

Scriptus

Issue 21



FOREWORD

Dear readers,

For the first time ever, Scriptus has released two issues within a month, and boy has it been hectic! We hope that you have managed to pick up a copy of Issue 20 and now we would like to present to you Issue 21! Issue 21 is particularly special, as it was assembled in less than two weeks, and is the first issue that has been published with the new Scriptus board!

This issue would not have been possible without:

- a. The old board members, who despite having no obligations for this issue provided lots of support and help. Special thanks to Nick, who managed to edit two issues contemporary, fly to Canada, and keep us all motivated.
- b. The writers! Thank you! Despite having an incredibly short amount of time to write and edit the pieces, they managed to deliver some funny, interesting, and surprising pieces (more on that later).
- c. To the new board, who was thrown into a chaotic and stressful situation, and yet were optimistic and worked hard to create a beautiful issue.

In addition, we look forward to getting your feedback, as a few little changes have been made.

Clara, our new designer, has experimented with a new layout, and Zuzanna, our new head illustrator, has created some brilliant illustrations based on her own personal unique style.

As for content, well....where should I start? As our beloved third years depart, we decided to reserve a special place in this edition for you guys. Third years, make sure you read Tanushree's piece and Tekla's most recent edition of HOME. In case you missed some events and are experiencing FoMO (fear of missing out), check-out the articles on written about Scopophilia and Organic Campus Farmer's Market; that way, you can pretend you were there! For all those who appreciate food and are staying in the Netherlands consider reading "A Foodie's Summer Begins... ". Other must reads include "Embodiment of Evil", "Constructed Reality", "Weekend College", and the submissions by AUCSA and Student council, where they reflect on the past year, whilst providing a glimpse of what lies ahead. Actually, dare I say, everything is a must read! And last, but certainly not least, do not miss out on Charlotte's new piece for the Love, Sex and Magic. She's been more daring than usual!

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GRADUATING CLASS OF 2016

[TANUSHREE KAUSHAL]

Dear class of 2016,

I have seen the best of people cry and break down, disillusioned with life and meaning and their own selves, wanting out, living as mere to-do lists, trying desperately to hang on to an idea of themselves – of one who can, nay, must keep going, who must keep pushing against the tides.

“Everyone else seems to be doing alright, why not me?” In these strange times, where much has stopped making sense and you feel lost about the future and yourself and your morality and your relationships and what even is reality, just take a step back and look how far you have come!

No matter what narrative you might be giving to it now, hasn’t it been such a journey? Starting here, a 5-minute ride away from home for some and a 13-hour flight away for others, yet here all coalesced into AUC students.

As evening dawns and I sit in my room after all the work and socializing, I find myself drifting off towards the past with the deepest sense of nostalgia towards who I was when I came here, about all that we have been through together as “the class of 2016” (something that was hammered into our heads a few dozen times in our IntroWeek which now seems so long ago). And as I reminisce about the ‘journey’ which has had its fair shares of ups and downs, I also wonder why I am thinking about the past at all? I have never been one to delve on events that have happened. Especially when the future is calling. Perhaps it is because we are sharing together a strange time between the past and the future – where the Capstone has been handed in and finals have been completed, but the new life hasn’t yet begun. A friend of mine described this in one word: limbo.

Now, I could very well be projecting my own sentiments on all AUC beings, in which case, this article is another expression from the girl in your year who enjoyed talking too much. But in case you are one of those that are caught in the midst of doubts, that are clueless about who they are and what they want, that fear the future instead of anticipating it, that are lonely and both emotionless and full of emotion at the same time, then I have a few words for you.

Yes, the future looks scary. What with the millions of responsibilities that will dawn upon your existence – what if they end up making you just another boring middle-aged person? What if you just fail miserably and can never recover? What if you end up alone and have no friends you truly connect with after this? So much fear! Fear of what? What is the worst, the most rock-bottom you can hit? And haven’t you hit lows after lows already? And you got out, right? That’s what will happen. Life will get ugly at some points and you will feel helpless and alone in this world. But you will get out because that’s what you are.

