

**If
communication
was a game we
should all be
cheaters**

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Abstract

This thesis is a result of my research on a subject that has always been a fascination to me. Nevertheless I got completely lost in a world of my very own words, explanations, ideas, and probably even misconceptions. I started my research on the subject of language. There is something appealing to me about the way in which it fails to explain the world and our emotions. During my research I was quite surprised by a discovery. Apparently the word communication comes from the latin “communicare”, which literally translates “to share”. As a graphic design student, it is far from surprising that I was so fascinated by this little detail. I have spent the last 4 years learning about the practice of communication, and I never knew what it actually means. I had to ask myself: Do I master the practice of communication or does it master me?

I try to understand to what extent can media shrink our perception? How do the communication tools we use give form to and alter our thoughts? How much do we actually engage with the people around and what does it say about our society. The ways in which we interact are a vehicle for defining our personal and cultural identity. The tools we use to communicate and to distribute information create a world where human interaction becomes dependent on and therefore limited to them. Talking is distortion of air but does that mean we can never speak in vacuum?

perceive
verb
verb

From Latin per- "through"
+ "capture, seize;
understand", from English
"become aware or conscious of
something, identify, consider,
think of".

IF A FISH WOULD SMOKE CIGARETTES
WOULD HE SMOKE THEM

LIKE THIS



OR LIKE THIS

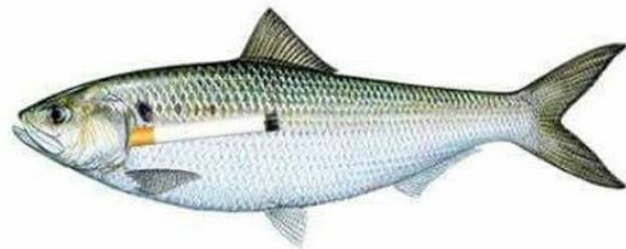


fig. 1

to think
noun

Icelandic þekkja "to know,
recognise, identify, perceive",
Latin tongue "know".

The meaning of meaning

All species experience and understands their environment in terms of the information processed by their senses.¹ We have built-in responses to certain types of sensations. Sunflowers for example can sense the sunlight and adjust their position accordingly so their flowers point to the sun. A sense is a physiological capacity of organisms that provides data for perception. We have a multitude of sensors for sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, thermoception, kinesthetic sense, pain, balance, vibration, and to some internal stimuli such as sense of hunger and sense of thirst. Our experience of reality is based upon the perception of sensations. Our embodiment creates the agency of self with which we perceive our environment. When we perceive we become aware. This awareness is a result of the processing of signals by our nervous system which are triggered from some sort of a stimulation of the senses.² “The necessity of being experienced introduces into knowledge an irrational element, which cannot be logically justified.”³ So to correct Descartes: We feel, therefore we are.

1,2 Wikipedia contributors (2018, December 13) Perception. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Perception&oldid=873488609>
 / 3 Cohen, R. & Schnelle, T. (1986) Cognition and Fact: Materials on Ludwik Fleck. /

Although, in addition to the senses that our genetical structures have provided, we have opened up perspectives on reality based on information that is mediated by symbols rather than the senses. This has become our second nature and it is transmitted not through our genes, but intentionally passed on and learned. In one word - languages. Thus our experience of reality immerses from an inner dialogue in which we relate our personal feelings and events to an external reality and an understanding of situations we have witnessed before.⁴

4 Nevejan, K. (2012) Withessing you: On trust and truth in a networked world.

knowledge
noun

From English “to be acquainted or familiar with; to have encountered; to experience; to recognize the nature of”.

experience
noun

From Latin experientia “a trial, proof, experiment, experimental knowledge, experience”, past participle of *peri-ri “to go through”, from English “practical contact with and observation of facts or events”.

I started to wonder which came first. Thought or language? It is logical to assume that thought was first and language is an attempt to express that thought and rationalise the world. There are many studies on the relationship between language and thought. In brief some conclusions include the ideas that thought and language have interactive relationship where language dictates thinking meanwhile thought also influences language. In fact there are many non-verbal ways of thinking such as in mental images (visual), kinesthetic, musical and mathematical.

But language is the extension of thinking. It is proven, that we can think and communicate without using language, but nevertheless as we grow up our mind processes are being programmed to operate and communicate by using signs and symbols. Of course it would be naive of me not to consider all the different possibilities of self-expression and communication, but nevertheless languages are still the number one tool we use to exchange information and ideas.

In general languages are modes for representing our thoughts by the use of arbitrary symbols and combinations of those symbols.⁵ They are an arrangement, which orders our knowledge with the goal of making it possible to represent in a system of names. Humans are “the symbol-using (symbol making, symbol misusing)” beings. We are “separated from our natural existence by instruments of own making”.⁶ Languages are very old instruments. The literary theorist Kenneth Burke describes language as the very centre of our existence and through which we exhibit our desires for order, our wish to control the natural world by naming its contents, and even our effort to dominate others. I suppose the boundary between a tool and a weapon can sometimes be very hard to tell.

