

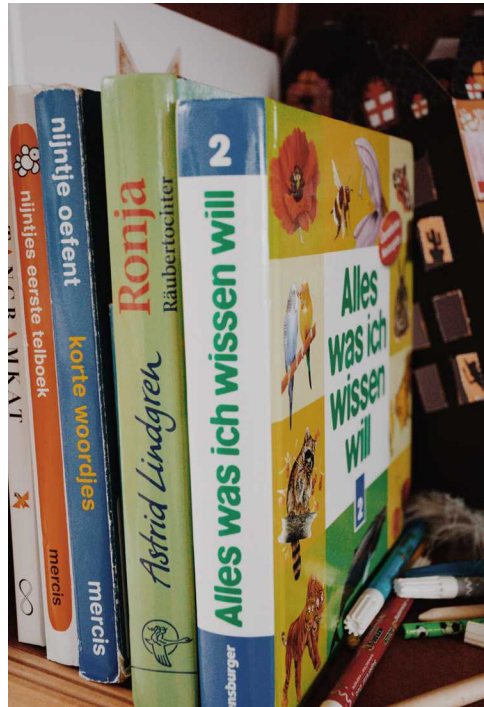
PHOENIX

ISSUE 2 | FEBRUARY 2018



The  issue





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Letter of the editor

BY LOLA SCHARRENBURG

To: Albion
From: Valerie

Julie zijn alle-
maal duizend
lief xoxo mvg en
knuffels (want
die zijn fijn)

Dear readers,

As you might have noticed by all the advertisements for perfumes, chocolates, and flowers that are currently being broadcasted, Valentine's Day is around the corner. Now, the opinions on this 'holiday' differ greatly, ranging from "if-my-partner-doesn't-show-up-on-my-doorstep-with-a-bunch-of-roses-I'm-going-to-break-up-with-them" to "why-does-the-universe-need-to-remind-me-that-I'm-single" or "no-way-I'm-joining-this-capitalist-construct-designed-to-make-me-spend-money". Personally, I'm at "I'm-not-sure-why-we-should-have-a-special-day-for-this-but-it-makes-a-great-excuse-for-having-fancy-dinner".

the best locations in Utrecht for if you're like me and want to go out for a Valentine's dinner, and we even set up a Battle of the Albion Couples! Furthermore, we talk about polyamory with alum Isa-beau Jensen, and in our Tea Time with Aaron Griffith, we discuss how relationships can be influenced by the language that you're speaking.

Whatever your view on Valentine's Day might be, I hope you will enjoy the second Phoenix of this year and if anything, be kind to yourself on the 14th. Oh, and don't forget to check whether anyone left you a message in our Valentine's messages section!

Love,

Lola van Scharrenburg
Editor in Chief

To: Anne
From: Baukje

Ik vind je lief
genoeg om je
niet te knuffelen.

To: Dinthe
From: Baukje

Je bent mijn al-
lerliefste vriend-
inte ♡

To: Niki
From: Bo

Are u a lit major
bc u lit me up
bby

To: Sandra
From: Baukje

Je bent net zo
belangrijk voor
me als mijn
vitale organen

To: Lola
From: Job

Lieve Lola,
je doet het
geweldig
en brengt de
Phoenix naar
een hoger
niveau

To: Chrystel,
Thijs, Jesse,
Lotte, Pauw,
Geke, + Merel
From: Minthe

You're my fa-
vorite people to
be socially awk-
ward with.

To: Minthe
From: Anoniem

Fijne Valentijns-
dag! ♡
Groetjes aan
Thijs! ♡
I<3U #NVTB

To: Floris
From: Chrystel

Lieve Flip, je
bent de beste
opa die ik me
kan wensen ♡

To: Dreamteam
From: Just Mon-
ika

Every day, I
imagine a future
where I can be
with you. In my
hand is a pen
that will write a
poem off me and
you
#HappyThoughts

To: Baukje, Din-
the & Anne ♡
From: Sandra

Julie zijn altijd
m'n #1 baes
♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡
hvj ♡ wjnmk ♡

To: Pauw Vos
From:

KAKAA!

To: Alessandra ♡
From: -xoxo- ur
secret admirer ♡

Je bent lief, hihi

To: Hanka
From:

Are u from
Apeldoorn
cuz ur
a-doorn-able
bye

“

You can't
control
who you
fall in love
with...



IS LOVE

Love. It is something that's different for everyone. Nowadays we live in a world where love is experienced in many different ways. Love between family and friends, love you feel for your pet, that one book you used to read as a kid, the band you've seen at least five times, the list goes on. Love can, of course, be romantic as well. Your first crush, your high school sweetheart, and the person you will be spending the rest of your life with. Everyone has a set of people they've loved romantically (unless they're aromantic, of course) and everyone is different, so naturally for all these people love is different. We would like to take you on a short journey through several different sexualities and the way these people experience or do not experience romantic love. Enjoy!

So, Els, what does being bisexual mean to you?

To me, it means being able to fall in love with both women and men, and being sexually attracted to both women and men.

How and when did you find out you were bisexual?

It's a cliché answer: I think I have always known. When sexuality really hits is when you start to become a teenager and sex is fascinating and you realise it is a 'thing'. I was about fifteen when I decided "Okay, I'm now going to live like a bisexual person and going to allow myself to be attracted to women as well".

What do you mean, "allow myself"?

Before that, I just focussed on boys and men. Girls were friends and your mom and grandma. Not people I was looking at in a sexual way.

What was it like, coming out to your friends and family?

I have not actually come out to my parents. My brothers know. My little brother was totally fine with it. He was the first I told, from my family. He was okay with it. With my older brother, it was a little scary, because he sometimes he can be a little homophobic. But just for himself, when someone suggests that he is gay, he gets very defensive. With other people, it is not really a problem [for him].

LOVE

Do you think that you being bisexual helps him with accepting that people can be something other than heterosexual?
I think it does. It shows him that it is normal because I am not that special to him. I am just his sister.

What were your friends' responses when you came out?

To my friends, it was just easy coming out. I just said "Oh, by the way, I am also attracted to girls. So now I am going to be saying 'you look hot'". Well, some of my friends thought I was making a joke. I told them that I was serious and they were okay with it.

What's changed now that you're at university?

The people here are super accepting. They don't judge who you are.

Why do you think that is?

I think that if you go to university, you choose a specific study which already shows that you have more in common with the people who chose the same study and the same city. I think that then people are generally more accepting of who you are because you have the same interests.

Do you ever get annoying remarks or questions about being bisexual?

Yes. I have been in a heterosexual relationship for almost four years, and I came out during the relationship. Some people were like "wait, how would you know? You have never kissed a girl, you have never done anything with a girl," but that's not necessary. You can be attracted to someone and not do anything with them.

What about your boyfriend, how did he respond?

He kind of saw it coming. We had talked about the fact that I wasn't sure whether I was heterosexual or bisexual. And then one day I was like "Okay, I am sure: I am bisexual". And he was okay with it. Our relationship did not change.

Do you have any tips for people who might think they're bisexual on how to tell their relatives and friends?

That depends [on your situation]. If it would be a big deal to your family, you should tell them in a way you've thought through and make sure you know what you are going to say. If they don't care, just tell them casually.



VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL

FEATURING INTERVIEWS

ON LOVE

IN ALL FORMS

Tess Masselink in conversation with **Elsbeth Smalbrugge**, an 18-year-old first-year student who identifies as bisexual, and **Weldoed Tevel**, a 19-year-old first year who identifies as asexual.

Vincent Potman in conversation with **Mees Roelofs**, a 20-year-old second-year student who identifies as transgender, and **Sam van der Wal**, a 28-year-old second-year student who identifies as non-binary.

Photography by **Laurel Sanders**, excluding Sam's photo.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

william shakespeare

So, Mees, you are transgender – how would you define it?

I would say that people raised me in a different way than they should have because I didn't feel like the norms they set really fit me, and because of that didn't really feel comfortable in my own skin and I had to change that, so that people would treat me like I wanted them to.

Does that mean you see trans as an umbrella term or a specific term?

That's very interesting because of course, you've got questioning people, and you've got non-binary people, and people who are identifying as something they were not born as, but who still don't use hormones or undergo surgeries, and some who don't get the whole package. I think everyone I just mentioned belongs to the umbrella term transgender.

How, then, would you say, do you view the issue of gender and gender identity?

On this issue of gender there are particular norms and things that people expect of you, and you know, boys should be masculine and girls should be feminine and if you aren't that it's... negative, not good. So little girls and boys who don't fit that picture, will not feel good, and that's not a good thing, I think.

Did you always know you were trans or was there a moment or occurrence that can be seen as the turning point?

