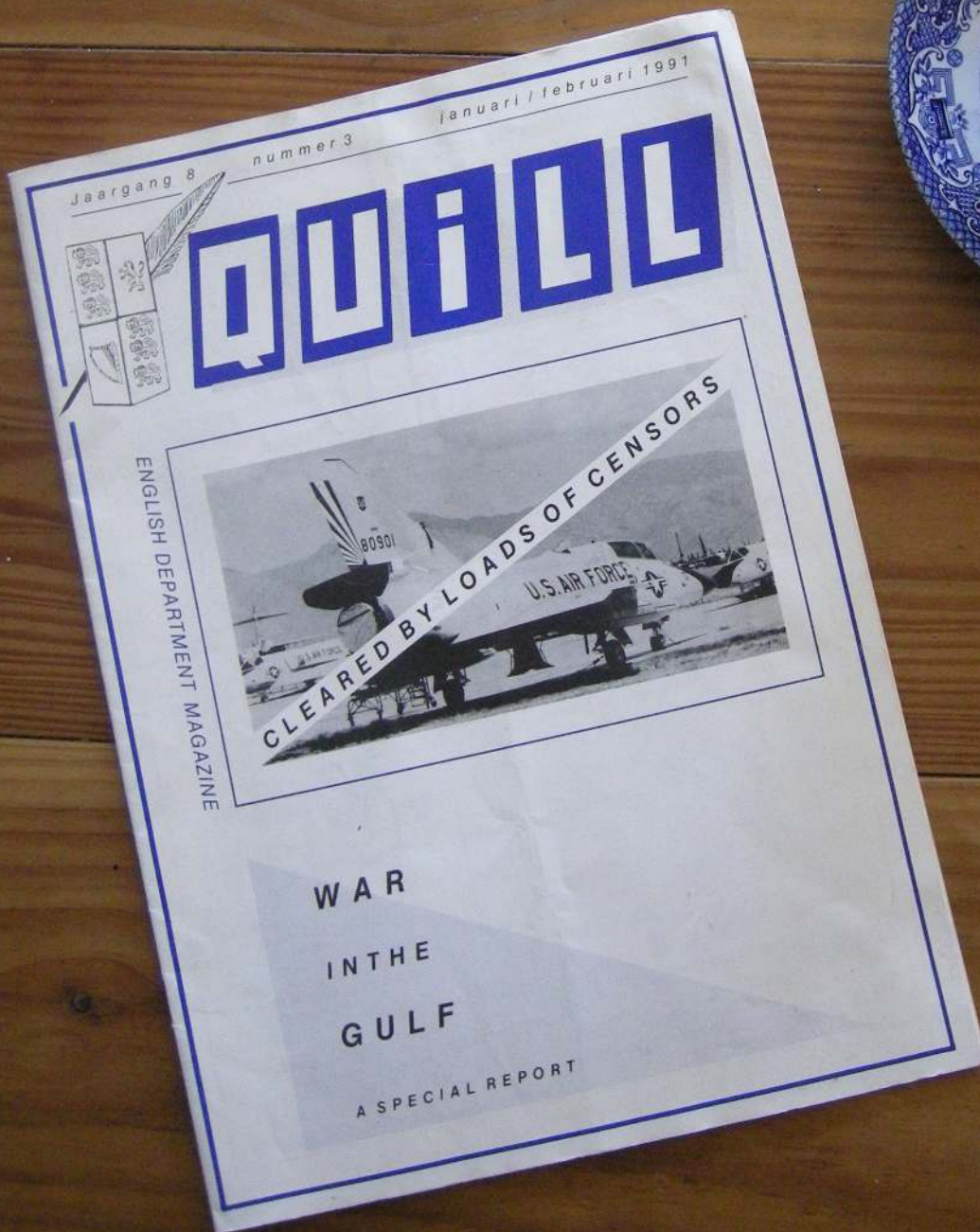


PHOENIX

Issue 3 - 2016-2017



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WORD OF THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

Welcome to this brand new Phoenix! Looks like this issue is filled to the brim with culture. Whether it’s about exploring museums, or writing, drawing or watching a movie. It’s always around us, always present. In the architecture of buildings and in the arrangement of trees in the park next to your house.

Playing games should be considered part of our culture as well, as Debbie Cole teaches us in this issue’s Tea Time. Me, I love board games, I just never really get round to playing them that often – a shame, really. Although I have to admit that playing knowledge games against my dad is just an embarrassment – knowing nothing about Dutch TV show presenters from before the 1980s, I am doomed to lose every round that isn’t about music or the Dutch language. And yet, I don’t think I’ll ever stop trying to win. That’s the fun!

What more is there to read, you ask? Culture Corner is, as usual, filled with the latest movies and music. We went on a stroll through Utrecht to find the best lesser-known museums for you to Rank. We welcome back a familiar face from last year’s Phoenix committee in our Bookshelf: Simone Schoonwater. Isolde van Gog drew a lovely collection of illustrations for us to feast our eyes on, and we visited Alumnus Willem-Jan Drost (indeed, our own Kiki’s dad!) to talk about working in logistics after having studied English.

And a big first: Phoenix is finally able to present the most striking and inspiring writings done during last block’s Journalism course. What’s not to love?

Inge van Nimwegen
Editor in chief

THE DRIFT TELEGRAPH

A crucial part of government and society, yet also one of the most fascinating and fun subjects to take at our University: Journalism. Good articles deserve publishing, and so Phoenix stepped in to give you an insight into what some of our English students concerned themselves with these past few months.

JONWAYNE'S RETURN TO ROTTERDAM JONWAYNE, BIRD

By Sebastiaan van der Schoor

Fan: Yo man, um, are you Jonwayne bro? Are you Jonwayne?

Jonwayne: Yeah

Fan: Look, I don't know who you are, bro, but I'm with this girl, she says she knows who you are, I think she's a big fan. But, um, she says you rap and I'm not really seeing it dog

Jonwayne: Um, yeah, no I don't really look like a rapper but yeah I do

Jonwayne doesn't like rapping for strangers, as becomes apparent from 'Live From the Fuck You', a skit from the rapper's new album. He takes off his moccasins on stage as he anxiously waits in silence for the beat to kick in. As soon as he opens his mouth all judgments you have from his appearance fade away.

The Californian rapper-producer looks like he works at a game store (which he actually did): chubby, hairy, with broad limbs and facial features. But make no mistake; his commanding, low voice, potent rhymes and flawless delivery make you instantly forget about his un-rapper-like exterior.

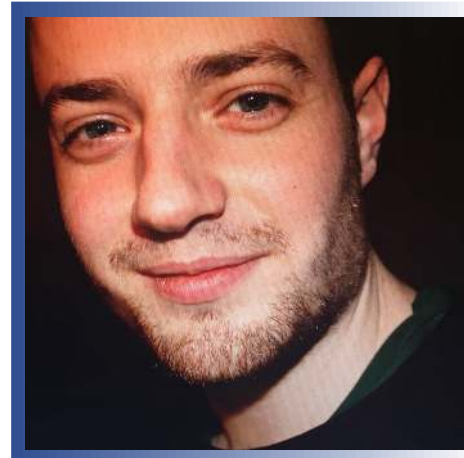
The big-boned lyrical miracle knows how to perform. He raps songs old and new, all with flawless delivery and impeccable flow. Jonwayne doesn't stop for pleasantries, only to do and say what he finds necessary. He is there not to please us, we are there to experience him. This would make for an intimidating experience, were his music and performance not of the highest quality.

This is the kind of artist who is still largely being 'slept on', which he knows. Seeing Jonwayne in the flesh is one of the wisest decisions you can

make, concert-going wise. Jonwayne encompasses 'real' hip hop, and with the near absence of foul language you could almost take your mother with you.

As becomes apparent from songs like 'Wonka', '30,000', and 'These Words Are Everything', we learn how he feels he could be famous but doesn't want to. We learn that he doesn't put hooks in his songs even though it would get him more money, and how he cares about his legacy more than about people's opinions.

This attitude is actually what makes him and his show so enticing. His skills are undeniable, his beats are both classic and fresh sounding, his show is underground yet accessible. Jonwayne is one for the ages, and I can only recommend you go see him next time you have the chance.



DEAR **THIERRY BAUDET**, THANKS FOR ENDANGERING **EMANCIPATION**
By Suzanne Hoogstraten

Dear Thierry Baudet,

When I was passing by the most elite fraternity in Utrecht I heard two slick, tie-wearing, and slightly ruffled-looking frat boys talking very concernedly about the Dutch elections this week. Their worries were about your new party Forum for Democracy: was there a chance that you would get three seats? Or would you get a meagre two seats?

