

### THINK BIG it's an honour

January 2016 **#1** 





Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

## HONOURS COMMUNITY

## Index

- **3** The process of creating something new
- 4 Honours Council & Committees
- 5 The Reading Club
- 8 Hot of the press
- 14 Liesbeth in Wonderland
- 16 Research on positive body image and sexual functioning
- 18 My work as an EMDR- therapist
- 20 Multisystemic Therapy
- 22 Do the wrong thing
- 24 A report about a Conference: institutions for moral behaviour
- 26 The view on crime from a clinical psychological and a cultural anthropological perspective: the differences and how they are related
- **30** The pitfalls of an overzealous work ethic
- 32 Personal Story
- 34 Studium Generale
- 36 Word Search Puzzle
- 38 Dare to Dance
- 39 TEDtalk reviews



FLTR: Nina Chmielowice, Anneloes Kip, Shermaily Riley, Petra Arentsen, Kyra van Hamburg

# The process of creating something new

Last summer the idea of an entirely new Honours Magazine of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences led to the formation of the honours magazine committee. The committee consists of Marjolein de Jonge, Kyra van Hamburg, Shermaily Riley, Nina Chmielowice, Petra Arentsen, Anneloes Kip and Demi Blom (the latter representing the committee in the Honours Council). Since september, we have worked very hard and really got to know each other. Working on a mutual goal, trying to deliver this first magazine, has really made us a close group. We've certainly had some fun during the bring-your-own-breakfast-meetings, photo-shoots and even during the Christmas Holidays we were able to get together and get some work done. Everyone really invested in the committee and brought their own set of skills into the group. Most of us have written an item for the magazine and if you take a closer look, you can spot Shermaily on our cover photo.

Needless to say, putting together a magazine from scratch wasn't that easy. We've hit some bumps in the road and at times (during classes, exams and social life) our motivation got kicked in the nuts. Fortunately, we could always count on feedback and support from the staff of the Honours Programme. Special thanks go to people such as Pim Sangers, drs. Els van Kampen, dr. Jaap Bos and prof. dr. Denise de Ridder who made their time available to us, contributed their ideas on creating and promoting the Honours Magazine and sometimes really put our feet back on the ground.

Perhaps the most important people, to whom we are very grateful, are those who put a lot of time and effort into writing an item for the magazine. What really kept us going were their positive responses when we invited them to write for the magazine. People got really enthusiastic about the idea of a multidisciplinary magazine on social and behavioural science, education and mental health care. We wanted to create a package deal by including both students and professionals and give both parties the opportunity to share their interests, opinions and latest experiences within their field.

In this issue, amongst other things, you can read about the honours committees and activities of honours students of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Also, the issue is filled with fascinating and refreshing columns, personal stories, work experiences, reviews and essays! We are very proud of the result and thanks to designer Sjoerd Wenting of *Stark-Wark Ontwerp* the magazine looks both awesome and professional!

In retrospect, a key lesson we've learned is to take a different perspective and appreciate the developmental process of creating a magazine. Not only did we get to develop our own interests and writing skills, we also got to work with a lot of new people and learned from their stories! This makes us very excited to start developing the next Honours Magazine (June 2016) and we are very curious where it will take us. But first, we hope you'll enjoy reading this issue of the Honours Magazine *Think big: it's an honour!* 

#### Honours magazine committee.

For questions, comments, ideas and writing contributions contact us at: honours.redactie.sw@uu.nl

You can check out the Honours Magazine and monthly Think-Big Newsletters at: www.thinkbig.sites.uu.nl

Design, Sjoerd Wenting *Stark-Wark Ontwerp:* www.stark-wark.com

# Honours Council & Committees

#### **HONOURS COUNCIL**

This year's Honours Council consists of five students. These students are Jan and Bart, who study social psychology, Marije, who studies cognitive neuropsychology, Demi, who studies clinical psychology, and Tessa, who studies educational sciences. Together with our fellow honours students, the council aims to make the most of this year. As council members, we are responsible for ensuring the connection between the different committees within the honours community as well as between the community and the official executive board. We introduce the ideas and plans created by our committees to the executive board. In order to accomplish this, we have to consolidate all plans, to form one overall picture, and to make sure there is no overlap between the different activities. We intent to establish a strong honours community, in which all honours students understand, motivate and inspire each other. Hopefully, this will provoke novel insights and ambitions. In addition, the community should stimulate students' personal development and help them to become full-fledged academic students. Gaining new insights, ambitions and academic skills is the responsibility of the community as a whole. The community will propose some inventive ideas to achieve these goals. The honours council will assist

the honours committees in turning their ideas into feasible plans and activities. We will do so by gathering all essential information and subsequently discussing all ideas with the executive board. Essentially, the council consists of five enthusiastic students, who will try their best to encourage all honours students to think big. Thereby, we hope to stimulate the invention of purposeful ideas and opportunities.

#### ACADEMIC SKILLS COMMITTEE

The committee for Academic Skills (Academicie) consists of seven honours students. One of them, Jan, is the honours council representative. The students in our committee are involved in different fields of study, we consist of five psychology students and two sociology students. Jan is in the social psychology track, Mats and Marit are in the cognitive and neurobiological psychology track, Eefje is in the clinical psychology track, Sophie is in the neuropsychology track and Nick and Maaike are studying sociology.

The Academic Skills committee has been formed with the purpose of facilitating training courses that stimulate the talents of the honours students. This is a vital component of the Honours Programme, as its goal is to let the students develop their personal intelligence and abilities. The committee is

therefore excited to provide these training courses to such a motivated and enthusiastic group. The members of the committee have transferred the desires and interests of the honours community to a number of training courses that represent two main themes: ability and skill development and the enhancement of career prospects. With the theme ability and skill development, students should expect training courses that develop vital parts of academic excellence, such as giving a good presentation. Additionally, the honours students will be prepared for a bright academic future with the training courses that will teach them how to present themselves in the best way possible. For example: how to create a killer CV, how to behave during job-interviews and how to use Linked-In. The committee believes that these training courses will be the first step into the bright future of the honours student, and they therefore hope that every student will seize this opportunity and attend the training courses!

#### COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The Community Committee consists of five students, namely Alissa, Arjan, Elodie, Fleur and Roos. We are a varied group; Alissa studies cognitive- and neurobiological psychology, Arjan and Roos study social psychology, Elodie studies clinical- and health psychology, and Fleur studies pedagogical sciences. Not only do we regularly come together for meetings, but we also like to do fun things together every once in a while. Aside from all the study-related activities organized by the other committees, there is also room for recreational activities. This is where the Community Committee comes in. By linking recreational activities to more study-related activities, we hope to be able to come together in a relaxed setting, and to create a community feeling within the group of honours students of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Science. For example, we are planning on organizing informal gatherings after talks from guest speakers. We have already organized our event "After Camp", where we all got together before our first Dare to Compare lecture to eat pizza. Everyone really enjoyed seeing each other after the introductory

camp, and we think everyone had a good time. Lastly, we are responsible for providing the honours community sweater, which everyone from our honours community can purchase. Not only will this sweater serve a promotional purpose for the Honours Programme, but it will also strengthen the community feeling within our group. We hope to organize many fun activities for the remainder of this academic year, and to make everyone see the honours community as a close group, in which everyone is accepted and appreciated.

#### **INTRODUCTION COMMITTEE**

Let us present the Introduction committee (Intro-Cie)! We are the commission that is busy introducing the Honours Programme to the outside world, especially to the potential honours students in the first year of the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The four of us make a great team: we are Roderic, Maureen and Anne, who do the neurotrack of psychology, and Jet, who studies General Social Sciences.

