

\*ART IN CONTEXT\* -CHARITY-

## INDEX

- 1 Ben Zegers**
- 3 Saša Karalić**  
Introduction
- 7 Jouke Kleerebezem**  
Towards a literacy of needs
- 13 Jeroen Boomgaard**  
The gifting artist
- 17 Alina Ozerova**  
Change blood for breast-milk
- 27 Dorota Sliwonik**  
Priscilla Pinze, Santa and the Deutsche Bank
- 33 Francesca Burattelli**  
The Agony of Charity
- 37 Hortense Lauras**  
I am a daughter of the church
- 43 Jakob Ehrlich**  
It takes the night to see the stars
- 48 Lukas Varady-Szabo**  
The Tribe
- 55 Mie Frederikke Fischer Christensen**
- 63 Mikel Orfanos**  
Zakat
- 71 Naomi van Dijck**  
Learned Helplessness,  
personal control in the age of theory
- 75 Nicola Godman**  
Chère Florentine
- 85 Rick van de Dood**  
An anomalism on the concept of giving
- 91 Victorine van Alphen**  
Self I Sing

'Art in Context' is an extra-curricular Honours Program Pilot initiated by Saša Karalić two years ago at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy.

Discussing the content of the program at the time, immediately questions emerged about the name 'Art in Context'.

*"It seems to be rather general. Is there any art without context? Does it exist? Can it? Could it?"*

*No. But the program aims to connect directly to social aspects.*

*Shouldn't it be called 'Art in Society' then? But then again, is there any art without society?"*

*No. No. Such a name wouldn't be any less general. Besides, it isn't only about society. It would be focussing on the development of art as both theory and practise intertwined program to begin with.*

*Doesn't the entire Rietveld education intend to do so?"*

*Sure. But 'Art in Context' wants to start from a subject out of the Rietveld-realm, that is to say: It doesn't depart from an 'autonomous' angle but from a topic, an issue in 'the real world'.*

*Aha, what is this issue then?"*

*It's money, to start with.*

*Wow, crisis, a tough one. A hot item nowadays, certainly in relation to the current conditions in which the arts are situated lately. How to deal with this issue?"*

*Mind you, it is not going to be about the Art Market. It will research economical systems. First we focus on the Stock Market on the one hand, and next on Charity on the other.*

*Opposites: Give and take nah?"*

*Art for real!"*

*Is it an expensive program or is it cheap?"*

*It depends on the way you look at it.*

*Oh, you mean the context, I suppose?"*

*Uh-huh. Check it out. It's a good investment.*

*Could we interpret this program as a typical Rietveld-approach of the so-called 'Beroepsvoorbereiding'?"*

*Yes, I guess. If you like.*

*Okay, well...let's go for it. Let's start from context and see what happens."*

**Ben Zegers** Dean Bachelor of Arts & Design  
Gerrit Rietveld Academie.

## INTRODUCTION

Art practice, independent from how free it seems to be, doesn't exist in outer space but is defined by social, economical and political circumstances in which it operates. This doesn't count only for what we call 'political', 'engaged' or 'useful' art, but also for the highly autonomous art practice. Even if art refrains from talking about or commenting on society (by society I mean here both social institutions, and rules and morals carried out by a general consensus), society will always, and inevitably, comment on art and try to fit it within the generally accepted social norm. This is particularly visible in the recent development of the public's view on art, where, following the logics of knowledge economy, art has been issued a restraining order. Art practice and, increasingly education is nowadays supposed to be 'efficient', 'excellent' and to possess a 'market visibility' in order to fit the needs and ideals of the current economical model. In my opinion, art practice cannot allow itself to ignore this and should coin new strategies that will keep it open, independent, equally informed and engaged within its social context. As philosopher Felix Guattari suggests, each work of art must have a 'double finality': 'Firstly to insert itself into a social network which will either appropriate or reject it, and secondly to celebrate, once again, the Universe of art as such, precisely because it is always in danger of collapsing.'<sup>1</sup>

Art in Context, a new extra curricular program of the Gerrit Rievelde Academy, tries to do precisely this – it offers to students a chance to place their work within particular social contexts and to generate knowledge and experience in addressing and confronting parameters of social involvement. While addressing a social context, students deal not only with constraints and rules of that context, but also with the functioning and the position of their work within a larger framework. This enables them to foresee the effect of their actions and to prepare for their post-academy practice – they are invited to use their work as a means for questioning and re-imagining the state of social

and political affairs. This is not to happen only through usage of art as a merely observative critical tool, but also through creating a mutual ground between art and social sphere where direct exchange is made possible. Art and social are not to be reconciled here but to be brought into a continuous tension.<sup>2</sup>

In this process, the use of theory plays an important role. First of all, students are invited to approach and process theory as information, which stands in the base of our analytical understanding of society. Theory is understood here not as an explanation of what we see or are ought to do, but as an important and ever-changing individual and collective introspection. Secondly, students are encouraged to use theory in a practical way: as a starting point or perhaps even as an integral part of their work. During the program, they are stimulated to read, research and produce theoretical texts and to connect them to their visual work. Striking the balance between the two is a continuous and, we believe, a rewarding struggle in strengthening the position, effect and functioning of their art practice in society.

In order to directly engage with relevant social aspects, Art in Context works on a particular topic throughout the year. The topics are chosen to be both specific and open enough to invite and integrate different approaches by the students. The pilot version of the program in spring 2012 was concerned with the context of the stock market, where students worked for two months with Euronext (the Amsterdam stock Exchange) under guidance of their tutors. Several students have chosen to produce works in a direct collaboration with employees of Euronext, while others offered an individual view on both the general subject and the context. The pilot was concluded in May 2012 with an exhibition, an opening performance/lecture at the Gymzaal of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. This year's edition of the program (2012/2013) is concerned with the topic of Charity. The research on this topic started with Oscar Wilde's

text from 1891 *'The soul of Man under Socialism'*, in which he claims that “the proper aim is to try and reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible”, and, “charity degrades, demoralizes and creates a multitude of sins”. This critical view on charity was challenged during group discussions and contrasted against students' views on the topic where their individual understanding of charity gradually became the main source of further research and works produced in the class. In order to broaden the topic, guest lecturers were invited during the first semester to offer their view on charity. In October 2012, Jean-Jacques Suurmond, a Protestant pastor, theologian and columnist for newspaper Trouw, gave a lecture on the Christian view on charity and its historical background. His lecture produced a lively discussion and many questions by students, all of which could not be answered but marked the students' texts and works they produced afterwards. This discussion with Art in Context students led Jean-Jacques Suurmond to dedicate his next column to it – ‘Caritas doet ons perspectief veranderen’ (‘Caritas changes our perspective’) appeared in the Trouw on 20 November 2012.

In December 2012, art historian and curator Alena Alexandrova was invited to give a lecture on charity from a philosophical perspective. As a preparation for the lecture, Alexandrova asked students to read extracts from Jacques Derrida's *'Given Time, Chapter 4: Counterfeit Money: Gift and Counter-gift, Excuse and Forgiveness'*. The text was discussed and later connected to the students' first attempt to produce visual works concerning charity.

These are just a few examples of the input that the students were offered during this year – they were continuously given theoretical and visual examples by their regular tutors and stimulated to read, research and make that research instrumental and tangible through their visual works.

This year's edition of Art in Context is concluded with a presentation/exhibition, and its first publication (which you read now). It's important to note that this publication, even though it is presented during the exhibition, is not an exhibition catalogue. The texts and images appearing in this publication are extensions of the works or function independently from them – they are theoretical and visual attempts of the students to expand the topic and their work by using a publication format. Thus, this publication comprises an effort to unpack and understand the complex topic of charity and to leave behind marks of collected knowledge. In time, we aim to produce a series of publications covering important social topics that will serve as a useful document for the whole Gerrit Rietveld Academy community.

Finally, I wish to thank all Art in Context students, whom contributed to the program with their enthusiasm and dedication – especially students whom also joined the pilot version and continued to contribute and involve themselves in our now common task. I hope that the experience they gained will resonate in their future practice.

April 2013

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<sup>1</sup> Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, Indiana University Press, 1995

<sup>2</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells – Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London, Verso, 2012



## TOWARDS A LITERACY OF NEEDS

The one spin-off from Occupy Wall Street that really fires the imagination is the Rolling Jubilee ('RJ') strike debt project. 'Strike Debt' itself is a debt resistance movement and non-profit organization, aiming to free the '99%' of their indebtedness to the '1%'. Strike Debt provides a 'bail-out of the people by the people': a 'clean slate' for the debts that people entered into, to cover prime needs such as medical care; education; housing. RJ raises funds to purchase debts in order to erase them. Crowd funding supplies the necessary capital to buy debts, at an average of 5% of the original debt value.<sup>1</sup> Banks and other institutional lenders put together anonymous hard to collect loan portfolios to sell them to debt collectors. Consequently, RJ cannot choose their beneficiaries, e.g. on the basis of individual urgency. Their only selection is for the kind of debt – typically for medical costs – and for geographic areas known to have particularly suffered recession. After Strike Debt has opened the portfolio, it surprises the debtors that it contains by abolishing their debts. This intervention in the shadowy debt trade market is a fine example of the '99%' movements wit and creativity. Within a couple of months, as the result of one major fund raising event, it collected almost 600.000 dollars to abolish nearly 12.000.000 dollars of debt.<sup>2</sup>

Purchasing debt, in order to erase it, is no standard financial industry procedure. Buying debt at 5% of its original value, in order to collect with a profit, is an example of 'trading in people's misfortune', as Rolling Jubilee puts it. Debt trade introduces new collectors with a fresh commercial interest in getting the debtor to pay off, ready to aggressively go after their gain. Meanwhile, by selling their claims the original lenders protect themselves against opposition that could be a risk to their financial product's original conditions. Debt trade destroys contracts between two parties who might otherwise be obliged to settle on new terms. RJ supports the idea that debts are 'but' a promise under negotiable exchange conditions. The project grants people not to be able to live up

to their financial commitments, under circumstances. It supplies the possibility of genuine 'jubilee' debt erasure, to expose the workings of the market for financial commodities. In ancient times the Jubilee was a special year of universal pardon. In the book of Leviticus, a jubilee year is known to occur every fifty years, when slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven and the mercies of God would be manifest.<sup>3</sup> This is where the project found its name; Rolling Jubilee not only erases debts and disputes the commodification of needs, it also opposes the guilt and shame associated with the inability to pay off a debt, created under conditions that could never be renegotiated.

RJ is a social political statement that could inspire new takes on charity. The project depends on people's benevolence and generosity towards an underprivileged other, but its cause is as much political as it is charitable. Therefore a contribution becomes a political act. While RJ might not directly undermine the mechanisms of consumption that bring debt, it is an intervention in the heart of the credit system. It demonstrates how analysis, critique and action can mutually inform and enforce one another. Traditional charities apply the rhetoric's of doing good to fight global pain. They scarcely contribute to a discussion of the underlying causes of such suffering, nor do they relate it to the privileges of the do-gooders. Traditional charities present suffering as 'exotic': the result of circumstances completely different from our own, whether geographically, politically and economically or other. They situate needs 'far away from our own beds' as a Dutch saying has it. Consequently, supporting those charities isolates both doing good and fighting for the prevention of these needs. RJ connects the fortunate who can still spare some money to the unfortunate (those not being able to live up to a financial burden), by rendering visible a political economical situation, which equally affects both benefactor and beneficiary.

Traditional charity is in denial of the economic and political systems that are at the root of needs, or at least ignorant about cultural systems that attribute value to material and immaterial properties, alien to our own value system. With the global marketplace's complex inequity of shortage in one place and surplus in the other, with a just doubt about whether we are capable of judging another man's needs while we hardly understand the nature of our own deficiencies, with a suspicion that we might have either contributed to the other's underprivileged situation, or risk to aggravate it with our very support ...doing 'good' is hardly self-evident. Most certainly it is not a matter of a simple redistribution of financial means. Goods that no one in the world should have to be lacking are not financial to begin with: they are not capital, loans, insurances – but clean water and food, hygiene, medicine, a home, knowledge, and labour. These assets form a proper ecology, while a shortage of one immediately affects the availability of another or several of the others. Chain effect shortage definitely has an economical backlash, but its relief depends as much on supporting local cultural values and preferences, as on economical injections. This is why it matters where those who offer help, place their aid. Any input in a failing ecology triggers the whole system to react. If charity donations enter a corrupt system, they will more likely aggravate the basic suffering rather than catalyze the system to start repairing itself, and evaluate its own dependencies, therefore answering to local circumstances and values. Only the complete erasure of a local system, which results in immediate suffering (such as a force majeure type disaster) and culminates in a total shortage of food, shelter and hygiene as well as a loss of infrastructure to work or fight the situation, calls for trauma relief and global aid.