You have managed to get two seats. Which means that at least 100,000 people have voted for you. These people apparently do not mind you saying that when a woman means "no" she actually means "yes" or the racist messages you spread. Or maybe they think your comments shouldn't be taken too literally, it is just locker room talk. Well, I do mind. It worries me that those frat boys, who will probably become the leaders and CEOs of this country, see an example in you. It worries me that they look up to someone who calls leaders like Trump and Putin inspiring. Someone who defends a writer that encourages sexual violence against women.

What I see is an angry man, who talks in broad strokes of the established order in politics and

the protection of Dutch values. I think that you do not realise what a privileged position you are in as a white man from a well-to-do family. You probably have never been discriminated against, never felt utterly defenceless. The fact that your party won two seats means that many people think it is normal

to have a member in parliament who justifies rape. That is not progression for The Netherlands, or even conservatism: that is taking steps backwards.

You call yourself an intellectual, but intellect is not measured by how posh your accent is or how many books on philosophy you have read. If you were to drag yourself out of the Amsterdam canal district for once, you would see that your ideals of the pretentious, eccentric and influential dandy are but a dream. The illusory an-

swer to the fears of those frat boys, who are feeling increasingly powerless in a world where they have to compete with women and ethnic minorities. What a disappointment reality will be. I can only hope that somewhere along you will learn that life has more to offer than the bubble in which you live.



A FRATBOY'S WARNING

Boys will be boys, let us play with our toys
Don't mind what we do, let us run around naked
It's only a phase, pay no heed to our ploys
And don't mind the value, we'll pay if we break it
Fraternity! Sexism! Homophobia and masculinity!
It's all part of growing up, it's all just a game
Besides, we won't carry on like this 'till infinity
Once we are older, us 'frats' won't act the same
But one day we'll have families, we will have wives
And embedded in our minds, superiority still lives
This condescending view will affect everyone's lives
So don't think right now "oh whatever, what gives?"
Equality must be taught, and taught hard it must
For fraternities, its bane, only teach lust.

By Timo Ros



HEALTH CARE IN THE NETHERLANDS: BROKEN OR THE BEST?

Are politicians right to claim the current health care system in the Netherlands needs fixing?

By Lotte van der Burg

Not that long ago, the Dutch government decided to completely overhaul the health care system in the Netherlands: in 2006, with the introduction of the Dutch Insurance Act, the government passed the torch to health insurance companies. Two years later, the concept of *eigen risico* (“personal accountability”) was added to the mix. Today, in the wake of the elections of March 15, both the Dutch Insurance Act and the personal accountability system are heavily criticized. Politicians intend to turn things back to the way they used to be. However, the question is whether the alternative is truly better.

Nine years ago, the health care system in the Netherlands was comparable to the National Health Service (NHS) of the United Kingdom. But in the wake of the economic crisis, the Dutch government went from the publicly funded “*zorgfonds*” to the business-oriented, private-sector health insurance system. The aim was to increase the quality of health care through market forces while reducing costs at the same time. Then, in 2008, the *eigen risico* was introduced: (translated approximately to “personal accountability”) it has people pay a customized amount of money for any care they receive within a one-year period. For instance, a person undergoing a €3000 operation is required to pay a minimum of €385 of personal accountability, while the rest is covered by their insurance company. Once the full personal accountability costs are paid, no costs arise for any additional health care they might need until the end of the year. The higher the personal accountability sum is set, the less they have to pay for monthly premiums.



seeking medical attention. Their health concerns then escalate. When Simone Ottens (58) started suffering from abdominal cramps, she chose not to seek help for the simple reason that she could not afford to spend any money. Almost a week later, an ambulance was called to rush her to the hospital when her appendix burst as a result of untreated appendicitis, putting her life at risk. “Had I sought treatment sooner, I could’ve left the hospital the next day,” she says. “Now, I was hospitalized for over a week.” And she is not the only one. A study conducted by TNS NIPO reveals that between January and August of 2016, 10% of Dutch people avoided health care.

In light of these controversies concerning the personal accountability system, several Dutch political parties, including the right-wing Freedom Party (PVV) and the green party GroenLinks, vowed to repeal it. The Socialist Party (SP) even plans to repeal the Dutch Insurance Act altogether and go back to the NHS-like “*zorgfonds*,” where health care is publicly funded. According to Nationaal Zorgfonds (National Health Care Funding), the current system is “too bureaucratic,” and the marketing strategies of health insurers cost us billions. They aim to repeal the Dutch Insurance Act and set up a national health care fund “without unnecessary bureaucracy and costly competition – and without personal accountability.”

“It is at least partly thanks to the insurance system that Dutch health care is one of the world’s best.”

“Had I sought treatment sooner, I could’ve left the hospital the next day. Now, I was hospitalized for over a week.”

The problem with this system is that people with lower incomes cannot afford to pay these personal accountability costs and therefore refrain from

However, as with anything health care-related, there are more factors at play. Femke van der Brug (21), a Master’s student in Health Technology Assessment at Radboud University in Nijmegen, states that the Dutch Insurance Act and even personal accountability are not as unfavorable as they might seem. “The current insurance system creates market forces and competition concerning costs and quality of health care,” she says. “It is at least partly thanks to this that Dutch health care has been one of the

best worldwide for quite some time now.”

On the issue of the personal accountability system, she does not agree with plans of parties like PVV and GroenLinks to do away with it. “This would only cause monthly premiums to rise and result in people paying more for health care they don’t use.” Moreover, research conducted by the Centraal Plan Bureau (CPB) shows that repealing personal accountability would cost the government 4.5 billion euros. To compensate for this, taxes may increase.

The social-liberal D66 is one of the few political parties that wishes to retain the personal accountability system. They state they “acknowledge the problem, but don’t see complete elimination as a solution,” since personal accountability does have its benefits: it leads to more awareness of health care costs, for one. Their simple statement that “health care is expensive” is, unfortunately, the ultimate truth on the matter.

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NUMBERPHILE

By Charlotte van Ruiten

I love numbers. They make me feel secure. They can represent a piece of objective reality in a succinct way that’s just not quite possible with words. And I’m not the only one who likes to put faith in numbers. Take a random news story, add some numbers to represent the facts, and it will be perceived as 60%* more reliable.

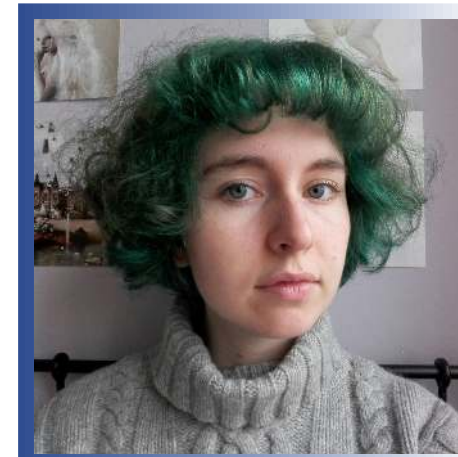
Especially in times when I don’t feel particularly confident in myself, I like to fall back on numbers to remind me who I am. My life is a sum of 22 years, 1.61 m, 52 kg, 3 housemates, 2 cats, 9m2 of living space, 2 break-ups, 1 boyfriend, 332 Facebook friends...

And then there is a specific set of numbers I like to obsess over the most. Sometimes when I’m sad, I crawl behind my laptop just to look at them for a minute. Every time a new number is due to be added, my days are filled with quiet anticipation. As the moment comes closer, anxiety wells up, and then, when the number appears on my screen, a flood of relief. I’ve done it again; I’ve passed the bar. And then the bar is raised slightly higher for the next time.

These numbers, my university grades, are something I’m genuinely proud of. I’ve worked hard for them, I’ve made sacrifices, and now I’ve got something to show for it. But seeing the numbers rise, as I feel my health deteriorating, has started to make me feel uneasy. I fear my identity is tied up in these numbers more than I would like to admit. If that’s true, what will happen when they fall?

And in the end, what’s the point? Having a piece of paper that proves I’m good enough to get admitted to the next place where I can obsess over numbers? And again, and again, until I’m burnt up? So people can stand around a gravestone that reads: “Here lies Charlotte, she had a really high GPA”?

*I made that up, but it looks great, doesn’t it?



PHOENIX RANKS

Local museums

Museums come in different shapes and sizes. We picked some to visit and found out where to go for art from faraway places, stargazing, and Utrecht's favourite illustrated rabbit.