⁵ Foucault, M. (1966) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* / ⁶ Kenneth Burke (1966) *Language as Symbolic Action*.

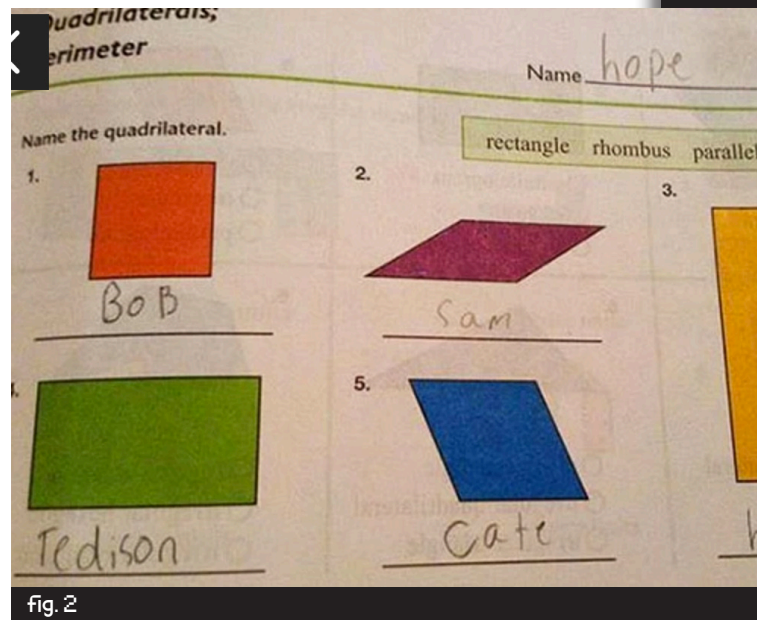
In a film by Jean Luc Goddard called *Alphaville*, Alpha 60, the city's computer system in complete control has outlawed free thought and individualist concepts like love, poetry, and emo-


fact
noun

From Latin factum "a deed, act, exploit; in Medieval Latin also state, condition, circumstance", from English "infor-mation that is known or proved to be true".

information
noun

From Latin "formation, conception; educatio; to inform".





tion, replacing them with contradictory concepts or eliminating them altogether. And the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, in which Newspeak is a controlled language, of restricted grammar and limited vocabulary, meant to limit the freedom of thought, personal identity, self-expression, free will, that would ideologically threaten the régime of the Party. He goes as far to invent the term “thoughtcrime”.

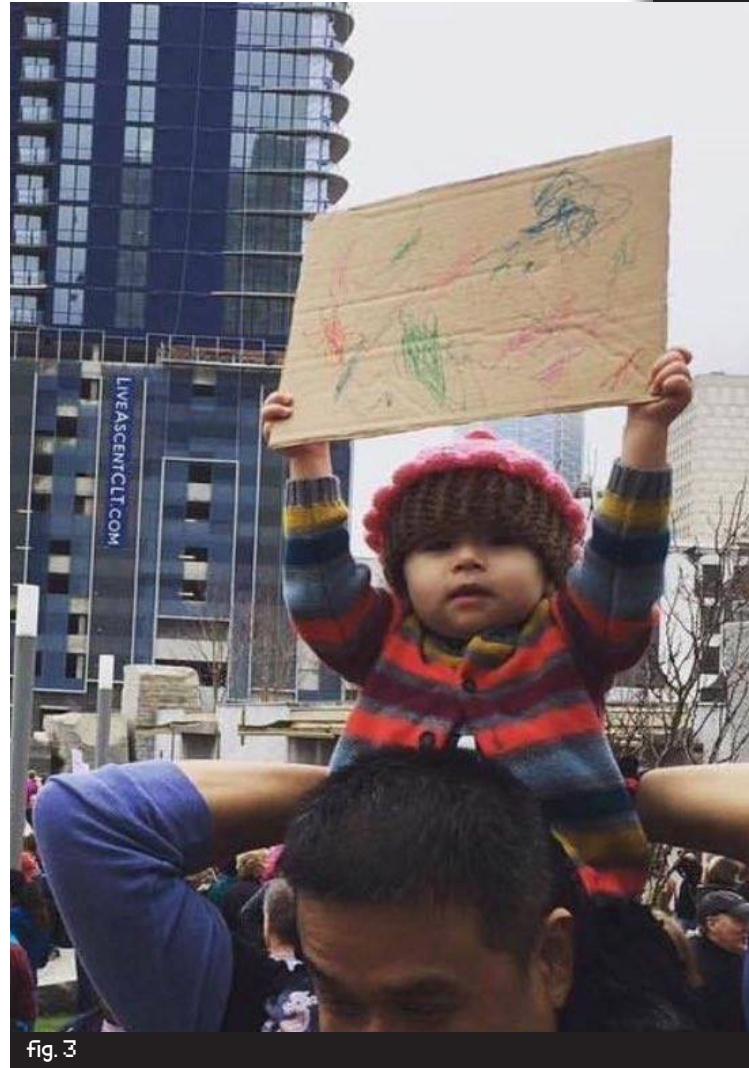
We could speculate that dystopian movies have a close resemblance to real life. In the sense where the expression of our thoughts happen according the possibilities our knowledge of language would allow. Some scientists even believe that when learning a new language, we become aware of new perceptual dimensions because different languages embody different world views and ways of organising the world. For example the perception of time, space, age etcetera. There are even some innumerate societies where counting is not an existing practice, so their understanding of quantity is completely different than our own.