No such a thing as a pure gift exists and economies come in as many ideological flavours as other systems of power.<sup>4</sup> As with any charity, which constitutes a generous voluntary redistribution of material wealth, substantially

helping the less privileged of this world, its main critique would be that it leaves intact the political and economical systems that produced the inequality in the first place. Such critique should also consider the effects that a redistribution of material goods can have on immaterial values, creating (new) dependencies between people who do not necessarily share belief systems, or the ideologies that inevitably come with any such redistribution.<sup>5</sup> Questions on the mechanisms of charity, on the nature and scale of global needs and on the moral dilemmas that deceive us in the appreciation of our own actions, risk to come in the way of sound judgment and might frustrate critical action. By staying passive however we deny our commitment to form a critical force against powers that intimidate a collective responsibility, to provide prime assets to those in need – including ourselves.

Becoming charitable today demands admitting to be needy: to be in need of economical and political awareness, to be in need of solidarity, to be in need of social and political organization, in need also of instruments which make awareness and solidarity work for a relief of material and immaterial needs on any scale. To conceive of a balance of goods and needs asks for what I would call 'a literacy of needs'. If 'media literacy' means the ability to understand how media works in the world, if 'financial literacy' means the ability to understand how money works in the world, then a literacy of needs would mean to understand how shortage works in the world. It demands an investigation into how 'conditions that require relief' are produced, maintained, exploited, suffered, relativized, culturally embedded, prioritized and catered to in human interaction.

Developing a literacy of needs is only one out of many essential literacy projects that the arrival of networked media invites us to. As much as real time information exchange empowers global industries, at least as much it connects likeminded individuals to 'launch and learn'

(from) their projects, thus utilizing new modes of collectivity and expression. How ideas and products native to these media will 'work in the world' is still very much anybody's guess. Nevertheless, we have witnessed networked organizational powers emerging in recent examples of civic mobilization and protest. We see that crowd sourcing inspires new forms of benevolence, as an instrument of engagement, asking for exchange and solidarity on terms different from traditional charity – or even from economical exchange, for that matter. Therefore needs literacy's learning opportunity will include concepts of reciprocity, wherein material and immaterial assets are intimately linked and mutually benefiting. If not just symbolically, then at least 'experimental' to begin with – as a testing ground, a demonstration model, something to work from in the world.

<sup>5</sup> See givingpledge.org, and for the debate it inspired e.g. The New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/11/giving/11PLEDGE.html>

<sup>1</sup> See video interview on The Huffington Post Live, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/15/occupy-debt-personal-finance\\_n\\_2132948.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/15/occupy-debt-personal-finance_n_2132948.html). Buying debts being discussed from 16'25"–17'30". For another in depth discussion of Strike Debt's strategy, read '*Dissent, a Quarterly of Politics and Culture*', [http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/strike-debt-the-debate](http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/strike-debt-the-debate)

<sup>2</sup> See rollingjubilee.org and strikedebt.org, who are also the publishers of a free personal finance management title: *The Debt Resisters' Operations Manual*, which to some is kind of an 'Anarchist Cookbook' against global financial enslavement.

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee\\_\(Christianity\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_(Christianity))

<sup>4</sup> Among the many sources from which ideas on the distribution and exchange of goods and relief of needs can be mined are classic texts like Marcel Mauss' essay *The Gift* (first published in 1925), built upon by among others David Graeber in *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value; the False Coin of our Dreams*, 2001. His *Debt the First 5.000 Years* followed in 2011. Alternative economical histories and reflections on the nature of capital one finds with the likes of George Bataille (*The Accursed Share*, 1949), Jacques Derrida (*Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, 1991) or Pierre Bourdieu (*The Forms of Capital*, 1986). Reflections on disputed human benevolence are bundled in *The Altruistic Species*, 2007 by Andrew Michael Flescher and Daniel L. Worthen.

## THE GIFTING ARTIST

Art no longer seems to be seen as a gift. At least no one any longer talks about a 'gifted artist'. Today the artist is smart, crafty, cunning, plays his cards well, deals with a difficult situation, keeps up his own pants, makes good work, does his own thing in the right way, but gifted: no. As a consequence what the artist does or makes is no longer regarded as a gift to society. What the artist offers is now seen as a business proposal, a proposal that is usually turned down. The artist is peddling nonsense, wants something in return for something no one wants. This turns him into a grant sucking good-for-nothing.

It feels like long ago, but once the artist was gifted. Something had been bestowed on him (usually a him), something others did not have and did not get. But this gift was, according to the nature of the gift in general a heavy burden. It had to be returned, or passed on, it was not something you could just keep to yourself, enjoy it or play with it. Because of his gift the artist had to give something to society or, depending on the theory of the moment, the human race. So being an artist implied an obligation. It was not a job, but a duty. On the other hand the artist again was rewarded for his generosity. Not so much in money or worldly goods but in terms of toleration. Because here the Christian rule counts; who gives is forgiven. So any stupid or a-social behavior from the side of the artist, his anti-bourgeois way of living, could be forgiven in return for his generous gift to society.

But the generosity of giving is not without its dangers. A gift is something you did not ask for, and you don't know what you will get. We all know the horrible feeling of opening up a gift that is so awful that your face freezes. And you can not give it back, on the contrary, you feel obliged to show your gratitude somewhere in the future by giving something in return (which can of course be just as awful, or worse). So the gift can be poisonous, just as the work of art of the gifted artist is not only intended to please. The gift belongs to a system of delicate balance. Giving too much spoils, disturbs the

equilibrium. The receiver either completely exhausts his own possessions to restore the balance, as in the Potlach system, or just gives up. The gift can never be returned and the receiver becomes a spoilt child. But the gift is especially dangerous because it misses the abstract measuring by money, the great equalizer. A gift can hardly be calculated, it has no market value, it is never equal to another gift, it always carries the danger of being too much or too little, too soon or too late.

For a long time artworks have been part of this system that has its own place outside the walls of capital. At least since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, since Romanticism, artworks were regarded as things that did not belong to the normal world of production. Objects with a value that could not be calculated because they could not be traded for things with an equal value. Of course artworks were traded, commerce has been part of the world of art as long as artworks exist, but their value is very unstable. It is always too little and always too much. The artist has a hard time surviving, the works are auctioned for outrageous prices.

But even this seems to have changed. Of course artists still earn little, and of course at auctions the prices are still incredible, but art is no longer seen as something from another economic planet. This change has several causes. The debunking of a lot of myths around art in combination with the appropriation by cultural studies turned art into a regular mode of production. The recent focus on creative industries and the general reevaluation of art as an important contribution to city branding or lifestyle distinction sealed the fate of the gift. All an artist has to give today is his expertise, his sense of the market and his feeling for the right style at the right moment.

Today the artist has to do something to earn his living; just being an artist is no longer enough. And that seems right: we all have to work and the oversized ego's of the artists in the old times

could be quite a nuisance. But with it the position of art in society has changed too, and there the problem starts. Art still is something without a clear function. Although it brands cities and generates money, it does this in a very indirect way. Artworks themselves hardly seem to play a role: it's the industry that controls the climate and creates the atmosphere, all the individual artist can do is play his role in this system. If his/her works don't sell he is just another small shopkeeper going down the drain. To finance his work, and thus be successful, he is supposed to get money from private funds or try his hand at crowd funding. And she and he may be very successful at that, but what are their gifts? Between the 50s and the 80s the Dutch society supported its artists with the so called BKR (Beeldende Kunstenaars Regeling, 'Income Regulation for Fine Artists') by which anyone with a more or less professional status as an artist would get a standard amount of money for works that were regularly handed in. Because the quality of the work was never at stake, and the price was set beforehand, this had nothing to do with the system of gift. It was charity. It not only turned artists into cynics that handed in the works they were least satisfied with, it also gave art a reputation of something that could never survive on its own. Maybe its biggest problem was that this system was not about art at all, but only about artists, who did not need to be gifted and hardly had to give anything to be rewarded anyway. In money.

Charity, as we all know, has its darker sides, and to be dependent on charity is not something anyone could wish for. But is it possible to escape from the shackles of charity, turn the direction of the system around and have it start once again with the gift of the great work of art? I don't know. But why not try: artists start gifting and become gifted once again.

CHANGE BLOOD FOR  
BREAST-MILK

## Letter of motivation

Dear sir or madam,

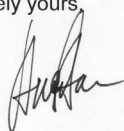
I am 23 years old female, my weight is above 50 kilos and my height is 176 cm. Currently I am having some small chest cold, not a serious one, but I'm afraid to get cold in coming days, while taking all the necessary precautions. Normally I try to avoid taking in antibiotics as it interferes a lot with the bacterial system of my digestion system, but of course sometimes it's unavoidable, when things get serious. Though I need to say I have not had any infection in the last two weeks. Neither I haven't had hepatitis or jaundice in the last year. And even if it sounds too premature I don't enjoy the idea of my skin getting old, all wrinkled and saggy – that's what stops me from getting a tattoo. Can't even think of that period when it might look stretched and faded out. Piercing is a different thing, cause you can do something about it when you are 80 yo, but the idea of keeping a piece of metal or any other hard material inside my body doesn't appeal me at all. Though I don't mind acupuncture for a health reasons, I tried it only once, 2 years ago, not sure about the effect but it was an interesting sensation. I can't admit that I spend too much time thinking about health or medical problems that might happen to me. But let's say Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease sounds super scary, but luckily none of my family suffers from it, including me. There are so many complicated things about your health and body systems that might happen, even before you are born. Sometimes doctors need to borrow some parts or elements from existing organisms or even human bodies to help others to survive or get cured, I don't mind that. Let's say human pituitary extract was sometimes used in growth hormone or fertility treatments, but that was before 1985. Well I personally never faced with this kind of treatments, but I hope it worked for those people that needed it. And human blood is obviously one of the most important 'components' of serious procedures and medical treatments. It's amazing that we can collect it now and preserve for those who might need it later or survive. I would not mind someone's else blood circulate in my veins, but at the same time I'm rather confused when thinking if I would I feel any difference after receiving a lot of 'alien' blood. I mean the blood which is collected from so many people and mixed together in one standard pack. I haven't experienced it yet luckily. Well that's because I never had a serious illness or major surgery in the past, neither a complicated dental work done. I think in general and especially the last 4 weeks I was keeping quite a healthy style of life, not being in contact with any infectious disease or having any immunizations. I also don't plan to have it in future – so I'm definitely not on a hospital waiting list or undergoing medical tests.

I'm not pregnant now, and I haven't given birth to a baby during the last 6 months.

I am this kind of a person who is quite concerned about the risk of getting any infection or allergy while traveling, especially in faraway and exotic countries, when you can't obviously get the best medical help in an urgent situation. You also won't have lots of emotional supports from your family and friends cause they would not follow you to every place on the earth. And in this situations you most probably would need to deal with medical personnel who speak different language from mine, so how can I be sure that in case if anything happens I would get the full and correct information about the situation and possible solutions? So every time when it comes to planning the trip I try to be as careful as possible. It may take a little longer then to actually come and visit the countries, but it's also very nice to have the dreams and make them come true. Right now I have a following list of countries I want to visit in the next 10 years: Italy, Greece, Israel, Russia, Canada, United States, Turkey, Romania and Albania. Though of course I already have some experience of visiting countries outside of Europe in last 3 years, though it's never been a

trip longer than one or two weeks. Not to forget, of course I've been to United Kingdom, but not in the period between 1980 and 1996. I'm actually not quite sure what happened there in that time period. Perhaps that was a 'mad cow' disease epidemic.. or HIV burst. And that's scary really – the fact that there are a lot of things that we are not aware of. To be honest I've never had sex with people who had HIV or syphilis or hepatitis C, at least as far as I know. As well I always tried not to have sex with anyone of any race who have been sexually active in parts of the world where AIDS/HIV is very common, including countries in Africa. And I have never had it myself. But at the same time I don't attribute myself to those groups of people who are at high risk because of their way of life. It's not that I'm saying that all those people who, let's say, receive money or gifts for sex are necessarily having or transmitting those infections... But well, we all know that the risk is higher for them and those who are using their services. I don't think it's appropriate for myself to pay for sex, I just don't think it's right, for me. The same is about drugs, I have never used it – those drugs that are injected. And the rest of them - I don't accept it personally. It's not like alcohol which disappears from your blood and organism after several hours or couple of days. Drug substances can affect the organism severely from a first try. And as it's widely known that drug-users are also in the group with a higher risk of getting dangerous infections like HIV or hepatitis. But there's something that you hardly can make sure of – is that any of your sexual partners might have been a drug-user, even if once. Sometimes people tend to hide those circumstances very well. So, unfortunately I'm not 100% sure that any of my sexual partners during the last year were not using any drugs before. So, in this situation, I believe it's more honest not to say 'no, none of my partners has ever injected him or herself with drugs'. The same thing is about assuming that none of your male sex-partners never has had sex with other males even since 1977, which means I would need to give exactly the same answer as about sex-partners' usage of drugs. But the good point is that we are responsible for our own health condition still, at least by making appropriate medical tests. Let's say with venereal diseases – I suppose I need to be aware of that, and use all the possible means to protect myself and others. This approach was totally working for me during the last several years. And I hope that it will only be enriched with medical information and its better consideration in the coming years. So I hope that my position towards the important issues of our health conditions is explained well enough, so I could be considered as a possible blood or plasma donor by your institution.