AAMU Museum for contemporary Aboriginal art

By Inge van Nimwegen

The AAMU displays art made by the indigenous peoples of Australia – the only museum in Europe to focus exclusively on contemporary Australian Aboriginal art. The visit starts downstairs, with an informative movie about the history of the Aboriginal people. An interesting, yet sad story altogether, illustrating the Aboriginals' struggle for self-determination, as the Stolen Generation was forced out of their historical ways of living.

Out of this situation a new generation of artists emerged, mostly living in the cities or remote communities, yet connected to both the outer world and their ancient Aboriginal roots. Different regions in Australia traditionally have their own subtype of

art, with their unique materials, colour palettes and styles.

Aboriginal art has always been based on the art of telling stories, through images only insiders can truly understand - the guiding booklet will lift the veil just enough to decipher some meaning in the dotted and painted illustrations. The AAMU has more to offer than just 'traditional' paintings: statues, collages, performance art, and decorated tree bark make up its collection.

A little more information on what was shown, and giving each art piece enough space to be truly appreciated would have been an improvement, but overall a more than pleasant experience.

Sadly, the AAMU will be closing down after 16 years in service – should you want to take a last look, you have until mid-June.



Sonnenborgh

By Minthe Woudstra

Sonnenborgh Museum might just be one of the coolest places to visit in Utrecht. The museum focuses on weather, the sun, the planets and the stars. There are interactive parts of the museum to help you understand the effects of different kinds of weather, for example. One of the main attractions of the museum is the observatory: here you can gaze through the giant telescope and see what is up there for yourself. They also host star viewing evenings where you can visit the museum at night, something which I would definitely recommend.

Nijntje Museum *By Kiki Drost*

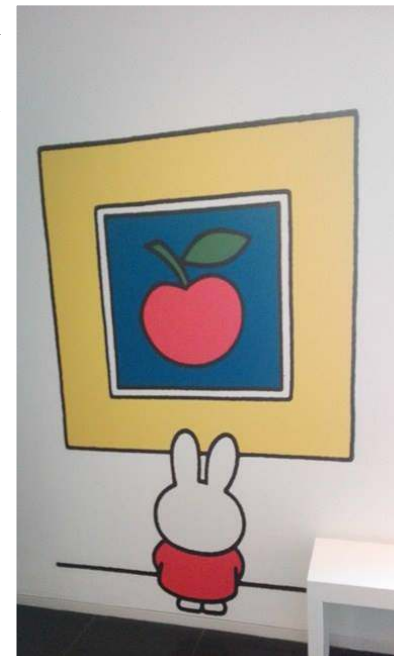
The Nijntje Museum is the absolute best, most incredible museum you could ever go to. Unless you are older than six years old. Then, maybe, there might be other museums that are of more interest to you. However, if you're between the ages of one and seven, this is the place to be!

Across the street from Centraal Museum you are greeted by a giant Nijntje (Miffy) statue. The museum itself is relatively small, but since its target audience is small too, this is no problem. It is a building not unlike a Drift-building, except instead of classrooms and students you'll get theme-rooms and toddlers. The first room has an "around the house" theme: you can 'cook' nice, plastic food, plant beautiful, plastic plants, or work in the shed with your plastic tools. Other rooms have themes like "the zoo," "the doctor," "school," and "transport". There's even a "museum" room in the museum. Of course there are plenty of things to do in each room: plastic entertainment everywhere. And toddlers. Also toddlers everywhere, playing with the plastic toys.

Despite the museum being for kids, it is quite fun for adults as well. I would recommend you'd go with a friend, though. That way, when the person selling you the tickets asks you if you're aware that it's a children's museum and you have to shamefully admit that you know, at least you'll be together. And one of you can pet the sheep at the zoo, while the other takes pictures. And you can read out a Nijntje story to each other. It'll make for a great Instagram or Facebook post.

If you're hoping for information on Dick Bruna (may he rest in peace) or Nijntje, you're out of luck: there are few information signs for parents and most offer only one or two sentences. But if you're absolutely bored out of your mind while the toddler you took with you is pretending to be a car, you can always try and learn some Japanese: apparently they get so many Japanese tourists that all signs are in Dutch, English and Japanese.

In short: if you're looking to relive your youth, or if you have a young son/niece/neighbour/whatever to entertain, this is worth your time and even money, because as an adult you pay far less for your own ticket than for a child's!



DON'T GET ME STARTED POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

By Jense van Kammen

Political correctness is the West's newest form of intolerance, and it is especially disturbing because it comes disguised as tolerance. People try to present it as fairness, yet it tries to control and restrict people's language. All this with the goal of not offending others and keeping the public away from 'dangerous' ideas and 'harmful' opinions. Sounds great, in theory. But the problem here is: what do we define as "offensive"? In my opinion, offense is taken, not given. Of course, it is a matter of decency when it comes to normal interaction with other people. But one should never be required to pre-analyse their every word just because one random person might get offended. I'm not going to stop expressing myself just because someone doesn't like it.

Usually the biggest arguments for political correctness try to show the worst sides of everyone having complete freedom of expression. But the pros heavily outweigh the cons. This freedom is a way of challenging views of others and yourself. The absence of this freedom causes an unchallenged master-narrative, and opposing and possibly dangerous ideas to go unchallenged. When this is taken to an extreme and actively enforced by a government, we get a dangerous fascist, authoritarian country. Probably not what we'd like after Nazi Germany and communist Russia, where people are thrown into gas chambers or the Gulag, respectively, for expressing their views. These are quite extreme examples, but the point I'm trying to make here is that censorship and oppression of opposing views never ends well.

The thing that annoys me the most is artists, especially comedians, being called out on racism, sexism, or one of the many other -isms. It's all about intent. And the intent is to make you feel, and in the case of comedians, laugh. You are not forced to laugh. Just know that the intent of the comedian is often to make you laugh by being absurd and making those forms of hate look ridiculous rather than normal. In short, people should grow up a bit and stop trying to be offended by everything, especially when discussing topics like immigration, affirmative action or politics in general. Calling someone a racist or a sexist is as much an argument as calling someone an asshole. Just bring arguments to counter ideas rather than try to silence them.



Tea Time

with

Debbie Cole

By Kiki Drost,
pictures by Lola van Scharrenburg

Here at Phoenix we try to serve you a healthy mix of teachers for Tea Time. So, after last time's more well-known teacher, who has been here a while, we thought it time for a new teacher, who only just started her UU adventure. This is why, on one of the first sunny days of the year, we found ourselves ringing the doorbell of Debbie Cole.

Debbie and her family moved from Texas to Utrecht only last August, but they greet us and invite us in in Dutch: "My Dutch is going really well at the moment. I didn't take any Dutch classes the second block, but now that I'm studying again it's going great. It's still hard to speak, but being able to read stuff or to hear stuff, that feels really good."

After petting the cat - which isn't their cat, as it turns out, but a neighbour's cat who likes spending time in their house - we sit down at the kitchen table, with tea and homemade sandwiches, and begin our interview.



Debbie's Favourites

Favourite film

"The Princess Bride and The Big Lebowski."

Favourite music

"My favourite band is Radiohead. We try to listen to all kinds of music and my kids are great because they bring home new stuff all the time, but Radiohead just keeps being good, no matter what."

Favourite colour

"Purple and green."

Favourite book

"My favourite American poet is E. E. Cummings, although Robert Frost is a close second. My favourite linguistic anthropologist is my former adviser Jane Hill: she has a book called The Everyday Language of White Racism. Oh, and Terry Pratchett, of course."



What did you study yourself?

"For my undergrad I did Modern Languages, which was basically a French major with a Spanish minor. What happened was that my French teacher in high school moved to the same university the year I moved to university, so I immediately started taking upper level French courses with her. In my junior year the university contacted me and told me I had to declare a major, and I couldn't decide between music or language, but I had so many credits in French that I just decided that that'd be my major. When I was done, I decided I really wanted to do linguistics. So I went to a program in Arizona, that had a joint PhD between the formal linguistics department and the linguistic anthropology department; it was the only place in the US that had this. The professors had decided that students needed to be trained in both, even though they didn't necessarily do both, so I basically got two PhD's: a PhD in linguistics and a PhD in anthropology. They called it one, but you had to do all the work for both programmes, you got trained as though you were both, and I think that's a really good thing, but it's also kind of problematic, because you produce interdisciplinary stuff no one knows what to do with it. It kind of made me an academic schizophrenic."

Why did you move to the Netherlands?

