years ago I was molested by a friend that I study with, and a year after that I worked up the courage to reach out to Erasmus University and talk to the student advisor. I was told that the university could not do anything else about my situation to make me feel safe on campus and that I should contact the police. So, I did that, but the investigation took a long time. It's been a bit over a year now and there is no date for a hearing yet.



It had been really stressful for me because while the investigation was taking place, I still had to face that person in class, and that's why I started the petition for the university to take action towards my case. I asked them to suspend him from campus until there is a verdict so that we can feel safe. This was not an option that was made known to me, but after the petition, I found out that the university actually does have procedures in place to investigate and potentially suspend students in cases like these. They just haven't been doing it.



## WHERE DID YOU FIND SUPPORT IN THE BEGINNING?

All of my best friends were really supportive of me. But as an international student, I can't just get on a plane and get comfort from my friends that live overseas. And not being able to talk to people that have gone through similar things was also hard because it's impossible to fully understand unless you have experienced it too.

It was also the fear of being pitied and viewed differently that stopped me from telling them too much about it. And it always feels more comforting to have someone directly by your side.

## BEFORE THE PETITION WAS WRITTEN, YOU POSTED A SET OF VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF RAPE CULTURE. HOW DID YOU COME ABOUT MAKING THEM?

A few months after what happened, the MeToo movement became really vibrant in the media sphere and that's when I realised that many women have been through something similar.

Then, the videos came about pretty naturally because I wanted to educate people – young girls especially – about what their rights are, broaden their understanding of the matter and give comfort to whom it has happened before. And really also to break down the taboo that this is something shameful to talk about.

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START THIS MOVEMENT IN THE FIRST PLACE?

A few weeks ago, I went to the Slut Walk Rotterdam. I met with you after and told you about how I was empowered by the women that spoke there. And then you told me about your experience and how comforting you felt after you spoke out and got support from people, and I felt like I was ready to do the same thing you did. I told my story to make people realise that this is happening around them every day, not just in the news.

## AND WHAT WERE YOU HOPING TO ACHIEVE WITH THE PETITION?

My initial intention was to seek justice for my case and spark conversation, but I had people reach out to me and say "Hey, I also study at Erasmus University and something like this happened to me too," so it's for all university students to know their rights. Safety on campus should be provided for students through more definite measures. After the petition went online, people actually talked about it much more than I expected. They shared it with their friends through social media and personal conversations. It's nice to have initiated this discussion and for people to feel comfort. So far, the measures taken by the university have not satisfied me, because those were not our goal. Other students have also reached out to me and expressed that this is not enough, because nobody knows what else he could be doing to other students.

*These are the measures Cece speaks of: The IBCoM programme has pulled the student in question out of this term's plenary lecture and made sure he does not have class on the same days as Cece until the end of the academic year. The lectures he misses are being recorded for him so that he can watch them at home. Whether or not he is still on campus on those days anyway cannot be guaranteed.*

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER PLANS ON HOW THIS CASE WILL CONTINUE?

Yeah, I have been in contact with the faculty dean and she has been really helpful. We have finally filed a formal complaint to the university. I was informed that an independent party that has not been involved in the case previously would be brought in to investigate the case from an unbiased position. But I also do not know the specifics on what to expect from the process itself.

## SINCE THE PETITION AND VIDEOS WENT UP, A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REACHING OUT TO YOU. HOW HAS THAT FELT?

I'm just really grateful to the people that reached out to me. They've been providing me with the support that kept me going and showed me that I'm not alone in this. It's also a really courageous of them to finally open up about their stories. I am really grateful that they did that. Three days after the petition came out, 90 people reached out me and 20% said that something similar had happened to themselves or their friends. There have been so many more since. And 4

or 5 people from the 20% were actually from Erasmus University, so that was really striking for me. It made me realise the impact of the petition and what it could achieve. It helped me to being more persistent and more determined in achieving the cause of this petition.

## AND WE BOTH KNOW THAT IT'S REALLY HARD TO TALK ABOUT IT, SO THERE MUST BE A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE THAT ARE GOING THROUGH THE SAME THING BUT HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SPEAK OUT.

Exactly.