Sincerely yours,  
Ana\*



March 31  
Amsterdam

\* Assumed name. This motivational letter is prepared based on the data of a random anonymous female blood-donor screening questionnaire. All the personal details have the same trustworthiness level as the data from a formalized questionnaire submitted.

ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

(page 1)

> ALL THE PERSONAL DATA WILL BE STORED AND ANALYZED COMPLETELY ANONYMOUSLY OR AS A PART OF A GROUP AGGREGATION. FILLING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL TAKE AROUND 3-4 MINUTES.

Gender: a. Male  b. Female

How old are you now: a. below 18 y.o.  b. 18-50 y.o.  c. above 50 y.o.

Is you weight below 50 kg? a. Yes  b. No

Height: 173 cm /fill in/

> IF YOU HAVE NOT ENOUGH OF INFORMATION TO GIVE THE ANSWER OR THERE MIGHT BE SOME CIRCUMSTANCES / TERMINOLOGY / DETAILS YOU'RE NOT AWARE OF – PLEASE CIRCLE 'DK' = DON'T KNOW AS YOUR ANSWER

Are you currently having a chest cough, sore throat or active cold sore? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Are you currently taking antibiotics / have finished an antibiotics course within the last 7 days? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you had hepatitis or jaundice in the last 12 months? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you had a tattoo, semi-permanent make up or any cosmetic treatments that involves skin piercing in the last 4 months? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you had acupuncture in the last 4 months? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Has a member of your family (parent, brother, sister or child) ever suffered with CJD (Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease)? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you ever received human pituitary extract (which was used in some growth hormone or fertility treatments before 1985)? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you received blood or think you may have received blood during the course of any medical treatment or procedure anywhere in the world since 1st January 1980? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you had a serious illness or major surgery in the past / are you currently on medication? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you had complicated dental work recently? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you been in contact with an infectious disease or have been given certain immunisations in the last 4 weeks? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Are you presently on a hospital waiting list or undergoing medical tests? a. Yes  b. No  DK

> SECTION ONLY FOR FEMALES. MALES SKIP THE SECTION AND START ANSWERING THE NEXT ONE

Are you pregnant now? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you given birth to a baby in the last 6 months? a. Yes  b. No  DK

> GENERAL SECTION FOR FEMALES AND MALES

Have you been to Central/South America at any time? a. Yes  b. No  DK

Have you been to a malarial area during the last 6 months? a. Yes  b. No  DK

ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE (page 2)

Have you been to or plan to go to CANADA, UNITED STATES, ITALY, MAINLAND GREECE, ROMANIA, ALBANIA, ISRAEL, TURKEY, FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC of MACEDONIA or RUSSIA between May 1st 2011 and November 30th 2011?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you visited a country outside Europe during the past 3 years?

a. Yes b. No DK

>If so, have you spend more than 6 months consecutively outside Europe?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you visited United Kingdom between 01.01.1980 and 31.12.1996?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever had syphilis, HTLV (Human T - lymphotropic virus), HIV or hepatitis C?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever received money or gifts in exchange for sex?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever injected yourself with drugs (even if once)?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you had any venereal diseases during the last 12 months?

a. Yes b. No DK

> SECTION FOR MALES. FEMALES SKIP THE SECTION AND GO TO THE NEXT SECTION.

Have you ever had anal or oral sex with another man (with or without a condom) since 1977?

a. Yes b. No DK

> SECTION FOR FEMALES. MALES SKIP THE SECTION AND GO TO THE NEXT SECTION.

Have you ever had sex with a man who used to have sex with another man even once since 1977?

a. Yes b. No DK

> GENERAL SECTION FOR FEMALES AND MALES

Have you had sex with anyone who received money or gifts for sex during the last 12 months?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever paid for sex with money, gifts or drugs?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever had sex with anyone who injected (even if once) themselves with drugs?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever had sex with anyone who had syphilis, HTLV (Human T - lymphotropic virus), HIV or hepatitis C?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you had sex with anyone with haemophilia or a related blood clotting disorder who has received clotting factor concentrates during the last 12 months?

a. Yes b. No DK

Have you ever had sex with anyone of any race who has been sexually active in parts of the world where AIDS/HIV is very common? (this includes countries in Africa)

a. Yes b. No DK

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINES

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION AND TIME SPENT! THIS INFORMATION WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOOD! AND HAVE A NICE DAY!

December 1, 2005

Message to Our Extraordinary Breastmilk Donors

We have been completely blessed to find all of you. Numerous women have graciously offered to donate their precious milk to our little munchkin! Our child is so fortunate that there are loving, caring women in this world who selflessly donate some of their time to ensuring his or her health. Our son, Loren, was born on July 1<sup>st</sup> and he is thriving solely on donated milk! Loren has received only breast milk since birth and I currently supply about 10-15% of his daily need on my own. We estimate that he is drinking about 35-40 ounces per day. Our goal is to provide a minimum of one year of milk, ideally 18 months. Thanks to some very generous women like you, we are well on our way to meeting that goal! <...><sup>1</sup>

DONOR SCREENING FORM<sup>2</sup> <...>

Mother's Health History		No	Yes
1	Are you taking any type of medication, prescription or over-the-counter, such as vitamins, birth control pills, herbals, laxatives or allergy medications? If yes, please specify:		
2	Have you taken Soritane and/or Tegison in the last 3 years?		
3	Have you taken Proscar or Accutane in the last month? Or dutasteride (Avodart) in the last 6 months?		
4	Please list any medications/herbal taken in the week prior to pumping milk to be donated		
5	Do you smoke, use tobacco, or wear a nicotine patch?		
6	Have you ever used so-called "recreational drugs" such as marijuana, cocaine, LSD, Dexedrine? a. If yes, what and when? b. If yes, were the drugs taken by mouth, nose, smoked, or injected? c. If yes, when was the last date of use, approximately? d. Are you using any of the above at present?		
7	Please describe your present daily alcohol use per day:		
8	Please describe your present daily intake of caffeinated beverages, per day:		
9	In the past 14 days have you traveled to, traveled through, or resided in areas affected by SARS (Mainland China and Hong Kong; People's Republic of China; Singapore; Taiwan; Toronto, Canada; or Hanoi, Vietnam)?		
10	In the week (7 day period) prior to pumping any of the milk you are donating, have you had a fever with headache?		

Mother's Obstetrical and Lactation History		No	Yes
1	How many children do you have? Names: Ages:		
2	During this pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery period, did you have any complications, including infection, excessive bleeding or high blood pressure? If yes, please explain.		
3	Have you breastfed before? a. If yes, was your experience satisfactory? b. If no, please describe:		
4	Have you expressed and stored milk before? a. If yes, when and how much? b. If you use a pump, what kind is it?		
5	Have you ever had a breast infection? If yes, please describe and give date(s):		
6	Are you on any special diet? e.g., low salt, low dairy products, vegetarian, diabetic, weight loss, etc.? If yes, please explain:		
7	Have you read the information sheet about HIV?		
8	Do you agree to have your blood tested for HIV 1 & 2, Hepatitis B & C, Syphilis and HTLV I & II?		
9	Have you read and understood all of the donor information presented to you, and have all your questions been answered?		

I hereby certify to the best of my knowledge I understand and have answered all questions truthfully. I have reviewed and understand the information provided to me regarding the spread of AIDS. I do not consider myself to be a person at risk for spreading the AIDS virus or any other diseases

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Abstract from exemplary donor agreement found at <http://milkshare.birthingforlife.com/donorscreening>  
<sup>2</sup> Sections 4 and 5 from exemplary donor screening form found at <http://milkshare.birthingforlife.com/donorscreening>

This paper form starts with “This is an anonymous questionnaire” and continues with “all the personal data will be stored and analyzed completely anonymously or as a part of a group aggregation”. Blood donation is normally, within the institutionalized system, an anonymous, voluntary and uncompensated act: the most charitable type of charity – sharing a part of yourself, a part of your living system with those who might urgently need it. Admirable, doing pure good, Amen!

At the same time it is an act drowned in judgement towards the person who comes to the institution and is tested. Even before the test, the subject is screened with a formalized questionnaire to define if he or she is good enough ‘to do good.’ So, what if basing on the answers to the anonymous screening questionnaire you’re not considered to be good enough to do good?

You take it personally. At least some people do. Homosexuals, prostitutes, drug-friendly people, piercing-lovers, British meat eaters, German-based military servants, complicated dental-work fans, as well as all those who can’t assure that their sexual partners do not belong to some of those groups. Basically you’re questioned about how much control you have over your own body. You scan yourself silently and probably you will turn around. You might be invited to come back and try again next year or never.

This is an anonymous questionnaire. It’s a tool created to reveal and analyze statistics of clusters, to imply tendencies and use it to categorize personal histories.

Left by Melanie at 7/26/2007 11:11 AM  
*I am from Germany and tried to give blood the other day. I also wanted to get registered as a possible bone marrow donor. Well, since I only moved to the USA about 2 years ago I was not allowed to donate blood. This is stupid! Can you imagine how many people are excluded by this rule? So you want to do something good but can't...*

Left by blood suckers at 9/12/2007 3:54 AM  
*Just today 9/11/07 I went to blood bank bus and I was not aware of this FDA bullshit stuff after*

*she asked all the Q's and when she got to tell me have you lived in europe from 86 till what ever she said I said yes about maybe 8 years she said no you can't blood maybe you will have a chance of that mad cow daisies I don't even eat red meet it doesn't make no sense what so ever why the use should stop the politic relations because all European are in one time or other they are going to trigger with some crazy's stuff like mad cow European are crazy bullshit I'm trying to do some thing good to help to donate some blood to the people they really need it so FDA think about it.*

Left by irritated at 6/16/2008 4:12 PM  
*I went to give blood today to help flood victims, and was turned away despite my good health because I am dating an African man. I am so put off! It feels so discriminatory, even though I can somewhat understand where they are coming from, it seems ridiculous to ban whole countries. My boyfriend has lived here since he was 16 and is getting his second bachelors degree, in the nursing field! Why can't they still take the blood and then test it, if it's not good then dispose of it and send people a letter? I spent 3 hours waiting, and got a sunburn to top it off.*

Anonymous individuals complain after being screened out with the anonymous questionnaires. Anonymous individuals are taking it very personally. It’s hard to be considered and treated as a statistical group representative, when you personally have an urge ‘to do good’. To perform a highly individual act, an act depending a lot on personal motivation as a duty and responsibility. To contribute to the blood donation system, which is run by organizations that operate with rules and groups statistics.

The social order demands you to be representative of a group in order to be able to support social structures and implement social policies. Medical insurance, social security, blood/organ donation, student finance, mortgage services – all these ‘social goods’ make Me feel like a particle, a unit, a representative of a statistical group, a line in a data file. This helps Me to live my life in a better way. It projects onto Me certain qualities of a group average, that I don’t necessarily possess. In other words, it treats Me as Them, while I am not They. It’s Me who considers Others to be Them. And the

embarrassment arouses when Me is getting confused with the Others.

Blood, plasma, sperm, milk – are all fluids that are more or less easy to extract from your body and shared with others without really losing it. This is quite different from organ donation, where you need to learn how to live without a part of you, so that at a certain point you can never forget completely about the donation act. Those gifts, I can imagine, require a complete anonymity otherwise the recipient will probably be overwhelmed with the ‘heaviness’ of such a gift. When it comes to body fluids you may even have an excessive amount of it or your body easily regenerates it. Let’s say giving out breast milk for instance. Like my mother did: a ‘fluid gift’.

My mom doesn’t know how to speak in front of the camera, she speaks as if she was a TV presenter: very clearly, correctly, good language, no nervousness nor shyness – she’s presenting the information. She doesn’t look vulnerable, nor sincere, nor open. She presents, being very much aware of what and how she says it, doing it professionally. Her mother used to be a teacher of Russian language and literature. Her father was the principal of a high school, the same school where my mom used to study, so she was always very aware of how the others might have seen her. My mother herself has been teaching for the last 13 years. Every 2-3 days a week she has her groups, she talks, motivates, criticizes and inspires her students. She communicates and delivers information.

Of course she can talk about her experience of breast-milk donation. Yes, she thinks there’s nothing special about sharing milk as soon as little babies really need to be taken care of. My mom doesn’t think it’s a generous act. She has never kept in touch with those babies or their families afterwards. She can hardly remember that there were actually two of them. She even had to give a call to her mother to ask if there was one or more babies. She has never seen the second one or his family either. Why would she have to?

They felt shameful to throw the milk away, the same milk that took quite some effort to ‘produce’. Someone called them and told them about another family’s difficulties. So, why not? It was anyway better than just to put it to the waste. She was providing those families with milk for about 3-4 months. Even when she was staying at the hospital for a couple of weeks. She was ok since it was me who was sick. I drank too much of that milk. So much so, that I couldn’t digest it and got an infection in my intestines because of that milk.

These two kids were my ‘milk-brothers’. My mom could have been called their ‘foster-mother’ or ‘wet-nurse’. Anyway she doesn’t associate herself or me in any way with those people. They told me about my ‘milk-brother’ (at least one of them) at the age of 7 or 9 and explained what it meant and how exactly it happened. My mom told me I was surprised, a bit confused, but never that much curious about this fact or about that kid. That’s what she says.

