

PHOENIX

Issue 1 - 2016-2017

Speaking of the Truth...
Lying Politicians and
Postmodernist
Excuses

Phoenix Ranks:
The Best Bookshops

Tea Time
with Anna Poletti

Isolde's Bookshelf

And much more!



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WORD OF THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

What you have here before you is this year's first issue of our beloved Phoenix, filled with letters, words, photos, works of art and more. All these express the one thing unique about (hu)mankind: creativity.

The English department has always been a creative bunch. Our imagination is easily sparked by literature, music, film, and art. Whether it be words that tickle our fancies, the way they rhyme, work together or juxtapose, or the way in which different notes go together to form chords and harmonies, or the hundreds and thousands of paintbrushes that over time have gently stroked the canvas.

Whether we use our creativity, our freedom of expression, to voice our opinion or someone else's, to entertain one another or just to enjoy ourselves, it is ours uniquely and ours alone. But I'm not here to speech about exercising your freedom of expression. All I'm getting at here is how much joy it brings me to see the creative efforts of the Phoenix committee come together into this finalised form you now have before you on the screen. It is critical, it is personal, but what I see in it most of all is a creative drive, the wish to create.

But enough with the vague terminology. After Jos and the rest of last year's committee (thank you so much!) it is now my task to guide you through everything Phoenix has to offer. A winning formula does not need much change! Therefore, the coming pages will allow you to dive into one of your fellow students' reading habits in Bookshelf and learn more about one of your teachers in Tea Time. Discover your next favourite CDs and books in the Culture Corner and learn more about life after your English studies from an expert in Q&Alumni. We have collected the best bookshops of Utrecht in Phoenix Ranks and our Albioneers write about their time at universities abroad.

But what we wanted to see more of was what the beautiful people of English Language & Culture themselves have to offer, so aside from these familiar features, you can find more of you in here than ever before! Scrolling through the digital pages you'll encounter a renewed Showcase, where Albioneers display their talents on their own terms, and each block we will give you a short insight into the daily thoughts of an Albioneer in the all new Humans of Albion.

Enjoy the read and never cease to create!

Inge van Nimwegen

Editor in chief

Meet the Committee

Some new faces, some familiar. But who are these people that bring you a new Phoenix every block? Meet our committee here.



Name: Vincent Potman
Age: 22
Job: Writer
Guilty Pleasure: Bad Puns, 80's music (especially Funk and Synthwave) and 90's fashion.
Hate: Pineapple, that most foul fruit, and Angel from Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Name: Lucinia Philip
Age: 19
Job: Writer
Guilty pleasure: MTV reality shows such as Geordie Shore and Are You the One?
Hate: People who hate on pineapples on pizza. BBQ mixed-grill with pineapples is the best and you can't tell me otherwise!



Name: Jense van Kammen
Age: 18
Job: Writer
Guilty Pleasure: Babymetal, Hollywood Undead, Jack's wife in "The Shining" and of course Kung Furie. If you don't know it (shame on you) go watch it on Netflix now.
Hate: Political correctness, milk in my coffee, Star Wars and The Hunger Games movies.



Name: Lola van Scharrenburg
Age: 19
Job: Editor and photographer
Guilty pleasure: Avril Lavigne and bad tv shows. Dr. Phil, Geordie Shore and Teen Mom are a few favourites.
Hate: That baking is so much fun but also extremely frustrating because you can't change anything once you have put your cake/cookies in the oven and you just have to pray for it to turn out right.



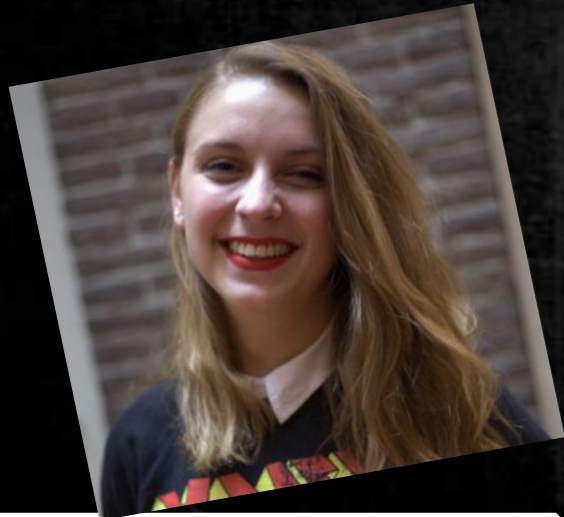
Name: Inge van Nimwegen
Age: 21
Job: Editor in Chief
Guilty pleasure: Making lists of literally everything
Hate: Having to scour through the considerable piles of black clothing in my closet in order to eventually find that one item of black clothing in question.



Name: Charlotte van Ruiten
Age: 22
Job: Editor and writer
Guilty pleasure: Watching fashion and beauty vloggers on YouTube. Honestly, for someone who doesn't wear make-up I spend a shocking amount of time watching people put it on their faces.
Hate: Ignorance, feeling old.



Name: Minthe Woudstra
Age: 21
Job: Photographer
Guilty pleasure: Dutch hip-hop, Justin Bieber, cats in christmas outfits, George Michael, bad puns, The Vampire Diaries, Ryden fan-fiction, Kesha, UFO conspiracy theories... Who am I kidding all my pleasures are guilty pleasures...
Hate: When people say Star Wars is better than Star Trek.



Name: Noa Tims
Age: 20
Job: Designer
Guilty pleasure: Faith by George Michael, Monsoon by Tokio Hotel and Say Yes to the Dress (and bashing ALL the Pnina Tornai-dresses).
Hate: Apart from all the "this-world-needs-to-change"-stuff, I mostly hate people who won't let me cuddle their dog after I've crossed the street - endangering my life - to get to them.



Name: Job Petersen
Age: 18
Job (lol): Writer
Guilty pleasure: ABBA, Bridget Jones's Diary, Britain's Got Talent, fruit on my pizza.
Hate: Wanting to drink that oh so desired cup of tea when it's way too hot, buggies (with yelling children), people who disrespect my favourite series (Harry Potter, Doctor Who, Downton Abbey, Hunger Games), indifference.



Name: Kiki Drost
Age: 22
Job: Writer
Guilty pleasure: I used to say ABBA, but I don't think it even qualifies as "guilty" anymore. Taylor Swift's older, teenage, emotional, my-life-is-so-hard-because-I'm-15 songs.
Hate: That pumpkins are so delicious but so much effort to slaughter.

SPEAKING OF THE TRUTH

TRUMP AND OTHER LIARS

By Charlotte van Ruiten

Like many people I have been following the US presidential election with stunned disbelief for the past year or so. It started off alright. Bernie Sanders seemed like a decent guy. I was convinced Donald Trump would drop out of the race early on. Nothing more than a silly joke from that crazy old America. The first time I read Trump was running I actually thought I was reading an article from The Onion. Unfortunately, this bad joke has turned into a bitter reality.

One of the most jarring things about Trump's campaign to me has been that he lies, constantly, and gets away with it. In fact, he does not only get away with it, it is the backbone of his success. According to Politifact.com Trump makes more false statements than true ones. Fact checkers are working overtime, but Trump's supporters couldn't care less. He creates his own reality and people buy it. His campaign highlights something disheartening about current public discourse: truth is hard to come by.

Trump has been called a post-modern candidate. He disregards all political conventions and truth is irrelevant in his campaign. He doesn't prepare for debates, he refuses to be polite, and he says whatever is convenient for him. One day he says one thing, the next he flat out denies it. One of the less subtle examples of his lies concerns the birther movement, the conspiracy theory claiming Barack Obama is not a US citizen. Starting in 2011 Trump made numerous comments questioning the citizenship of Obama and demanding him to reveal his birth certificate. In 2016 he denied this and twisted the story around, saying it was his opponent Hillary Clinton who had started the movement. This claim has no basis in reality, but he repeats it so often people start to believe it. If experts tell him he's wrong, he simply attacks them and calls them liars (like he calls the dozens of women who have accused him of sexual assault).

In Europe we also have our fair share of lying politicians. During the Brexit campaign Boris Johnson and others were able to convince enough people with falsehoods to win the referendum.

They knew the billions of pounds they promised the British people were not real, but their lies were very effective. Any expert who opposed them was conveniently written off as a corrupt European Union-lover.