I'd always been a bit non-binary – I didn't really fit anywhere, and because of that, it wasn't really an issue that people thought I was a girl. I always felt pretty good because I was able to do the things that I wanted to do. I know examples: I have a sister, a little sister, and sometimes we'd get presents together, and one thing would be pink and one would be blue, and it wasn't an issue because I would automatically get the blue one. My parents were like, "do your thing, we don't really mind", and I think I was 13 when I first thought "Hey, maybe something is going on here." I kept on thinking that, maybe for a month, and I thought it would go away, but when I was maybe 16-17 I thought "no, I think this is it" and I started to tell people, and came out of the closet.

Was there any backlash from friends or family when you came out?

No, no. My family is pretty open-minded, so they didn't give a damn. My parents, I think they already suspected it, and they talked about it with my brother and sister, and my brother was excited because he'd finally have someone to play with, but that wasn't the case of course. My grandparents were alright with it, so that was a surprise to me... They even bought me gender neutral wrapping paper for my birthday, so that was pretty cool.

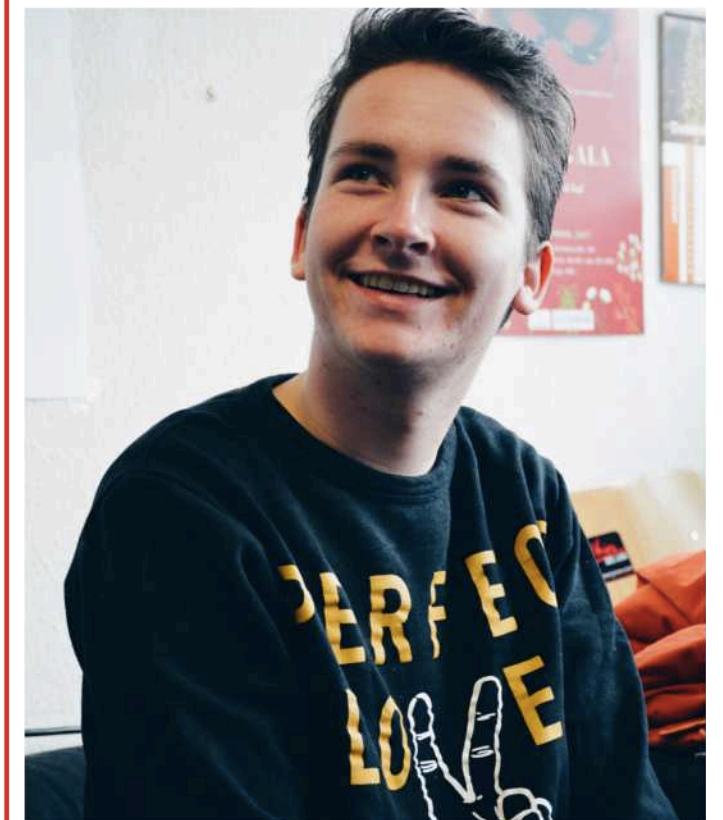
Were you in a relationship when you came out?

No, no, no I was single when I came out, but I still had the support from the partner I had because they were also trans, or maybe researching that topic, so I still had that support. Also from some other friends. Then I came out as trans and I went to explore the gay community in The Netherlands, and then that whole [issue of] identity and sexuality, and I discovered that.

Do you perhaps have any tips for people who are in a similar situation, but haven't come out yet?

Uhhmm, just do your thing. I know, well, it will be fine, but sometimes those people [around you] may not be okay with what you are and with what you identify. But I think you should always just try, and try your best to make them accept you, and if eventually, they don't, then fuck them.

"Try your best to make them accept you, and if eventually, they don't, then fuck them."



So, Sam, you are genderqueer, what, exactly does that mean?

I prefer non-binary, I used to go by genderqueer. For me, it's kind of like I'm not a man or a woman and I'm something...whatever.

Did you always know you were non-binary or was there a moment or occurrence that can be seen as the turning point?

I didn't always know, because obviously non-binary has received more attention in general in the past decade, I guess. But looking back on a lot of things... I remember, when I was a kid, when I was going through puberty (so like a really long time ago, way back in the early 00's) my mom used to have these parties, right? These Tupperware parties, you know, but for kids clothing, and we'd get to pick some clothing, and I'd go for boy's clothing, but I wasn't a boy and I'd first cut my hair around then. I used to have really long hair, and strangers would be like: "Young man, would like to do this and that?" and I'd be like "I'm not a boy" but also kind of like "I'm not a girl". So, looking back, it sort of makes sense, I guess.

So it came along gradually?

Yeah, I think it was five or six years ago – obviously with the internet, and there just being a lot more info available, at a certain point I was like "hey, I might not be a woman but I might be...not be anything?"

How do you define this "not anything"?

Yeah, see that's a really difficult question, because with new information like there is now, also taking into effect that I am a lesbian, there is a long-standing tradition of lesbians and gender nonconformity and not relating to the gender you are assigned at birth but also not being men.

When did you come out?

As what?

So, I suppose the non-binary came before the lesbian?

Well, I first thought I was bisexual for a very long time. I realized that in my second year of high school, so when I was like 13-ish. I came out to some of my friends and then six years ago I realized that I was non-binary and I came out to people. Then somewhere in between, I came out as bi to my mom – I'm not out to my family because they are not...very open about things, I guess. And last year I realized that I was a lesbian.

Has being non-binary impacted your sexuality, and if so, how?

No, being non-binary hasn't impacted my sexuality, but I do think my sexuality has ties to my gender identity. Maybe, sort of? I don't know for sure. It's complicated, man.

So, you used to date a man, and you're lesbian, how does that tie into it?

We broke up in October, last October. Basically, we'd been together for like ten years, going on eleven years, and it was a different thing because he was asexual. There is still an emotional connection, I guess, even if there isn't a romantic or sexual connection. It's...it's easier, after ten years, I guess.

What, then, do you seek in a relationship? Someone asexual?

No, I...see, you can't control who you fall in love with, but not being ace myself, I would prefer not to, but also, I'm into polyamory, so even if I fall in love with someone ace, who knows who else I might date?

These are but some of the ways people can love each other. It shows that love is universal, but also a deeply personal thing. With Valentine's Day right around the corner love is in the air, and you have but to breathe it in. Yes, feel your version of it and worry not, because, at the heart of it, Love is Love.



TEA TIME WITH

AARON GRIFFITH

It was a cold, harsh winter day and it was our first time witnessing the lovely city of Utrecht covered in a blanket of snow. People were bundled up in scarfs, hats and whatever they could find in their closet to face the winter weather. As we roamed the streets we left a long trail of footprints all the way to the house of one of our beloved teachers, Aaron Griffith. He opened the door for us and made us a warm cup of tea. After we were no longer shaking from the cold, it was time to start the interview.

Interview by Indie Reijnierse & Laurel Sanders
Photography by Laurel Sanders
Written by Indie Reijnierse

Where are you from?

"Pennsylvania. East coast between New York and Washington DC. People say where I come from is really cloudy, but I never really noticed it. I mean compared to here it's sort of a summery wonderland."

Is there anything you have noticed that's different here from what you were used to in America?

"Well yeah, I was struck - at least in Austria - by the politics. The far-right politics is on the rise across Europe and the US, but I was surprised that the far-right party was still calling itself a social party. That was very strange to me because in the US even the most liberal party would almost never refer to themselves as social, because social means socialist, and socialist means communist, and communist means bad."

Where did you live before coming to the Netherlands?

"I lived in Austria for about 8 years during my PhD. I went to Austria on an exchange programme for a year. I lived with an Austrian guy and an Italian guy. The Austrian guy's sister came to visit once and that is now my wife. That's how these things sometimes happen. The age-old story. Then I came back to Chicago – where I was studying - and I finished my P.D. I went back to Austria after that, got married and then we lived in Australia for 6 months, and then we lived in Austria for the next 7 or 8 years. I finished my PhD. In 2006 and started a research project at the University of Vienna and while I was there, a position opened up at the university. I started teaching and doing research there and then that was running out, and then a position opened here in 2014 and that's when I came here."

Have you always wanted to become a teacher?

"I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I was a math major in college actually."

Sensing our surprise, he explained it was an accident. After we shared our laughs about this, he continued.

"No, but really. In the US you just go to college and then during your second year you decide what you want to study, and I took a bunch of random courses my first year. Then in my second year, I took up another bunch of random courses. At the end of the year, I had to declare what I was going to study, and I was like 'Hmm, well now what? Well, I took a bunch of math courses and I'm good at that. I guess I'll do that.' I kept doing that and I just majored in math. At the same time, I knew

I liked language, so I took tons and tons of language courses. I took Greek, Latin, German, Japanese, Hebrew, because I was interested where English came from. That got me interested in historical linguistics. Then in my fourth year of college, there was some girl from Romania who was better in her first year of studies than I was in my third year in math, and I thought: 'You know what? She should be doing mathematics. I shouldn't be doing mathematics, I'm going to do something else.' I even took some of the standardized tests you have to take to go study in mathematics, and by the time I was taking them, I was like 'You know what? I'm not going to do this.' So, I applied to grad schools for linguistics instead."

