



*A Guide To
Nether-Hell*

A Journey Through Depiction & Experience
From A Nether-Divergent Perspective

Thesis
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Introduction

Please allow me to introduce myself. [1] My name is Merlijn [2] Lorenzo [3] Alexander [4] Bo [5] Quint [6]. I was born in 1992 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Around the age of 4-5 I was diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyper-activity Disorder) and PDD NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified). PDD NOS is now under the umbrella term Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The spectrum makes me on one hand focused and on the other hand vaguely floating mentally, which takes me in a fluid state of constant blurring and focussing the lens. I have been on the side of Dutch society where I didn't necessarily 'partake' in as a 'normal' Dutch kid would. I spent the first thirteen years of my life going to several youth psychiatrists and I went to a special elementary school. Every four weeks I went to a stay-for-the-weekend facility also known as logeerhuis, it's a place for kids with illness / disorders / etc. In addition to ADHD and PDD NOS I also have Asthma and Sotos syndrome. The symptoms I have from SOTOS syndrome are overgrowth in childhood / early growth spurt around the age of 10 and vertigo. I have been diagnosed at quite a young age, which makes sense in the world of western medicine since the archetype is a white cis male. Which is a privileged position that helped me.

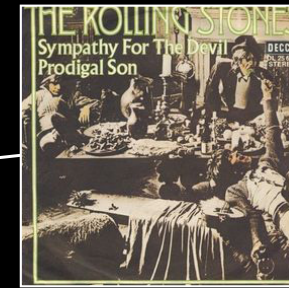
On my 13th I was ready for high school. Ready to go from the 'special' towards the 'normal' side of society. By society I mean Dutch society. In this country 'normaal' is something that you 'do'. In normal society, it is normal to go to high school and have a side-job. In Rotterdam there is the principle of *niet lullen maar poetsen* which basically means actions speak louder than words. I have had one (side)job in my life and that was at Albert Heijn, but I didn't get through the test period. The reason for that is that I couldn't focus on two things: School and Work. To focus on one thing works better for me. I have felt shame for this until recently: Not my fault.

I have had many people looking at me weirdly that I didn't earn extra spending money. This reflects the idea of, *Je past je maar aan!* (eng: just adapt). *Aanpassen* is maybe better translated as 'fitting yourself to an archetype because that is how we have always been doing it.'

Not fitting in at 13 years old has led me into subcultures. I already listened to quote unquote subcultural music because my brother and later other family and friends got me into it. By subcultural music I mean punk/punkrock/metal/etc. It was also a great output because of the revolving teen angst. At my school we formed a little club based on this and we all felt we didn't fit in but we were open for everybody. Looking back at it is a bit of a semi-socialist movement. I.e. The DIY punk movement on its own is already fixed on housing, government failing and the new wave ska movement was mostly also against racism and the rat race.

Feeling understood by music and gathering people with the same interests is a way to reach a certain collective consciousness. We cope with life by listening / singing / screaming along with music. Although it has amplified backlash. I had allegations of being satanic / devilish because I listened to Metal. I feel connected to the heavier genres because they convert the type of emotions I feel into sound. Music made me understand myself more and made going to places where like minded people were with live music was a way to develop myself. To be myself and feel accepted.

In order to deal with life in general, I had plenty of guidance and help through the years. When I was young I also had a lot of mental support through youth psychiatry / medicine / etc. I was in special education and through introspection I have learned to live with the diagnoses as they are a part of me. As an addition to that I visit a general practitioner for mental health care every three weeks.



[1]

Rolling Stones, The. Sympathy for the Devil. Decca, 1968, Accessed February 10, 2022. <https://open.spotify.com/track/1Ud6moTCoKyXMq1Ox-fieno?si=6dc8gca6c9cc49d2>.



[2]

Peet, Bill, Wolfgang Reitherman, and T H. White. The Sword in the Stone. Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Home Video, 1963.



[4]

Mosaicist unknown. The Alexander Mosaic. 10n.d., Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli NA, Italy.

Bronzino, A. (1560). Portrait of Lorenzo de Medici

[3]



Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange. New York: Norton, 2001. Print.



[5]

Short for Boogaard, Mother's surname

[6]

Father's Surname

I find consolation in the acceptance of neurodivergence (anything that isn't neurotypical). It is a sort of community that shares struggles to feel more accepted and also acknowledged. My struggle to begin with is that I don't feel that I was born in / built for the world / land / society I grew up in. In the Netherlands it's mostly 'act / do normal' because when you're not normal you need to just adjust. Adjusting yourself to the society you're in feels like you're damaging yourself to fit the archetype.

Not fitting into the archetype is basically a feeling of suffering because it's feeling guilty for being yourself.

Yet, still when I'm outside my brain does what it does. I struggle. I feel that I am in a world that is not built for me. I was born in the Netherlands where you just 'adjust'. And when you don't fit in, you find consolation in the arts.

I arrived at etymology, metaphors, mythology, (pop) culture [7] to try to make sense of the world that I'm living in. For my thesis I try to connect words, meanings and dissect them to find resemblances or to provide thought experiments.

Disability was the starting point. Disability is often defined by Dis-Order or Dis-ease. I am non-neurotypical. Which means my brain is not neurotypical. It is a type of brain that isn't normal. It differs. It is strange. It is not normal.

A disease must be cured, or healed. How are the damned defined?

A disorder must be put back into order. What order? Who's order?

Dis-Balance which causes Dis-Ease. In this case I dissected the words Disorder and disability. Which has revealed 'Dis', the city of Hell from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy which is described as the fortified city that encloses the whole of Lower or Nether Hell. I immediately found the link with my feeling of not being accepted, for one of Hell's many definitions is the state of constant suffering. In this thesis I'm going to start in the deepest pits of Hell depictions. I will go through the stages of Hell, purgatory and heaven but this context is needed in order to define Hell on Earth. [8]

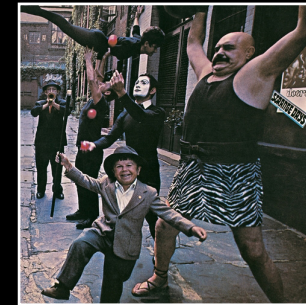
In this thesis I will (re)search the depictions, definitions, perspectives and the depths of Hell. I'm curious to see what point of view depicted the selection. I wonder how Hell is defined for the individual (specifically someone with disabilities). I'm suspecting that Hell is a custom made place for the person in it. The person that doesn't fit in. My starting point is Dante Alighieri's Nether-Hell. Bear in mind that I am going into the apparatus of how Hell is designed, not following the storyline.

So my question is: How do I go Through Nether-Hell?

Through digging into the nine circles of Hell, I will search for a non-abrahamistic point of view that treats the idea of Hell or an underworld differently. The Christian Hell is different from the Aztec underworld. There are alternative doctrines to give opposing perspectives. Pop culture shows a lot of definitions of what Hell is. It shows many forms and shapes balancing / challenging the observer. The following step is checking out Hellish creatures from fictive to non-fictive shape and that will be the portal to Earth, zooming in to the Netherlands with examples on how it feels to go through the Nether-Hell. The damned bodies and minds of society and human behavior around it and I will point out a few certain power structures, industries that have certain benefits and influence. How does that affect me? How do I cope and where do I seek the opportunity to make a change? How do I go through the Nether-Hell? What (are)/is my coping mechanism(s)?

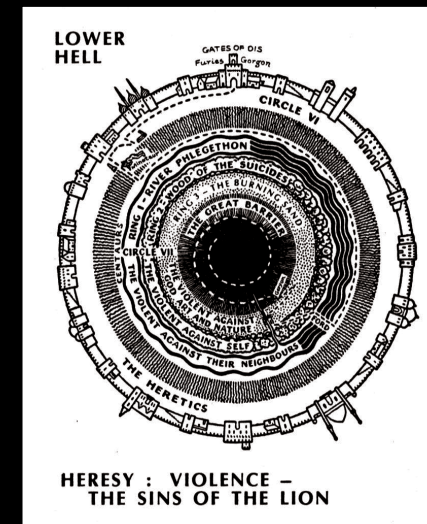
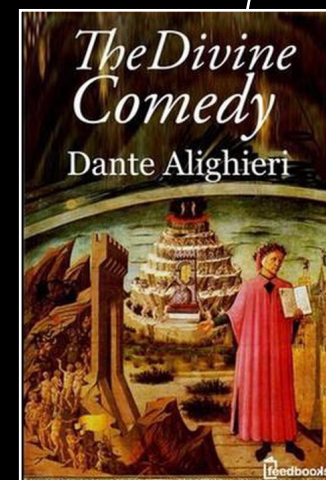
[7]

People are strange
When you're a stranger
Faces seem Ugly
When you're alone
[...]
When you're unwanted
Streets are uneven when you're down




Morrison, Jim, Doors, The. "People Are Strange." Strange Days. Elektra, 1967. Accessed February 10 <https://open.spotify.com/track/1Jmqubf9kGKWeYQXQK1mL5?si=15302fa0924c4491>

[8]



Alighieri, Dante. The Divine Comedy. Translated by H. F. Cary, Wordsworth Editions, 2009.

Scott-Giles, C.W. "Lower Hell." for Dorothy Sayers translation of the Divine Comedy 1949, <https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/311663236683039262/>



I. Hell, Depicted

I. Hell, Depicted

Welcome to Hell. A space that comes to mind as eternal damnation, flames, demons, lava. The most common version is the landscape of fire and eternal suffering. The idea of Hell as we know it is mostly lava and fire, the place where the devil is king. The word Hell derives from Anglo-Saxon language: Hellia[1]. capture the Jewish concept of 'Gehanna' as the final destination of the 'wicked'. When I was searching for the etymology of Hell, Hellia was one of the oldest definitions.

The definition of Hell seems abstract but also quite solid. In the most neutral terms, it is a nether world in which the dead continue to exist, these types of dead are often based on sins of a moral monopoly. Other definitions can be defined as states of mind. The idea of going through Hell: Being dependent on others, blindfolded, being stuck without power to break free or the process of going through eternal suffering.