Italian philosopher Maurizio Ferraris blames postmodernist thinking for the current demise of the truth in politics. According to postmodernism universal truth does not exist. Reality is constructed and everyone views the world from their own perspective. Postmodernism has produced interesting art and literature, but when applied to society the ideas can be problematic. If everything is regarded as "just another opinion" all theories are regarded as equal, even if they are not. This problem extends beyond politics. Recently in the Netherlands the women behind The Green Happiness stirred up some commotion because they promoted an unhealthy diet that can lead to malnutrition. Anyone should be free to follow whichever diet they like, but these women

pretended to be nutrition experts promoting the ultimate healthy lifestyle. If enough people believe false experts like this, they might seriously damage people's lives. Conversely, they also damage the credibility of actual experts. This example may seem trivial but it is a part of a larger problem. If the opinions of experts and amateurs are regarded as equal, it becomes impossible for people to make informed decisions.

Ideally media should seek to provide people with truth, separating fact from fiction. Unfortunately,

they often fail to do so. Lying politicians get attention because their outrageous statements make for good stories. Another topic that gets misreported on shockingly often is science. People love reading zany factoids, at the expense of actual facts. The Volkskrant monitored popular scientific news stories for a year and found that many of the "facts" reported in them are half-truths or whole lies.

Just yesterday I saw a headline from AD.nl on my Facebook timeline claiming a scientific study found that eating cake for breakfast can help you lose weight. That's pretty amazing! However, the truth is a lot less impressive. When looking at the

source of the information, a study published in 2011, it is difficult to see how this ended up as a news story in 2016. The study looked at overweight people who had to consume the same amount of calories every day for sixteen weeks. They found some evidence which showed that the group who ate a calorie-rich breakfast found it easier to resist snacking later in the day. Both groups had lost equal amounts of weight at the end of the trial, but the group which ate big breakfasts found it easier to keep the weight off. Interesting, but a long shot from the headline that made it into the press. To complicate matters the primary author of the article also happens to be selling a book called The Big Breakfast Diet, which she wrote before this study was conducted, casting doubt on her objectivity. In order to make a gripping headline, a journalist embellished the truth, until what was left was hardly even connected to the original findings. Science is often not very exciting, new developments take time and findings are usually inconclusive, but journalists need a new story every day. This is not always an issue, theories are constantly being adjusted, a new story can be published to correct yesterday's assumptions. But once a story is flung into the world, it can start leading a life of its own. Decades of reliable research have not yet been able to undo the damage of one fraudulent paper that claimed that vaccines cause autism, to name one sad example.

Human experience is subjective and the truth is often elusive, but I do think we should at least strive towards it. Check your facts. Distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. Call people out on their nonsense. Trump's victory is a big step in the wrong direction, but I remain hopeful the tide will turn and truthfulness will come in fashion again. Many people, especially from our generation, are fed up with the lies of Trump and other populist politicians. Lying and warping reality works great during campaign time, but when Trump is installed in the Oval Office, America will be in for a painful reality check.

***"Outrageous
statements make
good stories"***



PHOENIX RANKS

BOOKSHOPS

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a student of English looking for books is in want of a perfect bookshop. Here, we have a couple listed.

By Noa Tims

Photos by Minthe Woudstra



1. Boekhandel Erven J. Bijleveld

This bookshop is by far the most convenient if you're lucky enough to have classes in the city centre; it's located just across the street and you may encounter students with some time on their hands spending money they don't have. 151 years old, the shop never lost its cosy, old atmosphere. Working together with an independent publisher, they offer a wide range of poetry, English literature and Dutch works, laid out so that you'll be browsing forever.

2. Steven Sterk

This bookshop resides next to the famous Dom. They display several works of art around their store, as they work together with an art gallery close by. What makes this shop so special, is that they offer whatever books the publishers have stopped publishing: new books, for the price of second hand ones, next to the regular books. Recently, they have dedicated a little corner especially to English YA.



3. Broese Boekverkopers

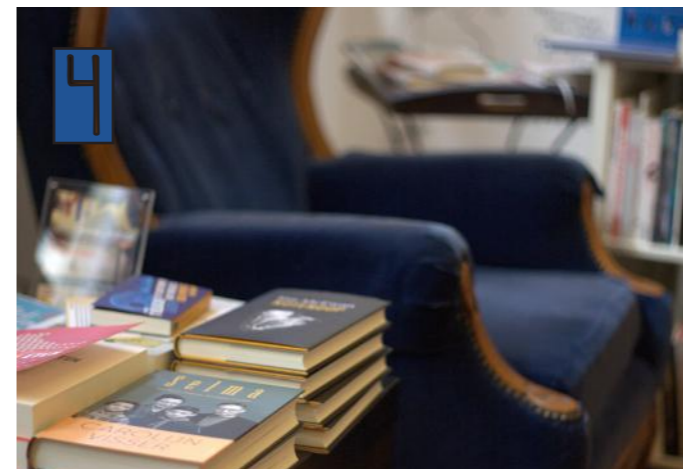
Sometimes, you don't want old and cute. Sometimes, you just want a huge assortment to choose from and hours of covers to read. This is what Broese offers, right in the city centre, with a huge section of English books. They also have an amazing offer of second-hand books: the entire basement is filled with them, and you can even sell your own.

HONOURABLE MENTION: AKO Utrecht Centraal, for some "my train is late so now I need something to read"-shopping.



4. Savannah Bay

You may not easily stumble across this one, hidden as it is in Utrecht's web of alleys. It's worth a visit though, as they have a wide variety of genres and a focus on gender identity and postcolonial works. They also offer books for Literature, Gender, Art, Spanish, Dutch and Linguistics studies. And sometimes they have a poodle, which is awesome.



5. Aleph Books & CD's

This little gem is also near the Dom. They have been there for thirty years and sell second-hand books as old the 1600s. I'm not kidding: Byron's works, bound in leather and gold, stood back to back with Fifty Shades Darker. Stacks of books and rows upon rows of leather-bound beauties allow for endless exploration. And if books are not your jam, they have CD's as well.



DON'T GET ME STARTED GATHERING STEAM

By Vincent Potman

Steam is great. It really is, with all its crazy deals, and its array of options; you can peruse their shop for hours on end and still not see everything available. Your own personal library of games, without all those pesky CDs. In theory it's all grand, and so it is in practice, most of the time.

**"You smile, telling
yourself it was your
choice.**

Hint: it wasn't"

But then...then there are the moments that you realize that all those games you bought because "Fuck that's a good deal!" are gathering metaphorical dust, just sitting in that cloud storage because you don't have the time or the space to play them all. You feel like it's wasted cash, but at the same damn time you know damn well that you'll keep them because you still want them, and you hold on to the farfetched notion that you will get to them some day. It is a lie. Still, you swear off buying any more games, but that too is a lie because when those deals come around once more, they whisper, they poke, and they urge you on until you give in. You smile, telling yourself it was your choice. Hint: it wasn't. We are all powerless before Steam; Steam, our materialist tendencies coming to the fore, a manifestation of our greed. It is the perfect Capitalist invention, working with the those who want to be frugal instead of against them. It is a Siren, and you know that it is dangerous, and bad for you (more like your wallet) but still you march on because the song (of cheap prices) is so pretty. And so the cycle continues, on and on, endless in its rotation of guilt, resolution, waning, and wanting. We all gather steam in our hands, only for it to dissipate.



Tea Time

with

Anna Poletti

A new year; a new Phoenix; a new Tea Time; and what better way to start than with a new face. On a rainy afternoon we once again find ourselves ringing the doorbell of one of our beloved teachers: Anna Poletti, who recently moved to Utrecht from Australia. Inside we find that her house is full of boxes; “there’s no point in unpacking because we’re only allowed to stay in this apartment for a year,” and little yellow post-it’s with Dutch on it, to help her learn the language. We sit down with tea and a slice of “citroencake, which I assume will be lemon?” and start our interview.

By Kiki Drost and Lucinia Philip
Photos by Kiki Drost

What did you study yourself?

“I did a Bachelor of Arts with a major in literature and philosophy at La Trobe University in Melbourne. After that I did my honours in literary studies and then I did a PhD in literary studies. My PhD was at Newcastle University in Australia. I then went on to teaching. I graduated my PhD in 2006, so this is my ten year anniversary.