## AND WHERE DOES YOUR FAMILY STAND ON THIS ISSUE?

Yeah, while my friends really support me, my family doesn't. After what happened, I didn't tell them immediately. It was only when I reached out to the police that I told them about it, because I felt like they shouldn't be kept in the dark about their daughter going to the police. I talked to my mom about it, but in our society in Vietnam there is certainly more shame and awkwardness around matters like this. She just became silent. We talked about it a bit more but the discussion was not in depth. She looked at it in a pretty conservative way. She thought that it was something that I did. That was really sad, so I never talked to her about it much after. She probably talked to my sister about it, but I don't know if she told my dad. Before I had told her,

she would keep asking why I had stopped spending time with him. That put a lot of pressure on me. I felt more and more guilt each time she brought it up. That's why I didn't tell them for so long.

**I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR STORY WITH ME, I KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT CAN BE TO TALK ABOUT. THAT IS WHY I AM SO HAPPY TO HEAR THAT YOU HAVE SUCH A GOOD SUPPORT SYSTEM. IT IS A BIG SHAME THAT YOUR FAMILY IS NOT A PART OF IT.**

But I really am just so grateful for that support system. Like, without it I wouldn't [exhales]... Without it I wouldn't make it this far.

**IT REALLY IS SO IMPORTANT AND IMPERATIVE...**

**TO CLOSE OFF, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY TO PEOPLE THAT ARE READING THIS, AND MAYBE TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ON THE FENCE ABOUT WHERE TO STAND ON THIS MATTER?**

I really just want to urge people to be more compassionate. It's a really difficult thing to go through and we just need to be sensitive. And for anyone that is not sure where to stand, I would gladly have a conversation with you and talk about my experience, so we can

get a better understanding of each other. And to the positive comments, I can never stress how thankful I am for you.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH.**

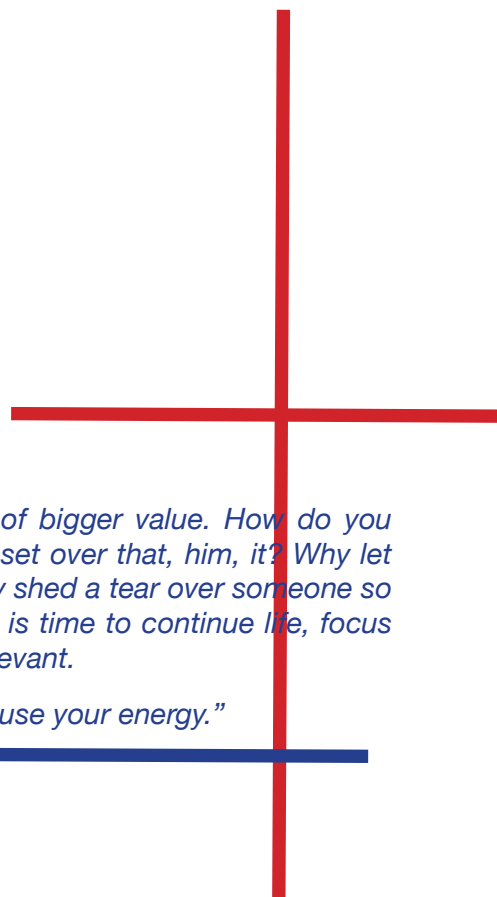
Cece can be found on Instagram @ changlolly or via email at daomchang@gmail.com



# SORRY, FOR DRAGGING YOU INTO THIS

BY BERDAN KAPLAN

I have no idea. I really don't. I feel for him. It is the same type of feeling I got when I saw that Samoyed dog, called Lucky, walking over the pavements of the Ponte Vecchio. It was the summer of 2015 and the careless feeling of immaturity was comfortably resting on my shoulders. Though, that feeling was not as burdensome as this one. This feeling was distant from Italy, Florence, and Lucky. A feeling I would normally judge my near ones for having.



