

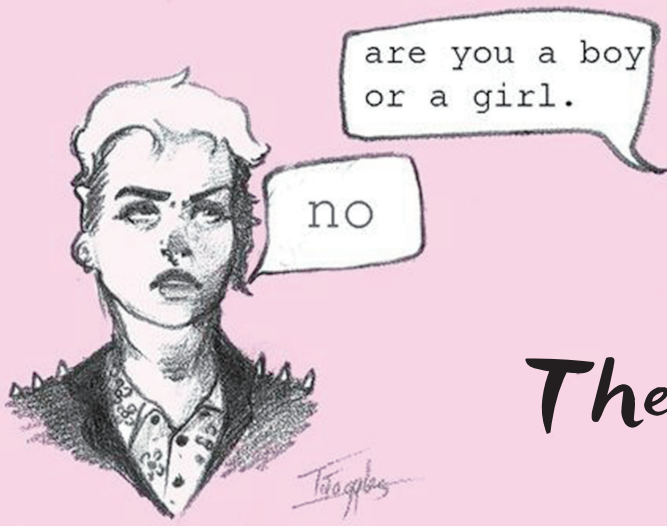
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# THE BRAIN

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2017-2018 Shunique





(Figure 1)

# The Transgender- The "Special" In Society

By: Louis Yung  
Chris Law

**H**ave you ever heard of the term 'transgender'? It is a term by which we describe someone who feels that they are not the same gender that they were assigned to at birth. Yet, we are somehow under the impression that transgender people are a small minority, but is that true? According to findings of a survey conducted in the U.S. in 2011, there were more than 700,000 people in the territory who had undergone medical surgeries so as to alter their sex. So, in the following, let us scratch beneath the surface and gain a better insight on the lives of the transgender.

The terms "Drag Queens" and "Drag Kings" refer to people who dress themselves up in clothing of the opposite gender for the purpose of entertainment at clubs, bars and some talent shows overseas. Rupaul (Figure 2) is an example of a famous drag queen. However, those who wear drag are criticized by members of the transgender community because they fear that transgender people may be stereotyped as people who wear exaggerated clothing just for laughs and not people who really identify themselves as the opposite gender.

*Genderqueer* people identify their gender as falling outside the dual concepts of "male" and "female." They may define their gender as "something" between male and female. They may even request that people use special pronouns to refer to them, such as "zie" instead of "he" or "she," or "hir" instead of "his" or "her." Some genderqueer people do not identify themselves as transgender, but a third gender as shown in Figure 1.

Gender fluid is a gender which varies over time. A genderfluid person may identify oneself as male or female at any given time or some combination of these identities. Their gender can also vary arbitrarily or vary in response to different circumstances.

The current problems faced by the transgender are plentiful, with poverty being the first one. As there is still no comprehensive non-discrimination law that includes gender identity, this lack of legal protection translates into unemployment for transgender people. One research has proved that 15% of the respondents who were transgender were living in severe poverty. Employers may be under the misconception that an ordinary person performs jobs better than those transgender people do. As a result, the transgender person will have more difficulties making ends meet and thus often wind up homeless.

Moreover, it is an undeniable fact that transgender people are susceptible to harassment and societal stigma. The transgender people are often characterized as being mentally ill and socially deviant, which may subject them



(Rupaul)

to ridicule and bullying from others. Take the workplace as an example. A survey has demonstrated that around one-third of transgender workers have experienced various forms of discrimination in their workplace. In fact, these kinds of embarrassments will result in a higher risk of depression and lower self-esteem which jeopardises their health.

Last but not least, transgender people are experiencing inadequate medical support from governments all over the world. Transgender people have increased risk of chronic diseases, cancers and mental health problems. One of the reasons is that some doctors may have some negative impressions about transgender people and thus refuse to offer treatments. In addition, not all medical professionals know how to deal with the unique transgender issues and some transgender health services are not covered by insurance. For these reasons, a transgender person may not be able to access the care they need.

With a view to alleviating the transgender problem, there have already been more measures being invoked. EEOC (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) enforced Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, colour, national origin, religion and sex. These protections address the conduct in the workplace. The transgender workers can receive appropriate workplace treatment so that all employees may perform their jobs free from discrimination.