What were you like as a student?

"Well, I was studious. I mean, you don't usually go on if you don't enjoy it. I took a lot of classes, because I could do it and I wanted to learn more. In my first semester, I took the normal load and then I added a little bit more, and I added a little bit more until I was taking a little too much at some point, but I took as many classes as I could, because I wanted to get in as much as possible. I'd do my homework until 11 or 12 and then I would visit everyone else in their dorm rooms, things like that. One of my roommates called me the doctor, because I'd go on my rounds every evening. I was fairly active on campus, I would do various things. 'When I was going on interviews for grad school, one of the people interviewing me said something to the effect of 'Ahh yes, 'fun,' that's sort of an undergraduate phenomenon' and I remember thinking 'Well that's a terrible thing to say.' Because it shouldn't just be about studying."

"Plus, I had fun as a graduate student. Perhaps I should've had less fun, and have been a bit more studious. But you

have to do something that's fun and for some people that really is studying and for me mostly that, but not all the time. I have to do other stuff sometimes too. So yeah, I was a fairly active student with academics, but also other things."

"I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I was a math major in college actually."

Is there something we wouldn't expect from you as a teacher?

"Probably. It's hard to say. I think there's a tendency for students not to view their teachers as humans. I think everything that hints at a person that's not only a teacher is unexpected for most students. For us as teachers, we were students once, so we understand that you also have lives. I don't think students can imagine what it is that we do. I mean that neutrally, it's a fact."

Nonetheless, we do discover some things we find interesting about Aaron. For example, he tells us he sings bass in a choir.

"I sang in choirs all over the place, in Boston, Chicago and I sing in one here. I found a random choir here by walking around. I saw a sign that said: 'Do you wanna sing?' And I was like 'Yeah' so I joined a choir. It's tiny, only about 12 people or so, but that's okay for me. I don't mind. I always enjoyed music."

What kind of music?

"I have a weakness for bad 80's rock, but good 80's rock too. My tastes vary. From classical choral to anything that I've heard that is kind of catchy. I'll go follow it and I'll see where YouTube leads me in the chain and I'll be like 'Oh okay, I'll try this one' or 'Oh nope, that's not good.' I can also put it on repeat for an hour and a half or 2 hours and that's fine with me, I have

no problem with that."

You don't get sick of a song?

"Eventually. It might take weeks. My old roommate would say - as soon as it was on repeat - 'Aaron didn't we just hear this?' And I'd be like 'Yeah' but to me, that wouldn't matter. If I liked a song I could listen to it for a week or longer but then when I was done, I was done. I'd still like the piece but wouldn't want to listen to it, and then the mood would strike me again months or years later."

Aaron also tells us he loves playing games.

"I love board games, card games, that sort of thing, or even computer games, but there's not that much time for that anymore."

What kind of computer games?

"Usually strategy games, I play a little Age of Empires, although I tend not to like real-time, I tend to like turn-based. Because, frankly, then I can take a break, where with real-time I'm like 'Uh really, again?' I can't click fast enough..."



During the interview, we touched upon the topic of whether language has an effect on your personality. Aaron shares with us that he believes your personality changes a little when you cannot express yourself fully, and that that is frequently the case when you are learning a second or third language. He tells us that his in-laws think he is a little politer when speaking

German. We add that we think changing what language you speak with someone might impact the relationship you have with them, as speaking a different language may result in you having a slightly different personality. He adds:

"That could be as well. That if your personality is slightly different - if you change what language you speak with each other - somehow the relationship is suddenly different. I remember seeing that at the intensive German school I went to. The first weekend you're there it's normal, you speak English. Then on Sunday evening they introduce the language pledge, and suddenly you pledge that you're only going to speak German from that point. Some of the people there have never had German before, and they're very, very quiet, because there's nothing they can say. Then for the rest of us, we're struggling because we're not used to speaking German, so there's a lot of silence. Sometimes relationships start during the course of the 7 weeks and I wonder, what happens when it's over? Suddenly you start speaking English and you're like 'I'm not sure if I actually like this person, or I do, but not like this.' There is something to that. There's a reason why summer romances sometimes remain summer romances, because out of the context, it doesn't work. Or if you're abroad and you see a Dutch person, you're like 'Hey!' and then you talk to them and you're like: 'This person is a jerk!' But you're still friendly, because you're two Dutch people in a foreign country. Yeah, context matters. That's just how it works. Sometimes you realize it when you're still abroad and sometimes you don't. Live and learn."

Or if you're abroad and you see a Dutch person, you're like 'Hey!' and you talk to them and you're like, 'This person is a jerk!'

You mentioned you took a bunch of courses in different languages, do you consider yourself a polyglot?

"Not really, because most of them are dead languages."

Does that make a difference?

"Well, I would assume that normally when you talk about a polyglot you think of being able to speak. Whereas with dead languages, eh."

Latin and Greek for example?

"Yeah, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, the older Indo-European languages. I was really interested in Indo-European. That meant things like Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, Hittite (the ancient language of Anatolia), Avestan (the ancient language of Iran), Old Per-



sian, Old Church Slavic, Tocharian. Although Tocharian I never did very well with.

Do you have a favourite tale or folklore from those languages, one that's not very well known?

"Well, I always liked the story, but I never took to the language, Tocharian. It was a story telling of how often Buddha can appear in a world. Imagine that the world was covered with water and there was a huge turtle that would come and put his head up above water once every 100 years, and imagine there was on this huge ocean a ring, floating around. Imagine that one of these times that he would put his head up, he happened to put his head up through the ring. As often as that might occur, that's how often a Buddha might appear in the world. It's a bizarre story, but I thought it was fascinating. Of course, translating something like this from a foreign language is rather difficult and as I said, I never really did well with the language, but I liked that story for some odd reason. There are plenty of interesting stories in Celtic or Old English and Old Norse as well."

Naturally, we were amazed that he has studied so many languages, upon which Aaron replies:

"Well, you have to, because the idea with these Indo-European languages is that all these languages are related. If you go back, maybe 6, 7 or 8 thousand years they're the same language. If you want to figure out what that language was, you have to study all these different languages and figure out how they changed. I ended up specializing in Celtic, so I do the same thing on a smaller scale in Celtic, but that's essentially the same."

Why Celtic?

"Hmm well, that was also an accident. I was doing Indo-European and I was an exchange scholar at the time. At Harvard one of the professors there said 'Well, if you want to do Indo-European you should take Old Irish because you should know that.' So I did, and that same semester I was also taking a course on the Indo-European verb, and I said 'I need a topic for a paper', and he said 'Why don't you talk about the Old Irish imperfect endings of the verb.' So I did. I had to learn all of the history of the Irish language. I read the standard books on that and eventually handed in the paper and it was a terrible, terrible paper, but his comment was: 'Well at least you tried.' Somehow, I kept studying Old Irish, it's just one of those things. For some reason, I thought Old Irish was great and it's hard to say why, but I liked the language and never quite got away from it."

I lived with an Austrian guy and an Italian guy. The Austrian guy's sister came to visit once and that is now my wife.

After looking at the clock, we realised we had been talking for 2 hours. If we wanted to make it back home in the stormy weather, we had to bring an end to this wonderful interview and brave the winter weather for the last time that day. Aaron, thanks again for the wonderful conversation and the hospitality!



WORD OF THE BOARD

BY JUSTINE HOOGSTRATEN

"Whenever I get gloomy at the state of the world, I think about the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport. It seems to me that love is everywhere. Often it is not particularly dignified or newsworthy, but it's always there. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, old friends. If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling that love actually is all around."

This is the start of one of my favourite movies and a truer statement has never been made. Love is all around us. Whether you're single and ready to flamingle or happy in a relationship, there are so many more kinds of love to be found in this world. Love for friends, for example. I am lucky to have a circle of close friends who always manage to cheer me up when it's needed, even when we are too busy to regularly see each other in person. Of course, I also have a love for all my Albion friends, who show me that a year on the Albion board is worth it, even when it can be tough. Heck, I even love those people who are just outside your circle of friends and you only have a conversation with once in a while; a shout out to them.

I also bear a big love for my family. You cannot choose family, so I'm lucky to have one that is pretty alright. I have parents who always welcome me at "thuis" with free food and working internet. I have two sisters who are pretty annoying, but I guess I love them anyway because they are my sisters. I still have three out of four grandparents, whom you start to appreciate a lot more once you notice that they are starting to grow older and older, and you realise they are not going to be around forever. And yes, I have to admit I can even appreciate those aunts and uncles who ask you about your love life and give you vacant stares when you try to explain that you don't intend to become a teacher and studying English is actually quite fun ("but everyone already speaks English, so why would you study English", is anyone with me?)