"I had been looking to do something different for a while and the Netherlands was always interesting to me because I grew up in Indonesia and my field work was in Indonesia too. The idea that I could be in a place where there were more Indonesians and Indonesian food was really interesting to me. And already there are nice things, like being able to get tempeh at the toko and sometimes I hear people speak Indonesian. When I came for the job interview at Utrecht University in January we fell in love with the city. It was cold and kind of drizzly, so we figured if we liked it in January we're going to like it the rest of the year."



Is there anything you miss about the USA?

"Barbeques and chipotles. We lived in Texas, near the Mexican border. And of course my friends. We also left behind a dog, a cat and a rat. Some good friends are taking care of them, so they're happy. We miss them more than they miss us, I'm sure."

Do you have any hobbies?

"Actually, one of the reasons we moved here is because Dutch people have hobbies: adults play music, they do sports, they paint, that sort of thing. Where we lived, people tended to not have this kind of hobby-thing. One of the things we've managed to start doing here is climbing: we're going several times a week. What I really want to do here is join a choir. I haven't been in a choir since I was in college. As a family we play board games, and that was one of the reasons my son wanted to come, because that's bigger here. There's a place on the Oudegracht where you can play with all kinds of people. And we're cyclists, so that was another good reason to be here."

After we're done with the interview, we pet the cat - which is not their cat - once more and then it's time for us to leave. Debbie, thank you once again for having us!



"My PhD made me an academic schizophrenic"

Minor Market



International Relations

*Universiteit Utrecht
By Emma Wasser*

I mostly took English and Communication courses over the last 2,5 years, so I was happy to do a minor in a topic that I think is super relevant at the moment. I decided to choose the minor International Relations, because I like history, anything that happens outside of our country, and trash talking Trump. Lucky for me, we got it all.

The minor consists of four courses: Introductie Internationale Betrekkingen, an introductory course where you mostly learn about theories in the international relations, such as realism and liberalism. The second course is called International Governance, and it's about the role the US plays internationally. It perfectly coincided with the elections in the US, so we talked about Trump a lot. I'm currently taking the third course, Humanitaire Campagnes, and it's my favorite so far. We actually get to write a big paper on our own for the first time. I'm writing mine about women's emancipation in the 60's and 70's in the Netherlands, which I find really interesting. Next block I'm taking the last course, Nederland in de Wereld, and as you might have guessed from the title, it's about the Netherlands in the international world order.

About the way the course is set up: The good part about the courses is that there are plenty of guest lectures, and a Model European Parliament where everyone has to represent a different country. There are however a few logistical problems with this minor. The course manuals change during the course, so they will set dates for deadlines and exams, and then change them. The minor is relatively new, so I'll give them that. However, it's not new enough for this level of fuckery in my opinion. Especially the course I'm taking now is a mess, because they don't explain anything about the essays and seminars, and the teacher seems lazy as hell.

Final verdict: The topics, courses, and people are fun and cool, but the minor's structure and course manual are shit. I would recommend this minor to anyone who's planning on working internationally or at a government institution. You learn a lot about the world, and it's a lot easier to put the current things that are happening (Trump, Israel, etc.) into perspective. The best part about the course is seeing the same people each block, and making new friends.



Spaanse Taal en Cultuur

*Universiteit Utrecht
By Noa Tims*

Let's say right off the bat that this is not going to be a sale's pitch for this minor. I'm going to be practical and critical. Here goes:

This is not a fun minor. It does not provide interesting artsy, literary or philosophical insights, it does not necessarily have political relevance and it feels rushed beyond what makes sense. You do learn a hell of a lot in terms of language acquisition. Whether or not you want to do this minor depends on all sorts of things, obviously, but it is a commitment, not a last-minute I-don't-know-what-I-want solution.

What you'll be doing is part culture, part language acquisition. You'll start with two courses in the first block, Inleidende cultuur Spanje en Latijns-Amerika and Taalverwerving 1. Both are quick and useful courses, although I found it a bit cramped to study both Spain and Latin America in a mere eight weeks: both cultures are rich and interesting and deserve more time. Besides this, it was more of a history course than a culture one. Taalverwerving 1 moves fast, and requires a lot of motivation and studying at home, but you'll walk away being able to at least

manage yourself in Spanish speaking countries. I found it really helped that I'd studied French and Latin in high school.

Taalverwerving 2 and 3 move even faster. Presentations, writing exercises and tests flow seamlessly into one another – which left me personally in a permanent state of stress – but again, an entire language in three times eight weeks is quite the tall order. In the end, they'll be testing the limits of what you can handle with your (e.g. mine) social anxiety not just by mere presentations, but by forcing you to record yourself video chatting with a classmate and someone from actual Spain for at least an hour – on fixed subjects, innovative and original ones like vacations and the cinema (who can't, in this day and age, ask the way to the nearest cinema and at least Spanish, French, German and Italian).

Speaking from experience I can tell you that you do really learn a new language – albeit not as perfectly as you can juggle English by now – but it requires a lot. If you've set goals for yourself and want to learn a new language, go for it. If you just want some filler during your third year, choose wisely.

BLIND SPOTS

By Berfin Berçem Kaya

Turkey is turning into a dictatorship – if you ask me, Turkey already was one, but it's becoming more constitutional. It's funny that this is going to be decided by the civilians. It's even funnier that the government knows well that Turkish immigrants are blind enough to vote in favour of them and the government uses this. They already did this during the general elections by making it easier to vote abroad, but now they want to propagate in other

countries as well. The funniest thing about this, is that the people in those countries like the Netherlands enjoy the privileges that president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wants to take away from the people living in Turkey. Erdoğan violates human rights, including freedom of speech, press, and religion. Don't the people living here understand that these are things that they take for granted in the Netherlands?

I love how the Dutch government decided against the propaganda of Turkey though and moreover, I adore how the Turkish minister responded calling the Netherlands racist and saying that they violate all democratic rights.

Excuse me? Surely, the Netherlands isn't the most perfect country ever, but take a look in the mirror, hypocrite. Journalists, members of the parliament, civilians, and so on, are incarcerated, because they aren't on your side. You still try to tell the Dutch government that they violate democratic rights?

I read a great article by psychotherapist Thijs Besems about trying to decide for the home you don't live in (Volkskrant). I'm not trying to justify this situation – not at all. However, I'm also trying to understand where this is coming from. I came to the conclusion that it's partially cultural. For example, if there is a family with a son and a daughter, the son may

decide over whatever the daughter can do or cannot. It doesn't matter whether he does the same thing or not, but he'll be able to decide what's better for her. (Disclaimer: this is obviously not every family; I'm not trying to generalise a whole country. However, especially the Erdoğan voters tend to have this behaviour.)

Do you see the same similarity that I see in the situation here?



ALBIONEERS ABROAD



Sydney, Australia

By Anneleen Kolijn

Studying abroad was something I had been dreaming of since the day I entered secondary school. However, at the same time the thought of leaving everything behind scared me. For this exact reason I almost missed the deadline to sign up for an exchange. Finally, just in time, I made up my mind and chose to sign up for what I really wanted: studying in Australia. Macquarie University quickly became my number one choice, and I have to say, it was the best decision I ever made. There is just something about leaving everything behind and starting all over again.

During my time in Sydney I was able to cross things off my bucket list I would otherwise never have done. For instance, I finally jumped out of a plane and it was the best thing ever. My wish of experiencing life

on campus was also realised and I met so many great people. Being able to live on a campus with international students is such an eye-opening experience, especially as a student of English

Language and Culture with an interest in intercultural communication. Every person you meet has their own story and everyone can teach you something new.

Studying abroad is definitely one of the best experiences ever, but there will always also be moments in which you feel less happy. I had to miss some birthdays of close family members and friends and it takes some time to get used to the new culture, even though Australia is a Western country. However, Skype is an amazing invention and even WhatsApp calls work, so in the end I was able to keep up with everything and everyone back home perfectly. Australians are very open and friendly and often invite you to join their plans. I

celebrated Christmas at one of my closest friend's grandparents where we unpacked presents from under the Christmas tree while enjoying the aircon. This was followed by a jump in the backyard pool, as one does in the midst of summer. Celebrating Christmas with temperatures around 35 degrees was not something I thought I would ever be doing, and yet there I was.

Australia feels like a place where anything is possible. It has the weirdest range of animals and their birds are the loudest I have ever heard. And somehow the stereotype of 'no worries mate' actually seems to apply to the country. If you are ever in doubt about going abroad for your studies or thinking about whether to travel to Australia or not: stop worrying and start doing. If it's something you really want, make it happen.



York, UK

By Anneloek Scholten

When I decided to do an MA in medieval literature, York was the logical place to go, as the university has one of the largest Centres for Medieval Studies in the world. While nearly everyone else has class in the (not particularly attractive) campus buildings, the CMS is located in King's Manor – a tourist attraction – meaning I tend to trip over tour guides and people with cameras and umbrellas on my way to morning classes.