At the moment I’m working on two things. One is just about to be finished: I’ve co-written a book on youth cultures and life writing. Part of my contribution to that book was to do research on letters in the Riot Grrrl archives in New York. That

Anna’s Favourites

Favourite colour
“Black.”

Favourite film
“For a fictional film I go for The Darjeeling Limited by Wes Anderson. And the documentary would be Tarnation by Jonathan Caouette.”

Favourite music
“Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. I haven’t really listened to a lot of Dutch popular music yet. I’ve had to listen to a couple of things for Dutch class. A pop song from the mid 90’s about a train?”

Favourite book
“Torpor by Chris Kraus.”

Favourite Dutch word
“*Ontgoocheling*. I haven’t been able to use it in conversation yet. I liked that the Dutch have a word for something that we don’t have a direct equivalent for in English. I’m most interested in those words. I’m going to sound like a goth in this interview, aren’t I? My favourite colour is black, I listen to Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds and my favourite word means kind of disillusionment.”

Favourite animal
“Squirrel, easy. Are there any squirrels in the Netherlands? [We point to the park across her house.] No! I have been watching that park like a hawk, waiting to see one and they’re not there. I think because it’s a dog off leash area.”



was really interesting and fun and I’m really looking forward to that book coming out. The other thing I’m working on is a book that I’m about halfway through, about life writing and media forms.”

Why did you move to the Netherlands?

“I’ve been collaborating with Kiene Brillenburg Wurth from comparative literature. I had come to Utrecht a few times for events organised by Kiene and I really liked it. Kiene and I worked very well together. And so when the job here came up I thought it would be great to be closer to that work that she’s been doing, because no one has really been doing that kind of work in Australia. But also, after ten years of universities in Australia I was ready to see what it was like somewhere else.

Do you like the Netherlands so far? Or do you regret your decision to move?

“No, absolutely no regrets. One of the big differences between Australia and the Netherlands, and the thing I’m really enjoying, is the difference in scale. Teaching happens on a much smaller scale here. In Australia I was teaching a subject that had 400 students and it is very difficult to really feel like you’re actually teaching 400 people, so I’m enjoying the class-sizes here. And the level of involvement that students have in the university is much higher here. Like Albion and all things that Albion does, but also the fact that there was a student on the selection committee for my job, which would never happen in Australia.

I love commuting by bike. Living in a university city, I’m enjoying that as well. Where I was working before was in Melbourne, which is a very big city, and the university was on the outskirts of the city and that was an hour commute on the train for me. And I like Dutch people. They’re friendly, and there’s an alignment between the Australian sense of humour and the Dutch sense of humour. They’re not identical but they’re close enough that it’s good. The jokes Dutch people make I understand and usually the jokes I make they understand. And I found Dutch people very open and patient when you’re a new person. I like the famous Dutch bluntness, particularly in a working environment.”



Is there anything you miss about Australia?

“I miss my friends. And my cat. I skype my cat every week, but it’s not the same, because she can’t see me on the computer screen. She can hear my voice, so she comes out and looks for me, but she can’t see me. There are some Australian foods that I miss a little bit. But I discovered -this is embarrassing but true- that there’s a café in Amsterdam, in De Pijp, which is called ‘Little Collins’, which is a name of a street in Melbourne, that does Australian style breakfasts. I’ve only been there once. I’m trying not to get into the habit of going there, because I didn’t move all this way just to go to Amsterdam to have an Australian breakfast. But after I’ve been here for about two months I said to my partner ‘okay, come on, let’s go. We are both ready to have an Australian style breakfast.’ And it was good. So there are some foods that I miss, but there are lots of good, Dutch foods to fill the gap.”

After we’re done and have taken our pictures, it is time for us to leave. Anna, thank you once again for your hospitality.



“I skype my cat every week”

Minor Market



Digital Humanities

By Charlotte van Ruiten

You study a humanities subject, and you use digital media and technologies. Have you ever thought about these things critically? Maybe you should. Even if you are a traditional book-lover that shuns all things digital, there is no escaping computers. In the minor Digital Humanities you carefully examine the role of computing in the humanities, as well as learn how to make better use of the digital tools available to you as a researcher.

This minor is quite different from most of the things I have done in my English major. To start, the courses are much more interdisciplinary. Examples from different subjects are discussed and your fellow students all bring their own expertise to the table. Because this minor is very small, everyone is involved in class discussions and there is a lot of room for your own ideas. History and linguistics are the biggest players in the field of digital humanities, so inevitably they come up more often than other subjects. If you are interested in these subjects this is great, if you are not it can be a bit tedious.

A decent part of this minor is theoretical. For instance, you learn about the implications of big data (a buzzword in academia right now) and the history of digital humanities. But the best part of this minor is that you spend a lot

of time learning practical skills. You get hands on experience with text mining, topic modeling, corpus research, and other such fun stuff. You even learn the basics of programming in Python and MySQL. (Don't be discouraged if you have no programming experience, your teachers know you come from the humanities.) Especially in the later courses you get chances to apply digital techniques to your own research interests. I also learned some useful skills I didn't expect to learn, like how to interview a scientist and write a compelling article about it, how to find an internship through networking, and how to make a blog. In the last block of this minor you do an internship. This is both a blessing and a curse. Internships look great on your resume and give you an opportunity to learn things you simply don't get from taking regular courses. On the flip side, some internships turn out not to be so great, and you will likely have to figure out a lot of things on your own.

If you have even the slightest interest in computers, I think this minor can be a good choice. Whether you are more interested in linguistics or literature, computers already play an important role in research, and this role will only grow in the future.



Muziekwetenschap

By Inge van Nimwegen

Have you always had an interest in music, but never really learned how to play an instrument? Or do you sing and play an instrument, but do you wonder where the origins of your favourite music lie? The minor Musicology may just provide you with the answers to your questions about, well, everything music.

The minor is composed of three parts: Muziektheorie 1, Muziek van de Westerse Wereld (A & B) and Muziek en Wetenschap. Music theory is exactly what you might expect coming from the name: at a ferocious pace it teaches you the art of reading musical script and the beginnings of the infamous theory of harmony. For someone like me with no musical knowledge at all, it's like learning a completely new language!

Muziek van de Westerse Wereld needs an A and a B, as the history of western music goes back centuries. Gregorian chant, troubadour songs, minnesong to chansons, instrumental music and opera, symphonies and other orchestral music. These will all be discussed in block 2. In block 3, the B version continues on these topics ranging from the end of the 18th century to the start of the 21st. More political, social, economic and cultural factors are covered, and on your journey you'll encounter well-known

figures such as Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Mahler and Debussy.

My only real complaint about this minor is that it does not include the one subject that'd really be the finishing touch to a complete historical overview of western music: (modern) pop music. Alas, maybe taking some extra time in block 1 to follow that lonely popular music course will fill the gap. Apart from this missing bit of information, the musicology minor is hugely recommendable to those wishing to broaden their English horizons to musical ends, even learning to write academically about music in the final course Muziek en Wetenschap.

THE TIMES THEY'RE A-CHANGIN'

By Berfin Berçem Kaya

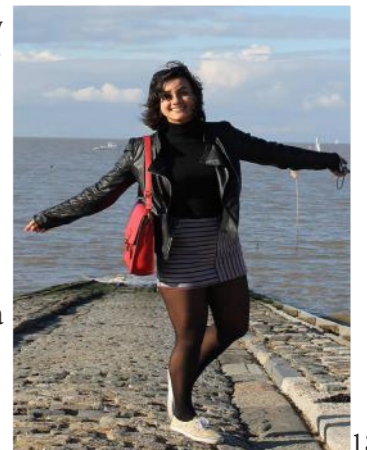
Before you start reading this piece, please understand that I'm not a Bob Dylan fan or anything. I know a few of his songs which I love, and that's it. Though, for me that's enough to defend his Nobel Prize in Literature. Or maybe it's not even the fact that I like some of his songs, but more that studying literature gave me a different understanding of poetry than some people who heavily disagree with him

being a Nobel Laureate. I mean, surely I understand it if you don't like Bob Dylan's lyrics, and perhaps like Leonard Cohen, Morrissey, or Nicki Minaj better. However, to say that he doesn't deserve his prize solely because he's a songwriter is unfair.

