

# PHOENIX

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Issue 4 | 2015-2016

Sex • Drugs • Rock & Roll

Miranda XXL • Lesbian pulp fiction •  
Utrecht coffeshops • LSD • The Brahms • John Coffey

Dutch Comic Con - Q&A with Syme van der Lelij – Anneloek's Bookshelf –

Master Market – Fleur in St Andrews

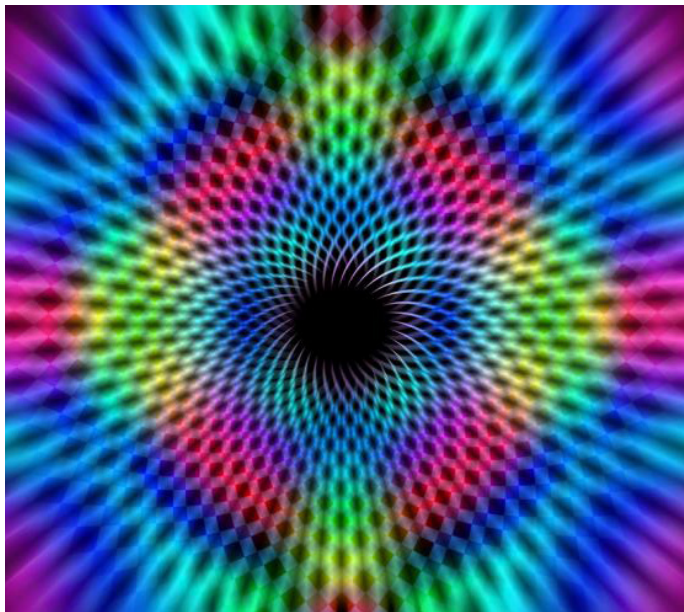
And more...







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# Letter from the editor

Dear readers,



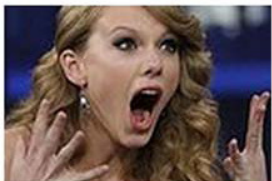
I’d like to welcome you to arguably the most exciting issue of Phoenix as of yet. You’re presumably familiar with the concept of clickbait: a website or newspaper posts a few lines of an uninteresting article on social media while leaving out the clue, hoping that you’ll fall for it and click the thing. The same goes for uncomplete lists of seemingly important stuff, or all things sexual. Whenever something naked is dropped on social media, it’s more likely to get clicked. Sex sells, so it seems. Now we desperately hope we’ve clickbaited you into reading this Phoenix, though we are convinced we actually have lots of interesting articles waiting for you.

Erik was the one to drop the idea of paying a visit to Europe’s biggest sex shop, which is conveniently located in Utrecht. We went from there and thought of articles not only about sex, but also on those other two parts of the holy trinity that is sex, drugs and rock & roll. Simone discovered this weird thing called lesbian pulp fiction and wrote a piece about it. We made a small edition of Phoenix Ranks on Utrecht coffee shops to make sure you’ll visit the right one whenever you’re up for a smoke. Interested in learning some more about hard drugs? We interviewed someone who went on an LSD trip. When it comes to rock & roll, we’re happy to have Inge in our ranks. This festival veteran and aspiring music journalist wrote a rocking contribution for Culture Corner and features in this issue’s Showcase. For some rock & roll life choices, I gladly direct you to this issue’s Q&Alumni. Ilse interviewed Syme van der Lelij, who ended up in Poland after his studies.

There’s a Bookshelf, there’s a Minor Market – shapeshifted into a Master Market this time around – plenty of columns and reviews, and to top it all off Lucinia wrote a special report on the Dutch Comic Con. In terms of discretion and an SFW-policy, we decided to leave Tea Time out for the occasion. I thank you for your understanding.

Making this Phoenix was loads of fun. I hope that you enjoy reading the stories we’ve put together.

Jos de Groot  
*Editor in Chief*



## 17 Facts You Won't Believe Are True

Hope you're sitting down for this one.

Jessica Misener  
posted on Oct 24, 2014



## 42 Wrestlers You Won't Believe Actually Existed

#NeverForget

Nick Wray  
posted on Nov 07, 2014



## Why BuzzFeed Doesn't Do Clickbait

You won't believe this one weird trick.

Ben Smith  
posted on Nov 06, 2014





## XXL

A seventies' funk song welcomes us as we enter Miranda XXL, a store that has excited our imaginations for some time. The manager of Europe's biggest sex shop has been expecting us and she offers us a cup of tea as we stroll around the 1000 m2 of massage oils, dolls, condoms, whips, DVDs, penis pumps, and other sexual paraphernalia. We tentatively poke and squeeze our way through the assortment, from the nice-looking dildos in the front to the intimidating leather masks in the back, and then return to the coffee table in the centre of the store to have a chat with the shopkeeper, Petra van Engelen.

*By Jos de Groot and Erik de Vries Lentsch*

**J: Do many people like us pay Miranda a visit?**

"Yes, occasionally. For school, photography or the arts. I was recently interviewed by a girl who did a project on out-of-the-box thinking."

**E: You sound a bit bored about it.**

"No, not at all. I like it, especially when you get to see the final product. The girl came back to show us what she had made for the project and told us her grade."

The subject is always what's stopping people from entering

the shop – about the fact that people still feel a certain tension. It's something that surprises me to this day. Sex is very open in the Netherlands. TV and internet show so much and friends talk about sex very easily. What's difficult about entering a sex shop?"

**E: Did you experience some kind of change in terms of customers?**

"One tiny change I can tell from the top of my head is that people from other backgrounds – like Islamic women – start finding the shop. You'll see them every once in a while. Students visit the shop

as well, you get a 10% discount by showing your student card here."

We used to have another shop just around the corner, which had a cinema and private cabins. That shop attracted a whole different type of people. Our customers have stayed pretty much the same."

**E: Did the cinema part disappear because it was no longer profitable, because of the internet?**

"No, it didn't have anything to do with the internet, really. Visiting the cinema was a social thing, an encounter. People had dates and

**"With enough lube, nothing is impossible."**

had their selves a good time upstairs.

We've had this business as a single store – with cabins – for a long time, though. People used to pick a DVD and come to me. I then gave them a cabin number and a remote and sent them on their way up the stairs. They had to walk through the shop to get there, which turned out not to be ideal. Our shopping customers were very different from the cabin visitors, you see.

We do own a shop in Zeist which still has a cinema. About fifteen to twenty people per day go there to watch films."

**J: Do you still sell DVDs?**

"We do, but not like before. We used to have eight to ten shelves with DVDs; now we have three. But we still have customers who just like to watch a DVD. They don't have access to the internet or don't feel comfortable using the internet for sex. And many DVDs are bought for people who are in a psychiatric institution or in detention."

**E: How did you get to work here?**

"I was a customer here, visited quite regularly to buy a thing or two. I was an executive secretary at an office back then. I once chatted with the shop manager and told

her I fancied getting a job here. Having to clean the private cabins didn't scare me off and I started working here a little while later, next to my job at the office. When the financial crisis hit, I lost my job as an executive secretary. I was asked to become the manager here at Miranda, but I didn't accept the offer right away. I realised that, as soon as you're working in this industry – even though it's just retail business – it's difficult to return to a job as a secretary. People will make assumptions once they hear that you work in a sex shop. I did take the job, though, and I've never regretted it."

**E: What makes you aware of people viewing you differently because of your job?**

"Because people do have a particular image of a sex shop. Me too, initially. The first sex shop I ever visited was sex shop De Dom, which is a 'traditional' sex shop: a small, dark and shabby shop with an old man behind the counter. When you've bought yourself a vibrator and walk out the shop, you can't help but think that the old man will fantasise about what you're going to do with your new toy."

People occasionally ask me: 'What is it you do at the sex shop?'







Well, it's sales. That's it, like at Albert Heijn or Blokker, only I sell erotic toys. The only thing is that you're more likely to experience something weird around here."

**J: Like what?**

"We used to have a toilet behind the wall where our collection of pocket pussies was hanging. Customers could use the toilet. On Valentine's Day – always a very busy day – I

right there. 'Sir, ma'am, could you please wait until you're in your car?' I asked them politely. You don't need put up with this kind of thing, it's abnormal. This is just a shop. But people apparently feel those things can happen here, because the atmosphere is erotic.

A boy once came to me and said: 'I want to buy myself a cock ring, but I don't know my size.' That's quite important, especially for a

**"I do have the best stories at parties and birthdays."**

went to the toilet myself and found one of those pocket pussies on the ground. I picked it up and I saw it was completely filled with sperm. Someone had gotten so excited he had to masturbate on the spot.

I also once had a couple at the counter. While talking with them, I thought: 'What's this moist sound I'm hearing?' He was fingering her

metal cock ring. 'How do I measure that?', he asked. I told him he could use a piece of rope or something like that. 'Why don't you come with me to the fitting room so you can do it?' he said."

**J: Walking around here, I don't get excited at all. Others do?**

"Sometimes, yes. Especially when

**"What's difficult about entering a sex shop?"**

they have a certain fetish.

A short while ago, I had a man in the shop with a fetish for nylons. Coincidentally, I was wearing nylons that day and he just kept gapping at me. Before he left, he said: 'I'm sorry, I'm just fascinated by nylons. I'm wearing them under my pants right now.'

These are exceptions, luckily. The atmosphere is generally very relaxed. Couples come and try things on, but you shouldn't think everyone in here walks around with a boner or a wet twat. I do have the best stories at parties and birthdays."

**E: Do you have regular customers whom you know and address with their first name?**

"Yes, many women who are in the business or work at a private house, for example. But also customers who visit once or twice a month and whom I've got to know. I talk about all kinds of things with my customers, they often ask me if I'm a mother. When they knew I'd been pregnant, they asked me how the baby was doing. Those are nice things."

**E: What's been the effect of 50 Shades of Grey?**

"When the book was just released, we could definitely see a change. We had two tables in the front of the shop with posters and products related to the book. A man came in and said his wife was reading the book. I asked him what chapter she was at, and when he told me, I said: 'Aha, then you'd want to buy these little balls!'