The CMS is a very close-knit community, and I'm afraid I'm not the most typical medievalist. Nearly everyone around me seems to be a member of the Tolkien society, and most of my classmates enjoy dressing up like Vikings, going to battle re-enactments, or organising weekly archaeological expeditions. Anglo-Saxonists will always bring up Beowulf and The

Battle of Maldon in casual conversations, and they have opinions on whether or not Beowulf was a good king, invariably landing on the "no"-side of that argument. In pubs, people will get into heated debates with Renaissance students and Early Modernists. ["I think you're forgetting that your period is the one with all the witch burnings."] ["What do you mean you like the Normans?! Go sit at another table."] Once they've exhausted their attacks on each other's research interests, they will move on to home towns, ["And George here is French..."] "I'm from Cornwall." "That's what I said,"] after which they launch into Brexit-bashing. My friends have made it their #1 drinking game to see how far they can go before they actually offend someone. So far, they have successfully insulted several Americans. Fortunately, the pubs have a frustrating tendency to close at midnight, so there's a limit to how much damage they can do.

One thing everyone agrees on, however, is the notion that it is never too early to start drinking. Evening lectures typically include wine, as do most other events hosted by the university, and cake will be used as an incentive to bribe people for anything and everything. The Humanities Research Centre even has an official cake director on staff. Another thing the English seem to agree on is that there is no such thing as bad weather on a Friday night. Who needs a coat when going out? Apparently, no one but me and my flatmate, who is Greek and perpetually freezing.



I may have concealed my enthusiasm under a layer or two of sarcastic comments, but York really is such a lovely city. My classmates, flatmates, salsa-dance-partners, and nearly everyone else I've met are wonderful people and the CMS seems to have "act like you've known each other for decades" as a ground rule, which is perfect when you're new to a city. For those of you who are really into Tolkien, I warmly recommend coming over for a visit to talk to a few early medievalists. If, like me, you've read LotR once and you've not memorised the entire thing, there is always (seriously, always) cake.

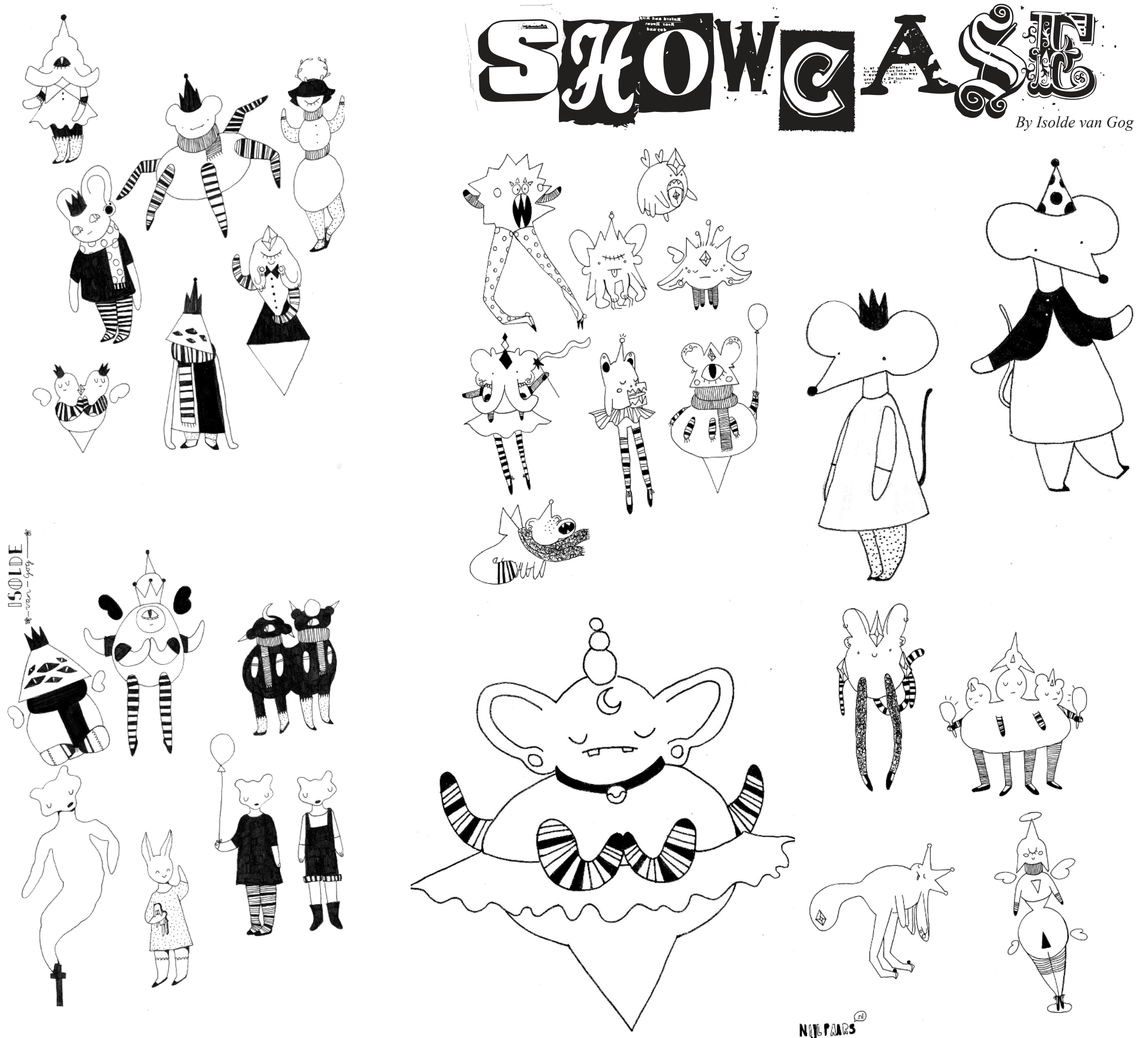


HUMANS OF ALBION



Sam van der Wal (27) - First year

"Sometimes you've got to take risks. For me starting at university was a risk, because: 'oh god, you're old, what are you going to do, are you going to do well, are you even going to connect with people?' But I guess that everything in life is a risk, you step out in the world and you don't know what's going to happen. It might be a great day, it might be an awful day, but you can't stay sat inside forever. So, I guess you have to take risks to get anywhere at all. No matter where that anywhere is."



Q & Alumni

With Willem-Jan Drost

Everyone knows English isn't a strict follow-this-path-and-you'll-end-up-here type of studies: it offers – and has done so for many years – doors to diverse career paths. For this Phoenix we met up with Alumnus Willem-Jan Drost, who works in logistics. Let's start telling his story from the beginning.

By Inge van Nimwegen

Q: Why did you choose to study English?

A: I started directly after VWO, in '87. Back in school I wasn't quite sure what I wanted. All around, you heard these resounding stories of fascinating studies, one of which was a studies called Mass Communication. You could only do Mass Communications after getting your Propedeuse in languages or history, among others. But during my first year I realised that Mass Communication wasn't for me – despite the fun, flashy presentation, it was all a bit woolly.

However, around the same time a new study area was introduced in Utrecht: International Relations (Internationale Betrekkingen). It required English at graduate level, however, so I ended up following doing about 2,5 years of English, and another 2 of International Relations. I didn't choose English

because of the language itself. I wasn't very passionate about English or any language at all, and I wasn't a literature freak either. English was just a means to get to International Relations.

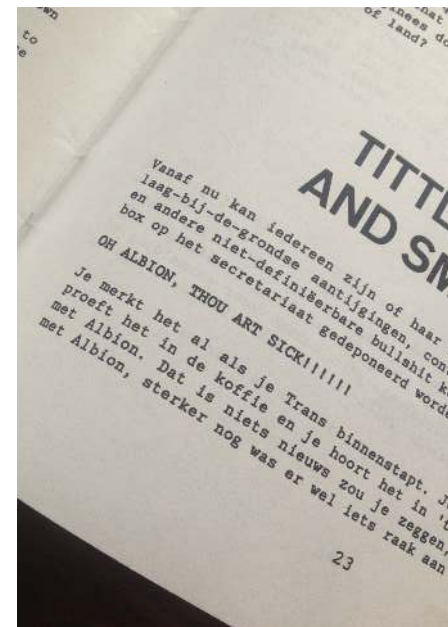
Q: What did the bachelor look like in the '80s?

