

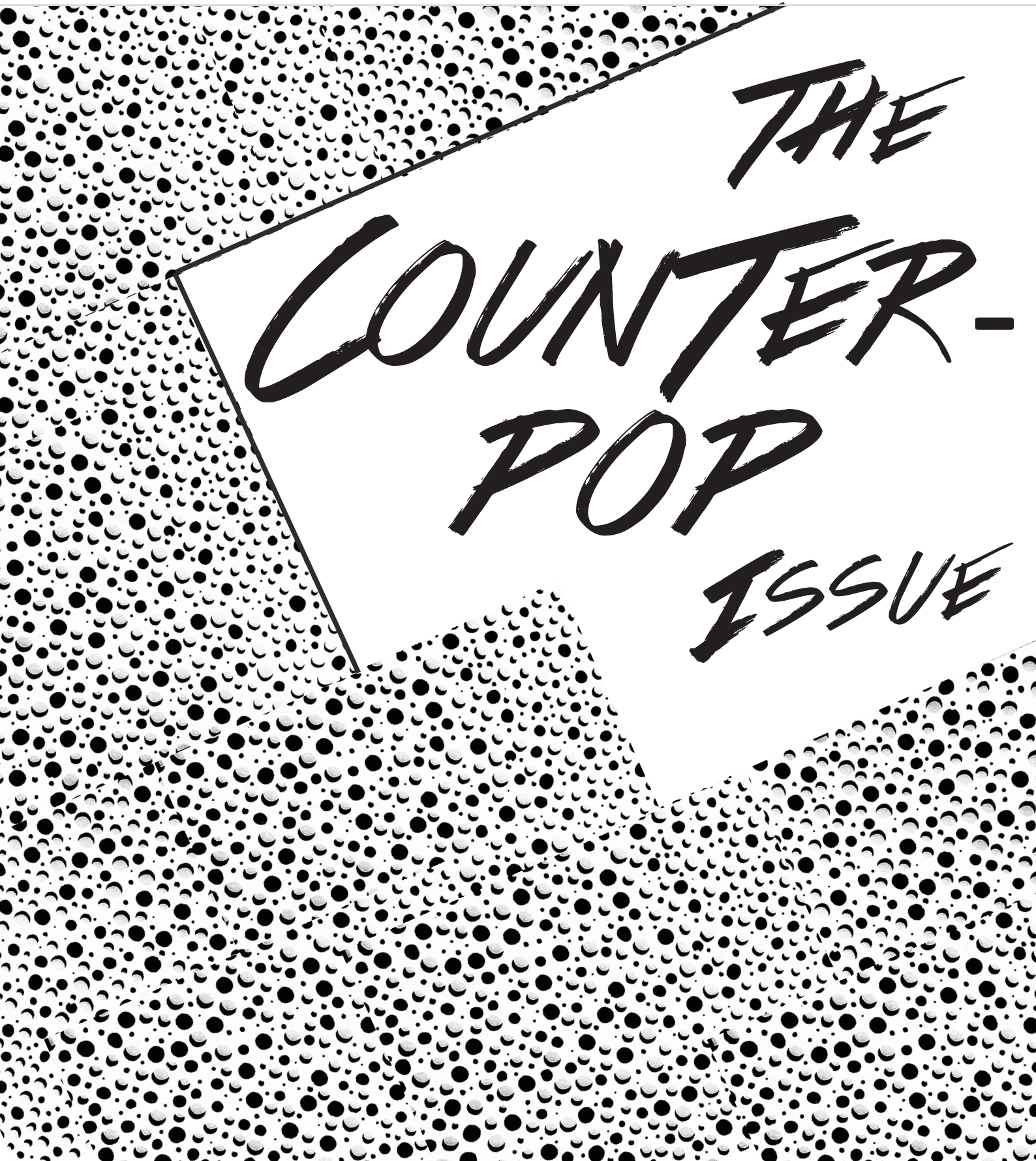
BAISMAG

INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES



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**THE
COUNTER-
POP
ISSUE**

DEAR READERS,

By turning this first page you have just jumped into the great paradox of contemporary culture.

While fashion might have developed further already, you can still spot people wearing t-shirts depicting Ernesto Guevara at the funeral of the victims of the La Coubre disaster. Do people wearing this fashion item mean that they are suspicious about the American secret service? Did they just find Ché one of the most handsome and mysterious historical figures deserving some extra attention? Or are they true followers of Guevara's ideologies, condemning capitalism and consumerism? Fact is they might have become 'victims' to this consumerism, wearing a mass-produced t-shirt depicting a man, an icon, whose loss of meaning correlated interestingly with his gain in global popularity.

In this issue we tried to touch upon the lines between counter and popular culture and delved deeper into both, to find out if there even is a clear distinction between the two. Gratefully we accepted the bliss of editorship and without even coordinating it we got to receive articles eventually representing almost every corner of the world; in our eyes an amazing metaphor for the natural flow of globalisation. Critical politics from Guatemala and Korea, pop culture in India, films from New-Zealand, music from South-Africa, art from Russia...

