

Lets talk about the

Elephant

in the room

ISSUE #2 - SPRING 2020

embrace

COLOPHON

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EDITOR IN CHIEF

@ACE

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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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UPCOMING EVENTS UITKOMING EVENTS

“Check out our brand new website for more information and ticket sales of these events! www.ifaace.nl”

12/03 – SOCIAL DRINK: PUB QUIZ

19/03 – IBCOM AWARDS

25/03 – THIRD GA

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02/04 – SOCIAL DRINK

03/04 – SGN DAY IN LEIDEN

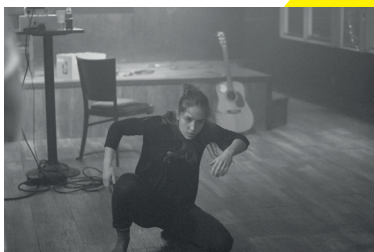
28/04 – 01/04 – DIVE FESTIVAL 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS
UITKOMING EVENTS

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Let's start off this issue with an intriguing question: "What do you find uncomfortable to talk about to others or on a public platform?". Probably, some topics came to your mind that are commonly uncomfortable, for many other people as well. This dynamic exactly is what births a taboo, *it is a mutual understanding amongst individuals to not bring up certain topics*. When you dig a little deeper into the first question I've asked, you can contemplate about why this topic seems so uncomfortable to talk about. Is it because you have

Some topics that we talk about freely nowadays are the result of people being catalysts for change. As is well known, there is a rather negative connotation to the word 'taboo', but why is that? Why is it not acceptable to keep hushing up these 'taboo topics'? Well, because they matter – to people's minds, their social ties, and the course of their lives. Moreover, hushing up taboo topics halts society in making progress in these respective departments. For example, people who do drugs or are drug addicts are not 'supposed' to

EDITOR IN CHIEF

@EDITOR IN CHIEF

accepted that it is a taboo topic, and you consider it as a regular feature of your social life to not bring it up? Or do you actually have the desire to talk about it, but are you scared of what other people might say about your 'improperness'? Of course, there are many more answers to these questions and there is no wrong or right one. However, no matter what your feelings towards certain taboos or breaking them are, one can clearly argue that taboos are social constructs.

talk about them because it's considered a taboo topic. Not talking about it then restrains these people from receiving the help that they need to change their habits, and it restrains others from informing themselves about this topic accurately. Movements or individuals who break the taboo, often by making a statement on a public or online platform, are making a change that will make society progress. This does not happen without backlash, criticism and scrutiny – therefore, some taboos have proven rather static and rigid over time.

Although it often seems like individuals who speak up about taboos find it hard to get their voice heard on a large scale, their efforts are not inferior to large social media movements like #metoo. Every big change starts small, and therefore the EmbrACE editorial team is tackling issues surrounding taboos in this second edition of EmbrACE 19/20. In this issue, we aim to challenge well-known taboos, as well as rather unconventional ones. *Sex, morality, expectations – let's discuss it all.* I, on behalf of the EmbrACE editorial team, motivate you as a reader to keep asking yourself questions on why these topics are taboos, and what can be done to break them.

EDITORIAL IN CHIEF EDITORIAL IN CHIEF

BY DANE VAN HEMERT



Dear ACE,

Now that the festive days of Christmas and New Years have long gone, and we are in full swing in the second half of our academic year already, it's time to reflect. I think there's only one sentence to sum up our feelings towards it being March already: "Where has time gone?!" Since our last reflection on all that ACE has been up to in the first edition of EmbrACE, in this second edition we would like to highlight some of the fond ACE memories of the past couple of months.

We started off the new decade in typical ACE tradition, with a Social Drink in Café Stalles! We enjoyed some good drinks and caught up with what

Then, the EXPO Committee kicked off their recruitment for DIVE Festival 2020 with a Pitch Night in Stalles. Several amazing artists showed their work, and the committee was able to talk to them about their thought process and connection to this year's theme of DIVE Festival: "Coming home, feeling home". We saw an intricate dance, a live music composer, singers with acoustic guitars, an artistic time-lapse video, and much more. The Pitch Night certainly was a good first taste of what we will get to see at the DIVE Festival in April!

In the third week of February it was the time to shine for our Career Committee with one of ACE's biggest events of the year: The ACE Career Days. We



everyone's been up to during their Christmas Break. To continue the fun, the Discovery Committee organized a Glow Golf event and at the end of January we hosted the Interfaculty Gala with our brother associations. Both events were great successes, and most importantly: a lot of fun! At the Gala, we certainly loved dressing up and dancing the night away with you guys.

We started off the month of February with our very own birthday party, the Dies Natalis of ACE. We turned 38 (gosh, we're old) and our hard-working committees congratulated us with tons of lovely speeches and presents. From candy jars to an "ABC-tje" to bouquets of flowers, ACE was definitely spoilt.

saw presentations from companies such as Microsoft, VICE, Maaspodium, Koninklijke Landmacht, PWC, and many more. Additionally, the programme included some educational and interactive workshops on skills such as Photoshop, Illustration and Public Speaking. We hope everyone took away something great from this event, whether that is a general idea of where you want to go in your professional career or even an internship at one of the visiting companies!