A: The official length of the studies was 4 years back then, and the Bachelor/Master division did not yet exist in its current form. There was a Propedeuse year, and three more years after. The subjects were the same for everyone, and had a bit of everything: some linguistics, phonetics, literature. A bit of Old English as well. There weren't any choices yet – like

specialising in either linguistics, or in translation, those only came about in later years, after I had graduated.

I remember that as a first year student, I loved being in the city centre. I thought it had great charisma – the feeling of being part of a tradition, an institute, that goes back hundreds of years. These historic buildings do give something of a cachet to a University, rather than some modern building somewhere far off.

The English faculty was situated at Trans 10, where it took up the complete first floor. That was where we took most of our classes, ate our lunches, and



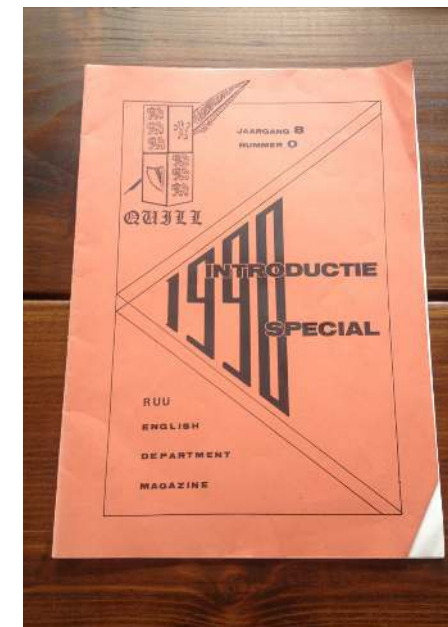
where Albion had her room. I was a member of Albion, and was on the Quill editorial board (Quill, as some might know, is Phoenix's predecessor) – by the looks of it, all largely comparable to what it looks like now.

Q: Do you feel English Language & Culture is a sufficient preparation for the job market?

A: English is a very practical language to speak. Being able to express yourself well in English can work in your benefit, I notice that also with regards to the many international contacts I keep in my job. Languages in general are great, you can't learn to speak enough languages. I'd recommend everyone to work with language. And English is, of course, a beautiful language. The downside to studying English is that everyone thinks they can speak it – 'who cares, I can do that myself' is a common misconception. Being proficient in English is less unique than some, like Spanish or French, but in general, any studies in language is an enrichment.

Q: Did the studies bring what you'd hoped for?

A: That's a tough one to answer. I ended up somewhere totally different: in logistics. A lot of coincidence was involved, of course. I finished my studies, made a far travel as backpacker,



returned home and figured I needed a job, any job. I really wasn't sure what I wanted to be. I ended up working for a trade company specialised in fashion and sports, coincidentally on the logistics side of business. That's where I lingered for a long time. It wasn't until much later, over 10, 15 years, that I found my way back to the international side of logistics. That's when I realised how much I liked that. Looking back you might say that shouldn't have come as a surprise considering I'd always felt drawn to the international aspect of International Relations. It's one of the things I love most about my job.

Q: So what does your job entail?

A: I am director of a consultancy firm specialised in logistics. We work for a number of branch organisations (in fashion, in sports, the furniture sector – well-known names in the industry) in four different countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden. In short: we advise the members of these branch organisations, organise, take care of all sorts of things in the field of logistics. These four countries make for a pretty international happening already, but we also keep in touch with companies in Asia, as most of the clothing is made in China and other Asian countries.

Q: Any words of advice for current students of English?

A: A tip from me to the younger generations, although it may not be for everyone – it's fun to be an entrepreneur. I didn't become one myself until 5 years ago, which is quite late, but I think it's necessary to have some experience in the field first. You don't start to see how things work until you're part of, say, a management board.

I very much like being an entrepreneur. It comes with a lot of freedom and it's very rewarding, in the sense that you are directly responsible for your actions. Cause and effect are closely tied together at all times. You do what must be done – or you don't. You can harvest the fruits of your efforts – or you can't. I'd like to remind everyone of the possibility, as it's really much easier and more fun than you might think.

It's also good to remember that University is in itself a sort of parallel universe, with its own dynamics and view of reality, of the world. It's good to not get stuck in that bubble. It isn't anyone's fault in particular, but that view is a limited one. It's good to view things from a different perspective as well – whether it be through an internship or a job on the side – it helps your personal development. It is the same in my job – you deal with a lot of company owners. It's got its pros and cons: although I do sometimes miss the intellectual depth, I like the hands-on approach of it all.



Culture Corner

FILM

Train to Busan

By Lucinia Philip

Although I wasn't planning on writing about another Korean film, I felt the need to promote one of the best films in the zombie-genre. Train to Busan is South Korea's first zombie film and the debut film of director Sang-ho Yeon, which has gained worldwide recognition and has been praised by many film festivals and award ceremonies. With an already released animated prequel and a sequel and possible American-remake coming up, Train to Busan has lived up to its expectations.

Train to Busan is about fund manager Seok-woo (Yoo Gong) who takes his daughter Soo-an (Su-an Kim) to see her mother in Busan. The film is set mainly inside the KTX (a high-speed line between Seoul and Busan) where Seok-woo and his daughter meet other passengers such as the tough Sang-hwa (Dong-seok Ma) and his pregnant wife Seong-kyeong (Yu-mi Jung). Briefly before the train departs, the nation gets struck by a virus outbreak causing everybody who is infected to turn into a zombie. Not long after their train journey has begun, the virus spreads throughout the train. A remaining group of survivors, including the previously mentioned characters, now must arrive safely in Busan where the military has established a quarantine zone.

I must say that the film wasn't as scary as I initially thought it would be. The zombies were an exorcism version of those in World War Z, making them at times more laughable than horrifying. This was also the first zombie film that has managed to make me cry. Where other zombie films concentrate mainly on action and gore, Train to Busan incorporates the melodrama that is characteristic for Korean cinema, creating a beautiful film with a life-lesson. Train to Busan explores the various relationships that can exist between humans and how these relationships influence us as and our actions. Especially the development of the relationship between Seok-woo and Sang-hwa, who learn what's truly important in life through the other survivors and sacrifices that have been made, is a heart-warming one.

Train to Busan is without a doubt my new favourite zombie film. The claustrophobic setting and well-written plot of the film are brilliant and the acting, particularly that of young Su-an Kim, is also remarkable. I would highly recommend this film to anyone, even those who have a dislike towards zombies as it is far from scary or gory.

Note: Train to Busan was released in Dutch theatres on March 30th

ACTIVITY

Muddy Cuddly Puppy

By Noa Tims

You are all – I suppose – familiar with the Culture Corner. Here, we discuss our opinions on cultural things such as films, music, books and the like. Then you can decide whether you'd like them enough to enjoy them. Now, this piece will not be very cultural at all, it doesn't have anything to do with the arts and it won't be concerned with providing critical opinions either: I just really love puppies and I went to see some a while ago so here's what I thought. I should mention they were not actually puppies, but wolves. Side note.

The first thing you notice: you never feel unsafe when in an enclosure with a wolf, but you are fully aware that this animal is in fact a wild predator, used to people, to be sure, but powerful and smart as well. Doesn't take away any of the cuteness, though.

Let's start at the beginning of the experience. I drove down to a little village in Belgium (read: so tiny they barely had a single place to get tea) with two of my friends. Even though we arrived in the centre of the village and had to walk a while before we got to the actual wolves, the first thing we heard was bone-chilling but surprisingly melodious (when you're used to the singing skills of my dog, at least) howling. We walked up the hill and were received by the sweetest guy, on his farm with sixteen wolves, sixteen cats, seven cows, four ponies, some sheep, dogs and a shitton of chickens. His wife was slightly more terrifying but they both clearly knew what they were doing.

The man took us to the enclosure of Hannah and Pjötr, two of the calmer wolves. We got to feed them and pet them – with their permission, that was very clear from the get go. Hannah was all over the place, yapping and howling and basically climbing in our guide's arms, while Pjötr was more careful, sniffing at your fingers when you least expected it. My friend got her arm chomped on, but it was all in good fun (they're so soft OMG).

After a couple of hours, we drove back home, mud-smeared and stinking of meat and wet dog, one childhood-dream off the bucket list (well, mine at least, not too sure about my friends)!



CONCERT

A State of Bewitchment: De Staat Concert Review

By Charlotte van Ruiten

The show opens with "Peptalk." The message of the song is clear: "We're gonna have some fun tonight," and De Staat delivers on that promise. The alternative rock band from Nijmegen plays their largest club show to date in a sold-out AFAS Live and pulls out all the stops. Frontman Torre Florim is completely in his element on stage as a musician and an entertainer, and the band plays like a well-oiled machine. Their at times heavy, industrial sound manages to stay lively through a combination of upbeat danceable songs and some calmer ones that allow the audience to rest their feet for a few minutes.