The journey to definitions of Hell started for me when I discovered the city of Dis[2]. I found out that Dis is a place in Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy: Chapter 1: Inferno. It is in the midst of the 6-9 circles of Hell, all the circles are filled with specific kinds of sinners. The idea of one's definition of Hell intrigues me. The idea of Hell is something that has a sort of custom made design, it is a place where all the bad stuff goes to, bad stuff being specified to something or someone that is supposed and opposingly 'good'.

Hell is something that is depicted but also experienced and the people that go to Hell are 'bad'/'sinning.' So not only is the road to Hell paved with good intentions, it is apparently also defined by and agreed upon by the status quo i.e. religious power structures.

Dante Alighieri's epic Divine Comedy[3] poem shows another way of looking, being at or going through Hell as he and colleague poet Virgil travel through the nine circles of Hell[4] that are very specifically designed for (or against) certain types of people or actions: Limbo, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Wrath, Heresy, Violence, Fraud and Treachery. These circles share quite the resemblance with the seven sins. I have been inspired by the Divine Comedy, just like many other artists have drawn inspiration from it.

*Heaven has been promised to the righteous
Hell's an overpopulated pit
Purgatory's given to the dreamers
But the world belongs to those who plow the shit*

-Ben Caplan [5]

The idea of sinning is a phenomenon that some if not all religion takes a part in. The obsession of 'doing good' rather than making mistakes and learning from it. How is good defined? The idea that you need to be punished for your sins instead of accepting the idea of sins and trying to improve yourself seems quite inhumane to me. If the sinning happens, why demonize it. It's apparently part of being a human being. It seems like in the organized religion type of beliefs, it is either walking along the spiritual path towards the promised afterlife whilst intending to do good according the Good books.

*I only read one book, but it's a good book, don't you know?
I act the way I act because the Good Book tells me so,
If I wanna know how to be good, it's to the Good Book that I go.
'Cos the Good Book is a book and it is good and it's a book.*

-Tim Minchin [6]

[1]

Anglo-Saxon language: Hellia ((derived from the Old English, Old Norse, Old High German, hel, Helle, circa. 725 AD) and originates from the King James version of the Bible.

Barnhart, Robert K. (1995) The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology, page 348. Harper Collins ISBN 0-06-270084-7

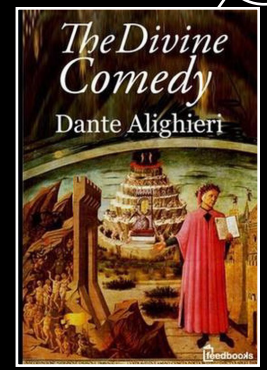


[2]

Stradano, Giovanni "Map of Lower Hell." Illustration of Dante's Inferno, 1587, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dis_\(Divine_Comedy\)#/media/File:Stradano_Inferno_Map_Lower.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dis_(Divine_Comedy)#/media/File:Stradano_Inferno_Map_Lower.jpg)

Alighieri, Dante. The Divine Comedy. Translated by H. F. Cary, Wordsworth Editions, 2009.

[3]



[5]

Caplan, Ben. "Plough the Shit" Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/track/4YzXjotUpPb2h1mxx-VgmO6?si=866ed5668152433c>

[4]

Somnium-Maris, Dante's Inferno Map, DeviantArt, Jun 11, 2013, <https://www.deviantart.com/somnium-maris/art/Dante-s-Inferno-Map-377156776>.

[6]

Minchin, Tim. "The Good Book" YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr13mBojco>

I. Hell, Depicted

Why is sinning not considered as something personal? It is either dehumanizing or demonizing in the extreme cases. It feels like blaming human nature to make mistakes. I understand that the person making a mistake should be able to suffer the consequences of their own actions, but rather giving the person a chance to develop and getting better, rather than sending them into damnation through an eternal guilt trip.

Aleister Crowley indirectly has set up his own complicated set of magical, mystical and religious beliefs called Thelemism.[7] “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law” is something that intrigues me. It gives people the right to own up to their mistakes.

And yes, I am aware of my own romanticizing of the alternative. This is ironically replacing doctrine. The part that intrigues me is the idea of acceptance of sins. To me, it seems more logical to be influenced by different ways of thinking and making a personal balance of relativizing thought. I would prefer that over following one ‘true’ word of one or another religion. I enjoy learning about religion and mythology in order to understand one or more societies.

I visited the Aztec exhibition in Museum van Volkenkunde in Leiden. There I met Mictlantecuhtli(the Lord of the Underworld / God of the dead in Aztec mythology) and the king of Mictlan (Chicunauhmiclan), the lowest and northernmost section of the underworld. [8]

Mictlan seems like the Aztec version of Dante’s Dis: it is the lowest level of the Aztec underworld. This is the place people would go to after death. Except for warriors that died in battle, people that were struck by lightning and women that died while giving birth. Again, that is oddly specific.

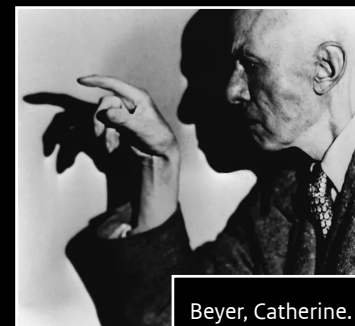
During the exhibition in Leiden, William Arfman [9] (Teacher at Tilburg University) lectured on conversing with the dead through Mexican religious cultures and he talked about Mictlan being a sort of reflection of our world through the afterlife. It is the underworld, though not Hell. It’s more of a reflected version of the society in another realm. [10]

In the Dutch media, the underworld is presented as not spiritual, but as a world where criminal activity takes place: Gangsters, drug trade, prostitution etc.

I think it is interesting how Hell or the underworld sometimes seems like the lack of acknowledgement of the problems in what we are experiencing in our daily existence. And through exposed scandals, the moral monopolies that define sins are the ones that also execute them.

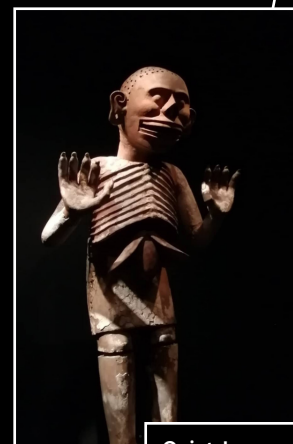
In Dragon Ball Z, one of my favourite childhood series, there is also Hell. It got censored into HFIL = Home For Infinite Losers[11] a place for, again, “the wicked and damned”. In the series, when people pass away, they go to The Next Dimension. Where they end up standing in line for a municipality building where King Yemma (the ogre King that judges the dead, based on Yama) decides where people go. [12] [13]

It’s such a strange take on Hell to just continue in bureaucracy, the definition of Hell is quite human/Earth centered. Then again Bureaucracy also comes quite close to eternal suffering.



[7]

Beyer, Catherine. “Understanding the Religion of Thelema.” Learn Religions, Sep. 3, 2021, learnreligions.com/thelema-95700.



[8]

Quint, Lorenzo. Photo of Mictlantecuhtli, Museum voor Volkenkunde/AZTEKEN, Leiden.



[10]

DÍAZ, G., RODGERS, A., & BYLAND, B. E. (1993). The Codex Borgia: a full-color restoration of the ancient Mexican manuscript. MLA (7th ed.).

[9]

Arfman, William. Lecture. ‘In gesprek met de doden’. October 31 2021.

[11]



Dragonball Wiki. “Hell.” Dragonball Wiki, Dragonball Wiki, date of publication unknown, fansite, <https://dragonball.fandom.com/wiki/Hell>

[12]



Dragonball Wiki. “King Yemma.” Dragonball Wiki, Dragonball Wiki, date of publication unknown, fansite, https://dragonball.fandom.com/wiki/King_Yemma

[13]



Dragonball Wiki. “King Yemma.” Dragonball Wiki, Dragonball Wiki, date of publication unknown, fansite, https://dragonball.fandom.com/wiki/King_Yemma



II. Ddevil is so Lovely

II. Ddevil is so Lovely

Devils, Demons, Angels and other spirits often also spoken about as walking amongst us. They take many shapes or forms. The Rolling Stones made a song about the Devil being portrayed as the do-er of all things while in this case Lucifer only comes when the deeds are already done.

*Pleased to meet you, hope you guess my name
But what's puzzling you is the nature of my game
Just as every cop is a criminal
And all the sinners saints
As heads is tails, just call me Lucifer
'Cause I'm in need of some restraint
So if you meet me, have some courtesy
Have some sympathy, and some taste
Use all your well-learned politesse
Or I'll lay your soul to waste, mm yeah*

-The Rolling Stones [1]

In this context, the devil sometimes reveals itself in society to show the flaws. Manuel Gagneux(Zeal and Ardor) made a song about abstract position of the devil.

*He gon' forgive my sin / Devil is kind / He promise many things / Devil is fine / I can't do him no wrong
/ Devil is kind / I see him before long / Devil is fine*

- Zeal & Ardor [2]

In this case the devil is either forgiver or deceiver, the song puts in the philosophy of what if slaves turned into Satanism rather than Christianity. For LaVeyan Satanism revolves around self-acceptances and the idea of do what thou wilt.

The demonization of people amplifies Hell being a reflection of society or even augmented into it. The mental suffering that is caused by disabling people based on the type of brain, the type of body, the ideology and so on just baffles me. Only doing 'good' things based on and preferred by doctrine in order to save a seat in the space that comes afterwards and gives an exempt position instead of doing good for the sake of helping other people

Who needs a thousand metaphors to figure out you shouldn't be a dick? - Bo Burnham [3]

Contrary to the idea of demonization/dehumanization, the idea of a devil or demon intrigues me. For example Lucifer (morning star), also known as the Fallen Angel who became Satan [4] has a moral societal function of showing, reflecting and embracing malfunction.

In series, literature, pop culture and also in real life the devil takes its place. For instance, the Devil in disguise is like a wolf in sheep's clothing, the devil is in the details. Another example is playing the Devil's Advocate according to Cambridge dictionary "pretending in an argument or discussion that someone is opposing an idea or plan that people seem to support in ways of popularity." [5] It's not about agreeing with that idea, but it is considering different ways of thinking and sharpening views.