The whole world has somehow come to exist in a form that values you only in comparison with others. AUC hasn’t been much different: how many courses, what grades, how many committees, how many hours of volunteering, how many social skills? This has ingrained such a strong sentiment of guilt and inadequacy that unhappiness pervades you constantly. And you try to find means of escaping this by joining one more committee, taking one extra course, writing one more brilliant paper or going to one more demonstration – but nothing suffices, for how can it? How can comparing yourself more ever lead up to more happiness? What kind of logic is this? There is only one you. There has never been and never will be a ‘you’. So how can you be bad at being the only YOU there has ever been? By simply existing and being a part of this beautiful world, you are enough. Nothing has to be proven to anyone, particularly to yourself. This is the true revolution – where you don’t fight the outside because there is no ‘outside’, and if there is one, it becomes absolutely irrelevant.

If this education has made you sad and serious, then this is not an education, it is a degradation. Degradation of your being. Go a little nuts for a while, or forever. And what is nuts anyway – living half-assed and doing things because they cleanse your guilt or add to your CV or make you feel better than your neighbour temporarily – is that not absolutely bonkers? If your ecstasy makes you dance on your way to school while others think you to be mad, so be it! Perhaps happiness IS madness, perhaps madness is the cure! Learn to laugh – especially at yourself. Spend time doing things that are utterly useless because not everything has to have a use! What use were you born for? You just are, so just be and stop reducing yourself and everything you do to instrumental tools of achieving something else. So go be silly – wherever you are, at the cafe you work at, the new country you will be visiting, your parent’s place, your new university – insanity has no borders. And you will see how you won’t need alcohol for this anymore.

The biggest education I have received here has come from the most unexpected cracks – the late night talking sessions that were supposed to end at midnight but went on until dawn, the intense break-ups that elicited how we aren't controlled beings with fixed narratives but can be irrational and angry and bothered by things that seemed trivial before, the times under the Sun staring at the bright blue sky realizing that everything is fine after all, having a chat with the ladies at the front desk which sometimes seems more meaningful than the 90 minute lecture you are paying for, seeing everyone exhausted in the last semester courses and realizing the shared journey we have undertaken that makes us feel that despite everything, we are in this together.

Now go home and look at yourself. You are a fresh, full of life, intelligent, idealist, well-meaning human being. You have been able to get through the shit storm they call college and teenage years. Look within yourself because the universe inside outshines anything that can ever be found outside. Celebrate yourself, revere yourself. Treat your body with love and respect and stop skipping meals or stuffing yourself with crap and go for long walks and surround yourself with people that make you happy.

We have so much energy within, so many dreams and so much potential that is bursting out at our seams! What place does fear have amidst all of this? But if you can't drop your fears, then confront them. Let them overwhelm you completely, instead of evading it by finding temporary solace in distractions.

As you pack your lives into suitcases and cherish the last few bits of college life, I leave you with just one more quote from Nietzsche: "We should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once. And we should call every truth false which was not accompanied by at least one laugh"

It's been a good run y'all. See you in another world.

Tanushree Kaushal

TAKING A MOMENT WITH THE AUCSA A REFLECTION ON THE PAST AND A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

[LANCE BOSCH]



The first year experience. Committees. External relations. Internal communication.

Before stepping into their roles within the AUCSA, Floris Cobben, Tim Moolhuijsen, Stefanie Berendsen, Sezgi Iyibilir, Jerome Mies, and Steffan Oberman decided that these four concepts should form the pillars of the association in 2015-2016. From the moment they were given the reins, the AUCSA Board strived to make sure every decision they made reflected these foci, and in many ways, they have done exactly that.