After months of excitement, we finally embarked on our Short Trip to Naples and Pompeii at the end of February. The group of participants was truly amazing, just like all the activities during

the weekend. We have eaten the some of the best pizza's in the world, climbed the volcano Vesuvius (some of us are still feeling the aftermath of it in our calves), wandered around the magical Pompeii, saw the sites and beautiful boulevard of Naples, and went on a very fun pub crawl. Only in Naples you find a 1 euro per drink Aperol Spritz Bar!

Now, whilst we love to reflect on these fond memories and live in the moment, it is also time to look at the future. Before we know it, we will be soaking up some (with the emphasis on some) vitamin D from the Dutch sun again and dreaming of our summer holidays. We as the 38th Board still have months to enjoy our board year, we are already

looking for the next board – it's never too early! For those interested, keep an eye out on our website and social media or stop by for a free coffee at our office.

We would like to thank all our committees, who have put such efforts into organizing fun, educational and career-related events, for their commitment to our beautiful association! And, we would like to thank all our members and participants of events for making ACE and her events what it is (which is awesome).

All the love,

The 38th Board of IFA ACE

Dané van Hemert, Kai Chen, Albert Jan van Dalen, Demi Heijboer



"IF YOU'VE BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED OR ASSAULTED WRITE 'ME TOO' AS A REPLY TO THIS TWEET".

In 2017 Alyssa Milano encouraged women to speak up about being sexually harassed or assaulted with the previous quote through the social media platform Twitter. Although **#me-too** is not as prominent today as it was in 2017, the issue is still present. The phrase "me too" was initiated by **Tarana Burke** in 2006, who wanted to spread awareness about the sexual harassment of African American women.

receive much attention, as the stereotype of men enjoying sex no matter how or where it happens is continuously reinforced. Both genders have trouble speaking up about the things that were done to them due to the fear of being judged, called a liar, or laughed at. People who never experienced something like that need to try to understand the feelings of the victim and offer support. Sadly, there are cases where wo-

"#METOO"

"#METOO"

"#METOO"

"#METOO"

Moreover, the actual hashtag appeared in 2017 when the Weinstein-Scandal became public.

#metoo was supposed to give women everywhere the strength to tell **their story** and raise awareness about the significant number of women suffering from sexual harassment. Resulting from the hashtag, women from all around the world started to tell their stories. As it was a taboo to speak up about sexual harassment for a long time, most people do not know how big the problem is. It is essential to acknowledge that the issue includes **both women and men**. The cases of men that were sexually assaulted often do not

men and men lie about being assaulted to receive attention. Still, the majority of people that speak up are stating the truth looking for help. Before accusing someone of lying, it should be thoroughly thought about in order not to hurt someone's feelings.

It is essential to let people talk about their story if it's using the **#metoo** or just having a conversation with a person they trust. Additionally, everyone has different boundaries, meaning different kinds of sexual assault can be either nothing to someone or hurt someone a lot. If someone is hurting, it is no one else's place to decide if they are damaged or not.

Twitter, as well as social media in general, was a big part of the spread of **#metoo**. Due to the internet's massive reach, it was possible to spread the message faster and all over the world.

Before, it was not possible to spread awareness about an issue that fast, and it can be seen how the hashtag helped society progressing. For instance, states are starting to offer more protection for their workers and ban nondisclosure agreements that cover sexual harassment. As most self-employed people have limited legal resources if they are harassed while working, legal matters are being improved.

If societies can make more progress and start acknowledging how many men and women are sexually harassed, more equality and safety can be ensured. Women and men who start speaking up are an active help in breaking this taboo and helping other victims see that they are **not alone**.



BY TABEA NORDHAUSEN

There are way too many cases of sexual harassment to read all of them, but while I was researching for my article, I came across one quote that stood out to me: ***"I feel that when you bring those dark things out into the light, they don't have any power anymore."*** This is a quote by Jill Marklin, a woman who was inspired to talk about her experiences by the #metoomovement. It highlights how the hashtag helped victims open up and gave them some of the power back they thought they have lost. Moreover, it is a compelling message that can help more victims tell *their story* to start healing.

I read this poem written by a Dutch tv-presenter Tim Hofman called “Over hoe bewuste millennials steevast vergeten dat er aan ieder lijntje coke een stukje Zuid-Amerikaans kinderlijkje kleeft”. This translates roughly to: “About how conscious millennials steadily forget that a piece of South-American child corpse sticks to every line of coke”. The poem is about how millennials and more importantly millennials who call themselves conscious call out someone who is not being ‘conscious’ enough in their eyes, but they do use a line of coke once in a while, without thinking of the consequences. Right now ‘being woke’ is a whole new lifestyle that has integrated among young adults. Being woke means that you are awake, that you are conscious of what is happening around you and in our society. The term got more meaning when activists started to use the term, saying that people needed to “stay woke”. Today, more and more people are saying that we have to become more woke in order to save the planet, but when is being woke, woke enough? Because calling people out on their not so conscious behaviour, but still participating in planet destructing acts, is that being woke or is that just you being a hypocrite?

WHEN IS WOKE, WOKE ENOUGH?