We take action to inform and motivate high school students and first year students of the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences about the Honours Programme. Speaking of which, the kick-off and open days for the University of Utrecht were a big success! We will stay in touch with these enthusiastic and motivated students and welcome them to the Honours Programme. That is why we will take part in organising other activities promoting the Honours Programme. Here, you can see some of the events that will be organised or where you can find us:

- By the end of January The studiepadvoorlichting
- 5th of March

The Utrecht University Open House for high-school students

- By the end of March
   The day for high-school students
- By the end of July or the beginning of August We will organise the introduction camp for the new honours students

# The Reading Club

Prof. dr. Denise de Ridder, Honours Director Faculty of Social Sciences at Utrecht University

While talking to some honours students a while ago, the topic of reading novels was mentioned. Much to my surprise, some students told me that Harry Potter was the last novel they had read and that they read it quite some years ago when they were in high school. I was surprised because I love reading novels and I found it hard to imagine that anyone hadn't read a novel for so many years - even though I recognize that it is sometimes difficult to squeeze reading into a busy agenda (except for the summer holidays when I binge-read). To help me to prioritize novel reading in my long list of things to do, I joined a reading club twenty years ago. Every month we meet and discuss a novel that all of us read. It's not that we are experts on literature, but we just like to share our thoughts about the novel and compare our interpretations of the story (but only after we exchanged the latest academic gossip and always followed by a nice glass of wine). Why would any honours student be interested in reading novels and joining a reading club? While thinking about this, I found it hard to come up with a sound argument beyond the usual stuff that novel reading broadens your horizon and the like. That is, until recently. While reading the paper (yes, I also read papers) I came across a nice article by Dutch novelist Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer (NRC; November 28, 2015). In this article Pfeijffer refers to Utrecht University professor Beatrice de Graaf who frequently appears in the media as an expert on terrorism and who lamented that it was so difficult to predict when and why young muslims would become a Jihad terrorist. It takes a novelist rather than a scientist, De Graaf claimed, to understand what drives him. Pfeijffer accepted this challenge and wrote a short

> "Harry Potter was the last novel they had read"

story about a young and desperate muslim, who is living in the banlieue of Paris, as if he (Pfeijffer) were standing in the shoes of a young man who has lost all hope of a better future. I might argue then, that beyond just being fun, reading novels may even contribute to becoming a better social scientist. It gives you the opportunity to explore in your mind possibilities rigorous science doesn't provide. Of course, reading shouldn't be about



Potter and read some serious stuff, here are a couple of my last year's favourites: David Mitchell *The bone clocks*, T.C. Boyle *The harder they come*, Zia Haider Rahman *In the light of what we know*, and (in Dutch) Chris de Stoop *Dit is mijn hof* (which actually pictures the Flemish farm where my grandfather was born). I can recommend to savour these books in the pleasant company of a reading club.



# **HOT OFF THE PRESS**

STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Petra Arentsen, honours student Clinical and Health Psychology This segment contains interesting new studies that have been done in the social sciences.



It seems that experiencing hallucinations or delusions might not be just a symptom of a mental disorder like schizophrenia.

According to a study led by John McGrath<sup>1</sup>, mean lifetime prevalence of psychotic experiences was 5.8% in a sample of 31.261 adults. This is higher than the estimated prevalence of schizophrenia, which is 1%<sup>2</sup>. Psychotic experiences were more common among women, unemployed and nonmaried respondents, and those with low family incomes. It was also found that hallucinations were more common than delusional experiences. According to Simon Makin (a journalist at Scientific American), the results suggest that psychosis might exist on a spectrum<sup>3</sup>. It is not PSYCHOTIC EXPERIENCES MIGHT ALSO HAPPEN IN OTHERWISE HEALTHY PEOPLE

clear however, if these experiences are distributed continuously (which means that everyone has them) or if there are certain people or subgroups that have them. Nonetheless, these results could help ease the stigma attached to a schizophrenia diagnosis.

Unfortunately, the full content of the paper is only available to subscribers. For those that are interested in reading more about this topic, a meta-analysis by Linscott and van Os is available. The review by Makin, although less scientific, also has some very interesting points.

Photo: schizophrenia Photo credit: David Ensor / Visualhunt.com / CC BY

<sup>1</sup> McGrath, J.J., et al. (2015). Psychotic Experiences in the General Population: A Cross-National Analysis Based on 31 261 Respondents From 18 Countries. JAMA Psychiatry, 72(7), 697-705. doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.0575. For abstract see http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleID=2298236 <sup>2</sup> Sadock, B.J., Sadock, V.A., & Ruiz, P. (2014). Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders. In C.S. Pataki, & N. Sussman (Eds.), Kaplan & Sadock's Synopsis of Psychiatry: Behavioral Sciences/Clinical Psychiatry (pp. 300-346). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer <sup>3</sup> Makin, S. (2015). Does Schizophrenia Exist on an Autism-Like Spectrum? *Scientific American*. Retrieved from http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/does-schizophrenia-exist-on-an-autism-like-spectrum/

9

## DESIGNING A NEW PHONE? HIRE CHILDREN, NOT ADULTS!

An often heard complaint the last few years is that mobile phones are only getting bigger, not better. Could it be that mobile phone companies are running out of ideas? If they are, Kuzhmickaja, Wang, Graziotin, Dodero and Abrahamsson<sup>1</sup> might have the solution.

In their study, the authors investigated whether young children could be a valuable source of creative ideas for mobile phones and services. They randomly selected eight hundred ideas from a survey from 2006, with one group being adults and one group being children aged 7-12. Two independent raters evaluated the creativity of the ideas, looking at quality and novelty. It was found that the ideas expressed by children were more original, novel, of better quality and were more frequently implemented than the ideas of the adults. Collecting ideas from children might therefore be a new way for mobile phone companies to finally be innovative again.

A few examples of ideas<sup>2</sup>:

ADULTS	CHILDREN
"For hypochondriacs: send the symptoms and in response you get a possible disease"	"The phone'd change color according to the person one's speaking with"
"Some type of feedback feature for messa- ging that would convey your mood better than smileys"	"Sending questions to a teacher if one gets stuck with homework assignments"
"A Winnie the Pooh quote for the day"	"Airbags for when you drop your phone"
A winnie the Poon quote for the day	"The phone'd give snack recipes based on
"Wife's menstrual cycle with instructions to the husband"	what's in the fridge"
"A gym dating service that tells you which gym members are single"	"The phone could be one's own pet, which could be taken care of"
	"A device which detects dirty spots in one's
"A service that tells whether a lecture is worth attending. The participants could	house"
vote"	"The phone would give the right pitch for songs when people are singing together"
"A mobile standup comedian: tells appro- priate jokes in every occasion"	

## AN ALTERED SENSE OF HUMOUR MAY BE AN INDICATOR FOR DEMENTIA

According to a recent study by Clark and colleagues<sup>1</sup>, changes in humor may be indicative of and differentiate between dementia syndromes.

The authors looked at four kinds of dementia: behavioural variant frontotemporal dementia (bvFTD), semantic dementia (SD), progressive nonfluent aphasia (PNFA) and Alzheimer's disease (AD). They found that all patient groups showed a preference for slapstick humour (such as Mr. Bean) and liked absurdist and satirical comedy less than the healthy controls. Moreover, patients with bvFTD and SD showed inappropriate incidences of humour. They laughed at others' misadventure, for example witnessing someone injure himself or watching news stories about disasters, and at impersonal stimuli such as a barking dog. Interestingly, one of these alterations in humour was reported to have occurred before the onset of more typical symptoms of dementia (2 to 13 years earlier): experiencing less pleasure in satirical comedy. These findings could lead to better and earlier diagnosis of dementia by looking at alterations in humour.



Photo: old man Photo credit: Susan NYC / Visualhunt.com / CC BY-NC-SA modified colours

<sup>1</sup> Kuzhmickaja, I., Wang, X., Graziotin, D., Dodero, G., & Abrahamsson, P. (2015). In Need of Creative Mobile Service Ideas? Forget Adults and Ask Young Children. Sage Open, 5(3), 1-13. doi: 10.1177/2158244015601719. Retrieved from http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/5/3/2158244015601719
<sup>2</sup> For those that are interested, the data used by Kuzhmicka et al. is available at http://figshare.com/articles/Sample for /858906. <sup>1</sup> Clark, C.N., Nicholas, J.M., Gordon, E., Golden, H.L., Cohen, M.H., Woodward, F.J., Macpherson, K., Slattery, C.F., Mummery, C.J., Schott, J.M., Rohrer, J.D., & Warren, J.D. (2015). Altered Sense of Humor in Dementia. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, *49*, 111-119. doi: 10.3233/JAD-150413. http://content.iospress.com/articles/journal-of-alzheimers-disease/jad150413

## INTERROGATING TERRO-RISTS: BEING RESPECTFUL AND BUILDING RAPPORT IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN COERCIVE STRATEGIES

A study by Goodman-Delahunty, Martschuk and Dhami<sup>1</sup> looked at efficacy of coercive and noncoercive interview strategies with detainees suspected of terrorist acts. They found that noncoercive strategies were most effective in securing information.

