

FALL 2018

ISSUE N° 24

PHOENIX



— The Mythology Issue

SING IN ME, MUSE, AND THROUGH ME TELL THE STORY...



Index

THE DEATH OF WINTER

A river
Stained with the paleness of ice,
The air
Filled with the coldness of night.

A winter unending
To all it did seem.
The death of life
Covered by a blanket of snow.

A woman
Her skin as pale as Death's bony hand,
Her hair
Darker than the lair of Veles himself,
She walked
Among her wintry graveyard of life.

And tears from her eyes
Fell like snowflakes from the sky.
Her sorrowful gaze set
On the depths of the river.

She knelt
By the darkness of the water,
Her tears
Taken by the blackness of the stream.

Her life had to end
In the depths of that river.
So, she let herself fall
And Marzanna drowned.

A morning
Ensued by the songs of birds,
A forest
Awakening from its long sleep,
And life
Reborn in the warmth of spring.

by Robert Ziolkowski

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photo by angela kroes



As a child, I was always interested in the stories of the gods, whether they would be Greek/Roman gods, the Christian God etc. I never realised the impact those stories had on me or the world. Growing up I saw the Christian aspects of the Narnia series, and I started to realise what the gods meant for the Greek civilisation at the time (eventually even writing my Profielwerkstuk about it), and I discovered this enormous respect or fondness for the idea of religion, and what it meant for people and religion itself.

Just to state this: I've never read the Bible; however, I am (being a Waldorf kid) familiar with Christian stories. Looking into the depiction of women within old mythological stories and religious stories, I must say I got somewhat frustrated. However, I recently came across an article from Broadly telling the story of Lilith, who you may know as the dangerous female demon of the night.

Lilith was Adam's first wife, created from the same clay as Adam, and therefore, she was his equal. A disagreement arose between the two about sex – she was his equal and therefore, should not lie under him and be subservient to him. In 1972, Judith Plaskow wrote "The Coming of Lilith" in which she depicted Lilith as a feminist icon. All of this is part of the "Feminist revisionist mythology": literary criticism that engages with the politics of feminism and mythology, fairy tales, religion etc.

As I almost always do when Christmas is just around the corner, I started re-reading the Narnia series. I realised that Jadis, the badass main antagonist of the first two books in the series (The Magician's Nephew and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe) is a descendant of Lilith and the giants. Lilith is depicted as something nonhuman in the very few lines in which she is mentioned. A feminist reading of Narnia is something I have never done; something that I perhaps should do for my own sake. Let's just hope my opinion on the story will not change. Still, whatever happens, Lucy will always be a childhood feminist icon for me.

Love,
Baukje Harmsma
Commissioner of External Affairs



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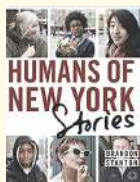
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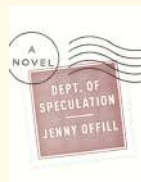
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staff picks

What We're Reading



INDIE: HUMANS OF NEW YORK BY BRANDON STANTON



LAUREL: DEPT. OF SPECULATION BY JENNY OFFILL



NURAI: IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK BY JAMES BALDWIN



TANISHA: ELEA NOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE BY GAIL HONEYMAN



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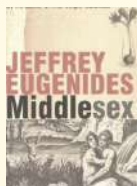
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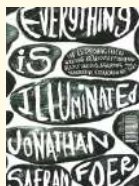
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ROBERT: THRAWN: ALLIANCES BY TIMOTHY ZAHN



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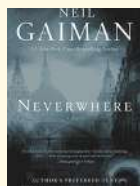
ROOS: EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED BY JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER



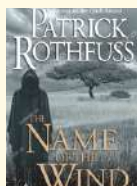
CELONIE: THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE BY AUDREY NIFFENEGGER



CECILIE: LODBROG-SØNNERNES HÆVN BY LASSE HOLM



ANGELA: NEVE RWHERE BY NEIL GAIMAN



HANKA: THE NAME OF THE WIND BY PATRICK ROTHFUSS



TESSA: THE MARS ROOM BY RACHEL KUSHNER

Phoenix Yearbook

With a new year comes a new Phoenix, and with a new Phoenix comes a new team! Throughout the year you will get to know more about our members via the Instagram account, but for now, a short introduction will do:



INDIE REIJNIERSE



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TANISHA WETSTEEN



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PERCY LESSOFF



ROBERT ZIOLKOWSKI



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CECILIE BALEMANS -HØJBERG



ROOS SPEELMAN



CELONIE ROZEMA



ANGELA KROES



TESSA KARSTEN



HANKA DAMSMA

INDIE REIJNIERSE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It's been a long wait, but it's finally here: a brand-new Phoenix issue. For the first time it's filled with illustrations alongside text and photos, and what better way to let our illustrators showcase their talent than with drawings of ancient creatures such as the Nokken and the Minotaur? You guessed it! This issue's theme is mythology. Throughout the issue you will be introduced to myths from all around the world, from the better-known Nordic myths to more mysterious Slavic and New England myths. We'll even come across some modern adaptations of classic myths in the first publications of our short story contest. Aside from our new additions, naturally we remain loyal to some of the older articles. So, as always, you can get to know one of your teachers better in Tea Time and you can find more answers to the age-old question 'what the hell can you do with an English degree?' in Q&Alumni! There is much more to be said about the contents of our first issue, but what better way to find out what this Phoenix has in store for you than to just dive in and start reading?

Happy reading & much love from the Phoenix Team!

Where the Nøkken dwells



WRITTEN BY TESS MASSELINK ILLUSTRATION BY CECILIE BALEMANS-HØJBERG

I wander through my garden at home, at the farm where my father has lived all his life. The wind rustles through the now brown-coloured leaves, making the branches creak and my hair blow in my eyes. I hear the calls of two ravens that are flying high up in the air. Their song sounds old, forlorn and very much alive. I walk onto the sandy road which leads into the woods.

A creek flows alongside the path, weaving like a string of life through the woods. The sounds of the water, trees and the ravens fill my ears, the smell of the earth enters my nose, and the wind tickles my skin and waters my eyes, as my feet trample the earth and lead me to wherever they want me to go.

The pine trees seem to grow taller and thicker the further I walk. There are no more sunbeams entering through the ceiling of leaves, even though it is thinner than it was a few weeks ago, when it was still summer. The stream grows wider, bears more water and grows, like the wind, ever louder. I no longer hear vehicles nor calls from the ravens. Still my feet keep going, and still I don't know where.

The sound of the water is now nearly deafening. I put my hands on my ears as I make my way through a sudden growth of thick bushes, their enormous and sharp thorns tugging at my trousers and blouse, scratching my skin through the thin fabric. While I am stumbling through the bushes, the sound of the water becomes so loud that it starts ringing in my ears. I close my eyes and walk on. The earth becomes loose and suddenly I am falling and rolling down a steep slope. Rocks, mud, roots of plants and twigs are coming down with me and engulf me as my fall is broken by steady ground. I open my eyes and stand up.

The bright stars are reflected on the surface of a great and still lake before me. Everything is silent. Suddenly, the surface of the lake seems to be spinning and my ears start ringing again, though now of silence. A sudden breeze blows over the lake, sneaking up from my feet to my head, making me shiver while my gaze is forced to the centre of the lake.

A pair of lights shine in my direction and another cold shiver runs through my body. I realise that I have entered the cold water and am now walking towards the lights as they are slowly drifting towards me. It seems as if there are long strings of water-weed surrounding the lights, but intuitively I know that it's hair. I feel no fear as the Nøkken approaches...

It reaches for my hand and leads me towards deeper water, eager to show me the beauty of its dark world, and I allow it to take me deep down under the surface.