Last of all, a big shout out to Albion, of course. I joined this community three-and-a-half years ago and I feel as welcome now as I did back then. Albion has changed and evolved as the people at its heart have changed and evolved, but what connects Albioneers, namely a love for the English-speaking world, never changes. Look around you and you'll find that love presents itself in many forms in your life. Apologies if this column has been a bit cheesy, but hey, isn't cheesy the whole definition of Valentine's Day?

SHOWCASE

BY KAI BIJNEN

Hi! My name is Kai and I draw things that make me happy. It's something I always put a lot of love into, and I want to share that feeling with other people :-)



BOOKSHELF WITH ROBIN

A new issue, a new bookshelf. This time Tess and I luckily did not have to travel far: we sat down to talk about books with fellow freshman Robin van den Brule in lovely Utrecht.

What is your favourite book that you've read recently?

I'm reading *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (by Robert M. Pirsig) right now, which is really cool. It's a story about being on the road and making a motorcycle trip through the USA. It's quite philosophical, and kind of a contrast with this other book I read, *The Traveling Cat Chronicles* by Hiro Arikawa. It's a really lovely book from the perspective of a cat and it's kind of sad but also really cute. He's a stray who is adopted by someone in his neighbourhood, and then they go on adventures together and travel through Japan. It's really nice because it's not really difficult to read, it's quite okay.

What is your favourite genre?

I don't really have one I think – I read all kinds of different genres. I guess I try to read books that are on my "want to read" list. It contains mostly classics because I come across those titles so often that I just want to read them. I really like coming of age books, though. Like *Norwegian Wood* and other books by Murakami, *The*

Secret History, *Ender's Game*. The last one is Science Fiction which I don't usually like, but it was great. I like the great myths as well.

Do you have a favourite classic?

I think *On the Road* (Jack Kerouac) is a favourite, but I think people will probably hate me if I say I really love it. I have so many favourites, it's difficult to choose. I also like *Catcher in the Rye*, and *The World According to Garp* was also really cool. Oh, 1984 was terrible but lovely. I really like *Lord of the Flies* as well. So I guess those are my favourites.

Is there something that makes a book good according to you?

"I think you always have parts of yourself in common with some characters"

For example, what I really like about *On the Road* but also about *The Secret History* (Donna Tartt) is that it draws me in; I think that's the most important. It's also kind of why I started studying English: because reading a book from an academic point of view is so different. You have to keep your

distance from it. But the book has to resonate with me. For example, when I read *The Secret History* for the first time – and with *On the Road* as well – I felt trapped: it made me want to go travel and go wild. In *The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, it takes you along on the stream of thought and that's also really good.

Do you have a favourite romance?

I read *The Marriage Plot* last summer, which is a book written from the perspective of a girl who's madly in love, and wild about English Victorian writers. It's about her going to college and growing older and not getting a PhD and meeting this guy and falling in love with him, but he's manically depressed. It's a heavy topic, but a really good



book. At first, I thought it was a bit boring, but I pulled through it and it really touched me. I understood why it was a good book – you kind of feel that it's going to go wrong and that they're not in a healthy relationship. Another favourite is *Twee Vrouwen* by Harry Mulisch. It's about love between two women, kind of fatalistic as well. I don't read much romance, though – when it's just too much centred around two people I don't find it that interesting. Like in the *Marriage Plot* there's also a third person who's off to India with a totally different perspective, so it's more interesting.

Do you have a favourite poem?

I'm not sure if it's an English favourite poem. There's this poem by Toon Tellegen which I really love: it's from *De Aanzet tot een Web*, "in een trein, in de nacht". I came across it when I was listening to the radio, and this came on and I just couldn't forget it, and it has been with me ever since.

Do you have a most-read author?

There are a few contenders, I think. I've read quite a lot from Hella Haasse, but also Donna Tartt – I've read *The Secret History* two or three times, and *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger too. *Catcher* and *Twee Vrouwen* are kind of my comfort books: something you come back to because it's a nice read, and it makes you happy, like comfort food. They're quite thin as well, so I read those a lot. I love Donna Tartt, and Mulisch as well. But not one particular author that immediately comes to mind.

Is there one author that you haven't read yet but really want to?

Where should I start? I think I should say James Joyce be-

cause I haven't read much by him, maybe some excerpts but nothing big. I had someone else in mind but I can't remember anymore. It's just that I don't really care. There are so many authors, and I read them when I read them, or not.

Is there one book that you really want to read?

Zen was one of those books, but that's just because you hear a lot of great things and it makes you want to read that. But I remember I was in a bookstore once in Amsterdam, and I was so overwhelmed by all the books and I knew I would never read them. I guess you kind of have to do with what you've got, so I'll just read it when I read it.

Do you have an OTP?

I don't think so, no. I mean, probably there are so many people that you want to be happy. Like in *Twee Vrouwen* (SPOILER ALERT), the ex-husband shoots one of them, which is really sad and they were happy and then their happiness just ends so quickly. I think for



everyone I want them to be happy; in real life too. More for them than in literature actually.

Do you have a favourite book of all time?

This is a hard one. It might be *The Secret History*, so much happens in that one. *Ender's Game* was also really lovely; *Kafka on the Shore* is also one of my all-time favourites.

If you were stranded on a deserted island, what one book would you have with you and why?

The SAS Survival Guide! No, I don't think that counts. I think it would be a collection of short stories maybe. My Greek Mythology book would be really cool because it has lots of stories but it's also something I could reread until I die. Though, I actually think I would take poems.

You said you liked Greek mythology; do you have a favourite myth?

I really like the *Oresteia*, because it's so tragic. It's about Agamemnon's return and then he gets killed after Troy. But I also spent a lot of time reading the *Odyssey*, so that's kind of a favourite as well.

Do you have a favourite character? Or is there a character you can really relate to?

There are no favourite characters. I think you always have parts of yourself in common with some characters; if you don't, then it's probably a reaction to that character. As a young girl, I really felt connected to Mathilda, from Roald Dahl. Just the feeling of loneliness and not fitting in.

Favourite book within the LGBTQ+-spectrum?

Twee Vrouwen, but also, there's

this book on my to-read list, Angels in America. It's about gay people in the US. It's a play I've been really wanting to see, but I have the text now so I'm going to read that.

Do you have a recommendation for your fellow students?

I think it's more a recommendation to also do things that are not related to books, like go to plays and museums. I think doing that enriches the experience of reading as well. You might get references better and it's fun. I really like the plays by Toneelgroep Amsterdam, especially those by Ivo van der Hoeven: they're very raw adaptations of Shakespeare and always very well translated, really emotional and rough and I really like that. Also, read the classics – like The Odyssey, for example, or The Iliad and other Greek Myths. I think that's my final answer. They're really nice short stories, and I kind of grew up in that world.



Don't Even Get Me Started

BY VINCENT POTMAN

VALENTINE'S DAY: EVEN CUPID THINKS IT'S STUPID

"...he can't exactly work his magic when things aren't truly romantic..."

Ahh, Valentine's day, the most romantic day of the year, right? The day where Cupid fires off his bow more times than he can count, new couples everywhere to be found! While the last is certainly true, the other two statements don't hold up too well; it is not the most romantic day of the year, and Cupid doesn't lift a finger to get these people together. I mean, he can't exactly work his magic when things aren't truly romantic, now can he? "What do you mean not romantic, are you one of them blokes who believes that romance is dead?" Yes, on Valentine's day it is. Let me explain. Valentine's day is a fad that works rather well up until high school because, well, pre-teen and teenage romance don't exactly have the highest of expectations. This is no surprise since, you know, you have to start somewhere, and Valentine's day is as good an introduction as any. It's an ego boost for the pretty faces and a chance for those lower on the social rungs, who – if they do not succeed – can at least say they tried. Cheesy poetry is written, awkward advances are made, and it also keeps alive the rather nifty idea of the Secret Admirer, a chance for some mystique. It is, as you've now no doubt gathered, cliché and contrived. And that is okay, because it not only is largely

contained within a day, it is the cliché nature of it that can teach you about real romance. This is not to say that real romance cannot be cliché or cheesy, because it can, but rather to point out that most romantic gestures are romantic because they are 1) genuine and 2) unexpected. While an act on Valentine's day can be genuine, it is not unexpected.

See, after high school, it really rather loses its shine. It becomes just another obligation, a very commercialized one at that. Doing something on Valentine's day is anything but spontaneous; a rose on Valentine's day is just another rose on Valentine's day. Yes, it's a nice gesture but it is expected, while a rose on any other day is truly a surprise! This is because there is no real romantic sentiment fueling the day, not like there is on an anniversary, for example. Romance on Valentine's day is you adhering to society's timetable – or Cupid's, for that matter – not your own. See, Cupid adores real sentiment (it's what he uses to make his arrows) and spontaneity, well, that's what makes that bow of his twang. So, if you want to be really romantic, surprise that person not with some Valentine's Chocolates, but with something just as sweet on a random day.