When I remember myself at the age of 9 or 10 thinking about my ‘milk-brother’, it had a trace of eroticism. Incestuous in a way.

I used to have a very strong desire to see my milk-brother, to get to know him.

Fantasizing that we can fall in love one day.

Terrified that it could happen.

That breast-milk was not my gift, nor my act of giving.

It used to belong to me, but was given away.

And I had feelings for it.

The Me inside was very nervous about it and demanding.



Print out the HUMANMILK document on pink or red paper and tape it securely to the cooler<sup>3</sup>

PLEASE EXPEDITE

CONTAINS  
FROZEN HUMAN  
MILK

FRAGILE -  
PERISHABLE  
KEEP FROZEN

<sup>3</sup> Abstract from the section 'How to package milk for shipping' of an exemplary donor agreement found at <http://milkshare.birthingforlife.com/donorscreening>

PRISCILLA PINZE, SANTA  
AND THE DEUTSCHE BANK



**The press release**

Wednesday, December 12, 2012. German Police enter the headquarters of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt am Main with a warrant concerning an investigation into money laundering. In the coming weeks and months, the press is full of stories and developments in the allegations of fraud and embezzlement.

**The facts**

The Deutsche Bank is the largest and most successful bank in Germany. According to Wikipedia it's also the world's largest currency trader. Deutsche Bank came to my attention after the Libor scandal (manipulated interest rates), in December 2012. This became of interest even though I'm usually not very interested in scandals.

**The artist**

I followed the first days of the scandal with satisfaction, seeing that the public prosecutor intervenes rigorously in the case. I have no special relationship with Deutsche Bank, I'm not one of their customers, nor do I see myself as a direct victim of the bank. Yet, even though I haven't followed the case since it closed, I can't stop thinking about it. I leave it to the public prosecutor to find the legal solution and concern myself with a different aspect of the case: the individual (the man behind the switch) and people involved, or affected, whom haven't been featured in the press.

**The giant**

Did the media coverage plant the image of the bank as an insatiable giant in my head? How are we supposed to protect ourselves against this monster? How long will I have to wait for the news media to present us with the full details of the scandal and solutions? When I look at the individual, everything becomes tangible, closer, and more human. I decide to treat the Deutsche Bank as a friend and play Secret Santa<sup>1</sup> with him.

**The background**

I play Secret Santa with old friends from school every year. When we meet we bring 'scrap elf' gifts: something that you don't really have a

place for at home but can't bring yourself to throw away. The most original gifts are always the most popular, so you have to be lucky when playing Secret Santa, to ensure that what you get bothers you the least.

**Priscilla Pinze**

I speak to my mother about my idea. She is frightened: don't throw away your life! There it is again, the menacing shadow of the giant, who if he wants to, can wipe out your existence. I choose to use a pseudonym when I call the bank. I'm very nervous. Where does this incredible fear of this institution come from? I expect no sympathy and to be laughed at.

**The phone call**

—**Thoma:** Klaus Thoma, Press Office German bank, Good day.

—**Pinze:** Good day Mr. Thoma, Priscilla Pinze here. Nice to speak to you. I have an interesting project that I'd like to discuss with you.

—**Thoma:** Mmm?

—**Pinze:** Although we've just had Christmas, I'd like to invite you to play Secret Santa with me

—**Thoma:** Secret Santa?

—**Pinze:** Exactly. It's a game you play before Christmas.

—**Thoma:** With you?

—**Pinze:** With me, exactly. You or your department make me a gift and I give you something in return. The idea is to support cultural change.

—**Thoma:** If you give us or me a gift, what do you think it will cause, what will it bring exactly?

—**Pinze:** For you it's a chance to get rid of something unwelcome, because if we agree on the 'Scrap Secret Santa' version you can give away something you've got hanging around the office. And for me it's about the gesture of

entering a dialogue with you to contribute to a cultural exchange and understanding.

—**Thoma:** OK.

—**Pinze:** To create a social obligation.

—**Thoma:** Are you going to do it with different people?

—**Pinze:** At first I'm only going to do it with you. If you accept, I still have to think about whether it will be extended to other people.

—**Thoma:** I'm surprised, as it seems you've chosen me randomly. Or is there a reason why you called me?

—**Pinze:** I have chosen you for one very simple reason. I wanted to speak with someone at your bank who I can talk to, who will listen, pose questions and respond.

—**Thoma:** Should we do this at Christmas time?

—**Pinze:** If we wait until next Christmas it would take too long. It would be nice if we could agree on a closer date.

—**Thoma:** Well, then I need your contact address. Do you want to write me an e-mail?

—**Pinze:** Before we end, let me put it this way: If you're in the office and see something and think: 'This is an object that I don't want any more', you can give it to me as a present. I've already thought about what to give to the representatives of the Deutsche Bank.

**Proclaim cultural change (and exchange) through the voice of the people**

When playing Secret Santa with Deutsche Bank I consider the mutual give and take as a token of our new friendship. I help friends willingly, as best as I can. And as the German bank proclaims, and needs, cultural change, I'd like to help them out. So I've created a plan: I want to convince the choir of the German Labour Union to write a song-lyric on the theme of trust. For these lyrics a composer

writes a touching musical composition. Finally the choir performs it in front of the CEO, the management and executives of Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt am Main.

I bring together elements that seem to contradict themselves, but can lead to unusual impulses and lead even further.

Culture is made by many.

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<sup>1</sup> Secret Santa is a Western Christmas tradition in which members of a group or community are randomly assigned a person to whom they anonymously give a present. It's often practiced in workplaces or amongst large families and participation in it is usually voluntary. The Secret Santa tradition also encourages gift exchange groups whose members are not close enough to participate in the alternative tradition of giving presents to other people. There are various traditions and ways in which a 'Secret Santa' is run, but presents are exchanged anonymously. The type of gift is left open, and its originality is usually more important than its value – which can mean the receiver might not like it much. (Shortened version, Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret\\_Santa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret_Santa))



## THE AGONY OF CHARITY

After several approaches to the theme of charity, I found myself stuck, questioning my own conscience. On the one hand I felt the cynical distance towards the reality of things, “What does it change to do charity?”, on the other hand there’s an ethical correctness: “How can such passiveness be accepted?”.

Then I realized a strong tendency in my way of thinking, a forced sensibility towards the subject of ‘helping the needy’, connected to a feeling of guilt being the ‘strong’ part. I found my own hypocrisy also connected to the fact of being, or trying to be, an artist. What disgusted me the most was the act of taking a distance to reality, by creating an image of exaggerated compassion; suffering for the world, without taking part in it, and excusing myself by creating art.

This led to a series of works concerning self-compassion ‘pain’ devotion and the confusing state which arises from these feelings. This was a starting point, to articulate a particular feeling of mistrust towards my own ethics. It was necessary to exaggerate this point of view, to go further in the process and try to find a clear standpoint, even though I’m not sure if I will succeed, or if it’s at all necessary.

—Today, I looked at the sky and cried.

—Ah yeah?

—Yes. I looked at the sky, clouds passing by like gray old widows on their way to the cemetery.

—Widows?

—Yes.

—And you cried?

—Yes. I couldn't stand the view of it. The birds, lonesome and hungry. They were screaming like babies, I guess they can't stand the winter much longer.

—And you cried because of the birds?

—Well I guess it's my tender heart. I can't help it. These things stick to me, they suck the life out of my bones. It's terrible. But I guess it's my destiny.

—Destiny?

—Yeah. I'm a slave of my heart. I see the malignity and malevolence that nobody else sees. Or at least few. Oh it has always been like that, since I was a little girl. My mother couldn't stop me from crying everyday, ah! The more beauty she tried to show me, the more I cried.

—Uhhh...

—But do you know what? It's different now. Now I know that it's my destiny, it works like this, and I guess I'm like a modern saint or something.

—A modern saint? So, you're going to share your mercy or?

—I mean, no, well. I've always identified myself with the saints and the Holy Virgins when I was little. Their agony.

—But nobody's killing your son or burning your eyes out or anything.

—No but I have the burden of seeing the pain

in all things around me. I can't run away from it. I can only watch it happen, while others pass by. They don't see anything; I am alone with my pain. It's terrible.

—I don't understand.

—Yes that's it.

—Hmm...

—Today I looked at the sky and cried.

Stills from the movie *Wilder*



I AM A DAUGHTER OF THE CHURCH

Charity is goodness, benevolence, love, the absolute love, the love of God through the love of one's neighbour, a value, a virtue, a personal path, the path of saintliness, devotion to the other, the act of giving, a self-sacrifice, a daily basis, a duty, a liberty, a joy. That's what I've been told. That's what I believe. I am 20 years old. We are in 2013.



Benoit Chareyre a changé sa photo de couverture.  
il y a 16 heures



J'aime · Commenter · Partager

Constance Gln, Gabriel N'Go et 12 autres personnes aiment ça.

Écrire un commentaire...

---

Benoit Chareyre  
il y a 17 heures

**Habemus Papam !!**

J'aime · Commenter

Constance Gln, Capucine Bruyette, Louis de Braquilanges et 20 autres personnes aiment ça.

Écrire un commentaire...

---

Benoit Chareyre  
il y a 16 heures

**FRANÇOIS 1er !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

J'aime · Commenter

Clémence Bertin, Capucine Bruyette, Gabriel N'Go et 8 autres personnes aiment ça.

Écrire un commentaire...

---

Thibaut Foussard a partagé un lien.  
il y a 15 heures

**Un pape Latino, François 1er !**



Papa Americano  
www.youtube.com

Link baixé  
[http://www.4shared.com/audio/Arh4Y2YO/Yolanda\\_Be\\_Cool\\_-\\_Panamericano.htm](http://www.4shared.com/audio/Arh4Y2YO/Yolanda_Be_Cool_-_Panamericano.htm) Ai pessoal para

Je n'aime plus · Commenter · Partager

Vous, Constance Gln, Clémence Bertin, Arnaud G. De Linares et 9 autres personnes aimez ça.






Joseph Boulouis T as pas trouvé mieux  
il y a 15 heures via mobile · J'aime

Écrire un commentaire...

---

Mentions J'aime

Afficher tout

 Pape François 1er	 La Manif Pour Tous de	 Je suis un peu fou	 Pour la dissolution et
 Merci Benoît XVI	 Spotted : Essca	 Europe 1	 Metropolia Ammattikork



IT TAKES THE NIGHT TO SEE  
THE STARS



Life Ball press releases:

*Using an old Arabic saying, Life Ball 2013 follows the motto: 'It takes the night to see the stars' – for a future without HIV and AIDS. This vision, which can become true, was the common tenor at the World AIDS Conference 2012 in Washington D.C., where representatives of different international AIDS aid organizations agreed: 'Together we can end AIDS'.*

—Life Ball Homepage

*On 19 May 2012, the Life Ball will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Since 1993 the event in the heart of Vienna is themed 'Fighting AIDS and Celebrating Life' and therefore deliberately exposing itself to an emotional tightrope walk in between the opulent and carefree ambience of the ball itself and the frequently painful reality of fighting HIV/AIDS. But Life Ball does so intentionally. As Life Ball organizer Gery Keszler puts it, 'If life were a play, one would not be able to tell whether it was a comedy or a tragedy, a farce or a fiasco or black or white either.'*

—Life Ball Homepage

*Some political gay right activists and 'fundamentalists' are skeptical about the way the idea of the ball and the ball itself are turned into a lifestyle issue and are being diluted. Nobody speaks up to voice criticism.*

—Newspaper Der Standard

*The guests at the gala are the monarchy of vanity and pleasure, self promoting autocrats, the gentry of disguise with only one rule: pressure to excitement.*

—Newspaper Die Presse

*Now I think I understand. Whether I will remember, I don't know.* Reaction from the talk master of Club 2, a supposedly intellectual talk show format on Austrian national television ORF, on the explanation of the difference between AIDS and HIV.

*Well don't blame me for not being an AIDS expert!*

Comment from the same talk master on the Life Ball organizer's astonishment over the host's nescience in regard to the topic.

(This talk show's edition was titled: '*Naked Society: Lust or Aid for AIDS*')

*Sometimes it is criticized that by now also certain conservative and/or right-wing politicians show up as guests or announce to attend the Ball. Gery Keszler believes that a ball against discrimination should not discriminate against anyone. 'If these people manage to secure a ticket and believe they would enjoy the event, they will certainly not be stopped from attending it', he claims.*

—Wikipedia

*On the one hand it's great if an event like the Life Ball taking place in Vienna's city hall raises loads of money for the fight against AIDS. On the other, it shouldn't be swept under the rug that the Ball is a very excessive party itself and, with its blatant call for any kind of sexual behavior, also a hotbed for the spread of this dreadful disease.*

—Kronen Zeitung

*The stars who are attending the Life Ball, are not only world famous in Austria, but really world famous.* (Tourism manager at press conference)



But, after all, I refuse to put my final work in the context of 'just another gay piece of art'.