New England

BY PERCY LESSOFF

Like every region of the United States, New England – consisting of the states Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island – has its own legends and folklore. Many early European colonial settlements were in New England, which is reflected in its architecture and local traditions. This, along with the forested hills and seaside towns with their history of trade and whaling, gives it a unique atmosphere. Where the myths and legends of the South are tense and Gothic in nature, and the horrors of the Midwest lurk in small towns and cornfields, much of New England's folklore is rooted in the ghosts of its storied past. (N.B. The Indigenous peoples of the area each have their own beliefs and traditions, but those are another topic entirely – one which I am not qualified to write about.) The state of Massachusetts has produced two of the most famous of New England's historical stories.

One such event is the Salem Witch Trials. From 1692 to 1693, the people in and around the town of Salem, Massachusetts were swept up in a widespread panic about witches in their community. Over 200 people were accused, and 19 were hanged on charge of witchcraft. Many of these people were considered outcasts in their community. The events in Salem have been an inspiration for numerous stories dealing with witches in the United States, especially in the area of New England. Nowadays, the town of Salem has embraced its history with museums and historical locations preserved to commemorate the events. In addition to those who were executed, an elderly man named Giles Corey was pressed to death when he refused to plead either guilty or innocent to the charge. He still plays a part in the folklore of the region – his ghost is said to appear whenever something terrible happens in Salem. He was also said to have cursed the position of sheriff (which ended when the sheriff's office was moved to a different town).

Another of the most famous horrors of New England's past is the story of Lizzie Borden, also from Massachusetts. She rose to infamy in the 1890s after becoming the prime suspect in the murders of her father and stepmother, executed with an axe. She was acquitted due to lack of evidence but is still considered to be the most likely candidate for the murder. She remained in the town of Fall River even after the murders, though she was considered a pariah by the community. The house in which the crime was committed is now a museum and bed-and-breakfast dedicated to the event, which is said to be haunted by the spirits of the victims. The event gained widespread media attention and was immortalized in a morbid children's jump-rope rhyme:

Lizzie Borden took an axe

And gave her mother forty whacks.

When she saw what she had done,

She gave her father forty-one.

Indeed, New England is filled to the brim with haunted houses – a quick google search leads to travel sites and local news articles listing the most interesting ones to visit. New England's history and landscape give it an atmosphere which is mysterious and spooky. It's also pretty much the only part of the United States where the horror isn't in the vastness of the unknowable landscape. Some of its folklore resembles certain aspects of European folklore more than the rest of the country – but its dramas and mysteries adapted, and evolved in the unique landscape of the American Northeast. Perhaps 'haunted' is a good description of New England's legends in general – the ghosts of its past linger on.

Their Faces Are Watching You.

BY ROBERT ZIOLKOWSKI

Forgotten and forlorn, it lay submerged in the cold waters of the Zbruch river: the arm of the mighty Dniester cutting through the lands the Slavs call theirs to this day. Once, one could marvel at the reliefs carved into this pillar of limestone, and by gazing upon the images one would gaze upon the world itself. But when Christianity washed over the tribes of these lands, from the Czechs to the Moravians, from the Poles to the Rus, so too did the waters of oblivion cover the carvings of the Zbruch *batwan*. Yet for a moment let the ancient truths of the Slavs - their truths of this world and the one beyond - be revealed to us.

If you had gazed upon the stone carvings of this monolith, you would have looked upon the face of the three-headed god Triglav, the incarnation of the sacred tree that is the world. The tree was planted by the supreme and absolute, life-giving god named Rod. On the tree's beautiful branches, stretching upwards to the sky, rests the god Svarog, who is the heavenly realm incarnate – a world to which mortals do not belong. They belong to the solid trunk of the tree, the terrestrial realm ruled by Perun - the god of thunder and lightning - and the son of Svarog. It is here that the gods and goddesses wield their power as spirits that invoke the forces of nature. They are all manifestations of either Belobog, the white god, or Chernobog, the black god. It is their oppositional and simultaneously complementary duality that shapes the world of mortals: the male and female, day and night, light and dark, heaven and underworld. Ah yes, the dark netherworld, the roots of the tree where snakes crawl and beavers live, the realm ruled by the chthonic god *Veles*.

Batwan: This is the Polish name for idols of this sort.

Veles: Chthonic meaning "relating to or inhabiting the underworld".

It is *Veles* who is the eternal opponent of *Perun*, always crawling out of the murky depths of his watery underworld to provoke the god of thunder and lightning. Whenever *Veles* emerged, *Perun* would chase him across the world, casting vicious bolts of lightning from the sky in an attempt to end the chaos that his opponent brought into the realm he ruled. Yet – though *Veles* was clever and cunning, hiding behind animals, trees, houses or even mere mortals – he could never escape the just wrath of the thunder god. Thus, whenever dark clouds of storm gathered and lightning struck from the sky, the Slavs of old knew another battle between the two gods had begun. But they also knew that when the storm had passed, *Veles* was cast back into the netherworld and *Perun* had been triumphant.

However, we must not forget the faces of the other gods and goddesses that wield their power in the realm of mortals. Remember the face of *Svetovid*, the four-headed god of war, light, and power. Remember the face of *Ognebog*, the fire god whose divine flame connects *Svarog* to the terrestrial world. Remember the face of *Jarilo*, the god of spring, fertility, sexuality, and peace. And remember the face of *Marzanna*, the goddess of winter and death, who each year drowns herself in a river to bring forth the rebirth of life in the spring.

So many faces yet to remember, so many names yet to speak of, but time passes like the waters of the Zbruch river pass over the idol that lays buried in its depth. Like the morning must come to kill the night, so too must the *batwan* become forgotten again...

Short story contest!

STORIES BY

Myrthe Neijens

Isolde van Gog



Illustration by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg, based on depictions of Polynesian gods.

Tessa and Ariana

A modern Theseus and Ariadne retelling.

"We're here for the escape room. There's fourteen of us."

The guy behind the counter nodded and pointed at a bunch of comfortable-looking couches. "If you could just wait there, then we'll call you when you're allowed to enter. I'm afraid you cannot go in all at once, so you'll have to split the group into two smaller groups of seven. Ariana will take it from there and provide you with the instructions." A beautiful girl - who looked about our age - came in, grinning at all of us. She and I met eyes, and I could feel my chest tightening. Even while she was silently watching us divide the group, I couldn't stop staring at her. Her blue-dyed hair appeared close to silver under the bright, artificial lights, and glistened as she absent-mindedly curled strands of it around her elegant fingers, which were decorated with short, painted nails.

Once we had decided on the groups, she briefly explained everything we needed to know about escape rooms, before turning to the guy to ask whether we could go in yet. He shook his head. "The last people are still in there. I say it'll take fifteen minutes, tops." Ariana, clearly not having anything else to do, sat down on the couch with us, and since I was sitting on the outside, she ended up next to me.

"I'm Tessa, nice to meet you." I was not surprised to hear that my voice didn't sound as natural as I had liked it to be, but Ariana's smile was a kind one, with no trace of mockery.

"Nice to meet you too, Tessa. Have you ever done an escape room before?"

"Nah, never. I just don't really know what to expect, which makes me pretty nervous." Ariana moved closer to me and I could feel the heat rising to my cheeks.

"I'll tell you what, if you give me your number, I can text you while you're in there and give you some tips on how to solve the puzzles. But only if you want to," she added hastily. My eyes widened, but I couldn't repress the smile that was spreading across my face at the same time.

"Wouldn't that get you in trouble? I don't want to see you get fired because of me."

"Are you kidding? My dad owns this place. I only help him out because it's fun, so I'm not even getting paid. He can't fire me," she laughed.