Overall, “transgender” is still a controversial issue which deserves our time, thought and consideration. It conjures a moral debate among various parties. Some treat them as weird people, while some advocate the freedom of choosing our own gender. However, what the transgender really desires is not only a society free of discrimination and ignorance, but respect from all of us. Therefore, our all-inclusive understanding for them is always the key to bridge the gap between us and those we perceive as being different from us.

rupaul



(Figure 2)

the official website | [www.rupaul.com](http://www.rupaul.com)

# Human Personalities

By: Joe Tang



**H**umans are special in the animal kingdom because no one is the same as anyone else. This is evident from the fact that even when people are doing the same job, each of them will not precisely do it the same way. There must be some differences in how they approach the work although the results might turn out the same or similar. The question that deserves our scrutiny is--is there a way to distinguish between each human being?

## What is personality?

Personality is the difference in characteristics of humans according to their line of thinking, emotions and behaviours. Knowing a person's personality allows you to have a general picture of the person's interest, beliefs and actions. For example, it is perceived that some people are clumsier in behaviour when they make stupid, unnecessary and repeated mistakes. Yet, some are perceived as adventurous in personality when they set their life goals as parachuting, skiing, or even wing-suiting. Besides, some are immediately perceived as boring people when seen always carrying their notebooks everywhere. One does not need to be a professor in psychology to notice these physical clues, but one needs to pay close attention on others to 'master their minds'. Personalities can be a mold-type and yet they are what define us as individuals.

## How are personalities affected by culture?

A person's personality is greatly affected by their external environment, most notably, the country he or she resides in. People of certain nationalities have certain general unique characteristics. Traditions and cultures of a country can influence the shaping of a person's personality. In turn, they also reinforce the general habits of their society and this thus forms a circle. Take as an example Germans. They are good at science and mechanics generally, but they lack the sense of humour on the whole. As for Italians, they love making exaggerations of something mundane and basic to the extent that the description is tantamount to a nuclear attack from North Korea. Canadians are ridiculously polite but not in a good way, apologising even if they have done nothing wrong. So if one chooses a country to immigrate

to, do consider the type of persons you will be interacting with and want to become. You might not notice how much your personality would be shifted after having immersed yourself in another culture.

## Personalities in animals

Actually, animals do not really have personalities. We see them the way they are and we judge them by their behaviours and habits. While there is a wide variety of personalities among humans, animals have fixed 'personalities' within their species. Let us use lions as an example. Lions live in the African grasslands. Twenty to thirty lions live together as a pride, which suggests that they are sociable. They are generally gentle and quiet. However, when they encounter enemy lions, they show their combativeness. They will not stop fighting until one of the lions is lying dead. They would not spare even an injured lion. They are also keen to show their cooperation among their family when they are hunting. These seemingly fixed behaviours can be observed over and over and among lions in all regions across the world. Unlike lions, human beings are observed to have varying group behaviours and characteristics as we cross time zones and regions.

Through observing the animal kingdom, human beings may better understand themselves. Distinguishing among animals is a relatively simple task when compared to classifying human behavior and personalities. Our personalities are formed by many factors, both internal and external. It is amongst all this diversity we find individuality in life.





# Recurring Dreams

By: Carman Man

**H**ave you experienced having dreams that seem very similar, almost as if you had dreamt it before? Have they kept occurring for over a period of time as if you were watching the same movie again and again? This is called recurring dreams which are more common than one might think. But what are they, actually? What do they mean? Why do they happen? Let's visit the hidden reasons behind these mysterious dreams and the benefits of recurring dreams.

Recurring dreams are dreams which people may have over a short period of time in their lives. They may reoccur exactly the same way or similarly, with slight variation like a colour, character or setting change. It may indicate stress of some sort that you have not acknowledged in your life. If you do not resolve the problem, the dreams may continue to reoccur until that

issue is resolved in your waking life. Another meaning is that recurring dreamers may have some sort of traumas in their past they are trying to deal with.

After talking about the meanings and reasons of recurring dream, I would like to tell you some benefits of recurring dreams.

One of the pros is that recurring nightmares can help dreamers perform better in daily life. Recently, some researchers have collected dream reports from medical students on several nights preceding a major exam. They found that those students having dreams concerning the exam on the night before or multiple nights before were able to obtain higher scores, even though the dreams generally were negative and ended poorly. In this case, students dreaming of failing the test or exam can have better performance in the test or exam since the stress in dreams encourages them to work harder.

Another advantage is that recurring dreams can help people rebalance themselves. Repeated dreams are reminding people that something in their real life needs their attentions, for example, stress. As a dreamer's attention is needed for this issue, he can find out where the stress comes from and try to deal with it. At last, the stress will be relieved and the dreamer's daily life can become normal again.

In general, recurring dreams draw our attention to the source of stress in our daily lives. Recurring dreams also bring benefits to all of us, such as helping dreamers perform better and rebalance themselves in their real lives. As human beings, we had better pay attention to and work with recurring dreams which are useful for our lives.