A short history lesson for those who didn't pay attention during their lectures: the earliest poetry is believed to be sung. Have you heard our teachers trying to recite poems with the iambic pentameter? It sounds a bit like a song, doesn't it? Not convinced of the musical sound poetry can have? You should try and listen to slam poetry. The people reciting their poems put so much emotion in it, it's almost like music.

Alright, I have to admit that I understand where some arguments from the other side come from. Musicians already have a greater chance of being acknowledged for their hard work compared to poets. However, I don't believe it's fair to say that Dylan doesn't deserve being a Nobel Laureate because of that. Maybe the idea shouldn't be "let's exclude songwriters from winning a Nobel Prize in Literature", but "we should give writers a bigger platform". I get that it is more difficult for authors and poets to gain the same reputation as musicians but that doesn't change the fact that lyrics can be poetic as well.

I'm actually very happy they chose a songwriter as I rather see it as an acknowledgement of song writing being as much literature as poems and novels are. The Times They're a-Changin'. This might actually be the start of a new era.



ALBIONEERS ABROAD

‘Seshin’ in Dublin: Grand Craic Sure

By Marlon Schotel,
Trinity College Dublin

It has been precisely a hundred years since the Easter Rising in Dublin. The bullet holes are still clearly visible in the stately walls and pillars of the General Post-office on O’Connell Street. I walk by this grand building almost every day, and so I am reminded to actually post my postcards almost every day, unfortunately ineffectively. I continue to make my way through the mass of people that is trying to catch their busses or cross the city’s main road at the intersection that is marked by the Spire, and right next to the Post Office I come across a huge Primark (-which confusingly is called Penny’s here, so the settling “Primark is Irish, so don’t be posh and pronounce the R” unfortunately doesn’t really work I’m afraid). I walk these streets full of history and modernity as if it is my home. And actually, it is my home. At this point I’m already halfway through my time here in Ireland, of which a bit over a month in the actual city all non-Dubliners seem to call ‘the Irish Concrete Jungle’ in a country so rich in nature. I do call this my home, for now, although it’s a very weird phenomenon when you know you’re going to have to leave it when your four months are up.

During the months before I left Utrecht, I’d yell to everyone who’d listen that one should NEVER do an Erasmus year. I have never been disappointed this many times in a row about something I wanted this badly. The UU didn’t have a contract with the English department at TCD, I couldn’t participate in the International Start-Up programme when I

had already booked my flight, and just a couple of weeks before I left this was topped off by an e-mail stating I wouldn’t be able to live on campus and had to look for a room myself. And this is just a summary, not including the pain-in-the-ass paperwork.

But after a lot of stress, determination and even more e-mails, everything eventually fell into its place. I’m now in Irish Studies, I travelled around Ireland and got a place to live at a different campus (-huge shout-out to my mom for spamming the shit out of the Global Officer at Trinity while I was on a wif and network-less holiday, or I’d still be living in a hostel).

And so, predictably, now that I’m actually here I’m left with nothing else to say than: oh yes, go and have your Erasmus experience. It is very weird building up a part of your life in a city you know you’re going to leave in a definite amount of time, but that doesn’t make it any less legitimate or awesome. You’ll have to realise life is different from your expectations, and the time really does seem to fly (- which might also be because I joined the Dublin Draiochta (Draiochta is modern Irish for Magic) Dublin Quidditch team (ha ha)). I’m aware of how many cliché’s I’m getting myself into here, but in the end studying abroad is about so much more than just studying at a different uni – it’s about hanging out with people from all around the world and broadening your perspectives; to be away from everything you know and seeing you’re still surviving; to get a chance to feel at home at a completely new place – and ultimately getting to know yourself better by getting to know how you make yourself feel at home at a new place, when everything you’ve always known to be your home is separated from you

by a shitload of water. (Also: cool accents).

Ps. During the start of September Facebook kept suggesting people to be friends with that I seemed to have an increasing amount of mutual friends with. Hi, Albion Firsties – we’ll please facebook and be friends when I’m back.

Irish Craic:

- “How’re ye?” is just a way of saying hi, not a real question. Awkward.
- Trinity is basically Hogwarts: professors will actually wear black robes, and have you seen the campus?
- Bookshops everywhere!
- The accommodation crisis here is even worse than in Utrecht – it’s normal here to share a room with other people (mostly multiple Brazilian guys).
- ‘Being late’ is just called ‘Irish Time’ here (this one is particularly Grand to me).



With fellow Albioneer Shannen at Front Square, Trinity

Life in La La Land

By Siem Bruinsma,
UCLA, Los Angeles

On my first day in Los Angeles, I hiked to the Griffith Observatory to take in the panoramic view... to find it being used as a film decor. I couldn’t have had a more fitting LA welcome.

It’s a little daunting, everything LA’s got to offer. But then I think of how much I’ve already done in the past five weeks. I got the shit scared out of me at Halloween Horror Nights, went to a Lakers game, spent a weekend by the pool in Palm Springs, watched the sunset at Joshua Tree. I went to gigs at the Hollywood Bowl and Hollywood Forever Cemetery, a talk show taping and rediscovered and fell in love with The 1975 at the after-show mini-concert. I found the best donuts, the best bookstores and the best ever music store (Amoeba, you know who you are). LA has got it all.



In between all the fun, there’s also uni (aka why I’m actually here). It’s a treat to walk around the UCLA Campus. Similar to Utrecht, the Humanities majors have the prettiest buildings. Most seminar rooms still have blackboards and the classic American chair-table top combos, which are actually really uncomfortable. My freshman US History course’s TA is Dutch, and with my name there’s no way to disguise I’m too. The UCLA sports teams are called the Bruins and someone has already made the joke that I’m Bruins’ ma. My other two classes are on poetry, one being an actual workshop for which we have to hand in a poem each week.

I mostly hang out with a group of international students. It’s great we’re all in the same situation, and together we marvel at and are stunned by American culture. I’m still mystified by the gaps in toilet doors, how to respond to “How are you?”, why my classes don’t have breaks and so many people talk the same flat way.

I live at the Co-op (Co-operative Housing), just off campus on Frat Row, where the beer and rubbish have literally seeped into the pavement. It’s like living

in the dorms, alas cheaper and shabbier, but with nineteen meals a week and a strong social vibe. I share a double with my English roommate in a really gezellige (there really is no other word for it) wing and we often leave our doors open.

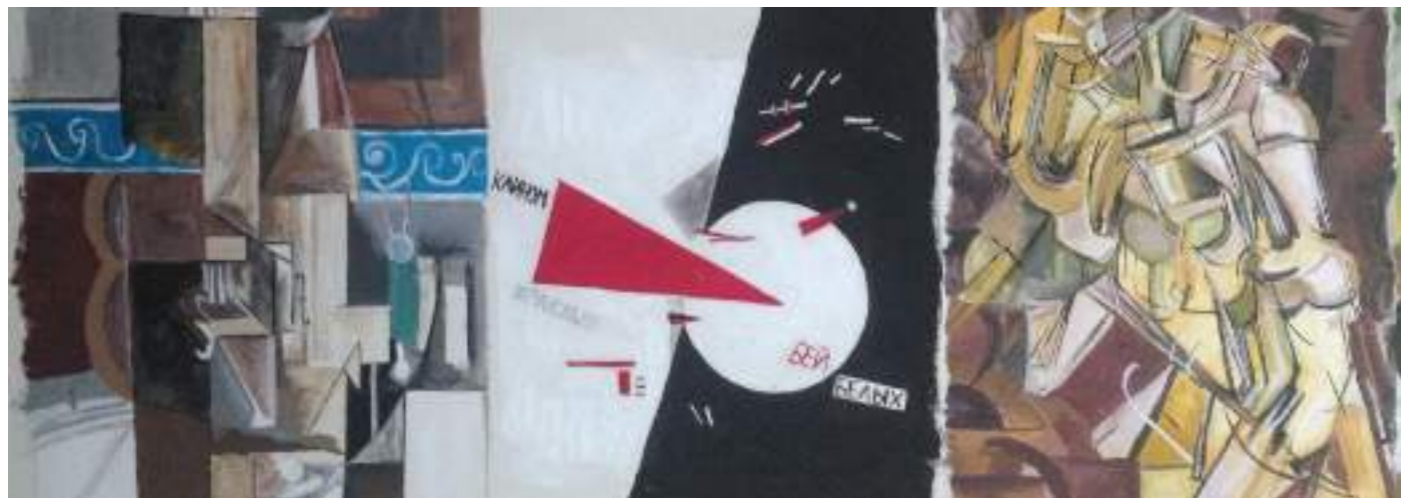
One of my goals was to retain my sort of British accent. Alas, day one and I already flattened my pronunciation and threw in likes. It helps I’ve got an English roommate, but even she has noted how my accent is becoming more American. RIP.