One of the most famous subcultures nowadays would be the 'hipster'-culture; a hipster as someone who goes against the mainstream culture and established social order, but on the other hand someone who follows fashion trends. Following the trends results in setting them, and the people who follow these, are they hipster too now? 'Real' hipsters would say no. But who is the real hipster?

What do we (want to) represent in our expressions of culture? Could it still symbolise something deeper? Although we might not provide you with the answers to all these questions we, in some way, hope to inspire you, amuse you, and maybe with this magazine give you a cultural artefact that you might consider part of some counter culture...

May the positive forces and beauty of globalisation be with you,

Love and Peaches,

TOM & VIOLA

LIKE CHOICE,

I will tell you one story. It could have been my dream, it could be somebody's reality, and it could just be. Read it and decide what is your choice like choice like choice.

In some incomprehensible city with unremarkable people and advertisements about nothing, there lived a man. I am not going to call names on purpose, because there is none.

In the morning the man was drinking precisely two-thirds of a powdered coffee cup. His apartment was spacious, at least so it seemed to his friend, when he was coming over. If you think that there was something interesting, you're wrong. Furniture from the 1960s, dilapidated stove and sick colored curtains. Although, perhaps, there was one feature. In his cupboard there always were the same chocolates. They were lying behind the cracked glass door in a nice wrapper; to Darling Clair was written on them.

On the man's way to work he was unable to find anything that would attract his attention. The person was not seeing any purpose in what he was doing for life. Pushing on the button of the elevator when people are coming in. He had a friend who was involved in a roughly same routine. After work, they drank some local alcoholic stuff and went home.

What would you say after seeing this man? Maybe you would not have noticed him at all first. But if you have there is nothing special to look at, really. While falling asleep the man was listening to the same song every day: Galt McDermot's Coffee Cold. Chocolates were in front. He stared with indifference. As if they did not mean anything to him. Although this was not the case.

LIKE CHOICE,

Everyday he was going to that one cafe on the corner of the street; in every pub of that city a bartender was pouring him the same beer every Friday. The salesman Johnny for the second month was trying to foist this man an orthopedic mattress, which proves to heal you from back pain once you are old.

If the man was going to the club then miserable homosexuals would have molested him. He did not like it, but did not understand what he wanted. Whiskey or rum could not help to find what he needed. Sometimes inspiration came to him, but it was for a single moment. He tried to catch the thought. The only one that was going away all the time. He remained with nothing.

What happened with this person? Can't you guess? Years passed and a bartender and his friend buried him, even an actor from the gay club showed up to see how looked the person who never tried. And now you ask me what is the reason? But, probably, it is obvious, because the man has not found the only one very simple thing that nobody was able to discover in that city. Courage. His chocolates were left lying in the cupboard, behind a glass door, if not rotted. Où est ma clair?

The courageous choice, my friends, is the only one.





A LONG TIME AGO IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...

It is a period of civil war. Star Wars fans have been split into two factions fiercely debating whether J.J. Abram's upcoming movie is anything like Schrodinger's Cat; a movie that is both bad and good until its release date.

In anticipation of the movie's release this December, we here at BAISMAG will try to brush through and partly-review the first six episodes in as few words as possible. The attempt is daunting, but in the words of our favourite Jedi master - Do or do not, there is no try.

THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY (1977-1983)

Most of us (well, I hope most of us) were still Midi-chlorian cells swimming in the channels of the Force when this came out. For those of you new to the Star Wars universe, it is quite easy to be intimidated by a trilogy that begins at Episode IV. It is beyond me why the creator of the series, George Lucas chose to go backwards (like Master Yoda perhaps backwards he thinks hmm?), but I assure you it isn't all that confusing. Remember Science Fiction was pretty much still in its infancy in 1977, which means if a bunch of 70's kids could digest it, so can you!

Episode IV, V, and VI was the trilogy that introduced the world to Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, and -Alright Chewie I'm telling them okay? Whadaya mean I should have told them your name first? Gosh. Fine. - Chewbacca. Since I assume a good deal of readers are mere padawans (basically Jedi for 'newbie'), I will try to brush through this spoiler free. Episodes IV - VI were masterpieces in their own right. It might disappoint you in terms of CGI, but they did a mighty fine job of crafting their own detailed models for filming. If you're a CGI kinda person, this is not the trilogy you are looking for. It's got a great story, and a talented cast comprising of the likes of Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher.

Ps. Don't forget. This trilogy introduced the Ewoks.