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# A Mind

Not every hero wears a cape and not all villains wear masks. Serial killers are often described as normal looking, unlike Jason or Freddy Krueger, who wears an iconic hockey mask and has a horrifying, scarred face as depicted in the pop culture movies. So, what causes that tormented soul beneath a perfectly normal looking exterior

to be so mentally twisted?

If you are a Freud enthusiast, you might think that a horrendous sexual assault must be a part of the murderers' childhood story. Sigmund Freud holds that one would be mentally handicapped after such traumatic experience and hence display psychopathic behaviours. This theory is supported by many psychologists, who view a person's childhood as his/her foundation of mental growth. However, this is not always true.

Considered as the first ever modern-day serial killer, Jack the Ripper is one of the most infamous cases in the commonwealth's criminal history. The killer was not identified, and was believed to be a male, hence the nickname "Jack". He would conduct minor "surgeries" on his victims, such as removing an organ or two, or even decapitated them, thus "the ripper" in his name. His victims - mainly prostitutes. This leads to the investigators thinking that the murder is out of sexual pleasure. Some historical serial rapists and killers reportedly gratify their sexual needs not through conventional means but through blood and gore. The Hungarian "Blood Countess" Elizabeth Báthory de Ecsed is also a notable killer of the sort.

A human being's thirst for sexual gratification can be disturbing. And so is the desire to restrain murderous urges. Some murderers kill to challenge authority. They take pride in living in the dark and making fools out of the police. They gain satisfaction from outwitting everyone. The Cleveland Torso Murders, involving 12 victims in a span of three years, is a classic case of this type of serial killers. When the murders began, American law enforcement legend Eliot Ness was the then safety director. He was tasked to stop the murders from happening. After he made some headway on the identity



# so Twisted

of the killer, a body of a new victim was found on Ness's doorway and a note written challenging him. Though Ness did not back down, the murderer was never officially identified, who presumably had an evil grin of victory.



Another crime classic is the Zodiac Killer, who claimed to have killed 37 people from the years of 1960s to 1970s. The killer most notably wrote in codes to the media and police to give clues about his identity. He would also write premonitory notes--notes on his next murder. Since most of these were sent to the newspaper companies directly, they were all made public. This heavily shamed the police, in addition to their incompetence of making an arrest. The Zodiac Killer also got the last laugh, never being caught.

In the end, those evil desires may reside in each of us, having the potential to grow and fester if we allow. All the aforementioned murderers started out just like you and me. Except they could not wrangle with their inner demons and overcome their tormented desires. We would like to think that killers have no commonality with you or me but they were once just like us inside and out. I suppose that is why they are, for the large part, unnoticed and blend in the society so well. "Sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death," as stated in Scriptures. So, let us restrain ourselves and be the master of our consciousness. Let no killer instinct be conceived in our hearts.





# Same Species, Different Mindsets

By: Tiffany Cheung

**B**oys, have you ever wondered why some girls can be 'set off' (made upset) by a single word or phrase? Why are girls seemingly so much more emotional? Girls, have you ever wondered why it could be complicated to communicate with boys sometimes? The short answer is that males and females have different brain structures and that sets us all on a road to diverging mindsets.

Chemically, boys utilise nearly seven times more gray matter for action than girls do, while girls utilise nearly ten times more white matter than boys do. What is gray and white matter? Gray matter is the action-processing centers in our brain, controlling reasoning and higher-level thinking. White matter is the networking grid that connects the right and left hemispheres. It even connects the gray matter part of the brain with other processing centers like smell and controls which hormone to secrete. This discrepancy allows females to be more outstanding in multitasking whereas males excel in highly focused tasks.

Another difference is between how girls and boys communicate and access their memory. These functions happen without us even thinking about it and yet it is caused by the differences in chemicals and the amount being released in the hemispheres. Females have verbal centers on both sides of the brain, while males tend to have verbal centers on the left hemisphere only. We see this practically played out every day when girls average 20,000 words a day while their counterparts speak only 7,000. Females tend to be more expressive, recounting people, objects and feelings on a singular topic. This may be why females often have a larger hippocampus, the long-term memory storage center of brain. But those larger hippocampus are put to good use when women input or absorb more sensorial and emotive information, resulting in remarkable success in data-memorising and organizing. So women are often more detail-oriented.

With this in mind, girls make unusually good "detectives" because of their detail-oriented minds. They tend to

process information in a more organised way and draw clearer conclusions as women have more connections going across the two halves of the brain. It allows them to apply logic and intuitions more effectively.

