

PHOENIX

Issue 1, December 2013

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Shakespeare?

THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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The First One

I proudly present to you the very first Phoenix issue of the academic year, just before the close of the calendar year. As you can see, we look different than we have done in the past couple of years.

Last year, because of economic crises, budget cuts, the ever-increasing prominence of social media, and general impending doom, the decision was made to no longer make a physical magazine but to go fully digital. A name-change and the creation of a blog later, Phoenicia was born. While the venture was successful, the magazine structure was dearly missed by many students and readers, not to mention that its name arguably missed the fiery elegance and majesty of its predecessor. Hence, when I was assigned the role of captain of the ship, a few changes were quickly decided on. First, we would return to being called Phoenix and secondly, we would become a magazine once again. Unfortunately, while we were able to avoid the end of days, there was no getting around the lack of funds to create a physical version. As such, we are as digital as we were last year, which naturally also has its perks.

The main goal for this reinvention of Phoenix is for it be as closely connected to students of English as possible, while also remaining in touch with the world of popular culture outside of the university. Beyond this page lies the result of our efforts to bring you such a digital magazine. As this is the Christmas edition, we have spared no expense to bring you the finest copyright-free Christmas clip art the world wide web has to offer as well as the world's premier photoshop editing.

Now, while the Phoenix has arisen once more, as Phoenixes do, it is still an infant at this point. With a new group of people, a new platform, and a new structure, we are still exploring how to bring you all the most interesting and appealing magazine we can produce. I am genuinely excited for the prospect of seeing Phoenix grow increasingly more beautiful, interactive, and bold with every issue and I hope you are too. For now, enjoy this first edition during the brief windows of time between stuffing your face and having to answer your aunt's questions about what kind of job you are going to find with a BA in English Language & Culture. Good luck with that.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

Lars Engels
Chief Editor

Tea Time With Roselinde

By Kiki Drost and Stanzy Kersten

On a chilly Saturday afternoon, Phoenix reporters Kiki and Stanzy travelled to Bilthoven to interview everyone's favourite grammar teacher, Roselinde Supheert, in the comfort of her own home.

We ring the bell and a little girl in her pyjamas opens the door. The little girl is Roselinde's daughter. "Saturday is Charlotte's pyjama day," Roselinde explains after we enter. "She has to get dressed 5 times a week, so I let her stay in her pyjamas if she wants to." Roselinde gives us a small tour through the house after which we sit ourselves down in the kitchen, since the living room has been transformed into a hut by Charlotte. We look around the kitchen while she puts the old-fashioned kettle on the fire and notice an abundance of vegetarian cookbooks. "I've been a vegetarian since I was about 16 years old," she tells us. When we have our cups of tea and some speculaas in front of us, we start the interview.

Where did your connection with the English language begin?

My mother is very fond of England; she has worked and lived there, so I guess that must have been where it started. I originally studied musicology, but after about a year and a half I decided to do English. My mother was so proud of me.

What got you into teaching?

I was asked and I hated it. I graduated in England and it was 1985 when I got back and then the English department asked me. I was incredibly scared and have been for years. However, I got used to it when I got older.

Do you think you'll stay at the UU?

I think so, yes. Even though there is a lot of pressure, I also enjoy the freedom it gives me. Still, I would like to work a little less so I can spend more time with Charlotte. I am a little jealous of my husband, since he gets to take her to her music classes and swimming lessons.

Basics

- **Worked at UU for 28 years**
- **Favourite colour: Red**
- **Favourite holiday destination: Kent**
- **Favourite music: Händel (Bruce Springsteen when it comes to pop artists)**
- **Colour of toothbrush: Pink and blue, with Cinderella (she bought this for Charlotte, but she didn't like it, so now Roselinde is using it herself)**
- **Favourite book: Moby Dick, Jane Eyre**

Are you raising her bilingual?

I tried but it is quite hard. I still teach her English, as I read English books to her now and talked to her in English when she was a baby. Sometimes she will come up to me and tell me to ask her questions in English.

Do you have any plans for Christmas?

Well, we will have a Christmas tree and I will put on Händel's Messiah. Charlotte's school organizes things in church, so we will probably be going to church as well. My in-laws will be over for a Christmas dinner too.