Confessions were four times more likely when interviewers adopted a respectful and neutral stance. When using a social strategy called rapport-building (an approach consisting of informal interactions such as attentiveness, genuine interest and empathy), detainees were even fourteen times more likely to disclose information earlier in the interview than when rapport-building was not used. According to Olga Khazan<sup>2</sup>, writer at The Atlantic, accusatory strategies are still more likely to be used with high value detainees (like terrorists) than social strategies. Why? Khazan highlights a study that found that people are more likely to be supportive of torture if the suspect is a terrorist<sup>3</sup>. The authors speculate that this support for torture might be based on retributive action (punishment) and not based on information extraction.



Photo: Interrogation Photo credit: Drewdlecam / VisualHunt.com / CC BY-NC-SA

<sup>1</sup> Goodman-Delahunty, J., Martschuk, N., & Dhami, M.K. (2014). Interviewing High Value Detainees: Securing Cooperation and Disclosures. Applied Cognitive Psychology, 28(6), 883-897. doi: 10.1002/acp.3087

<sup>2</sup> Khazan, O. (2014). The Humane Interrogation Technique That Actually Works. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/12/the-humane-interrogation-technique-that-works-much-better-than-torture/383698/?google\_editors\_picks=true

<sup>3</sup> Spino, J., & Cummins, D. (2014). The Ticking Time Bomb: When the Use of Torture Is and Is Not Endorsed Review of Philosophy and Psychology, 5(4), 543-563. doi: 10.1007/s13164-014-0199-y

# Liesbeth in Wonderland

Prof. dr. Liesbeth Woertman, director of the psychology educational programme at Utrecht University. Interview by: Nina Chmielowice-Szymanski, honours student General Social Sciences at Utrecht University & Shermaily Riley, honours student Psychology at Utrecht University.

#### Who is prof. dr.Liesbeth Woertman?

I am 61 and since 2009 I'm the director of the psychology educational programme in Utrecht. The description of my chair is maintaining the quality of the education in the psychology department. It's a nice combination; I have a chair to study the quality of the education, as well as my responsibility for the entire educational programme It's a hell of a job. I could also answer this question on a psychological level and say "I am the one who is asked for directions".

## From Jamin candysellster to director of an educational programme

I am the oldest child of a working-class family. Having no idea what I wanted to do with my life and myself, I started my first job in the candy shop Jamin at age fifteen, after dropping out of school. Two years later my little brother graduated high school and got his *MAVO*-diploma. Meanwhile I had been working at all kinds of lousy jobs and was still wondering what to do with my life. Inspired by my brother I decided I wanted to start the *MAVO* evening school.

#### MAVO

Before the *MAVO* I had always been one of those kids being told to go "water the plants" or do other chores. During the lessons I used to be daydreaming. I wasn't doing what I was supposed to do and I didn't feel like I had a problem. I just thought I wasn't that smart and therefore got insufficient marks. What was actually going on was that I didn't know how to study. I had to talk myself into the *MAVO* because the director was very skeptical about the fact that I hadn't gone to school in two years. With my heart beating loudly I tried talking my way in. Finally the director said a little moody, "Well, I'll take you as a risk-student". Strangely enough I got my *MAVO*-diploma within a year. Something happened; I finally understood what studying was.

#### My first A grade!

At the *MAVO*, in one way or another, it just clicked, I understood what studying was. Reading wasn't the problem, I spent a lot of time in the library. But I just realized that you have to pay attention and reread your notes for example. I'll never forget the following. The first school exam we had to do was Dutch text interpretation. I went to school three evenings a week, and I worked full-time. I'll never forget, the teacher entered the room and he said "Hey Woertman! What grade do you think you have?" I thought oh f\*ck the duck and said very insecure: "Well sir, I think I have a 6 at least". "You got a 10, Woertman!" .That grade put so much into motion. So I got my diploma in one year and I was unbelievably proud. It changed my life fundamentally. I got curious and I thought, if I can do this then maybe I can do more.



#### Alice in wonderland

Actually everything went pretty easily, if I just took my time for it. Eventually I went to the Social Academy. I learned all kinds of theories and ideas and my world was expanding further and further. It felt like 'Alice in Wonderland', discovering one door after another. If you look at my resume, it looks like I'm a very slick person, but that's not how it went, absolutely not. I'm fascinated by how far you can develop your thinking and step into new worlds time after time, despite all the insecurities and fears you have. And you should realize that although my story sounds nice and successful, there was also a lot of sadness, fear and rejection.

#### Different worlds

I felt like living in two worlds, being from a working-class family while developing and getting educated. My parents know I teach, that's an idea they can picture. But the thing is, they didn't grow alongside me. And for a very long time I felt very torn about it, because I'm also a loyal girl, and you want to be loyal to where you're from. I don't want them to think that I look down on them. In

our time, it seems as if the social class problem doesn't exist, things aren't referred to in that context anymore, but of course it's still there. That's why I think it's important to tell my story, to teach and comfort others, that things in life can take some crazy turns.

#### Studying together

After the Social Academy I

thought "Well, now I want to go to the university". But I've hesitated for a long time. I thought: this time I'm reaching too far, this is too hard. I actually wanted to study philosophy but in the meantime I already had two kids. I wasn't sure if philosophy could earn us a living. So eventually, I started studying psychology, and at the beginning I felt like I was lost. There was a large class difference, and I thought: this is not my world. But during the first year, bit-by-bit I discovered people who also didn't fit in for whatever reason. I found some real soulmates. I started to have fun studying because I began studying with other people. We divided the chapters amongst each other and then we explained to each other what the essence was of each chapter. Later, I found out that explaining material to someone else is by far the best way of studying. The study went pretty quick, and at the end they asked me to stay and offered me a position as a teacher.

#### Grab that opportunity

I was very lucky to have a few teachers who saw a potential in me that I hadn't seen for myself yet. For me, this is the essence of being a good lecturer: seeing something that is almost possible or within reaching distance while people haven't realized it for themselves yet. I hate the liberal thought that if you work hard enough in life, you'll make it. It definitely plays a big role, but it's not the only thing. There's something in the interaction with others. There need to be some people who want to see you. And when they actually reach out, you have to grab that hand. I had never pictured myself as a teacher but it turned out to be a great fit. I obtained my doctorate in 1994, all in my own time and with my own money. I have chosen the hard way, because I wanted to develop myself and to grow, and in 2009 I got offered the position as the director of the educational programme. And here I am now.

Take home message

I really wish that when students are here, at the university, they are here for themselves. To everyone who's here because of their parents, or because it's a usual thing to go to university where they're from, I'd tell them to go. Go do something different. Leave immediately. To the students who are here for the

potential status I'd say, "please leave right now". There are other fields where you can obtain a much higher status and make more money. Not here with us. I want students to be more intrinsically motivated. I don't think we've got enough of those. I don't care about high grades, but I want students to show that they are interested. The same goes for the Honours Programme. According to me, the Honours Programme isn't all about high grades. It is meant for people who dare to walk that path, to open that door, to see what else there is. And it is meant for people who dare to be vulnerable and who want to grow and learn. That's what should be most important. So the message to all students is: be brave. Don't just follow your heart, but be brave in the sense of asking questions and being curious.

14

"It felt like

Alice in Wonderland.

discovering one door

after another"

## RESEARCH ON POSITIVE BODY IMAGE AND SEXUAL FUNCTIONING

Femke van den Brink, Psychology teacher at Utrecht University

My name is Femke van den Brink and I am a psychology teacher at Utrecht University. Besides teaching, I am conducting research as part of my PhD project. This work involves studying positive body image and sexual functioning.

Ten years ago, when I was a bachelor psychology student I met prof. dr. Liesbeth Woertman. Her enthusiasm and devotion in studying body image "infected" me. As a student, she gave me the opportunity to contribute to her research projects, and a few years after I graduated, she provided me the opportunity of writing a thesis for my doctorate. The research topic of body image keeps intriguing me and I would like to share some interesting findings so far, which I have outlined below.