But boys are not to be passed by. They often make excellent police officers and professional athletes. It is in their nature and in their heads. Men's brains have more connections from front to back, which are the areas of the brain that control the motor and spatial awareness abilities. Hence, the male peripheral perception (the sense of things happening around them) is greatly heightened. They may be more attuned to what is going on around them and react faster. It allows them to be better at jobs

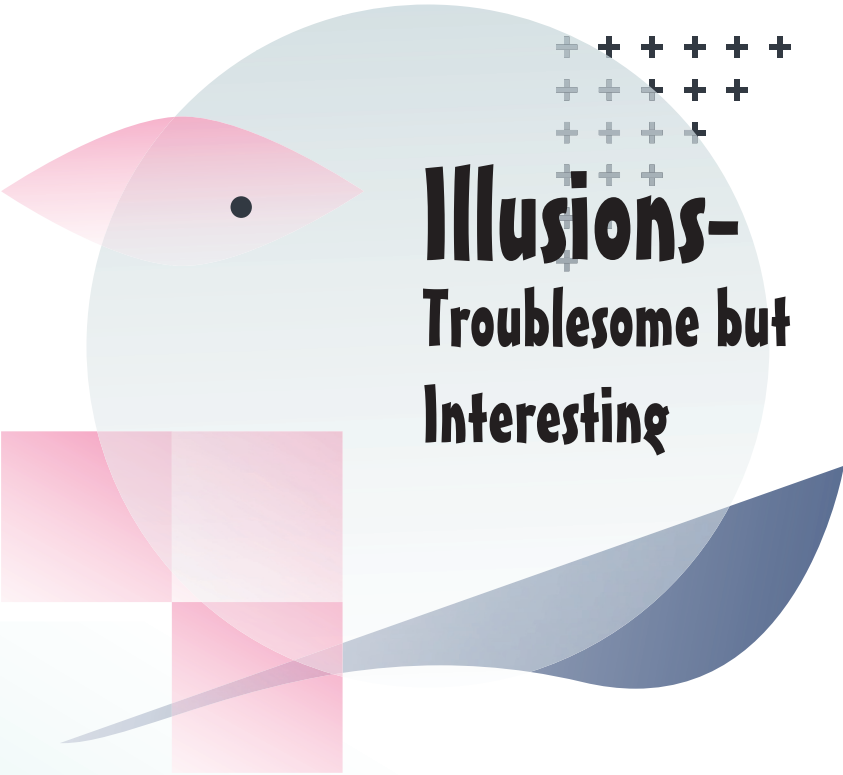
that require hand-eye coordination and understanding where objects are in space. Thus, boys may achieve better results in sports and be better-suited for jobs like police officers, construction foremen and soldiers.

From an emotion analysis, males tend to analyze information after reflecting briefly on an emotive memory. Then they will move onto the next task. In some cases, they may altogether change course and do something unrelated to feelings rather than dwell on them. Thus, observers may mistakenly believe that boys avoid feelings in comparison to girls. Another misconception is that they may tend to solve the problem too quickly rather than exploring their emotions. However, boys may just need some more time to organize and absorb the emotions and information. Therefore, boys are not actually indifferent to their emotional surroundings as it seems.



Scientific researches show that male brains are about 10% larger than those of females on average. Some may be under the misconception that "the bigger, the smarter". In fact, no differences have been found between men and women's IQs on average in regards to brain size. So none of the genders are actually superior to the other regarding intelligence.