Shaming people for not being woke enough when at the same time participating in poor activities, just like the poem of Tim Hofman captures perfectly, is not conscious at all. So how can we talk about being woke, when in fact a lot of us are definitely not. Of course, there are people who are being as conscious as possible. But they are not acting conscious in order to be woke, they are acting like that in order to help our planet. I have seen someone getting all wound up about the Amazon bushfires saying that we have to change for our environment and to become more conscious, who two minutes later threw her trash on the streets. When I see something like that happening I feel like being woke is not about being conscious at all, it is just a label people give themselves for any little act to make themselves feel better. “Look at me shopping at a thrift store, I am so woke right now”, is not



the way to go. And more importantly it does not grant you permission to shame other people for not being as 'woke' as you are. But it is not just around me where I see this happening. The term 'woke' has been commercialized by companies as well. Companies see their chance to join in with a current trend to catch a bigger crowd. Because being woke is now used in so many different ways and by so many different people it loses its meaning. People are already saying that being woke is the new cool. Today someone 'acts' woke in order to be cool and a company 'acts' woke presumably in order to make more profit. To me this is not what being woke should be about.

If you would ask me about what I think being woke should be about, I would say that it is



WOKE FAMILIAR WAKE LIFE

BY LIZE VAN LOOIJ

not just about the name you give yourself for doing something good for the environment or the name you would not give to someone because he or she is in your eyes not conscious enough. To me it is especially about also seeing the good. It is about supporting what people are doing. For example, it is about praising the meatlovers that try to cut of meat and go meatless for one or two days a week, instead of shaming them for not even being vegan. And I think that in a world where so many people call themselves woke, more people should take this into account.

I don't want to be all negative, because it still is important that we are changing in order to become more conscious. However, the verb being woke is not going to make you any more or less conscious than you already are. Being woke is not going to change the world. Your acts are changing the world, not a label that people give themselves. So, can we please stop and call ourselves woke and just try to be better in our own way instead of demanding others to adopt your way of living. That way may work for some, but that does not say that it will work for everybody.

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I HOTO'S DI AGE





Imagine this: you're sitting in a theatre. On stage stands a man, dressed in a suit, probably wearing a hat. He's done some tricks showing how he can pull a white rabbit or dove from that hat, and now he's trying to get someone from the audience up on stage. A woman two rows in front of you volunteers and climbs upon stage. The magician asks her to close her eyes and places his hand atop of her head. Next thing you know, the woman's running around the stage, acting like she's a chicken.

If you were there, sitting in that audience, what would be your first thought? Probably something along the lines

The scenario scripted above is actually not an act. The woman was unable to lift up her leg. But not **just** because he said so. What the magician actually did was, by taking her hand and lifting her arm he shifted her weight to her right foot. Then he put his hand on her back, preventing her from shifting it back onto her left foot. Then he told her that she was unable to pick up her right foot. Because the woman **believed** that she was under hypnosis, she was.

"Hypnosis is primarily about convincing the subject that the hypnotist has control over everything. That's it."

THE TABOO ON HYPNOTHERAPY

of "Oh, that's probably someone he knows. They've agreed to do this before the show started" or "What an attention-junkie, running around acting crazy just to get a few minutes in the spotlight". And, in this case, you're probably right. But what if he hadn't convinced her to act like a chicken, but instead had done the following; he would've placed his hand on her head and told her to close her eyes. He tells her to shift her right foot. He then takes her hand and lifts her arm. He tells her that her leg is getting heavier and heavier, as if it feels like concrete. He says it's stuck to the ground. He then asks her to lift her leg and as if under hypnosis, she can't. What would you've thought about that? Would you've believed that?

This example above is a classic example of stage hypnosis, the kind that we see in the theatre just because it's entertaining to watch. You either are amazed by the capabilities of the hypnotist, or by the stupidity of the audience member he has called upon stage, thinking to yourself that you would never ever do that. But what if you were troubled by mental problems, and hypnotherapy might offer a solution to your problem?

You probably won't know a lot of people who have been or are involved in hypnotherapy. Why not? Because hypnotherapy is still seen as something scary, something "floaty" and Freudian, which makes it, in a lot of people's eyes, something like a taboo. It is not based on any solid or scien-

tific research, which, at least in the Netherlands, makes that the practice of hypnosis makes you a therapist, not a psychologist. I feel, however, like it should not be seen as this big, scary thing which we should avoid. I believe it is something to be welcomed and embraced in modern medicine, and something that we should talk about more as an option whenever people are in need of help.

Hypnosis is a state of mind in which the brain is open to learn things faster than it normally would. We often experience this in daily life, when we refer to this state of mind as “The Zone” of

When under hypnosis, you are completely aware of your surroundings, and you are in total control of yourself. The hypnotherapist guides you through your unconsciousness and helps you confront certain issues that you’ve been struggling with. For some people, one session with a hypnotherapist might already be enough to conquer their problem, like for example when people want to stop smoking. Deeper, psychological problems might, however, take somewhat longer. This is because, together with the hypnotherapist, you’ll have to figure out what the cause of your problem is. Psychological problems often stem from deeper

IMMOTIVATED

BY JOOSKE ARNOLDUSSEN

a “Flow State”. It means that you do things without thinking about them, like you’ve done them a thousand times already. Like breathing. Or when someone is talking to you while you’re texting someone else and when you’re done you realize you haven’t heard a thing they just said. If this happens to us naturally, then why would we think it’s scary whenever people help us do it? Is it because of the idea that we give somebody else control over ourselves and our unconsciousness? Because that idea is completely false. As stated before, hypnotherapy is about convincing the client that hypnotist has control - when actually the client themselves holds all power in their own hands.

issues, not directly visible at the surface. Therefore, it might be necessary to book a few more sessions. The therapist might, in those sessions, do a “regression”. This means that he will guide you back to a past, traumatic experience, and help you process it.