THE PREQUEL TRILOGY (1999-2005)

This is where things might start to make a little more sense. The prequel trilogy features a relatively strong cast such as Natalie Portman, Samuel L. Jackson (Say what again!), and Aslan...I mean Liam Neeson. The first episode, The Phantom Menace pretty much has Liam Neeson running around saying cool Jedi stuff with his pupil, Obi Wan. While it plunged the Star Wars universe into better CGI, and began to shed a bit of light onto the backstory of the original trilogy, it lacked a bit of Star Wars magic. The following episodes, The Attack of the Clones and The Revenge of the Sith were light-years ahead of its unimaginative little brother.

Episode II brought metres of depth to the Star Wars universe and introduced us to the clones, super-cool troopers who I may or may not have wanted to be as a kid. (A man can dream okay?). The story has bits for everybody - action, politics and even romance featuring Hayden Christensen chasing after Natalie Portman (and I can't blame him).

Quite obviously, Episode III finishes the story on which the Original Trilogy builds on. While I will try very hard to not spoil things, you know that with a name like 'Revenge Of The Sith' things aren't going to go well.

Something bad happens and people die. Sorry. Not sorry.

(Pro Tip: It is always advisable for beginners to watch the Original Trilogy before the Prequel Trilogy.)

THE VERDICT

Star Wars is to Science Fiction what Lord Of The Rings is to Fantasy. The story is great, and jokes aside I hope I haven't spoiled it too much for you.

Ps. If you like soundtracks, the Star Wars soundtrack is so good I like to walk around The Hague with my earphones in, pretending I'm Darth Vader moving trams and stuff. Yep. It's that good.

**MAY THE FORCE
BE WITH YOU,
JEDI MASTER BARTLETT**

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARK ORDESKY:



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF THE LORD
OF THE RINGS TRILOGY

American film producer and film studio executive Mark Ordesky is best known for executive producing the Oscar-winning film trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. I had the pleasure of e-meeting Mark over Skype thanks to him being good friends with my uncle, as he gave me some advice on a film project of my own. Charismatic, obviously highly intelligent, and contagiously enthusiastic, it was a pleasure speaking to him that first time, and an honour to be able to now interview someone so involved with one of the biggest film franchises of this generation.

B: Can you briefly describe your personal journey in the film industry?

Ordesky: I fell into the film industry a bit by accident. I started out as a writer, but quickly realized my actual skill and passion was recognizing and advocating the talent of others. I've been fortunate to do that ever since—at Republic Pictures, New Line Cinema, and now as an independent producer. I love artists—writers, actors, directors—and I love enabling their process of creation.

B: How did you get into this business?

O: I wrote a short novel while at university, and it was bought by one of the studios. Everyone thought I was going to become a screenwriter, so to learn how I got a job as a script analyst for a production company. But the screenwriters I read were far more talented than I would ever be. Then I got my big break: a job buying distribution rights to independent films. That's where I discovered Peter Jackson and Lars von Trier by seeing their first films. I vowed to have a career where I could help get their movies made.

B: So how did you end up as the executive producer for the *Lord of the Rings* movies?

O: That's a long story! The short version: I tried to buy the US distribution rights to Peter Jackson's first film, *Bad Taste*. That created a friendship with Peter which I took with me to New Line Cinema. At New Line, I helped get Peter his first Hollywood job, writing an instalment of New Line's *Nightmare on Elm Street* series. Years later, when Miramax was trying to compel Peter to do a one-film version of *The Lord of the Rings*, I helped make the case at New Line that we should finance the films the way Peter envisioned them.

B: What attracted you to working on those movies in particular?

O: I had loved the books from the first moment I read them at 13 years old. They were the gateway to my love of fantasy, science fiction and horror in literature and film. And I loved Peter Jackson. So *The Lord of the Rings* was a chance to combine two passions.

B: What's it like watching back the films you've made now?

O: It brings back memories of the adventures of film-making, and also of my life at the time. Films are how I mark the passage of my life.

B: What does a day in your life look like?

O: It's a mix of seeking and discovering new projects and creators; helping creators with whom you're already working develop and package their projects for casting, financing and distribution; and physically making the projects for which you've already secured financing. No two days are the same!

B: What's the main difference between a producer and a director?

O: A director has a vision of how to bring a movie to life from script to screen. The producer's job is to support and enable that vision by helping to assemble creative elements, financing and distribution.

B: What advice would you give your 20 year old self?

O: Break more rules.

B: Do you think film has long-standing effects on society?

O: I do. I think film is a powerful medium to change hearts and minds. All my favorite films when I was your age transformed me: *Chariots of Fire*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Year of Living Dangerously*. New films still transform me today.

B: What's your favourite book? What are you currently reading?

O: That's a hard one! Other than *The Lord of the Rings*, I'd say my favorite is probably Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. I think it's relevant to every generation. I also love reading Hollywood history and biographies. It helps remind me that whatever obstacles I'm facing, they've been overcome by others. Right now I'm reading the biography of David Brown, legendary producer of *Jaws*, *The Sting* and *The Verdict*. David Brown is who I'd like to be when I grow up!

B: What's Ian McKellen like?

O: Smart, compassionate, witty and mischievous!