We expected the same to happen when the film was released. But the film wasn't 100% faithful to the book and the toys didn't play as big a role. So we didn't notice much of the film in our shops. 50 Shades-handcuffs aren't any different from ordinary handcuffs, but because they have the 50 Shades logo, they're more expensive. Some people do fall for that."

**J: We saw a humongous dildo over there. Does that one actually get sold?**

"Oh yes."





**“You shouldn’t think everyone in here walks around with a boner or a wet twat.”**



**J:** It looks like it’s physically impossible to use.

“I bet it can be used. With enough lube, nothing is impossible. That big dildo was sold more often when prostitution was still legal in Utrecht. The prostitutes would use it as decoration for the windows of their boats.

We have a lot of metal things as well, like a metal cock ring with a ball that you have to stuff into your anus. It’s actually unhealthy to use. You’ll be incontinent for the rest of your life.”

**J:** Do you tell your customers that as well?

“If people want to buy something like that, they’ve usually done their research on the product and they simply want to buy it.

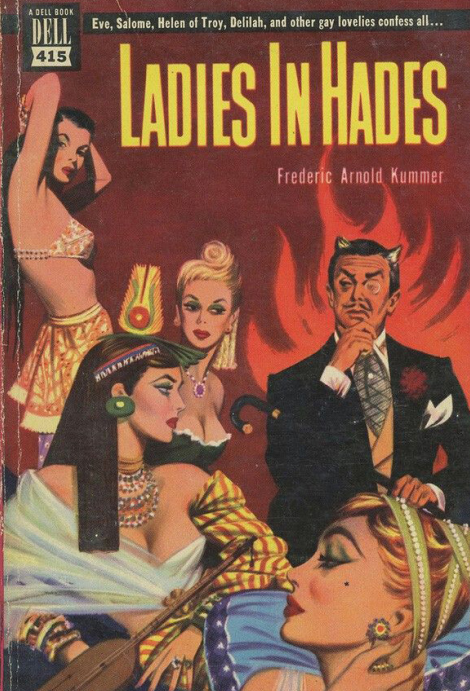
I have a customer who visits every two or three weeks. He is in the process of stretching his anus and he always tells me at how many centimetres he is. Oh well, whatever floats his boat.”

**J:** What kinds of people work here, apart from you? Were they also customers, like you?

“We always try to always have a man and a woman behind the counter. That’s important in order to make the customer feel at ease. People who want to work here, often have a wrong image of the shop. They think everyone here is horny all day. I have to vacuum and feed the birds, you know.”







# The Paradox of Lesbian Pulp Fiction

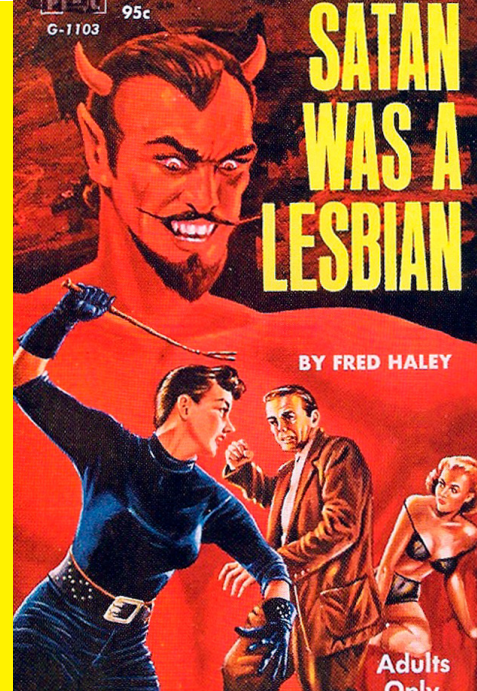
I was casually browsing eBay, looking for a vintage poster to give to my girlfriend as a house-warming present, when one particular poster caught my eye. I WAS ONCE A TOMBOY, NOW I'M A FULL-GROWN LESBIAN, the pink poster said. A drawing of two pin-up girls about to get into bed together was included below. A few minutes later, I had made sure that this poster was not designed recently, but in the 1950s. What was more, it was not just a poster: it was the cover of a book. And there were many, many more books like this. So what was going on?

*By Simone Schoonwater*

As it turns out, the tomboy-cover was not the most offensive or dubious one out there. Highlights included: Satan Was a Lesbian, Come Sin With Me, To Hell They

Belonged, Ladies in Hades, Lesbian Jungle, Easel Orgy, The Price was Perversity, and Lesbian Captive. I won't even go into the various sub-titles ("From the author of: Hot Teenage Society Lesbian Vengeance Pact"). It was clear that these pulp fiction novels were not carrying out a particularly positive image of lesbians or homosexuality in general.

When I went online to research this, I found a surprisingly large amount of essays and studies dedicated to lesbian pulp fiction. Apparently after World War II, a whole pulp fiction mass market evolved, mostly dealing with "dirty" topics like drugs, crime, or homosexuality of course. These novels were not censored (in terms of sex) as much as literary works, because they were regarded as trash anyway. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, pulp fiction was the only thing people

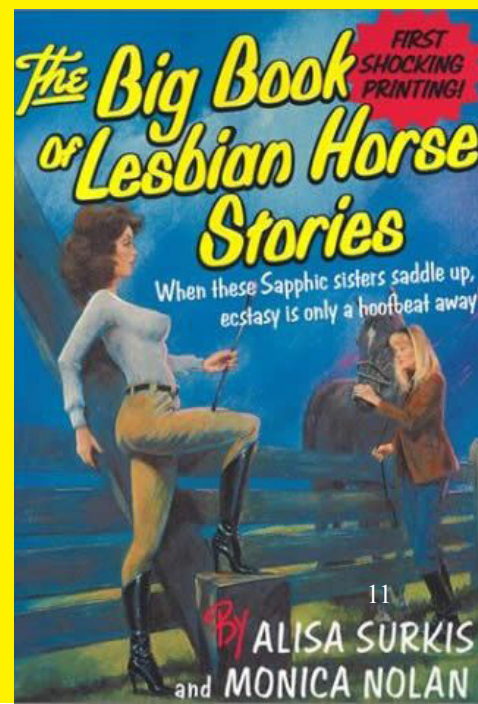
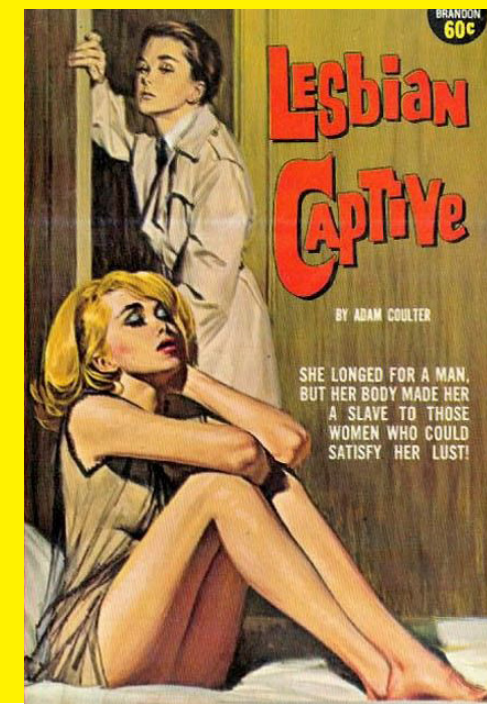
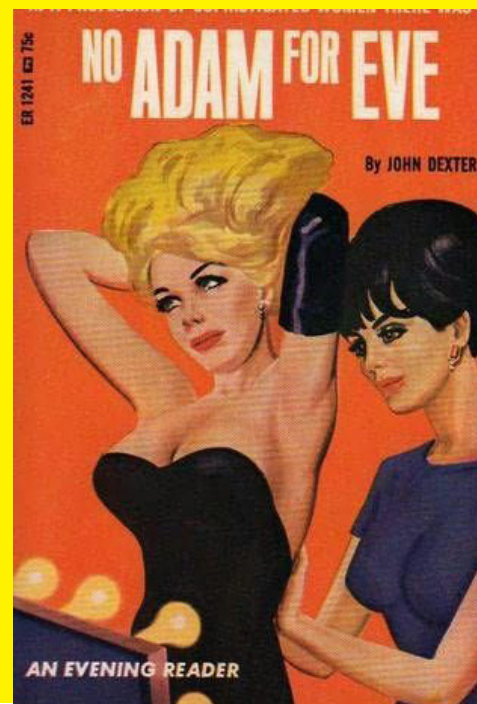
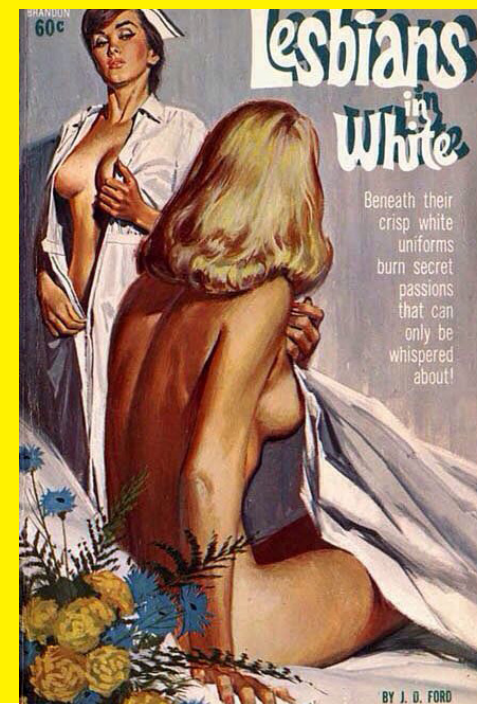
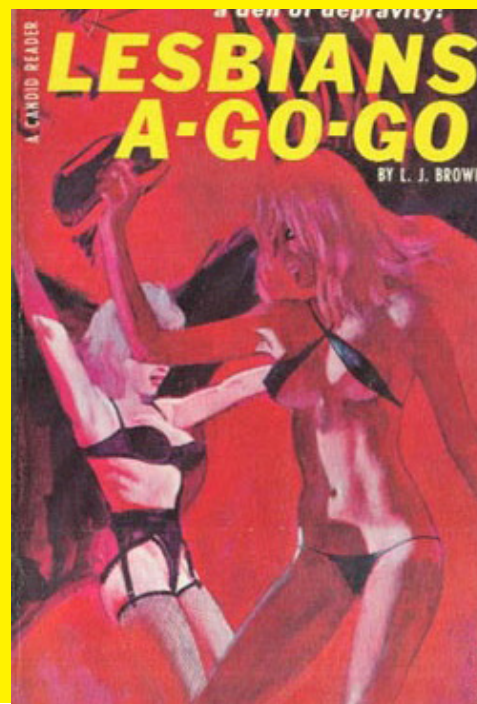
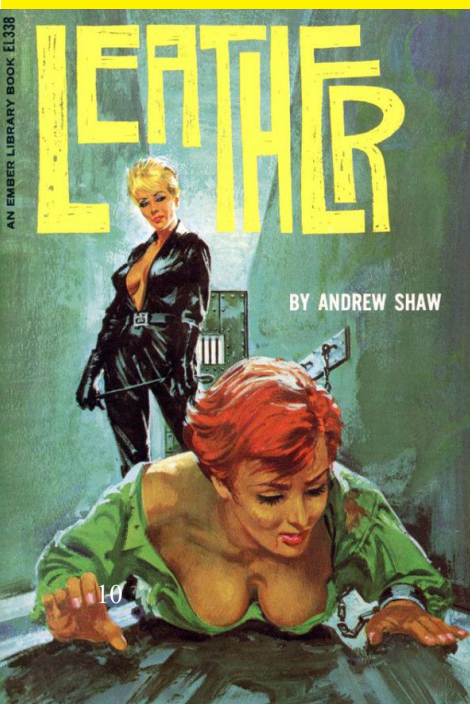
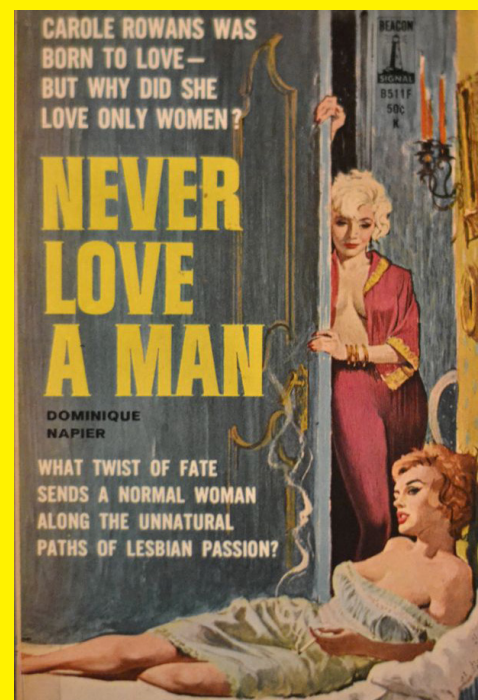
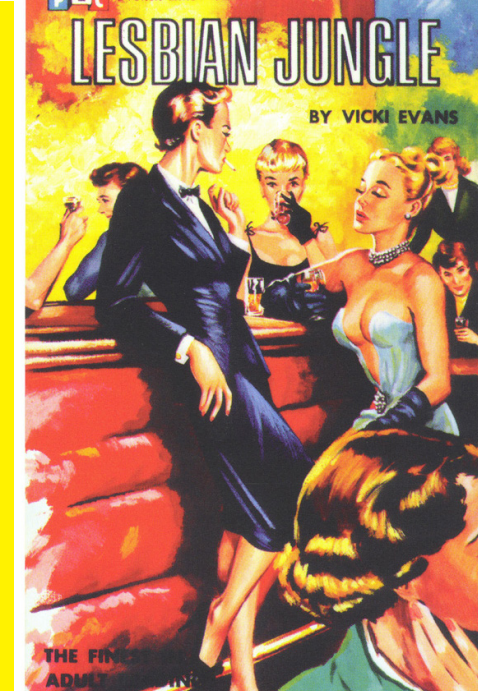