Because we know how to use language and it is so ubiquitous, we can transmit really complicated thoughts to one another. But language does not just reflect reality, it selects reality. It is not only a description of an experience, but it directs us to look at one thing over another. Since human beings depend for their lives more on learned and less on genetic information than do other living things, the structure through which information is carried exerts a decisive influence on our lives. Language does not merely reflect an objective world, but words participate in constructing that world as well. To use language is to engage in a construction process, and what is constructed is our view of the world. But thinking and perception depend on our previously accumulated knowledge.

What we already know changes the way we see the world. Knowledge can sometimes result in a closed and settled perspective, leading to not moving beyond the way in which we perceive and deal with problems. For example in the case with babies. We can't have a conversation with them, because they don't

to inform verb

From Middle English *enforme*, *informe* 'give form or shape to', also 'form the mind of, teach', from Old French *enfourmer*, from Latin *informare* 'shape, fashion, describe', from *in-* 'into' + *forma* 'a form'.



mind noun

From Old English *mynd*, *emynd* "memory, remembrance; memorial, record; act of commemoration; thought, purpose; consciousness, mind, intellect", from Proto-Germanic *mundiz*, *gamundiz* "memory, remembrance".



have any knowledge on the medium of spoken language. That doesn't mean a baby doesn't have thoughts or anything to say to us. Babies never resemble a blank canvas. The beginning of their cognition process is their beginning. Babies' capacities for feeling originate through interaction in the moment they are formed in the womb. It could even be that their thinking (cognition) is even greater than ours, since it is not mediated through human language.

In fact newborn babies communicate between each other in their own imaginary languages. They invent those at the moment of their interaction. Most of the time to us it sounds like nonsense, but it's impossible to deny that they do exchange some meaning. We are just too biased by our knowledge of institutionalised language norms to possibly understand it and engage in such a conversation. In fact they are even much better at sensing other people's emotions than grown up's can ever be. The act of imitation is important in the newborns world. At the beginning babies imitate the facial expressions that they see and express themselves using this "language". It is interesting that these facial expressions are very similar across all cultures. There seems to be universal expressions for the emotions of fear, sadness, joy, disgust, and anger. It appears that the human face speaks a sort of a universal language of expressions and babies use it to communicate to us before they know how to speak.⁷

⁷ H. Klaus, M. & H. Klaus, P. (2000) Your amazing newborn .

But as they grow up, babies pick up on the language from their environment and start to use it for expressing their thoughts. That's when they start to make sense out of our world through the use of language and we can have a sequential conversation with them.

conscious
noun

From Latin conscius, itself from
con- a form of com- "together"
+ scire "to know".



Use a catchy title

Communication comes from the Latin word *communicare*, which literary means “to share”. In simple words communication is the exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, emotions. For communication to happen there must be the sharing of meaning. Words, for example, ‘mean’ nothing by themselves. It is only when people make use of them that they stand for anything, or, in one sense, have ‘meaning.’ They are instruments for communicating.

When we are communicating, we are not only exchanging information, but also witnessing each other. That means we continually negotiate trust and truth. We witness each others presence.⁸ This is how we establish trust and sense of what is “true”. We tell each other stories, we laugh, we debate and this is how create meaning and value. People like to participate. We like to be a part of something larger than we as an individual are. Humans have always been part of a social group. A tribe, a family, a team, etcetera. Different cultures are a result of this witnessing as well.

⁸ Nevejan, K. (2012) Witnessing you: On trust and truth in a networked world.

To witness each-other is crucial for the construction of our reality. When witnessing each other, trust and truth are negotiated and as a result social structures are shaped.⁸ Communication constructs social realities in the sense that meaning is created by common ideas and their exchange between people. “When negotiating trust and truth, people have to take responsibility for their words and deeds. Results of such negotiations, the shared authoring of outcomes, inspire meaning to emerge and cultures to rise.” In a way it is the same as with letters. Letters receive meaning when being part of a bigger structure, as a word or sentence. When creating meaning and value (negotiating trust and truth) we decide in which actions to engage, what stories to tell, how we express.

language
noun

From Middle English langage,
language, from Old French lan-
guage, from Vulgar Latin *lin-
gu ticum

A form of communication using
words either spoken or gestured
with the hands and structured
with grammar, often with a writ-
ing system;
wording; choice of words

Freud speaks of culture as the fundamental order with which a man “will be dealing and within which he will be at home”. These codes are the one governing our schemas of perception, our exchanges, our techniques, our values, and the hierarchy of our practices. But of course, a culture could not survive long unless it is a shared understanding. It relies on the repetition and re-affirmation of common practices. The very same codes and practices are the ones that we create when we share ideas and understanding. When we witness each-other. The social structures we participate in are not organised in closed systems, but rather between sets of elements in an interaction. So to say, communication.