The tour is focussed on their newest album O, but old favourites like "Sweatshop" and "Down Town" are played with as much enthusiastic vigour as ever. "Back to the Grind" is even graced by the re-appearance of the impressive mechanical drum machine they toured with for their second album Machinery. A highlight for the fans was a new song, titled "Macarena" on the set list: an uplifting criticism of Trump and post-truth politics.

Rather than nicely playing their songs, De Staat pushes audience interaction further in this show than they have before. This reaches a pinnacle when Torre picks up a camera and first points it and himself, his face grotesquely amplified on the screen behind him, then directly at members of the audience. "You gotta help yourself," his fans scream back at him with devotion.

The show could not end with anything but what has become De Staat's trademark circle pit. As the first notes of "Witch Doctor" are played the excitement is palpable. People crowd around the centre of the floor where Torre has positioned himself. Mimicking the song's successful music video, the mass of human bodies starts revolving around Torre on the beat of the music. It's an impressive sight to behold and an unforgettable experience to be a part of.

The machine, the camera, the circle pit, they've done it all before, but it all comes together to create a spectacular show. Relying on gimmicks to liven up a performance can fall flat, but the elements are carefully chosen and create a great interaction with the audience. And most importantly, while the props are memorable, excellent music still takes centre stage.

FILM

Beauty and the Beast

By Minthe Woudstra

In the last week of March the long awaited live-action retelling of Disney's Beauty and the Beast opened in movie theatres. One day after its premiere in the Netherlands, I tried getting tickets in three theatres and finally, at the fourth one there were still a few seats available. I braced myself, not only for the theatre full of people, but even more so for the rendition that took on my favourite Disney film.

The film started with the classic monologue without too many of the words deriving from the original film, and soon after this the music of the first iconic song starts. One of the things I was most afraid of was the massacre of the songs. However, they incorporated the old song in an honourable way. The film also included beautiful additional songs, which admittedly, thanks to Spotify, I already know by heart.

There are extra dimensions added to the film as well; Belle is the scientist instead of her father, and there is more attention to who her mother was. Next to this, the movie has more POC representation, shows the first interracial kiss in a Disney movie, and it is implied that Lefou is not straight.

As far as casting goes, Emma Watson's image of a bookworm certainly coincides with that of Belle's, although Emma's singing did fall short in certain parts. Luke Evans, who played Gaston, has a perfect voice for the part, and his companion Lefou, played by Josh Gad, was the ideal casting representation of Gaston's sidekick.

As Beauty and the Beast holds a special place in my heart I was critical, but in the end I was pleasantly surprised. The retelling stayed close to the original whilst making progressive changes. After that first time watching the film, I went to see it again two days later, and my third visit is already planned. Needless to say, the film will not disappoint, 10/10 would recommend.



FILM

Logan

By Vincent Potman

Logan is a successful movie. Not just because it was a blockbuster hit that makes comic fans cry their eyes out, but also because it is a beautiful closer to a franchise and a pair of roles, as Patrick Stewart and Hugh Jackman go out as Professor X and Wolverine one last time.

Set in 2029 when almost all Mutants are dead, a despondent Logan is drinking away his time while laying low on the Mexican border. He earns his wage by being a driver for hire, and so hopes to support his two fellow mutants; the albino Caliban and Logan's ailing mentor, Charles Xavier. Xavier is experiencing worsening seizures which, with a mind that powerful, harm not just him but also his surroundings. Keeping him isolated and medicated is thus a necessary thing for all involved. Realising this need for absolute solitude, Logan plans to buy a yacht upon which they can live out the end of their days. Of course, this smooth plan of his is derailed by the appearance of a woman who asks him to help out her child – to get her to safety. Safety is rather far off, though, and so Logan has to fight his way there alongside the girl, whose existence raises a lot of questions. Travelling they search for answers, those of the past, but also of the future.

“A journey, one that

**Jackman and Stewart bring to life
fantastically with their superb acting.”**

Time – its power and the inevitability of its passing – is thus a major theme of the movie and rightly so. Wolverine is a thing of the past, a bygone, and all that is left now is Logan the man. The movie does this justice by leaving out most of the “superhero” elements that have been so much the staple of the genre. The combat is not flashy or over the top, but is instead gritty and harsh, truly deserving of the R rating. Upbeat is also not the name of the game, and the film is coiled with tension throughout. Action packed as it is, it is the emotion that drives it every turn. It is a journey, one that Jackman and Stewart bring to life fantastically with their superb acting. A journey I recommend going on, even if you're not a huge Marvel or Superhero movie fan, because just like *Arrival* (2016) reconstructed a sci-fi premise, so does Logan the superhero genre.

CONCERT

Review Iguana Death Cult: EKKO in ACU

By Lola van Scharrenburg



On a Thursday night in March, Rotterdam band Iguana Death Cult played the last show of the release tour of their debut album, *The First Stirrings Of Hideous Insect Life*, in a sold out ACU. The band having been described as protopunk, garage rock and psychgarage, it promised to be an interesting evening.

The show was opened by Creepy Karpis, a garage band from Zwolle with surf influences. The band has only released one EP so far, but had no problem filling their half hour with a ton of energy and enthusiasm. As with any show, the crowd needed some time to warm up, but halfway through their performance, Creepy Karpis has a large portion of the crowd bouncing up and down. After a short break and a welcome gasp of fresh air outside, it was time for Iguana Death Cult to enter the relatively small stage. Creepy Karpis had clearly set the mood, because within no time the entire venue was dancing, jumping and moshing. Iguana Death Cult played well: they were tight, clean and on key. There appeared to be a fair amount of dedicated fans, singing along to every word. The people who were less familiar with the band, like myself, had no problem tagging along though. The positive vibe, high energy and, at times, catchiness of the songs, made it very hard to keep standing still.

By the end of the show, most of the crowd were rather exhausted, mainly as a result of the never-ending mosh pit but also due to the extreme heat in the venue, which didn't seem quite well ventilated enough for shows like this. No one seemed to be complaining though, and after some 45 minutes of non-stop energy, 200 hot and sweaty bodies left the venue, tired but satisfied.

WORD OF THE BOARD



By Jitske Brinksma

Anyone who knows me knows I love (and I do mean really really love) food. Jamie Oliver has become godlike in my house and I'm on first name basis with

him (“don’t put that in, Jamie says...”). Today, however, I won’t be talking about Jamie’s gloriousness. Instead I’d like to share my other greatest food and cooking passion with you all: The Great British Bake Off. Now, you may have heard that the GBBO has recently been sold to Channel 4 and that some of the presenters have decided to leave the show. I will remain loyal to the original show and never watch it ever again (except maybe once, just to judge them for how terrible it all is), so I feel that this is a great time to reflect on the show.

Although I could say many sappy things about the show, one of my favourite things about the show are the many many baking puns. To give you an example, in the most recent season one of the presenters asked a contestant: “Do you want me to put my warm hands on your stiff bag?” And this is only the beginning. My dear fellow board member Iris recently made me aware of a Facebook page called No Context Great British Bake Off. An entire Facebook page full of GBBO puns. I couldn’t be happier. So, after spending some (okay, a lot) of time on this page, I decided to provide you with a collection of the greatest GBBO puns. If you’ve never watched the show I hope this will convince you to start (the original BBC version of course, not the abomination that the Channel 4 one will surely be), and if you, like me, religiously follow the show, I hope this will remind you why this show is just the best ever. “It’s soft - better let that firm up before I can use it”. “It’s very, very moist”. “I haven’t even shaved my armpits, Howard”. “The children are cooked now”. “Just use your fingers, stretch it out”. Sorry about this.

DON'T EVEN GET ME STARTED! PC CULTURE: CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG

By Vincent Potman

PC culture has been a growing phenomenon since the turn of the millennium, and our generation grew up with it. Political correctness – PC for short – is the term used to describe words, actions or policies intended to avoid causing any person or group offense. As one can expect it is a term borne from the USA, where there are more than a few grievances that have not healed well – or at all. Usually it’s a term used by the Right to imply excessively soft policies, and that the Left is furthering a self-victimization culture. To an extent I can agree that perhaps some people and groups have gone off the deep end with it, but I cannot say it is utter garbage. As with many things, PC culture only works in moderation.