(both straight and gay) had to base their image of homosexuality on, simply because no other literature was available. Most of these books ended either in insanity or suicide, or the woman in question turned straight after all. Because the US government did not allow the promotion of homosexuality of any kind, lesbian novels were not allowed to have a happy ending.

So who wrote these books? Not very surprisingly, mostly straight men did. They frequently used female pseudonyms and wrote to fulfill the fantasies of other straight men (a kind of pre-internet porn industry, you could say). Common themes in their novels were predatory butch lesbians, Satanism and witchcraft, bondage, voyeurism and orgies, and they were often set in places like prison, the military or boarding school. Still, a small portion of books were actually written



by lesbians themselves. These featured better developed characters and offered a more positive view on homosexuality. Although some of the books had a tragic ending, most of them did not. There are definitely two sides to this story. Lesbian pulp fiction, on the one hand, was used to entertain men and spread a negative, damaging and stereotypical image of lesbians to a largely ignorant audience. On the other hand, some of them were written by women, and they gave lesbians all over the US the feeling that they were not alone. At least the end of lesbian pulp fiction is a happy one: with the rise of the gay rights movement after the Stonewall riots of 1969, the novels were no longer needed. The lesbian community was now, as lesbian pulp fiction writer Artemis Smith first said, "out of the closet".





# LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS

*David\* is one of the most laid-back people I know. His way of talking and moving suggests that few things in life have the power to upset him, but he doesn't carry himself with a pubertal 'I don't care about anything'-attitude. He is one of the few guys I know that can pull off a full beard without looking like a hobo or a barista. And he is the only guy I know that has taken LSD. This was the topic of conversation as we sat down in the living room of his house, with David leisurely rolling a cigarette.*

*By Erik de Vries Lentsch*

## **Where did you get the idea of using LSD? Was it on your wish list?**

"Yes, it was. Friends of mine told me that it was fun to do. I always thought you'd totally lose your mind, but they told me it wasn't like that.

I went to a psychedelic party with a friend. We had already drunk alcohol, because I hadn't planned on using LSD that evening. I thought I'd rather try it in a safe environment the first time. But the people who were with us told me that it would okay and I'd had experience with tripping. So we decided to do it.

Still, it wasn't the ideal place to try LSD for the first time. I would advise against it. I'm going to try 2CE soon and I'll be doing that at home, in a safe environment."

## **What was the psychedelic party like?**

"They played psytrance. There's a whole hippie subculture and those people don't listen to Bob Dylan anymore, they listen to this."

*David reaches for his laptop to open Spotify and play a high-BPM song that is filled with distinctive sound textures – rustling, echoing and bleeping. It certainly is a far cry from the seventies' music I associate with LSD.*

"The beat is there the whole time, so that people who are 'far out' have something to hold onto. As the party goes on 'til eight in the morning, the music gets more and more minimalist until this beat is the only thing that's left.

Towards the end, some hippies had fallen asleep. I even saw some lying right in front of the speakers.

The party took place in the Maassilo in Rotterdam. The crowd was very diverse – scary dock workers from Rotterdam who've snorted themselves silly and

hippies who walk barefoot through the grimy mess. And then there's people like me."

## **Is it easy to talk to people at a party like that?**

"Most of the conversations I had were with friends of friends. I don't feel that the veteran hippies are all that approachable."

## **How did you get your hands on an LSD stamp? Did you go into a dark alleyway?**

"You can find a dealer on the street, yes. But there are also a handful of phone numbers going around. A friend and I know this one guy who sells basically everything, except for heroin."

## **And when you took it, did you see shit?**

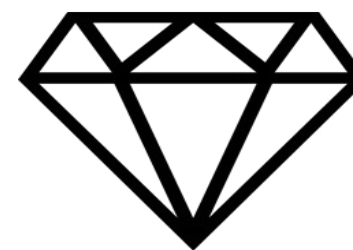
"Yes. You won't see little green men, like with MDMA – that stuff makes you see things that aren't there at all. But it's like smoking weed: you understand how images develop. You're too late with interpreting the stimuli you get. It's exactly like a seventies' space poster. Everything is composed of hexagons. You can see the components that make up everything. You look at your hand and you can see every line and every shadow."

## **How did it affect your mood? Did it make you happy or unhappy?**

"It was busy inside my head, lots of things going on. You can see through everything. Something that normally just exists is now suddenly composed of many things. Normally you'd see a bar and you just think: I can get a drink there. But when you're on LSD, you'll see the tap and you'll think of the beer keg and of the people working behind the bar. The effect is the exact opposite of beer.

At one point I forgot how perspective works. I looked at the floor and I thought that down was forward. But if down is forward, then where is down? People were enormous one moment and tiny the next. That was terribly funny, of course.

Everything loses its meaning and its value – which is exactly how a hippie movement can arise. But it also means that you have to be careful not to lose your money and your keys. You're quick to think: 'Am I really going to bother picking up the tenner I dropped on the floor? That seems way too complicated.'"



## **The party lasted for a long time. Did LSD help you get through the night, like speed?**

"If you take speed, you really get an energy boost. LSD helps you stay awake, but the effect is different. Everything becomes clear and you get a lot of impressions, which keeps you up.

LSD lasts quite a long time. You're 'in' it for about eight hours, but effects can last for up to ten, twelve hours. It's not exhausting, though. Speed really only postpones your fatigue, which is not the case with LSD. It feels a lot more natural and you won't be knackered afterwards, unlike with amphetamine."

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## **Did you have any epiphanies?**

"Well... it was a very rainy night, so the Maassilo, which is an awesome place, was also very grimy. And I was wearing old shoes with holes in them. My socks got wet and that kept me busy for a very long time. Then I thought to myself: 'David, surely you can make the effort to buy some new shoes? You'll look better and you won't have to be mooney because of your wet socks.' Usually I'd be too lazy, but I bought a new pair of shoes the next day."