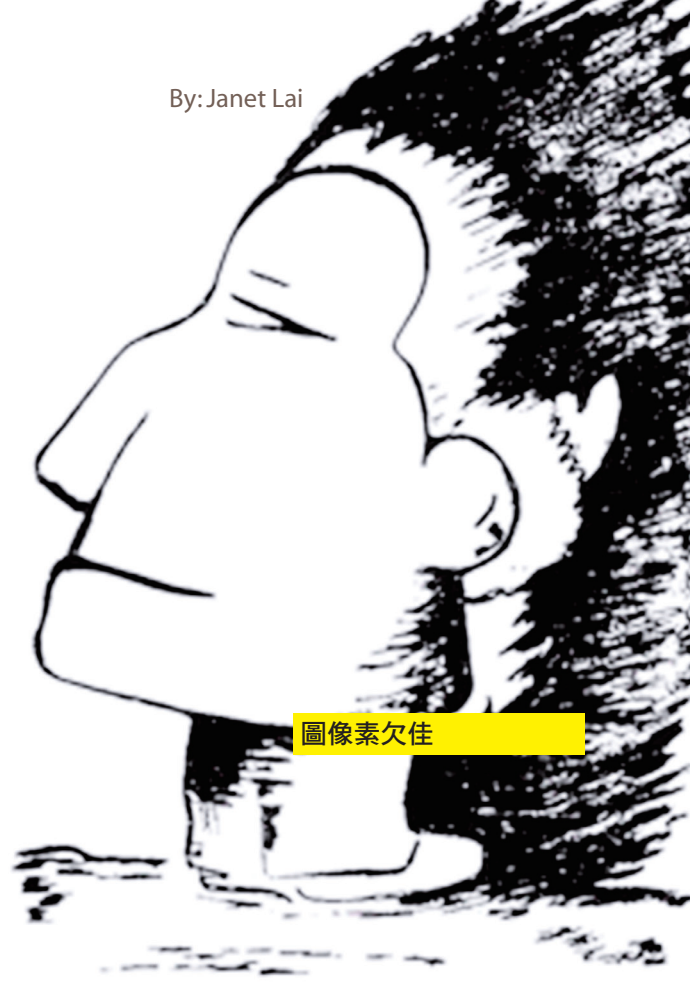


# Illusions- Troublesome but Interesting

It is not uncommon to have heard of or seen street illusion being performed, also known as street magic. In fact, illusions exist every day in our life but you may not realize them, hence they are illusions. Here is an opportunity to learn more about it and what it is all about. In fact, an illusion is a distortion of the senses, revealing how a human brain normally organizes and interprets sensory stimulation and incoming information. Though illusions distort sensory reality, most people generally experience them in the same or like manner.

## Optical

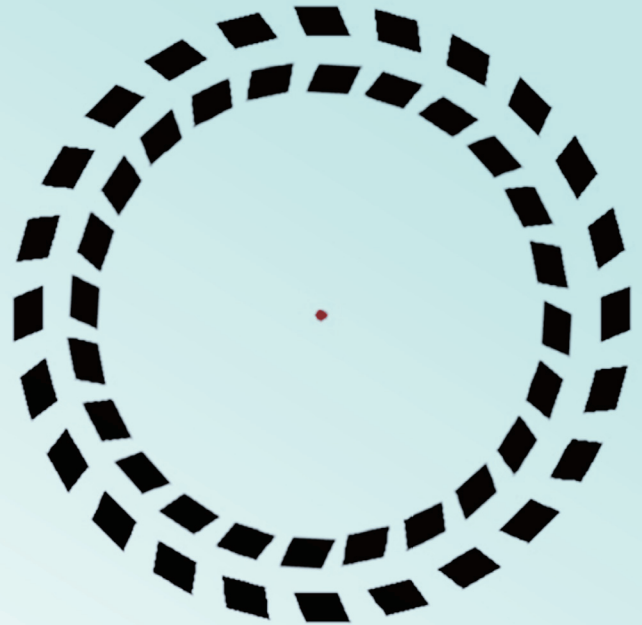
Illusions may occur within any of the human senses, but optical illusions are the most well known and clearly understood. An optical illusion is characterised by the presence of some visually perceived images that are deceptive or misleading. Therefore, the information gathered by the eye is processed by the brain to give a perception that does not register with the physical world. In normal cases, the brain constructs a world inside our heads based on what it samples from the surrounding environment. However, sometimes it tries to organise this information in the way it sees best and at other times it fills in the gaps. This way in which our brain works is the basis of an illusion. Here are a few categories of illusion that are not as well known.



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*Look at the centre dot and move your head towards and away from the screen. Are the outer rings rotating?*



## Auditory

An auditory illusion is an illusion of hearing, the auditory equivalent of an optical illusion-- the listener hears either sounds, which are not present as the stimulus, or "impossible" sounds. One example of an auditory illusion is a Shepard Tone where it seems to get forever higher in pitch.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzNzgsAE4F0>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzo45hWXRWU>

## Tactile

Examples of tactile illusions include the Phantom Limb, Thermal Grill Illusion and the Cutaneous Rabbit Illusion, which are among the most common and well known. You can try one now--run your crossed index and middle fingers along the bridge of the nose with one finger on each side, resulting in the perception of two separate noses. Interestingly, the brain areas activated during illusory tactile perception are similar to those activated during actual tactile stimulation. Tactile illusions can also be elicited through haptic technology. These "illusory" tactile objects can be used to create "virtual objects". A quick Google search can help you better understand each of these tactile illusions.

If you are curious give each one of these a try.

*More illusions can be found on <https://www.braingle.com/brainteasers/>*