Hypnotherapy is not (yet) seen as a “real” form of psychological help, and I wonder why not. It might not have a rock solid, scientific background – but it has proven to be extremely helpful. The stigma and the stereotype that it is “floaty” or just something for “hippies” has been tackled by nearly everybody who have tried their hand at it. So, with that said, let’s all try to keep an open mind – after all, as long as it works, it works, right?

Both the concept of **taboo** and the word itself are surrounded by a mystical haze. The word doesn't feel familiar and it's clear that it does not originate in the English language. It was first noted relatively recently by Captain James Cook, a British explorer who in 1771 visited the Pacific island of Tonga and observed its people and traditions. There are many versions of the word **taboo** such as **tabu, tapu, and kapu** in different Polynesian languages. This exotic and mysterious word describes something that is either forbidden, sacred, consecrated, or dangerous. This only makes us wonder why, in particular, the indigenous, polytheistic, and traditional Polynesian cultures managed to develop such a strong sense of this concept?

In western, post-industrial societies **taboo** is often seen as something negative and outdated. Today people encourage one another to be open and speak up about things that previously would have been extremely private or considered inappropriate. For example, in the past homosexuality was a taboo, sometimes even considered an illness. Whereas now it is something widely accepted and absolutely normal. This is undoubtedly a positive change as breaking

ARE WE TAMING OUR INNER BEASTS

unhealthy stigmas and taboos can lead to a more honest society. I can imagine that for many of us this is a very personal topic. Coming from Poland, a country that doesn't allow same sex marriage it is extremely sad to see that not everyone is willing to give up these outdated taboos.

Now let's take a look at topics that were or still are commonly considered taboo, such as: homosexuality (fortunately no longer a taboo), incest, polygamy, murder, cannibalism, necrophilia, or drug consumption. All of these have one thing in common: **they are natural**. In other words, they occur in nature, animals do them probably without the slightest feeling of shame. There have





been many cases of same-gender sexual behaviours between animals such as ducks or giraffes, similarly incest and polygamy are present amongst mice, and monkeys. Murder and sometimes cannibalism are a natural part of a carnivore's life ensuring their survival. Finally, necrophilia has been observed in squirrels and drug consumption in deer (psychedelic mushrooms) or wallabies (opium).

So, what is a **taboo**, is it a desperate try to control our inner beast? Is it what makes us more human, more civilized? Does being human mean leaving the animal behind or can the two coexist?

We could argue that 'leaving the beast behind' is quite a common pattern in

OUR INNER BEAST

BY LARA DOMARAZKA

the history of humanity. As societies developed into more and more advanced and organized, people left their animalistic habits behind. As an example, let's look at the conflicts between Christians and Vikings in the 8th and 9th century. Christian kingdoms such as Britain or France were both technologically and socially developed. They considered pagans to be uncivilized, and inhuman. In comparison to the Christians, Vikings weren't a developed society, their life was more nature oriented which brought them closer to their 'animalistic side'. The process of Christianization was not only a change of religion but a change in lifestyle that pushed societies from their initial needs and instincts such as killing and reproducing to more highbrow, civilized ways which included morality systems, education or art. With the development of societies humans strayed further away from their initial 'beast'.

Similarly, being able to control your inner animal became a huge aspiration in the middle ages. People believed that if they repressed their earthly desires and instincts, they would have been

rewarded for it in Heaven. Individuals would, for example, avoid indulging in sex because of a higher reason, in this case God. The taboos came from within the constructed society creating systems and rules that enabled control. Animals don't have these kinds of systems.

Sigmund Freud has a lot to say about this social construct in his book *Totem and Taboo*. He claims that incest and killing a totem animal (patricide, matricide) are the most prominent taboos. They are also however the needs of a primal man, something that deep inside we all want but simply deny it (Oedipus complex). These needs can be dealt with through the process of socialisation. In other words, they become less and less visible the more advanced the society is. The human inside of us is able to dominate the beast. However, because we all originated from primitive cultures, no matter how technologically and socially advanced we will become, the Oedipus complex will remain our basis.

The Oedipus complex is a very tricky theory, if we were to simplify it, it would go more or less like this: *Every boy unconsciously desires his mother and has an urge to murder his father.* If the boy claims that this is not true, Freud says he is in denial. So, no matter if the subject agrees or disagrees with this claim, the theory is confirmed. We can see why such an unsettling topic could be a taboo. Personally, I think Freud goes too far with his ideas. Every boy might feel a very intense bond with his mother and an urge to compete with his father, however putting it in terms of sexual desire and murder is probably an exaggeration.