Pleasurable and safe sexual experiences are an essential element of overall health related quality of life. Since problems with sexual functioning can impact interpersonal functioning and overall quality of life significantly, identifying determinants of sexual functioning is important. It could increase our understanding of how to prevent or treat sexual problems. A relevant determinant frequently studied in the context of sexual functioning in women, is body image. Body image is best characterized as a multidimensional construct encompassing self-perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours about one's physical appearance. In a review study, we have compiled the empirical evidence of 57 studies regarding the association between sexuality and body image among healthy women. We found that many studies have supported a connection between body image and female sexual functioning. Negative body image may interfere with sexual pleasure and satisfaction, or may lead to painful experiences during sexual activity with partners<sup>1</sup>. However, it became clear that relationships between body image and female sexual functioning have been investigated mostly

in negative terms, and there was little attention to positive aspects of body image. It is important to acknowledge that positive body image is not simply the opposite of negative body image. For example, the absence of body dissatisfaction does not automatically imply positive body image. Positive body image is reflected by the absence of negative body attitudes and dissatisfaction, and the presence of love, respect, acceptance, and appreciation held for one's body, and is therefore conceptually distinct from negative body image. Targeting positive body image in research may generate implications for prevention and treatment of body image issues and sexual problems, above and beyond the measurement and reduction of negative body image, which can enhance further physical and psychological health benefits.

In this respect, we have explored characteristics of women who are satisfied with their body -with emphasis on their sexual health-, in an empirical study. We found that young women who reported overall body satisfaction evaluated themselves more positive as a sexual partner and reported better general sexual functioning than women who were neutral about their bodies. Both solo and mutual sexual frequency did not differ between the women with positive and neutral body image evaluations. These results imply that body satisfaction is associated with positive quality, but not higher quantity, of sexual experiences<sup>2</sup>. Since there might be additional factors that impact associations between positive body image and sexual functioning, we examined links of two underlying dimensions of romantic attachment (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) in romantic relationships with positive body image and sexual functioning in another empirical study in female university students. In young adulthood, body image is strongly influenced by interactions with romantic partners, and romantic partners typically function simultaneously as sexual partners and attachment figures. This makes the role of



romantic attachment in the relationship between positive body image and sexual functioning of particular interest. Our results suggest both direct and indirect links between romantic attachment and sexual functioning. Low levels of attachment anxiety were favourable for experiencing more body appreciation and, in turn, more sexual desire and subjective sexual arousal. Low levels of attachment avoidance were directly linked with better sexual functioning, by enhancing more arousal and vaginal lubrication, higher ability to reach orgasm, and sexual satisfaction<sup>3</sup>. These results suggest that the role of romantic attachment can be a continued area of interest for researchers and clinicians. In clinical settings, we recommend to pay attention to the intimate relational context through, for example, involving romantic partners in individual treatment programmes. Furthermore, we feel that emotionally focused couple therapy is useful in this respect. This form

of therapy can be effective in targeting negative interactions between partners that maintain attachment insecurity, reprocessing negative emotional experiences of sex, and develop a more secure bond with the partner in order to build on a more satisfying sex life. The associations between body appreciation, sexual functioning and romantic attachment underline that specific (elements in) treatment programmes can be helpful in building on a positive cycle, in which positive body image, a satisfying sex life, and a secure bond with the partner can reinforce each other. We are currently working on other studies in the context of relationships between positive body image and sexual functioning. Hopefully, future findings can help make a step-change in understanding and treating mental health issues in the context of body image issues and sexual dysfunction.

<sup>2</sup> Van den Brink, F., Smeets, M. A. M., Hessen, D. J., Talens, J. G., & Woertman, L. (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Woertman, L., & Van den Brink, F. (2012). Body image and female sexual functioning and behavior: A review. Journal of Sex Research, 49, 184-211 doi:10.1080/00224499.2012.658586

Body satisfaction and sexual health in Dutch female university students. Journal of Sex Research, 50, 786-794. doi:10.1080/00224499.2012.684250

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## **MY WORK AS AN** EMDR- THERAPIST

Angerique E. Molenaar, healthcare-psychologist and pedagogue at Reetude, Dordrecht.

"I don't feel good, I don't sleep very well, I always have nightmares about the same event, I feel guilty about it, it's typically me and I don't like that, I avoid thinking about it and when I do I 'm anxious".

These are one of the complaints that clients have when they come to me for psychological consultancy. I talk about it with them daily and after some counselling interviews I regularly propose to treat them with Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy.

#### WHO AM I?

Till 1985 I studied pedagogic sciences in Utrecht. Afterwards I have worked for 22 years at a big company, an educational service centre. I was helping children with learning- and behavioural problems by advising their parents and their schoolteachers. I always wanted to extend my occupation and I became more and more interested in the problems of people of all ages. I wanted to help them directly, by myself. During my 'life long learning experience' I got educated in the application of EMDR. Since 7 years I have got my own practice as a healthcare-psychologist and EMDR-therapist. During 3 mornings a week I'm practicing EMDR and other therapies. In the afternoons I'm practicing administration, reporting, I make phone calls, have contacts with medical doctors, catch up with professional

reading/ training and other pursuits. So at the other days of the week I've got time for my 4 kids , my husband and other activities.

#### **EMDR, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing is a therapy for people who experience psychological difficulties as a result of traumatic events (such as an accident, pain, heavy emotions, sexual violence etc.). The first version of EMDR has been described by the American psychologist, Francine Shapiro in 1989. It has now developed to be an effective and acknowledged therapeutic method.

#### WHEN IS EMDR USED?

As described by the Vereniging EMDR Nederland, there are people affected by negative events who can deal with recovering after trauma on their own, using their own resources. Others develop psychological problems, usually the traumatic event is being re-experienced, for example in fearful images (flashbacks, intrusive images) and nightmares. Other symptoms that often occur are fear and avoidance responses. This is generally referred to as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD )and other anxiety based disorders. These are problems caused by a specific, horrific event, whereby thinking of this event still elicits a strong emotional reaction.

#### **IS EMDR EFFECTIVE?**

There has been a lot of scientific research carried out to establish the effectiveness of EMDR. The results show that clients respond well to EMDR. After a few EMDR sessions most of the people are able to continue with their daily activities such as work and study. People who have endured longer lasting traumatic events or when the problems are more complex, treatment obviously requires more time.

#### **HOW DOES EMDR WORK?**

It isn't certain how EMDR works. In any case it appears that the natural and normal processing is being stimulated by EMDR. There is a lot of scientific research which shows that bilateral stimulation (concentrating on the distracting stimulus) increases the access to memories. The client focuses some time on heavy thoughts relates to the traumatic event. The distracting stimulus is given by looking at my hand taps or moving lights from a special designed lamp. Research also shows that the bilateral stimulation in EMDR automatically leads to physical relaxation. This probably directly effects the implications for memories: as a result memories change and will be stored differently in long term memory but in a less emotional way.

#### WHAT ELSE IS EMDR USED FOR?

There is more and more evidence that emotionally charged memories and images also play an important role in other psychological problems and disorders, such as chronic pain, eating disorders, depression, addictions and psychosis. For this reason EMDR is used more frequently but usually as part of a broader treatment programme. Further information can be found at www.emdr.nl. To ensure good quality, always check if the therapist is registered with Vereniging EMDR Nederland (VEN). The aim of VEN is quality control when EMDR is used.

# Multisystemic Therapy

Luc Volkert, MST therapist, De Waag (section: *Forensische Zorgspecialisten*), The Netherlands, location Leiden (2 years)

Treatment: Multisystemic Therapy (MST). MST is an intensive family- and community-based treatment program that focuses on addressing all environmental systems that impact chronic and violent juvenile offenders, their homes and families, schools and teachers, neighbourhoods and friends. For more information visit mstservices.com.

Organization: *De Waag Nederland*, is the oldest and largest centre for outpatient forensic psychiatry in the Netherlands, and provides a perspective for clients and those around them. The policlinic contributes to a safer society by working to achieve lasting changes in the behaviour of clients. These clients, aged 12 and older, exhibit transgressive and/or criminal behaviour and often have (severe) psychological problems. Substance abuse problems may also be an issue.