After two cups of tea and a handful of questions, it was time for us to go. We thank Roselinde for her hospitality once again!



Why I Bleed

By Pascal Smit

I'm Pascal, although I write under the pseudonym of Hadrian, and am a second year student in our delightful field. When I got home today, I found a letter in my mailbox (the physical type) asking me to come donate blood. This will be the fourth time this year for me to bleed and contrary to what you might expect, I'm always very happy to get called in.

Now, before I continue, I should tell you I used to be utterly afraid of needles when I was but a wee lad. I still remember the day we needed to get immunization shots against Meningitis and the nurse needed to call in several other people because she wasn't sure whether she or I would be hurt more in the process. Now I gladly go in voluntarily and get them to prick me with the biggest needle they have. I'm no longer afraid of them and even if I were, I think I'd still donate.

Now, to get to the subject matter, why do I bleed? It simply absolutely fascinates me to know that there might be a person somewhere who's been saved by my blood. I don't even consider blood a very personal thing, everyone has it and it's just a fact of life for me. Some of the donated blood is also used to produce important medication that again might help to save lives. Moreover, I don't have any control over who gets my blood, if anyone. It could even have been given to people I would never associate myself with normally. It is this mysteriousness that makes the entire endeavour even more fascinating for me. Finally, it's also the easiest way to give to charity. I don't need to part with money (which we students tend to need more than blood) and I don't need to clear entire days from my schedule. I just need to eat and drink well, go to the hospital, and let them suck me dry.

As such, many kudos to the other (blood-)donors. I know several members of the board are, and at least a few in my year. Thank you!

Happy Cynicism!

Hadrian Ma'at Ferran



Ho Ho Hollywood

By Arlette Krijgsman

Do you still need some New Year's resolutions that have nothing to do with dieting, sporting or being healthy in general? Make going to the cinema more often one of them! During the holidays and the few weeks after, plenty of new and exciting releases pop up and 2014 does not seem to break that habit. Whether you like action, drama or comedy, you will probably find something you like, perhaps even amongst the following three.

Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit Action

Since it stars Chris Pine, Keira Knightly and Kenneth Branagh (who presents us with a rather interesting Russian accent in the trailer), this one might be worth watching for the cast already. Based on the protagonist of the famous Tom Clancy novels, Shadow Recruit centres on young CIA analyst Jack Ryan, who uncovers a Russian plot to crash the U.S. economy with a terrorist attack. For those of you who enjoy Mission Impossible, this seems the perfect January film.

Trivia: It is the last Jack Ryan-film Tom Clancy was involved in as a writer, since he died October 2013.

Philomena Drama/comedy

With Dame Judi Dench in a leading role, this one is probably headed for some Academy Award nominations. The story, centring on a journalist who decides to help a woman search for the son she was forced to leave decades ago, might not seem like the most innovative idea of the past few years, but I think you might just be surprised. Abroad, the film has been received very well, with a 79/100 metascore, and is already nominated for three Golden Globes.

Trivia: The film contains "home movie" flashbacks of which some were created for the film but others contain actual footage of Dame Judi Dench's real son.

Parkland Drama

Even though it received mixed reviews, Parkland did quite well on the London Film Festival, and is now headed for a late January release in the Netherlands. For those of you interested in American history, this one might be worth the watch: the film focuses on the chaotic events that occurred at Dallas' Parkland Hospital on the day U.S. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Since it does not actually involve Kennedy himself, I have high hopes for an interesting take on what happened.

Trivia: The movie was based on a well known book by Vincent Bugliosi, Four Days in November: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy, in which he aimed to prove that Lee Harvey Oswald carried out the assassination alone.



10 Holiday Films You Want To Watch

1. Love Actually
2. The Polar Express
3. Home Alone
4. The Muppet Christmas Carol
5. Arthur Christmas
6. The Nightmare Before Christmas
7. Nativity!
8. Scrooged
9. Life of Brian
10. Elf

Soundbites for Wintry Nights

By Iris Nieuwenhuizen



It's the most cringeworthy time of the year as we hear the same sugary songs that have been blasting through the radio for years. Luckily for us, goldilocks Justin Bieber thought it was nice to add a new original and innovative song, *Mistletoe*, to the canon in 2011. In an effort to discern what this song is about and explore what it adds to the established canon, Iris takes a dive into the deep and meaningful lyrics of J-Beebz.