## **That is the most trivial LSD-epiphany I've ever heard.**

"It's not exactly an existential question, no."

## **Are you going to use it again?**

"Certainly. It's got potential. I was focussed too much on everything around me this time. The next time, I'd like to use it in a quiet environment that will allow me to think more."

\* 'David' is a fictitious name

## Wasted Times



I will confess. It may come as a shock to you, but I am not the roughest kid on the block. I have tried it though; I have stolen the small pencils at Ikea, I have drunk Wicky without shaking it first. But unfortunately, I have once again ended in the daily grind of offering seats to old ladies in the bus and putting those small bars between the groceries at Albert Heijn. The rough path was not for me, which is quite a disastrous realisation at the age of 22. One wrong turn, and there you are in bright yellow windcheater on the Veluwe with two Kitch-Kitchen cyclebags filled with currant buns and two crying toddlers. But of course I will blame society for that situation. I was simply born at the wrong time.

*By Laura van Lokven*

The seventies, that would have been a better fit. Great outfits with those neat flared jeans that would cover up my fat ankles and great music that would let you get away with an epileptic seizure on the dance floor. And the booze and drugs use, oh boy. Those were the times of real discipline. Nowadays you're a hotshot if, after popping some pills and sinking some drinks, you make it to the end of Oudegracht without taking a wrong turn, turning your cycling adventure into a diving trip. But in those days, you were expected to actually work while intoxicated. Hell, whole businesses were built with white frosted noses and alcohol breaths reeking up to Maastricht. No wonder I chose my dull lifestyle, the bar now is simply set too low. We should go back to the glory days where people didn't just hand out plates of cheese and sausage at birthday parties, but passed around little lines of angel dust as a real treat. Sure, having a few rotten teeth is quite annoying, but if I have to believe the current Oral-B adds, there's nothing a good scrub can't fix. And it's nothing compared to the advantages. Because, as an English Literature student, I have to say that with most of the works I get dropped on my plate I wonder how much acid the writer has been dropping. And the fact that I have to study it as a subject of literary value, can only strengthen the fact that using drugs certainly sparks the creative process of the human mind.



# PHOENIX RANKS

## COFFEESHOPS

With Amsterdam and all its green-leaved neon signs just a stone's throw away, Utrecht isn't especially known as a coffeeshop capital. Although we do have the highest church tower in the Netherlands, Utrecht has to settle for a mere nine coffeeshops to provide its inhabitants – and tourists – with their greens. Yet, as a student in Utrecht, you might like to visit a coffeeshop on your home ground.

Andersom is probably the most obvious one to go to, as it's located at the very foot of the Dom tower. Andersom's cool location is both its asset and its drawback, since tourists looking for a smoke mostly end up here. Presumably, they are not the type of company you're looking for and, more importantly, they are the reason for Andersom's high prices. Though, when you're in the mood for a smoke underneath the Dom or – perhaps even better – in front of the Academieggebouw, Andersom is just around the corner for your needs. A few steps away from the entrance of the UBB, you'll find coffeeshop Pleasure at the Voorstraat. It looks shabby and uninviting and has little to offer. Visiting the adjoining Taco Mundo is probably more exciting.

In our humble opinion, only two Utrecht coffeeshops actually stand out and are worth visiting. Iris and Maarten were found willing to have a go at them and they kindly urge you to do the same.



### HI+LO

*By Maarten Gooskens*

The storefront alone should tell you that Hi+Lo is not like other coffeeshops. It looks more like a sleek designer hostel or a hip furniture store. Upon entry, you can buy whatever you like at the front desk (the fact that there is a front desk only adds to the hip hostel feel). And you're only allowed entry by the bloke behind the counter. Once inside, the clinically clean white interior looks like a lobby straight out of *The Fifth Element*. Downstairs you'll find an oriental lounge where there's more pillow than floor: a modern Sodom and Gomorrah for the lover of green, with the feel of an old opium lounge.

Hi+Lo does not conform to the standard of coffeeshops, which makes it so good, unless you're looking for that shady and grimy atmosphere. If you're new to coffeeshops, this one might not give you the right idea, but I highly recommend it as a starting point. If you're a veteran to the coffeeshop-game, variety is the spice of life.

### CULTURE BOAT



*By Iris Pijning*

A small walk away from the UB, at the picturesque Wittevrouwensingel, you'll find the Culture Boat, Utrecht's only floating coffee shop. One of the first things you'll notice when you step onto the Culture Boat is that there are no semi-grumpy bouncers at the door like at some other coffee shops. The boat itself has a great atmosphere and the staff seems very friendly. They have a small menu of weed and hash. On the one hand, this means that if you know what you're about and fancy a specific type of herb, you're probably not able to get it here. On the other hand, if you don't know or don't care as much, it can be pretty nice not to be faced with a daunting list of twenty names like Schnazzeberry, Old Mother Sativa, Purple Urkel and Blue Cheese. The boat's interior is full of Persian rugs and big green plants. When it's sunny you can see the smoke patterns and planty bits swirling through the bright cabin. I can imagine it being quite nice at night as well, when it's dark outside and the Wolvenplein prison is lit, just like you.







# SHOWCASE

## Inge's music addiction

Our own Inge van Nimwegen loves music. This love manifests itself in two ways: reviewing concerts, festivals, and CDs for a Belgian website, and buying loads of band merchandise. Mysteriously enough, I have never seen Inge in one of her band shirts, but I did meet up with her to discuss her rock 'n roll hobby.

*By Simone Schoonwater*

### How many shirts do you have?

"I'm not entirely sure, about 30 or 40? I also have some hoodies, jackets, beanies, and even a scarf. Recently I was on the verge of buying band socks, but I changed my mind at the last moment. They were ten pounds for a pair, which is really expensive."

### Do you have a favourite item?

"I've been hunting down all the shirts of one



particular band called The Wonder Years, specifically those which have one particular bird logo on them, in different designs. So far I've already collected three hoodies and four shirts. Although I have been a fan since 2012 and saw them live for the first time in 2013, I still have a lot of shirts to go! These bird shirts are my favourites, together with my very first shirt of The Wonder Years, a burgundy shirt which features the bird in covered in flowers."

### How long have you been collecting merchandise?

"Ever since I started going to concerts, which was in 2010. My first concert was Billy Talent, unless you count that time I saw Only Seven Left at the Tina-day. The first band shirt I bought was a Plain White T's shirt with Hey There Delilah on it. I surprisingly didn't buy it at a concert, though it is an official shirt. It's rather ugly and light blue, but I still have it in my closet."

### How much money do you think you spent on merch?

"Umm, an average shirt is around 20 euros and I have bought quite some of my merch second-hand. All of them are 'official' merchandising though – I want my money to go to the actual band. I've been doing this for six years, so the total amount will be... maybe 1000 euros? That's actually a lot, haha! Though I have to say that I have sold some shirts after a while, because I didn't like the band anymore or because I didn't back their ideas. For example, there was

a band who sold a shirt with a picture of a gun on it, as a joke. But I wasn't comfortable wearing that image anymore, so I got rid of it."

### What is your most expensive shirt?

"30 euros for a shirt of Morrissey. It was a very responsible item: printed on bamboo cotton, eco-friendly, and made without the use of child labour."

### Can you tell us something about the music website you write for?

"Yes! It is a Belgian website, called snoozecontrol.be. It focusses on alternative music, mostly metal. I do it as voluntary work, but I get to go to festivals and concerts as a press reporter (so basically for free). I can't just apply for any concert, since the site isn't that big and you're often turned down, but smaller concerts or festivals usually do accept my requests. I've been to festivals in the Netherlands of course, but also France and England. I might even report Sziget this year! And sometimes I do interviews, for example with Circa Waves and Twin Atlantic."

### Do you think you'll ever stop collecting merchandise?

"No, at least not completely. My closet is bulging right now, though. I guess I'll maintain a rotation system, where I buy new shirts and sell old ones. It's not like I'm really hoarding merchandise. Besides, this music collection has a function: you can actually wear the shirts. I think I wear band merch approximately three days a week, so it's pretty strange you have never seen me in it!"





# Albioneers Abroad



## Ellen in Bangor

By Ellen Colée

Going abroad is all about trying new things. And hearing new things. I have always loved British English (as most of you lovely people do too) and I have discovered a few hidden gems. One day I was walking outside with one of my flatmates and it was really cold. She said: "I'm freezing my tits off!" So that is my new favourite expression. I don't really know whether guys can say it too. Or would something else freeze off then? I don't know. Another one I heard is "I can talk for England," meaning that you talk a lot. I wasn't sure whether that was a real thing, but I was reading a book the other day and the same expression was in it! I love confirmation.

Another new thing I noticed

here is the way most of my flatmates cook. I knew British food was different before I came here. I knew fish and chips was a thing, even though I don't really eat it here. And I really like the fact that you can order mashed potatoes (or just "mash") everywhere, instead of chips. But the way they cook? I didn't know it was possible, but they shove everything into the oven. Raw chicken and sausages, for example. This shocked me. Since going abroad is all about new things, and since shoving all your food in the oven takes less effort than using the hob, I tried it. I was surprised how similar the chicken tasted! However, the sausages taste a little weird. Have you ever had an English Breakfast somewhere in the UK? Have you ever noticed that different taste when eating a

sausage? Well, I have discovered the reason why. It's the oven.

Something else I discovered here are charity shops. I know they also exist in the Netherlands, but there are so many here! And they sell the most amazing books. The first time I looked at books in one of the shops, I didn't understand what was written with pencil on the first page. It looked like 69. I was in doubt, did this mean the book was 69 pounds? To be fair, it was a fancy hardcover book. An old one. I asked the lady at the counter. "That's 69 pence, love". Oh yes! And the 69 p spent on the book goes to charity. So I have helped make the world a better place by buying a book. I have to admit; I love it here.