Now, please excuse me while I go and make the most of the seven weeks I’ve got left in LA, try and pass my courses while I’m at it, not spend too much money so I’ve still got a budget left to travel after finals and eat double my weight in donuts, IN-N-OUT and other fried/grilled stuff that’s so bad but so good #noshame.

From Los Angeles with LAllove,

Siem

(not Sim/Sam/Seam/Si-em/
Sheam/Niem)



SHOW @ ASTB

For my finals, I made this visual timeline of painted art from 1800, starting with Classicism and ending with Postmodernism. I chose these specific paintings because they represented a significant change in what was accepted as high-class art before. These paintings were made by revolutionary painters, either being the ‘fathers’ of the specific art movement, or the most associated with the period. I loved diving into this project and experiencing every single movement on its own. What struck me were all the different kind of difficulties that each movement has, contrary to the belief that certain kinds of art are ‘easy’ to paint (read: “art that my little sister could make”). I hope that with this timeline it is made clear what great developments were made, structurally and content-wise, in relatively little time.

By Jasmijn Ooms



Q & Alumni

With Mariëlle Smith

By Inge van Nimwegen

At the start of our interview alumna of English Language and Culture Mariëlle Smith tells me she cannot guarantee me any “beautiful” words. But language is mostly what she occupies herself with on a daily basis. Phoenix meets up with her at the turn of a career change that sees her moving on from a teaching spot at the Utrecht University to an independent editing career.

“English is officially my bachelor’s degree, but overall I did so many minors that you cannot really consider English my field of expertise...”

Q: Why did you choose to study English?

A: “I think I picked English because I wrote a lot. Writing is something many students do, I think, but I didn’t talk about it much. Writing is something you keep to yourself. Especially because in my year, a couple of students who wrote were particularly verbal in doing so. Some even distributed their work in class, which we thoroughly enjoyed – they couldn’t write at all! For a long time, I didn’t dare admit I wrote as well, afraid of being associated with this group of people.”

Q: How did you like the studies?

A: “The logical option with English was translation so I did some courses on that, but I never agreed with the theory. Even as a native speaker with a dual nationality (British and Dutch), translating Dutch-English was considered a no go.

So actually, I got engrossed with gender studies pretty quickly. There is no full-time bachelor on gender studies, but I don’t consider that odd. Usually when you start university you’re only around 18 years old – you need a bit more experience, a couple of courses, in order to be able to think critically about different subjects.”

Q: How did your story at Utrecht University continue?

A: “I stayed in Utrecht for the research master Gender and Ethnicity (now known as Gender Studies). In my second year I was asked to teach seminars, so I became a teaching assistant, and I simply kept doing that as a PhD student. Many of the courses I enjoyed taking, I now teach. It’s a quite unusual construction: others usually leave university to do their PhD elsewhere and return later on. I have been very loyal to Utrecht – once I arrived, I never left.”

M.S. Wordsmith

writing mentor & editor - mentors the process, edits the work

Q: So, you’ve been around the UU for a while – what has changed over the years?

A: “Of course in my day we used to have literature courses, but we didn’t have seminars the way they exist now. We had lectures, but no further guidance – just a ‘good luck, now go write some papers!’ The whole idea of getting involved with the material on a different level, discussing it among ourselves and looking at examples, we didn’t have that.

I do feel there’s a change to be seen in students, influenced by neoliberalism. Students look at higher education like a service they pay for, similar to filling their basket at the supermarket. Rather, as a John McLeod, Professor of Postcolonial and Diaspora Literatures at the University of Leeds once explained, university is like a fitness centre. You pay huge amounts of money to give you access to fitness equipment and people willing to give you advice. But if you stand in the middle of it all just looking around, nothing will happen. You have to get up and do the work, use the equipment, ask for guidance if you need any. Nothing will happen if you’re going to just stand there. I feel that teachers are finally taking a stand against this behaviour.”

Q: Why are you distancing yourself from teaching in the future?

A: “Life at university isn’t all roses. For a long time, I didn’t speak out against how the university is run, but my mindset has changed and I am ready to start doing my own thing full-time coming September. I love teaching. The students, the study subjects, seeing the changes brought about in students – that’s terrific. And students seem to enjoy it: I’ve never had empty classrooms. That’s the part I like. But then there’s the politics behind it, which takes up so much time and energy. At some point what the students give you in return just isn’t worth all that anymore.”

Q: What will you be doing next?

A: “My main focus will be editing. Over the years I’ve come to know quite a lot of writers and I used to proofread their work. They were the ones encouraging me to consider turning it into a full-time job. I already had my own website, www.mswordsmith.nl, from where I’d been doing academic editing – editing dissertations and such.”

Q: So you work as a freelancer?

A: “I’m very active in the self-publishing scene, which is huge in the UK and the US. It’s an online business, most of all concentrated in Facebook groups. The motto is: ‘traditional publishing? Fuck that shit.’ You can do all that yourself, except for the editing. That’s me. I proofread everything before it’s passed along to the Amazon’s of this world. As an editor I mostly look at the structure of stories, rather than strictly copy-editing. I would like to gather more experience in that field, however.

Customers often ask me for their editing jobs because they read some of my own writing and liked it. That’s the overriding factor for them, and of course an amazing compliment for me.”



Q: Do you think having studied English Language and Culture is useful with regards to editing?

A: “I myself wasn’t necessarily interested in the cultural and literary aspects of the English studies. I just liked writing, mostly in English. I like languages, and what they can do. I like to explore the boundaries of language, what experiences can and cannot be captured in a certain language.

Linguistics is useful as it’s good to know how and why languages differ – it can help with editing. I edit a lot of English work written by Dutch academics. Knowing the different language settings helps me explain their mistakes. I don’t just correct mistakes. I always try to teach the writer something so they can improve themselves and continue to get better until they don’t need me anymore. I love seeing returning customers improve their writing.

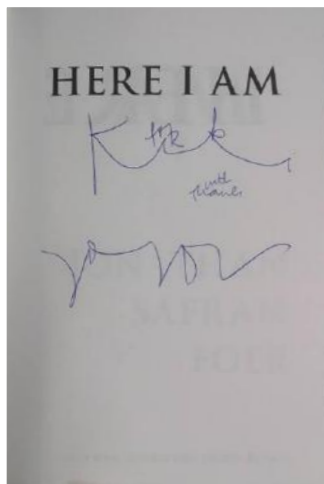
Something else that stuck with me over the years is the advice Simon Cook used to give me – I still teach his lessons to my students. The most important advice is to always read your writing aloud. I do this when I write, I do this when I edit. Where do I hear a problem? Why is that one sentence weird? Something else he taught me is to be aware of mistakes you regularly make. Making mistakes is nothing to be ashamed of – but knowing how to find them and correct them will make you a better writer.”

Culture Corner

BOOK

Jonathan Safran Foer - *Here I Am*

By Kiki Drost



As a literature student you are likely to have a few favourite authors, and likely some of them (if not most) have long left this mortal realm. So if you have a favourite contemporary author, and they publish a new book, they can count on selling at least one copy; to you. For me, such an author is Jonathan Safran Foer, and the book I rushed to the store for to buy was his first novel in years: *Here*

I Am. To make things better: Foer went on a promotional tour and one of the venues he visited was Paradiso, for a talk hosted by the John Adams Institute.

On 14 October I headed for Amsterdam. I was a volunteer for the evening, so I had to hand out leaflets to people as they were coming in. Right before it was about to start – and right before I was supposed to hand in my leftover leaflets and join the audience – a man walked in. I was just about to hand him a leaflet when I suddenly recognised him as Jonathan Safran Foer, so instead of a leaflet he got an awkward smile.