Lights fill the streets spreading so much cheer/I should be playing in the snow/But Imma be under the mistletoe. The street lights probably aren't causing this cheer so I assume it's those hideous colourful glowing led strips people tend to wrap their houses in when Christmas is near. If so, I understand why he's inside and standing under that mistletoe.

Everyone's gathering around the fire/Chestnuts roasting like a hot July. An excellent choice of metaphor, Justin. You've successfully compared the month in which we're mostly sunbathing to a roast over a white-hot smoking fire.

Word on the streets Santa's coming tonight/Reindeers flying through the sky so high. But of course, Santa's probably hustlin' on them streets while cops are trying to catch him ridin' dirty blasting Chamillionare from the speakers installed in his sleigh. I can't imagine any other reason why word would be on the streets.

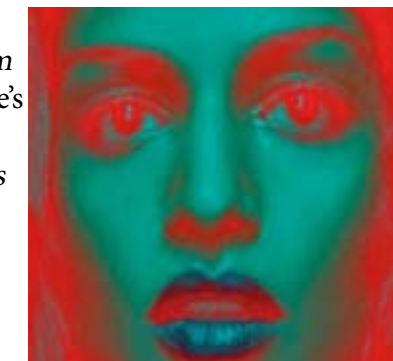
I don't wanna miss out on the holiday/But I can't stop staring at your face. Is he saying that he's going to stare at his love's face for two days straight? That's not cute, that sounds stalkerish.

In case this article has made you wildly enthusiastic about repeatedly hearing the words mistletoe and shawty produced by Justin's golden vocal cords and watching his pretty face, you should check it out yourself. Nobody should be ashamed of their inner twelve-year-old in the safety of their own home. Only in public.



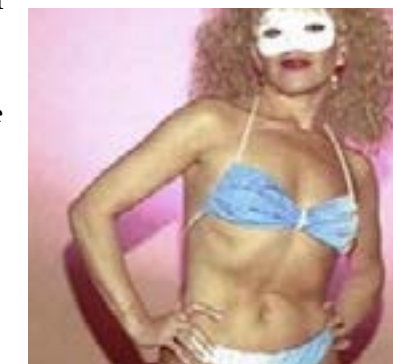
M.I.A. – Matangi

Live fast. Die young. Bad girls do it well. Our favourite bad girl is back with some banging tunes. M.I.A. combines her Sri Lankan roots with heavy beats, drops and autotune in a collection of raw tunes and softer tracks. The serene sound of the sitar opening on the album is quickly remixed when M.I.A. starts throwing lines at us. The album seems less critical than the previous *Maya*, which was full of criticism of modern society and the U.S. and Sri Lankan governments. It would be unlikely however if the album wouldn't feature such songs and indeed, in *Boom Skit*, M.I.A. lashes out at American society. Also, as a counteraction to Drake's YOLO, she ridicules the phenomenon in *Y.A.L.A. (You Always Live Again)*. In collaboration with Canadian The Weeknd, the songs *Exodus* and *Sexodus* introduce some sexiness/a healthy dose of sex to the album as well. To conclude, it is worth your time.



Blood Orange - Cupid Deluxe

Put on this album, lie down on your bed, close your eyes and imagine yourself in a cheesy 80's film. After a short break, during which he produced for Sky Ferreira, Solange and others, Blood Orange, a.k.a. Devonté Hynes, is back. He opens his new album with airy tunes and sweet voices. The distinctive pop sound mixed with some r&b, a bit of funk and a dash of disco that was so characteristic for his first album *Coastal Grooves*, seems to be perfected now. Heavy basslines and rap on *Clipped On* and *High Street* feature next to saxophones and the sensual whispers of a French girl on *Chosen*. Danceable tracks such as *Uncle Ace* feature on this album as well. The dreamy and melancholic songs will leave you daydreaming of love.