CULTURE CORNER

ALICE ISN'T DEAD

BY NANNE VEEKE

The podcast Alice Isn't Dead, from the creators of the popular podcast Welcome to Night Vale, sits high on my list of favourite things from 2017. It's different from a "regular" podcast in the sense that Alice Isn't Dead feels more like an audiobook, rather than a talk-show. The story revolves around Keisha, a truck-driver, who is on the search for her missing wife Alice. On her journey, she encounters many eerie things, towns, and conspiracies with people who appear to be quite abnormal. Could the mystery surrounding the disappearance of her wife be part of something bigger?

It took me a little while to get used to the format, as it really feels like the main character is blurting out all her thoughts to an audio recorder while she is on the road. You get used to it very quickly and I find it refreshing to have a different sort of narrative; it adds to the suspense because Keisha sometimes has to get out of her truck and come back, later on, to tell us what has happened. The plot was very engaging and kept me on the edge of my seat whenever I sat down to listen to it. The emotions of the characters feel so real and you really get dragged into their state of mind. There are now two seasons with each 10 episodes available that are each roughly 20 to 25 minutes, and there will be a season three in 2018 for which I cannot wait! I am curious to see how this mystery will unfold itself further and I will be talking about this podcast for a long time to come. If you are a fan of strange happenings, eerie things, and conspiracies I would highly recommend you check out this podcast on the Night Vale website (nightvalepresent.com) as I have nothing bad to say about this amazing podcast that captivated me in every way.

THE MOUNTAIN BETWEEN US

BY VINCENT POTMAN

"It isn't the Mountain that's the problem..."

The rather original idea of mixing romance with a gritty survival adventure, starring Kate Winslet and Idris Elba, roused my interest. It is a recipe that should, by all rights, have led to me being glued to the screen, but The Mountain Between Us lost me early on, somehow failing in every other aspect but its casting. Indeed, even Elba and Winslet's talent can't save this one from crashing: it isn't the mountain that's the problem, it's the terrible script. It starts off fine, as I'm more than willing to suspend my disbelief for the starting premise of Alex Martin (Winslet), an inquisitive journalist about to get married, and Ben Bass (Elba), a straight-laced neurosurgeon on his way to a critical surgery, both being stuck at Salt Lake City Airport, deciding to convince a charter pilot to take them across the mountain range despite the impending storm. Beau Bridges, the pilot, agrees to the offer and takes along his trusty Labrador for the trip. The expected crash, which is rather tame, occurs not due to the storm, but the pilot having a heart attack. An interesting way to start off what is going to be a battle against the elements, and in hindsight the first sign that The Mountain doesn't grasp how to build up the stakes. The two action scenes that closely follow the crash only confirm it. These two scenes, however, do introduce a clash of ideologies – of Alex and her gut feelings and Ben and his rationale – which is honestly underutilized. There is also the interplay of blame and guilt, with Alex having been the one to suggest this stunt in the first place, which only features briefly and then gets left behind with the plane when they start trekking down the mountain. It is here the movie starts the dive from which it never recovers: prioritizing the romance and letting it carry the survival aspect when it should have clearly been the other way around. Instead of a cold and realistic survival that leads to a growing bond, an eventual romance, we are given a schmaltzy romance. It turns what was meant to be a cold and unforgiving landscape against which they struggle into just scenery: largely irrelevant slush that only functions to further the romance. This is not to say that the mountain range is not given its due because it is with breathtaking cinematography, but it only adds beauty and lacks some much-needed tension. The dialogue, however, is where it really falls apart, being stilted beyond measure, almost solely focused on shoehorning the two together, and ignoring how two people thrown together by terrible circumstance ought to act. This all culminates in the terrible final act, which is just wish-fulfilment at its worst at the cost of the plot.

The Mountain Between Us could have been great, only it failed spectacularly on all fronts. It is not satisfying for those looking for a good survival story, or for the saps looking for a good romance because it is too cheesy and can't be taken seriously in any capacity. Indeed, its only saving graces are the great nature shots, the fact that Winslet and Elba are good enough to make this thing somewhat palatable, and a character to root for: the dog. As I said, it isn't the mountain that's the problem. 17



BREATHE: "A heart-warming Biopic"

BY VINCENT POTMAN

Out of all the movies I've seen in 2017, *Breathe*, manages to warm my heart unconditionally. There is no grand evil plot, no villain to overcome; it's just people being people, bringing out the best in each other. It's 1958, and 28 year old Robin Cavendish (Andrew Garfield), a relatively successful tea broker and husband of Diana Cavendish (Claire Foy) gets polio while in Kenya, which paralyzes him from the neck down, a respirator doing his breathing for him. It's a shock to everyone and he's given only three months to live, or once back in England, at most a year. He is depressed and fatalistically insists that Diana pull the plug. His wife, who has not long ago given birth to their son, Jonathan, is having none of it. In 1959, with Robin in a somewhat less fatalistic frame of mind and Diana as resolute as ever, they decide that the hospital is actively making things worse, which results in him living with his wife and young son in a countryside house. This is against the advice of the doctors, who do not give him long to live outside of the hospital walls. The rest of the movie, a tribute to his life, is how he and Diana set out to prove them wrong, eventually not just fighting for only his benefit.

A beautiful story, which is beautifully acted. The whole cast is phenomenal, but Claire Foy and Andrew Garfield really shine as their chemistry is a pleasure to watch. It's two people staying alive by enjoying the little things for all that they are, who refuse to let adversity get the best of them, and who bring out the best in each other. Yes, first time producer Andrew Serkis, in tandem with Jonathan Cavendish, manages to really bring to life the charming and delightful moments their personal dedication to living created. Indeed, *Breathe* knows when to be serious, when to be funny, and when to be sweet. It's a heartwarming biopic that really does their fight justice, showing how a debilitating sickness such as polio, which these days is thankfully no longer a threat due to the vaccine, but back then was all but a death sentence, can be overcome with love, determination, and a quick mind. If you want something that really moves you but also lift up your spirits, then I cannot recommend this enough.

CULTURE CORNER

COCO BY NINA VAN DER VOORT

A young boy wants to be a musician in a family where music is banished, and on his journey to becoming a singer/songwriter like his idol Ernesto de la Cruz, he finds himself wandering through the Land of the Dead, desperate to find a way to become a musician.

The storyline itself was enjoyable, to say the best; it was good, but not as amazing and gripping as expected. However, it still remained a beautiful story about music mixed with the importance of family. The characters and the dynamic between them was wonderful. From the boastful, proud Ernesto de la Cruz to the humble, loving Húgo and of course the adorable Miguel with his funny sidekick Dante. But what really amazed me about the movie was the animation. The images in the movie were astounding; it had beautifully bright colours, such as green, orange and pink. These colours also perfectly fit in with "Dias de los Muertos", or "Day of the Dead". The animation was truly out of this world. The pictures were very detailed to the point where it almost looked real. Something I also absolutely loved about this movie was the portrayal of Mexican culture, more specifically Dias de Los Muertos. It gives a clear explanation about how it's celebrated, in such a way that it's nicely incorporated into the story, while also showing the importance of the holiday.

All in all, it was a heart-warming, enjoyable story about music, family and a good representation of Mexican culture, told through beautiful animation, perfect for everyone to enjoy. Therefore, it deserves a good 4 out of 5 stars.

25 YEARS OF RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

BY TESS MASSELINK

Who hasn't heard of the band Rage Against The Machine? If you haven't, it's time to change that. Rage Against The Machine (RATM) isn't making new music anymore, but the band still has many fans all around the world. RATM was a funk and rap metal group from the United States. 25 years ago they brought out their self-titled debut album, which was an instant hit. Now, the Netherlands and Belgium have their share of heavy bands as well. Musicians known from certain bands came to the idea to form a Rage Against The Machine cover band in