A few hundred people of all (adult) ages were seated and sat through an ever so slightly introductory talk by the Dutch host. After he'd discussed some of the themes Foer took the stage. He described the process of writing the novel and talked about earlier experiences on his tour. He then read an abstract from the book. He had considered reading out several passages, but didn't want his book to come across as being solely about Jewish identity (although this is important), being overly pornographic (although there are sentences about licking cum out of assholes), or being just about family life (although this lies at the heart of the novel). He ended up reading a bit that combined Jewishness, family and Steven Spielberg's penis, which was funny to read, and even funnier to be heard coming from the mouth of the creator himself.

After his talk there was an interview and an opportunity to get your copy signed. I used to lend my Foer books to anyone who was even slightly interested, but I'm afraid you will just have to buy *Here I Am* for yourself, because my copy is not going to be leaving my sight!

CONCERT

Daughter in TivoliVredenburg

By Lola van Scharrenburg

As a part of their European fall tour, British indie-folk band Daughter played in TivoliVredenburg's large yet intimate Ronda. The show was sold out and the venue filled with dedicated fans, every single one captivated by the band's enchanting performance.

While support acts often face half-filled venues with most of the crowd enjoying their drinks and the fresh air outside the room, opening act Dan Croll had no problem gripping the audience's attention. The British singer-songwriter and his band entertained with well-performed, happy and somewhat poppy songs, with witty and sometimes slightly awkward remarks in between.

After a short break, Daughter entered the stage. Frontwoman Elena Tonrad announced that she was feeling a little under the weather, but besides the occasional sip of tea and a few high notes that she sang low instead, this was hardly noticeable. The performance stood out in its quality. Elena's voice sounded just as wonderful as it does on the album and the band never seemed to miss a single note or beat. Guitarist Igor Haefeli surprised his audience by sometimes playing his guitar with a violin's bow, and sometimes replacing it for a bass or synthesizer.

Having released their new album *Not to Disappear* earlier this year, the band mostly played new songs. However, their greatest hit from the previous album, *Youth*, could not be skipped. With all of the crowd singing along it was definitely an enchanting moment. Another thing that stood out were the slight alterations made to most of the songs compared to the album versions. Although Daughter was never not interesting, these little changes definitely added a new dimension to the show.

After every couple of songs, Elena expressed how amazed and thankful she was that all of us had come to see them. During these moments, she was giggling, shyly looking away and just generally being extremely cute. After an hour and a half long show, an encore, and the last of these thank-you's, the show was over. Although it could have gone on for hours without getting boring, everybody went home satisfied.



SERIES

Turn Everything Upside-down with *Stranger Things*

By Vincent Potman

Netflix has really been pumping out some good things recently, including *Daredevil*, *Sense8*, *The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* and, as of the fifteenth of July, *Stranger Things*. Strap in for one heck of a thrilling ride, because it's about to get strange! On the 6th of November 1983, in the small town of Hawkins, Indiana, Will Byers, 12 year old nerd, seemingly vanishes into thin air. His mother, frantic with worry starts her own investigation, whilst Police Chief Jim Hopper organizes a search and a personal investigation. Will's three fellow nerds, Dustin, Mike and Lucas, decide that they need to conduct a search of their own at the place where Will's bike was found. Instead of finding their lost friend, the boys find Eleven, a mysterious girl with psychokinetic powers. She tells them she knows where Will is. As each group uncovers things about the mystery in their search for Will, with a sinister government agency trying to cover up the supernatural occurrences, two teenagers, Nancy and Jonathan, get pulled into the whole affair as well. Nothing is as it seems, and danger lurks in the night.

“Nothing is as it seems, and danger lurks in the night”

As with most Netflix shows, the season is rather short, only 8 episodes in total. Each is about 40-50 minutes long, so it's an easy binge. Worth one too, with a great cast, an enticing and gripping story, and characters you care about. It has that great 80's feel to it: from the origin story of Eleven, Dustin and Co. traveling largely on their trusty bikes, to the extreme clique culture of high school. The soundtrack is also amazing, complementing everything I've so far mentioned. All in all, *Stranger Things* is a superb show, and season 2 is already in the works, which is an incentive all on its own. So, if you feel like your life is too normal and boring, you can spice it up by trying to figure out Will Byer's disappearance and the origin of the supernatural things happening in Hawkins. If you dare, that is!

CONCERT

Hang Massive: Alien Sounds in Amsterdam

By Charlotte van Ruiten



On 2 October, the first dreary autumn day of the year, I went to a concert in the WesterUnie. I was there to listen to the ethereal sounds produced by a peculiar instrument, the hang. This is a steel instrument which resembles a flying saucer and sounds somewhat like a cross between a harp and a glockenspiel.

Hang Massive is a British duo who started playing together in Goa, India. They started off as two guys with hangs playing in the streets and are now touring the world, joined by a DJ and a vocalist. Five years ago they achieved something many small artists must dream of: they went viral. One of their videos is the second thing that comes up when you google the word “hang” and has nearly twenty million views. The video shows them sitting amidst some trees, playing calmly on their unusual instruments. The music in their popular videos is enchanting and the reason most people came to this sold-out concert.

As the crowd slowly poured into the venue, most of us sat down on the ground, took our shoes off, and made ourselves comfortable. Some people were meditating, some people were drinking beers, all was well. Unfortunately, after about an hour of waiting, it had become clear that we were absolutely not going to fit like this and we were instructed to stand up. This was the first problem with this venue. While I don't mind standing at concerts at all, for this one I would have preferred to sit.

The second problem with the venue was of much greater importance; the acoustics. The loudspeakers made the usually warm sound of the hang sound shrill and flat. Especially for the songs they played without accompaniment of their DJ and singer, which were the songs most people came for. The band played some of the relaxing, spacey songs they are known for, and some of their newer work with a more poppy sound. Decent, but nothing that swept me of my feet. Overall the concert was definitely enjoyable, but I would have preferred to experience it in a different setting.

BOOK

A Travesty: Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

By Vincent Potman

[Warning: this review contains spoilers.]

As a huge Harry Potter fan reading the “eighth” book is all but required, and so I have. It was not an enjoyable read, and took actual effort on my part to finish it. Admittedly, I did not hold high expectations for it. I had heard various things during the time it has been out, but I tried to keep from judging Harry Potter and the Cursed Child by the opinions of others and view it with a fresh set of eyes.

The work being a script, rather than a novel, makes it a different read and I accounted for that, but even with all that leeway it kept on disappointing. Indeed, the largest point of failure of the play is not that it has to work within the constraints of its medium – the necessity of visuals being dire – but that the plot is flimsy, contrived and cliché. It goes something like this: Albus Potter and Scorpius Malfoy become friends in the Hogwarts Express due to both having daddy issues caused by fame/infamy. Both get sorted into Slytherin, which heightens tensions and family relations worsen over the years. One day Albus overhears something about a SPECIAL TIMETURNER and convinces his bud that saving Cedric Diggory will fix everything. Surprisingly, it does not, it actually makes things worse. Also, not to forget, a Prophecy is involved.

“a horrible addition to the HP universe”

Yeah, that’s what they came up with. As a continuation of the epilogue [of the original Harry Potter series] it could have gone into new territory, fresh pasture, but it did not. Instead they decided to bring the past into focus, specifically Voldemort and Cedric. Maybe a nostalgia trip was the goal, but it was not a good one, only tainting that moment. Worse is that due to this focus on the past the present doesn’t matter, and as a consequence the main characters of Scorpius and Albus are flat and boring; more caricatures than anything. You would assume, given the title, that one of them was cursed, but no. If anything they – and the whole play – are cursed with falling into all the pitfalls of fanfiction; bad fanfiction. It is by any and all definitions a fix-it-fic with other bad symptoms added in, like Tom Riddle having a child.

In conclusion it is a horrible addition to the HP universe and I don’t recommend it, but if you go see the play in the light of absurdism it might be enjoyable.

INTERNATIONAL FILM

EungGyo / A Muse (2012)

By Lucinia Philip

A poet in his 70s, his thirtysomething protégé and a 17-year-old schoolgirl come together in this controversial drama about art, youth, (forbidden) romance and jealousy. Based on Park Bum-shin’s novel, EungGyo, also known as A Muse, is a South Korean film directed by Jung Ji-woon.