It is no surprise that Freud's theories have been heavily criticized as he ta-

kes a rather strong stand in the topic of not only taboos but also humanity's needs and inventions. Even though, the truth might not be as morbid as Freud puts it or maybe not even close to his vision, I'd like to encourage you to ask yourself: Are you taming your inner beast?



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"Whenever a taboo is broken, something good happens, something vitalising. Taboos after all are only hangovers." - Henry Miller



NAME: Noah Vink

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"Small minds discuss people, average minds discuss events, great minds discuss ideas that go beyond their own reality."

23



NAME: Laura Slee

AGE: 20

STUDY: IBCOM

"Taboo is relative"

**MEET THE COMMITTEE
MEET THE COMMITTEE**

Before you read this, I would like to say that this situation deals with a taboo that is not conventional in the sense that many experience this, but is rather something I witnessed growing up. I also just wanted to talk about a topic that I think doesn't get brought up enough. Finally, I am not shaming anyone for their life choices. The scenario I am describing was the right path for many people I knew, while for me it would have been the complete wrong decision.

I attended High School in a small town in the American state of Michigan. It's the kind of place where everyone is just a little **too** polite and nothing extraordinary ever really happens. As a student, you are expected to have chosen your dream university at the age of 12 and do everything in your power to be accepted. Once attending this school, surrounded by people who you've known since the first grade, you will then

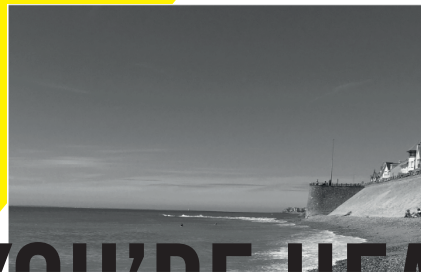
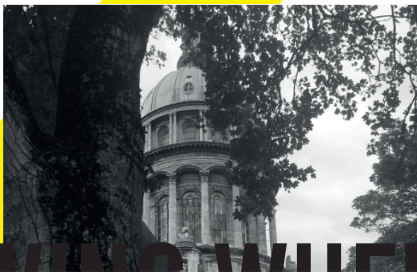
OF HAPPINESS AND NOT QUITE K OF HAPPINESS AND NOT QUITE KNOWING WHERE YOU'RE HEADED

continue on to major in something like Business Administration, meet your significant other, get married, move back to your hometown, have children, retire and play bingo until the end of your days. Of course, I am exaggerating a **little**. But, honestly, the process is more or less like this and, to me, it always sounded a bit like a nightmare. I did not want to stay in this town for my entire life, nor did I have the faintest idea of what I wanted to study. So, I decided upon something a little more reasonable: rather than risking the scenario of choosing a course and

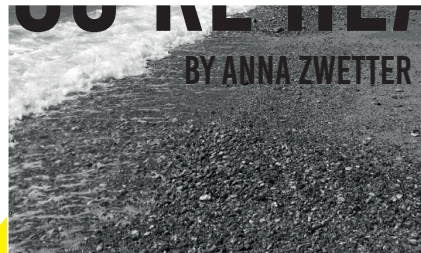
quitting after half a year, I applied for a gap year. While the concept of taking a break after finishing High School is popular throughout Europe, in the United States, at least in smaller towns, it is a completely foreign concept to many. "Oh wow, that's **so** interesting!" is the false response I got from many of my classmates when I told them that I wanted to spend a year volunteering and living with people of intellectual disabilities in France. In contrast to their seemingly enthusiastic words, their face expressions said it all: people could not understand why

in the world I would waste a year of my life volunteering when I was perfectly capable of starting my student life. Why would I do something so out of the ordinary when I was supposed to have my whole life planned out down to what I would be having for lunch on September 27, 2029. *But, I did not have my life figured out at age 17. In fact, I felt nothing but the urge to have experiences, do something worthwhile and go to sleep at night knowing that I was*

valuable life and “adult skills” that I did not have previously, but I also learned a lot about who I am as a person and what I am capable of. I don’t mean this in that cliché *I found myself* way that many people mention in combination with doing work and travel in Australia, but more in the sense of a newfound self-confidence and appreciation for my own ability to handle stressful situations. Whether it was keeping a cool head trying to resolve a conflict bet-



NOVEMBER WHERE YOU’RE HEADED! NOVEMBER WHERE YOU’RE HEADED!



happy. Rather than worrying about the fact that I didn’t know what I wanted my life to entail, I figured that this gap year could also prove useful in coming to a conclusion on this topic. So, I packed my bags and headed to the rainy north of France and embarked on a journey that ended up being the best decision of my life.

Not only was I able to learn the French language (which, believe me, I never thought I would while spending years trying to memorize verb conjugations in various tenses), but I can truly say that this gap year not only taught me

between two people or training new volunteers who arrived after myself, I realized that I was finally able to accept responsibility and radiate confidence, even in a language that was not my own. Finally, arguably the most important benefit of this whole adventure was the sense of community that I felt for the first time in my life. I was living in an environment where differences did not matter; but rather, if you showed kindness, it would be reciprocated, no matter what. Of course, as with everything in life, certain days sucked and sometimes the work was mentally straining, but, now,

after two years, I have come to realize that I would not trade this experience for anything.