#### LEARNING ON THE JOB

After graduating from the Utrecht University in 2013, I was lucky to find a job as a MST-therapist. I had a wonderful time at my internship with the Raad voor de Kinderbescherming, but I had more of a consulting/advising role there, than actually seeing clients. Even though I had gained a lot of experience in communicating with youth while working at groups with children (that could not live at home), I did not have much therapeutic experience. With MST I needed to focus on reducing the risk of recidivism actively, not only by talking to the child itself, but mostly by influencing their parents and (direct) environment. Luckily, MST has an everlasting learn-on-the-job character. This means that the basic method gives you the continuous opportunity to learn from yourself, your team members and of course your supervisor and consultant. This loop of weekly feedback from

different layers guarantees that each day you become better in what you do. On a weekly basis we use short role-plays (5 minutes max) for difficult situations. Not only do we receive well-adjusted feedback but we can also practice implementing the solutions quickly. MST even recommends making recordings of sessions, especially the sessions you are not satisfied with. This makes it much easier for your team to understand what you are struggling with as a therapist and how to tackle those problems. You will learn much faster if you are able to see feedback as an opportunity to learn, than as 'big brother' watching you. The youth (often) shows delinguent behaviour while one or both parents have psychiatric/psychological problems themselves. Most families followed lots of treatment before and are therefore sceptical about you being the one that is going to help them. An open, honest and



"Engagement is the most important thing in MST and is in my opinion a critical key for success in each treatment" curious attitude will get you a long way in understanding the family's problems and at the same time you are building engagement with the family members. Engagement is the most important thing in MST and is in my opinion a critical key for success in each treatment. Engagement withholds your working relationship with the client (or the person you work with). Cancelled appointments and not executed interventions are examples of possible indicators for low engagement. Having a low engagement does not mean that therapy as a whole is a lost cause, but it does mean that interventions specifically focused on enhancing the engagement are required. However, failing to admit there is an engagement problem could mean the end of your treatment.

# Do the wrong thing

Dr. Jaap Bos, teacher General Social Sciences at Utrecht University

'Do the right thing' is the title of a successful 1989 movie written and directed by Spike Lee about racial issues. I had to think about this film, or rather about its title, when I had to give a lecture on ethics in social sciences.

It was a lecture on all the various bad decisions researchers as well as students sometimes make – such as transgressing into plagiarism, fraud, data manipulation etc. It's a lecture I give reluctantly, because it is easily misunderstood as a sort of sermon told by a know-it-all to a group of enthusiasts who find themselves in the defendants' bench without having done anything wrong.

It does not help to say that that is not your objective. On the contrary. Students will find that that is exactly your objective – or so I have to assume, since when I gave this lecture not so long ago, student's appreciation of my teaching never was so low. They fucking hated it!

So what did I do wrong? I started out discussing a few examples of researchers who had done all the wrong things. We all know Diederick Stapel, I said, who filled out his own questionnaires. Great idea – but it's not research. It's more akin to the work of a magician who conjures a rabbit out of his hat but only after he put it in there in the first place. I mentioned Mart Bax too, the anthropologist, who invented entire villages to support his findings. That makes great fiction. And then I proceeded to discuss the prevalence of fraud and its consequences.

The prevalence of such obvious forms of fraud is not very high, but its consequences are quite serious. One of them being the fact that a journal has to retract a publication when errors are made ('sloppy science') or fraud is suspected. Since 1975 the number of retraction in the scientific journals (in the field of bio-medical and life-sciences) has increased nearly ten-fold , see a study by Fang and colleagues<sup>1</sup>. This may be partly the result of our own recently increased awareness of ethical issues, but it is also telling.

Retractions undermine the already receding trust in science, so I ended my lecture with a call to the student, saying: ethics is not really about 'doing the right thing', rather it has to do with the question what are the goals that you want to achieve in science? Now I know what I did wrong – or at least I understand why my message never got across. I believe I made a classical mistake. In this respect (ethics), you cannot learn from other people's mistakes. You have to learn from your own. So here is my piece of advice to all of you (and I hope you appreciate the irony in it): do the wrong thing! And learn from it.



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# A report about a Conference:

institutions for moral behaviour

#### Marieke ter Hoeven, honours student Cognitive Neuro-biological Psychology at Utrecht University

Thursday the 12th of November 2015 was the day when the conference about the institutions for moral behaviour took place in the Leeuwenberghkerk in Utrecht. I look back on a very interesting day, with talented and engaging speakers presenting the audience with interesting descriptions of research in their field. My aim with this report is to present you with an impression of that day and a small review about the different lectures I attended. The day began at 9 o'clock in the morning. Henk Aarts, one of the organisers of the conference, opened the conference. He emphasized the interdisciplinary atmosphere of the conference, and how important it was to talk about morality to understand more about society in general. Then he announced the first speaker: Frans de Waal. Internationally, Frans de Waal is especially known for his research on prosocial tendencies in apes. His primate research offers insight into the possible evolutionary building blocks of moral behaviour in humans. He explained how there are different views of morality within different evolutionary

theories. The 'veneer theory' stresses how nasty nature is and that it wouldn't be able to produce something like morality. On the other hand there's a view about 'evolved morality'. Here morality is seen as a product of evolution. Any animal with well-established social instincts would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience. His talk was engaging and had lots of examples of the moral building blocks he studied in primates: chimpanzees reconcile after fights, group members react with consolation to another stressed bonobo, apes have the capacity for targeted helping (which showed apes can take the perspective of the other ape), apes cooperate even though they themselves gain nothing from it and apes, as well as monkeys, have an aversion for inequity: they want the same reward as the other ape or monkey in exchange for the same effort. This shows there has to be some sense of fairness. By the end of his talk he had me convinced: Darwin was right on the morality part – it is emotionally driven, stems from our ancient brain areas and makes use of our 'gut' judgment.

The next speaker was Paul van Lange, professor of Psychology at the VU University at Amsterdam. His research focuses on human cooperation and trust, where a lot of his research-studies revolve around the mechanisms of social interdependence. He talked about the variables that predict how much we donate in door-to-door donation situations, and it turns out that a powerful motivator for the way we make our decisions revolves around our reputations being at stake. He also talked about why and how we trust other people. Heritability of trust turns out to be quite small, and the levels of trust vary greatly cross-nationally. The specific personal experiences of people matter a lot, as well as our own states (for example sleep deprivation) and even the specific features of other people: the more masculine a face looks, the less trust people tend to have for this person. Paul van Lange has also done a lot of studies on 'social mindfulness'. Unmindful behaviour would be to take away options from another person. Apparently people are more socially mindful towards friends than towards strangers and more socially mindful to people with 'trustworthy' faces. Social mindfulness is associated with other prosocial measures and it is associated with adult age. People from 'lower social classes' elicit greater social mindfulness from us, than people from higher social classes. Cross-nationally there's a strong correlation between social mindfulness and prosperity. Taken all together his talk shed light on different social aspects and social mechanisms that can play a considerable role in our moral decision making.

The last talk I attended was the talk of Joshua Greene, professor of Psychology at Harvard University. He could tell us a lot about moral judgment and decision-making. His research has focused on behavioural experiments and functional neuroimaging techniques to understand the moral judgments shaped by

automatic processes and controlled cognitive processes. He talked about the different ways people could make decisions with social dilemma's, namely intuitive and fast, versus slower 'manually' controlled. It seems that when people are asked to make an integrative judgment, the input from the dorso-lateral prefrontal cortex, as well as the input from the amygdala, are both taken into account. Morality does not have a special place in the brain though, probably because there are many variables involved. Joshua Greene talked about how modern morality is not really about 'selfishness versus thinking about others'. Questions about modern morality ask for higher levels of reconciliation. It was very interesting to hear him talk about the different behavioural studies, that underlined how small variations in the variables can cause people to make guite different moral decisions. For example, the distance at which people around us are suffering matters: the more distant, the less we are inclined to take action. His conclusions were that our fast-thinking machinery does guite a good iob at solving basic moral problems. However, modern moral issues such as different moral perspectives, need to be dealt with by a slower way of thinking. Modern moral issues ask from us to take into consideration and sometimes accept things that we initially find counter-intuitive.

After this talk I had to call it a day, because the duty of attending my course lectures called. I can recommend you to look into the research done by the experienced speakers I've described above. I hope I've been able to share some of my experiences and knowledge I've gained that day with you, and I hope my report will spark your thoughts on morality, the way it did with me.

THE VIEW ON **CRIME FROM A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL** AND A CULTURAL **ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:** THE DIFFERENCES **AND HOW THEY ARE RELATED** 

Petra Arentsen, honours student Clinical and Health Psychology

This Essay was written within the Dare-to-Compare Course of the Honours Programme 2015-2016. The course began with the introduction of a common theme that was broad and societally relevant (i.e. the topic of 'crime'). Students individually wrote a short paper about this topic. Course coordinator Reine van der Wal MSc. (assistant professor) and course teachers dr. Floor Kroese and dr. Amy Nivette chose this paper to be published in the Honours Magazine.

Crime is a topic of wide interest because its consequences can affect almost everyone. According to Nivette<sup>1</sup>, crime is a list of behaviours that society generally agrees are wrong and that should be forbidden. It causes physical, economic, social or psychological harm and is often followed by an official response guided by law. This paper contains an examination of the differences in research on the topic of crime, as seen from the perspectives of clinical psychology and cultural anthropology. Firstly, the perspective of clinical psychology on crime will be discussed, examining a study about the link between personality traits and delinguent behaviour. It will continue with the perspective of cultural anthropology, analyzing a fascinating study of a murder note written during colonial times in Mexico. Finally, a comparison will highlight the differences and similarities between the two approaches.