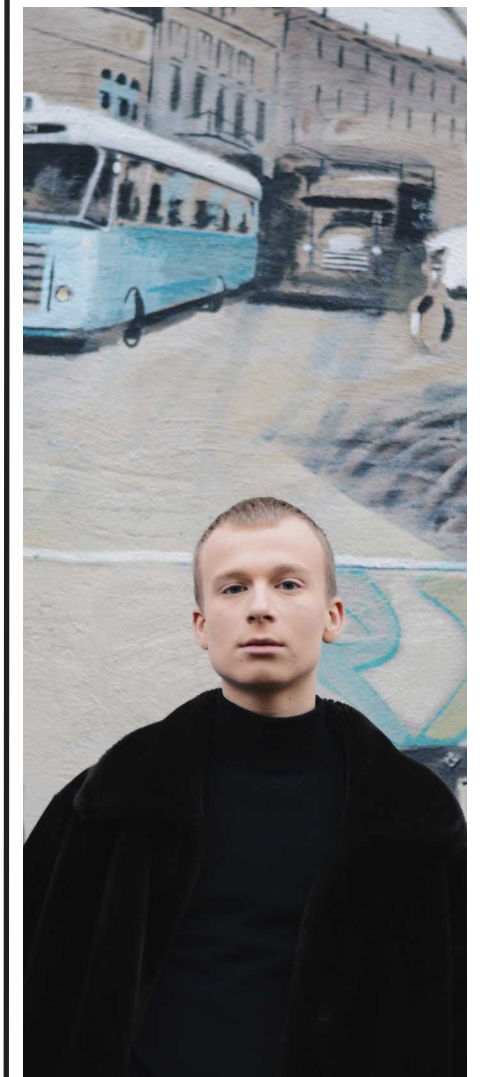
eo about refugees, which fitted RATM's many political statements in their music. This was a good introduction to the concert: it provided a bit of awareness for the audience, which is what the original RATM would have done. Since the band played the entire self-titled album, the show started with the killer tracks 'Bombtrack' and 'Killing In The Name', sung by David Achter de Molen. Being a John Coffey fan, it was amazing seeing David on stage again. He gave it his all and the audience went bonkers. Bonkers, in this case, means



honour of the 25 year jubilee of RATM's debut album. 25 Years of RATM consisted of De Staat drummer Tim van Delft and bassist Jop van Summeren and The Brotherhood Foundation guitarist Tom Sikkers as instrumentalists. The cover band had multiple singers, which was a really cool idea. The singers took turns in singing the various songs from the album, which they played in its entirety. The singers were David Achter De Molen (John Coffey), Roy Smolenaars (Memphis Maniacs), Marco Roelofs (Heideroosjes), Jeroen Camerlynck (Fleddy Melculy) and Caroline Westendorp (The Charm The Fury). The concert started with a vid-

multiple moshpits and even a circlepit. With this, David had set the standard for the entire concert. All of the singers had great chemistry with the rest of the band and the audience. It was obvious that everyone was enjoying the show immensely. The album ends with the song 'Freedom', but the audience was pleasantly surprised when the band started one last, extra song: 'Guerrilla Radio'. This was the heavy final song of the concert, which really drew everyone in for a few last minutes of moshing and singing along at the top of their lungs. In short: it was an amazing night full of heavy music and cool people!

HUMANS OF ALBION



BY SVEN VERHOEVEN

Buy yourself that big box of chocolates or send that gorgeous bouquet of red roses to your own address. Why? Because you deserve it. The one person you're always stuck with is yourself. So you better get along and make the best of it. Love yourself, because you're the only person who can truly make you happy. Simply be your own Valentine this year! And remember, in the words of RuPaul, "if you can't love yourself, how in the hell are you gonna love somebody else?"



ALBIONEERS ABROAD



FROM HULL WITH(OUT) LOVE

LOVE ON THE EMERALD ISLAND

Unless you are leaving a significant other behind when it is time to start your time abroad, love is probably not one of the things you spend a lot of time worrying about when thinking of the coming adventure. Love, however, has the irksome tendency of throwing itself at you when you least expect it; this has become increasingly apparent during my time here in Hull, where my friends and I seem to have landed in situations that resemble the plot of a romantic comedy or soap opera.

If you're single, someone will inevitably say something along the lines of "don't fall in love whilst you're there!" before you leave. If you're anything like Fiona, another exchange student from the Netherlands, you will roll your eyes at them and reply: "as if." Unfortunately, the UK is home to some very enticing characters, and especially those that wear fashionable glasses seem to possess the talent of stealing the hearts of those who thought their mothers were completely misguided when they assumed their daughters would fall in love abroad. To complicate matters, the British - according to our observations - seem to prefer acting in a way that suggests they have the emotional range of the Queen's teaspoon, even when they have previously admitted to having feelings for you.

One of my closest friends here, an exchange student from Ireland, came here still dealing with a recent break-up.

Looking forward to a year without attachments, she was set on enjoying the single life, and made the most of our nights out in the surprisingly lively city of Hull. One Friday night, she took a guy home, with no further intentions than to have a good time before going their separate ways again. Said guy, however, turned out to be significantly more interesting than she initially thought. Now, three months in, he is a regular visitor at our halls; they have officially started dating, and I must admit they are adorable together.

As for me, love was about as far from my mind as it could be in the months before leaving. I had been happily single ever since starting university, and forming any sort of

attachment before leaving for nine months seemed like an utterly ludicrous idea. Unfortunately, love had a different idea, and it was at a festival three weeks before my boat left that I met a guy who crawled into my heart as well as my tent. Both of us fully anticipated contact to die down naturally as soon as I left, but instead I am currently looking forward to his second visit here.

From unexpectedly having to miss someone to begrudgingly having to admit your mother may have been right in her predictions, love has surprised all of us here in cold Northern England. It may not be on your mind, but never underestimate it: nobody expects the Spanish Inq- uhm, love.

BY LEA DOKTER



What is love? You might think to know a solid answer to this eternal question, I certainly thought I did until I went abroad to Ireland and realised what I knew of love was merely relevant to my own country. After several encounters with Irish boys I concluded they were polite, to put it one way. While Dutch boys have the strong tendency to grope our behinds and go straight for a kiss after buying us a single drink, the Irish genuinely try to talk to you, despite being absolutely pissed. This nice change of scene allowed me to reflect on our own dating culture.

So what is love? Meeting people from countries across the globe (newsflash: the earth isn't flat) during my exchange provided some interesting insights. In Spain love is expressed through big attitudes, in Italy boys literally fight over it, in Germany the word is rarely used, and in India love is not always voluntarily.

Yet despite these different notions of love, it exists everywhere. A German friend fell head over heels for a local boy, while a fresh French-Indian couple became a hot topic amongst the international students. I became infatuated with an American guy and have been wooed by an Englishman. 'Love transcends all borders' always sounded like a cliché love quote to me - which it is - but I now realise it is absolutely true. As I am writing about all things love abroad, I realise one of my earlier statements about Irish

boys might be false. During the orientation days we had to sit through multiple lectures and talks about sexual consent. A weird but funny video explained sexual consent through drinking tea (try to look it up, it's really interesting!) before an extensive list of numbers and organisations to contact in case something bad happens was presented. A popular nightline was set up and run by students, which I soon realised is absolutely necessary with the way Irish students go out and get out-of-the-charts drunk all the time. The fact all this exists and is heavily discussed around campus suggests that perhaps the Irish boys - or girls for that matter - are not as polite as I had first thought.

Perhaps another reason for all the campaigns about consent is the Irish government itself (don't worry, you won't have to pull out your tin foil hat for this one). I was shocked to discover that abortion is still illegal in the green country. I will not linger on this subject, however, as it is highly controversial - even here in the Netherlands.

Anyway, I meant to write a feel-good piece about international love. Going abroad for an extended period of time teaches you about many subjects, even those you would expect the least. Just by observing the international students interact with each other, the internationals interact with the Irish, or the Irish interact with each other, I have learned a great deal about what dating, sexuality, and love

means, how it differs from place to place and from person to person, and I truly recommend everyone to experience this for themselves.

BY ANNEMIEK BLAAUWGEERS



Q & Alumni with *ISABEAU JENSEN*

Isabeau Jensen is 24 years old, and she's quite a recent graduate. She got her degree in 2016, and she's currently finishing up a master's degree in linguistics with a neuro scientific focus. Isabeau is also chair of the Polyamory Foundation Netherlands.

Why did you decide to study English?

I started studying Psychology first, but then I quit because I became ill. When I was better, I realized I wasn't very interested in Psychology anymore. I wanted to do something that I was good at and found interesting as well, so I decided to study a language, and I picked English.

Could you explain the concept of polyamory for those who don't know yet?

Polyamory translates to 'multiple loves'. Within polyamory there are a lot of different types: some people call themselves polyamorous and they mean that they fall in love with multiple people and seek connections with these people; some people are in a three-person romantic relationship; some people have two partners and that's it. Everything comes down to the question: are you hierarchical or not? Which means: do you have a partner and some separate loose contacts besides that, or do you have multiple contacts that are equal in their relationship to you. Then there's the distinction between open or closed relationships: do you have any casual contacts besides your partner, or do you have relationships in the way you would with monogamous relationships. There's also the discussion of the identity vs. choice – to be honest, I don't think it makes much of a difference. You should let people either be who they are,

or let them make the choice they want to make. This is the 'technical' side of it. Polyamory also rests on the statement that people aren't property. Mostly, it's about making connections that feel right to you, and to stop focusing on the difference between friendship and romantic relationships. This is what's always personally appealed to me.

In polyamory, there's a word for the feeling you get when your partner is dating someone else, the feeling of wanting them to be happy and not feeling bad about them dating someone else. Many people have a hard time with this because the first emotion they think of in these situations is jealousy, while in polyamorous relationships the feeling has positive connotations. When Felix comes home from a date at night, I want to know how it was and I'm happy when he had a good time, in the way I would be happy for a friend if they'd had a great time on a date. Only here, it's my boyfriend.