The content of knowledge in this context is to extent the means of creation of culture. It resembles traditional myths. And because we regard old habitual practices and conceptions as particularly self-evident, and that is how they create the foundations on which further social construction will happen.

In a very technical manner, communication is the processing of signals. For communication to exist there needs to be a sender who develops an idea into a message (encoding), a channel or a method of delivery (media) and a receiver, who interprets the message and assigns meaning to it (decoding). The method of delivery is not a neutral agent in the communication process but an active part in the transmission.

“In the short span from the teacher’s mouth to the student’s ear the content of the knowledge transmitted is always slightly distorted. Thus, in the course of decades or even centuries and millenia, divergences develop to an extent that it sometimes becomes doubtful whether anything of the original has been preserved at all.”⁹

⁹ Cohen, R. & Schnelle, T. (1986) Cognition and Fact: Materials on Ludwik Fleck.

meaning
noun

what is intended to be, or
actually is, expressed or
indicated; signification

word
noun

a single distinct meaningful
element of speech or writing,
used with others (or sometimes
alone) to form a sentence



fig. 5

The communication tools we use have the power to translate our experiences into new forms. In the same way that language translates our thoughts into the outside world. Media are the extensions of the senses.¹⁰ We employ media as ways of communicating, which makes it a vehicle for defining our personal and cultural identity. By its definition a medium (singular for “media”) is the intervening substance through which sensory impressions are conveyed. “Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication.”¹¹

10,11 McLuhan, M. (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*.

The beginning of human communication through channels, different than vocalization or gestures, is as ancient as cave paintings, drawn maps and writing. In the beginning of civilization there were oral cultures, later on scribal cultures, print cultures and nowadays digital cultures. This is how the history of humankind has been more or less dominated by a certain kind of medium.¹² In traditional oral cultures knowledge, art, ideas and cultural material is received, preserved and transmitted orally from one generation to another over space and time. Today we rely on media to communicate, acquire knowledge and information and even find in it solutions to our problems. We exist in a disembodied state of social presence where the absence of our bodies gives new meanings to the physicality of experience.

12 Couldry, N. & Hepp, A. (2017) *The mediated construction of reality*.

Even if media extends our bodies in space and time, it prevents us from touching. Nowadays a significant role in social interaction play the screens. The screens have become carriers of information and the mediating material of our communication practices. In a conversation the Luna Maurer (artist) and Andreas Zangger (historian of transitional networks) talk about humans and machines, designing systems and on the participation of their users. They discuss people on the streets as “man-machine hybrids” communicating with someone in a world out there. But the impact of technology on our social interactions is something

medium
noun

From Latin medium “middle”,
from late 16th century English
“something intermediate in
nature or degree”.

communication
noun

from Latin communicatio
“imparting, communicating,
I share, I impart”, from Eng-
lish “sharing, imparting or
exchanging of information by
speaking, writing, or using some
other medium;.

we all experience on a daily basis and are to an extent aware of. This is why I decided to use two examples that are not from the present. To not bore potential readers. I give these examples of how we create tools which become carriers of our intentions and whose features transform the ways in which we “share”.

The first example is from the dialogue *Phaedrus*. In it Socrates expresses his concern with the invention of letters. In his words the “Discovery of the alphabet will create forgetfulness in the learner’s souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality.”¹³

13 Gretzinger, K. (2013) In a Manner of Reading Design.

In Socrates’ view knowledge can only be gathered via a dialogue which is an exchange of questions and answers where ideas are explored until the knowledge is truly understood. Reading only mislead us to think that we have knowledge, when we only have data. It is a private experience of information and alienates us from the world around and contributes little understanding of a subject.

I recently found out about a term peep media. There are many examples of such devices in the history starting from traditional peep show devices, later the stereoscope and now virtual reality. The earliest type of stereoscope was invented in 1838. It demonstrates the binocular depth perception. When two pictures simulating left-eye and right-eye views of the same object are presented so that each eye sees only the image designed for it, the brain will fuse the two and accept them as a view of one solid three dimensional object or space. The images merge in the peeper’s mind.

intervene
verb

From Latin *intervenio* “come between”, from English “prevent or alter”.

intermediate
adjective

coming between two things in time, place, character, etc.

synonyms: halfway, in-between, middle, mid, midway, median, intermediary, intervening, interposed



fig. 6

The mainstream stereoscope was a pair of photographic images placed inside a hand-held wooden box. The images that were used often depicted distant cities and landscapes. It became a tool for “world voyaging”, a way to escape your immediate surroundings. This quote about the stereoscope comes from an advertising booklet for John Fallon’s “Stereopticon” show and gives a critique on the stereoscope when it was still an emerging medium. “After all, the picture in the stereoscope is but a miniature, and, besides, there is nothing social in the enjoyment of the view revealed to you. You look selfish at the show with your personal eyes, and your friends must wait their turn to see it....”.¹⁴

¹⁴ Kluitenberg, E. (2006) Book of imaginary media: Excavating the dream of the ultimate communication medium.