## A Universe of Traditions at a Traditional University

By Fleur Kronenberg

While walking home last week at 2am after Glitter Ball in the Old Course Hotel a realisation dawned on me. I was barefoot – I had danced my feet to blisters – crossing the 700 year old Swilcan Bridge one of the oldest golf courses in the world, together with my academic mom and we were in search of cocktails. This was the moment realisation hit me, I am truly studying in St Andrews. The Bubble. The town of Will and Kate. I am here this year to get my MLitt in Museum and Gallery Studies. If you have read Syme's columns about St Andrews last year (which I really recommend you do) you will have gotten a bit of an idea of this town and this University: the rich kids, the prestigious University, and the undivided love for wine and cheese (preferably free – preferably eaten while wearing your academic gown).

St Andrews is a university of traditions; for instance, we wear the aforementioned academic gowns to formal dinners and during the optional weekly Sunday pier walk. The most complicated tradition we have involves the academic families. During Fresher's Week (the first week of the Semester, before classes start) every first year student can be adopted into an academic family if they wish to, with third year's acting as parents. I got lucky and got adopted into a big theatre family (for reference, most people have 2 siblings, I have 6). Your academic parents welcome you at university and your family provides you with an instant group of friends. Sometime in October we celebrate Raisin Weekend where the kids can thanks their academic parents for their help. Traditionally the children gave their parents a pound of raisins, however this gift has liquefied into wine over the years. The highlight of this initiation like event would be the foam fight on Monday morning. Your parents dress you up for this, and ours decided we should be bags of Jelly Beans. It was unlike anything I had ever done before and will ever do again.

As I said, St Andrews is a university of traditions, most of which have grown and shaped sometime between 1413 and now. To be part of this age-old heritage of an age-old university has been incredible and I would recommend it to anyone.



## Fleur in St Andrews





# Master market

## North American Studies



A little over half a year ago I moved to Nijmegen to study American Studies at Radboud University. Specializing in Literatures and Cultures of North America in an International Perspective (which is the official name of the MA track I'm in), I have been studying transnational America, contemporary literature, the future of American power, African American history and culture, and briefly touched upon border studies. RU offers another track called Transnational America: Politics, Culture, and Society, and although the two programs do not differ all that much, they both allow for different specializations. Where I chose to study African American history and American borders, students in the other track chose to study religion in America and constitutional law.

*By Maroucha Veerman*

The most positive aspect of this Master's program, to me, is the wide range of theories and topics that are available, as well as very knowledgeable teachers and professors that made me feel right at home. Offering both a BA and MA in North American Studies, I feel that RU could be seen as the leading Dutch university in American Studies, although I might be slightly biased. The MA isn't always very easy though, as it requires a lot of work and sometimes hundreds of pages of reading a week, but that was more a shock to me

than it was to students who didn't study English in Utrecht.

Perhaps the very best thing about North American Studies at Radboud is the exchange week with students from German and American universities, in which you examine theories of transnationalism, have a lot of time to discuss your thesis with both students and teachers from these universities, and, of course, have time to bond with your fellow students from across the Atlantic. I would definitely recommend my Master's program to anyone who is interested in fields of popular culture, race studies, gender studies, environmental studies, literature, politics, and to the generally America-obsessed. I have really enjoyed myself the past seven months and am currently working very hard to graduate within the year Radboud has given me to finish it!

More info? Check [www.ru.nl/nas](http://www.ru.nl/nas)

## Research Master Linguistics



Although I started out my bachelor in English with a love for literature studies (the familiar 'I like reading books, let's study English!'-story), or so I thought, I ended up as a Research MA student in Linguistics at the UU. To friends and family, linguistics is this abstract concept that may or may not have something to do with language, and explaining to them what they teach us in the programme usually results in blank, uncomprehending stares. Until you zoom in and provide them with some specific linguistic findings. Which will end with them bombarding you with any language-related question they can come up with, most of which you are unable to answer. We don't have all the answers yet and I love that I might still contribute to cracking some big linguistic puzzles.

*By Laura Smorenborg*

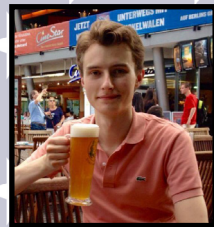
In the first semester, the programme provides 4 'foundation courses' to give you a broad, although rather formal, linguistic background. The second semester you get to choose between several electives to define your specific linguistic interests a little better – or to realise you're actually rather interested in something completely different. The second year is more focused on your own ideas for research and includes an internship, which you could choose to do abroad. Finally, you get a full semester to write your master's

thesis.

It's hard work being in a research master programme and there are definitely days where I wonder why I signed up for this. However, this master programme gives me the opportunity to – hopefully – pursue an academic career in a very diverse field of research. Lastly, for the people that can't seem to make up their mind between literature studies versus linguistics, there are many possibilities for combining linguistic research with your love for literature, so mind that one doesn't necessarily exclude the other.



## Sensible Showmanship



Trump is an engaging public speaker. Not because he's witty or eloquent or charming or intelligent, but because he is unpredictable and because he has a sense of humour. He often accuses the other candidates of being boring, "low-energy", and I think he's right. Ted Cruz has the appearance of a disappointed middle school teacher, Hillary Clinton is too polished to be likeable, and Bernie Sanders has a voice so droning that Obama wants to send it into Afghanistan. I also think it's a shame that the kind of explosive energy that Trump displays apparently doesn't occur in moderate politicians. Schwung seems to go hand in hand with demagoguery.

By Erik de Vries Lentsch

It's a shame, really. Why can't social democrats be daring? Is it impossible to be cheeky and provocative without being a prick? Is humanism averse to showmanship?

You see, I love the word 'kopvoddentaks'. Not the meaning of it, but the sound. The same goes for 'testosteronbom': it's a clever neologism and it's fun to say – the tip of the tongue taking a trip down the palate to burst belatedly at the lips. It instantly signals the danger of a frustrated, dark, ape-like immigrant.

However, if you want to talk about the moral duty of caring for our fellow human beings, there are no catchy words for that. The phrases that are at your disposal are worn-out and boring. It's hard to say 'peaceful negotiations' with jazz in your voice. Nothing really rhymes with 'civil liberties'.

I'm starting to think we need to find that rhyme. We need to find a way to make sensible policies as engaging as populist ones. Trump is popular because he isn't boring and plastic like the other candidates. He must be met with the same amount of energy and candour.

In Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, a handsome Spaniard approaches the film's two main characters and asks them to come along for a romantic weekend in Oviedo. Without any introduction or foreplay, he tells them: "I'll show you around the city. We'll eat well, we'll drink good wine – and we'll make love." He then promptly leaves the two women to consider his proposal.

"You've got to admire his no-bullshit approach," says Cristina.

"What are you talking about?" says Vicky, "It's all bullshit."

I think this is a good metaphor for the current state of affairs. Donald Trump has effectively asked the American voters: "Hey, wanna get fucked?" and half of them have dropped their pants and said "Well, at least he doesn't beat around the bush."

## Selfie Safari



For three weeks I travelled around the beautiful country that is South Africa, the home of the big five and innumerable other types of wildlife. One particular species I've encountered gave me some serious food for thought. These creatures of fascination always travel in packs and are more easily spotted than any big game animal. They're not indigenous to South Africa; you might very well come across them in Europe. Originally from the far East, these subjects of interest and scrutiny appear fond of travelling and continue to sprawl over the globe.

By Jos de Groot

Let's get one thing straight: this scribble is in no way intended to ridicule Japanese tourists or to present them in bad light. However odd their behaviour in front of touristic highlights might appear from time to time, they seem to enjoy themselves. On top of that, they pay top prices to visit other parts of the world and to stay in the best hotels. We might actually be thankful for that.

In all honesty, my fascination is partly based on those recurring peace-signs and spectacular photo poses, but what strikes me the most is how Japanese tourists appear ignorant of their surroundings. They've travelled a great distance to get from Japan to South Africa, yet all I see is a big air conditioned coach spitting out fifty or so Japanese jet-setters at a Lonely Planet hotspot. They take pictures of everything and everyone at hyper-speed, and within minutes they've disappeared from the scene. Into the coach, onto the next stop. I can't get my head around the apparent nonchalance with which snapshots dissolve into iPhones and humongous Nikons. I travelled to South Africa to learn about its cultural history and to see its wildlife and unearthly landscapes, not to score a selfie with Nelson Mandela's cell on Robben Island.

The question I'd like to have the answer to is: what drives these people to visit remote countries? It's not about a lust for adventure, nor do I get the impression Japanese tourists are committed to getting to know other cultures. Who would've thought I'd end up writing about the Japanese after my trip to South Africa? This I know: encountering other cultures is food for the mind. All this actually made me reconsider my own motivations for flying to the other side of the world. And really, the Cape of Good Hope would be a very boring place to visit if it weren't for the Japanese.

# Word of the Board



21 is not exactly a ripe old age, I am fully aware of that. Yet frequently at parties I feel ready to put my head down onto the bar and take a good nap right there as the clock arrows hit 01:30. Around me all the kids are partying the night away, either dancing around hysterically or shoving their tongues down each other's throats (I always pretend not to notice and/or look at it, but it attracts the eye – like some strange animal wildlife mating ritual would). In a desperate attempt to stay awake, I take another sip from my coke (one of my adult decisions: I gave up alcohol last December) as I mentally cry over the fact that I will have to go to the gym tomorrow (making adult decisions makes you feel morally right at the moment you do so, but they actually totally suck) instead of sitting on the couch with my boyfriend and watching *Gilmore Girls* together. Fact is: I am one of those stay-at-home soccer moms at 21 years old. I even have a kid in my life whose upbringing I contribute to (or at least I like to think so): my boyfriend's eleven-year old brother. The other night I caught myself putting on my 'mom voice', as he calls it, when I told him to 'put on his pyjamas right now, or I will do it for you, mister!' (I have once followed up on that threat: I may be a frequent visitor at the gym these days, but I still cannot win a wrestling match with a child ten years younger and five inches shorter). I tell him that even though he doesn't like mushrooms, eating them won't kill him and I make sure he's in bed by eight-thirty. I then plop down on the couch exhaustedly, watch a Wes Anderson movie and go to bed at eleven. At heart, I am without a doubt at least 37 years old. However, physically I am not, and neither are my friends who have called me several variations of 'lame' and 'weak' during the past ten minutes. And so I drag myself off the oh so comfortable bar stool to kick my ass back into gear and get onto that dance floor. I have the rest of my life to be a couch potato and play mom to everyone around me. This is the time to be partying: after all, I am indeed only 21.