In the past year, the most active members of the association have been the first years, attending countless events, organizing amazing activities, and creating new, exciting committees, all whilst proudly sporting AUCSA merchandise in greater numbers than seen in previous years. This is a direct result of the emphasis the Board placed on introduction week and introduction weekend: every first year's first taste of the AUCSA. Furthermore, it can be said that the first years' high involvement with the AUCSA also stems from the accessibility of the AUCSA in the past year, which encouraged all AUC students to be more engaged with the work of the association. During the AUCSA elections, this increased engagement was definitely evident, as over a dozen AUC students fought for the opportunity to continue the good work of the '15-'16 Board. On top of these community engagement accomplishments, the AUCSA Board has successfully improved their financial administration, has played a vital role in building the UCSRN (and led AUC to victory!), and has revamped the AUC website.

With all the success the AUCSA has had in the past year, the newly elected Board is eager to hit the ground running and build upon the solid foundation laid down by this year's team; their aims in the coming year include integrating AUC students more deeply in Amsterdam and increasing the interaction between University Colleges. Additionally, discussions concerning the incoming third years are already taking place, so that the AUCSA can rekindle these students' first year fire and prevent the once-inevitable third year burnout. Lastly, the new Board is also adding a new concept to the AUCSA pillars: AUC spirit. The paths the AUCSA Board will take to reach these goals will be revealed in due time, but rest assured: the plans are already in motion.

STUDENT COUNCIL

[TANUSHREE KAUSHAL, STIJN WILBERS, ANOUK TER LINDE, DANIËLLE WAGENAAR, AARON AL-TARAS, MAARTEN ALBERS]

Dear students,

What an exciting and interesting year it has been for us as your Student Council! We have seen the birth of great student initiatives such as Right2Education and the current effort to rethink the content of our walls, but behind the scenes, much more has been going on. We would like to tell you about this before our time is up.



It was not always easy to come together as a board on the back of highly competitive elections, with five Council members coming from four different parties. We divided the positions amongst ourselves, with Stijn and Tanushree as Co-chairs, Anouk as Secretary, Daniëlle as External Communications, and Aaron being responsible for Internal Communications. There was little time to get used to being in the Council and working together because the first big task was already waiting for us at the beginning of the summer: the renegotiation of AUC's Gemeenschappelijke Regeling (GR), or policy document.

The GR is the agreement between our mother universities, the UvA and the VU, on AUC's position within their governance structure. It dictates who is ultimately responsible for decision-making at AUC; it determines student and staff representation, and it is the basis for many other rules that are fundamental to the existence of our programme. When the AUC programme started, it was put outside of the UvA and VU faculties to ensure that it would receive the extra attention from the university Executive Boards (or Colleges van Bestuur) that it needed to start up and develop. Now that we have matured into a well-established entity, the Executive Boards decided it was time for us to move into a faculty and change our GR, because all other programmes are also organized in faculties. However, how does one put an interdisciplinary programme like AUC in a faculty that focuses only on a few disciplines? This was one of our main concerns during the discussions on the new governance model. We have had long and fruitful discussions with the student and staff representative bodies of the UvA and VU to ensure that the newly written GR would tailor towards the values that make AUC the programme how we know it and how we want it to be in the future.

In the new governance model, we managed to have interdisciplinary input and decision-making power by different faculty deans on the Board of Deans that will be responsible for all final decisions made about AUC in the future. This Board of Deans will include people from all our disciplines: Humanities, Social Science, and Science. Furthermore, staff representation will be arranged formally for AUC staff, which was previously not the case. Also, our Student Council will retain all rights for representation regarding matters that concern AUC, even though individual study programmes usually do not have a Student Council. All in all, we think the outcome of this process will ensure AUC's values for the future, even though we will officially be part of the UvA and VU Science faculties. The new GR document has recently been agreed upon by all parties and it will be effective soon.