The nature of the stereoscope is antisocial, but it’s popularity and use was maybe because it was a personal media machine, manipulated by one’s fingers, capable to teleport the users to witness the world, whenever everyday reality becomes boring. It was considered as a “highly convincing tool for armchair travelling”. But the act of “armchair travelling” creates an active relation between the view, the viewing apparatus and the viewer. It presents us with a tunnel vision and imposes it’s antisocial nature by alienating us from immediate reality.

In another dialogue the previously mentioned artist Luna Maurer and historian Andreas Zangger debate “the designing of systems or plays” and their constraints and freedoms. They discuss the idea of rules and resistance in a variety of ways.

In the talk they refer to the Ludwick Fleck, for his critique on the sociology of knowledge that in science, if the evidence doesn’t fit the theory, it is either considered as noise or accepted as a sign of resistance to the theory. They talk of designed systems as having a set of rules, multiple participants and a number of possible outcomes or developments. Participants react within the given boundaries and the set of outcomes which depends on the framework.¹⁵

¹⁵ Nevejan, K. (2012) Witnessing you: On trust and truth in a networked world.



character noun

from Latin character, from
Ancient Greek kharakt r
“type, nature, character”, from
kharáss , “I engrave”.

participation noun

the action of taking part
in something, involvement,
e n g a g e m e n t ,
contribution, sharing,
association, joining in

alter verb

change in character or
composition, typically in
a comparatively small but
significant way.

sharing verb

give out, distribute, dispense,
hand out, deal out, use, occupy,
or enjoy (something) jointly
with another or others, possess
(a view or quality) in common
with others, participate in,
take part in, play a part in, be
involved in, contribute to, par-
take in;

When navigating in a space we are following the plan of the architects and urbanist that have designed it. The way each one of us navigates is unique to ourself, but the overall path we follow is envisioned by the creators of the environment.

In the 19th century Paris had been a centre of civil unrest which lead to a transition between royalty, republic and empire six different times. One of the most useful tools of the rioters were sandbags, pavement slabs, wagons and even furniture which they used for barricades. By blocking off Paris' narrow streets, the barricades prevented the soldiers trying to restore the civil order. In 1852 Napoleon III gave the responsibility to Georges-Eugène Haussmann to re-plan Paris for giving soldiers easy access into all corners of the city and preventing the construction of effective barricades. Haussmann demolished the city's streets and built wide open boulevards. By transforming the infrastructure of the city he pursued to prevent and therefore limit the possible outcomes of civil (inter)actions and the construction of future barricades.¹⁶

16 Wikipedia contributors (2018) Haussmann's renovation of Paris. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haussmann%27s_renovation_of_Paris.

Speaking of these systems I do not mean no state that they are all negative, there might in fact be as many positive examples as there are negative. What is the most significant about this story though is not how environment can be created in such a way to sustain order and power. The moral of the story are the citizens who managed collectively to find a creative solution for a problem by improvising with the available materials. Positive examples are games that would engage individuals in an interaction, such as entertaining games or sports. Nevertheless these design tactics apply to some other domains, such as the social world. In our everyday life we are participants in a structure of possible or impossible relations, which are defined by the set of rules typical for the given context. But there can be a positive side of rules. Meanwhile these rules limit our scope of expression, they also force us to come up with creative solutions in order to resist the rules.

play
verb

to take part in a game or other organized activity, to compete against a person or team in a game, to behave or pretend in a particular way, especially in order to produce a particular effect or result, to deceive someone to make them laugh or in order to get an advantage over them:

communication was a game we should all be cheaters

When we dare to reinterpret a concept, an object, a rule, and anything for that matter, we allow the chance of discovering new possibilities. In a book "Creativity flow and the psychology of discovery and invention", Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explains the phenomena of creativity as something that does not happen inside people's heads, but in the interaction between a person's thoughts and a sociocultural context. Creativity is experiencing the world in novel and original ways. When we create something, we do not create it from nothing. We take existing materials or ideas and use, transform, merge them accordingly to a vision that we have. Creativity is the working of our imagination in context. Imagination is closely related to reality. The connection lies in the opportunity that based upon reality, imagination provides innovation and possibilities. It helps us to distance ourselves from the situation and understand that things can be different. When our imagination is at work we are able to envision possibilities. Imagination is an essential part of communication. It inspires our thinking and the way we perceive, engage, produce and

game
noun

a procedure or strategy for gaining an end, a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition to each other, the manner of playing in a contest, the set of rules governing a game, any activity undertaken or regarded as a contest involving rivalry and strategy.

rule
noun

From Middle English reule, rewle, rule, from Old French riule, reule, itself an early semi-learned borrowing from Latin regula "straight stick, bar, ruler, pattern", from regere "to keep straight, direct, govern, rule".



interact with the environment, situation or people. We imagine the others through sympathy. That mean to identify with them. When we say “I can imagine how you feel.” Imagination unfolds human perception and experience in unexpected ways.