B: What was your favourite moment in the whole *Lord of the Rings* era?

O: It's a tie: One favorite was the world premiere of the first footage of *The Lord of the Rings* in Cannes 2001. Our French distributor Sammy Hadida lifted me off the ground and kissed me in his excitement. My other favorite was *The Return of the King* winning Best Picture in 2004.

B: Do you have any particularly funny/memorable stories from the making of the *Lord of the Rings* movies that you'd like to share?

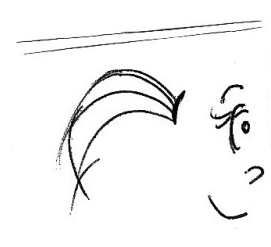

O: One time I was going to set to ask Peter some important question (important to me anyway), and he didn't want to deal. So he asked me to read off-camera lines during the scene when Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli are crossing Fangorn Forest. I was stuck behind a fake tree for hours, and Peter avoided my question. The other time was when Peter tricked me into prematurely announcing that the world premiere of *The Return of the King* would be in Wellington NZ in front of thousands of fans. Peter is mischievous!

BY ANTONIA MCGRATH

Toto...?

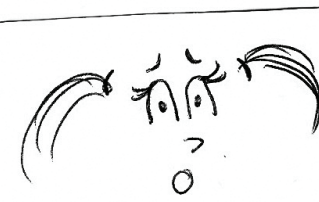

Why is the Hague hipster?

Hmm... Let me think! I thought Amsterdam was Holland's most hipster city?



But! Hipsters wear glasses right? And we have a lot of intelligent people in the Hague like politicians, diplomats, students...

Yeah, but Amsterdam has universities too...



Ok... But hipsters are vegan right? And we have the Hague Market with fruits and vegetables!

Fifi! Don't be stupid! You don't know anything!


BUT!!! We have deer next to our central station! I thought hipsters liked nature...

Yes... Maybe you're right! Moreover, I see people with full-grown beards around all the time!

So living in the Hague is hipster?

But I am not hipster!





It's so hipster to deny that you're hipster.

Wait, so am I hipster?

No, no, you aren't! Oh, wait...

Maybe you are! So am I too then?

RUSSIAN POST MODERNISM

I want to start with dividing Russian citizens into 3 different categories concerning their attitude towards postmodernism in Russia. Probably the majority wouldn't even understand what the heck you were asking them about and what their orthodox-conservative-normal lives are to do with this weird western thing. The second category (usually youngsters from Moscow or St. Petersburg wearing skinny jeans with spectacles bigger than their head) would direct you to the one and only Russian Museum of Contemporary Art called Garage (really popular not only due to its ambiguous exhibitions but also because of the founder - former model Dasha Zhukova, better known as billionaire Roman Abramovich's wife). And the third, the tiniest category of Russia's population, would say names like Kazimir Malevich (Black Square painting), Victor Pelevin (Generation П), Tatyana Tolstaya (On the golden porch) and Venedikt Yerofeev (Moscow-Petushki). Those are the most well remembered names of Russian postmodern culture, but I will focus on Malevich and Pelevin in this article.

These two authors have different perceptions of postmodern culture, although one feature remains the same for the Black Square painting and the novel Generation П: attempt to deny the popular culture of masses. But what about them? Why are these particular authors symbols of Russian postmodernism?

Let's start with Kazimir Malevich with his "Black Square" painting as a representative of visual arts. According to Malevich himself, the painting should have represented a "zero point of painting" this "zero" being the beginning of the rejection of the entire objective in the world and a switch to immaterial substances. It is interesting that at first sight, the black square could be seen as something static and fixed, Malevich wanted it to represent a dynamic and active form. Furthermore, by this piece of art Malevich intended to reject the whole idea of the "painting" as we got used to thinking about it. It was symbolic for the end of traditional material thinking of the artist and became a cultural icon of the time.

Victor Pelevin and Generation П novel thought to be the most powerful Russian postmodern literary work by the critics. The novel is set in Russia in the times of political and economic reforms of the 1990s. The main character is a Russian student who has just graduated from the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute and has found employment in marketing, in a company that develops Russian versions of western advertisements. The main themes of the novel are: consumerism, attempts of Russian citizens to adapt to the market economy of post-Soviet Russia and specificities of Russian mentality. Pelevin, in a very straightforward way, tells "no" both to the ideological directives of the Soviet era and to the inculcating pseudo ideology of the consumerist society. According to Pelevin postmodernism, being inseparable from the popular culture should be understood in the context of it. The author mocks the person of a postmodern epoch as the one without agency, clear values or moral landmarks; this person is easily disturbed by mass media and over sympathizes them.

So, as the examples of Malevich and Pelevin show us, Russian postmodernism is not a style per se, but rather a period of time when all thinkable and unthinkable styles, tendencies, methods and experiments were present at the same time creating a truly mind-blowing mixture.