The feeling I got when she walked in now hit me again, only ten times harder. We quickly exchanged our phone numbers and when it was time to go into the escape room, I felt her hand brush against my arm. "Good luck, Tessa." I was ready to face whatever dangers were in there.

That which was lost in the forest

A modern Tristan and Iseult retelling

The forest seemed to reach the edge of the world, a place where time no longer existed. The trees stretched higher than the lowest clouds, and the bushes were so close-knitted that animals saw no use in hiding. In one of the many meadows, a couple lay on their backs looking at the sky. It had felt as if they had been there for ages. As she turned to look at him, she wondered if flowers would grow over his face if they stayed there any longer. When the sun disappeared behind a cloud for a second, it would already look like the grass that tickled his cheek grew the tiniest bit closer to his nose. It was only a matter of time, she thought, until it would touch the freckles sprinkled across his face.

She lifted her hand and moved to touch his face, but his hand caught hers and their eyes met. His gaze, as intense as when they first met, was drenched in fear, longing, and something that felt like home. Before they met they had been so lonely, so lost. They were found the moment their hands met. Every touch still felt like finding an intangible but crucial thing.

The heat of the sun was warmer than what could be considered comfortable, but they didn't move. Her fair skin, prepared for dreary mornings and overcast afternoons, almost sizzled in the hot midday sun. She deserved the pain, the slow burn of it. She imagined that her affair must feel like a raging, burning slap across the face to Mark. She had promised they would suffer together, therefore she deserved every damned ray of sunlight that fell upon her body.

As they looked at each other, tears began to form in her eyes. He gripped her hand tighter because he understood. They couldn't hide here forever, this was merely an interlude, a short break before the end. The air hung around them, warm and full. Liquid sorrow leaked out of her eyes, every drop fighting for its right to make so soon an appearance. With his thumb, he gently pushed them away as if pushing away the curtains of worry surrounding her thoughts. He caressed the back of her head, his fingers getting caught in her slightly tangled hair, and brought their faces as close together as possible. Their lips touched ever so softly, only to be pressed together with a force fueled by desperation.

"I have to return you, don't I," he murmured. She gave him the smile only the hopeless can give. The light reflected in her eyes mimicking the faith they both wished they could have. She knew he would find someone else. He couldn't imagine he would, she had bewitched him. He had walked into her trap and taken her down with him. Nothing would be able to compare to this.

His angry arms circled around her like ropes, and he held her so tight it would cause bruises. Her nails dug into his back and her tears seeped into his shirt. They were slowly losing themselves. Between every choked-up breath, they braced themselves for the worst possible outcome.

The trees felt as if they were closing in and he released her from his hold. He thought he could taste the ending, but it would end up taking longer than anticipated to come to a close. How similar it would be though, her hands clawing at his rigid figure, tears drowning her features. Her last look being one of fear, longing and the loss of a place like home.

written by
robert ziolkowski

NETFLIX SERIES PT. I

Season 1, Episode 1 – On the Eve of Halloween

the girls who saw it all

"I bet you that none of these people out here celebrating Halloween even know a single thing about Samhain or Celtic mythology," Emily said as they passed through the restaurant's front door, coming out onto Janskerhof, lively as ever. She took Marie by the hand and flashed her a mischievous grin. Marie smiled shyly – as was her way – yet found herself agreeing with the statement. It took her a moment to gather herself, however, as the touch of Emily's soft, warm hand had made her head spin a little, no doubt also having tied her tongue into a nice tight knot. She already had produced enough socially-inconvenient sounds during their date tonight to last a lifetime. Suddenly Emily turned her head towards Marie, fake exasperation showing on her face.

"OMG, you're one of those people, aren't you? You think Halloween came from the States, don't you?" Her tone was one of mock disapproval. Marie laughed heartily this time and shook her head while answering.

"No, I don't! I know it was originally the day the Celtic people celebrated their new year and believed it was the day the spirit world and ours were closest to one another."

"Which is why people dressed up as monsters to trick the spirits - oh-so-rudely invading our realm of existence - into believing they were one of them," Emily continued with exaggerated satisfaction, the two women walking hand in hand along the shimmering canals.

"See? I do have taste when it comes to dating people. I always pick the intelligent ones."

Marie kept smiling, thoroughly enjoying her date's proximity. She could not deny anymore, not for a while now, that she had fallen in love with Emily. She adored every part of this witty, sometimes flamboyant, and positively crazy art major from New York, and seeing her eccentricity as a bright light that would broaden the perspective of every –

"Hello? Earth to spirit realm, is Marie there?" Emily interrupted her internal monologue, a bemused smirk resting on her soft pink lips. "This mere mortal here has asked a question," Marie lowered her head and chuckled softly.

"Sorry, I got lost in a train of thought."

"In other words, you got possessed. Great! I've always wanted to ask the spirit world some questions. Oh! Maybe you've got some long-dead ancestor of mine inside of you!" Emily joked. The two of them laughed as only friends and lovers could, walking down the street on their way to Marie's place.

"Anyway," Emily said once their laughter had settled down, "I was saying how much I had enjoyed our date together and how I hoped we could do this more regularly," she paused, almost expectantly, "you know, as a proper pair of monogamous randy lesbians." Marie was thankful they were not in the restaurant anymore, because that statement would have made her choke on her food for sure, in turn causing a most unflattering scene that without a doubt would have made Emily reconsider her words. The two of them laughed at Emily's words but then the realisation hit Marie, and in front of a dark alley where the lights were not working, she stopped and turned to her date.

"Wait, so is that you, I mean, you want me to be... Eh, that is, you and me..." she started, stumbling over her own words. Emily chuckled in response and pulled her companion closer.

"Yes, dummy, I'm asking you to –"

Suddenly Marie saw Emily frown and stop midsentence. For a moment she was worried her almost-girlfriend was reconsidering her entire proposition, but then Emily heard the sounds herself. Yelps of pain and pleas to stop, then... the unmistakable sound of someone being kicked and beaten. Both women turned their heads towards the unlit alley and peered into the darkness, immediately seeing several shapes standing over a heap or pile. No, not standing over it, kicking it viciously... and not a heap, but a person!

"Hey! We're calling the police!" Emily suddenly shouted angrily, taking several steps into the dark alley, pulling Marie along with her. The shadowy figures, who looked like men, all turned their heads into their direction and murmured some curses before taking off swiftly and disappearing behind a corner. Marie was already dialling the emergency number on her cell phone, her nervous breath appearing as wisps of condensed air in front of her.

"We need to check on whoever that was, they might be hurt," she said.

That seemed to snap Emily from her haze of anger, who appeared visibly disoriented for a moment but quickly got her wits about her.

"Yeah, you're right."

The two of them went deeper into the alley, their hands still firmly intertwined until they reached the person laying on the ground. Marie only heard Emily gasp beside her, while taking a step back as the image in front of her was burned into her brain. Blood gushed out onto the street from a deep head wound, the male-shaped body laying completely limp, the limbs twisted into unnatural angles. Yet it was the open eyes, the open and unmoving eyes of the young man sprawled out before them staring into the nothingness that caused her heart to sink.

"M-Marie, he –"

"He's dead," Marie breathed.

What Netflix can do with TV series we can do with written text, but... with a little twist. You just read the beginning of a short story named "The Girls Who Saw It All". This is meant as the start of a first "season", with this being episode one: the pilot of the series. The idea is that, like a Netflix series, each issue of the magazine will feature a new episode continuing the plot. Yet here comes in the little twist... what I started, I will not finish. Instead, **you** will! Yes, to keep the storyline surprising and unexpected we invite one of you to continue the story by picking up where I left off and write episode 2. The idea is to continue this with each following issue. The fictional story is set in Utrecht at our very own university... and you can be its writers!