Lee Jeok-yo is a celebrated poet and author who has lost all excitement in his life. Seo Ji-woo, who met Lee during one of his poetry lectures, is his loyal assistant and student who dreams of becoming as great of a writer as Lee. It isn’t until the day they find a young girl, Eung-gyo, sleeping on Lee’s porch that their relationship starts to change. Lee is immediately drawn to the high schooler and agrees to give her a job as his housemaid. As the days go by, Lee becomes infatuated by Eung-gyo, who makes him feel young again, and starts to have sexual fantasies about his younger self and Eung-gyo. Based on these fantasies and his feelings for the girl he writes a short story: Eung Gyo. Eung-gyo has now become his muse. Meanwhile, Ji-woo is starting to express his jealousy and disapproval of the inappropriate relationship by competing with Eung-gyo for Lee’s approval. When he discovers the erotic short story, Ji-woo decides to steal it and publishes it under his own name, gaining him a lot of recognition from several institutions and authors. Affected by how beautifully she is described in the story, Ji-woo and Eung-gyo get involved in a sexual relationship which is soon discovered by Lee. Once Eung-gyo realises that Eung Gyo was actually written by Lee it is already too late.

The film is considered controversial because of the relationship between Eung-gyo and Lee, but aside from Lee’s sexual fantasies, the relationship is kept pure and platonic as Eung-gyo has grandpa-zoned him. EungGyo is actually a rather fascinating film that explores the loneliness, emotions, personal struggles and (non-)sexual desires of its characters. While you would expect the film to be uncomfortable to watch because of its theme, it really portrays the relationship between these three characters in a beautiful and captivating manner. I would highly recommend this film if you want to explore East-Asian or Korean cinema.

Note: the film is available on Netflix.



ALBUM

Twin Atlantic’s GLA: aggressively Scottish

By Inge van Nimwegen

Scottish rockband Twin Atlantic have never attempted to hide the fact that they’re of Scottish descent. Never before, however, have any of their albums breathed ‘Scottishness’ like their latest release GLA. Named after the airport code for hometown Glasgow, their fourth album screams out a want for belonging. It is a heavy, aggressive follow-up to its softer, easier-listening predecessors, most famously their hit singles “Heart and Soul” and “Brothers and Sisters” (from 2014 album Great Divide). GLA really is something else.

Odd-titled opener “Gold Elephant: Cherry Alligator” sets the tone right off the bat with its steady rhythm and heavy riffs all over, leaving you wanting more. In 12 tracks, Twin Atlantic gives you exactly that. From the catchy – but warn ya, not exactly radio-friendly – banger “No Sleep”, to “You Are The Devil” and “I Am Alive” that will make you want to get up on your feet and dance, it also has subtle surprises in between like the weirdly poetic “Valhalla”.



At the brink of commercial success, this authentic rock band appears to have turned its back on topping the charts with this all-but-easy listening rock album cracking with attitude and singer Sam McTrusty’s unmistakably Scottish accent.

GLA is a fascinating journey from start to finish, with even the weaker songs functioning as bridges keeping the pace in between truly memorable, unashamed anthems. Their previously poppy sound is replaced by a Black Keys-like garage rock vibe with heavy effect on the voice and isolated guitars, as in “The Chaser”, finally allowing Twin Atlantic to move away from that image many attributed to them: trying to be a poppier Biffy Clyro.

The story of GLA comes to a full closure with “Mother Tongue”. Disguised as a love song, it expresses the group’s heartfelt love for their hometown – the city that brought forth this band called Twin Atlantic, ready to conquer the rest of the world.

WEB SERIAL

Worm: A Serious Web Serial

By Vincent Potman

Worm, written by Wildbow, known in real life as J.C. McCrae, is a web serial that was started in 2011 and finished in 2013. It’s a magnificent piece of writing and even though it’s quite daunting in size – a whopping 1,680,000 words – and its content is definitely not for the faint of heart, if you are willing to devote time to it you will certainly not regret it.

“It’s a magnificent piece of writing and quite daunting in size, if you devote time to it you will certainly not regret it”

Worm is a colossal story that has many layers, even addressing the metaphysical question of what it means to be human, but at its core it’s a story of self-discovery. It follows Taylor Hebert, an introverted teenage girl who doesn’t have the happiest of lives, and due to this gains an unconventional superpower. She wants to become a hero, and tries to accomplish this by taking down a local supervillain, but in the process is mistaken for one herself. It’s not the introduction to the local ‘cape’ scene she wanted, but she decides to walk that road regardless, certain she can still do good; in fact, she plans to be a double agent. Somewhere down the line though, she realizes that the world is far from black and white. It’s mottled grey by the politics, unwritten rules, and violence that come with superpowers. As she fights in her city, Brockton Bay, she wrangles with who she is, who she wants to be, and morality; do the ends justify the means, or do the means justify the end? Where does she draw the line?

At first Worm is contained to the Brockton Bay area, but as the plot unravels, Wildbow brings to life the whole of Earth Bet in all of its dark glory. The story is divided into several arcs, each expanding upon what he already created. He manages to do this almost perfectly, in both the fine details as well as the broad strokes. The pictures he paints vividly appear before one’s eyes, you get caught up in the pace he sets, and the character interaction is natural and beautifully done.

Some arcs are better than others and the end leaves room for interpretation – Wildbow chose to do this because a sequel is in the works – but regardless I highly recommend this story to anyone who enjoys superpowers, and those who can take a story that resides within the darker side of fiction.

FILM

Don't Breathe (2016)

By Jense van Kammen

Throughout the past few years, the horror genre has built up a bad reputation. A lot of cheap money grabs like the new Paranormal Activity or the cliché incarnate called The Boy have been released. But now there's hope.

I don't want to say too much about the plot of this movie, and I don't recommend you to watch trailers or read too many reviews, because one of the biggest strengths of this movie is its surprise factor. This creative twist on the home invasion genre with-in horror truly lives up to its name. Just like the main characters you want to hold your breath for the biggest part of the movie. The tension is built up slowly but steadily, leaving little room for relief. You want to hold your breath when the slightest sound the characters make could mean the end of their lives. This movie does not rely on a lot of cheap jump scares but on real suspense. The few jump scares in the movie actually pose a threat to the characters and keep up the tension. They don't present a form of comic relief, a thing you don't want in horror movies.

"Don't Breathe is a breath of fresh air from all the mediocre horror movies"

One of the few problems I had with this movie was its villain. Even though Stephen Lang portrays a blind war-veteran brilliantly, eventually the movie leaves the audience longing for something more... nasty. And there were a lot of chances for this. For example, the veteran's guard dog was scary, but all bark and no bite. The veteran was just too effective, taking out the intruders with accurate gunshots and clear martial arts experience, rather than some inventive sadism. And let's be honest, that's one of the big reasons one goes to see a horror movie.

Don't Breathe is a breath of fresh air from all the mediocre or even bad horror movies that have been released recently. It is directed by the promising director Fede Alvarez, whom horror fans might know from the 2013 remake of the gorefest Evil Dead. Don't Breathe is much more quiet, dark and eerie than Evil Dead, almost resembling a thriller more than a horror movie. It's scary because of the suspense that keeps building and building, and not because of extensive gore and violence or cheap jump scares. It's a great movie for the casual or newbie horror viewer, and a must see for horror fans, though it won't leave you with weeks of nightmares.

CONCERT

Justin Bieber: Purpose World Tour

By Minthe Woudstra

On Sunday the 9th of October, Justin Bieber graced our tiny country with a second show of his Purpose World Tour. As he already performed in the same venue the day before, whispers of the happening already floated on the internet. He play-backed the whole concert, there were girls fainting everywhere and he, of course, had a taste of our most famous herb. I was excited to find out if all of these things were true. Earplugs in hand, I went into the Gelredome, ready for the Justin Bieber experience.

Before beginning this review, let me start off by saying that, no, I'm not a Belieber. I am, however, someone who enjoys going to weird concerts, and weird does not even begin to describe a typical Justin Bieber concert. Last year, Justin Bieber released his new album Purpose and with this album also came his huge image overhaul. From annoying rich bad boy, to misunderstood youngster trying to be better. This overhaul clearly worked, he has had several #1 songs and his shows sold out in no time. When entering the venue, I expected groups of 13-year-old girls, but I was pleasantly surprised to see that I wasn't the oldest one there. Justin Bieber got 'cool', and I was seated next to two cool 25-year-old guys, singing along to every song.