#### **CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Clinical psychologists focus on abnormal behaviour or psychological disorders. Abnormal behaviour is defined as psychological dysfunction within someone which is associated with impairment in functioning or distress and a response that is not typical or culturally expected<sup>2</sup>. Besides abnormal behaviour, another construct of interest is personality. Personality is a set of traits or characteristics of individuals that are consistent and affect many behavioural domains<sup>3</sup>. This variable plays a key role in clinical psychology because of its range of effects on psychological disorders. For example, the personality trait of Neuroticism strongly predicts the risk for major depression<sup>4</sup>, anxiety disorders<sup>5</sup> and is associated with high levels of somatic and emotional distress<sup>6</sup>. Both personality and psychological disorders are therefore essential to clinical psychology.

Are these factors also important in approaching the problem of crime? The answer seems to be yes. First of all, in a study of delinguent behaviour in 18-yearolds, Krueger and colleagues<sup>3</sup> addressed the question: "Is there a relationship between personality and criminal behaviour?" They found that five personality scales correlated with delinguency: traditionalism and control correlated negatively, and aggression, alienation and stress reaction positively. Furthermore, the most versatile adolescent delinguents had distinctly different personality profiles compared to the control group: they scored low on harm avoidance and social closeness. and high on alienation. Secondly, psychological disorders also play an important role in the clinical

perspective on crime. It seems that both mental disorders and personality disorders are more prevalent among prisoners. For example, a study by Rasmussen, Storsæter en Levander<sup>7</sup> found a higher lifetime prevalence of major depression, bipolar disorder, alcohol and substance abuse, early adjustment problems and psychopathy in a prison population. Two Swedish studies found that 5% of inmates had a major mental disorder and 20 to 75% a personality disorder7. In conclusion, crime is often approached by clinical psychologists by looking at personality and prevalence of mental disorders.

It is now clear that many criminals suffer from either a personality or mental disorder. Coming back to the definition of abnormal behaviour, crime is a problem because it is abnormal: it is often caused by psychological dysfunction, associated with distress for at least the victim and maybe the offender, and it is a deviation from the norm. As a therapist, clinical psychologists often come into contact with victims and offenders of crime. It is obvious how crime can be a problem for the victim. For example, witnessing crime can, in combination with other variables, cause posttraumatic stress disorder in victims<sup>8</sup>. However, crime could also be a problem for

the offender. Sometimes one can commit a crime without wanting to or being fully responsible. These two examples clarify that crime is mostly seen as a problem for the individual in clinical psychology. Therefore, it should also be addressed on the individual level. In their discussion, Krueger and colleagues explain that although societies and genes contribute to crime, these forces do not commit crimes. According to them, the main focus should be to acknowledge the role of the actors in crime. This seems to be in agreement with the approach of clinical psychology at large. While social factors and environment definitely play a role in clinical psychology, in the end the one that receives therapy and has to change is the individual itself. Functional family-therapy is an example of an intervention that has been found effective for delinguent adults<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, early intervention in childhood might help. Children with antisocial behaviours can be helped significantly by teaching parents to recognize behavioural problems and to encourage prosocial behaviours<sup>2</sup>.

#### CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Just as clinical psychology has its own preferred methods for doing research, cultural anthropology distinguishes itself by its research method: ethnographic field research. The purpose of this type of research is to provide a detailed description and an understanding of the lives of members of a group<sup>10</sup>. Ethnography emphasizes the context of human life, looking at micro-cultures, like the family, and macro-cultures, such as the country one lives in. It is the study of how people display their culture, and of what they think, value and believe. To find out what the meaning is of people's behaviour, it is necessary to become familiar with the social and cultural context<sup>10</sup>.

When it comes to crime and violence, these constructs can be approached by looking at cultural practices and beliefs, ritual violence and/or relationships within groups<sup>1</sup>. This becomes clear in a study by Terraciano, who examined a murder note from a Mixtec man from 1684. The paper begins by describing the inhabitants of colonial Mexico, the Mixtecs. Terraciano explains that Mexico was a colony of Spain, and that crime and punishment therefore reflected both Native and Spanish moral values. The paper continued by translating the note and describing the murder. The man (Pedro) had killed his wife because she had an affair with another man. What is interesting about the note according to the author is that Pedro never offered an explanation for killing his wife beyond accusing her of adultery. It seems that he did not need any further justification for his murder. The author offers two explanations: the first is that adultery was a serious offence in Native Mixtec communities, traditionally punishable by death. The second explanation is that Pedro murdered his wife voluntarily, and therefore he corrected the sin of adultery. This would reflect the Christian / Spanish moral values. In the conclusion of the paper the author describes that the case fits

into a fairly well-defined pattern of crime for the colonial period. The highest percentage of violence occurred between members of the same household, with women most often being the victim and 99% of the homicides committed by men. The author concludes that one of the struggles of that time was that of gender rights. This may have contributed to the violence of men towards their cheating wives. This paper clearly reflects how anthropology approaches crime. First of all, the examination of cultural beliefs (adultery is a serious offence, women are not allowed to cheat) and practices (adultery is punishable by death) creates explanations for violence and crime. Secondly, the cultural context seems to be important. Variables that explain violence cannot be seen separately from each other, such as the place (colonial Mexico), the time (1684) and the values (Spanish and Native).

Why is crime a problem according to cultural anthropology and for whom? It's not clear if it's even seen as a problem. The study of the Mixtec murder note describes crime in such a way that it fits within the cultural context and values. It is likely that it depends on the culture whether or not crime is seen as a problem. Adultery was punishable by death and this was accepted by the Native Mexicans, and partially accepted by the Spanish. But even though it was accepted, the crime and violence towards women still affected one group: women. For them, it certainly was a problem. How crime should be addressed is again very culturally specific. Is it

seen as a problem in this specific society? What cultural values and norms are concealed behind violence? To address the violence in this specific example, the value of 'adultery is a sin' and the norm 'adultery should be punishable by death' should have to be addressed. In conclusion, cultural anthropology is a very descriptive way of research, looking at cultural and social contexts, values and beliefs and trying to understand the culture from within.

#### COMPARISON

Clinical psychology and cultural anthropology seem to be two contradictory approaches. Clinical psychology directs its attention towards the individual and their characteristics, such as personality and mental disorders. It is an approach that uses statistical procedures, standardized assessment and group research. The goal is to be able to say something meaningful about the individual. The individual is both responsible for

crime and the key to addressing it. Cultural anthropology on the other hand concentrates on case studies and small groups. Instead of trying to find a representative population, the object of study is a specific community. Even though it studies small groups or individuals, the goal is to say something about a culture. It is also highly context and culture specific. Not the individual, but the group or culture is responsible for crime because of the values and behaviours that are part of it. Even though there are many differences, the two approaches are also related to each other. For example, both are concerned with specific behaviours and attitudes of people that cause crime. Clinical psychology finds these behaviours and attitudes in the individual (delinguents are more likely to be impulsive and feel alienated) while anthropology finds them in culture (adultery is a sin). This is different from an approach that would focus on more

general processes, like economics and education.

It would be interesting to see what the two approaches could achieve if they were combined. According to Terraciano<sup>11</sup>, the process of applying statistical methods to criminal records lacks the telling and accidental details that happen around crimes. Anthropology does look at the details and context, while clinical psychology does not. The statistical procedures of psychology would make anthropological research less speculative. The field research, cultural variables and context of anthropology would make clinical psychology a lot more realistic, because personality and disorders do not happen in a vacuum. To conclude, both have their strengths and weaknesses. Clinical psychology and anthropology are very different approaches. Together though, they give a much more complete picture of crime.

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## THE PITFALLS OF AN OVERZEALOUS WORK ETHIC

There is more to life than work

"Take care that thou art not made into a Caesar, that thou art not dyed with this dye; for such things happen" - Marcus Aurelius (VI.30)<sup>1</sup>.