In pop culture, The Joker[6] from Batman and Guy Fawkes or V in V for Vendetta[7] touch on raw nerves by revealing and showing issues. They're often blamed for it but they merely show a lense of anti-establishment. The Joker is product of society and Bruce Wayne, the Batman, the good person. A hero. A very rich and good hero, a person serving the rich.

[1]



Rolling Stones, The. Sympathy for the Devil. Decca, 1968, Accessed February 10, 2022. <https://open.spotify.com/track/1Ud6moTC0KyXMq1Oxfleno?si=6dc89ca6c9cc49d2>.

[2]



Zeal & Ardor, Devil Is Fine, Mvka, 2017, Accessed February 10, 2022. <https://open.spotify.com/album/5Oc87gybQZkVeqogIFXzMd?si=bb81d331d9624f09>

[3]

Burnham, Bo., "From God's Perspective", Comedy Central Records, 2013, Accessed February 10, 2022. <https://open.spotify.com/track/496hKzhCnPhgT6JuC3ubNZ?si=f14de8ca82ed4116>

Rhodes, Ron. "How Did Lucifer Fall and Become Satan?" Christianity.com., date published in 7 February 2022, online article, <https://www.Christianity.com/theology/theological-faq/how-did-lucifer-fall-and-become-satan-11557519.html>.

[4]

Cambridge International Dictionary of English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Print.

[5]



Jack Nicholson as the Joker. Burton, Tim. Batman. Warner Bros., 1989.

[6]

[7]

McTeigue, James. V for Vendetta. Warner Bros., 2005.

II. Ddevil is so Lovely

Another word for Joker or Devil is underdog, anti-hero or anti-product. As in a product of society that seems to glitch, fail or malfunction. Elliot (Mr. Robot) [8] and Alex deLarge (A Clockwork Orange) [9] get a certain type of blame by society yet they are all products that were made by society. And instead of improving and healing the parts that cause these baddies, it's much easier to give them the label bad, devilish and cancel them into eternal Hellfires. Don't get me wrong, I'm not giving them a hero title, but they give lenses to focus the view.

The devil is in entertainment. The idea of a Court Jester.[10] An officer of amusement for the court by performing absurdity. Mocking the status quo of dignity (monarchy, politics) as a form of public entertainment. It seems like the Joker, the Fool(tarot card)[11] is someone who is acting silly in order to make their audience laugh. It takes knowledge, melancholy and criticism in order to joke about institutions whilst being paid by them.

Modern versions can be seen like the president's dinner in America, where the president is being roasted by a comedian. Sometimes the mockery of an established being isn't wanted. Dutch comedian Martijn Koning ridiculed Thierry Baudet. [11] When told that Baudet and his party FvD flirts with fascism, he got thrown out of a talk show. While he was doing his job: being critical towards establishments through satire. It's a very interesting time to live in concerning modern day Court Jester where cancel- and consequence culture are debated in order to discuss what can or can not be joked about, whether it is about kicking up or down. There are voices of unpopular viewpoints yet they maintain the principle of the devil's advocate.

If the king can't stand the fool, then he's a tyrant. [12]
(paraphrasing Shakespeare's Macbeth).

What I read from this is that the king stands for the status quo, the popular vote or opinion. The Fool in this case is the court jester / joker / devil and the tyrant is the person who won't allow mockery of its status. I believe the status of these roles is something to value. I feel that nothing is more challenging for the mind than something of an opposite belief. Debate to me feels like an assessment of the mind.



Wallström, Martin, Sam Esmail, Rami Malek, Christian Slater, Carly Chaikin, and Portia Doubleday. Mr. Robot: Season 1. , 2016.

[8]



Kubrick, Stanley, and Anthony Burgess. A Clockwork Orange. Los Angeles: Warner Bros, 1971.

[9]



Parlett, David. "tarot". Encyclopedia Britannica, 7 Apr. 2009, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tarot>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

[10]

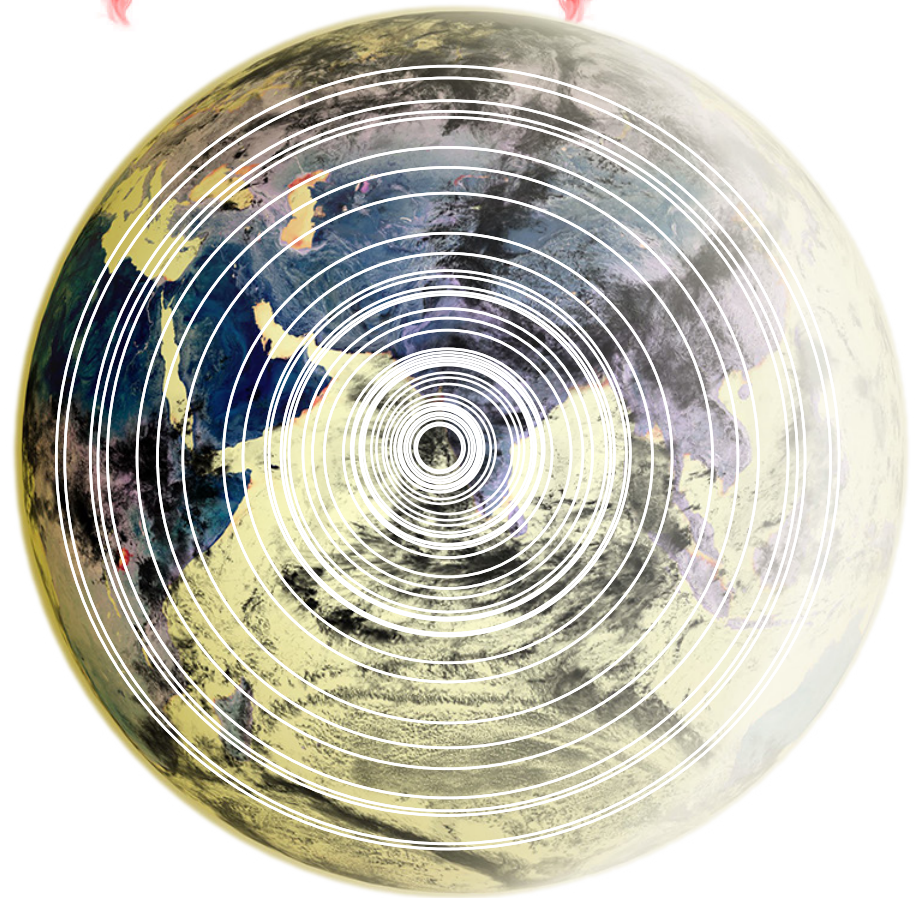


"Episode 49." Jinek, RTLXL by, RTL Nederland. RTLXL, <https://www.rtlx1.nl/programma/jinek/a79de6cd-9140-3ba8-8b00-6a53624a3e43>.

[11]

Shakespeare, William, and Rex Gibson. Macbeth. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

[12]



III. Hell on Earth

III. Hell on Earth

If there are plenty of entities on Earth that show the mishappenings / downfall of society, can we speak about Hell on Earth? The depictions show human concepts of Hell as a reflection upon society and the literature appeals to the moral compass: What is good and what is bad?[1]

How does Hell appeal to society and vice versa? To me, Hell seems like an experience we go through. To translate Dirk de Wachter (psychiatrist)[2] in his lecture *Laat ons ook ongelukkig zijn* (Let us be unhappy as well).

Hell is the lack of connecting. If people don't share their unhappiness/misery, people swallow it and so it becomes sickness/illness. We could be unhappy in a healthy way by sharing. People have the need to share their emotions and that doesn't happen very often.

I think this experience starts with not granting yourself to be unhappy, but being angry with yourself that you are sad. What I learned from De Wachter is that Hell is either (the feeling of) exclusion or (the feeling of) being excluded. The people that don't fit. The heretics (which are located in the sixth circle of Hell). Not fitting into the archetype. I also feel excluded because of my neurotype. I'm autistic and I'm an ADHDer which means I am neurodivergent. Otherwise known as Non-neurotypical. The 'regular' brain is neurotypical. My brain is not, because of my neurotype. Which is why I'm 4-10 times more likely to get anxiety, depression and low self esteem. I struggle with the word disabled because it feels like it gives a certain label of infantilization or victimization. But that can also be another factor: Imposter syndrome. Self-guilt over not fitting in by thinking you're doing it wrong but nobody caught you yet.

Not fitting in is mostly defined by people as not being normal in the sense of disability and being different.

But what the Hell do these words mean?

Normal?

as opposed to Weird? Or Different?

Disabled? By whom? By what?

How is this even decided?

Luckily, "I'm not the only one" is a mental passage. In the lecture *Disability Studies Across the Disciplines: Theory & Praxis*. [3] Lennard Davis talks about examining the systemic barriers to the full societal inclusion of persons with disabilities. He looks at the (in)visible barriers of accessibility from multiple backgrounds: science, art, literature, the law, art history, biocultural / biopolitical / intersectional / governmental field. For instance, accessibility for disability in buildings. Lennard Davis explains about the idea of disability through sociological perspectives by showing models.



MacLeish, Jessica. "What's the Worst Thing about the Bad Place?" *The Ringer*, *The Ringer*, 28 Jan. 2020, <https://www.theringer.com/tv/2020/1/28/21110896/the-good-place-finale-bad-place-details>.

[1]



de Wachter, Dirk. "Laat Ons Ook Ongelukkig Zijn | Lezing Door Psychiater Dirk De Wachter." YouTube, Radboud Reflects, 25 Oct. 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TX_dsdKNPGU.

[2]



Davis, Lennard. "Lennard Davis | Disability Studies across the Disciplines: Theory & Praxis." YouTube, Duke Franklin Humanities Institute, 10 May 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zvko_mq5ck.

[3]

III. Hell on Earth

The Charity model: People are disabled because they are punished by 'God' or 'God's mysterious ways' and/or they are disabled because they committed a sin or because of their parents actions This problem is solved by either prayer or alms. [4]

When I read this, I see Pieter Brueghel and Jeroen Bosch paintings that show an extensive amount of disabled people with their Damned Bodies crawling through Hell.