Send your continuation of the story to albionphoenix@gmail.com to be considered.

COLORING FOR STUDENTS: DURGA EDITION

Grab your pens and enjoy your time with this special edition coloring page! A great way to wind down after a week of attending classes. Be sure to send us the end result through FaceBook and Instagram. Line art by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg



GENIUS VERIFIED

On a gloomy Monday morning, I ventured out to (seemingly) the other side of the country to talk to Ryan Wennekes - fellow firstie and member of the band Casual Moses - about his songwriting, musical inspirations, and his love for Tom Misch.

Casual Moses? That's an interesting name for a band!

Yeah, we get that a lot. We've been through quite a few names, but we're currently working with this one. We also considered Casual Jesus, but Casual Moses felt slightly more questionable. We also called ourselves Honeywell for a while, named after our first fan. Like, a literal fan in a rehearsal room. Terrible, I know. There have been quite a few names over the course of the band's life, but the members have stayed roughly the same: Reinout, Max and I are the band's core.

You mentioned that you do the majority of the singing in the band and also play the guitar. How did you get into music?

After playing the piano for a while, I decided to move on to the guitar by practicing on my brother's rejected guitar. I am definitely your average 'slaapkamer gitarist', inspired by John Mayer [laughs]. But when I got a Gibson from my parents I really started to pursue music. It has always been a way to express myself, which I think is what got me so passionate about it.

Would you say your songs reflect that need to express yourself?

Oh, yeah, for sure. Most of the songs for the band are written by me and Max: the band's lead guitarist. We, like most, write songs about our own experiences. Whenever we want to write about a certain event, we tinker on from that until we find something that fits. Max is definitely one for positive lyrics whereas I tend to take it to a bit of a moodier place, but I think that's exactly what makes us a good songwriting duo.

Are there any musicians that particularly inspire you?

Definitely Tom Misch. He really inspires me. The man even sings in a British accent, like, what's not to love? Besides that, Lianne La Havas, John Frusciante, Paul Desmond, the list goes on. Perhaps throw some 90's Chili Peppers in the mix. A lot of different genres, that's for sure. I feel like that is reflected by the music I tend to make, too.

Do you have any words of advice for aspiring musicians?

Just start! Literally, you need to just get up and start playing. You have to start somewhere. In particular: play with others, bounce ideas off of each other. That is one of the best ways to learn. And most importantly, have fun with it. That's what started this love of music for me.

Interview and photos by Tessa Karsten



Albioneers abroad with Tessa van der Heide

I'm writing this at my desk, after just having handed in my second essay for this semester. I've been running laundry all day and cleaning instead of writing, because I barely get anything done during the week!

I have been at the University of Manchester for slightly over 1,5 months now, as a Harting Scholar. I moved to my room on the 15th of September - and soon after was the Welcome Week - only to spend the week after that sick with Freshers Flu! I am a swimmer, so I joined the competitive squad of the UoM Swimming team, though I have to say that training four times a week is taking up a lot of my time.

I am taking three courses, two on linguistics and one statistics course, and I'm enjoying all of them; there is only one lecture and one seminar per course, but there's a lot of reading to be done outside of that! I got very lucky and saved a lot of money by borrowing my course books from the library, since I get to keep them for the entire semester. The main library - and the campus in general - is amazing. The Student Union is very active and there's an entire building (5 floors!) dedicated to study spots, from single cubicles to open office to group rooms you can book; it even includes napping pods on the second floor! (Why is this not a thing in Utrecht?!) I live really close to the University, near Oxford Street, so all my classes are, at most, a 15-minute walk away. There are a lot of fast-food restaurants, as well as plenty of supermarkets (Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Lidl) within a 10-minute walking distance. I considered getting a bike, but there are barely any cycling paths, and bike theft is a real problem here. The first "bicycle" I saw, only still had the frame! Plus, everything is so close that I can just walk everywhere or take a cheap bus (£1.50) everywhere else. My accommodation is pretty great, and my flatmates are really nice. There are 3 guys, who are from China, Canada and the UK, and three girls, including me, a girl from Denmark and one from the UK. So, it's really an international flat! I've made some local friends too, who then introduced me to their Irish and Australian flatmates! Aside from all the nice stuff and coursework, I am a student assistant for the Dutch beginner's class on Wednesdays and I give conversation class on my own on Thursdays.

I'm so busy that I barely have time to miss the Netherlands and though I miss my boyfriend and girl-squad a lot, I would definitely recommend going abroad with the Harting Scheme. It's very different from Utrecht, but it's been great, and I don't expect that to change anytime soon.



Albioneers abroad with Lotte Inkenhaag

It was the summer of 2016 when I found myself in Dublin for a week. A highlight for anyone who comes to this friendly city is visiting Trinity College. From then on, it was a dream for me to study there and this has finally come true! As I started to prepare, I became more and more nervous to move into my new home and meet my new housemates; a 60-something-year-old married couple who rent out bedrooms to international students. In hindsight, all the stress was, of course, not necessary and my so-called 'Irish parents' were more than delightful and extremely welcoming, even though their accent is so heavy it took me a couple of days to get used to it. After two weeks, however, I heard people telling me that I started throwing around Irish slang myself!

Next, of course, was the challenge of making new friends in this green country. As I had met some Irish students through international frisbee tournaments, I fitted in straight away with my new frisbee friends. Luckily, all of the societies in Trinity are very active and have a full schedule so there's no time to be bored. Every week, we do fun things like go to the theatre or, as this is Ireland, go for pints after practice. There are also themed house parties on the regular and if you are not dressed up properly, you have to do a forfeit which inevitably means more alcohol: sláinte! Whenever we have a free weekend, there are people going on trips to the countryside for a hike or to other cities to do some sightseeing, so there are loads of opportunities to become familiar with the locals!

Now, it's not all partying. Studying is, of course, the real reason I came here. While I was in Utrecht, I followed the Irish Literature module, taught so charmingly by our very own Onno Kusters and Alana Gillespie. I was extremely interested in this course and that's why I chose to follow more classes on it here in Dublin, because what better place to learn about Ireland than in its very capital? I'm currently following a course on The Troubles in Northern Ireland. The professors expect you to do a lot of extra reading besides the reading they assign. After all, I only have 6 hours of class so the other 34 hours are basically reading and studying by myself, which all the students obediently do (or not, you can fill that in yourselves).

All in all, this might truly be one of the best experiences in my short life so far. Even though I was super nervous and anxious about leaving my family, friends and especially my flatmates behind, ever since I got here, I have felt at home and welcome. It was totally worth all the paperwork, stress, and what seemed hundreds of emails to be sent back and forth.

Erasmus is great craic!

Minor & Master Market (Educational Minor)

By Geke Niemann

If you would jump into a time machine and visit me this time last year, you would find me working on my motivational form for the educational minor. In secondary school, I decided that I wanted to become a teacher and that's how I ended up studying English. As you might understand, picking a minor wasn't such a hard decision for me. However, if you're still not sure about whether or not teaching is something you'd like to do in the future, or if you, like me, are sure you'd like to become a teacher of English, continue reading, because I'll briefly tell you why I'm so passionate about the educational minor.

The educational minor programme really focuses on the combination of teaching and achieving knowledge about education. We (students of foreign languages) have didactics classes once a week. During these classes, we learn how we can improve our teaching in general and the teaching skills specific to language teaching (e.g. what's the best way to help students improve their listening skills). These classes involve a lot of reflection and ask for active participation. You talk about things you've experienced in class and reflect upon it with your fellow student-teachers. You discuss whether they've experienced similar problems and how they dealt with them. So, the knowledge you receive is connected to your teaching and the other way around. Our seminar group consists of 12 students, which means that you're really involved in each other's learning process and all grow to become better teachers together.