Anna Carlgreen, a Swedish artist, fascinated by glass and it’s optical properties demonstrates with her artworks how minimal alterations can have a monumental effect on perception.

“Multifaceted glasses can show us things we otherwise would never see or experience.” She makes a very interesting point when talking about her fascination with the kaleidoscope. “The notion that the shape of things could be altered by altering the angle of the frame while looking through the glass, was an amazing discovery. ... Bold experimentation, producing constellations of forms that are very carefully calculated, reveal completely new aspects of the refractive capabilities of glass.”¹⁷ I see the kaleidoscope as a metaphor for a way of observing the world, where the meaning of what we perceive is not declared by the outside, but by the way in which we decide to look at the outside and interact with our tools.

17 Carlgreen, A. (2012) Looking through glass.

I found two images at the beginning of my process. I was very fascinated by them and they became main reference points of my research and writing process. The first image, right here on the left comes from Museum of Internet. It is interesting for me because it is simply weird and expresses a lot of sense, while being very irrational. Usually the use of the teapot happens according to the rules imposed by it’s design. It is intended to be used in a particular way. We must lift the pot with a hand, position it over the cup and than pour into it. The teapot is the medium for serving tea. It’s well thought form defines the possible ways in which the teapot could be used. But to show one thing means simultaneously to conceal something else. There might be many other ways of serving tea. In the image the “user” of the teapot has engaged in an interaction that does not conform to the conventional tea



fig. 8



serving practice, while remaining to be functional.

This second image impressed me on a more personal level, but it also illustrates great problem solving skills in practice. I personally have a great issue with queuing. I feel bored, anxious, stressed, even sometimes depressed. All of this while I am not able to move back or forth, because I have my own turn, and I must make sure I align with it. When queuing we stand in line. In this case though, the participants in the queue have managed this horrible practice in an inspiring manner. It serves its purpose, but the action of queuing is reinterpreted by the people that are the active participant in the queue and not defined by the accepted idea, such as that we should stand in line. I can't help myself to not wonder did someone make it first and the rest followed, or is it a tradition in some societies?

To keep an open mind means to be willing to reinterpret former norms and conclusions, and therefore to allow for the exploration of new possibilities. For example Umberto Eco's description of the concept of "open-works" in art. The intention of opening the work is to generate a much more active attitude in the listeners, viewers, and readers. This presents the public with a field of possibilities and leaves to her the decide for an approach.

The preferred games in a culture (traditions, celebrations, arts, etc) reflect the dominant trends, tastes, and ways of thinking, meanwhile educating and training the players on the virtues of the game and the social world. And people confirm them later in their habits and preferences.¹⁸

18 Cailliois, R. (2001) Man, play and games.

In Greek language, the terms paideia - the word for education, culture; paidia - the word for play, game, pastime, sport; and paides - the word for children; have the same root. Another term - paidagogia (pedagogy), also coming from the same root, was aimed to encourage learning as a form of play (paidia) which was considered the most effective approach to learning for the free

creative
noun

From Proto-Italic "to make grow", from Proto-Indo-European "to grow, become bigger".



fig. 9



citizens of the society. We can even go as far as to position a reciprocal relationship between a society and the games it likes to play.

Many games do not imply rules, such as playing with locomotives, cars, dolls, puppets and other. These games stimulate improvisation, and are a play for play's sake. But in this play fiction is becoming a rule of its own. The rule of "as if".¹⁹ People find children to be the ultimate creative explorers because of their constant curiosity and the interest they invest on anything within range. They are delighted by the unknown. The way in which children learn is by playing. By interacting with their environment children engage in a feedback with the subject of their exploration and learn by the immediate exchange. It could be that their play is so creative because they are not completely aware with the rules of the world. Their play engages them in a free form of interaction with the environment. This dialogue with the surrounding is a crucial part for acquiring knowledge. It is the same when communicating because in a dialogue (an interaction) a multitude of view points can be observed, and varying opinions allow for a multitude of views.

19 Caillois, R. (2001) Man, play and games.

As we grow up we learn the rules of communicating. We start to interact with each other according to the set of rules that we had to acquire and practice in the context of our cultural surrounding. We take part in a sort of communication game dictated more or less by the social and educational systems. In society the rules of communication and interaction emerge from the cultural and technological context we exist in. But the more we become used to these artificial rules of express, the less we look for change, the more exposed we are to outside forces and the less we try to engage in immediate interactions.