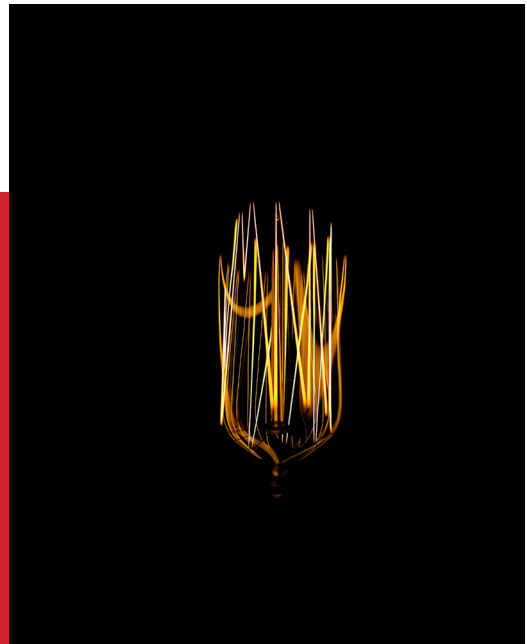
*"You are of bigger value. How do you get so upset over that, him, it? Why let your body shed a tear over someone so stupid? It is time to continue life, focus on the relevant."*

*Don't misuse your energy."*

Yet, that misuse is uncontrollable. Just as uncontrollable as the reaction your stomach generates whenever you see him. That igniting sensation of inevitable nerves made of hope, covered in a cocoon of joy. Correction, \*false hope.

*"It's not you, it's me."*

I guess I would describe false hope as one of the biggest issues of the first world. Don't get me wrong. False hope is beautiful in a way that, when you are the recipient, there is something intangible you can look forward to, something that one day might become tangible, or might never. Something you might be able to lose; a privilege that is only for people like you and me. Often we forget to be grateful for the fact that we are capable of losing valuable possessions we once won, tangible or intangible. We don't really need, nor sometimes even appreciate, those kinds of reminders in the times when our emotions are taking over the best of us. But this is all a natural process, something as incontrollable as those butterflies inside of you.



*"I'm not ready to commit."*

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Ouch. What was that sound? Not your heart, I hope. It is not that bad. Do you even know what real love is? No, you don't. Having a crush is different from being in love, and creating feelings is different from having them. So, you have no excuse to be sad. You have no excuse to feel heart-broken because you simply aren't. Why do you still seem unhappy? Because they didn't want to commit? You cannot force something that is not there. That is like pushing against a locked door that says 'pull'. The uselessness of it could not be described more vigorously. Although, take into consideration that, when pushing this door, your eyes are blinded, and the strength in your arms that keeps fighting to open it, stems from the toxic power of false hope. Even if you'd be

smart enough to pull the door, there is still something wrong. You don't see it, nor feel it, but it just won't work, I'm sorry.

*"I think it's best if we both go home."*

Did you just decide this for me? Oh, wait, this is your verdict. It affects me but I don't want to acknowledge it, and I probably won't any time soon. Maybe I will realize once you drop me off at my bike and give me a goodbye hug. The physical touch I was seeking, but with different intentions than I had anticipated. Goodbye? Don't be so dramatic. He didn't get launched into space. You will still see him, he even assured you. You will still be friends...

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*"I still don't know what I want."*



Textbook-perfect. Thank you. I guess that is all I wanted to hear. What I needed to hear? That's not important... for now. Just leave me being lost, wandering around. I know it will let me down sooner or later but for now it is only deferred pain. For now, let me find ease in a field of discomfort where my feelings have created an illusion of bliss. Remember those feelings, the ones that screwed you over?

*"Sorry, for dragging you into this. This writing. This speech.*

*It was nothing to me."*

**“WE ALL LIVE  
PARTIALLY IN  
REALITY AND  
PARTIALLY IN A  
WORLD OF  
MAKE-BELIEVE.”**

**— MARTY RUBIN**

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## ARTICLE 3 - BY MILAN WEBER

Pictures by Milan Weber



## ARTICLE 7 - BY SARA HAVERKAMP

Drawing by Sara Haverkamp

## ARTICLE 12 - BY LENA MINGZHU WEIBERLENN

A big thank you to Cece for sharing her story

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**“THERE ARE  
SUBTLE TRUTHS  
BURIED IN EVERY  
MAKE-BELIEVE. YOU  
NEVER KNOW  
WHERE YOU MIGHT  
FIND ONE.”**

**— SHARI ARNOLD, NEVERLAND**

**ace»**