THE TRIBE

To begin with, I'm mainly interested in our own society. The inside mechanism of the way we live and how each of us relates to the 'grid' (the box in which we all evolve).

Charity is about helping the poor. But the way we see the poor is mostly from a materialistic point of view. We help those with less money and with less goods. Even with other kinds of things such as illness and so on, it is always from a point of view that is dictated by Western society. Therefore, this 'induced' point of view does not interest me that much. To be honest, I don't think I care about starving African people, for example. Not because I don't find it sad, or because I am a heartless bastard, but because it is something I can't relate to. It is not part of our life. It is not part of our 'box'. For me, it sounds more like a story. I know it exists, but still, it is a story. The story of the poor starving African. It's outside. And I do not think it is valuable. All we have is our situation, our environment, our neighbours...

We live in a system which is running by its own rules. But how can we live the way we want in a frame that does not take into consideration the individual or the collective? We were born and have grown up in it, and the system became our reality. The solution I propose is to try to tend to a certain independence which will allow me and others to grow in an alternative way, as well as challenge the current system.

Therefore I propose to rise a kind of 'tribe' or community allowing a certain investigation into freedom. I want to try several actions and create experiences using space as a playground and the people involved as one group that defines itself and sets its own rules, with identity and ideology inspired by any kind of alternative society (hippies, tribal societies, anarchists, homeless people, independent states), without parodying them.

So back to us.

In my first attempt to make work, I wanted to point out our perception of certain 'big' aspects of life like: food, sex, mental health... But it was too closed and too static, yet too vague. It led me at least straight away into the field of 'us'. I now tend more to do an 'experienced' work followed by a documentation. The major problem I am confronted with here is the question: what do we need? Because, again it is a materialistic point of view: we have enough. Even too much. So I need to investigate. What are we lacking: freedom, human relationships, love, sharing, friendship, lightness, connection to our surroundings, connection to our body, fraternity, action; less objects more space?

I think we live in a system, which is imposed upon us and is not good for the individual nor the collective. Something is missing. It is far from being perfect. Therefore I want to create my own system and started to orient myself on the idea of a tribe: A community. These days, I am reading Jean Baudrillard's book *The consumer society*, and I came across this part:

*It was the hunter-gatherers (primitive nomadic tribes of Australia, Kalahari, etc...) who knew true abundance (...) they hunt and gather 'for fun' and share everything together. (...) The hunter-collector is not the bourgeois invention of Homo economicus. (...) He trusts, and that is what marks his economic system, in the wealth of natural resources, while our system is marked by despair facing the shortage of human resources, a radical and catastrophic anxiety which is the profound effect of the market economy and competition in general.*

So what about some points of attention?:

1. Love & Nature
2. By changing the way we live we change the way we are
3. Action brings results
4. Reality is defined by our surroundings
5. Reality can change
6. When people collaborate, the outcome becomes something independent
7. Peoples can 'tune' together



8. Senses need to be stimulated

~Perpetual stimulation~

*Our contemporary Western society, in spite of its material, intellectual and political progress, is increasingly less conducive to mental health, and tends to undermine the inner security, happiness, reason and the capacity for love in the individual; it tends to turn him into an automaton who pays for his human failure with increasing mental sickness, and with despair hidden under frantic drive for work and so-called pleasure.*

*Our 'increasing mental sickness' may find expression in neurotic symptoms. These symptoms are conspicuous and extremely distressing. But 'let us beware', says Dr. Fromm, 'of defining mental hygiene as the prevention of symptoms. Symptoms as such are not our enemy, but our friend; where there are symptoms there is conflict, and conflict always indicates that the forces of life which strive for integration and happiness are still fighting.' The really hopeless victims of mental illness are to be found among those who appear to be normal. 'Many of them are normal because they are so well adjusted to our mode of existence, because their human voice has been silenced so early in their lives, that they do not even struggle or suffer or develop symptoms as neurotic does.'*

*They are normal only in relation to that abnormal society. Their perfect adjustment to that abnormal society is a measure of their mental sickness. These millions of abnormally normal people, living without fuss in a society to which, if they were fully human beings, they ought not to be adjusted, still cherish 'the illusion of individuality', but in fact they have been to a great extent de-individualized. Their conformity is developing into something like uniformity. But 'uniformity and freedom are incompatible. Uniformity and mental health are incompatible too... man is not made to be an automaton, and if he becomes one, the basis for mental health is destroyed.'*

Huxley: Brave new world revisited

*When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.*

Wayne W. Dyer

Of course, all this will stay within the frame of an art work. Therefore it will need a structure, which I divide into three parts:

1. Values, beliefs, spirituality...
2. Frame, set-up, organization...
3. People, free drive, creation...

Some spontaneous writing:

*I understand the door, I understand the key. Today is not the right way. But it asks such a life change. So radical. The change would be so brutal and sudden. Like a lightning. Across the image. Through the postcard. All of a sudden. Like that! Put everything bare. No more barrier. We understand all. Everyone knows everything. What would happen if we said everything right away? The whole truth and nothing but the truth about the world, people, manners, rites... EVERYTHING! Nobody is fooled. We accept because we know that it's better like that. I mean, look at us, humans. Our homes, our works (I mean a job, a job), why we get up, our habits, our whole life! And yet everything runs like clockwork. No worries. The wheels are intertwined and the machine moves forward. But everyone knows. Everything is orchestrated on clear rules that we hide, that we ignore. We say it is chance, that's it, that's life... And we play the game we learned yesterday without asking questions, without change. Life flows, society flows, my friends flow, I flow like a river that has always casting And yet when I look I see and understand. I understand how it flows. Of course not completely... But enough to question myself. But the hardest part, of course, is the way I look at myself. Because I see myself floating on the river, and I would not want to call it artificial but the feeling is not far. Is this fate? To see yourself drifting on this river called world. And why even with this look I can't reach the shore, getting out of it? And by that I mean that if I can understand, everyone can. So why is it the same? Yes we need principles; yes we must stick to it. Values, values, values! I am sick of watching without acting. We must act on life. I must act on my life. But it takes discipline. It can't be done half. Get up. Raise your arms to the sky. Place a hand on life. It is a passage to action. It is to build the foundations of its existence relentlessly, unflinchingly, without interruption. To settle for is not acceptable. There is not time to let yourself*

*sink in this fresh and weary river. Forget comfort, forget monotony, and forget routine. Arise and walk. Arise and live. The man, the human, the animal. Everyone! It is time to leave this dream and to bite life till the blood. To peel it until you reach the core. Build yourself hard; free; and alive. Outside the river. Or not the river, but the current. River yes. But swim. Swim, back, left, right... Free! Look: everything is there. Lets be the first humans to live for real. Outside the rules. Outside of morals, apart from the gods, beyond our imagination. Freedom to be.*

**Friends**

A friend is someone with whom you can share a space of research and freedom. Someone you can believe in and with whom you can build a relation that explores human parts of the world that we can't explore alone. Exploring yourself and others. It is an intellectual relationship by which one sees oneself through the eyes of another. By which we see the world, through several pairs of eyes.

**Future**

The future is the rainbow coming out of the prism of the present when the beam of the past hits it. The future is what creates the beam of the past. The future is what is now building on the foundation of yesterday. The future is what the world accepts, what I accept, the good and the bad. Temporality is going in both ways at the same time. Future is a complex mix between causality and destiny.

**Energy**

Energy is the source. Energy is the engine of each. Our motivations. Energy is the power of life flowing through our veins. Energy is motion. Why do you wake up in the morning? What makes you move? Your goal, your ambitions, what you stand for, makes you move, makes you create and destroy. Energy is found deep inside our soul. It is the fluid of the human 'in becoming'. Every cell in action unified to carry the world one step further.

**Sincerity**

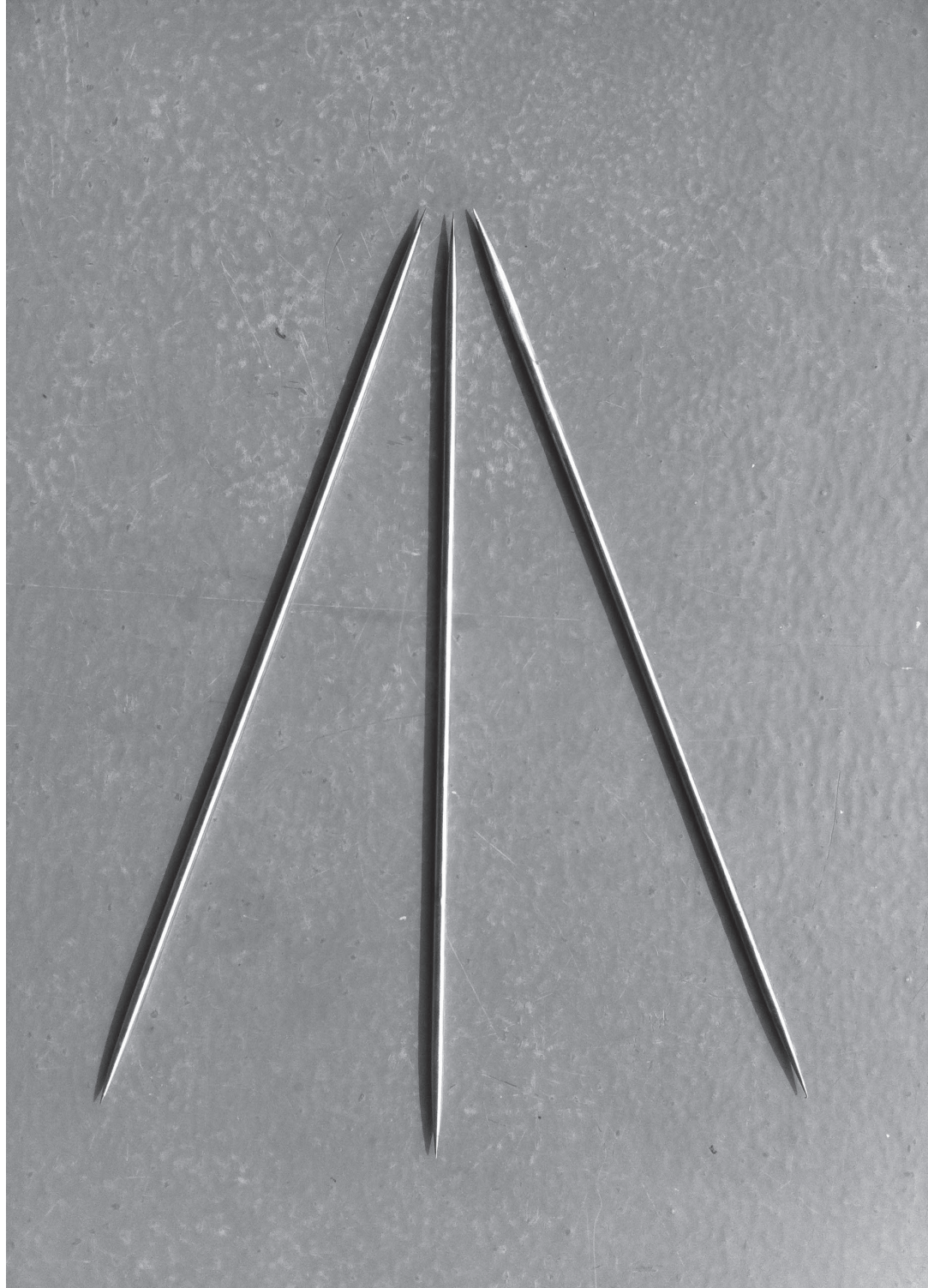
Sincerity is to look at things as they are and act accordingly. Sincerity is to deal with everything: the best and the worst. To gain it, it asks to be able to break everything one could have possibly believed in, in order to rebuild one's beliefs stronger. You need to be willing to kill yourself and because we all are individuals in process, destruction and reconstruction are perpetually achieved. One must look at the world as if he was just born and look at himself as if he was about to die.

**Human play**

Our consciousness is a double-edged sword. By gaining it, we lost our connection with the main core of life (love and nature). We create the 'I', we create the 'you', we create the 'this' and this leads to the ultimate division of the world. The poor human exploded his reality and the only thing he has been left with, is infinite pieces of symbols he invented and tries to put together hoping to find reality again. This restless trial led to society, religion, morals, language, rules, standards and so on. Those pieces have been placed in such a way that it allows humans to live again (this time on it's own fictional reality). In this reality life has rules.

**Love & Nature**

Love and nature are the two things one must believe in. They both can't be explained but are the main core of life. Nature being the physical, the flesh. Love being nonphysical (the motion). They cannot be dissociated, like body and spirit. Even the smallest grain of sand will be composed of both. Nature by its materiality and its place in the world and love by the fact of its existence, and the influence it has on other things. There is no difference on a human level besides the magnificent gift of being able to reflect on them. We ate the apple and now it became our duty to protect this absolute treasure.





**Thane Lund**  
hi frederikke!

how has the new year been for you? i've since moved to nyc and things are well. it is a very different environment to what i'm used to but i'm enjoying living here a lot.

what is you mailing address? i have something to send!

t





### Mie Frederikke Fischer Christensen

Hey Thane. I actually already got your "parcel".