The Medical model: Genetics / disease / trauma are the reason for your disability, the remedy for that is either treatment or cure. [5]

This one makes more sense to me, because it applies to me. Thanks to medical science, I have medicine for my Asthma and thanks to Social Skills training, youth psychiatry and also introspection I'm able to function "normally" in this society.

The Social model: It's not genetics/trauma/God/sin but it's political, social and cultural practices that create disability. Davis elaborates on a distinction between disability and impairment: An impairment is a physical or mental limitation/lack/inability. Disability is the effect of discrimination or lack fo accomodation against people with impairments. I.e. the Wheelchair analogy: Person in a wheelchair is not disabled until they reach a set of stairs. But why don't we look the same way to people with psychiatric disorders? The talk goes about Disability as being disabled by others whilst being physically or psychiatrically impaired. The social model gives an empathetic definition of disability. A disabled human being turns into a human being disabled. [6]

Davis also questions the idea Enforcing Normalcy(Paraphrasing):
 "When did people start talking about normality? Because people are treating disabled as the opposite of normal, being abnormal. The word normal initially comes from statistics "state-istics" : data about the state(population, income). [7]

So that is literally said initially looking at a number and basing the common denominator on the middle part of a graph. Why can't we do that with human bodies? -> The 'average' person. The normal person.

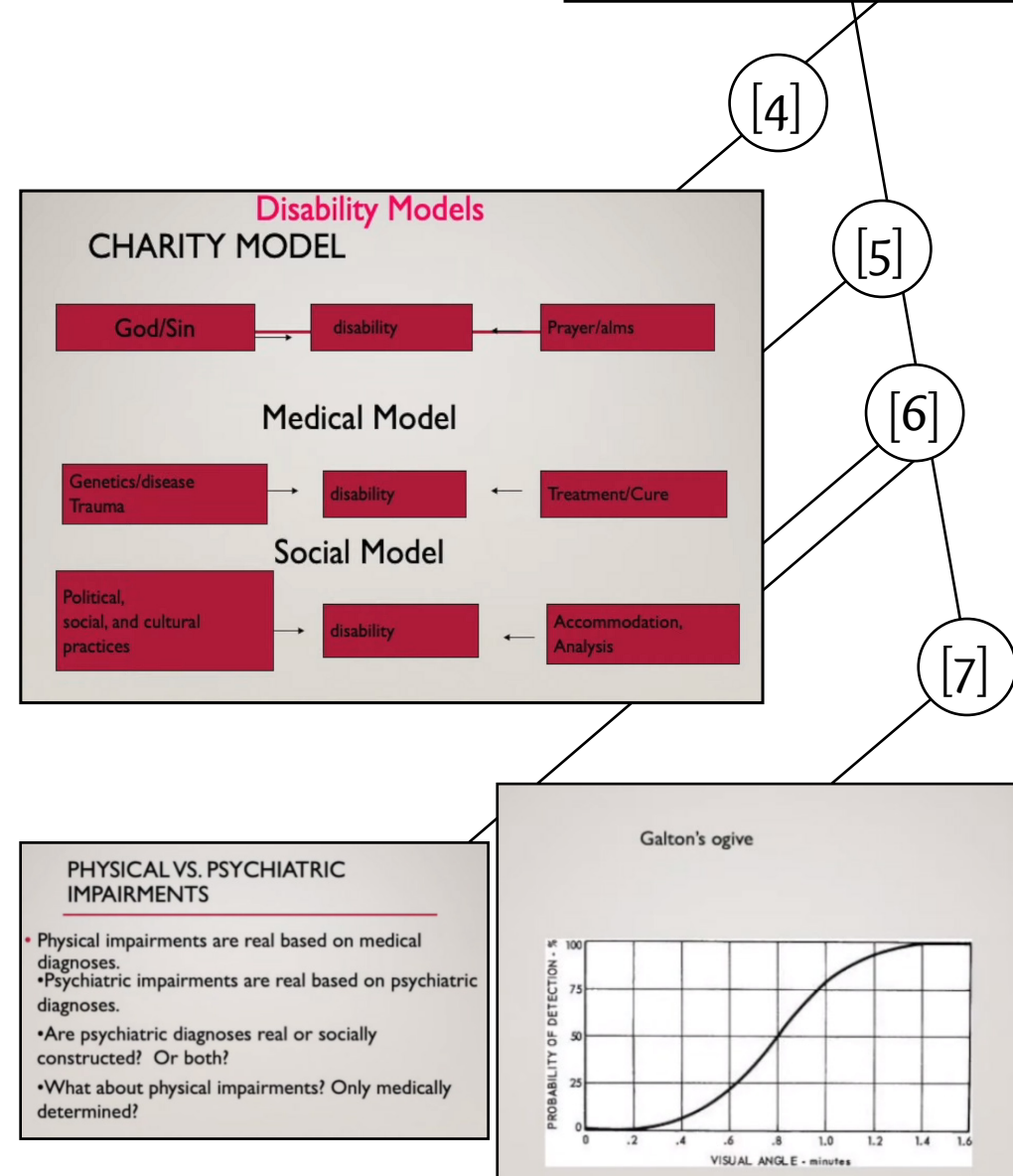
In this case, the foundation of the idea of normal is based on statistics and mediocrity but also on purity and the 'best mixture'. The theory makes sense since this idea comes from Sir Francis Galton, who happens to be Charles Darwin's nephew. Who would ever think that Eugenics and Survival of the Fittest a.k.a. Natural selection would have origin in the same family?

Fun Fact: The opposite of Eugenics is Dysgenics: tending to promote survival of or reproduction by less well-adapted individuals (such as the weak or diseased) especially at the expense of well-adapted individuals (such as the strong or healthy).

I would suggest we frame normal as something someone or a group of people is used to. It seems culturally bound, based on history and the influence of many factors. If I would define something as normal, I would change it to usual or habit. De-generalizing normalcy. Your normal is not my normal. Your heaven might be my Hell.



Davis, Lennard. "Lennard Davis | Disability Studies across the Disciplines: Theory & Praxis." YouTube, Duke Franklin Humanities Institute, 10 May 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zvko_m4sck.





IV. Nether-Hell

*Doe maar normaal,
dan doe je al gek genoeg*

Enforcing normalcy? Ben je gek? Doe Normaal joh!

And thus we descend from the *enforcing normalcy* [1] to the Dutch **Doe Normaal!** In the Netherlands there's this act of Being Normal. 'Act normal, then you'll be weird enough'. The norm is also found in the act of 'participate, adjust yourself'. This viewpoint is a Dutch obsession. If you don't adjust you are free to leave.

What do we mean by Normaal dan? Who decides that then joh?

IV. Nether-Hell

To me, the idea of Dutch normality is also formality. "See, everybody is doing this, you should do it and if you don't you don't fit in." And if people don't do it, are struggling or refuse to do so, they're frowned upon. The way I see it: Nobody is normal, normal isn't something that can be done. The confusion is in what people are used to and just because certain habits have been normalized, doesn't mean that it is alright. On a positive note: Doing Normaal also refers to social rules. You don't disturb your fellow beings by doing something bad to them. Even though I'm Dutch, I still struggle with Dutch society. A common Dutch phrase that links to 'our' ideology. Together with 'Je past je maar aan' / Just adapt. Which kind of makes sense. To act normal and adapt. But what if the society you live in does not act and adapt back? A society in its essence is based on taking part in the society, bringing in your input. Just for the sake of it, In Dutch, we commonly talk about society as a *Maatschappij*.

Maat(Measurement/size)

Schap (Shelf)

Maatschap(partnership, partner ship?)

It gives me the idea that the system is fixed through measurement (meten met twee maten = double standards). In a society it is required to participate, there was even a (failed) participation law. It seems quite rational to be adjusting to one another in order to live together. The results of Google Translate are 50% about economics.[2] We call social studies class *Maatschappijleer*, but the other Dutch definition of society is *samenleving* = living together / co-existing.

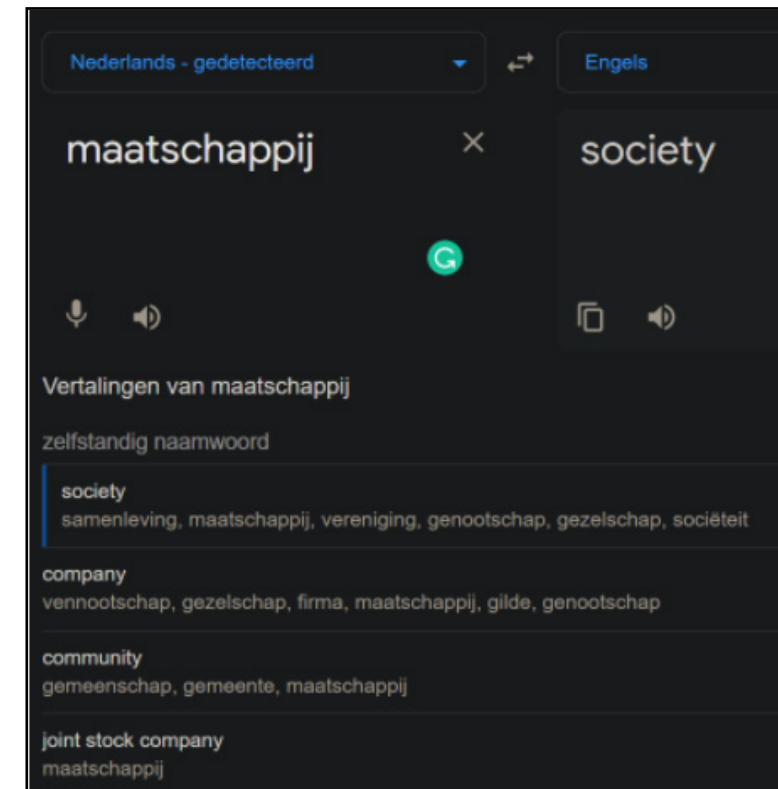
I feel the adjustment is more *maatschappij*-based than *samenleving*-based. It gives me the idea that we are doing it for an economic structure, rather than a social purpose. I struggle with it. Because at first I tried to adjust myself to this society, even through my mental and physical stuff. I was never mentally ABLE to study AND work. If I could, then I would. But I can't.