Lady Gaga - ARTPOP

All hail Mother Monster for she's back with ARTPOP. The pop is definitely there. The references to art and the promised reversed-Warholian experience are however not as overwhelming as expected. Perhaps this is for the better, because Gaga serves us some wonderfully sexy hits like *G.U.Y. (Girl Under You)*, *Sexxx Dreams* and *Do What U Want* (featuring R. Kelly). The odd one out on the album seems to be *Venus*, which, fortunately, was replaced by *Applause* as the first single released for the album. Contrary to what the lines in *Applause* might suggest, the album is not about fame or being Gaga at all. In fact, Gaga takes a swing at some of the rich and famous in *Donatella: Walk down the runway but don't puke/It's okay you just had a salad today*. For the combination of pop, sex and snappy remarks, we simply love her.



Wherefore Art Thou So Loved, Shakespeare?

By Aisha Mansaray and Erik van Dijk

To some, William Shakespeare is the greatest playwright ever. To others, his works are simply unreadable. Aisha Mansaray and Erik van Dijk discuss the issue in an exchange of civilized letters (no Shakespearian insults here!).

Dear Erik,

Lately I've realized—as I'm completely submerged in my Intercultural Communication master program—that the last couple of months, I haven't spent any time on one of the things I love most: English literature.

I even kept my Norton Anthologies, because I thought that someday I would have enough time to read the classics. And whenever a student of English tells me about one of the courses on English lit they're taking, I enviously listen and think back of the first and second year of my BA, when I indulged in reading 'To His Coy Mistress' by Marvell, Tennyson's 'The Lotus Eaters', and later Utopia by Moore.

As much as I love English lit, I realize there is one thing I do not miss reading: Shakespeare. Not the poems, not the sonnets, not even the plays.

I just don't understand what the fuss is about. Yes, his work has been hugely influential. His plays are still immensely popular today and his texts are (supposedly) humorous, intelligent, and universal, but that was something I could only discover after I waded through his 15th century English and unnecessarily difficult sentences. Take this quote from 'Othello':

IAGO Even now, now, very now, an old black ram is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise; Awake the snorting citizens with the bell, Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you. Arise I say! (1.1.9)

Isn't there a way in which he just could've wrote: "Hey dude, there's this black guy screwing your daughter. Do something about it."

I know I'm not awfully thoughtful here and I'd like to think I recognize good literature and poetry when I see it (Shakespeare was obviously not a bad writer) but I'm honestly wondering why so many people love his work, because after three years of studying English, I still think it's boring and unreadable.

Love,

Aisha

Wherefore Art Thou So Loved, Shakespeare?

Dear Aisha,

when I read Shakespeare's works for the first time, I was also quite underwhelmed. The amazing Shakespeare, known for being one of the bright minds of English literature and the creator of many stories and plays now considered classics, did not make a big impression at all after reading his pieces.

Only after taking several other lit classes and reading works by writers as Swift, Donne, Marlowe and Milton, I realised what made Shakespeare and his writing so special. It's not about what he does write, but what he doesn't. That's the key to why his work is considered timeless brilliance.

All his works are written in a way that years or even centuries later people can still read them and relate to the story in one way or another. No part of his writing binds the reader to a certain viewpoint; it inspires discussion. The characters he portrays are mostly timeless and even when they are bound to a certain period in time they always clearly show which part of human nature they are meant to showcase. Characters are not so much simply good or bad but have more nuance and reason behind their actions.

A perfect example is Hamlet. He means well and is morally conflicted about killing people, but in the end he does murder almost everyone involved in the story. Not exactly the most one-dimensional character I have ever come across. Leaving the interpretation and judgement of the behaviour of Hamlet to the reader is what makes it such a strong story. There are enough arguments either way in the discussion on whether or not Hamlet's actions are justified. Even if Shakespeare himself judges the actions of a character in his stories directly, he still manages to have the character be diverse enough to allow one to argue that his judgement is wrong.

There is no other author in the literary history of the English language who has been reprinted, adapted, retold, taught and just generally considered common knowledge in the way that Shakespeare is. Granted, the archaic English can be a threshold some will find difficult to pass, but that doesn't have to be a problem with all the modern retellings of his stories.