Polyamory operates from the idea that it's important to think about the kind of relationship you want instead of going with monogamy as the default. This involves not assuming that jealousy is the logical emotion. Jealousy is, in a way, a logical and natural emotion, otherwise, we wouldn't all experience it. But you can also wonder whether that feeling is your partner's responsibility or your responsibility to figure out what it is that's making you feel like that, and what am I going to do change that? Communication is key in that, as it is key in every kind of relationship.

Can you tell me a bit about your work at Foundation Polyamory Netherlands?

I went to a lecture on polyamory, and someone from the foundation was

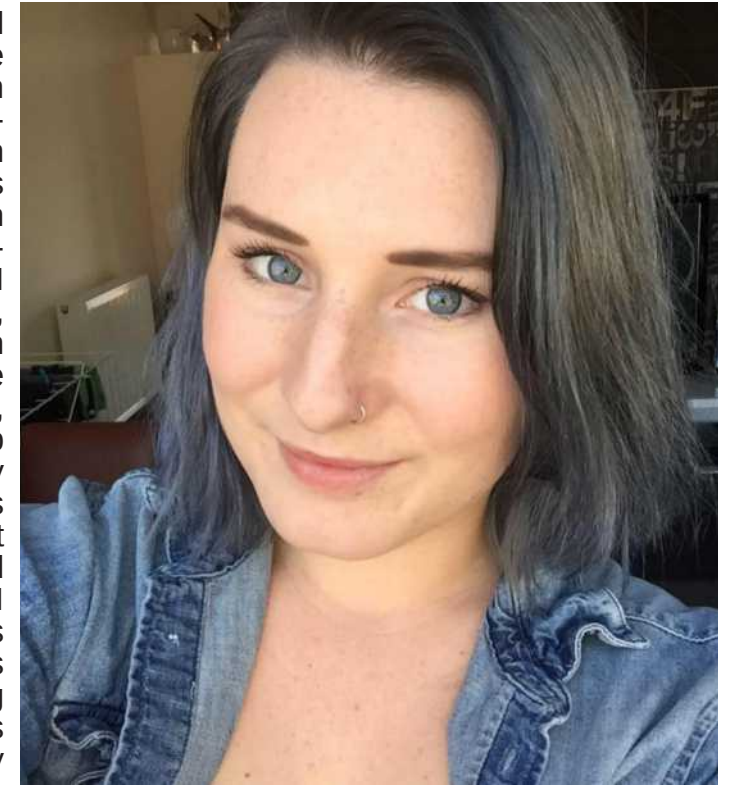
speaking there. I thought 'That's me! It's so cool there's a foundation for this!' I contacted the foundation and told them I'd like to work for them in some way, but they told me they were planning on stopping. So I took over the foundation and became chair. I had been on committees and boards before, so I did have experience in the field. I had the chance to decide the direction I wanted to take with the foundation, and I decided to focus mainly on advocacy of rights, which is what I did for students when I was on the VIDIUS board. The previous board had done a lot of community building the first six years, which meant that the foundation had a big group of supporters: there was a Facebook of nearly 600 members at the time. I figured "that part is going well, I want to fight for rights." This meant reading up on the operation of mortgages and rent and whatnot, which isn't my thing at all. I found some people who were interested in this stuff as well. At the end of the day, much of it is lectures and interviews and the like. I like being able to choose the direction the foundation was going to take. As chair, I have the power to say what our next step will be.

What motivated you to attend the lecture?

When I was in my first year of English, I had a boyfriend. After we'd been together for two years and were living together, I fell in love with Felix, my current partner. I told my boyfriend at the time, and when he asked me, "Does that mean you like me any less?", we started talking about the feelings involved and possible scenarios where this would work. It sounds easy now, but it really wasn't, at all. There was a lot of talking, pain and thinking involved, especially thinking about the relationship structure you're currently in and one you actually believe in yourself. In the end, we figured it out and it's only then that I discovered there was already a word for it and not something we had invented ourselves. "Look at me!" I thought, and then I found out there was this whole community and all this literature on the subject. That's when I started going to lectures with Felix. At a certain point, things between me and my ex ended and Felix and I decided we didn't want to be in a monogamous relationship just because of that. This was more than three years ago.

What kind of stuff do you do with the foundation?

We have people all over the country who organize drinks, which means there are drinks somewhere in the country almost every week – from Leeuwarden to Zeeland, from Amsterdam to Limburg (though not much in Limburg, to be honest – still quite Christian). There are a lot of support groups, a lot of community building. My main job is contact with the press, which has been huge the past few months. We'd like to start building files with information that can help people with a polyamorous relationship. Things like how to get a mortgage, what bank you can use, how to handle custody if you have a child, stuff like that. It's completely new territory, we're the ones who are figuring this out for the first time. Engaging politicians



is also a focus, but realistically that will be a few years down the road since the current cabinet is so Christian. We did have an elaborate plan prepared, but it will have to wait. There's another chance in four years! And there are plenty of things we can accomplish on a more local level – in some cities, it's possible to rent a home with multiple people. Utrecht isn't one of those cities yet, but that's one of the things we can try to change.

What kind of reactions do you get from other people?

Face to face, the reactions are pretty okay. People are mostly curious – there are many questions about my sex life. On the internet – and especially as chair of the foundation – it's hell. A lot of the comments are ingrained with sexism, which makes you realize that part of monogamy holds onto the image of men wanting women for themselves. Many comments are both heteronormative and sexist. "You're just a slut", or "you're just a sex addict" are comments I hear a lot. Many say it's cheating, which is incorrect because the rules we've made within our relationship say it's okay. There's a lot of homophobia as well. When I tell people I'm in a relationship with both Richard and Felix (Richard and Felix are both pansexual/bisexual as well), sometimes people say that they are just gay, as if that would be wrong.

Cultuur, communicatie en mediastudies

BY CHRYSTEL PHILIPSEN

Last year, I figured out that English literature was not in my future and I decided to look further. In block two I followed the course 'Adapting to the Novel'. This course sparked my interest in different forms of media. Since I was already in my second year, I decided not to quit English and pick out a minor that suited my interest in media. Eventually, I stumbled upon the minor Cultuur, Communicatie en Mediastudies.

I have now taken two out of the four courses. The first course that I took was Cultuur, Communicatie en Nieuwe Media and to be honest, I was disappointed. We had assignments every week and I thought the course was really dull. However, I really enjoyed our final assignment. For the final assignment, you could make an online magazine, a short film, a paper, a presentation, etc. There were no requirements for the format and your topic had to be related to culture and new media. I decided to make a short film about the representation of women in action movies. It was a lot of fun and discussions that are relevant nowadays are being discussed. The theory might have been boring, but all in all the course was quite enjoyable.

The second course I took is called Pop music, Pop culture and Media. This course is really amazing. During the lectures, you will learn about the history of music from the 1950's up to the 2000's. For half of the lectures, you will listen to the music of a particular genre, and the professor is really cool. You learn how particular music genres come into existence and a bit about the subcultures that come with it. During the seminars, you will learn about the influence of music on the human brain and the social functions of music.

Long story short: it is a really cool course and I would recommend it to anyone who loves music. In block 3 you will follow the course Subcultures and in block 4 Nieuwe Media Filosofie. I have no idea what I can expect from these courses, but I'm sure the courses will not disappoint.

Social sciences courses are quite different from the regular English courses. Seminars are a lot more interactive. People are actually interested in the topics and participate in discussions without being forced by a teacher. Also, everybody actually does their homework which is weird.

If you like film, music and pop culture then look no further: this is the minor for you ;)

Jeugdliteratuur

BY MARLON SCHOTEL

Hi! My name is Marlon and I'm busy getting my master's degree in Jeugdliteratuur (Children's literature) at Tilburg University. This master track is part of the department of Kunst en cultuurstudies and is taught in Dutch. Most of the primary readings are Dutch texts, but don't worry: Harry Potter is an often used as example in loads of the secondary texts.

Literature students should all agree that reading is hugely important, and not only to master a language or to enjoy. I loved studying English and I am a real #TeamLit supporter, but in my master's I wanted to learn more about the effects and importance of reading, instead of only zooming in on texts. I have learnt a lot from analysing adult literature, but I wanted to know more about what exactly we learn from books in terms of personal development and skills. The perfect combination of these two aspects, text-based and reader-based, is the Master Jeugdliteratuur in Tilburg. This is a one-year long Master and consists of the following courses: Het kind als lezer, Theoretische en historische reflectie op jeugdliteratuur, Jeugdliteratuur in internationaal perspectief, Life writing, and Grensverkeer: Jeugdliteratuur en andere cultuuruitingen. Apart from these modules, you also follow two courses in research skills (I chose Hermeneutical Research of Discourse and Visual Image, and Research Interview and Narrative Analysis), and a self-study module, internship or relevant courses from another department or at a different university.