BY KSENIA KOCHETKOVA



NORTH KOREA: THE TROUBLEMAKER

There is more chance that China's football team can join the World Cup than North Korea can obey basic international rules, such as protecting private property. Recently, according to the report of the Washington Post, North Korea manages to control an Egyptian company, which sells cellphones in North Korea, by some secret operations. Anna Fifield, the author of the report, forms the title like this:

"North Korea tells Egyptian company: Thanks for the cell phones. We'll take the company, too."

The title shows a typical North Korea attitude towards "private property". As a "communism" or "socialism" nation, North Korea holds a negative attitude to private property because it believes that the latter will cause income inequality. Income inequality is intolerable for North Korea. Therefore, it articulates that all the property should be owned by the state so that the state can distribute it uniformly, and everyone will get the same. Its slogan is "All the property is owned by the state, and the state is owned by the people." The income inequality gap between people can only be effectively controlled by the state.

As a result, North Korea has no intention to protect private property as long as the nation and its people can get benefits. However, do "the people" really get any benefit? According to the report, North Korean people's life is still quite lagging behind. For example, "there is no public Internet in North Korea." Nowadays, public Internet should be one of the basic benefits that people can enjoy. Nevertheless, this basic benefit is still unavailable for North Korean people.

As for the slogan mentioned above, is the state really owned by the people? Well, if it is, how can it be explained that all national leaders come from one family, from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong Il and to Kim Jong-un? North Korea seems to be owned by the Kims' family instead of "the people". A state really owned by the people has a transparent election system, which means its leaders aren't appointed by the former ones. Professor Griffiths might suggest, "North Korea, improve your 'Voice and Accountability' if you have any."

All in all, North Korea is a troublemaker, which always disobeys some basic international rules so that the nation can get some so-called benefits. Its disobedience also makes it a clown at an international level because it deeply believes that its decisions and policies are correct and in accordance with its people. However, in fact, those decisions and policies are merely beneficial to Kims' family.

Writer's note:

Even though I'm against any form of violence, I'm still curious about the reasons why there isn't any military sanctions imposed on North Korea. After doing some research, I found out that any military sanction to North Korea would be a declaration of war against China. For information, please read Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid and Cooperation Friendship Treaty, which is really short but extremely significant to both countries.

BY YANG QIU

Not some time ago, the 'greatest country' on the face of planet Earth, witnessed a thumping movement. Eerily on the lines of the Bohemian Revolution, but one which did not involve silver laced corsets or weirdly enthusiastic cabarets like the Moulin Rouge. In spite of these trivial differences, what made the movement in the United States so similar to its Bohemian counterpart? The will to upset the established order. Granted, I took the aforesaid dialogue from one of my favourite movies, but I'll get to that in a minute.

The Counterculture movement of the 1960's was signified by people who sported tattered clothes with some of the most vivacious insignias on them. Flags embellished with 'Peace' logos coupled with music avec political overtone but unfortunately, without any tuning were in abundance. For us, it was probably about the Woodstock Festival and teenagers who deferred their Yale acceptances (Read: Hillary Clinton) for the sole purpose of getting high. However, there is more than meets the eye. There was an underlying logic behind all those teenagers taking to the streets. The movement was at the junction of two important events- America's infamous involvement in Vietnam went well in concordance with the growing Consumerism along with other social issues at that time.

Let's put things into perspective here. What started with just a bunch of people with the intent of non-conformity to the rules and procedures went on to become something bigger. Individuals who grew tired of observing political instability, growing role of corporations in their daily lives streamlined this frustration in order to oppose the society. At that point of time, the support wasn't as significant as just a minor portion came together to oppose the system. Fortunately enough, the world was blessed with the likes of some of the greatest musicians and icons during that era.

Time to fast forward to the present era where counterculture is no longer an option. That's probably because we're very much used to the presence of consumerism to an extent that we would not exactly go out of the way to delve out of things. Although, Tyler Durden was almost successful in convincing us otherwise, Capitalism and its symbols and ideals have held us captive for some time now. Yes, we're very much into the Popular Culture age. To my discontent and however hard for me it is to say it, Popular Culture and the notion of Capitalism are synonymous to each other. A number of symbols that are a part of Popular Culture today (Andy Warhol's Pop Art, for instance) were inspired from the Counterculture age of the 60's. Moreover, Pop Culture, in a variety of forms draws inspiration from its penultimate subculture in the first place. That's the big fat irony. We, now, manufacture products for mass circulation which have been inspired by the ideals of a movement which was against this kind of consumerism.