Justin performed a two-hour long show, which is a generous amount of time, and his repertoire was certainly large enough to fill these hours. The rumours that he play-backed songs were true, but only for the ones during which he was dancing vigorously. The best part of the show was his acoustic set in which he sung his hits Love Yourself, and Cold Water. This showed that Justin really does have talent. There were some girls in the crowd who fainted, and in between songs Justin lovingly asked if they were alright (which probably made their night, "omg he noticed!!"). As far as his herbal preferences go, he did appear to be a little slow at times, but this did not stop him. All in all Justin delivered quite a show, and when the concert came to an end I couldn't help myself and bought Purpose World Tour merchandise, maybe I'm a bit of a Belieber after all..



WORD OF THE BOARD



Dear Albioneers,

If you're reading this, it means that you have survived the first block: go you!

I'm so proud of you! Whilst writing this, I have yet to start studying for my own exam, so I have my fingers crossed that I will be able to join the celebrations by the time this is published. Unfortunately, instead of being able (or willing) to read my Shakespeare texts, I am way more skilled in the noble art of procrastination. As it is a Tuesday today, my choice of useless pastime is a lovely Facebook page called "Dilemma op Dinsdag" or, in the English version: "Dilemmarama" (try saying that five times fast). Most of you probably already know this page, but for those who don't: you basically have to choose between two equally awful and ridiculous things.

Some of them are relatively easy to choose between: "when you're happy, you grow like a baby" or "you always have a pacifier in your mouth". I'd choose the baby, because that is in fact what I usually sound like when I'm happy. Other dilemmas are more difficult: would you rather have that "whenever you yawn, a fly flies into your mouth" or "if you see someone with glasses, you have to clean them by breathing on them"? (I guess I'd choose the fly?) Today's one wasn't easy either. Which would you choose: "all the money you have ever received as a present turns out to be a loan that you have to pay back to those who gave it to you" or "when you see a lovey-dovey couple, you have to squeeze yourself between them and ask for a kiss". Now, as much as I'd hate being so unimaginably awkward, I think I would choose to ask those couples for a kiss. We can all use a little bit of extra love and being a student is extremely expensive: I really don't think I can afford to pay back my grandparents all that "ice-cream money". Luckily, these dilemmas are only imaginative and we will probably never have to make these choices, but I would love to hear from all of you what yours would be.

Lots of love,

Anna de Roest

HUMANS OF ALBION

By Minthe Woudstra



Thijs Grootveld - 23 - year two

"In my opinion, the best thing about creating art is receiving other people's interpretation of it. Sometimes you look at your own work and you can see just one interpretation; this is how I wrote it. And then someone else comes along with an interpretation you never thought of, and your work can turn into something else entirely. That is what I love about performing: seeing what my words can evoke in someone else. It really is a game of give-and-take."



B O O K S H E L F

I S O L D E

During the meeting for this edition of Phoenix we were looking for a firstie to get to know all about his or her bookshelf. The first person who came to mind was Isolde. After giving me and Lola a wonderful tour of her hometown Rotterdam, she was more than happy to show us her intriguing bookshelf.

By Job Petersen
Photos by Lola van Scharrenburg

First things first, what is your favourite book at the moment?

“My favourite book at the moment... I always have ten favourite books at any given moment. Currently I’m reading *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh and I really like it. It’s one of the best books I’ve read so far. But my overall favourite is *Wildwood* by Colin Meloy.”

Can you tell us a little more about *Wildwood*?

“I think it’s classified as a children’s book, but it falls somewhere between young adult and a children’s book. It’s one of the most well-made books I’ve ever seen and it has beautiful illustrations. It tells the story of a girl named Prue. One day she has to babysit her brother and he gets kidnapped by ravens. The first book focuses on bringing her brother back, but it also opens a lot of storylines that are continued in later books. The writer, Colin Meloy, is a singer-songwriter who plays in a band called The Decemberists. He’s an amazing writer and his wife does the illustrations. The story and the illustrations are really closely related because they discuss their work together to create a complete whole. It’s so nice.”

Which book do you think is extremely overrated?

“I have mixed feelings about the *Divergent*-series. I bought those when the last book was published in America and at the time I was very enthusiastic about them, but thinking back they’re a bit choppy. It feels like they aren’t finished. I had that with many young adult books: the idea is great, but the way they execute it just doesn’t live up to my expectations. I’ve read lots of young adult books like that and I really want to get rid of them now, because it somehow pains me to still have them on my bookshelf.”

Concerning books, are you Team America or Team Britain?

“That’s a tough question! I really like British books and I read them a lot, but I also have a lot of Amer-

ican writers I really like, Colin Meloy for example. And Edgar Allan Poe is one of my favourite writers. Actually, I don’t think I can choose.”

Which author have you read the most books by?

“I think I’ve read the most books by Haruki Murakami. I’ve read them in Dutch because he writes in Japanese, and usually when I read translations I pick the Dutch ones. Those versions of his books are the prettiest.”

You’ve said you really like the covers of your books, do you judge a book by its cover?

“Yes. And I think most of the people who say they don’t actually do as well. Of course you have that saying that you shouldn’t, but the illustrators and designers who make those covers have a job to represent the book on the cover. So if the cover doesn’t appeal to you, the book probably won’t either.”

Best quotation or scene from a book?

“Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars; choose sitting oan a couch watching mind-numbing and spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fucking junk food intae yir mooth. Choose rotting away, pishing and shiteing yersel in a home, a total fucking embarrassment tae the selfish, fucked-up brats ye’ve produced. Choose life.” (Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting*)

What is your favourite English word?

“Splendid and spiffing.”

Which book are you most ashamed of for not having read?

“Well... I can say that I am a bit ashamed of not having finished the *Harry Potter*-series. Now you’re all going to hate me, because you all did. I started when I was about ten years old and somewhere halfway through *De Halfbloed Prins* - I read them in Dutch at that age - I simply didn’t like it anymore. I stopped and never picked it up again.”

Isolde’s book tips:

Irvine Welsh:
Trainspotting

Collin Meloy:
Wildwood

Maggie Stiefvater:
The Raven Boys

I wanted to ask you what your favourite Harry Potter book is, but now that it appears you don’t like Harry Potter, should I skip that one?

“I do like *Harry Potter* and the whole world

around it. I plan on reading them all in English one day, I just haven’t come around to it yet. But to answer your question anyway: I do have a favourite. Of course I have a favourite! I did read the first five books. My favourite is the first one, it always has been. There are so many great scenes in that book and I like how Hogwarts and the whole wizarding world are described for the very first time.”

A question about another ‘series’, which is your favourite Shakespeare play?

“I don’t know. I haven’t read that much of Shakespeare yet. A play I’ve read twice, for school and for the last course, is *Othello*. But I think *Macbeth* is my favourite. Though I have to admit I love

Iago in *Othello*. He’s amazing. He makes the whole play so much more enjoyable!”

Who is your favourite fictional character?

“I think it’s Ronan from *The Raven Boys* because he’s sassy and rude. I actually like the *The Raven Boys*-characters in general because they’re so well developed and ... I just adore them. I want to be with them forever. Ronan is the perfect combination of loving and adorable and a plain bitch.”

Can I generalise you like evil characters as you’ve also mentioned Iago?

“Not really the evil characters, but the einzelgänger ones. They’re more real and down-to-earth. They’re rough diamonds and most of the time they have a little heart on the inside even though it’s sometimes very hard to find.”

Do you like prose more than poetry?

“Of course anyone reads more prose than poetry, but I also like poetry a lot. Poetry is the ultimate puzzle. I think I like them equally. My favourite poems are ‘She Walks in Beauty’ by Lord Byron and ‘Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art’ by John Keats.

Do you have a favourite reading spot?

“I’ve got one comfy chair and another one on my balcony. I also like reading on the train.”

What are you looking forward to reading at the moment?

“*A Gathering of Shadows* by V.E. Schwab. Actually, I’m also looking forward to reading *Saturday* by Ian McEwan, which is required for our next course.”



“I never
wonder to see
men wicked, but
I often wonder
to see them not
ashamed.”

Jonathan Swift



Colofon

This issue of Phoenix was made possible because of:

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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 incredible hobby with the world in the next Phoenix Showcase? Contact us via albionphoenix@gmail.com and we'll work something out.