To me, this has been a matter of acceptance and introspection. This is me and I'm fine with that. However, I feel that the *maatschappij* I live in is in some parts not made for me. The country I live in is not particularly built for me. I don't necessarily fit into the archetype but then again the archetype is outdated.



Davis, Lennard. "Lennard Davis | Disability Studies across the Disciplines: Theory & Praxis." YouTube, Duke Franklin Humanities Institute, 10 May 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zvko_m4sck.

[1]



Translate, Google. "Google Translate for the Word Maatschappij." Google Translate, Google, n.d., <https://translate.google.com/?sl=auto&tl=en&text=maatschappij&op=translate&hl=nl>.

[2]

(Neo)Liberal as we tend to show the Netherlands, acceptance is something that is rather expected. Or locally, in my beloved city Rotterdam, *niet lullen maar poetsen*^[3] which roughly translates as “Actions speak louder than words”. I both love/hate this discipline. Because it grew on me as callous and it’s a way to get through rough and dark times by keeping yourself busy. Another Rotterdam trait is rolled up sleeves(which represent certain working ethics as in no fear of hard work). It is a discipline that can make or break me sometimes. Because I never really had a ‘job’. I worked at Albert Heijn when I was 14 and I did not make it through the trial period. I wasn’t mentally able to pursue school and a side job. I can not focus on two things at once. School / education has always felt like a job for me. I have felt guilty about it for years, but recently I started to forgive myself but it’s again a part of me. It’s not my fault.

As in, the expectations and pressure make me feel undervalued because I don’t feel like the Normaal that is presented. The Normaal I mention is something that is not the ‘usual’ but the expected and something we’ve grown used to. Normaal is knowing how to bike because everyone has learned how to do it. And being judged for not being able to do it. Normaal is working until you’re sick. Normaal is healthy. It is being enforced to adjust to what a certain standard is. Normaal is raar. I can’t ride a bike

KAN JIJ NIET FIETSEN JOH?!
(You CAN’T ride A BICYCLE!?!)

Ofcourse the idea doe normaal will not be mentioned without mentioning Dutch politics. Normaal is also political. The Netherlands always presents itself as liberal, open minded, and free. It’s romantically portrayed as a place where you can do what you want while seeing the same sequence of coffee shops, monarchy, sexworkers and windmills. There is a lot of diplomatic influence. You can just be yourself, we have it quite alright over here. We shouldn’t complain.

Dat bepaal ik toch zeker zelf wel?
(I’LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT!)

Am I able to be myself here? Well, yes, but it’s not without effort. Am I in a privileged position in the Netherlands? Most definitely. But as a Dutch citizen I also see the mishaps of for instance NeoLiberalism, a political approach that favors free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending. Which is mostly about the economic interest of the country. Profit over the people.

Rutte has been ruling the country for over the last 10 years: [4] This is the fourth time we are governed by VVD. It has been 10 years of neoliberalism which has caused privatization of social housing, public transport, healthcare etc.

Overall, this neoliberal *Doe Normaal* mentality is exposed as puritan based conservatism towards hedonism. i.e. drug use is condoned but it’s illegal. We are free to do it here but not to get it. Coffeeshops are free to sell products that come through the backdoor.



Chan, Ling. “Learn Dutch.” SparkLing One, SparkLing One, n.d., <https://sparkling.one/blog/niet-lullen-maar-poetsen-learn-Dutch/>.

[3]

RUTTE I =
VVD (Dutch liberal party) +
CDA (Christian rural party) +
PVV (populist party).

RUTTE II =
VVD + PvdA (labour party)

RUTTE III =
VVD + CDA +
D66 (democratic centrist party) +
ChristenUnie (‘social-Christian’
party)

RUTTE IV =
^ ‘SAME BUT DIFFERENT’

[4]

“History of Dutch Parliaments since 1945.” Parlement.com, Parlement.com, n.d., https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp1x03/kabinetten_1945_heden.

Normaal Doen also has its conservative base in the religious fundamentals of the country. CDA and ChristenUnie don't like to see laws changed that are in their favor. They don't want to provide people with the right to completed lifed, euthanasia[5] or abortion laws because of their beliefs.

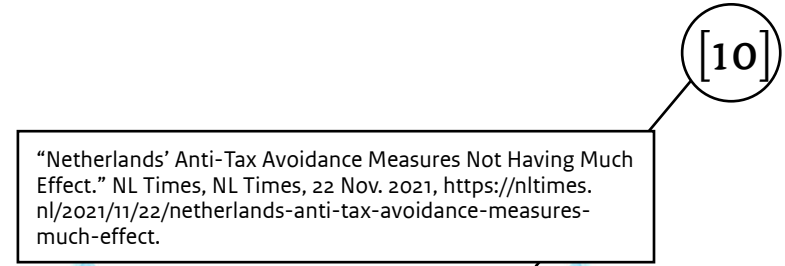
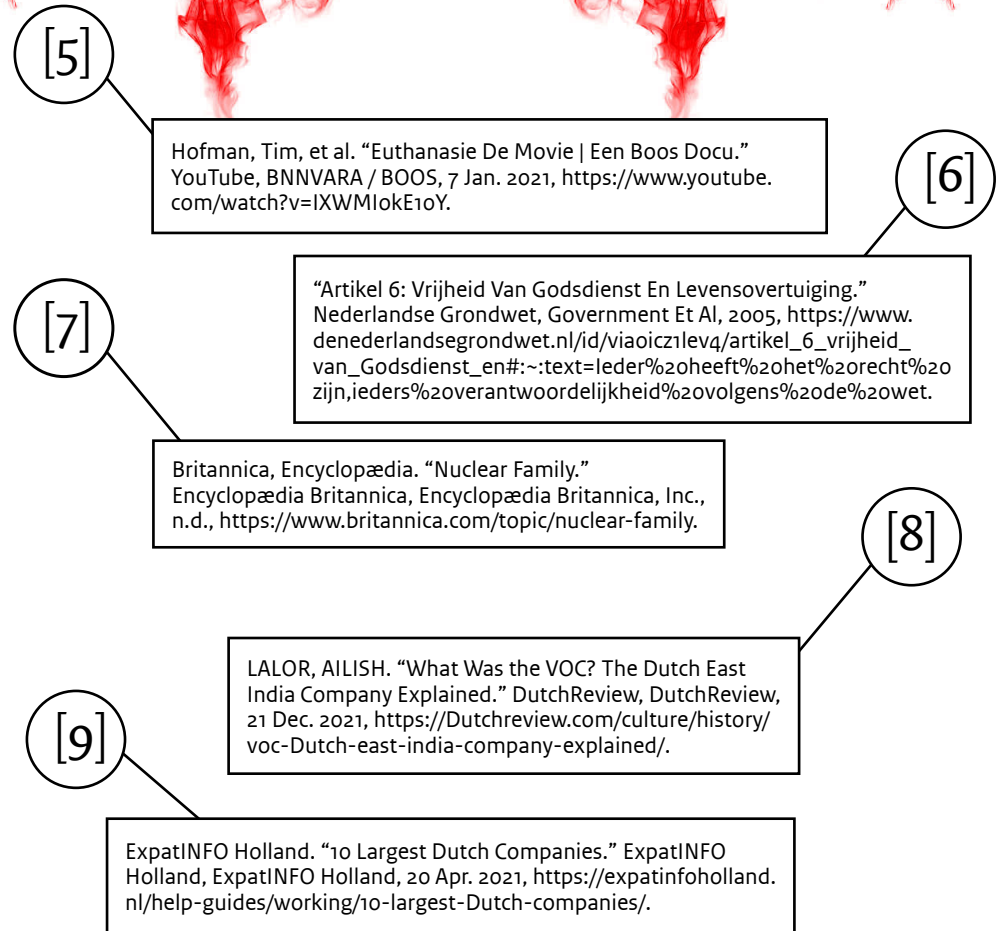
The preferred status of religious exemption is even noted in our laws and rooted in the society: Hospitals with religious names, the aforementioned shortsighted looks on hedonism (since it is sinning). But also the moral monopoly on charities. Why does religion(in this case protestant/reformed/catholic/Judæo/Christian) have such a prefered position in the Netherlands? and how does that have an impact on me and my surroundings? The idea of 'That is just the way it is' which links to 'it is a tradition'.

Article 6 of our constitutional law [6] says that everybody has the right to practice his or her religion / lifestyle / spirituality. Individually or in relation to others as a space of freedom in relation to the law. This means even though you are practicing your religion in all your rights, you are bound to be treated the same as the other.

The *maatschappij* that I live in is mostly fixed on outdated archetypes based on remnants of what people used to be. The norms and values based on diversity are not compatible with policy. I'm, respectfully, secular. I try to stay neutral to people's beliefs in either religion or spirituality. I'm likely to be more drawn to atheism, which is not about being anti religion or deity, I'm just not convinced of the existence of them.It's not that different from a Hindu person not believing in Yahweh. I'm a skeptic, maybe even a humanist. When I'm confronted with information, I trust contemporary empirical evidence over dogma, superstition or other ways of magical thinking. That doesn't mean that I am not open for speculation, hope or love. I'm fine with *samenleving* with religion but the problem is that religious parties CDA and ChristenUnie that have fundamentals in them and have a say in what is normal and what is not. I am a firm believer of the separation of church and state and the separation of politics and companies. The *maatschappij* has a lot of lobbies in the Netherlands, one of which is the rural sector. They vote the most for CDA, the biggest Christian political party in the Netherlands. Their biggest base are the villages and they are a family[7] party which basically means they are about the Christian beliefs of what a family must be i.e. the nuclear family.

The VVD is basically a party that is fixated on the economy. They thrive in family businesses and enjoy international companies. We were always 'a rich and prosperous country'. Until quite recently 'we' called our darkest chapter 'our' Golden Age. Our previous PM even gloried this part of history as the VoC mentality. [8] (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie aka the Dutch East India Company. Trade is in our blood and blood is in our trade. Profit over the people.) This still counts in the Netherlands, in other proportions and over different values. Because of both NeoLiberalism and Dutch Colonization, I feel that the Netherlands are a company. One of the recent nicknames of the country Nederland BV (The Netherlands Ltd.). Because it prefers the economy / businesses / trade over lower income. For a country known for this prosperous reputation and as a country that seems like a paradise. Well, it is a paradise, for the people of wealthier families and tax evaders.