I'm gonna go ahead and take the example of the 'Guy Fawkes' mask - a profound symbol of Popular Culture. The mask gained cult acclaim because of the graphic novella and the brilliant brilliant film, 'V for Vendetta'. Hold on, we're not there yet. The cult acclaim was furthered when another two overwhelming layers were added to its cult popularity. First one being, Anonymous, the hacktivist group that employed the mask for its somewhat rational propaganda. Second one would be our very own Dutch DJ, Nicky Romero's 'Toulouse' video. I can tell you why the latter's influence is insane. Back in Delhi, my hometown, not many people knew about the 'Guy Fawkes' mask with respect to the movie. Consequently, it started circulating among the youth. Unfortunately, it started gaining popularity for all the wrong reasons. Individuals would now wear it for every concert or party. Here's the sad part: on probing them about the mask, they would be blissfully unaware of what the mask actually stands for and give me responses that made me shudder in frustration.

That's where the paradox starts to weigh in. Out of the so many symbols that were once popular during the Counterculture movement (The Rolling Stones' Tongue and Lip Logo, The Beatles' Yellow Submarine Insignia and Pink Floyd's prism) are now being used for marketable purpose. I am not against it simply because I have a couple of t-shirts with the aforementioned symbology. Well, it isn't just me, but people everywhere who put their Yankee caps and Boston Celtics jerseys to good use but that's the beauty of Popular Culture: that it is everywhere.

Out of all the references I have used, including the one in the beginning, have been inspired by Popular Culture of today. I had the opportunity to travel to both Amsterdam and Hamburg, two of the most culturally diverse and exceedingly brimful cities this weekend, which was quite the motivation for this piece. I have greatly exaggerated and rationalised my inability to submit this piece on time, but let's be honest, with all these wonderful things around me, the delay was worth the hassle.



Deciphering the Switcheroo

By Pratyaksh Arneja

THE WALLS ARE SCREAMING

I arrived to Guatemala embarrassingly ignorant about the nation's troublesome history. I got off the bus in Guatemala City oblivious to the fact that I was walking amongst people who had suffered one of the longest civil wars in history. However, it did not take me longer than a ride on the "transmetro" from the bus terminal in zone 12 to the hostel in zone 1, to realize that I had arrived to a city of deep frustration and a thirst for justice. As I looked out of the window of the crowded "transmetro" I could not escape the graffiti's on the walls. Unlike in my own country of origin, the words painted on the buildings were not the names of the spray can-holding artists themselves. Instead I was introduced to difficult Spanish terminology such as "Genocidio" (Genocide), Justicia (Justice) and "Impunidad" (Impunity). I noticed the reoccurring stencil work of the face of an old man wearing glasses. Under the face often read slogans such as "si hubo genocidio" (yes there was genocide) or "sin justicia no hay paz" (without justice there is no peace), some walls had other faces on them followed by the question "Donde están?" (Where are they?) I did not require a profound understanding of Guatemala's national history to realize that something was not quite right.

I had planned on spending three weeks in Guatemala, visiting the Mayan temples in Tikal and the lake in Amätitlan but instead I ended up staying in Guatemala City for over a year. Guatemala has often been described as a silenced state and the war is wiped out of newspaper headlines and political activism is often associated with criminality. During my stay in the city I noticed that the war was rarely mentioned in conversation although the over thirty yearlong war rids tens of thousands of people of their lives, others went missing and entire Mayan villages were killed off by the military government. The "conflicto armado" as the war is referred to in Guatemala, was a war between the government and the leftist guerrilla movements but ultimately the civilians especially in the rural areas paid the price.

The walls, however, seem to offer a place to make the voice of the people be heard. Guatemala City has not forgotten even if the conflict is not an everyday topic of conversation. The graffiti on the walls on nearly every street corner are a constant reminder of the past. I soon learned that the man with the glasses was Efraim Ríos Montt, a wartime president who ordered the ethnic genocide of Mayan populations. As the graffiti makes known for all passers by, he was never convicted of his wartime crimes. Two months before I left the city Montt was finally sentenced to life in prison (but let off because of his poor health), without a doubt his face and the word "genocidio" painted on the walls of the city had a role to play in bringing about justice and breaking the silence. The mouths may only whisper but the walls of the city are screaming.

BY MARIANNA LAINE

PARA EL QUE DIO
LA ORDEN DE AGONÍA.



EFRAIM RÍOS MONTT

VIEW ME: FILM REVIEWS



THE MARTIAN (SCI-FI / ACTION)

BY ISIDORO CAMPIONI

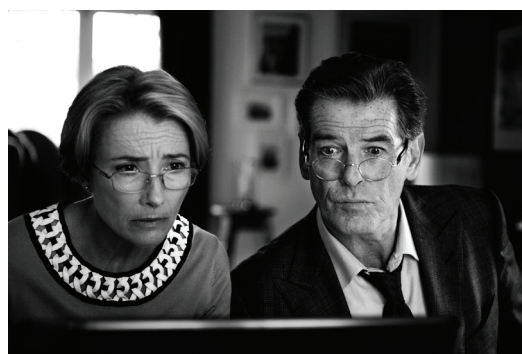


Calm, relaxing and restful are the opposite words I would use to describe this movie. In a not too distant future ... I know, it is a cliché from science fiction movies. But once you survive the first five minutes of the movie, we find ourselves immersed in the oasis of Mars, with Matt Damon. Having been left accidentally for dead by his captain and crew, Matt (I forget his name in the movie, but who doesn't) elaborates ingenious ways to grow food and communicate home that would put Einstein to shame. Regardless to the problematic situation 'the Martian' finds himself in, his optimistic and charismatic view of things keep you intrigued and full of hope. There is no denying that this is a classic American movie which ends with high fives and chants, but frankly that can be overlooked as story, acting and screenplay is brilliant. Although you might not be a big fan of unrealistic stories, I promise this will leave you perplexed.