At first glance, Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.) does not seem to have had that much in common with contemporary Dutch fathers (and mothers). However, he professed an unease at the notion of complete identification with his role as emperor, the bureaucratic system; the 'surface'. In his journal, he reminded himself not to be "made into a Caesar" and not to be "dyed with this dye". He warned himself not to purplearize; not to identify solely with his role as emperor. An apt choice, or rather invention, of words as he wore purple robes in his function as emperor. Perhaps we should follow his example in reminding ourselves not to get lost in our role as journalist (journalistize), teacher (teacherize), manager (managerize) or what have you. Dutch journalist Jan Blokker once wrote an article in Dutch quality newspaper de Volkskrant about an Amsterdam-based superintendent of police, the type of man who could not bear to part with his uniform even whilst sleeping. It is precisely this type of extreme identification with one's job, exemplified by the identification with one's uniform, that Marcus Aurelius cautioned against.

The question why all of this mattered to Marcus Aurelius is an interesting one. He in fact feared that a singular focus on his role as emperor would negatively impact his personal development; thus professing the insight that work and life are not interchangeable concepts. In order to live 'the good life' he had to foster other interests. He attempted to achieve this by keeping meticulous personal notes. One of the fathers participating in my study on caring

personal relationships and other interests enriched his life. He considered his job to be important, but observed that his profession was not all there was to his life. Another father participating in the study expressed the belief that living a life of variety and fostering the relationship with his children enabled him to have a "fresh" outlook on life as it allowed him to see that there was life beyond his work. However, the comparison between Marcus Aurelius and Dutch parents can only take us so far. Apart from the obvious historical reality of the emperor's life, he was predominantly interested in the mind and mental prowess. He valued self-possession and discipline above all else. He subsequently attempted to rid himself of emotion. At some point in his notes he even confided that he was pleased to have rarely fallen in love. Thus demonstrating an obvious proclivity for the realm of the mind. The bottom line of all this would be that

fathers<sup>2</sup> argued that a focus on his children,

those who choose to combine different domains will, despite having to balance career and family both practically and mentally, not get completely caught up in one of them. Getting too caught up in your work is a common phenomenon nowadays and we can easily cite many cautionary tales. The damage wrought by a complete identification with one's job extends beyond the realm of the mind. It also puts our health in jeopardy. Certain Japanese men are so overworked that for them it has resulted in urinating blood. And occasionally even in death. The fact that they have a term for the latter, karoshi, should not go unnoticed. Nowadays, forty to fifty percent of Japanese men between the ages of thirty and fifty would consider themselves to be at risk of karoshi.

Vincent Duindam, associate professor at Utrecht University; Department Cultural Diversity and Youth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Marcus Aurelius. "Book Six." *The Meditations*. Trans. George Long. N.p., 167. N. Pag. The Internet Classics Archive. Web. 1 Jan. 2015. <sup>2</sup> Duindam, V., & Spruijt, E. (1997). Caring Fathers in the Netherlands. *Sex Roles*, 36(3-4), 149-170.

# Personal Story

Marjolein de Jonge, honours student Child- and Youth Psychology at Utrecht University 'Voluntary experience-expert Altrecht Eetstoornissen Rintveld'

I can't say I didn't think about it at all before I proposed to write something about my own experiences for the Honours Magazine. It's pretty scary, actually. When people read my story, they will probably create an opinion about it and see me in a different way. On the other side; I want to show you how grateful it is to use your own, sometimes negative, experiences and strength to help others with the same problems.

As the title already gives away, I'm currently 'working' at Altrecht Eetstoornissen Rintveld in Zeist as a voluntary experience-expert. But what brought me there? I struggled eight or nine years with eating problems and depression, which started when I was around ten years old. My eating problems slowly became worse and eventually turned into Anorexia Nervosa, which I battled for four or five years. I think it's beyond the scope of this column to tell every single detail about my past and everything I've been through. It's not like I can't talk about i, but in my opinion it's more interesting and more suitable for this magazine to tell something about what I do instead of 'just another eating disorder story'. But I can proudly say that all of this belongs to my past. And although these were, the hardest years of my life - and I

know this sounds cliché - these years have really made me who I am today and made me so much stronger than I ever was and if it wasn't for those years I wouldn't enjoy life as much as I do now.

For a long time I've thought about the idea to really 'do' something with my experiences. Passing on my strength and positive energy to others and noticing that this really can make a difference, seemed to me as one of the most valuable things. So I decided to mail Altrecht Eetstoornissen Rintveld if I, as a psychology student who conquered Anorexia Nervosa, could do anything for *Rintveld*, which was possible.Via Rintveld I came in touch with 'Ixta Noa', an organisation which activity in every form imaginable. uses the strength of experiences with any psychological/psychiatric disorder in all kinds of domains (open houses, mail contact, self-help groups and within GGZ institutions). I followed two courses which taught me how to use my experience to help others, to have a clearer 'story' to tell and to handle certain (difficult) situations. In the future I need to follow two extra courses for the domain: Inzet binnen GGZ. Now, i am working every Wednesday afternoon during the inloop at *Rintveld*. The girls and women who are hospitalised (or have a policlinic treatment) can come to us



and take part in our activities. These activities vary a lot; from relaxing activities to more therapeutic ones. Twice a month there is a creative During the Christmas Holiday we watched a movie with all four units to practice eating 'scary' snacks like popcorn and chips in a normal and more relaxed environment. And a couple of weeks ago we went to the volunteers organisation in Zeist, work that could give a little more structure and fulfilment in the daily lives of patients, especially the chronic ones, and give them an opportunity to slowly take part in society again. Besides the weakly inloop where they can ask us anything, patients are allowed to make an appointment with one of us. I notice that especially the younger

girls have a lot of questions and find it congenial to talk with someone who really understands them and to see that it is possible to recover. For the older (chronic) patients, the focus is less on real recovery and more on a pleasurable life with their eating disorder. That's something I sometimes struggle with, because I find it really hard to see the lack of motivation within these women to recover.

For me it's amazing to do this kind of work and to use my own strength and things I've learned to help others. I think it's beautiful that something like this is possible within a healthcare institution like Rintveld. Although there are other kinds of more professional treatment, which are of utmost importance, as well as contact with people who are not 'eating-disorder'-related. However, what I really missed during my eating disorder is to see that recovery is possible and how, for God's sake, could I do that. I had so many questions, which could never be answered by someone who had never experienced an eating disorder. That's the extra element of an experience-expert. They truly understand what someone is going through and also knows what to do to make things better. Which is exactly what I try to pass on to them; things can get better, but the only one who can really make

a change, is you. You can get a million of treatments, but as long as you're not motivated or you don't believe it will ever get better, nothing will change. You have to learn that life is so much more than your problems and by not eating really nothing is solved. To my opinion an eating disorder is a kind of surviving strategy and the 'not eating' part is a symptom of not feeling well. So many people have said to me 'just eat, and everything will be alright', not only the people close to me, but a lot of the professionals stick to this as well. Of course starting to eat again is one of the first steps, but it won't solve your problems. The moment I started to eat again, things got way worse than before. Not only because

> I got my feelings back and had to deal with them again, but also because I lost 'control' over my eating and, in my head, over my life. Everybody around you starts to think things are getting better, while in your head things are the same. So basically you fight your own battle in your head because nobody truly understands what's going on. The fact that things are still not how they supposed to be, cannot be seen by anybody and you don't want to disappoint others that things still aren't going well. I think experience-experts can play a huge part in recovery, because they know

have someone who finally understands them, but also for the professionals and the families who are working with them to give them more inside and a better understanding of what's really going on in the minds of their patients/loved ones.

I hope I gave a little insight in what experience-experts can add to a treatment. Of course there are many other ways experience-experts can work and also in a more professional way ('Human Concern' is a beautiful example of work by professionals with a past eating disorder, which gives them an unique view and kind of treatment). It's not only wonderful to help others and give them a little more motivation it also strengthens myself in a way that I more and more know that I never want to go back to that. So it works as a little motivation for myself as well.

all of it. Not only for the patients to

# **STUDIUM** GENERALE

Studium Generale is the scientific discussion platform of the University of Utrecht. To solve the world's biggest social problems we need young scholars with an interdisciplinary mindset. Studium Generale gives you the opportunity to develop just that, inviting you to look beyond the borders of your own discipline.