In games cheating is a subversive action. It is defined as finding an easy way out of an unpleasant situation usually by dishonest means. Disobedience against the game where the partici-

hack noun

an act of computer hacking, a code providing a quick or inellegant solution to a particular problem, a strategy or technique for managing one's time or activities more efficiently, creative problem solving



fig. 10



fig. 11



pants disrupts the rhythm of the game. In this particular context though, I understand it as free expression. In the dictionaries, as well as in society, it is associated with acts of dishonesty and immorality. Nevertheless if the rules provide for an unmoral outcome than the one cheating would, the act of cheating should be justified because “There is no justice in following unjust laws.”²⁰

²⁰ Swartz, A. (2008) Guerilla Open Access Manifesto, The Internet archive

Some people might find the connection between cheating and creativity bizarre. I relate them in the sense of both being strategies for discovering unconventional means of solving a problem or dealing with a difficult situation.

If we think about cheating in school. In that context cheating would mean two things. That these kids didn't learn their lessons for an exam and they have found a way out of this situation with a very practical solution. We can always argue if it is bad or not they didn't learn their textbooks. But we should maybe credit students for the way in which they find solutions to their problems. Some of the examples shown here are impressive for me. I am sure everyone had to come up with cheating techniques at least once in our lifetime. Therefore can all relate to how much creative thought and precision this practice requires.

I relate game to communication are because they are both participatory activities in which we must engage in an active exchange with others, but this exchange is always happening according to the rules of the game. Except when cheating. Cheaters break the game. What would cheating in communication mean than depends on how we reinterpret the communication tools we have in order to allow a more truthful and open exchange.

There is a lot of subversive potential in computer hacking nowadays for example. When someone takes the central productive techniques of contemporary society and diverts them for a non-profitable or illegal use, which involves sharing, free cooperation, and many times, collective action.²¹

imagination noun

the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses, imaginative faculty, creative power, fancy, the ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful, creativity, imaginativeness, creativeness, the part of the mind that imagines things



fig. 12



21 Snook, T. (2014) Hacking is a Mindset, Not a Skillset: Why civic hacking is key for contemporary creativity.

An example, although a legal one, is Bellingcat. I find it a beautiful example because of two things. How we can transform the purpose of the digital media we are clustered with and how people invent new practices of sharing, because we know how manipulated mainstream media information is.²² In 2012 Eliot Higgins started a blog under the pseudonym Brown Moses, through which he published his research into video footage of the Syrian Civil War.²² He looked at footage on the Internet, localised the video clips and examined details of the weapons which were used. The community uses open source tools, such as Google maps and social media investigation for citizen journalism. The contributors to the website publish both their case studies and guides to the techniques they use in their process. They also use a tool for fact-checking called Meedan's Checkdesk, which allows a collaborative and transparent verification of content.

22 Wikipedia contributors. (2018) Bellingcat. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bellingcat&oldid=870962728> / 22 Nevejan, K. (2012) Withessing you: On trust and truth in a networked world.

Hackers' desire to seek out information and learn how to overcome the obstacles given by the system. It is kind of play-exploration with the ultimate reason of acquiring knowledge about systems or exploit their vulnerabilities. But hacking can also refer to many other disciplines, apart from computer sciences. It can mean many things. To withstand or put up with a difficult situation; to apply a trick, short-cut, skill, or novelty method to something to increase productivity, efficiency or ease; to chop or cut down in a rough manner; etcetera.

Creative resistance towards institutions is very common in the context of journalism, activism, civil affairs, especially art, but usually these actions disrupt establishments and allow uncensored information to enter the realm of the public and become part of a discourse.



fig. 13



fig. 14

I thought of talking a bit about walls. A wall is defined as a structure built for defence. From old English - a divider. The wall is meant to divide space or to be a border between the outside and the inside (of a house, for example). Walls are the artificial borders of the world. They have a very strong political connotation as well. It seems to be a trendy way to brag about power. And that's how walls get raised to divide people and land and become barriers to communication and social interaction.

Nevertheless in the process of their existence the character of walls takes on a different meaning. They become street galleries, where anyone can be an artist and express their creativity in public space. From means of separation, the wall turns into a space for open communication, criticism and personal expression. There are many walls in the world. But maybe there are many more people taking on these walls and opening up public space.


In the history of art there are many movements that try to escape the institutionalisation of art and to create space for free, living art. The Dada and Fluxus artist for example promoted art forms that were outside of the norms imposed by cultural institutions, media production and high art. By engaging in self-defined artistic practices they broadened the understanding of what can be considered as art. Fluxus encouraged a "do-it-yourself" aesthetic. They refused the romantic idea of the artist as an individual with an outstanding gift and aimed not only to make art available to the masses, but wanted to engage them as active participants in its production.