The minor also supports the step-by-step process of becoming a teacher: you'll start off with observing classes and reflecting upon the choices an experienced teacher makes. Through the year you'll slowly grow into the process of teaching all of the classes for a particular group yourself. Trust me, that's one of the best experiences ever.

Coming February I'll have completed my minor. I'll receive my second-degree teaching qualifications once I've completed my bachelor. If there's anything I've learned over the past year, it is that working in the educational sector is even better than I could




NOUR EL HOUDA (36)

HUMANS OF ALBION

Photo and interview by Angela Kroos

When I was 18, I lost my mother and took on the parenting role for my little sisters. Now I have three kids, of whom the youngest will turn four next month. Now that he's going to school like the others, I decided I wanted to do something completely different from staying at home. That's the reason why I have returned to university 18 years later. The most difficult part of going to university is combining it with taking care of my children: it requires careful time management and discipline. Sometimes I'm already preparing dinner at 8 in the morning for that evening, sometimes even the night before, but I'm very motivated. My kids are proud of me and that motivates me too. I want to set a good example for them, because I want them to know that they can do anything they want as long as they work hard.

A decorative illustration of a tea branch with several small, five-petaled flowers and leaves, positioned at the top left of the page.

Tea time

WITH CATHELEIN Aaftink

On a cold November afternoon, the delightful Cathelein Aaftink picked us up at the train station in Deventer. On the way to her home, she gave us a tour of her neighbourhood: the Havenkwartier. We began the trek up the stairs in her gorgeous four-story house, stopping along the way to make some tea in her kitchen. When it was ready, we climbed the final set of stairs to her study on the fourth floor, bringing with us her dog, Gijs (making this the second year in a row that the first Tea Time interviewee has a dog named such). Surrounded by bookshelves and a view of the city through the windows, we began the interview.

In conversation with PERCY LESSOFF & ANGELA KROES
Photos by ANGELA KROES Written by PERCY LESSOFF

What did you study?

"I studied Literary Studies, at Utrecht University, but I started out studying Liberal Arts and Sciences. One of the first courses I took was 'An Introduction to Literary Studies.' The ways of thinking and the topics touched upon in that course: that's where I wanted to be. So, I switched to Literary Studies in my second year." "Before I went to university, I studied Modern Dance in Rotterdam. I wanted to become a dancer ever since I was five or six years old. I studied at the Conservatory while going to secondary school, and I was accepted into the Modern Dance Academy in Rotterdam, a rather prestigious school. But it turned out I didn't like it. The combination of going to school and using my brain, and then taking dance classes from three to six every day - even on Saturdays - that worked for me. Only dancing all day just wasn't my cup of tea. It took a few months to come to terms with what I already knew in the second week or so. Then I decided it was time to give university a go. I was only during my traineeship at the Istituto Olandese in Rome, that I became really serious about pursuing a career in academia. I then applied to the Ph.D. program of the University of Alberta in Canada, because I was interested in joining the Reader Response research group, and I got in."

Where in Canada was this?

"In Edmonton, way up north, with winter temperatures of minus 30. I was thrown in the deep end in my first week at the University of Alberta. I had to teach a big course about how to write essays, about all the different requirements. This wasn't something I had thought much about. Up until that point I simply wrote essays, some of which just turned out better than others. This made it super stressful for me to teach such a course back then. A little less so today, after teaching at university for almost 15 years."

Since Cat also studied in Utrecht, she says it has made for some odd situations sometimes:

"Some of my colleagues today used to be my professors when I studied at the UU. For example, years ago I wrote a paper for Paul Franssen about all the different kinds of mentions of Shakespeare in Oscar Wilde's oeuvre. And now we are colleagues. So that would be like you and me teaching a course in ten or twenty years. How much fun that would be!"

Is your history with dance reflected in your studies now?

"Well, I'm really interested in experience, right? People ask me: 'What do you do? What kind of scholar are you?' and I say I'm a phenomenologist. Phenomenology is the philosophy and the study of consciousness, of experience and lived experiences. When you think about experience and you try to describe it in the most inclusive manner, there's always also the bodily. That, I feel, ties in with my past as a dancer. Plus, my teaching can be quite physical; I move around a lot especially when I really get into what I'm teaching."

Do you still dance?

"No, I do not. Well, not on stage. I made the decision to quit - no, I felt the decision, and then I actually made it a couple months later. I quit the Dance Academy cold turkey. This was a huge shock to my body because I used to dance eight to nine hours a day. For years I

compensated by going out a lot. There was a lot of clubbing! I also did yoga. I guess dancing was a talent of mine, but then I came to realise: 'This is not going to make me happy, this is not going to work for me. So, I'm just going to put this aside, and I'm going to do something else, because I am pretty sure my chances in life of becoming happy increase radically if I start to do this other thing.'"

"Years ago I wrote a paper for Paul Franssen about all the different kinds of mentions of Shakespeare in Oscar Wilde's oeuvre. And now we are colleagues."

What were you like as a student?

"Well, I was definitely hungry for knowledge. I wanted to learn, not necessarily to get good grades, but to fully live this new world that I'd now entered. At the same time, I also really enjoyed student life. I chose to live in an international student house. Three Dutch people lived there, and the other people were from all over the world, from the US, England, Ukraine, Greece, and Germany. I ended up staying there for four years or so. We threw crazy wild parties. I'm talking 200 or 300 people at the house!"

Still talking about her student years, we moved on from wild parties to the subject of love:

"I had my first girlfriend in high school. Then at university I got into a serious relationship with another girl. My parents had a hard time with it, so for years there was quite a bit of tension because of it. I looked up the Phoenix magazine in preparation for this conversation, and I found the Love Issue - I think it was from last year. I was amazed about how open students were about their preferences. I'm open now, but when I first started teaching, I was a bit more hesitant to go there. There appears to be much more openness now. Love, connection, happiness; these are the things we should worry about. Most students seem to get that so profoundly. That's beautiful."

At this point, Gijsje, the dog, was demanding our attention. Naturally, we wound up talking about him for a while.

"He's like a people magnet! When we walk him - obviously, people here in the neighbourhood are used to him now - but when we go somewhere new, we get asked all the time: 'What kind of dog is this? Is he a puppy?' Well, yeah, he's still a puppy, but this is it! He will stay this small, as he is a Kaninchen Dachshund. My parents have a standard Dachshund with the same colours, so together they are like one and a half dogs. Oh, and by the way, with my parents, all is good. It took a while but they're fine with it now. And they adore Floor, my current partner."

One of your areas of interest is phenomenology. Do you pay a lot of attention to experience while reading?

"When preparing for lectures or seminars, I think about the kinds of experiences that a text appears to offer. The kind of emotional experiences or the kind of questions the text raises or what kind of phenomena this text

touches on. For example, you would have an old text, 300, 400 years old, but it talks about love. So, what resonates with us today? Is this a kind of love that is familiar to me, and what are the qualities and characteristics of love that are lifted out here?"

"A thing that has been on my mind a lot lately is what is called deep reading, or also sometimes slow reading. This is a kind of focused engagement that is geared towards becoming emotionally invested, to care. You're approaching the text in order to be affected by it, to learn something, to experience the perspective of someone else. Perhaps to feel like your own sense of self is spoken to or questioned a bit, to dwell in different meaning possibilities, and to think reflectively, critically, and creatively. Deep reading is one of my current research interests, including the question to what extent and in what ways our digital culture and habits foster those kinds of affective, cognitive, contemplative and ethical processes."



Cathelein holding Gijs

What was your dissertation about?