THAT AWKWARD MOMENT (ROMANCE / COMEDY)

For when you want do nothing but spend the afternoon with your partner to Netflix and chill, but you cannot find a movie that will satisfy both of you. Let me advise this movie as she will fall in love with the romance, and he with the bro-mance. After one of the three best friends exits from a long-term relationship, the other two vow to remain single for solidarity. But this task proves to be challenging as they all find their other half. And yes of course, there is a down as their friendship is challenged and then an up as they all figure it out and all ends well. However, apart from being the cliché romantic movie, in New York, with Zac Efron, it will leave you with that warm and fuzzy feeling in your chest.

THE LOVE PUNCH (COMEDY)



Imagine one of those movies where you laugh so much that your abs hurt, then there are those few movies that make you laugh so much that your abs still hurt the next day. I believe that that feeling would suffice to describe the comedy that can be found within this movie. When Pierce Brosnan finds out that his job and pension has been liquidated by a greedy businessman, he teams up with his ex-wife, Emma Thompson, to steal the money back. Be it their English charm or their innocent and harmless appearance, but this couple is captivating. I would suggest that after a voluminous family lunch, you roll over to the sofa and enjoy this movie with your family and friends, because it is the most fun movie I have seen in time.





BATTLING THE

PATRIARCHY: THE PLIGHT OF

AFRICAN WOMEN

“And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength.” – Nervous Conditions, Tsitsi Dangarembga

We all know the stereotypical image of the African woman as portrayed by the media; docile, submissive, a door-mat to the bullying African man that lashes out at her on a whim, beating her to a bloody pulp. There are many that deplore the state of the African woman and they have every right to. In tradition-riddled environments that prevent many from, for example, pursuing a career, and living under the thumb of a patriarch, female empowerment is something reserved for a privileged minority in Africa. However, in the 21st century, one must examine the historical origins of female submissiveness, and ask oneself whether this is still the case for all women on the continent today.

There are many women in Africa that suffer abuse by men and generally have fewer legal rights than their male counterparts, the eradication of which is a battle many lawyers and NGO fight on a day-to-day basis. It is tragic that for many African women, land rights are practically non-existent, as these are held by men and women only have access to them through a benevolent male relative, commonly a father or a husband. If a husband should die, many widows are left without a home, as is the case in Zambia, where more than 1/3 of widows lost access to their homeland when their husbands died. Another example is genital mutilation, a barbaric traditional practice that some cultures in Africa still practice to this day. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 25 million females alive today in 29 African and Middle Eastern countries have been put through this ordeal.

However, this is the 21st century, and as President Obama stated in his speech at the Safaricom Indoor Arena in Nairobi in July 2015, “Africa is on the move”; thus, progress in the domain of female empowerment cannot be ignored. African women today are more aware today of their rights, and one can observe in many areas in Africa women challenging traditional gender roles. There has been a move towards independence, with women attaining university degrees, previously something only men could do, pursuing careers, and, for the lucky few, buying cars and nice homes. In families, the woman is no longer the meek caregiver controlled by her husband. For examples, one need only look to the award-winning Kenyan businesswoman Eva Muraya who founded her own company, Color Creations, or the female entrepreneur Fola Laoye, who contributed to making her family business the largest healthcare service provider in Nigeria. Female empowerment is reflected in the political domain as well: Rwanda is the only country today, where more than 50% of the Members of Parliament are female, and currently, there are four female African presidents, which is more than the United States of America has ever had.

Looking back on history, it is interesting to note that before colonialism, African women were generally seen as equals by men. In fact, when explorer David Livingstone arrived in Africa in the 1860s, he observed that female chiefs governed clans in what is today known as the Congo, and in many monarchies, women occupied places of power that equalled that of the king's. It is only after the continent was subjugated to European rule that this state of egalitarianism changed. With the importation of Christianity, European languages, and concepts of social Darwinism, to Africa, ‘the white man’ changed traditional pre-colonial African societies, and with that, the status of women in these societies.

Title deeds are one example, an alien concept in Africa until the Europeans arrived. They contributed to cementing male domestic patriarchy on the continent: only men, as in Victorian England, were permitted to own land, rendering women dependent on men, a situation that has lasted to this day. Colonialists also brought with them ideas of male fundamentalism and of the traditional Victorian woman – a meek and obedient housewife subservient to her husband, what many African women today are conditioned to be.