Fluxus art discredited the conventional market-driven art world. They have created their own means of expression and production, overcoming the existing codes for the definition of art. Fluxus artists claimed their work to be "anti-art," in order to emphasize the revolutionary mode of thinking about the practice and process, which involves a broadened understanding on the importance of art in the social context and the importance of immediate interaction.





fig. 15



I started my research on the subject of language. I have always found something appealing about the way in which language tries to explain the world. As I was struggling with the broad subject and the multiple variations of languages, I have discovered something very unexpected. I always like to check the etymology of words. Sometimes it gives me a much better understanding of it's meaning than definitions do. What grabbed my attention was the origin of the word "communication". Communication comes from the latin "communicare", which literally translates "to share". As a graphic design student, it is far from surprising that I was so fascinated by this detail. I have spent the last 4 years learning about the practice of communication, and I never knew what it actually means. I had to ask myself: Do I master the practice of communication or does it master me?

When we communicate we express our thoughts and ideas and share meaning. To share meaning, is to share our existence and affirm each-other. We negotiate trust, truth and value in the process of our communication. But these communication practices imply their very own rules. That expression always has a particular form and happens according to some principles. Principles defined for example by the cultural context or by a society's technological state of development. Since expression and sharing depends on these principles, our common experience is captured in a manipulated state of interactions. My assumption was that these principles give form to our perception and thoughts like the water takes the shape of it's container. I started to wonder what would the natural state of communication look like? This is how I got into my explorations of perception, thinking, meaning, sharing, communication and finally cheating. Why cheating?

10. The diagram below best illustrates

- ~~a. Lamarck's theory of evolution.~~
- ~~b. Darwin's theory of evolution.~~
- ~~c. Malthus's principles.~~
- ~~d. Lyell's theory about past changes.~~
- e. Giraffes are heartless creatures.

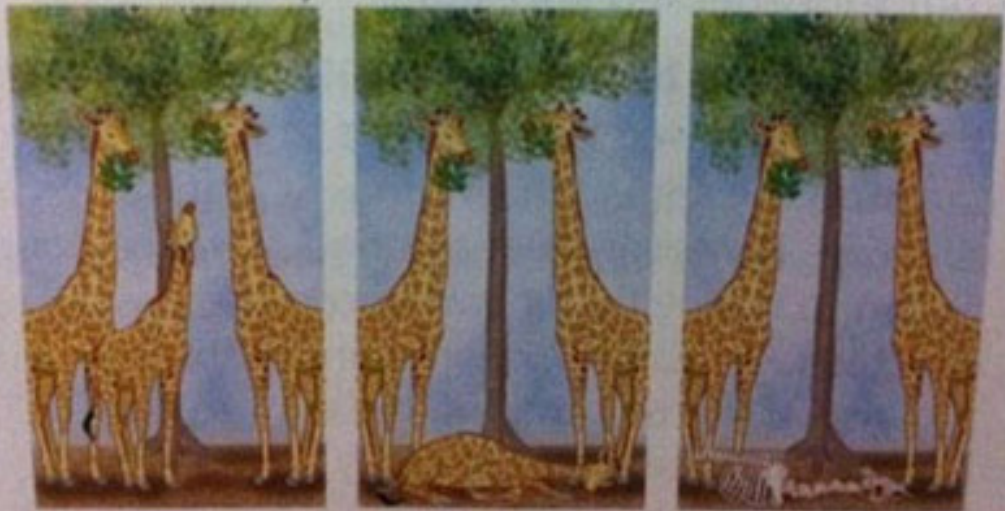


fig. 16

Our experience of others emerges in an inner dialogue in which our personal feelings are related to an external perceived reality and understanding of previous situations. Experience is the process of getting knowledge from doing, seeing, or feeling things. If we want to experience the world in a different way we must first start doing, seeing, feeling and thinking differently. The ways in which we interact are a vehicle for defining our personal and cultural identity. When we express ourselves, we use tools to communicate and to distribute information, but that creates a world where human interaction becomes dependent on these tools and therefore limited to them. They have the power to shrink the understanding between us until there is no shared experience.

Imagination and creativity helps us to open spaces for further interaction. Expression unleashes affect. Affect is what touches. Affect as a verb means to influence something. When we express ourselves we influence each other. We share meaning and value. This is how we ourselves create our reality.

The rules and structures that are meant to govern our interaction are not absolute and can easily be changed, if we can distance ourselves from the situation so that we can critically observe it. There are ways to use these rules and structures in a way that contributes to our common experience, rather than to dominate it.

When people engage and participate new possibilities and spaces emerge. When children play, they make arrangements among themselves. They conquest a balance of power in the playground. They invent their own roles and rules to follow. The children play is a voluntary activity that occurs in a space isolated from the rest of life, away from the horizons of reason. They establish their own truth.

Imagination and play are crucial for the creation and sharing of meaning because they help us to distance ourself from the situation and understand how things can be different.

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