"After many detours exploring various topics, my supervisor and I ended up deciding upon the phenomenon of beauty. The dissertation is titled Kaleidoscope: A Phenomenological-Empirical Study of Beauty. I asked almost 500 people to describe a personal moment of beauty. Beauty is considered to be the "queen bee" of philosophy, also because it's such a complex phenomenon. There are many philosophical proposals attempting to characterise the nature of beauty. This is beauty, this is how it works, these are the things to pay attention to. It's subjective, it's objective, it's a bit of both. But we experience beauty all the time. So why not also ask people what it is like to live beauty? So, that's what I have done. The data and the method I have developed allowed me to articulate 4 different experiential profiles."

As we were in Cat's study, we were surrounded by her books, CDs, and records, so eventually they became the topic of conversation.

What do you like to read?

"I love reading Etty Hillesum, James Baldwin, Virginia Woolf, Salman Rushdie, and Nabokov. I think those are my favourites. As a teenager, I really appreciated Connie Palmen's work, and I read Jeanette Winterson often."

Do you like other Dutch writers?

"I cannot think of an author whose oeuvre I embrace as a whole. It's more selective. With Nabokov or Rushdie, I'm just amazed by virtually everything they've ever written. I don't have that as much with Dutch writers, with the exception of Etty."

What kind of music do you listen to?

"I really love Led Zeppelin, George Michael, Philip Glass and Booka Shade. And a lot of soul: Stevie Wonder, Curtis Mayfield and Prince. Various hard bop artists. And Nina Simone, of course."

While on the subject of music, Cat thinks of an anecdote she wants to share with us:

"As a student, I bartended at the Winkel van Sinkel and at Tivoli. At Tivoli, we weren't paid, we were all volunteers and we had these debit cards we could use to buy drinks, which was all good. I forget what year this was, but Prince performed at Vredenburg. Back then Tivoli and Vredenburg were still two different venues. After the performance at Vredenburg, Prince was going to give an additional concert that same evening, but it was unclear where it was going to take place; Tivoli was one of the three options. All volunteers were asked to come in. And Prince chose Tivoli! I was so excited about the whole thing. And my colleagues were like: 'Just go to the stage, alright!' So, I went to the stage, the curtains opened and there was this guy playing the drums and it was Lenny Kravitz! Insane. They jammed for two and a half hours or so, and Candy Dulfer and Hans Dulfer, and all these other artists also performed. It was absolutely mind-blowing! But then afterwards, this is what happened, almost like that one scene in Dirty Dancing. We had to bring cases with bottles of Coca-Cola to this other bar location behind Tivoli. We walked through this room, backstage, and who were playing ping-pong? Lenny Kravitz and Prince! It was surreal. After two and a half hours of performing, they had to cool down a bit, and that's how they did it. They played some ping pong. Which made for a very cool scene, let me tell ya. And I happened to catch them!"



At this point, we had been talking for well over an hour. We finished our tea, chatted a little longer, and took some more pictures, before descending the stairs, leaving the house, and getting back in the car so she could drive us back to the station. Cat, thanks again for the hospitality, the fascinating interview, and of course for letting us pet your adorable dog!



Bookshelf: professor edition



Gijs, people magnet



Interior details



"I was amazed about how open students were about their preferences. I'm open now, but when I first started teaching, I was a bit more hesitant to go there. There appears to be much more openness now. Love, connection, happiness; these are the things we should worry about. Most students seem to get that so profoundly. That's beautiful."



Photo by Angela Kroes

Q&ALUMNI WITH JOS DE GROOT

Jos de Groot (24) is no stranger to Albion. 3 years ago, he led the board in the coveted, but demanding position as Chairman. When the application to his desired master's program fell through, he decided on taking a gap year and assumed the role as the Editor-in-Chief of our very own Phoenix magazine – a credit he says served in his favour when he was accepted into the Journalism Master programme the following year. As the interview progresses, we find out he was the creator of Q&Alumni. Now, a couple of years into his professional life, racking up impressive credits at esteemed places across all forms of media, Jos gets to see the roles reversed: interviewer turns interviewee.

What would you say is the most interesting job you've had?

"That would certainly be working for a daily talk show, called 'M', which I was plunged into after only having written for newspapers. It was my first television experience, and it was great to be part of everything that happens behind the scenes. It's only then that you realise how much effort is put into just one single live broadcast every day."

What was your function at Talkshow M?

"I was a news editor, which meant that I usually prepared the first interview of the show, which was supposed to be about the news of that day. There is such an immense pressure, which is also very addictive – you just go and go and go. I think I worked 50-60 hours a week when I worked there. You kind of have to, because you want to make the best show possible and if you can't give it everything it won't be as good as you want it to be."

"The pressure also comes with the field. In media they give very short contracts, because most jobs are on project basis. Right now, I have a contract for 2 months. This means you have the freedom to just hop from one job to another, but it also comes with uncertainty. But I do think that can be exciting! I'm learning so much, and I'm just taking it all in as I go. You get to meet so many people working in media. It's very exciting to be in those environments!"

Did doing a degree in English inform you into this process?

"Well, the honest answer is no. It's been very beneficial for me to do a university degree, but it should not have necessarily been English. Studying at university provides you with the necessary skills to explore things more critically, which is a great asset to have in your further career."

What about the board year, did that help you in any way?

"It sounds very cheesy, but I've learned so much in that year about myself and about working together with others. As chair of the board, you are granted the opportunity to present in front of the members and to lead the meetings. If you've never been in a meeting before, you have no idea how to compose yourself. By participating in a lot of meetings you learn how to be efficient in formulating what you want to say and how to get it across. That's crucial for your career, and it's something I still use when I pitch an idea for a show."

You mentioned you took a gap year; would you recommend doing this?

"If you're in doubt about what the hell you should do – and I think many, many bachelor students of English will find themselves in that position as soon as they have written their thesis – I would recommend it, because it's not a motivation to do a master just because you have to do something. That's just an excuse to do another year of studying."



Written by Indie Reijnierse and Laurel Sanders. Photo by Laurel Sanders.

What are your aspirations for the future?

"Right now, I'm working behind the scenes, but in a few years' time I'd like to be the person presenting the news or doing the interviews. It's mostly about the satisfaction that comes with making your own product, which is something that I've experienced while working for a newspaper. It's very satisfying to see the result of your work in the paper and to have your name credited. This might be something I'm missing in television or radio, but working for the radio can be way more exciting than working for the newspaper. Every medium has its pros and cons."

What advice would you give people who want to follow a similar path?

"However difficult it is, at some point you need to think hard about what you want. In my experience, university isn't necessarily helping you in finding what you might want."

Jos also advises the journalistically inclined among us to consider taking a minor in journalism at Hogeschool Utrecht, which is specifically meant for university students. Since our own English programme no longer offers a journalism course, this piece of advice becomes even more valuable.

"I would also recommend taking a course in rhetoric [Editor's note: This course is called "Retorica. De kunst van het overtuigen van Perikles tot Obama"]. I've learned so much about presenting and about how to talk in front of people. I think many students don't know how to present well, although it's a very important skill to have. This course really helps you to get out of your comfort zone. It's scary, but it's a secure environment and after that you can use those skills when you do have to do a presentation where you will get graded on your presenting skills."

Before we end the interview and say our goodbyes, we ask Jos a final question about what it's like to be on the other side of Q&A Alumni:

"It's kind of funny, I really liked the invitation because I was like 'Oh, I came up with that and now I'm on the other side!' It's really nice and it's also a bit of unreal, because to me it feels like ages ago when I was in the Phoenix committee. Now I have a job and something like an adult life, and I'm being interviewed by my own old magazine, so that's really nice and I feel flattered."

"At some point you need to think hard about what you want."