Is there a connection between the extinction of languages and the disappearance of biodiversity? A strange question, perhaps, but according to British biologist Jonathan Loh the answer is yes. He proved that wherever cultural diversity diminishes, biodiversity does so too, and vice versa. And what about this one: can art change people's minds? To answer this question philosopher Rob van Gerwen discussed an artwork by Marco Evaristti, who filled food blenders with water, dropped goldfish into them and plugged them into the electricity mains in an art gallery. The artist wants the audience to 'finish' his work by simply flicking the switch. But you don't blend a living fish, do you? Then you start thinking about all the fish that are killed in the fishing industry. This is exactly what the artists want to achieve: to trigger the audience's moral sensibility, forcing them to think about important issues. These are just two examples of recent lectures held by Studium Generale that shine an original light on human behaviour. For those of you who are more interested in the practical application of science, Studium Generale organizes

lectures about burning social issues on a local and global level. In a lecture about terrorism and radicalization, for example, prof. dr. Beatrice de Graaf (International and Political History) suggested that talking to citizens with extremist tendencies might be a good way to limit security risks. In another series of lectures, scientists from a wide range of disciplines talked about how to make our city a healthier place to live in. Geographer Martin Dijst asked the city councillor of public health to better assist people in making the 'right' choice: no snack bar at every intersection, but a greengrocer instead. Studium Generale is not just interesting for students. Scientists themselves gain important insights through discussing their work with you. Not so long ago, one of the founders of the donor egg bank was forced to reconsider the bank's ethical implications when a member of the audience asked him why we even want women over 45 to still have children. After every lecture, there is always plenty of room for debate between you and the scientist. Get inspired by some of Utrecht's most wellknown scientists—it's free of charge, and accessible to anyone interested. Check our website sq.uu.nl or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

Want to become even more involved and write a blog about a lecture for publishing on the website? Contact Rick Berends at r.j.h.berends@uu.nl.

#### iversiteit Utrecht

# Studium Generale

**PODIUM VOOR KENNIS & REFLECTIE VAN DE UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT** 

Voorjaar 2016 | Filosofisch Café Asha ten Broeke | Hans Clevers Movies & Science | Stine Jensen Gratis en voor iedereen | Europa Science Café | Groene dilemma's Machtige geheimen | Herman Pleij En meer op www.sg.uu.nl Lezing gemist? Zie sg.uu.nl



THIS PUZZLE CONTAINS THE LAST NAMES OF 16 SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AND PHILOSOPHERS. SINCE IT WOULD BE TOO EASY TO JUST SEARCH FOR THE SPECIFIC NAMES, WE ONLY GIVE YOU ONE HINT TO FIND THEM. YOU CAN LOOK FOR THEM IN EVERY POSSIBLE DIRECTION, EVEN BACKWARDS.

Nina Chmielowice, honours student General Social Sciences at Utrecht University

#### Find the answers on page 43

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- **16** The author of *La Distinction*. *Critique sociale du Jugement*



# Dare to Dance

Zoë Yara van Hamburg, graduate Liberal Arts and Sciences

Hello, my name is Yara van Hamburg. I am a graduated Liberal Arts and Sciences student from the University of Utrecht with a major in Anthropology and a master's degree in Theatre Studies. I never thought that I would finish my studies in the science of Art and Culture, as I had started my study trajectory in Psychobiology, but I am very pleased that I did.

My dissertation was about the debate on renewing the curriculum for secondary education in the Netherlands by incorporating elements of high-quality intercultural education into the curriculum. I was fascinated by this subject as I believe we put too much focus on biology and, consequently, forget the significant power (cultural) performativity has on our socio-cultural development. The mechanism of performativity<sup>1</sup> functions at the intuitive level. It is the abstract, hidden, unthinking, habitual ways of how social notions are constituted. This is how one has invisible and habitual social notions of, for instance, gender, while actually performing socio-cultural elaborations. To be reminded of this, art organizations can be of value due to projects that stimulate

intercultural sensitivity through the pedagogical power of movement. My research stated that we might have the ability to make changes in our social dynamics, to create more balance in our intercultural society, if art organizations are given a more significant chance to work directly with educational institutions.

For this research I interviewed teachers of secondary schools about their ideas on how to renew the curriculum in such a way that it entails high-quality intercultural education. On top of that I did informal fieldwork within the non-profit art organization 'Dancing on the Edge'. I experienced that one can be overwhelmed by the flow of continuous new information that one can discover while doing research. Therefore, the most important tip I can give to others, in regard to writing their dissertation and doing research, is to fully be committed to the topic you've selected. Write in such a way that you do not let yourself be restricted by time or the university's policy. Because in the end, what really matters, is when you ask yourself the question "did I do this by my own stubborn, unique, genius or insane way?", you can honestly say to yourself that you did.

# **TEDtalk** reviews



## The long reach of reason – Steven Pinker and Rebecca Newberger Goldstein

https://www.ted.com/talks/steven\_pinker\_and\_rebecca\_newberger\_goldstein\_the\_long\_ reach\_of\_reason

Shermaily Riley, honours student Cognitive Neuro-biological Psychology at Utrecht University

Nowadays we're all convinced that we live in a very civilized society. This in comparison to our ancestors, who used to have certain practices that we look back on with horror. Fortunately, much has changed for the better, and many people can enjoy the benefits of equal rights. But what brought us to this point? What actually made the difference? Steven Pinker and Rebecca Newberger Goldstein try to tackle this question, both from a different point of view.

Whereas Steven Pinker is convinced that human empathy is the grand motivation behind all this change, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein stands with her point that not empathy but reason was the key factor in this development. Both Pinker and Goldstein make some valid arguments, supporting their point of view with quotes and ideas of many great minds.

A pleasant coincidence of this TEDtalk is that it's animated, making it not only more fun to watch, but also very helpful in understanding the sometimes complex wording used to illustrate their points. If you're interested in finding out whether empathy or reason is our better angel, I'd absolutely recommend joining Pinker and Goldstein on their journey to the find the answer!

<sup>1</sup> Nagel, J. (2003). Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers. Oxford: Oxford University Press



## Be like Jack Sparrow: embrace your fears - Frans Timmermans

http://www.tedx.amsterdam/talks/tedxamsterdam-frans-timmermans-112009/ Jet Klokgieters, honours student General Social Sciences at Utrecht University

Who knew that a TEDtalk from 2009 would be equally or even more relevant in 2015 than back in 2009? Frans Timmermans, now the vice-president of the European Union, but becoming minister of the ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands in 2009, acknowledged the challenges the world was facing in 2009. He talked about fear in the rapidly changing world. . 'The speed of this change, the proximity of the problem, the proximity of the other, of differences is another driving force of fear.' 'Every time we face change [...], Europeans look at the other with apprehension: Is he a friend or is he a foe? Is he out there to take away my values, to impose his views, to push me out of my own position?'

It's ironical to say the least, staggering

even, to come to the conclusion that the fear Frans Timmermans talked about is the fear we all now know so well. Refugees, bombings, attacks in Paris by members of IS are the headlines of today.

Frans Timmermans is a master in making those grand issues understandable and approachable. He puts sensitive questions in perspective with a good dose of humor, without losing a respectable approach. But underneath it all is a clear message, one that will make you start thinking. After you've watched Frans Timmersmans' TEDtalk 'Be like Jack Sparrow: embrace your fears', you should just sit for a couple of minutes and think to yourself while taking the knowledge of today into consideration: 'Will I look the Kraken in the eye?'



## The Cancer of Modern day Science

<u>https://www.ted.com/talks/ben\_goldacre\_battling\_bad\_science</u>
 Roderic Hillege, honours student Cognitive Neuro-biological Psychology at Utrecht University

Ben Goldcare explains in a witty way how critical 'critical thinking' is when it comes to our health. Every day, there are news reports on new health advice. Sadly, with some critical thinking the whole essence of such research can sometimes disappear. Resulting in popular myths of science. For instance, the assumption that drinking one glass of red wine a day protects against cancer. In his talk Ben Goldcare goes on to explain that these examples are only child's play - some news reporters trying to make headlines. A more serious problem presents itself when the pharmaceuticals apply the same tactics to promote their products to make huge profits at the costs of human lives.



## How brain science will and has changed computing

https://www.ted.com/talks/jeff\_hawkins\_on\_how\_brain\_science\_will\_change\_computing Roderic Hillege, honours student Cognitive Neuro-biological Psychology at Utrecht University

In his talk in 2003, the inventor of the first "smart"-phone, Jeff Hawkings, goes on to explain how the combination of the working mechanism of neurons might change computing as we know it. Imagine a device that uses the same principles of the neo-cortex, the intelligent-part of our brain, as its core way of functioning. One would end up with a computer that really is 'smart', opposed to the bricks that we call smart and seem to always carry around with us. In his talk, Jeff Hawkins explains how this could be implemented and what core principles this machine embodies.

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