Niki Liebrechts  
Commissioner of Internal Affairs



# Q & Alumni

## with Syme van der Lelij

A familiar face to most seasoned Albioneers and treasurer of the 23rd Albion board, Syme van der Lelij left behind both student life and Utrecht a while ago. Last year's St. Andrews adventures were documented here in Phoenix and Syme is now reporting back to tell us what working life is like for a recent graduate... in Poland.

*By Ilse Bruls*

**Q: Why did you choose to study English?**

**A:** "I started out by studying Journalism, but that wasn't all that; I felt that it lacked substance. I'd always loved reading and read a lot of English books, so I figured: why not study English? So I got started

on a bachelor's degree in English and I've never regretted it. If I had to choose again now I wouldn't choose any differently. Well, I also wouldn't really know what else to do."

**Q: Back then, did you have any idea what you wanted to do with this degree?**

**A:** "No, I've never had any idea – I still don't, really. I love to write, which is why I opted for Journalism in the first place. So someday I hope to become a Nobel Prize-winning author, haha. I'm still planning on writing that book yet somehow never getting around to it."

**Q: What did you do once you got that Bachelor's degree?**

**A:** "I went to St. Andrews in Scotland to pursue a Master's degree called Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture. Due to my being on the Albion board during the last year of my Bachelor's, I never got around to studying abroad so I still wanted to do that, which is partly why I chose this Master's. But it also seemed like a lot of fun. It's not very practical or useful, but I did get to read a ton of interesting and fun books."

A couple months before graduating I had a minor crisis because I still had no idea what I wanted to do next. During my Bachelor's I was busy deciding which Master's degree I wanted to do and didn't think beyond that, and once I got started on my Master's I was completely focused on that and not on the future. Thankfully the University of St. Andrews has a great Careers Centre with very helpful people with whom I had a ton of conversations about my options, talents and goals. I started applying for positions in the publishing industry, but since that didn't really move things forward I opted for a different approach. I figured, if I'm not sure what exactly I want to do, how about I start with the where? I didn't feel like going back to the Netherlands because I liked living abroad too much, but I was also

quite done with St. Andrews and the Scottish weather. I'd already been to Poland twice so I knew I liked the country and, more importantly, that it was dirt cheap. So I literally googled 'jobs in Poland' and went from there."

**Q: So what is it you do now?**

**A:** "I currently work as an IT analyst for HCL, more specifically at the IT helpdesk for Estée Lauder employees. Admittedly, it's not a very exciting or challenging job, but it's still fun and I work in a very diverse, international team: my co-workers are Spanish, French, German, you name it. Everything's in English here, and since my English is very good I'm at a huge advantage compared to most of my colleagues. In that sense, my Bachelor's degree has prepared me very well for working in an international environment like this one. The fact that I speak Dutch as well is also very useful, since they love to have people who speak more than one language here."

## "I literally googled 'jobs in Poland' and went from there"

**Q: Outside of work, how's life in Poland?**

**A:** "Pretty great! I've met tons of nice, fun people and Kraków, where I live, is a very international and vibrant city. I've also joined an English-speaking theatre company. And Poland really is dirt cheap; I live in a studio right in the centre of Kraków and my rent is only €300 a month, which is pretty unique in a large city. And you can get a pint of beer for only €2!"

**Q: What do you like better: life as a student or as an alumnus?**

**A:** "That's a difficult one. I do sometimes miss student life – getting drunk on a random Tuesday

## Curriculum Vitae Syme van der Lelij

### Experience

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 2015 - now  | IT analyst at HCL Poland                    |
| 2013 - 2015 | Columnist for DUB                           |
| 2011 - 2014 | Sales assistant at ice rink De Vechtsebanen |
| Summer 2012 | Mail sorter at PostNL                       |
| Fall 2010   | Intern at BN/de Stem                        |

### Education

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 2014 - 2015 | MA Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture at University of St. Andrews |
| 2011 - 2014 | BA English Language and Culture at Utrecht University                          |
| 2008 - 2011 | Journalism at Fontys   |

### Associations

|             |                                    |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 2014 - 2015 | Columnist for Phoenix              |
| 2013 - 2014 | Treasurer of the 23rd Albion board |
| 2012 - 2013 | Treasurer of SUDS                  |

night and showing up to your lectures the next day completely hungover. When you're working a regular fulltime job you quickly learn that you really can't do that anymore. I used to work every day from 8 to 4 when I started out but now my shifts are more varied – I sometimes work nights too – which makes it all a bit less predictable and more fun. And there are other advantages: my free time is really, truly free time. I'm not mulling over an essay in the back of my mind when I'm doing something fun, which is a lot more relaxed. And I have more money, which is always nice. So overall, I think I prefer working life – which might also be because I was a student for 7 years in total, so by the end of it I was kind of looking forward to taking the next step. But you should definitely enjoy it while it lasts!"

**Q: What's next for you?**

**A:** "I'm not planning on working this job for the rest of my life. Maybe one more year, but then it's time for something else – though I have no idea what that's going to be. I might do a PhD, or something in journalism or the publishing industry – something that has more to do with my degree. I don't see myself coming back to the Netherlands anytime soon, though; I'd rather move to a city I've never been, preferably in an even cheaper country. The cultural differences are what make even a customer service job such as my current one exciting, so I'll keep looking for that instead of going back to what I already know. I would definitely recommend working abroad to anyone – so if anyone's looking for a job, hit me up!"







There is only one place on Earth that is close to heaven and that is... San Diego Comic Con. Unfortunately, I do not live near San Diego and neither do I have the money to fly to the United States of Comic Con. For those who can relate to my problem there is a good alternative right in our beloved city of Utrecht. Last year saw the premiere of the first edition of Dutch Comic Con in the Jaarbeurs Utrecht, and with around 25.000 visitors it was a huge success. As expected, this year was even bigger than last year with more guests, merchandise, games, (free) comics, visitors and space. Probably the most thrilling happening this year was the exclusive preview of the first episode of Outcast, a new TV series by the creator of The Walking Dead which officially airs in June. As there was so much to see, I've decided to take you on a journey through Dutch Comic Con.

*By Lucinia Philip*

### Experience Hall

The Experience Hall is the main hall and the first hall you see when you enter DCC. It is called the experience room for a good reason. To give a quick summary of the things to do and see in this hall: icons such as the Batmobile with the Batboat, the original and new Bumblebee - which got me way too excited - and other transformers, a Star Wars corner with cosplayers, decorated Stormtrooper masks and other collectibles, and a Ghostbusters corner with the Ecto-1 and cosplayers. Aside from these icons, you can buy books and comics, play games, take pictures at different booths or get tattooed by Henk Schiffmacher. The Artist Alley and Hillywood Show are also in this hall.

### Dealer Hall

Unlike everything else in this issue, "dealer" in this case has nothing to do with drugs. The Dealer Hall is where we find all the merchandising. I was already quite impressed last year, but this year there was so much more to see and I spent more money than I should have. One downside of the Dealer Hall is that a lot of dealers sell the same merchandise. You could buy a Marvel beanie - which I did, no regrets - or a Gohan figure at one stand and find the same item but much cheaper at a different stand. Even though there were a lot of stands that sold the same items, there was also a lot of diversity. There were a couple of stands that sold Japanese and Chinese clothes, toys, books and accessories. I have seen a fair amount of cosplay and steampunk dealers, anime stands - including hentai for those who are into that - and also workshop and craft stands. So if you decide to visit DCC you better save up some money.



### Gaming Hall

The Gaming Hall is a big corner down the end of the Dealer Hall and consists of a Gaming Stage, a FIFA area and a Hearthstone area. I was a bit disappointed in this "hall" as the main focus was on FIFA. I'm sorry, but I'm just not interested in watching a couple of guys on a stage playing kick the ball while talking about special tips & tricks. Compared to the gaming area in the Experience Hall, the Gaming Hall was a flop.



### Entertainment Hall

The Entertainment Hall is pretty much where all the exciting stuff happens. It is where the authors, actors and artists gather for their panels and interviews. I have to admit that I missed almost everything that happened on the main stage this year. However, judging from the programme, it must have been good. The only actor I went to see was Seth Gilliam (Teen Wolf, The Walking Dead) since that's my duty as a passionate The Walking Dead fan. Aside from the famous guests, the main stage is also used for the Cosplay competition and across the main stage there is a Kids area with a bouncing castle, Disney area and a "Kids bios". And yes, we checked out the bouncing castle, but it was too small for a couple of young adults.

Dutch Comic Con is the only place in The Netherlands where you can see this many icons from pop culture in the same building. One moment you're deciding whether or not you should take a picture on the Iron Throne and the next moment you're looking at some merchandise with Joe Hill (Horns), son of Stephen King. I've had so much fun this year and saw many great things and people and I would recommend everybody to go next year. It is an amazing experience.



# Culture Corner

## EP Release

### The Brahms Belise

Barely a party

It is in small venues like Ekko in our very own Utrecht that you can find the most exciting, unknown, surprising talent out there. The coffee is great, the atmosphere is relaxed, and sometimes real diamonds present themselves on stage.

*By Inge van Nimwegen*

These were also the expectations for The Brahms' EP release on March 17th at Ekko. The four boys played a hometown show to celebrate the release of their second EP, 'Belise'. It is the follow up to 'Meraki', the debut which gave us indiepop hit single "Golden" to dance to. (Chances are you've heard this track at least once. Somewhere. Just believe me: you have.)

Surprisingly, this new EP does not live up to the idea we have of The Brahms: enthusiastic ready-made pop songs with the playfulness that reminds of early Vampire Weekend and The Kooks. Rather the opposite is true: it is comparatively dismal, sounding like a less-exciting musical repetition of 'Meraki'.