Its funny, but it actually arrived the same day as i wrote you last time. I felt like i already wrote you so much that day,<sup>1</sup> that my happiness wouldn't get the required room.

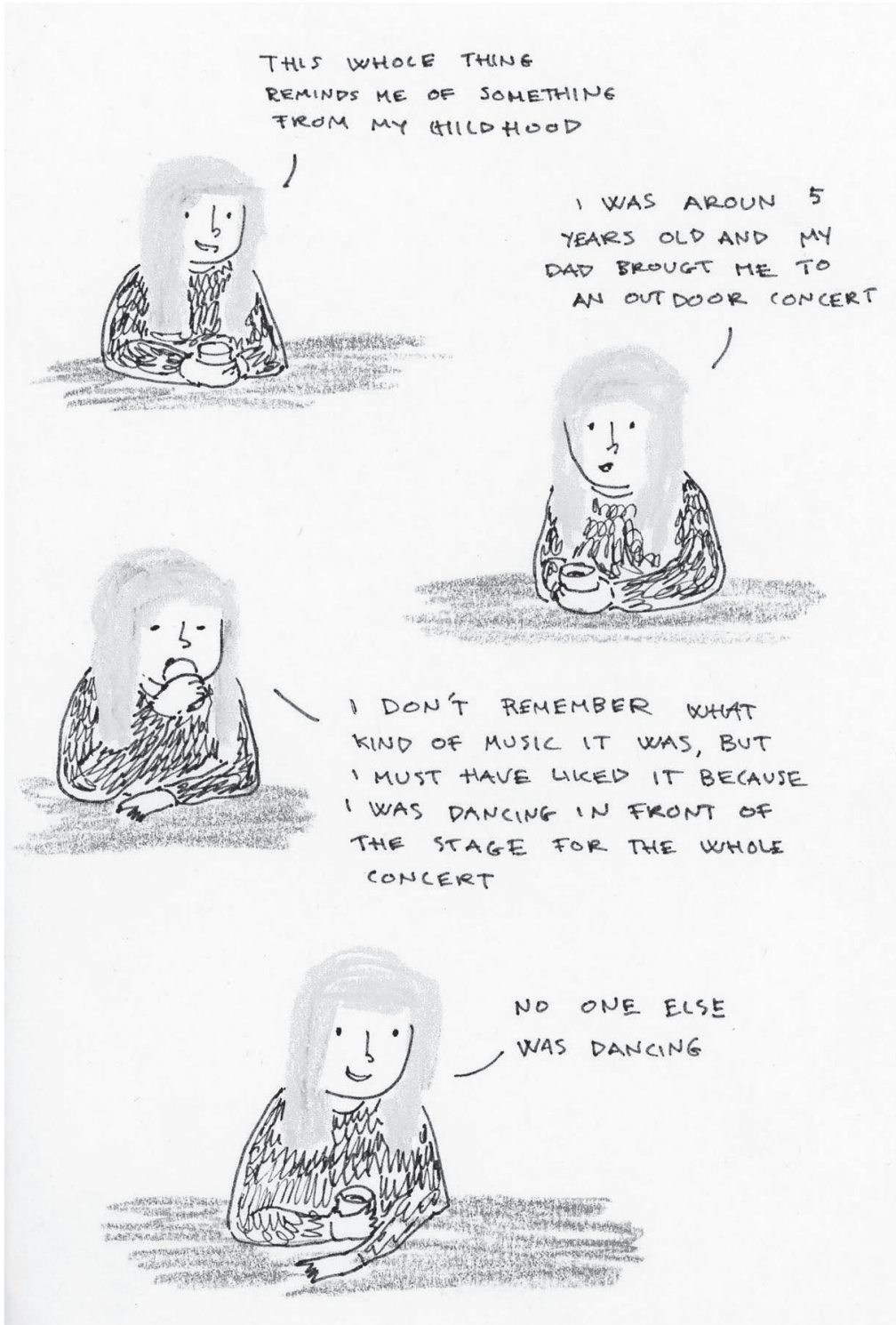
- For it made me VERY happy. It arrived on a day where I was a bit blue and the outside was a bit grey. Receiving you package made me happy and energetic, for several days. - receiving a package by mail is wonderfull - its the best.<sup>3</sup> I really loved the book, and i assure you that it will be put to good use, as soon as i overcome the fright of ruining those virgin white pages. <sup>4</sup>

The reason why i didn't answer was because i felt that i could not credit it rightly. I instead wished to send something return to the adress from where it was dispatched.<sup>5</sup>

This is currently in the making - so i hope you haven't moved :)<sup>6</sup>

Frederikke

1. Also, I didn't want to spam you like some teenager
2. How poetic.. and a bit pathetic. It might have been sufficient to say that the weather was shitty and I was in a bad mood.
3. It did make me very happy. However, I might be exaggerating a bit in an attempt to make up for not thanking you, completely on my own initiative
4. Actually, I only just started using it a few weeks ago. I was rereading this and realized that it was still completely unused. It made me feel quite shameful, so I started drawing in it shortly after.
5. This is true. Aside from not wanting to spam you, I also wasn't really sure what the customs surrounding sending and receiving homemade sketch-books from distant acquaintances were. I wanted to send something back to you, but once the excitement of your parcel settled, it got replaced by a fretting over what to send back.
6. This is a lie. I was in the middle of a conceptual process of what to send you back, but nothing physical had been made at this point. I probably wrote it thinking that you would never find out. It would be an opportunity to pitch and idea and send it off quickly, which wouldn't be a problem.



## ZAKAT

This work is based on the notion of poverty and the qualification of receiving funds. It is focussed on Benedict Mutsaerts in different ways, in terms of analyzing his portrait.

Eight categories of people qualify to receive funds according to the Quran.

1. Those living in absolute poverty.
2. Those who where restrained because they cannot meet their basic needs.
3. The collectors themselves.
4. Non-Muslims who are sympathetic to Islam or wish to convert to Islam.
5. People whom one is attempting to free from slavery or bondage. Also includes paying ransom or blood money.
6. Those who have incurred overwhelming debts while attempting to satisfy their basic needs.
7. Those working in God's way.
8. Children of the street, travelers.

The 'Zakat' is considered by Muslims to be an act of piety through which one expresses concern for the well being of fellow Muslims. Zakat promotes more equitable redistributions of wealth, and fosters a sense of solidarity amongst members.

Zakat is also meant to discourage the hoarding of capital and stimulate non-wealthy Muslims. Wealthy Muslims are compelled to invest in profitable ventures. Furthermore, Zakat is also meant to increase the means of production, such as: equipment; factories; and tools. In other words it's the providing act of investing in wealth in the productive businesses. Zakatable assets are: gold, silver, cash, stocks, merchandise for businesses. Non-Zakatable

assets are: clothing, households, furniture and other personal assets. Zakat is also only payable on the assets that are owned over one lunar year. The payment is mentioned as 'Nisab'. The 2012 considered Nisab price, for such Zakat assets, was valued at \$5,200 (estimated American Dollars).

The basic establishments within the Zakat are not that interesting to me. I prefer to tumble upon the eight steps that are created within this tunnel-perspective. From the perspective of Quran the eight steps are extremely important. A fictional weight is created which is connected to the left-wing politics of these days, although the steps are sealed as the most primitive ways of thinking but understandable within third and second world countries.

Those who live in the absolute poverty are in modern terms: people that are not able to live like they want to live. Based on the conditions of health and foundation of strength-increasers. Within this field, basic needs would be for a third-world country: food and water. But for 1st world countries, addictive things with the same end-result as the one of the third world countries are slight differences. We choose for this diversity, they are forced to.

Collect stuff while you don't have to collect them. You prefer the starving behavior above the collecting addiction. 'Debts, because of needs.' It depends on what kind of need... materialization or the sacred well filled with survival substances.

My own observation based upon the subject (with archival footage of benedict Dyonisus Mutsaerts):

1. A photo, but if I will return within 7 minutes or 10 hours the movement of the benedict are not going to change. This is a quite dry metaphor for someone that is imprisoned in his own profile photo. This photo is called: *'The Absolute Poverty'*.

2. Basic needs are also simple needs. A world where everybody would live upside down isn't realizable, but with a photo it is. The basic need of the average human being is order and discipline. Upside down things wouldn't be so efficient, and certainly not basic.

3. Collecting can be based on objects. Pieces of bread in straw baskets can be seen as a 'collection of things'. Only by highlighting a certain area within the photo, we're not able to see the meeting between the sandwiches and the benedict.

4. Symbolical ethics and characters can be highlighted throughout almost everything; it's just based on the surrealistic approach towards the ordinary things. In this case: two lifted arms can be represented as a strengthening for two tools. Such as a knife and a fork crossed.

5. America, the country which wasn't and will 'never' be free. The country which is symbolized as the country of slavery and a high amount of blood money. Here a piece of the flag. Because, still an average middle-class doesn't exist in the U.S in terms of a European average middle class. Only a lower-income class and the capitalistic society is attainable.

6. Quite ironic example towards the basic needs. A nice wooden chair and a black suit, most likely made from silk.

7. The White Collar. Symbol for people in highly powers that follow God's path.

8. The traveller. A priest that still has to follow his path to God. The children of God and the traveller on his way to God in the afterlife.



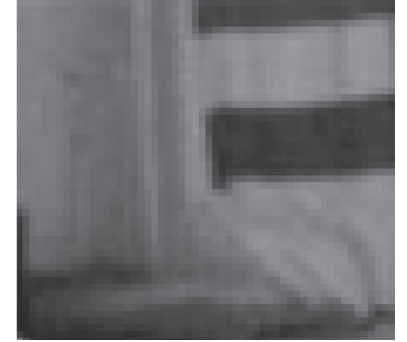
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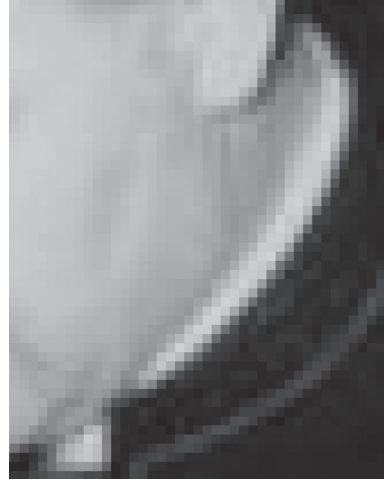
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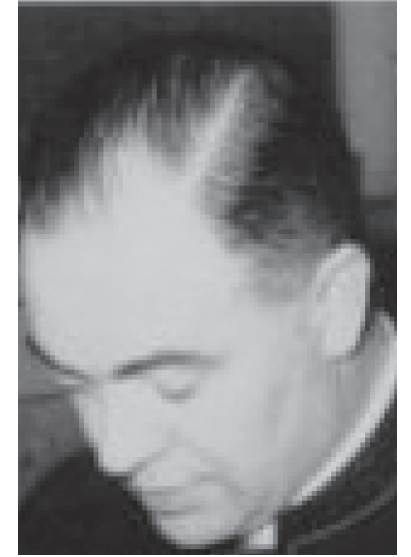
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8



6



LEARNED HELPLESSNESS,  
PERSONAL CONTROL IN THE AGE OF THEORY

For the following text I read the book: *Learned Helplessness, a theory in the age of personal control* by Christopher Peterson, Steven F. Maier and Martin E.P. Seligman. I was interested in this theory because of my personal passive reaction towards the topic of Charity. I decided I had to use the theory to my own will. Learning it, I questioned myself in how far this was possible, or if there may be some sense of uncontrollability of the theory. Reading the text I wrote down objective notes, of what I should remember and what was important in the text, just as I would read any kind of art-theoretical text that I was supposed to learn. Cutting these up and replacing them to my way of logic created a validation of my expectations, making the text a subjective paraphrase of the original book. I could name you numerous examples of how *the theory of Learned Helplessness* manifests itself in our natural environment. For the sake of explaining the theory I will not, because subjectation from my part will lead to your misunderstanding of the theory. Whereas my objectivity, will make your interpretation of this theory more dominant. And in case you will interpret the text, you are more likely to understand its key-components. This understanding would be considered more subjective but it would be in any way, in your own control.

At first *the theory of Learned Helplessness* seemed very controversial. The source of this was the long-standing debate within social sciences between those who simplify phenomena in attempt to understand them versus those who complicate them. In the method of 'simplophiles' the richness and the variety in human behaviour is to be ignored in an attempt to explain as much about human behaviour with the fewest possible principles. 'Complophiles' however, will acknowledge this richness and despair when faced with attempts to reduce them to these few simple laws. Which makes this approach in theory less controllable. As more scientific theories, *the theory of Learned Helplessness*

is, with trying to explain a variety of complex phenomena, to be thought of as a theory by simplophiles. But in their efforts to explain animal helplessness, the principles apposed such as *expectation* and *learning of noncontingency* where more rich and complex than the previous *theory of Stimuli-Response learning* which gave them the temporal term of Complophiles. *Stimuli-Response theory* as well as *Behaviourism* where successful learning theories that procreated fundamental changes to the field of social sciences. Their predecessors, *Structuralism* and *Functionalism*, were mired in subjective reports. The adherence of *Stimuli-Response-theory* and *Behaviourism* to the method of objective measurement resulted in the first objective measurements of learning. This resulted in the measurable truth of what was cognitive, followed by a confusion of what was *ontology* and what was *epistemology* as their life-long difference was proven by one and other. Theoretically this will result in the cognitive understanding of things such as this text, are in fact an existing truth. The more 'subjective' *cognitive* response proven by the objective measurement led to, that the term *association*, from the previous theories, which was an inference, was dismissed, first as unimportant, later as non-existent due to its subjective report.