So even though the language may be troublesome to get through and the general use of words is not at all a style you fancy, try and read what isn't written there and see how amazing it is that a writer from that time has managed to write pieces that are still relevant today and give such insight into human nature. Thanks to Shakespeare we now have some stories that are not just brilliant in simplicity, but also timeless.

Love,

Erik

Books

By Margit Wilke

We kick off our bookshelf interview series by asking Albion treasurer and incredibly decent lad Syme van der Lelij some questions about that which we all love: books.

What was your favourite book growing up?

I think my growing up can be divided into stages. At first, I was really into *Pinkeltje*, but after a while I discovered Dutch author Paul van Loon and read most of his books from *Dolfje Weerwolfje* to *Kippenvel*. It took me fifteen years to finally get to the real legend: J.R.R. Tolkien.

What is your favourite book now?

I cannot decide! Can I pick two? One of them, *Three Men in a Boat and Three Men in a Bummel* by Jerome K. Jerome, is very funny and is based almost entirely on dialogue. That Jerome guy is a genius. Another genius is Graham Greene, who wrote my second favourite book right now, *The Quiet American*. I liked that one so much, that I even wrote my BA thesis on it. I am, hopefully, leaving for St. Andrews next September to do a postgraduate on Modern and Contemporary Literature so I read as much as I can to be honest.

What is the last book you read for 'fun'?

It is funny that you say "for 'fun'" because the last book I read non-school related was an incredibly hard book to finish. The cover of *Goodbye to All That* by Robert Graves shows a man in mid-life crisis, which kind of says it all. I guess autobiographies from men in the first World War are not really my thing.

Which book are you most ashamed of reading?

Q & A a.k.a. *Slumdog Millionaire* by Vikas Swarup. I must have been seduced by the colourful cover of the book, but the writing was anything but colourful. It was dreadful and I was surprised I made it through. Having lived under a rock, I have yet to see the film adaptation.

Which book are you most ashamed of for not reading (yet)?

Probably the Bible. I feel like everyone should at least have read it once, right? And maybe *1984* by George Orwell, which, kind of, has the same status as the Bible: everyone should at least have read it once.

Name a book you could not get yourself to finish.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne. I tried, I really did! Twice, even, but no such luck. It is incredibly slow to get through and so very boring after a while. I'm sure it is lovely, just not my kind of lovely, I guess.

What, for you, is the ultimate page limit to a book before you decide against reading it?

800 pages probably. It depends entirely on the book itself. If it has a nice cover, I will read it. I think book covers are the most important parts of books, anyway. If the writer has not even made the effort of making the cover nice, how is he/she even going to expect I will make the effort to read it?

If you were to write a book, what would it be about?

I would love to write a book, someday. I do not think I would have enough material to write one just yet, but courses like Creative Writing and Adapting to the Novel really helped me establish my 'writer-self'. I would love to write about disfigured people in a normal world or come up with such a brilliant but absurd idea that everyone is like "what?!" Yeah, I hope to do that someday.

Which author have you read most books by and why?

Probably Graham Greene. Writing my thesis on his books, I had to, right? No, I really like him. He creates his characters in a very distinctive way and surrounds them with an atmosphere only he can come up with. Above all, I really like that Greene is such an accessible writer: his books are both academic and for 'fun'.

Could you recommend a book?

High Fidelity by Nick Hornby. It is like he wrote the male version of Bridget Jones: it is impossible to not recognize yourself in the head character, Rob Fleming. If you have been dumped and need a companion, read this book!

Books

To conclude, share your favourite passage with us.

From *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene:

"I have read so often of people's thoughts in the moment of fear: of God, or family, or a woman. I admire their control. I thought of nothing, not even the trapdoor above me: I ceased, for those seconds, to exist: I was fear taken neat. At the top of the ladder I banged my head because fear couldn't count steps, hear, or see. Then my head came over the earth floor and nobody shot at me and fear seeped away."



A fluffy brown and white cat, possibly a Ragdoll, is the central focus, sitting in a woven basket. The cat has a white blaze on its face and white fur on its chest and paws. It is surrounded by festive decorations, including large red poinsettias, green holly leaves, and clusters of red berries. The background is a solid red fabric. The entire image is framed by a decorative border with a green, red, and white plaid pattern.

Merry Christmas

and a Happy New Year!