Now, on to its live debut. 3voor 12 once said about The Brahms that the audience can really "see how much these boys enjoy playing live". As much as we'd have liked to see this positive vibe again this evening, it simply doesn't show. At most, it feels as though the guys are working on routine.

Apart from a handful of younger girls down the front, who are happily swooning away at the sight of the four handsome-looking 20-somethings, the



audience quickly becomes more interested in its cold beer and conversational partners than in what's happening on stage. The Brahms have degraded themselves to the position of radio-like background noise (even at full concert volume) for their happily talking and drinking audience.

Whether the band is trying to overcompensate for their mediocre new release or just doesn't feel the magic tonight either is unsure, but it becomes painfully clear that their latest EP does not offer any exciting new material to allow The Brahms to evolve from 3FM Serious Talent into a full-grown band with status. This release show could barely be called a party.



## EP

### A House For Thee by Utrecht's very own John Coffey

New EP, New Era

"Isn't this the band that went viral by catching a beer?" Yes, indeed. But John Coffey have shaken off their reputation as being a beer-drinking party band only with their heavy and heavily laden work on 'A House For Thee'. A new era has begun for this no longer just party band. With 'A House For Thee', the punk rock/hardcore five-piece may have made their most timeless and important work yet.

*By Inge van Nimwegen*

'A House For Thee' should firstly be applauded for its clear political stance, worked out not just in the lyrics, but also in its general atmosphere as well as in its charged art work. Artist Olf de Bruin portrayed human-like creatures living as hermit crabs. Some have access to a shell of their own; others are in search for one, in order to survive. How's that for a metaphor?

Almost-title track "No House For Thee" provides sharp commentary on the reluctant, inhumane, response to the current refugee crisis. As guitarist Alfred van Luttkhuizen told 3FM, the song is ironically sung from the point of view of a tourist, celebrating a party on the beach, who suddenly sees a drowning man coming towards him, spoiling his



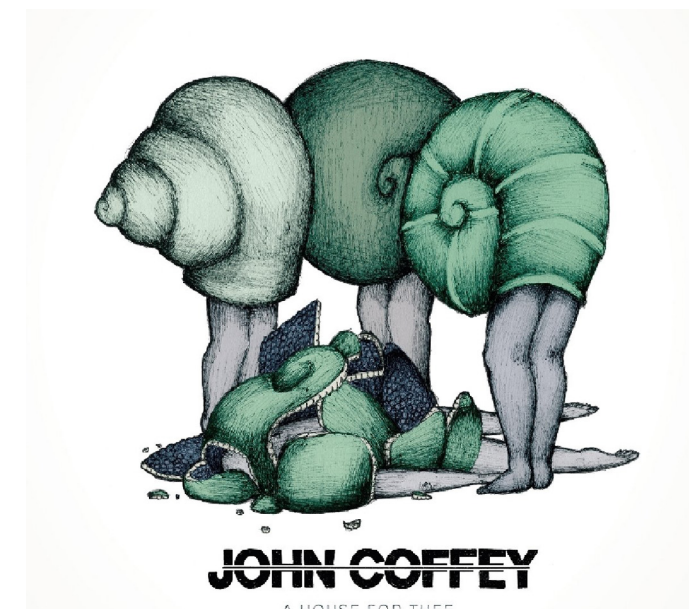
party – 'on the horizon I see the floating end of my party / Stay far away, for here's no house for thee'. The theme hits close to home, the harsh lyrics are essentially a call for humanity.

Both "No House For Thee" and "Nails On The Blackboard" contain all the 'classics' Coffey elements: they sound filthy, raw, heavily distorted, with some good guitar riffs and vocalist David Achter de Molen holding back nothing vocally. The tracks pulse with both anger and excitement.

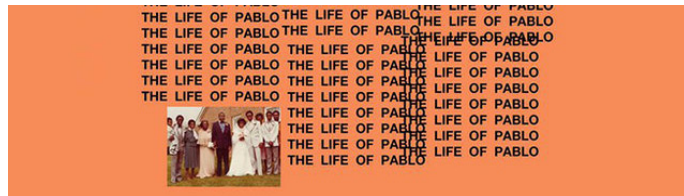
Third track "Needles" is much slower and darker than its predecessors, giving off a grunge-like vibe. It is here that one is reminded of producer Kurt Ballou's (Converge, American Nightmare) work on this album. Overall, the EP, but in particular this song, has a heavy feel to it. It makes its importance known, although it does, in all honesty, drag along a tiny bit when "Needles" continues into "One Size Fits All". This song doesn't really offer anything unique or captivating, other than as an in-between, a smooth transition from "Needles" to "Relief".

The most surprising element of the EP may very well be this the last track, a full-band acoustic take on "Relief" (originating from 'The Great News'). It displays what John Coffey do best: writing honest lyrics that speak to the heart, in vocal harmonies that display the truth and quality to make your hairs stand up. Guitarist 'Crucial' Chris van Teijlingen does not get enough recognition for the heartfelt backing vocals he contributes to this song, giving it that characteristic John Coffey sound.

This EP, although recognisably Coffeyesque, is bound to throw people off that may have enjoyed singing along to the likes of fan favourites 'b-b-b-b-b-b-b-broke my neeeck' and 'miiiiiiiiiles to the end of the road we walk' from former albums. 'A House For Thee' is simply not a record that includes songs with huge sing-along potential. This EP, rather, will force you to listen, listen again, and think. Give it a listen.







## Album

### Kanye West The Life of Pablo

By Maarten Gooskens

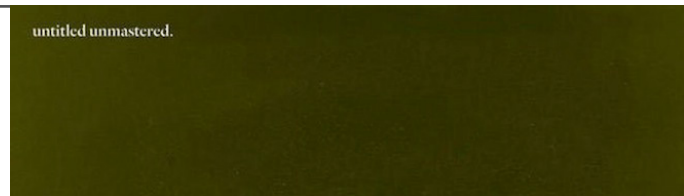
Kanye West has become an icon of pop culture, but many people tend to forget the music behind the madman. After a period of absence, Kanye released *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, an album which went down in musical history as an instant classic and made its way into the hip hop canon as one of the greatest albums ever.

This raised expectations, yet Kanye did not disappoint with his next release, *Yeezus*. Although not necessarily better than *MBDTF*, the album managed to go in a surprising direction with a rawer sound and more political themes, whereas *MBDTF* was almost like an epic of Kanye's fame and personality. And now Kanye's antics have been blown out of proportion, from his 2020 presidential campaign to his fashion line and his multi-million-dollar debt. Needless to say, the expectations for this self-proclaimed god were high once again. And now we've finally been given *The Life of Pablo*.

Boy, what a let-down. Maybe you've already heard the *The Life of Pablo*, but I doubt it. And this is just the chunky part of the turd: the fact that Kanye only released the album on Tidal, the streaming service of his buddy Jay-Z. Now I am not above admitting that I procured it in a less than legal manner, and I urge you to do the same, because this album does not deserve the opportunity to rid Kanye of his debt. It actually starts off really good with "Ultralight Beam", giving you the initial impression that Kanye has struck gold yet again. Only, it's not really Kanye. The track is carried mostly by Chance the Rapper.

According to Kanye himself, the album is a gospel, but it seems he's preaching to the hip hop choir. He's not trying anything new or exciting, rather going with the more fast-paced flow of artists like Future (also featured on the album). The features aren't as unpredictable, nor are the style or lyrics. It's redeemed ever so slightly by "No More Parties in L.A.", but the success of this track can once again not be ascribed to Kanye but to Kendrick Lamar (up next on the review-block) and Madlib. As a stand-alone hip hop album it's not really bad, it's decent, but some expectations have to be met and Kanye really fell flat.

After his previous two releases, I was almost starting to believe Kanye's claims to divinity. But if this album is Kanye's way of saying that we are allowed to have other gods before him, then that's the one facet of this album I can get behind.



## Album

### Kendrick Lamar untitled unmastered.

By Maarten Gooskens

Kanye West makes accessible hip hop, Kendrick Lamar made hip hop accessible. This might sound like a vague distinction, but I mean to say that Kanye made music that did something completely different than the hip hop trends during its release. He not only set a new trend for hip hop to come, he also created an album which people who were not necessarily into hip hop could enjoy. Kendrick, on the other hand, makes true and blue hip hop, lyrically and sound-wise. Yet he managed to put hip hop on the map, making album of the year on many different sites, magazines and award shows; all through a solid flow on well-produced beats and, most importantly, through strong themes. Although the comparison is almost unfair, Kanye's last two great albums have been followed by a flop, and now here's Kendrick releasing a sort of mixtape or compilation of old tracks after his last two great albums. And it's wonderful.

*untitled unmastered* doesn't quite pack the same punch as Kendrick's previous two releases, but it's not supposed to. We can consider ourselves blessed that Kendrick decided to keep us busy until his next full-scale release with this mixtape or EP. Thematically, he keeps close to what we're familiar with, just packaged a little differently. You can hear how these tracks would not have fit in with either of his two previous albums; they're all very different in terms of sound. Yet the album doesn't feel like a bunch of old tracks slapped together. The recurring phrase "Pimp! Pimp! Hooray!" might have something to do with that.

The album starts off pretty grimy, but gradually gets cheerier. "untitled 03" is already slightly higher paced and a little less heavy in terms of lyrics, almost comical. It is followed by a soulful interval, "untitled 04", only to be followed up by "untitled 05" (you may have spotted a trend in track titles), where Thundercat provides the bass, supported by some mellow piano and trumpet play. The soulful note of this album reaches its peak at "untitled 06", featuring Cee Lo Green. Where Kanye has disappointed us with some pretty weak features, Kendrick surprises (like Kanye used to do) by having Cee Lo almost carry a track. Closing with the upbeat "untitled 08", this EP leaves me begging for his next album.