The *Stimuli-Response theory* is based on the fact that *Responses* are always explained by *Stimuli* from the past. This theory results in the recognition of the organism as pushed and pulled in its behaviour by its environment.

*Learned Helplessness* is seen as a theory that is not endorsing this vision but as a theory that is speaking about the influence of organisms in their environment changing and choosing outcomes of situations. This vision is making the organism strongly liberalistic, leading to the fact that it can draw conclusions and mould its understanding of its environment into expectations and theories.

Martin E.P. Seligman claims that, "...the very facts of life are now different for those of us in the here and now."<sup>1</sup>

The scientists involved in the first experiments, before defining the *Learned Helplessness theory*, tried to make these scientific measurements of *Stimuli-Response theory* more rich and complex. In the experiments they researched if organisms learn to prevent outcomes after a negative experience is witnessed. The *Stimuli-Response theory* does not support this idea in the way that *Stimuli* should always be experienced before the *Response*. An expectation, and thus prevention, is in this theory not objectively explainable.

The new way of perceiving the individual (with the ability to prevent) was tested in *two-process theory*, where in the first part an organism is confronted with an unpleasant experience together with a cue for this experience. Secondly the organism is learned the standard avoidance procedure. This resulted, in the situation where the cue was given before the unpleasant experience would take place, the organism was able to prevent this experience by avoidance. Argued against this theory was that the organism was in fact not preventing the future event but was *responding* to a given *stimulus* (the cue) from the past. In this case, the theory was not proving the existence of *expectation* and *prevention*. Another attempt was made. This time the organism is confronted with an unpleasant experience together with a cue that it could not escape, where it had no personal control. In this attempt, the organism was not able to learn to avoid any cue in the second phase, the standard avoidance procedure.

Based on this, *Learned Helplessness* theorists created three components of *the Learned Helplessness theory*. Consisting of *contingency*, *cognition* and *behaviour*. The *contingency* being the relationship between the organism's action and the experienced outcome, in this case there is no relationship because of the *uncontrollability* of the situation, resulting in *noncontingency*. *Cognition*

is the explanation that the organism gives to the *contingency*. This consists out of three steps: first, the organism must apprehend the *contingency*, or rather the *noncontingency*. The way in which the organism will perceive and interpret the experience influences the second step; that of explaining this situation. From the first two steps the organism will construct the third, which is an *expectation* for the future. In the *behaviour* of the organism the consequences (*helplessness*) of the *noncontingency* and the *cognition* (the explanation it gives) are now visible in *passivity* of the organism. Physical changes as perceived in animals are known to be: cognitive retardation, loss of aggression, immune changes and physical illness.

In order to learn *noncontingency* an organism has to experience two situational probabilities (P) of their response (R) and its reinforcements (Rft). In order to conclude that an situation is without personal control it must learn the relation between those two probabilities, if  $P(Rft/R) = P(Rft/no R)$  the organism's actions do not affect the situation. And if  $P(Rft/R) > P(Rft/no R)$  the organism chooses to escape the situation because it will profit from it (reinforcement). When the difference between the two probabilities is greater, the more control the organism experiences. In case the two probabilities are equal there is no dependency on any of the responses. The organism would in this case profit the most from making no response.

This description of *noncontingency* would never be able to be applied on *Stimuli-Response Theory* because this theory is focused on the temporal relation between *stimuli* and *response*. If this *response* is followed by *reinforcement* it will be strengthened although this would not necessarily have to be a 'real' relationship. *Learned Helplessness theory* on the other hand will allow an organism to detect a cause-effect relationship, and in this way allow it to separate momentary non-casual from enduring 'real' relationships that will form the construction future expectations. In this way an organism is

able to find answers and explain its experiences in a certain way. In the process of converting objective environmental evidence to cognitive representation the knowledge en further expectations of the organism is thus produced. This should not only be shown in negative experiences but also in positive or neutral experiences.

*Learned Helplessness theory* describes alteration of three psychological processes due to the construction expectations by the organism. These alterations also occur in positive experiences that lead to constructed expectations. First there is an alteration of the *incentive motivation*. By learning that response and outcome are independent the organism concludes that it is in less control in any situation. This leads to further failure in learning. The motivation to respond exists from *drive*, biological urges like hunger and thirst (which will stay unchanged), and from *incentive*, the anticipation that a future reinforcement will take place. If there is no expectation on this future reinforcement there will be no motivation.

Secondly there is an alteration in *cognition*. An uncontrollable situation results in a *cognitive* deficit because of interference with the relationship that is known between the own behaviour and the situation. There exists an alteration in the manner the organism processes information, because there is a contradiction between the expectation and the fact to be learned. Third it leads to alteration in *associability*, the organism loses the ability to see a reinforcing event when it sees a predictive relationship. This also causes alteration in developing a new association between cue and reinforcement when there is a possibility of success. The organism is here either not attentive to the cue or trusts his internal cues better, which results in being more likely to connect their own behaviour to the uncontrollable situation.

Next to psychological processes, expectations and uncontrollability leads to emotional changes. More specifically, there is said that learning that one has no control over aversive events leads to anxiety that is than followed by depression if the experience is continued.

Although *Learned Helplessness theorists* explain their theory to the broadest sense, they believe that it is overused and applied promiscuously to situations that do not bear a convincing resemblance to pure cases of *Learned Helplessness*. This happened due to their motivation to explain many illnesses or even sudden death by their *theory of Learned Helplessness* creating with their good intentions from it an 'all-explaining theory' with the attempt to help the human race understand its psyche.

In reaction to this they name three necessary-components that are required to talk about a pure case of *Learned Helplessness*. First there must be a case of *noncontingency*, second the organism must have an expectation of helplessness and third, it must show passive behaviour. Generally the term *Learned Helplessness* is popularly used in cases that only show one or two of the three necessary components.

The popularity of learned helplessness is still to find in its grounding in basic psychology and easily possible application to human troubles. Making it a easy candidate to base self-helping books on. Also because they state that *Learned Helplessness* should be able to eliminate even after full development by learning to escape. The 'therapy of learning to escape' should in this case never be depended on exposing the organism to controllability but of changing its expectations.

Given these facts I can find my personal control over this theory in reading it and using it, but it should never be constructed out of understanding but from out my expectations

#### References:

Seligman M.E.P., Peterson C., Maier S.F., *Learned Helplessness: A theory for the age of personal control* (1993), Oxford University Press Inc., New York

<sup>1</sup> page 16, §1

CHÈRE FLORENTINE



**Sponsor no.:** K05011912  
**Child no.:** 212890  
**Development Unit:** DK0403  
**Case no.:** 218

Familjen Luella Godman  
Rute Fardume 614  
62458 Lärbro  
Sweden

**Translated by:** EAG

14 March 2011

Dear Familjen Luella Godman

The consultative committee and the staff of the DU 403 Ahouefa are thanking you very much for all you keep on doing to Florentine and her family.

Thanks to your kind contribution Florentine started school attendance and is in secondary 7 after passing her "O" level examination.

Right now Florentine is 22 years old; we paid her family a visit to know about her future plan. From the discussion we had in her parents' presence it comes out that Florentine would like to become a mid-wife. In order to achieve her goal Florentine should obtain her "A" level certificate before sitting for the test of entry in the mid-wife school where she will be trained for 3 years.

Right now Florentine is in secondary 7; she has only to pass the above mentioned certificate to achieve her goal. She will finish her training in 2014 but the DU will keep on giving her assistance **December 2011** after which her parents will take over to help her achieve her goal. We remain at your disposal to give you any other information you would like to have.

The home consultant

Dossou Koba.

Florentine TOSSAVI

Ce 04/11/11

0059/212890/218

UB 403 Abouéfa

Objet: lettre d'adieu

Chers parrains

Je viens par la présente vous remercier très sincèrement pour tout ce que vous avez fait à ma famille et moi.

En effet vos appuis m'ont permis d'être inscrite à l'école et j'ai évolué jusqu'en classe de terminale: classe que j'ai redoublé pour avoir échoué au BAC. Mais je tiens <sup>très</sup> quand même à obtenir le BEPC et comme je tiens à avoir le BAC je continue les classes et l'UB m'a donné les fournitures et frais scolaires de même qu'à mon frère Bonaventure qui est reçu au CEP et qui fait maintenant la 6<sup>e</sup>. Ma sœur Jeanne a abandonné les classes et arrose sans flatter que nous n'avons pas atteint ces niveaux d'étude sans vos appuis.

Même les écoles primaires et maternelles de notre village ont bénéficié de la construction de salles de classes avec des équipements en mobiliers et en matériels didactiques.

Nous avons aussi bénéficié ma famille et moi des frais médicaux pour les cas de maladie et de moustiquaires empêchées pour nous préserver du paludisme.

Grâce toujours à vos appuis, ma famille dispose d'une plantation d'acacia. Comme vous le constatez, vos appuis ont contribué

à l'amélioration de nos conditions de vie et cela permet à mes parents de pouvoir prendre la relève après BØRNEfonden pour me permettre de terminer mes études comme cela se doit. Mon projet d'avenir est à terme. L'UB ne peut plus m'assister avec ma famille. Toute la communauté se joint à mes parents pour vous remercier.

Adieu chers parrains et que Dieu vous rende vos bienfaits au centuple.

Votre filleule Florentine

lettre écrite par moi-même.



Sponsor no.: K05011912  
Child no.: 212890  
Development Unit: DK0403  
Case no.: 00218

Familjen Luella Godman  
Rute Fardume 614  
62458 Lärbro  
Sweden

Translated by: AJ

21 November 2011

Dear Familjen Luella Godman

I am hereby sending this mail to sincerely thank you for the assistances you have given to my family and me.

Your assistances enabled me to be registered to school and to progress up to secondary 7, form that I am repeating after failing in A level degree examination. But I have got my O level degree and as I still want to get the A level degree, I continue attending school and the DU supplied me again with my school materials and fees. My brother Bonaventure who is attending secondary 1 with his primary school leaving certificate also got regularly his school needs satisfied by the DU. My sister Jeanne who gave up school assure you that we progressed up to this level owing to your assistances. The preschools and primary schools benefited from some classrooms equipped with furniture and didactic materials.

My family and I also benefited from medical fees in case of sickness and we also got some impregnated mosquito nets for malaria prevention.

Thanks to your help, my family has an acacia plantation. As you can notice, your assistances contributed to improve our living conditions and also enabled my family to take over BØRNEfonden's actions to help me finish my studies as it should.

As my future plan date expired, my family and I cannot continue depending on the DU to receive your assistance.

All the community joins my parents to thank you.

Goodbye dear sponsors and may God reward you a hundred fold.

Your sponsored child **Florentine**.

Letter written by myself.

Nicola Godman  
Frieslandstraat 29  
1082 TK Amsterdam  
Les Pays Bas

Mars 2013

March 2013

Chère Florentine

Je m'appelle Nicola et je suis la fille de Luella Godman, qui a été ta marraine à Bornefonden jusqu'à 2 ans.

Merci beaucoup pour les lettres, toutes les lettres que tu as envoyés depuis tout ce temps. J'ai apprécié les lire et réfléchir à ta vie. C'est ma première lettre pour toi, et je ne sais pas si tu vas recevoir cette lettre, peut-être j'écris trop tard, donc tu ne fais plus partie de Bornefonden.

Je me rappelle quand tu es devenue notre filleule, j'ai le même âge que toi et je crois nous avions 10 ans. Je pensais que ton nom est similaire à mon second prénom, Frances, j'ai cru que tu t'appelais Francesca, mais bien sûr c'est Florentine. Ma mère m'a suggéré de t'écrire, en français, pour pratiquer mon français (j'ai faites des études français à l'école), mais je n'ai jamais écrit.

Je suis désolée de ne pas t'avoir écrit plus tôt, alors que tu ne me connais pas et peut-être que ça ne te manque pas.

Encore, je veux que tu saches que je pense à toi, bien que nous sommes très loin l'une de l'autre.

J'espère vraiment que tu peux réaliser tes rêves, bien que nous ne t'aidons plus.

Bien à toi,  
Ta Nicola

Dear Florentine,

My name is Nicola and I'm the daughter of Luella Godman, who has been your sponsor through BØRNEfonden, until 2 years ago.

Thank you for the letters, for all the letters that you've written throughout the years. I appreciated reading them and wondering about what your life looked like. This is my first letter to you and I don't know if you'll receive it, perhaps it's too late, now that you're no longer part of BØRNEfonden.