Especially the module Het kind als lezer answered my questions on why reading is important. My personal interest within this subject lies with empathy, identification and theory of mind, and I intend on writing my thesis on these phenomena.

The field of youth literature is incredibly small, especially in Holland. You'll be familiar with all the Big Names within a few weeks. You also learn that the field is often under-appreciated, not taken seriously and that it struggles with its status. But more importantly: you learn that children's and youth literature is in no way a lesser branch of literature than adult literature is.

It takes some getting used to to spend your train ride from Utrecht to Tilburg reading picture books, Jip and Janneke or Een brief voor de koning, but to me it gives an incredible feeling of satisfaction to be engaged with the effects and importance of reading day in and day out.

Lastly, it's a small course with only two professors and, this year, only 7 other students. With a BA in English you can enter this master's without a pre-master's.

BATTLE OF THE ALBION KOPPELS

BY NINA VAN DER VOORT & LAUREL SANDERS

There are quite a few couples here at Albion, and for this very special Valentine's issue we've decided to talk to two of them so we could find out who the absolute best couple is here at Albion. The lucky contestants? Minthe Woudstra and Thijs Grootveld vs. Vera Aalbers and Robin Bal. For this article we asked our candidates a series of questions about the other person in the relationship, to find out how much they know about each other. The couple that gets the most questions right or agrees on the most things, wins. So... which is the best couple of Albion?



MINTHE AND THIJS

How did you meet?

Minthe: "At Albion. There's some debate about that. I think Ikea was the first time I saw him, and then at a game night. And the Ikea thing was a hide-and-seek from Albion, but I think the first time we actually spoke was at the game night."

Thijs: "We met through Albion. I think the first time we met was an activity in my first year; Ikea Hide-and-Seek. We played hide-and-seek at Ikea which was amazing, and I think that was the first time we officially met and then at a game night at Albion, later. Those were the two first times that we really met."

Thing they really like about themselves?

Minthe: "His interest in music."

Thijs: "Tough question... One thing that she really likes about herself is that she's so much into photography."

What would they order at De Stadsgenoot?

Minthe: "Usually he picks coke or beer... Cider, Apple Bandit."

Thijs: "She would probably pick like cider or beer because she has to."

Pineapple on pizza: Yes or no?

Minthe: "No. I hope no."

Thijs: "I'm not entirely sure, I'd go with yes."

Favourite TV show?

Minthe: "Friday Night Lights."

Thijs: "That's a tough one, she has a lot. Her favourite TV show... It's probably something like How I Met Your Mother."

Eye colour?

Minthe: "Well he always says brown but I think it's more green."

Thijs: "Oh wow. It's brown."

Are they a coffee or tea person?

Minthe: Tea.

Thijs: Tea.

One place they would love to travel to?

Minthe: "I think we both want to go everywhere. Like New Zealand maybe? Iceland, but I've already been there. I would say everywhere."

Thijs: "There's a lot of places... Let's go with Las Vegas."

Did they like you immediately, or was it more of a process?

Minthe: "Gradually."

Thijs: "There was an early interest, but then the rest was gradual I think."

VERA AND ROBIN

How did you meet?

Vera: "We first met on the matching day of this course."

Robin: "On the matching day of this study, and to be specific we were seated next to each other by Marcelle Cole in the Riddles class."

Pineapple on pizza: Yes or no?

Vera: "No."

Robin: "She's indifferent. I'm going to go with indifferent. I think she'd be okay with it, but she doesn't usually order it."

One place they would love to travel to?

Vera: "I think maybe somewhere in England."

Robin: "Iceland. Or Japan or Australia. But I'm going to go with Iceland."

Are they a coffee or tea person?

Vera: "Coffee, definitely."

Robin: "Tea, definitely."

FINAL SCORE
12/16

And the winner is...

It seems like both couples know each other fairly well. However, Vera and Robin seemed to know one another just a bit better and win the battle. Congratulations to both couples, seems like everyone is a perfect match.

FINAL SCORE
9/16

What would they order at De Stadsgenoot?

Vera: "I think he would order beer."

Robin: "A dry white wine."

Eye colour?

Vera: "Brown."

Robin: "Blue."

Thing they really like about themselves?

Vera: "That he can laugh at himself."

Robin: "One thing that she really likes about herself is her lifestyles, which concerns veganism."

Favourite TV show?

Vera: "How I Met Your Mother."

Robin: "American Horror Story, I dare say. Or Stranger Things."

Did they like you immediately, or was it more of a process?

Vera: "I think he liked me immediately."

Robin: "It wasn't immediately for her. I know that she tried to keep her distance while we were dating but she didn't manage to."



Treat Yo'Self: Utrecht Style

BY JASMIJN OOMS

Many students stay true to a pasta-pesto dinner or their – ahem – 'love' of instant noodles, but sometimes Uncle Duo gives out a particularly steep loan, and your taste-buds yearn for something less sodium-based. These are the moments where you truly thrive, and here are some great places where you can treat yourself, whether you've had a good or bad day.



Instock - Vleutenseweg 382
\$\$

Not only does this restaurant have a mean croissant-pineapple French toast, eating here will also give you an extra feel-good vibe, as their meals are made with food that is thrown away after only having been 1 day in the supermarkets, directly battling food-waste. On Saturdays, there is live music, and the menu always changes to lovely meals in sync with the season (plus they always have vegetarian/vegan options!).

Ān-Ān Saigon Streetfood - Voorstraat 23
\$\$

If you never had the means (or desire) to go to the likes of Vietnam, this restaurant is perfect to tempt your palate with something new to grab onto! Vietnamese meals are overall very green, fresh and delicious, and AnAn puts their rich flavours into small Asian dishes suitable for all diets.



Umami - Oudegracht 74
\$\$

All Utrecht-situated sushi-lovers do not know what good sushi tastes like until they have eaten here. Though their sushi-menu is small, the intense tastes and flavours are really unimaginably tasty, and as a result, this restaurant is always busy; so make sure you make a reservation before going! Shave off some euro's by eating the 'Early Dinner' between 16:30 and 17:30 and enjoy your All-You-Can-Eat extravaganza!

Spekuk - Drieharingenstraat 10-12
\$\$

If you're looking to spice up your life, go eat spicy, intense Indonesian rice-bowls of Rames (literally translated to "everything mixed together"). This is the kind of restaurant where you'll eat your food teary-eyed because it's so spicy, but it's so good you can't stop eating.

Sirtaki - Servetstraat 1 (next to the Dom)
\$

Truly I haven't eaten any other Greek food, but I never need to try anything else than from Sirtaki. Their portions are huge, full of greens and when you don't feel like sitting down to eat, across the street, their kitchen gives award-winning meals to go as well.

De Kleine Parade - Drieharingenstraat 2
\$\$

So I suggest that you don't actually have dinner at this restaurant. Why? Because you need to save your bucks and appetite for their desserts. They serve a wonderful platter of tapas-like desserts that I still sometimes have dessert-hungry dreams about. If you have enough nerve, have some McDonalds, and then come to this stylish establishment and only order desserts. You won't be proud, but you will be satisfied beyond belief.

CALENDAR

February

- 15th AcCie event
- 20th Symposium about Brexit
- 21st Biercantus
- 22nd CarrièreNacht
- 26th Gala: Oscars Party
- 27th Ice skating
- 28th Pub Quiz

March

- 6th Karaoke
- 7-8th SUDS one act festival
- 10th Ouderdag
- 13th KB info night
- Monthly Drinks
- 14th Drifting (party)

As you all might know, every year SUDS aims to set up several theatre related activities for the students of Albion and beyond. Our next venture onto the stage will take place shortly, namely: our One Act Festival. A series of 4 short plays with a group of different actors will be performed, all in one night! We have a true range of different plays for you, so all tastes can be appeased. There's the dramatic plays *The Crab* and *Crucify Your Mind*, and both of these gems were written and directed by your and our own Jasmijn Ooms! Another Albioner, Isolde van Gog, wrote the hilariously brilliant *Donnie D's Mixtape* (director: yours truly), and our other comedy, called the *Bi-Muda Triangle*, was written/directed by a team of amazing SUDS alumni: Anastasios Galanis and Inés Gallego Landín. Join us these amazing nights of theatre on March 7th and 8th! Tickets available at the till or by mailing to

sudstickets@gmail.com.

BY KERSTIN RIEL



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Special thanks

Aaron Griffith, Alessandra Polimeno, Annemiek Blaauwgeers, Chrystel Phillipsen, Elsbeth Smalbrugge, Isabeau Jensen, Jasmijn Ooms, Justine Hoogstraten, Kai Bijnen, Kerstin Riel, Lea Dokter, Marlon Schotel, Mees Roelofs, Minthe Woudstra, Robin Bal, Robin den Brule, Sam van der Wal, Sven Verouden, Thijs Grootveld, Vera Aalbers en Welmoed Tevel.