One of the other highlights of our year has been the great success of the student initiative Right2Education. Emerging in December, several AUC students took it upon themselves to set up a programme to involve immigrants in the Dutch classes at AUC, and eventually even organise Dutch classes by AUC students themselves. While the influx of refugees poses difficult questions to government all over Europe, these students took practical action and thus made an important difference in the lives of so many individuals. The project has grown into something of a cultural exchange, with the guest students having become part of our AUC community. The Student Council is happy to have played a mediating role between students and management in this project, and we take our hats off to all those who have contributed to its success.

Unfortunately, in March it became clear that the collected duties of his studies at AUC, the Student Council, and other responsibilities were too much for Aaron and he had to vacate his seat. Next on Aaron's party's list was Maarten, who enthusiastically accepted the offer to take over Aaron's position of Internal Communications on the Council.

In March, we also started to prepare the second annual Voices of AUC conference that was to be held on the 21st of April. Three of the Council members, Maarten, Tanushree, and Anouk, worked in a team composed of students and staff to organise the conference this year. We decided that we wanted the participants to rethink AUC's motto, Excellence and Diversity in a Global City, and give new meaning to the words that are so often mocked or criticised. We had an excellent turnout on the night itself, with more than 60 attendees who participated in the dialogues and shared their thoughts the values of AUC. What we enjoyed most were the concrete proposals that we could take away from it: rethinking the Introduction Week to make it more inclusive and reflect our values as a community, being more flexible with assessment policies and course evaluations, creating more official and constant channels to reach out to the city of Amsterdam, and actively engaging to make the composition and practices of our community more diverse. The results of the dialogue can also be found in the Voices of AUC report, and once again, the team would like to thank all of those who attended and contributed.

For the bigger part of the year Stijn, together with a group of other students, has been working on another exciting new initiative: the possibility of having a student-run canteen. The contract between the UvA and Eurest, the company that currently runs the canteen, will expire in January 2017. The idea was taken up to see if it would be feasible to have the canteen run by students themselves, in order to better cater to the needs and desires of the students. While nothing is certain yet, the first reactions are positive and we are certain that the next student council will keep working on this and get the best out of it.

One achievement that was recently launched as has received a lot of positive feedback is the Master's Database. Daniëlle has been involved in getting this off the ground all year, working closely with the Alumni Association. Right now, the Database contains information from a wide range of Master's programmes on issues such as which courses to take at AUC, what the programme is like, and how the transition from AUC works. Daniëlle's position of Academic Committee Chair at the UCSRN has proved to be very helpful to coordinate cross-UC efforts to make Master's programmes familiar with Liberal Arts & Sciences education.

The final initiative that we would like to inform you about is the establishment of a Solidarity Fund for students. Together with a group of teachers and Management Team representatives, Tanushree has been working on this project, which is intended to supply financial support to students who would need it. With the statutes written, the Board completed, and the first contributions in, the Fund is now almost operational, so keep an eye on more information about this in the near future!

That's it then. We have tried here to give you an idea of what we have been doing this year and how we have tried to support and improve life at AUC. One last thing that we would like to do now is to introduce you to your new Student Council: Co-chairs Matilda and Sofija, Secretary Sarah, External Communications Manager Fatiya, and Internal Communications Manager Rayan. Having worked with them the past few weeks on the transition of tasks and responsibilities, we have full faith that they will do an excellent job on the Council. We would like to wish them all the best for next year, for it has truly been an unforgettable experience for us.

ORGANIC CAMPUS FARMERS MARKET

[ERIKA PERSSON]



Normally, the student initiative Organic Campus has the pleasure of providing students and others with a well-filled bag of organic, seasonal vegetables twice a month. To make this possible, we maintain close contact with the farmers of BioRomeo who collaborate with Organic local farmers to offer us an amazing variety of seasonal vegetables all year around. However, Wednesday the 8th of June we did not deliver our usual well-filled bags as usual - instead, Organic Campus ordered a wide collection of our favourite vegetables in large bulks, and took over the middle courtyard to set up a Farmers Market for all the students and anyone who passed by. In order not to confuse our customers too much, we still provided a five-euro Organic Campus bag, along with a display of what is offered this season, such as zucchini, bell-peppers, eggplant, cucumber and other spring and summer veggies.