Now, you may be wondering, as a second year Arts & Culture Studies student, have I come to a conclusion on where my life is headed and what I want to do? The answer is no. In fact, I have no idea. I have my interest in the arts and my dream of writing and publishing a fiction book, but other than that my future is still wide open. I can never give an answer to that common question of “where do you see yourself in 5 years?” that an extended relative you don’t quite know asks during a seemingly never-ending family gathering. I don’t know where I would like to live, whether I ever want to get married, how many kids I want or how I will spend my retirement. Of course, these are things that I think about on occasion, but I always come to the same conclusion: I like that I have nothing planned. Not only does it lower expectations and keep things interesting, but it also reminds me that I am open to any experiences or future career, as long as I am doing something that I enjoy and that I can say that I am happy. Because what is life, even with money and success, if you aren’t happy?

I have noticed, especially in the past few years, that young people from our generation face an immense amount of pressure, both from others and themselves, on their decisions as to what they would like to do with their lives. I also feel that this is a topic that is rarely talked about, which can cause feelings of isolation for individuals, like me, who are unsure of where their lives are headed. Some of the values that are constantly brought up in the society we know include getting a good job where you can work hard and make money.

But, the value of doing something to further your own happiness, which I wholeheartedly stand behind, is mentioned much less frequently. *As I see it, it is up to us, the newer generations, to challenge this societal paradigm by choosing experiences for our own sake and own happiness, even if they may be frowned upon by the general public.*

And even if that choice ends up being completely wrong, at least we’ll know that we made it for ourselves and not for anyone believing in an unrealistic, one size fits all expectation of what creates a productive, purposeful future.

MEET THE COMMITTEE



NAME: Jooske Arnoldussen

AGE: 19

STUDY: IBCOM

"Nothing is really a taboo until you make it one"



NAME: Anna Wivel Bouchard

AGE: 20

STUDY: IBCOM

"Anything someone could get mad at me or yell at me for doing (which is what makes it such fun)"

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NAME: Lara Domaradzka

AGE: 18

STUDY: International Bachelor Arts and Culture Studies

"Taboo is a small element of what makes us human"



NAME: Lize van Looij

AGE: 19

STUDY: International Bachelor of Communication and Media

"Nothing is taboo if you have an angle on it"

The world we live in one which is changing rapidly, with people being the driving force of this change and demanding things such as equality and improvement of the environment. Although these changes are intended to be positive, some of the traits being exhibited in those demanding change, can be considered fairly toxic. It has become nearly taboo to call out these toxic traits because the initial behaviour is considered to have positive intentions. If one were to go against these views or point out an inconsistency or flaw, they are labelled as a far-right conservative who are against these positive changes, even if they too have positive intentions behind their actions.

Let's begin with body positivity, as this example is fairly straightforward if there is still confusion as to what this article entails. As many have seen, modern media has been undergoing a major change due to the body positivity movement, which pushes for the inclusion and acceptance of **ALL body types**. As the passive ag-

THE HYPOCRISY OF POSITIVITY

gressive ALL above suggests, this movement has had some negative consequences. Since this movement began women of varying shapes and sizes have been included in media, there has been a decline in women trying to reach an unattainable body standard and less scrutiny towards those who do not reflect these unattainable standards. Sadly, however, this has led to scrutiny and rude comments being made to skinny girls instead. In short, telling a large girl to eat less is no different than telling a skinny girl to eat more. Body positivity is about the inclusion of all body types and all sizes, which (not surprisingly) should include the

skinnier girls or those with a smaller clothing size. This movement's core value is the idea that all should be accepted no matter what they look like, which has been twisted by certain plus-sized models and the public as: the acceptance of plus-sized girls. Taking this core value and twisting it to that point of view takes away the initial message. By that virtue, those who disguise themselves as 'body positive' individuals but still make comments to skinnier girls on their appearance, aren't 'body positive', they are merely taking an 1950s view on body image and switching who is being criticized.

[illegible]

BY ANNA WIVEL BOUCHARD

were labelled at the time, these extremists are turning the tables and saying, or acting as though women should be or are the “better sex” even if superiority was never in the question. They are twisting a positive message and creating an “eye for an eye” narrative surrounding revenge or payback towards a whole gender, rather than the small proportion who are actually responsible for supporting male or their own entitlement. Furthermore, some feminists tend to criticize women who choose to stay at home or enjoy “girly things” and criticize men in high positions, since all of these traits are considered gendered. However, when reviewing the feminist ideals, this shouldn’t be the case. Equality includes not being judged for the paths you choose in life or for not encountering shortcomings due to factors you cannot control. Hence when a “feminist” criticizes men or women or believes in the superiority of one gender, they are merely creating a new strand of sexism.