EDUCATION

- 2016 – 2018** **Master Journalistiek & Nieuwe Media**
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Scriptie: *Merk, expert of twitteraar, over de individualisering van de journalist*
- 2012 – 2015** **Bachelor Engelse Taal & Cultuur**
Universiteit Utrecht
Scriptie: *The Iron Tulip, over het ontstaan van een gemediatiseerde persoonlijkheid*
- 2014** **Minor Journalistiek**
Hogeschool Utrecht
- 2006 – 2012** **Gymnasium**
Lyceum aan Zee, Den Helder
Profiel: *Cultuur & Maatschappij*

JOBS

- 2018 – heden** **Redacteur *Dit is de Dag* en *Langs de Lijn En Omstreken***
NPO Radio 1
- 2018** **Redacteur actualiteiten talkshow *M***
Human Factor TV
- 2018** **Onlineredacteur Plusredactie**
Volkskrant
- 2017 – 2018** **Freelancejournalist**
Trouw, NRC
- 2017** **Stagiair binnenland en cultuur & media**
Trouw, Amsterdam
- 2015 – 2017** **Medewerker bediening**
Grand Hotel Karel V, Utrecht
- 2015 – 2017** **Redacteur *I know this great little place in Utrecht***
- 2015 – 2016** **Huiswerkbegeleider en bijlesdocent**
Juffrouw Julia, Culemborg
- 2014 – 2017** **Stadsgids**
Rederij Schuttevaer, Utrecht



photo by angela kroes

BOOKSHELF



The 26th of October was the epitome of a Dutch autumn day: it rained, the trees were a vibrantly coloured mix of yellow, red and brown, scarves fluttered, umbrellas fought against the wind, tea was sipped, and the NS had some technical difficulties. Because the railway between Rotterdam and Utrecht was conveniently being repaired, we had to make a slight detour. Several trains, buses, and subways between obscure stations and unheard-of villages later we finally arrived at Kralingse Zoom, where the ever-charming Hester de Jong was already awaiting us. After the necessary house tour and some delicious, home-made 'poffertjes', it was time to talk about the mutually beloved subject of books and reading, while she showed us her gorgeous shelves.

So, what's your most recent read?

I most recently read *The Girls* by Emma Cline. It's a story about a girl named Evie, who is increasingly attracted to a cult-like group of girls. I really wanted to finish this one, but the novel didn't seem to capture my attention. I had to force myself a bit to finish it, as there were barely any exciting moments. Maybe my expectations were too high because of Lena Dunham's quote on the back that said: 'This book will break your heart and blow your mind.' It really inspired me to read it, but when I finished it, I just didn't feel the same way Dunham felt.

Do you have a favourite author?

Oh, that's a very hard question. My favourite novel is *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy, so I think that he's one of my favourite authors, but I haven't read his other works yet. I like Jane Austen as well, especially Emma.

What's your go-to book?

I know it's cliché, but I can really enjoy popular Young Adult novels. I Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson for example, or If I Stay and Where She Went by Gayle Forman. The YA books I feel most attracted to are the more well-known novels that contain more depth than many regular, pulpy-ish YA novels. I really admire *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. I notice that as I grow older my reading level grows with me. I used to like books like *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell, but nowadays I appreciate books that have a bit more insights, depth, and historical relevance. A genre I currently enjoy is the autobiography. Icons like feminist Gloria Steinem and poet Maya Angelou all have fascinating stories to tell, which are really interesting to me.

What's a trope you find overused in the books you read?

The trope I find most annoying is the 'woman who ultimately needs a man to rescue her' plot. This is so not emancipatory and occurs in many bad YA books I've read, like *Everything, Everything*. That book really disappointed me, and I think a point has been reached where almost every YA book (except John Green's ones) is just a plain rip off or watered-down version of a plot that has been used many times before.

What's one author or book you haven't read yet but would really like to read?

I would really like to read *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh. My father gave it to me, and it's just a classic. Many other books I want to read are from Emma Watson's book club, like *Why I'm No Longer Talking About Race* or Naomi Alderman's *The Power*. I think Watson is very inspiring in her choices, highlighting books that deal with many complex feminist and race-related themes. I remember when I was on holiday in Norway with a few friends and I walked into a bookshop and a boy read the plot from Alderman's book to me out loud. He asked me disdainfully: 'What's your opinion on that?', and I thought to myself 'Well, if you're so skeptical about that I'm not going to talk to you about it'.

Have you ever read a book related to mythology?

Not yet, but my grandparents gave me *Women Who Run with the Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estés, which is an anthology that collects many old stories, fairy tales, and myths on the archetype of the 'wild woman'. Estés explains how the modern woman can reconnect with her instinctual nature within and she feels that it should not be repressed.

What makes a good book according to you?

A plot that contains something you did not expect at all. I enjoy a good plot twist. One that I'm reminded of right away is the end of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which I'm not going to spoil.

What is the most beautiful novel you own?

The Portrait of a Lady by Henry James. It was a gift from my father, but I haven't read it yet.

What's your favourite spot to read?

My favourite spot is in bed, during the evening or the afternoon. In the morning, I like to snuggle up in the corner of our living room couch. On Saturdays, I sometimes go swimming with my mom quite early in the morning. When I come home I also really like reading a bit, as I feel very comfy and energized.

Who are your favourite characters?

I adore Luna Lovegood, but I like Ginny as well (from Harry Potter). A divisive choice is Snape, because it seems that there are two groups who feel very strongly about hating him or loving him. What I really like about Snape is his ambiguity, as it is always a bit vague which side he is on throughout the novels. It makes him quite a complex character.

Which character do you most identify with?

Emma, from Austen's eponymous novel Emma. She has a strong opinion about a lot of issues in public, which I aspire to have as well. Also, she does not view marrying a guy as a mark for a completed and successful life. I agree with her and think marrying is not necessary. She is a rebel in a time where the only goal for a woman was to find the best husband. That she revolts against that in her time is so modern, because even nowadays not marrying can be perceived by some as quite a strange or unusual thing.

What is the saddest book you've read?

Me Before You and After You by Jojo Moyes. They weren't books with the most quality or depth, but I cried so hard when I finished them. I had the same thing with The Fault in Our Stars and the last part of the Divergent series. After I read them, I sat on my bed, not knowing how to carry on with my life [Hester laughs and visibly contemplates her memories from the past]. It was quite tragic.



When did you ever feel inspired by a novel?

I think with nearly every book about humans who go their own way and make the best of life on their own terms. I like characters that have a very strong personality and aren't susceptible to persuasion and influence from others, the individualistic wallflowers. That reminds me of Maya Angelou's Me, Mom & Me, which illustrates the importance of strength of character. Maya and her brother are abandoned by their parents, and they are continually haunted by their absence.

This was on Emma Watson's book club list as well, and many books on that list that I've read are provoking and inspiring in their own way.

What book would you recommend to your fellow students?

I haven't finished it yet, as I'm currently reading it, but the classic To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. It's so good and fascinating and compelling to read, that I can recommend it to everyone. Jung Chang's novel based on her grandmother's life in Mao Zedong's China, Wild Swans, is also really good, though quite shocking to read. Women were treated very poorly then and the conditions in which everyone lived are appalling.

UU TEACHERS INCREASINGLY RESTRICTED BY BUDGET CUTS

Young children often think teachers live at the school where they teach. If the budget cuts on university education are any indication, so does the Dutch government.

The red square has been worn by students and teachers alike since the beginning of September. Spearheaded by WOinActie, the square is part of an awareness campaign and national movement to restore the state funding of university education to the levels of 2000 after several budget cuts. These "efficiency" cuts have led to students being taught as cost-effectively as possible, causing university teachers to be underpaid and overworked.

With 19.5 million euros being cut next year, I sat down with four lecturers from Utrecht University's English programme to discuss the issue.