I remember when you first became our sponsored child, I'm the same age as you and I think we were around 10 years old then. I thought you had a similar name to my second name, Frances, and that yours was Francesca, but of course it's Florentine. My mother suggested back then that I could write letters to you in French, as a way to practice my French (I studied French in school) but it never happened. I'm sorry I never wrote to you until now, even though you don't know me and perhaps you don't miss it.

Still, I want you to know that I care about you, although we are far apart.

I hope that you will be able to achieve your goals even though we're no longer helping you.

I wish you all the best,

Yours

Nicola



*Headstand for Florentine*  
20th March 2013  
Amsterdam



Nicola Godman <nicola.godman@gmail.com>

**Barnfonden**

1 meddelande

Catherine Larsson <Catherine.Larsson@barnfonden.se>

4 april 2013 11:50

Till: nicola.godman@gmail.com

Hej Nicola,

Jag har nu på förmiddagen fått svar från Benin angående Florentine. Jag bifogar bilderna till dig. Jag har fått veta att Florentine bor kvar i området, att hon har familj och är gravid.

Om du vill skriva ett sista brev så kan du skicka det till den adressen du använde när du var fadder. Märk kuvertet "former sponsored child". Eftersom Florentine bor kvar i området så tror jag att personalen kan överlämna brevet, men jag kan inte garantera att det kommer fram.

Vänlig hälsning,

Catherine

**Catherine Larsson Palomäki**

Fadderservice



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Västra Kanalgatan 8  
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Läs vår blogg: [www.barnfonden.blogspot.com](http://www.barnfonden.blogspot.com)



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Hi Nicola,

This morning received a reply from Benin considering Florentine. I attach some pictures for you. I found out that Florentine is still living in the area, that she has a family and is pregnant.

If you want to write one last letter you can send it to the address you used when you were a sponsor. Mark the envelope 'former sponsored child'. Since Florentine still lives in the area I think the staff can deliver the letter, but I can't guarantee that she'll receive it.

Kind regards,

Catherine Larsson Palomäki  
Sponsorship service

**Photos 1 & 3:** Florentine in front of her hut and in the DU

**Photos 2 & 4:** Florentine's photo

AN ANOMALISM ON THE CONCEPT OF GIVING

A documentation of cleaning the grave  
of a person anonymous to me.







SELF I SING<sup>i</sup>

“Heterogeneous mass of bombast, egotism, vulgarity, and nonsense”<sup>ii</sup>



*This must be paradise.*

From the ocean Saint Martins grew as the airplane descended. The Boeing's engines blew away some people on the beach, mixed them violently with sand and sound.

Months ago, I had seen this landing from their perspective on Youtube, when I had made the decision to visit my twenty-year-old brother.

He has been living in the Caribbean for 4 years.

Up until now the imagery I had seen of this Island, had seemed unreal. Somewhat like seeing images from a warzone: another 'level' of happiness.

A white burned triangle takes up most of the right part of a photo, suggesting the corner of a sail. Behind it a bright beach as a disk in a turquoise pool; a video of a Boeing landing, tearing

off bikini's of screaming girls overwhelmed by the engines thrust;

An iPhone video of a huge splashing black tail, mixing a pixelated grey sky with a grey-flaked sea;

A pink purple palm trees sunset; oiled people;

paradise.

Out of the plane, tropical breeze. Just a few steps through an extremely small airport, tropical breeze again. Got offered a rental-car, a taxi, got offered to get laid. Nice remarks about my ass.

Chose the cab, went to the 'Karakter' beach bar as planned. Girlfriend of brother calls, she is on another island and that brother is probably stuck at sea due to 48 knots storm.

No sound from him since. Wait on beach, cannot afford Pina Colada, take a swim. Jet lag and a big backpack. Had too much sun.

I Float.

Silicon breasts, sixty year olds in white linen suits. I wait.

The bar starts to close, the soft warm wind starts to blow full power; palm trees skew in low light.

A guy, 'Nils', German, with an overdose of irony and nihilism appears to be a friend of my brother.

I hold my laptop above my head wrapped in plastic bags and swim to his dinghy.

The waves are too high to dock small boats.



Nils buys chocolate, expensively imported prosciutto and various bottles of liquor for 350 dollars. I buy an avocado, feta, and some tomatoes for 7 dollars, and make a salad that will turn out to be my dinner, breakfast and lunch. His eyes are black with sparks from light joy, dark circles around them. A 40 year old boy with gray-blue cheekbones on a chubby belly, stoned, chalked up with cocaine. Good sense of humour, little sense of danger. As the sky turns from indigo to black, we race with the dinghy from harbour to harbour and smoke cigars in his yacht's saloon watching a 90's live show of Faithless on a flat screen. There is a girlfriend, he treats her like shit, they call each other pigs, she is French and slams the door. I wake up with the sun, take a glass off milk and read Ayn Rand's Fountainhead on the deck.

It became my rough guide as I entered the playground of the rich, working on ships, being around billion dollar yachts, their owners, parties and crew.



“What kind of idea are you?

*Are you the kind that compromises, does deals, accommodates itself to society, aims to find a niche, to survive; or are you the cursed, bloody-minded ramrod-backed type of damn fool notion that would rather break than sway with the breeze?”*

From *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie. (1988)

*Man should not be ready to show that he can live like a badly-fed animal. He should decline to live like that, and should either steal or go on the rates.*

Oscar Wilde. *The Soul of man under Socialism* (1891) <sup>iii</sup>

*He’s just a egomaniac devoid of all moral sense.*

*Said the society woman dressing for a charity bazaar, who dared not contemplate what means of self-expression would be left to her and how she could impose her ostentation on her friends, if charity were not the all-excusing virtue.*

*—Said the social worker who had found no aim in life and could generate no aim from within the sterility of his soul, but basked in virtue and held an respect from all, by grace of his fingers on the wounds of others.*

Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (1943), p.651

*This was solidarity. The debutante having her toenails pedicured the housewife buying carrots from a pushcart the bookkeeper who had wanted to be a pianist, but had the excuse of a sister to support*

*the businessmen who hated his business the worker who hates his work the intellectual who hated everybody*

*all were united as brothers in the luxury of common anger that cured boredom and took them out of themselves, and they knew well enough what a blessing it was to be taken out of themselves. The readers were unanimous. The press was unanimous.*

Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (1943), p.6

*“It is altruism that has corrupted and perverted human benevolence by regarding the giver as an object of immolation, and the receiver as a helplessly miserable object of pity who holds a mortgage on the lives of others — a doctrine which is extremely offensive to both parties, leaving men no choice but the roles of sacrificial victim or moral cannibal.”*

Ayn Rand in *The Virtue of Selfishness* (1964)

Oscar Wilde’s charity-allergic passion for authenticity and creativity, made me curious for the contemporary appeal of the underlying values: reason, autonomy and freedom; These values are as out-dated and relativized as they are currently being idealized, contested, and haped into contemporary individualism. In America, this is done more then ever.

Due to her dangerously radical thoughts and Europe’s ‘uneasiness’ towards laissez-faire capitalism <sup>iv</sup> the name Ayn Rand might ring as little bells as it previously did to me. But she appeared essential for an understanding of the ‘principled selfishness’ that has currently taken the shape of a movement in the ‘land of Liberty’. Paradoxically, Ayn Rands high valuation of an un-sacrificed self, inspires as well as contradicts such movement-formation: “Only a rationally selfish man, a man of self esteem, is capable of love – because he is the only man capable of holding firm consistent, uncompromising, un-betrayed value. The man who does not value himself, cannot value anything or anyone” <sup>v</sup> It might be a sensible incoherence – understandable only in a country of possibilities, just across the ocean, where freedom and autonomy traditionally stand next to God himself.

As a twenty one year old philosopher, Ayn Rand (1905-1982) immigrated with millions from Soviet Union Russia after experiencing the violence of the October Revolution, and the ‘brute force of collectivism’ <sup>vi</sup>. Ayn Rand became the founding mother of objectivism: the ‘philosophy of reason, achievement, individualism. Her libertarian objectivist thinking – taken up by the Atlas Society and other objectivist individuals and collectives – is controversial, ‘challenging both left and right’. Nevertheless her objectivism is core to the Roots of American values and the globalizing package deal of capitalism, liberalism and individualism. As far as we may gather from the New Individualist a ‘Rand Reaction’ – a renewed Randianism – has arisen: Tea Party distributes her books, Ayn-Rand-tattoo’s are found on shoulders, there is an objectivists-dating site, people protest with quotes and characters from her novels. <sup>vii</sup> In a study of the national library of the American Congres, *Atlas Shrugged* appeared as the most in-

fluent book of the 20th century after the Bible. *Judging by the barrage of attacks and references in the media, one can only conclude that Ayn Rand is a pervasive and increasingly powerful force in U.S. Politics, possibly on the brink of toppling the prevailing orthodoxies of modern American Liberalism* <sup>viii</sup> Or shall I quote Michelle Malkin from Fox News? “*the Producers, the creators of wealth... are going on a strike... The Ayn Rand-ers need to take this country back*”

Even after being heavily criticized by political, economical and/or philosophical theoreticians, her objectivism is now included in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and new biographies, and analyses are being written every day. Rand’s ideas are unignorably alive and appealing. Corcoran (Financial Post, 2012) bitterly admits that ‘she has been long dead but resurrected as the most dangerous woman in America’.

In 1949 a movie of *The Fountainhead* was made in a very different context: a post World War II America which was phobic but also full of collectivist thinking, similar to the personal yet generic experience of a Young Ayn Rand fleeing from Soviet Russia to the United States. It is that context from and in which she pointed out the self-corrupting demands of ‘society’ and ‘solidarity’. She celebrated authenticity and the value of thinking, choosing and failing for yourself. She distrusted any governmental regulation, in favour of being responsible for no one but herself, passionate for a completely free market. For ‘the egotist-installation’ (Art in Context, 2013) I resurrected one of this first Ayn Rand mass-interpretations: *the Fountainhead* movie of 1949 that she loved for being so close to her novel, then hated, being misunderstood as more appealing as well as less substantial then she understood her ideas to be. Since 1949, the process of her ideas being flattened, reinterpreted, shaped, iconized, tattooed, praised and demonized had been on going. Heated by the financial crisis, in the contemporary American context her ideas are put forward as the source of its problems as well as the solution.



*‘Since man’s mind is his basic means of survival [...] he has to hold reason as an absolute, by which I mean that he has to hold reason as his only guide to action, and that he must live by the independent judgment of his own mind; that his highest moral purpose is the achievement of his own happiness [...] that each man must live as an end in himself, and follow his own rational self-interest.’*

Ayn Rand in *The Mike Wallace Interview* (1959)

All imagery taken from:

*‘the egotist-installation’*

(Victorine van Alphen, Art in Context, 2013)

<sup>i</sup> Self I Sing is the name of the idiosync-soundtrack-machine based on samples from the poem *One’s self I sing* (Walt Whitman, 1867). It allows the audience to make it’s own soundtrack-poem to ‘the egoist installation’

<sup>ii</sup> Boston Intelligencer on the poem *‘Leaves of Grass’*, of Walt Whitman (1819-1892) (of which the poem *One’s self I sing* is the first poem of the final phase). This opinion published as one of mainly negative reviews on Walt Whitmans leaves of grass after it was published in 1855 (revised in 1867). This criticism is typical for the kind of negative criticism that he got when his poetry came under attention, and is almost identical with the criticism on Ayn Rands Fountainhead, even if she – as a lover of the manmade – does not at all share his relation to nature and the transcendental. Rand anticipated and incorporated such criticism in dialogues of her main characters, to show it’s restrictive counterproductive effects. Although their work is dubbed egotist, Both Whitman and Rand celebrate the self, highly aware of the tense relation between individual and society. (Ayn Rand believed that her objectivist individualism would save humanity where altruism, by contrast, would destroy it.)

<sup>iii</sup> In this essay Wilde advocates a socialism that, according to him, would serve as he condition for individualism.

<sup>iv</sup> A capitalism that proclaims as little government and governing as possible.

<sup>v</sup> Ayn Rand in *The Virtue of Selfishness: a new Concept for Egoism*. The Objectivist Newsletter, 1964

<sup>vi</sup> <http://tegenlicht.vpro.nl/nieuws/2012/november/Ayn-Rand.html>

<sup>vii</sup> See for sources and more information (among many others):

<http://tegenlicht.vpro.nl/nieuws/2012/november/Ayn-Rand.html> and <http://www.atlassociety.org/print/324-america’s-new-action-hero>

<http://www.digitalbusstop.com/literary-tattoos/#ixzz2ONCAN4dS>

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/09/22/terence-corcoran-ayn-rand-still-the-most-dangerous-woman-in-america/>

<http://www.nrcnext.nl/columnisten/2012/10/22/de-samenleving-gaat-aan-solidariteit-ten-onder/>

<http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4468/Schrijf/article/detail/3386290/2013/01/31/De-visie-van-superkapitalist-en-kunstenares-Ayn-Rand-op-cultuur.dhtml>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/09/22/terence-corcoran-ayn-rand-still-the-most-dangerous-woman-in-america/>





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