## Film

### Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice

By Erik de Vries Lentsch

(This review contains spoilers, but you shouldn't pay to see this film anyway)

When I watched *Man of Steel* in preparation for this review, I was baffled. The climax of that film reminded me of – and I really can't think of anything else – the 9/11 attacks. The wanton destruction of Metropolis and thousands of its citizens proved that director Zack Snyder simply does not take into account the human element in his films. It left me (and many others before me) with an ashy taste in my mouth.

With *Batman v Superman*, then, Snyder and the producers from DC Entertainment not only tried to set up a Justice League franchise and to fulfil the fan-boy's fantasy of watching Batman punch Superman in the face, they also retroactively tried to give *Man of Steel*'s ending some meaning by turning it into the fuel for Batman's revenge. They bit off more than they could chew.

The film starts out promising enough. The first forty-five minutes or so are spent mostly in the company of a grizzled Batman portrayed by Ben Affleck, the only actor who displays any kind of charm. Batman is also the only character whose motivations aren't a jumbled mess, as becomes clear once the 'plot' rears its head; Lex Luthor (Jesse Eisenberg) is nothing more than a jumped-up, smarmy-arsed college kid with an incomprehensible masterplan and Superman's personality is about as round as Henry Cavill's jawline. The script twists and turns painfully as it tries to manoeuvre the three characters into a position of conflict. Equally painful are the attempts at profundity. Zack Snyder seems to think that the way to explore themes of power, responsibility and divinity is to have characters mention them bluntly.

These issues may not bother die-hard fans who just want to see an alien and an orphan billionaire fight one another, but even they will be disappointed. The actual showdown is entertaining, but it lasts less than ten minutes and is suddenly resolved when Batman learns that the name of Superman's mother is Martha, just like his own mother, which somehow nullifies two hours of hatred. Then Wonder Woman shows up and the three of them have to fight an electric space ogre created by Lex Luthor. This schlocky battle would have been exciting if it weren't for the all-pervading dreariness of the film, with its desaturated looks and its growling protagonists. This film has nothing to do with justice – and really, it has nothing to do with superheroes either.

To prevent gems of the past from falling into oblivion, Lucinia reviews an under-exposed or forgotten film that she believes is absolutely worth a watch.

## Film

### Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1998)

Given that the theme of this issue is "Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n Roll" it is only appropriate to discuss a film featuring at least one of these topics. Normally I introduce you guys to an indie film that I enjoyed watching and would like to recommend to you. This time it's a bit different as I'm recommending a film that I found completely uninteresting.

By Lucinia Philip

*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is an adaptation of a novel written by journalist Hunter S. Thompson and was directed by Terry Gilliam. The novel is a fiction based on actual events that took place during a trip Thompson took to Las Vegas with his attorney in 1971. In the film Raoul Duke (Johnny Depp) takes this same trip with his attorney Dr Gonzo (Benicio Del Toro) while under the influence of several different drugs such as cocaine, LSD and a substance called "Sunshine Acid". To summarise the entire film in one sentence: journalist and his buddy travel to Las Vegas for work, do nothing else but drink and take hallucinating drugs, get themselves in trouble and eventually have to leave Las Vegas. Nothing much happens really and halfway during the film I even started reading an article on why humans have a consciousness, instead of paying attention to the screen.

For me there were only two positive elements: the acting and the cinematography. As a huge Johnny Depp fan, I honestly was not surprised by his brilliant performance. At one point I even wondered whether Depp and Del Toro had actually been taking drugs prior to filming, because they were so convincing. It was because of them that I kept watching the film until the end. I also liked the way the film was shot and the colour palettes they used to give a more 70's feeling. At the beginning and further on in the film there was some footage shown of activists and hippies, giving you a greater understanding of what life was like during that time and what inspired Duke's behaviour. Other than these things I can't find anything else that I enjoyed. I am not saying that the film was bad, but it was just not my cup of tea and I'm sure that people who do like these kind of psychedelic films will appreciate this film.



Anneloek is one of our third years students and probably a familiar face to most of us. Especially those of us who take literature classes are likely to have met her. But is her bookshelf as smart and sophisticated as she herself is? Time to find out!.

By Kiki Drost

# Anneloek's Bookshelf

**What was your favourite book growing up?**

"I have no idea. I just read parts of everything. I think I read a lot of fairy tales mostly. But honestly, I just read anything I could get my hands on, and my parents were very liberal so they didn't really care what I read or in what age category it was."

*"I put myself through Dickens, but I wish I'd put that down halfway through"*

**What is your favourite book now?**

"Very difficult question for an English student. I think Lolita by Nabokov, or North and South maybe by Elizabeth Gaskell."

**What was the last book you read for "fun"?**

"I'm currently reading Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez, and before that I think I read The Waves by Virginia Woolf."

**Which book do you consider extremely overrated?**

"Jack Kerouac's On The Road. I think it's horrible; there's no structure, there's no story really, it's just very badly written. The narrator is drunk all of the time, he's extremely uninteresting; it's just a horrible book. The fact that it was even published makes it overrated."

**Which book are you most ashamed of for not reading?**

"None, really, I think. It's just that I think there's so many good books to read that there's a lot of things I still want to read, but I'm not really ashamed of not having read them yet."

**Which books have you only read halfway through or less?**

"I think that there are a lot of books that I had to read that I stranded halfway and then couldn't really get through anymore. Vineland for example. I put myself through Dickens, but I wish I'd put that down halfway through. Usually I do finish books at some point."

**If you could recommend me one of your books, which one would it be?**

"I think I would recommend Lolita. I think it's very well written

and the unreliable narrator works really well."

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

"I would never write a book. I don't think I have the patience to write a book, honestly. I think it would be very much like On The Road; I think it would just be random typing."

**Which author have you read the most books by and why?**

"No idea. I mostly read one or two books per author, and then eventually I'll read more."

**What is your favourite English word?**

"I have lots of words, let me think. I really like the word 'implicitly'. I just think it sounds really good."

**Team literature or team linguistics?**

"Literature, definitely. I do like historical linguistics, but the answer is literature."

**What is your favourite film adaptation?**

"I think Trainspotting maybe? And I also like Blade Runner as an adaptation of Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep. I don't actually like the film that much, but I do think it offers an interesting perspective."

**What is your least favourite film adaptation?**

"My Fair Lady as an adaptation of Pygmalion, because they changed the ending to this very Hollywood-like romantic ending where Eliza comes sort of crawling back, I think that's preposterous."

*"I would like to be friends with Gandalf."*

**Which book are you looking forward to reading next?**

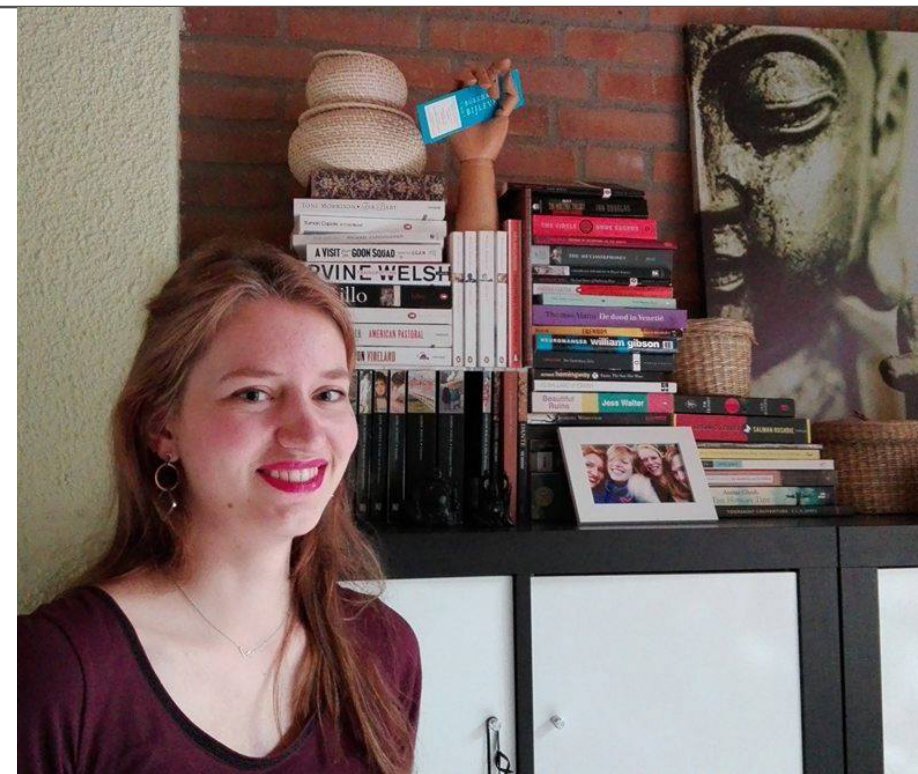
"I'm not really sure what I want to read next right now, actually."

**What is the best novel you read for a course?**

"Lolita, again. Apart from Lolita, I don't know. I think a lot of the reading we do is quite good."

**Who is your favourite fictional character?**

"As a person or as a character? Because I think Humbert Humbert is very interesting as a narrator and as a character, but I wouldn't like to be friends with him, for example. As a person, maybe Gandalf? I would like to be friends with Gandalf."







## Calendar

### May

|    |                           |
|----|---------------------------|
| 10 | Drinks: Black Tie Edition |
| 12 | Game Night                |
| 12 | Project siX               |
| 19 | Albion Escape Room        |
| 26 | Uitgeverij-uitje          |
| 31 | Committee Meeting         |
| 31 | Let's GO Retro            |

### June

|       |                |
|-------|----------------|
| 8     | Open Podium    |
| 24-26 | Lustrumweekend |

### COLOFON

This issue of Phoenix was made possible because of:

Committee:  
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Would you like to contribute to Phoenix on a freelance basis? You can! Did you write a kick-ass column or review or would you like to share your fascinating hobby with the world in the next Phoenix Showcase? Contact us via [albi-onphoenix@gmail.com](mailto:albi-onphoenix@gmail.com), and we'll see what we can arrange.





*"If music be the food of  
love, play on."*

- William Shakespeare