The whole movement is based on a wish for multiculturalism and mutual respect, which can’t be achieved by slinging around racial slurs and epithets. No, for anything to heal there must be respect, or at least a willingness to understand one another, which is where an excess of political correctness turns into the very thing it espouses to erase. For example, some people take it too far by interpreting it as the validation for their opinions and values, making all others irrelevant and wrong whilst others try too hard to be PC all the time, making their efforts to seem respectful a sham, letting it take on a tone of mockery. One could thus say these people suffer from hyper-correction.

Indeed, it seems that to use politically correct language one would have to use it... politically. The ideal is thus to have it be an organic part of your speech and actions, and not force it upon yourself or others. To me it has always been an attitude, a way of conducting yourself, rather than a “movement” you can be a part of. Especially now, in the Trump Era where divides in opinions, values and views continue to grow and worsen, it is ever more important that it be used for what it was originally intended: building bridges. If anyone, however, doesn’t offer you the same courtesy, know that you are the better person because you at least tried to respect them – they just didn’t let you.



B O O K S H E L F

S I M O N E

By Job Petersen

For this edition, I visited Simone Schoonwater. She is a former Phoenixeer who conducted many Bookshelf interviews herself. So, it seemed interesting to ask her about her very own bookshelf once.

What is your favourite book?

“I don’t have the feeling that I have discovered my ultimate true love book yet. But I if have to choose right now, I’d go for Freedom by Jonathan Franzen. I bought it during the Big Trip to New Castle two years ago. I just randomly picked it in the bookshop. The characters are more important than the story itself, as with many books. One character was completely obsessed with the environment and this brought up my own activism. After my bachelor I’d like to do a premaster in Environment and Society Studies, which is about how you can accomplish sustainability. Yeah, you really become activist-like after reading this and it sticks with you. The story itself isn’t that interesting.”

What makes a book good according to you?

“As I already mentioned, the characters are important to me. I also like it when authors have a very specific style and language. An example of this is Jonathan Safran Foer: the stories aren’t that special, but the language makes it interesting.”

Do you have a favourite character then?

“I don’t really have one character, but rather a couple of persons together. They’re from a Dutch book called Freaks by Joey Goebel. It’s about some people in a band who are all weird yet very original. They are probably the best character I’ve ever read about, which is why I reread it quite a lot.”

Team prose or poetry?

“Well, eventually I’m going to write my thesis about poetry, but I don’t know how that happened. A couple of poets I consider amazing, others not that much. So, yeah...”

Last year you wrote for Phoenix yourself, do you have any intentions of writing later on?

“I always wanted to become a journalist, but now I’m hoping to study Environment and Society Studies, which is a completely different master. Now, it does seem like fun to me to go back to

writing later, but then about that area. However, I was on the book panel of Sevendays once and I was able to interview some authors. So, if someone were to ask me right now to write book reviews, I’d love to do that as well.”

What is your favourite Harry Potter book?

“This is quite a tough question for me. I think part three or part six.

Part three is fun because it’s so different from the rest with time travelling and crazy stuff like that. Also part six because it’s very funny on one hand, like Ron being poisoned with love potion, but

on the other hand it’s also the last book set in Hogwarts. Plus, they finally believe Harry was right, that really annoyed me in part five.”

I asked others about their favourite Shakespeare play, but they didn’t really have one. Do you?

“Oh but I do: Macbeth. I remember being really obsessed with it when I was about fifteen, only because it features witches. I also went to see it a couple of times, here in The Netherlands, but also on a festival in Edinburgh. I still like it because of the crazy things that happen. And it’s Scottish.”

Now you mention it, you go to Scotland frequently, don’t you? Have you discovered a favourite Scottish word?

“Yeah, that’s right. I was planning on studying abroad to Scotland last semester, but now I’m planning to do this master, for which I also go abroad. So, that would be too much. But I have a friend over there whom I visit a lot indeed. I don’t really have a favourite word, but I have discovered that in the Glasgow region giving a kiss means giving a headbutt. This is kind of funny I think.”

“I think studying English has ruined it a bit, I have become too critical.”

Do you have a favourite author?

“No, not really. However, I do have a book which has become quite a project for me: Infinite Jest by David Foster Wallace. It

contains more than

a thousand pages and is very tough to get through, but it’s really original with odd words and funny scenes. He writes observations which make me think like ‘oh right, I always have this as well’. Another author I think is great is Jeanette Winterson, with for example The Stone Gods. She’s a social critic to the extreme. Also really feminist, so that makes me happy.”

Is social criticism a recurring theme in the books you like reading?

“Well, this book is really critical, because it’s very pro LGBT rights and feminism. Other books I read are less critical, but do have an ironic attitude, towards America for example. This is quite nice. Also, J.K. Rowling does this a little bit as well, writing ironically about the British society.”

Favourite film adaptation?

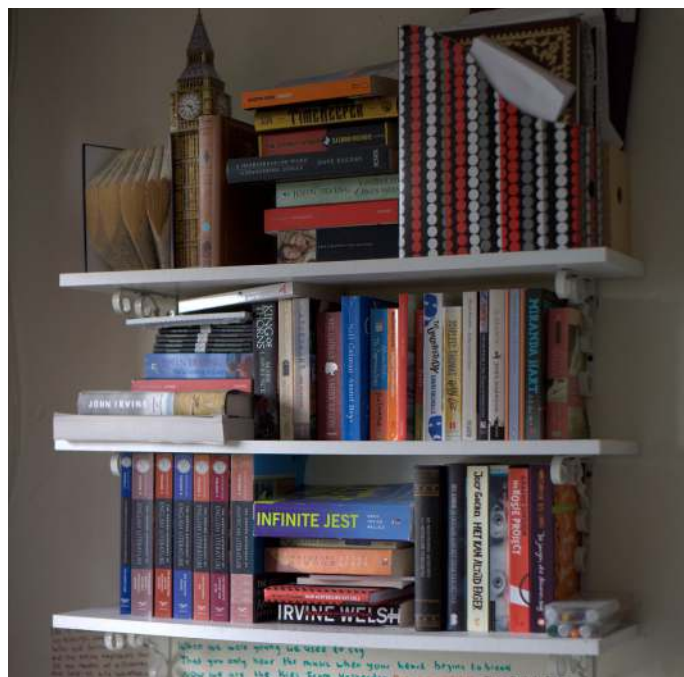
“Trainspotting. Yes, Scottish again haha.”

What book are you most ashamed of for not having read yet?

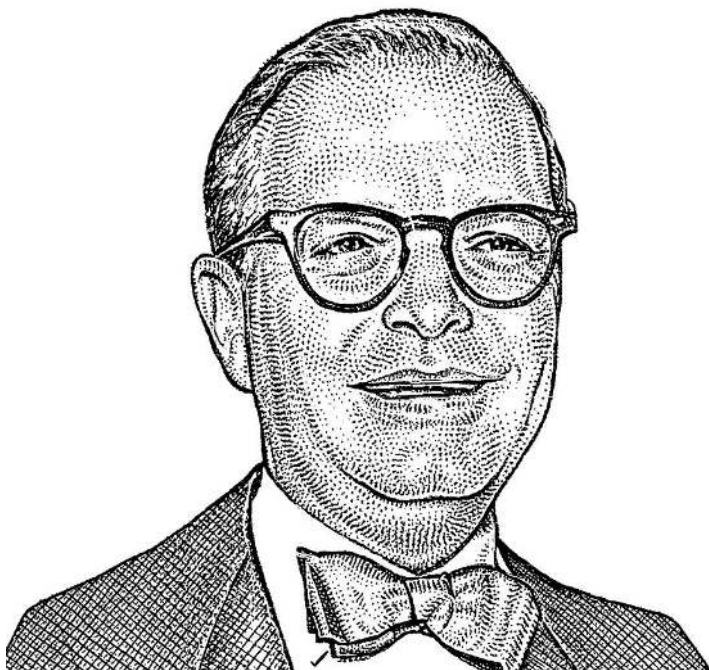
“I have never read Lord of the Rings, so that has become quite a thing right now. When I was fourteen I began reading The Hobbit, because chronology, but I thought it was dull and I never bothered to finish it. I used to like fantasy very much, but now it’s not really my thing any more. Plots begin to get a little unoriginal and superstitious. I think studying English has ruined that a bit, I have become too critical.”

Finally, what book would you recommend at the moment?

“I’d go for The Art of Fielding by Chad Harbach. It’s about baseball, I don’t do sports myself and the sport doesn’t interest me, but baseball is more of a context really. Once again, it’s the characters that I love the most. Very touching. And if you can write a book about baseball and let me check Wikipedia about a sport I don’t like, well then I think that says a lot.”



“All
literature
is gossip”
Truman Capote



Colofon

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