African women are not powerless; on the contrary, they are hard workers and generous caregivers, with the potential to change the continent for the better. It is history and outdated European ideas of the traditional ‘ideal’ woman that have reduced them to the state of near-powerlessness they are in now, crushed by the oppressive force of a male-dominated society. “Just because something is a tradition doesn't make it right,” Obama remarked in Nairobi earlier this year, and he is right. Female repression holds a country back from development and from achieving its full potential. African women must liberate themselves – and indeed, some already have – from this archaic notion of female submissiveness, and embrace their power and strength as females, as their ancestors had so many years ago.



BY
ANNA ADIMA

Dutch Impressions

by Emily Magnus





BY FEDERICO LUX

Die Antwoord is one of the most famous South African groups at the moment; the duo, formed by Ninja and Yolandi Visser, is characterized by classic rapper features: baggy clothes, prison tattoos, and an overall badass feel around them, expressed through looks, language, and music. Now the question is; does all of this in any way represent South African youth culture? To simplify things I decided to focus on one of their most famous songs, "Fatty Boom Boom", to try to give an analysis.

The video clip contains quite some meaning: it pictures a fictional Lady Gaga arriving in Johannesburg and having a tour of the worst neighbourhood of the city on a matatu, which of course is driven by a funny black guy with a funny accent, who tells funny nonsensical stories about the 'concrete jungle'. As the video goes on we can spot typical African animals walking with nonchalance on the street: hyenas, black panthers, and the 'king of the concrete jungle', the lion. Because of course every African has a lion as a pet right? Afterwards come Ninja and Yolandi playing on the streets, the first body-painted in white, while the latter in black; the dichotomy that they seemingly wish to portray is pretty self-explanatory. After a series of gross adventures in the concrete, our beloved Lady Gaga ends up eaten by someone's lion pet.

The message they seem to want to convey is that down there they do not really appreciate Westerners, do they? We can also understand much of Die Antwoord's message by the lyrics, in fact their problematic relationship with the bigger stage and Western audience is treated as follows: "Suddenly you're interested 'cos we're blowing up overseas / make you money". Again, no big money white people are welcome in the concrete jungle, a point reinforced by what happens to Lady Gaga.

Die Antwoord more than once criticizes – directly and indirectly – the West as a whole, from Lady Gaga, to how Yolandi and Ninja are dressed up. If we dig a little deeper, we can find some sort of love/hate relationship between them (as well as youth cultures) and the West. In the example of Die Antwoord, they appear to 'despise' the West, but on the other hand, they sing in English – or in Afrikaans, which has linguistic connections to Dutch as a colonial language – and dress up as stereotypical white rappers and so on and so forth. This shows a sort of desire for detachment from the colonisers, but also a dependency, which can clearly be seen in youth cultures and languages such as Ndoubil or Nouchi that are highly influenced by the colonising power, but they also try to reject it or Iscamtho and Soweto that appropriated much of the Western gangsters' looks. Die Antwoord's song "Fatty Boom Boom" can therefore represent this sort of love/hate, attraction/rejection

POSTCARDS

FROM 3RD YEARS ABROAD

Muli mutya
BAISMAG!

Here in Uganda our daily life is quite different to the one in Europe.

We take showers out of buckets, wash our dishes & clothes in a basin & eat rice with beans almost everyday. Life happens outside, on the streets. The streets are filled with children screaming "Nuzungu!", meaning "white poison" in Lugandan.

Every day can be an adventure with unexpected things happening. We generally stopped asking no more questions on how & why, but simply go with many things, which leads to great memories & funny situations!

We further missed our washing skills; 1 1/2 hours of waiting doesn't even seem like a wait anymore!

Overall, we are very fortunate to be here & we looking forward to seeing all of you again!

Much love from Uganda,

Faco & Schobai
xxx



THE PICTURE IS FROM BRUNNEN ISLAND - PRINZESSIN WOLFE - PART OF THE BRUNNEN BEHOLD!

enjoy sitting what the water
C-jelly in hit the rocks +
from the father-men. Mine I
moved home I had never been
to Turkey - and since I have
travelled to Amara; Pamukale;
Cappadocia; Turgutreis; Trabzon;
and Anzura - next (concerning) I go
to Marburg - George is - it is good
and is really. I have to say I think
is all five my favourite - the
only two wonderful in music and
more all is funny in NL,
grünne

Mochaba Kwio May Kando,

I am in the beautiful city
of Istanbul right now - enjoying
more sun than I have ever seen
in the NL - even in summer! Last
week I went to one of my favorite
places here - holidaying in sea, too! They
have the greatest cafes & bars - and
also lots of beautiful things - right up
my street. I also love crossing the
Bosphorus - I am fortunate to
live right close to the water and

LETS GET NAKED AND DRAW



by Natya Heuser Wolff

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