(Multi)national companies are what drives our country.[9] Be it in the shape of export, mass production to the tax paradise that we also have in the shape of post office firms. [10] I think this because multinational companies have more power. There are deals made in our government. Ex-politicians lobby their way into well paid positions at companies. We are living through bureaucracy and policy and there has been a lot of privatizing and putting basic needs into market shape.



In Pointer, an investigative journalism program^[11], there was a research about two million people from the Netherlands that have a physical or mental handicap. In the UN treaty, the Netherlands committed to make the Netherlands more accessible. Sadly, the Netherlands don't seem successful. Most spaces are not accessible for people with handicaps, there are long waiting lists for specialized education and poverty is growing in the group of disabled people in the Netherlands. Well, in general there is a gap between poor and rich.

In the Pointer episode, Teun van de Keuken^[12] joins forces with Jeannette Chedda^[13]. Together they did an experiment in going to public spaces: pubs in Delft. They show that it is possible to get a drink and to go inside, but almost every toilet is upstairs or not accessible. Which is literally impossible to get her or my brother (out of many!!) to perform the basic needs of going to the toilet.

The Dutch government is obligated to take care of its citizens. It is supposed to put money into making the Netherlands liveable instead of living in this Neoliberal Nether-Hell, with a spokesperson / MP who is called Mark Rutte.

The social injustice that I feel is something that runs in the family. I recently discovered that Coba (Jacoba Cornelia) Veltman ^[14] is my old great aunt. She was a Dutch Anti-Fascist and Resistance Fighter during World War II. In February 1941, she was part of the CPN (Communist Party Netherlands), she was one of the typers of the pamphlet *STAAKT, STAAKT, STAAKT!*, (*STRIKE STRIKE STRIKE*) that initiated the February Strike. The idea that resistance runs in the family gives me hope. Like my aunt, I participate in actions on- and offline as a form of protest for the community. Activism to break the stigma of mental health through the means of bureaucracy and understanding the mishaps in our *samenleving*.

By sharing stories with friends, family and people in KABK about bureaucracy, inequality helps me cope and get through the day. When I can, I join protests. On 17th of October 2021, I joined the protest Woonopstand ^[15], which was about the housing crisis. I joined because of the neoliberal privatization that has turned housing rights into a housing market. Where people with the biggest wallets have more priority than people who actually need a home. Which is ridiculous, everybody needs a roof over their heads. At the protest, people from all kinds of different backgrounds joined which showed it was a human rights problem. The protests started with a few speeches and afterwards there was a march from South of Rotterdam to the center of Rotterdam. Since the housing crisis isn't a recent problem, squatters and anarchists also joined the march with a house on wheels to make a statement on the Blaak market square. When the march went over the Erasmus bridge it suddenly got held up.

The municipality of Rotterdam 'pre-emptively' ordered the Military Force (ME) to held back anarchist block from the demonstration, there was no clear reason or motivation. What became clear afterwards was that there were officers in plainclothes. I find it disturbing that a peaceful protest has been stopped or clogged at a bridge. I stood on the bridge when the clogging at the beginning happened and there was nothing communicated from ME nor the police. A lot of people felt a grim atmosphere and at some point I decided to go home. Later people were unfairly treated and this has changed my views on local governance. It's typical how something that goes about basic human rights has been disturbed by police brutality. ^[16]

^[11] "POINTER: Beperkt Toegang." Edited by Anne Mae Van Tilburg et al., KRONRCV POINTER, KRONRCV POINTER, 14 Nov. 2021, <https://pointer.kro-ncrv.nl/onderzoeken/beperkt-toegang>.

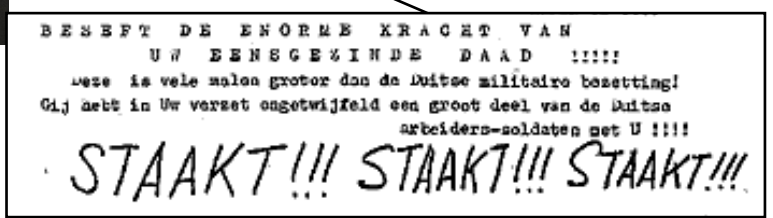
^[12] van de Keuken, Teun. Teun Van De Keuken, Teun Van De Keuken, 7 Feb. 2022, <https://teunvandekeuken.nl/>.

^[13] "Jeanette Chedda." BIJ1, BIJ1, 17 Mar. 2021, <https://bij1.org/kandidaten/jeannette-chedda/>.

^[14] Ockhuysen, Ronald. "Nabestaanden over De Impact Van De Februaristaking: 'Thuis Leerden We: De Verrader SLAAPT Nooit'." Het Parool, Ronald Ockhuysen, 13 Feb. 2021, <https://www.parool.nl/amsterdam/nabestaanden-over-de-impact-van-de-februaristaking-thuis-leerden-we-de-verrader-slaapt-nooit-b8c4c302/>.



Milanovi, Zowi. "75 Jaar Sinds De Februaristaking Tegen Deportatie En Bezetting." Vonk, Marxistische Media Voor De Arbeidersbeweging, Vonk, Marxistische Media Voor De Arbeidersbeweging, 4 Mar. 2016, <https://www.vonk.org/Nederland/75-jaar-sinds-de-februaristaking-tegen-deportatie-en-bezetting.html>.



^[15] Megawati Vlasblom, Mieke, and Sander van der Kraan. "Woonopstand Official Website Landelijke Woondemo - 17 Oktober Rotterdam." Woonopstand!, Woonopstand!, 14 Feb. 2022, <https://woonopstand.nl/>.

^[16] Author, Unknown. "Woonopstand Rotterdam Publiceert 'Zwartboek Politiegeweld': 'Excessief Geweld Perkt Ons Demonstratierecht in'." Rijnmond, Rijnmond, 3 Nov. 2021, <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/1425501/woonopstand-rotterdam-publiceert-zwartboek-politiegeweld-excessief-geweld-perkt-ons-demonstratierecht-in>.



The good thing about today's activism is that you don't have to be somewhere physical to try and make a change. I feel inspired by instagram pages like @Neuro.Elfje[17], which is an anonymous educational instagram page about Neurodivergence. I recently sent a message, asking:

Would you call yourself an activist?

@Neuro.Elfje replied: "Yes, why wouldn't I be? I mean, yes, I hear a lot of people say that you aren't a real activist when you don't come to protests. But if they aren't accessible, does that not make me an activist? Of course not! Why would people complain about something like that. In this time, (re)sharing posts and opinions reaches a bigger stage than an actual physical protest. If that would be the only way, it would be a very validistic approach."

Activist bodies also mean activist minds and in this time, neurodivergence is something that can be discussed through social media, in political parties like Bij1 and through art.

And there is one great reason that I feel I live in a world that isn't made for me: Recently I contacted the student counselor about these troubles and she said that I could get some sort of compensation[18] because I have redone my first year. I felt 50/50 about it. Because the train of thought called 'I don't deserve it' came by and I talked about this to friends and family and they all said *TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN!* So I made an appointment to fill in forms with my GP and hopefully I could get some money. I'm one out of many that has a major study debt due to the *leenstelsel*, I don't even know how high my debt is but I also don't really care anymore.

The *leenstelsel* [19] is going to be abolished and I'm officially part of the bad luck generation. Rutte IV has presented that we bad luck people can apply for a voucher of € 1.000 to € 3.000 whilst the average study debt is € 15.200 to € 17.900 [20]

The word study debt in Dutch is *studieschuld*. *Schuld* means guilt. You are guilty of being in debt. The feeling in debt increases when talking to prosperous people that just say:

You don't HAVE TO take a loan right? I chose to work in order to pay my debts.

It's despicable that this kind of stuff is taken for granted. The inequality shows through the people that adapt to the normal because they're on the right side of how normaal is defined. I don't doubt the intention of such comments since they are well-meant. But on the other side of the coin:

The road to hell is paved with good intentions but hell itself is customized to the opposition of that status quo with the act of false pretense.

[17]

@Neuro.Elfje. "@Neuro.Elfje Website." NeuroElfje, 4 May 2021, <https://neuroelfje.nl/>.

[18]