Humans have the tendency to judge others based on action, but themselves based on intention, a trait which is seen most clearly when looking into the environmental crisis. The environmental crisis is one which is very hard to be helpful in as the large producers of CO2 and global governments are the ones who can make truly significant changes. Although, people still try to do little things in order to help out like becoming vegan, using less plastic and not supporting creators of **fast fashion**. There are those, however, who encourage environmentalist behaviour, but do little to nothing to help and merely have good intentions. Being “devastated” about the amount of animals who get tortured and killed to make meat but still eating a burger, or believing that CO2 levels should decrease but still buying all the latest fashions and driving a car when you can isn’t supporting the environment, its killing it. Good thoughts and conversations about the improvement of our planet raises awareness about the

issue, but does little to resolve it. Complaining that Amazon didn’t donate enough towards the bush fires when you didn’t donate anything doesn’t help the situation, actions help situations. By that standard, those who consider themselves environmentalists yet do little to nothing to help the planet, are another example of individuals trying to create positive change, but have yet to make a change in their lives which truly helps this issue for the better.

I too have committed some of the things mentioned above because I did not notice the toxic aspect of these action and merely followed what everybody else was doing. By virtue, this article is not meant to put anybody down, it’s meant to show how sometimes we as a society make mistakes and interpret things wrongly. Even though humanity is far from perfect it is still our job to try improve living standards and fight for what is right, and not get what is right confused with what everybody else is doing.





NAME: Dane van Hemert

AGE: 22

STUDY: IBCOM

'Taboos are nothing but social constructs.'



NAME: Maud Dik

AGE: 21

STUDY: International bachelor of Arts & culture studies

"Taboos can break"



NAME: Tabea Marie Nordhausen

AGE: 19

STUDY: IBCOM

"Taboos are always debatable"

**MEET THE COMMITTEE
MEET THE COMMITTEE**

When I think about taboo, the first thing that pops into my head is, obviously, sex. It has a private, fun and a naughty connotation to me. Slowly the topic is becoming less burdened with taboo though. One example is Lize Korpershoek, a Dutch filmmaker and columnist, made a documentary on her own sexuality and its limitations. How it is in violation to western sex 'standards', in specific regarding women and what is expected of them. In "my sex is broken" she takes a deep look why she feels constrained to have sex with her boyfriend. The result is an intimate and vulnerable Lize who might make you

school it couldn't have done any harm to get a little bit more education and discussion on it. It is so easy to feel a bit ashamed about your body, libido or whatever. Or to not be 'normal' in your sex and its development, could maybe even be the worst taboo.

To illustrate how differentiating the constructs are I asked my friends their definition of sex.

F1: "To me sex is everything from foreplay till orgasm including penetration. So, if I don't penetrate the girl I wouldn't have had sex."

DEFINITION OF SEX

feel less embarrassed about your own sexual appetite. However, her film did spark infamous critique from older white men who thought it to be too private and they disagreed that she should take the public with her under the sheets.

So, that only highlights the importance of discussion and I asked my friends if they wanted to talk with me about their experiences and thoughts on sex. They were very open and so many interesting things came up. It made me think: do we want sex to be as easily discussed as the weather? It's nice to have your friends and give each other some advice. In high

F2 and F3 both agree that sex does not have to include penetration and just oral sex is sex too. To them sharing the intimacy and satisfying each other, really satisfying, already defines sex. Would this make more sense? Or does it mean that when two girls have sex they would never technically lose their virginity. Lize also discusses the topic of 'deflowering' in her documentary. She is in conversation with a sexologist and she explains that if you are too young (i.e. not ready) to have sex, you might develop your sexuality in a 'wrong' way. The mindset of young girls can be programmed in such a way that the most important thing of sex is pleasuring the other because

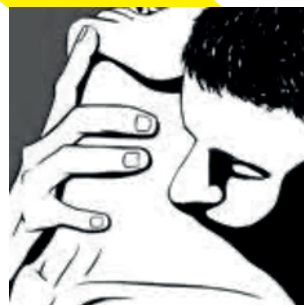
they are afraid of being rejected. Or because they don't know what they want. Although, I don't think this necessarily needs to be true, it does raise the issue of the pressure of having sex and losing your virginity. As my friend nicely put it: "to get it over with". A lot of people, now, have sex or at least they claim to. It is everywhere and you can't get around it. To not have sex or not wanting to is simply not discussed/mentioned. There is this perfect heteronormative image of sex, which is reestablished in your typical Hollywood film where a guy and a girl having sex and the scene being over when the guy has orgasmed. Fortunately the standards are



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BY LAURA SLEE

changing, I'd say let's talk with your friends more often and check out the following programs to get inspired: *the "sekszusjes"* and *"Emma's peepshow"* on Youtube, and of course *Sex Education* on Netflix.



A book review of 'De Meeste Mensen Deugen' by Rutger Bregman

Between all required reading for your courses, do you ever read a book that completely blows your mind? Most of the time, this happens to me when reading a fiction story. I love to get lost in fantasies and characters, but this time I fell in love with a non-fiction book. And to be honest, before reading it, I had the lowest expectations of it. The title didn't appeal to me at all. It was too idealistic and vague, which made me consider it as naïve. Howe-

explain to you why I find this book so groundbreaking.

As I said, the title didn't speak to me at all. I found it almost annoying. Why would you state something like that? Well, to trigger obviously, because it made me read the book anyway. I heard from the writer, Rutger Bregman, before. He studied history at the University of Utrecht (just like me) and works for 'the Correspondent': a Dutch journalism platform with no advertisements that promote thorough research pieces rather than 'quick news'. However, I

THE ULTIMATE TABOO. THE ULTIMATE TABOO. THE

THE ULTIMATE TABOO: MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD

A BOOK REVIEW OF 'DE MEESTE MENSEN DEUGEN' BY RUTGER BREGMAN

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ver, my friend made me listen to the first chapter of the book as a podcast version during a car ride. And since we had nothing better to do, I agreed to it.