"It's ultimately about the amount of money the central government is prepared to spend per student," Dr. Simon Cook says. "We've had some input into the process which decides how we are supposed to cut a certain amount, but absolutely none into whether we should cut." More importantly, he says, "our programme is remaining intact," as we're "pound for pound less expensive" with more enrolled students.

In terms of the recent cuts, Cook says, "the impact will be mostly on staff. The consequence for students is that groups are more likely to be fuller more of the time," and with the tutor programme being reduced, "students will not have a lot of contact with their tutors in their second or third year" unless they are "proactive in seeking help."

That being said, he adds: "It could be a long-term concern for students that more non-research positions are being created" for recently appointed teachers, who "have been appointed on teaching-only contracts. University is supposed to be about people teaching their research. They may well be doing research, but if they are doing it in their free time, it's unpaid."

The difficulty is that free time is rarely a guarantee.



By Leda Serikoglu

"Teaching," Dr. Nynke de Haas says, "always takes more time than allotted, especially if you need to prepare courses you have never taught before." Additionally, "at our university, there's no reimbursement for developing courses. The way I understand it, for every hour that you teach, you get two extra hours for preparation and grading, which is completely unrealistic" for new courses, and it barely breaks even for developed courses. One of the causes of the situation, she says, is that "university staff are, for the most part, idealists, which makes them eminently squeezable," while the government seems to be under the impression that they "can be squeezed more," essentially placing sanctions on what it deems inefficient teaching. "There is probably some inefficiency, but that's because we're human; if we're not allowed to be human then we might as well give up. Everyone is working for free for some of their time. We should be getting more money to solve that problem, rather than being fined for something fictional."

Dr. Mia You was appointed on a teaching-only part-time contract, which would theoretically give her a week-day and the weekend off. "I can honestly say that if I don't work through the weekend then I'm really in trouble the next week. Usually I work until midnight, especially when grading and preparing for lectures the next day. There's never a time when you feel like you're done." You says that in her Critical Writing course, a Masters' course, her 24 students have to write three assignments, which take "about 45 minutes" each to feedback and grade, racking up to a total of 54 hours in a single teaching block alone.

One of the reasons why it is difficult to take any kind of action, You says, is because there is "a worry that whatever actions are taken will be harmful to students."

"The essence of university," Dr. Lieke Stelling, also a member of WOinActie, says, "is that teaching and research are intertwined, you can't separate them. But this has started to happen. You get researchers who get grants and can spend little time on teaching because they have money to carry out research for a certain number of years, and there are people who don't have the grants. They do a lot of teaching and they don't get time to do research." This is essentially a catch-22, because publishing research is a prerequisite for applying for research grants in the first place.

Student support will be crucial, Stelling says, "if state funding is going to be restored to the level of the year 2000, it will only be because of student actions."



by roos speelman

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

by Angela Kroes

Without knowing how they got there, two half-brothers find themselves in a mysterious forest called 'The Unknown', where The Beast lurks in the dark as they try to find their way home. This acclaimed animated miniseries, praised for its beautifully designed world where it always seems to be autumn, was well-deserving of its own art book. McHale explains that he aspired to create a world that is "a mixture of American folklore, classic fairy tales, ghost stories, and dreamland". The book - designed to resemble an old scrapbook - elaborates on this goal: the reader is presented with a large collection of character sketches, background designs (both early pencil drawings and finished digital art) and storyboards.

Additional commentary from the creative department shows the extensive research and detail that went into creating the series. This especially comes forward when they discuss the conceptual process behind every episode: the creators open up the world behind the story and explain every other idea they considered before going through with the final concepts. Besides, they don't shy away from a bit of humor in their comments, either. The youngest of the two half-brothers is described as a boy who "likes to eat things (including, but not limited to, 'food')".

Fans of the series will love this book for the whole new perspective it brings to *Over the Garden Wall* and the deeper insight they will gain into the behind-the-scenes process, "and that's a rock fact"!

From creators Sean Edgar and Patrick McHale.



by cecilie balemans-højberg, based on depictions of Thoth, the Egyptian god of writing, magic, wisdom, and the moon.

TROLLJEGEREN

by Tess Masselink

Trolljegeren is a Norwegian mockumentary about - you might have guessed it - trolls. In this movie, three students who are making a documentary about bear-hunters go after someone who they believe to be a poacher. To their surprise they find out this man is actually a troll hunter for the government, which incidentally reveals that the government has been hiding trolls from the public for years. The troll hunter Hans at first refuses to tell them about the trolls and doesn't allow them to film him while he's working. Nevertheless, he later gives in and takes them with him, and the situation escalates when they go after a troll so enormous that even Hans is worried.

CIRCE Madeleine Miller

by Patrick van Oosterom

In 2017, classicist Emily Wilson literally wrote history as she became the first woman ever to publish a translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. The Guardian praised her translation for exposing 'centuries of masculinist readings of the poem', and noted that Wilson does not soften the misogynist descriptions. A new, modern wind of diversity seems to be whirling through the realm of classical mythology. Visionary novelist Margaret Atwood already wrote about Penelope's (Odysseus' wife) experience in *The Penelopiad*, and now Madeline Miller is back with her second novel, *Circe*, a feminist re-imaging of the ancient Greek myth of the witch Circe. Miller abandons all the stereotypical connotations of the word 'witch' and presents not an antihero, but a smart, individualistic girl who tries to survive in a world where she is the divine underdog. She is bullied by her siblings - because she looks unattractive and has a shrill voice - until she discovers that she has the power of witchcraft. Zeus and her father, the Titan Helios, banish her to the island of Aiaia for misusing her powers and transforming her mortal lover into a god. In Homer's poem, she has the reputation of turning the guests on her island into wild beasts, but this lacks a cause: she is simply evil for evil's sake. Miller destroys this belief with recounting Circe's backstory. She is frequently visited by astray sailors who abuse her, and she has to use the charms purely for self-defense. Although Miller's prose can be a bit circumlocutionary and purple, her retelling is compelling nonetheless. The novel contains enough drama to fill multiple seasons of *This Is Us* and is jam-packed with the idiosyncratic characters of bawdy gods, flirty nymphs and trembling mortals. *Circe* is a delight and triumphantly succeeds in strikingly retelling the stories that have captivated humanity for thousands of years.

The film has an eerie vibe due to it being filmed in such a way that it looks as if it were actually filmed by the students: it has a The Blair Witch Project-like execution. Contrary to The Blair Witch Project, which is creepy enough - but feels fictional despite its efforts to seem like a real event, the beautiful and inherently Norwegian outback setting, as well as the simple script of *Trolljegeren*, make it feel very real, intense and gruesome. Regardless of these terrifying effects, there are certain comic relief moments throughout the movie which make some terrifying scenes a bit more light-hearted and watchable for the less brave-hearted audiences.

Overall, *Trolljegeren* is quite a different movie from what most people are used to, but don't let this scare you off, especially not if you are in the mood to be properly spooked. When it comes to scary and creepy movies, this movie should definitely be at the top of your list!

DIVINE INTERVENTION

By Roos Speelman





"When the Gods forget how to slay demons and call on the universe to aid them in their task, who do you think the universe sends to help them destroy evil and wrong doing unmask? The Goddess Durga, riding towards the darkness on a tiger, countless weapons in her arms, her daughter is the one the universe trusts to protect her against all odds. Because on one hand she wipes out evil, on the other she nurtures good better than any God. In the end, even the universe knows that it is her daughter she should trust to protect her from ignorance, from darkness, from every downfall. And what does the birth of Durga, fully formed, ready to fight demons say about you? You were born to take on monsters. You were born to eat the darkness that tries to absorb you."

— Nikita Gill, Ma Durga