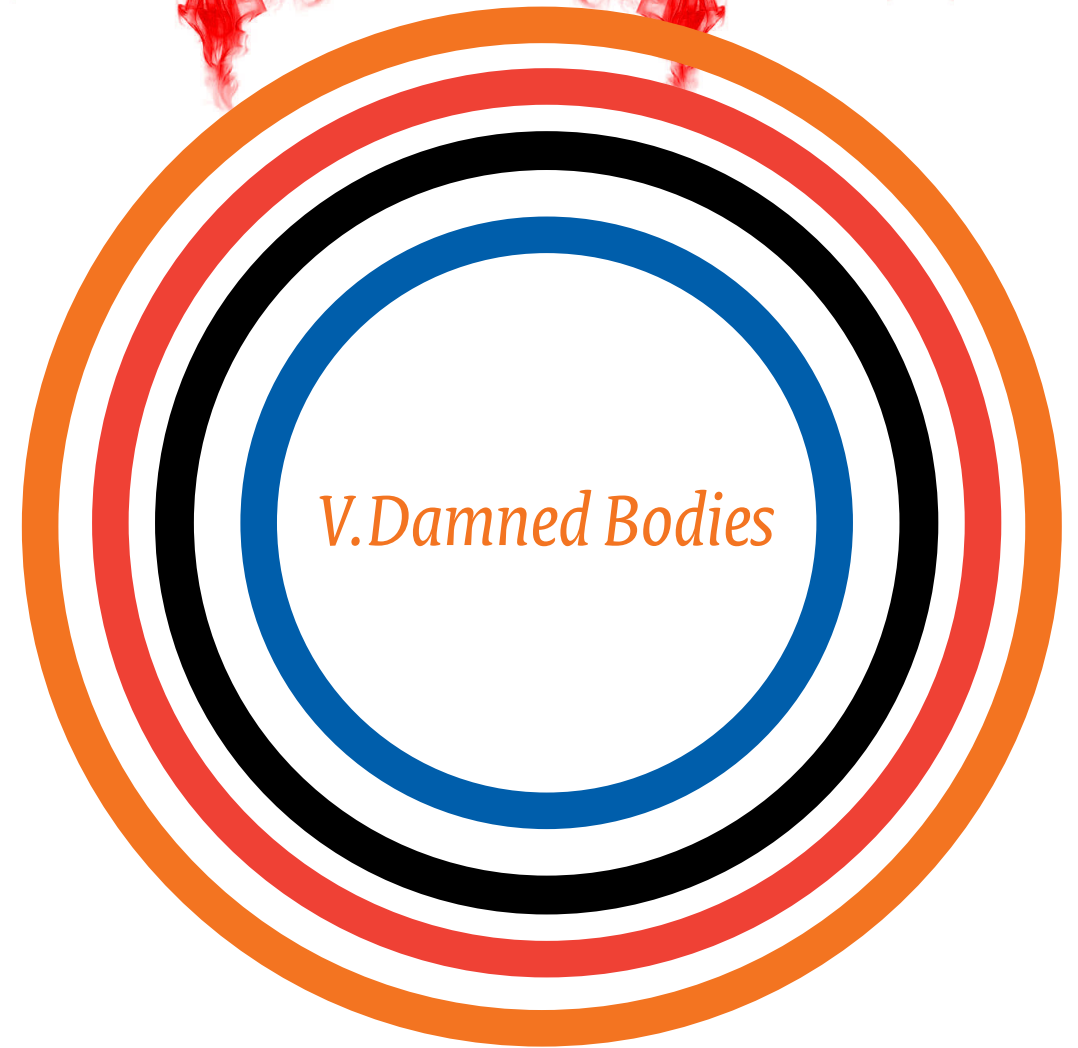
"Studievertraging - Duo." Duo.nl, Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, <https://duo.nl/particulier/studievertraging/>.

[19]

"What Does Leenstelsel Mean in Dutch?" WordHippo, WordHippo, <https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/the-meaning-of/Dutch-word-0a3750de039580b9061e23f8b7b5e4334882e26e.html>.

[20]

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. "Meer Personen Met Studieschuld, Gemiddelde Studieschuld Gelijk Gebleven." Centraal Bureau Voor De Statistiek, Centraal Bureau Voor De Statistiek, 23 Nov. 2021, <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2021/47/meer-personen-met-studieschuld-gemiddelde-studieschuld-gelijk-gebleven#:~:text=%20voorlopige%20cijfers-,Gemiddelde%20studieschuld%20gelijk%20gebleven,2%20duizend%20euro%20in%202020>.



V.Damned Bodies

V. Damned Bodies

In III. Hell on Earth, I referred to Pieter Brueghel[1] and Jeroen Bosch [2] paintings that show an extensive amount of disabled people with their Damned Bodies crawling through Hell.

The wicked and the damned. That is not a nice way to treat people. Nether-Hell is difficult to get through. But speaking up and putting a spotlight on things that bother me is a good way of coping. And of course seeking for like minded people. Last year I participated in Niels Lourens' initiative, the Non-neurotypical art students podcast. [3]

In this episode, I mention infantilization of people who are mentally or physically disabled or impaired. Which is a tricky subject because a lot of neurotypical people find it awkward to communicate with neurodivergent people. But it really depends on the individual. But the overall politically correct seeming rude approach (also seen in the disability model) is not the best way to do this. I understand when it comes to something as fragile as seeing or talking to someone who has something in the likes of a disease, another type of brain the person on the other side is having a trouble understanding.

The Hellscape are always customized for the 'damned'. So what if we reverse engineer this method and use it in advantage in the holistic way? Based on how someone is. Treat people for who they are, not what they are.

Another thing I mentioned in the podcast was that I'm disgusted by how neurodivergent people are depicted. Neurodivergence should not be a business model, and if it is, Share!

I understand that most of these cases are led by what people call good intentions or false pretense. The first example: Capido[4]. A dating app which is a pun based on Cupido and Handicap. They mention on the website that they offer a platform where people with a disability and autism can meet together. When people don't have a disability, they are also welcome. It is an inclusively meant dating app and the maker must have the best intentions, the website states that the reason behind this initiative was because of the discrimination the maker felt in other dating apps where he had a nice chat conversation, but when he shared a picture he gets blocked. He chose to make Capido to start making a difference. It's a very warm and charming intention, but I am not sure why a certain group of people should be so excluded. But on the other hand, it can also be a form of activism. Since disabled are experienced and want to meet people that are of the same 'sort'. It gives me the idea of eugenics.

[1]



Bruegel, Pieter. Dulle Griet/Mad Meg. 1563, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerpen. Mayer van den Bergh, <https://museummayervandenbergh.be/nl/pagina/dulle-griet>



Bosch, Hieronymus, Zondvloed en hel, 1514, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. <https://www.boijmans.nl/collectie/verdieping/jheronimus-bosch-de-duivelmaker>

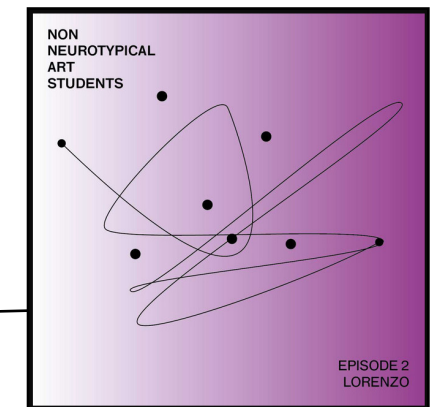
[2]

[3]

Lourens, Niels. "NNAS: Episode 2 (Lorenzo)." Spotify, Non-Neurotypical Art Students, 23 Dec. 2020, <https://open.spotify.com/episode/768YrHyfVZRCHLfXYufWEv?si=PtsO45PBS1q-JPYkHDF3EQ>.

[4]

Oudshoorn, Erwin. "Dating Voor Mensen Met Verstandelijke En Lichamelijke Beperking." Capido, Erwin Oudshoorn, 26 Oct. 2021, <https://www.capido.nl/>.



When I first saw the Capido-app [5] I assumed that it was just another company trying to use people with disabilities as a business model, but the intention seems better than I assumed it to be.

Speaking of business models, a Hellish way to look at the idea of dating apps is that most of them are based on rating systems. Buying your way into love through premium accounts. In a video by Youtuber *Ordinary Things: The Evil Economics of Tinder*[6] it's shown that men greatly outnumber women on basically ANY app. But 'luckily' people can buy their way into meeting 100x more potential matches because they can reach the state of Platinum Übermensch. Again, paying your way into your non-loneliness.

In 2021, *The One*[7] was released by Netflix and it was about finding your perfect match through DNA and it showcased the problems of it. i.e. people who were happily in a relationship and still were curious but also had bigger ethical questions. A few years ago one of my best friends sent me a video called *No Pills But Nutrition at ADHD*. It was a bulletin by current affairs program *EenVandaag* from 2011 re-uploaded on January 8, 2020 on a YouTube channel called *LeefBewust*. [8] A YouTube channel that describes itself as the platform for a healthy and conscious life to 'wake people up' and give insights over a more natural, healthy and overall more powerful lifestyle.

The video that was shared was presented by *LeefBewust* [8] as *BREAKTHROUGH: NO PILLS BUT NUTRITION*. In the video, they talk about a *Lidy Pelsser* research [9] that was posted in the *Lancet* using a change of diet rather than medicine. The video starts with *Pelsser* saying: When you have a splinter in your thumb, you don't use a painkiller. Why would you eat food that causes ADHD, then simply don't eat the food. Normally I'd say 'why bother discussing this?' but this was published in the *Lancet*.

This publication is about an elimination diet. The study was about people 'getting' ADHD from eating or drinking something. The elimination diet is some sort of unnecessary torture in order to push kids into 'adjusting' and letting them taking part in society. It's pure fucking torture to adjust your kids just because someone has published an unchecked peer review. In the comment section of the video there are links found where peer review reflected on the 'breakthrough case'. By both a Peer review from *The Lancet* [10] and the *RIVM* (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment)[11]

The mindset behind this kind of thing reminds me of the God/Sin disability model just like the *CEASE Therapy*[12] which is basically exorcism through Homeopathic treatment. The Neurodivergent are the sick, the damned. So they must be cured. If the sick are rotten, who are then the pure?

[5] Oudshoorn, Erwin. "Dating Voor Mensen Met Verstandelijke En Lichamelijke Beperking." Capido, Erwin Oudshoorn, 26 Oct. 2021, <https://www.capido.nl/>.

[6] "The Evil Economics of Tinder." YouTube, Ordinary Things, 19 Oct. 2020, <https://youtu.be/OnLpylrZo28>.



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V. Darned Bodies

In the beginning of COVID-19, I gained interest in alternate media, conspiracy theories and misinformation. I found out that the presence of magical thinking and logical fallacies were gaining popularity.

Whereas people were searching for soothing messaging in magical thinking, I started turning more and more into skepticism. Mostly because (medicinal) science has helped me in being myself. I just trust science more than I trust spiritual institutions.

I am very much aware of the negative aspects of the western scientific world not giving out patents, being white cis male centered mostly but that doesn't mean it is a reason to give up on centuries of research. It is an opportunity to dive into science through diverse bodies, psychedelics and other not widely enough explored fields. Science made me understand myself more through psychological terms while growing up. It rid me from allergies, taught me how to live with myself instead of holistic alternative medicine or following the Josef Mengelesque^[13] CEASE therapy or the ADHD dietary Pelsler method. These kinds of methods of destruction are both brought by believers of holistic medicine and other new age spiritualist (mal)practices. I'm quite skeptical of the new age spiritualists. It's a westernization of the spiritual knowledge that comes from indigenous cultures. Cultures that have been colonized.

There is a certain skepticism towards science and the main reason for that is the big pharma and big capitalist companies as the big evil. I mean, they're not wrong. But that's a part of it rather than all of it. Blaming something huge as our scientific practice for something company based. The people that claim to have faith in 'natural/holistic/medicine' have a sudden aversion that is brought in the bubble. But the same people are now able to become older than 40 years old because of it.