And yes, I was triggered. But still, the book was so big and I had barely any time left to read next to my courses. However, fate kicked in with Christmas break around the corner as well as my birthday. I got the book from my brother and I ignored my deadlines, with Christmas as the perfect excuse.

I picked it up and I didn't put it down until it was finished. And I felt my world broadened, life got lighter and I got brighter. Does this sound lame?

I double dare you to read: 'De meeste mensen deugen' (something like 'All people are good') by Rutger Bregman. For the internationals: this title will soon be translated. Read on and I will

always perceived this platform as a bit elitist because of the academic language and the very long articles. Therefore, I also judged the book of Rutger Bregman that way. I expected it to be a 'too far from my bed show'. But after I heard the first chapter of the book as a podcast, I was reconsidering my prejudices.

The book started with a scene London close to the start of WWII. The city was in danger. Leaders were concerned about the city being the biggest target and their biggest fear was that panic would break out among the people. What they thought was that in emergencies, human civilization will downgrade. The real nature of human beings would be visible again and they would turn into wild animals, trying to save their lives. But when the bom-

blings started, the opposite seemed to be true. Instead of mass hysteria, a vagarious calmness took over the people of London. Several historical sources point out that the inhabitants were not afraid. The expected traumatized victims and mental breakdowns were nowhere to be found. The British society seemed to, instead of breaking down, become stronger and more connected in time of crisis. And according to Bregman, this resilience is part of the true human nature.

not argue that the world today is good. How could it be, while horrible things like genocide and murders are happening every day? Instead, he offers a thorough analysis of human behavior (now and in history). He argues, simply put, that *Western civilization is built on the assumption that people are bad and that they are lazy.* That they need a ruler, a leader, to guide them the way. That we always assume the worst in people, instead of the best. That we create in this way a self-fulfilling prophecy. Does he give a clear reason for

IF MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD IF MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD

BY NOAH VINK

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Bregman announces that he is going to argue a controversial idea. *He proclaims that it is an idea that rulers and people of power have despised for years. An idea that the media do not cover and have been denied in our whole human history.* An idea that can be supported by every discipline in science. This idea is that most people are good. By framing this statement in a mysterious way, as an 'unrevealed secret', he intrigues and prepares the reader for a 472-page bookwork. A bookwork that didn't just make me feel good for a moment, but offered a whole new vision on human history and human beings.

The title of the book implies not only that humans are good, but that therefore the world we live in is also good. In that way, it provokes opposition and dissatisfaction, but Bregman does

why awful things happen in this world? In my opinion, his argumentation around this question is satisfactory. Even though humans are good, it is also in their nature to feel connected to the ones that are most like them. And this has a result they treat the ones that are not like them with distant and suspicion. Because the assumption is that humans are bad, especially the ones that are not exactly like you.

Bregman discusses several scientific studies from all disciplines, from archeology to psychology and from politics to biology. His arguments support his statements seamlessly, but even more impressive is his way of storytelling. Instead of boring, dry language, the reader is taken on a journey. Something I can appreciate since I sometimes get sick of the use of aca-

democratic language (which is often not even necessary to explain something clearly). It hands the reader a mirror of today's society and what it is built on. Yes, there is a lot wrong with our world today, but he shows us that the pure nature of human beings is not like our world today. *It is the system that is fucked up, not human beings themselves* (and yes you could argue this too, but read the book first).

But changing the system is a whole new story. Bregman states that this is done by starting with yourself. Instead of distrusting humans and always expecting the worst of them, you should try to do the opposite. He states ten amendments to live by to change this in your life. Easier said than done I would say, but that doesn't exclude the fact that this book offered me a revolutionary new worldview, which might be too idealistic for some people, but gives me more hope and strength than the usual 'the earth is going down and we all going to die soon'-thinking.

The theme of this issue 'Taboo' made me instantly think about this book. Bregman's story explains perfectly why people are convinced about their own destruction and wickedness. *We base our self-image on what we are fed: stories about how humans are inextricably bad.* News about wars, murders, and psychopaths on the loose. Rewards for working harder (because without rewards we would be lazy). Punishment if we do not obey the law instead of offering actual help. Our system is built on the misunderstandings about human nature. And this book is the start of a revolution on how we think about ourselves.

How would it help us to get any further if we would think about ourselves as wicked, hopeless and destructive? *Yes, maybe wicked, hopeless and destructive things are happening in the world right now. But isn't this only the truth because we accept what we think we deserve?* It is easy to accept this bad world as it is when you believe in the wickedness of human nature. It will cost hard work to commit to the idea that humans are good because it means you have to work to change the world we live in now and in which the main belief remains that humans are inclined to the worst inside of them. But I am prepared to be called an idealist and see the good in people. And the book 'De meeste mensen deugen' made me see realize this. Go read it people and be ready to be called naive, because change is not going to come any other way.

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