The practitioners of this type of conspiratorality are not the same as the certified concept of spirituality with a sense of integrity. It's a business with a political socio-economic lobby and bias with influence from the wellness industry selling quackery in the shape of holistic alternative supernatural medicine to the people that seek guidance and development in their spiritual paths to help them cope. ^[14] The purity and perfect vs the wicked and the damned. There is also a place in Hell for the fraud. The Malebolgia (evil ditches) is the eight circle of Hell, it has ten evil ditches and one of the ditches is destined where humans who committed the sin Fraud are punished. ^[15]

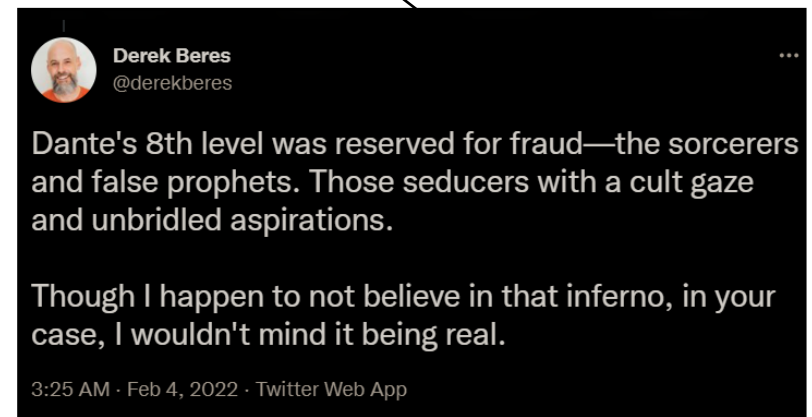
But then again, Dante Alighieri was Christian/Catholic so it's a bias, but as Hell is a space that is for people pointed out, I feel a healthy reflection can put some reflection and perspective to the pure and the holy as well. ^[16]

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V. Damned Bodies

The idea of a damned body is harsh and cruel. Yet it is seen in daily life and it has been an source of inspiration. With my artistic practice, activism and involvement in the community. I satirize the world I'm living in and ridicule/amplify the failing aspects of the society that we've grown accustomed to. My works are mostly virtually accessible activist hellscapes on what I hope to be a social scale rather than just the people that are able to access the art.

My brother is in a wheelchair/scootmobiel. Ever since he's in one, I started looking different at daily life things: the accesibility of public spaces and it has helped me in developing criticism. I have grown to develop interest in social design, something that doesn't only apply logic but also empathy. If I show my work in the KABK, there is some logistical struggle to take place. It is not accessible. I found this quite ironic for a building that should represent art, design, societal questions and so on. The students and teachers are supposed to be criticizing, defining, designing and making narratives, futures, institutional critique.

In 2019, I made a video for a site specific assignment as a form of institutional critique to show the inaccessibility of the KABK. In the video the person in the wheelchair is trying to get into the art academy by wheelchair[17]. In the video he gets help from a student to get into the art academy with many struggles up ahead. At the collective assessment, I heard from my teachers that the board of governance thought that I was an inspector doing an unannounced assessment of the KABK.

During my internship at SETUP MediaLab Utrecht[18], I developed an artistic design research project about the mental health crisis in the Netherlands.[19] The project was inspired by a government ad campaign that was intended to improve the mental health crisis that was exposed during the pandemic. In my project I translate the Babylonian confusion that exists and translate it into a vulnerable Jenga tower. [20] The goal of the 'game' was to be coproductive and talk the same language instead of bloating pieces of jargon while that only is understood by the one saying it. If a brick falls it collapses and the question in the end is:

What will you do when the elements are breaking down and fall to shards? Do you throw away and keep on talking your language or do you blend and create a new dialect that more can understand?

My graduation project *Happytalism* is a satirical interactive installation which is a response to the beforementioned problems caused by conspiruality. *Happytalism* is inspired by The Malebolgia. [21]

Happytalism is an experience to expose the infection of integrity that is caused by politically infused industries that provide and promote dis-information, quackery, holistic ableism etc.

By entering the hellscape of *Happytalism*, the visitor goes into a peaceful space of soothing aesthetic that shifts into the hellscape of chaotic stimulation overload: 10 hrs of meditation on repeat, special effects, multiple spiritual influencers that guide you at the same time through social media. At the same time the negative aspects come in through the aspects of conspiruality. To visualize the Hell I experienced as a damned, wicked body by the idea of the self-proclaimed pure. [22]



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[22]

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The background features a vertical gradient of smoke. The top half is filled with vibrant red smoke, while the bottom half is filled with bright blue smoke. In the center, a realistic image of the Earth is shown, partially obscured by several overlapping circles. A large, thick orange circle is positioned behind the globe. To its left, a smaller blue circle is visible. In the foreground, a series of concentric white circles are centered on the globe. The text 'VI. CONCLUSION' is written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font across the right side of the globe.

VI.
CONCLUSION

And you may ask yourself, “How do I work this?” [1]

So, how do I go through Nether-Hell? I go through it by the coping mechanisms I developed. It is living in a space that is not made for me. The Neurotypical world, but also the Neoliberal world and of course Capitalist world.

I cope through connecting with friends and family. Sometimes I’m tense, but I know people who struggle with the same. Social Media has given more and more people a voice to share their struggles and that legitimizes, affirms and confirms the adjusting yourself to the *samenleving/maatschappij* you’re in feels like you’re damaging yourself to fit the archetype.

Not fitting into the archetype is basically a feeling of suffering because it’s feeling guilty for being yourself.

My close friend circle and surroundings consist of people that flaunt what they are. Be it sub or counterculture, be it based on sexuality or in what type of body they are born. Most of us share a certain feeling of not being accepted and we try to deal with it by coping collectively.

I cope by being around people that care and meeting people that aren’t familiar in dealing with a changing world. It is about the proper treatment, helping and coping mechanisms rather than healing, enforcing normalcy and curing. Coping over curing. It’s the development of thicker skin through experiences. It’s falling into pits of pessimism and negativity every once in a while but never losing the idea that it’ll become better but it’ll never become good. [2] It’s a ongoing process of development, but the development needs people with experience so the development needs to be accessible.

*None of us are getting out of this life alive
That’s why I don’t go gentle into that good night
That’s why I’m shining brighter than the brightest light
I twinkle like my blade in the belly of the right
‘Cause dullards don’t shine for shit, they just talk shite
Shoulda, woulda, coulda does not build prophecies of height
So I’ll be mouth and eyes for the sore foresight*

-Joe Talbot(IDLES), Mike Skinner & The Streets [3]

I cope through music, that’s something quite normaal, I believe? In my spare time I go for walks to empty my brain, I write poetry and I make drawings. I play guitar, listen to music, watch series, and meet friends and family. Due to past experience I’m more comfortable in the now. But I’m terrified of the future. I keep hearing all this motivationally intended feedback from teachers but I’m just thinking: Okay, I will graduate and *then what?* Because of my ADHD/PDD NOS I have never really been able to work a side job next to my courses because my mind can’t handle it.

After KABK I will enter the next stage of the Nether-Hell. To become even more intertwined with bureaucracy and probably gaining more experience through the struggle. I’m afraid of the current housing crisis as my current contract will expire next year.

[1]

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[3]

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...Fine, and then what?

Will I do a Masters?

Will I start my career and start kissing butts and begging for funding?

..Or will I go for financial stability?

Another financial fuckup by the fuckin Netherlands is that funding is the way of getting paid and I'm not sure if after 12 years of study I would like to start a career in such security. I don't feel that there is much security. At least, I'm used to lack of security so maybe my coping mechanism is just telling me to not think too much of the future for the next thing might be around the corner. I try to accept myself more and more and advise other people struggling to at least try and do the same, things are getting better. Neurodivergence is growing as people are getting their diagnoses and therefore understanding the struggles they couldn't explain before. There is a growing number of online communities asin instagram pages, facebook groups. zooming into my close circle I see close friends getting their diagnoses in their 20s-30s. It's a relief after a lot of distress and they are becoming better at dealing with how their brain works. The relief is that after diagnosis, treatment and therapy, people are learning to put a spotlight on the thing they're struggling with and being okay with it.

It's a lot of suffering, but the suffering gave me the experience and experience gave me wisdom. I try to share my gained knowledge in the work that I make. I'm writing this because I want to share my views on society and what ruling forces drive it. In my graduation, I show how the pandemic has caused us emotional dis-tress on a societal level. When we enter individual trauma, we seek uplifting spiritual guidance and experience. We present our vulnerable fragile selves to what we believe and are convinced to be certified teachers, practitioners, guides and products of growth. Where there is a will to grow, there are ways to develop but also to infiltrate and manipulate. Over the last few years there has been a growth in supply and demand for spiritual development.

I believe that treatment of one another, whilst maintaining integrity will help. Acknowledgement of my own irony is what keeps me sane. Empathize by proper social treatment. Treat others the way you want to be treated yourself and be open for other thoughts and also to question everything, forces, habits, cultures, words, sentences, beliefs. Normaal is just a thing used to define what's weird. If people find comfort and luxury in the models they are brought up with, they aren't normal, they are privileged. Living in a bubble.

Working for the rat race?

You're no friend of mine

Just working at your leisure to learn the things you won't need

The promises you make tomorrow will carry no guarantee.

-The Specials [4]

But the thing is, I don't have all the answers nor do I have solutions. I know that I will continue in growing coping mechanisms and use my critical thinking to develop Hellscares, questions and providing insights that aren't normally asked from a typical Dutch angle, but a Nether-Divergent viewpoint.

[4]

Specials, The "Rat Race" Spotify

[https://open.spotify.com/](https://open.spotify.com/track/oy6ZjYa5BtpnRb8SoS7ceD?si=0546755e03ee4683)

[track/oy6ZjYa5BtpnRb8SoS7ceD?si=0546755e03ee4683](https://open.spotify.com/track/oy6ZjYa5BtpnRb8SoS7ceD?si=0546755e03ee4683)



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