In addition to the bags, visitors could choose from a large variety of both seasonal and storage-friendly vegetables, extras such as homemade apple jam and tomato chutney, eggs, cheese, beans, juice, and much more just the way we want it: Organic and at cost price.

For the first time ever, and in order to offer a full Farmers Market experience, Organic Campus also collaborated with Cuisine board to make sure the visitors did not leave with an empty stomach. To make this happen, Cuisine did what they do best, which was to provide the students with a delicious meal of home-made Italian gnocchi in tomato sauce - of course, all with ingredients from our farmers.

After something savoury, we needed something sweet (who are we kidding - we always need something sweet). To fulfil those needs, the AUC alumni Jenny Eder, set up a table with a Vegan Bake sale containing a selection of her favourite home baked cakes such as juicy Eve's Garden Cheesecake with figs and vanilla and a mouth-watering chocolately Sachertorte. If you ever come across her catering firm "Plants Gone Wild", make sure you get a piece of her cake!



Overall, we had a very successful four hours in the sun selling veggies on the courtyard. Cuisine sold out their gnocchi-lunch in only an hour and Jenny continuously distributed her amazing vegan cakes to those who desired some sweetness. As if this was not enough, Leon Lan showed up with amazing smoothies that were gone in no time. Yet, after 4 o'clock we still were left with some crates of vegetables that longed to be in a kitchen. To make sure no food went to waste, we distributed the leftovers into bags filled to the rim with vegetables to cater to those who usually order from us, but unfortunately were off-campus for the day. We wanted and were happy to still be able to offer them a beautiful Organic Campus bag. (just a suggestion) By the end of the night they were all gone, and no vegetables went to waste!

The collaboration with Cuisine Board and Jenny was a delight, not only due to our common interest in quality foods, but also because we enjoy sharing quality food with other students through our love for cooking. Be sure that there will be more collaborations ahead. And if you missed out on this Farmers Market, keep your eyes open for the autumn edition coming next semester!

SCOPOPHLIA

[CLARA PIETREK]

Fairy lights in a beautiful garden, picnic blankets, home-made carrot cake, live music and much more: Scopophilia happened again and this summer's version of AUC's very own art festival surpassed itself. With exhibited art pieces displayed in the hedges of the garden, live painting sessions, unique concerts organised by Dormessions and spoken word in collaboration with Penny Dreadful, all between massive trees in a park-like atmosphere, the summery vibes were all over, increasing the excitement for the soon-to-come summer break.



Scopophilia, organised for the fourth time, is AUC's bi-annual arts festival, promoting itself as a "platform to young creatives in Amsterdam". After the last edition at OT301 in January, Daria Ivanenko and Anouk van Eekeren, both members of the Art Board and in charge of this year's Scopophilia, decided to move this summer's version of the festival outside and to the up-and-coming neighbourhood Noord, making it possible to enjoy an unforgettable open air event in the garden of Tolhuis tuin. Promoting "diversity and sustainability", the festival aimed to stick to its values by trying to keep its ecological footprint as low as possible: photographs and paintings taunt on cords in the trees and the freshly made vegetarian and vegan food catered by Plants Gone Wild, are just two examples.



The festival started off with the first concert organised by Dormessions - Roosmarijn and her band, who were playing on a stage in the back of the garden among huge trees. They were followed by We All Think We're Money, De Nachtdienst XXXS, Soul Travellers, and Francesca Venken. In between, students presented their own poems and short stories, surrounded by the audience sitting on blankets in the grass. After Nelson's and TIAN's performances under an impressive canvas tent with beautiful light effects, the evening ended with two concerts in the wooden hut of the venue: The Hazzah and Takkie & Ranx. Until late at night visitors sat outside in the by fairy lights lit-up garden enjoying the summer night before taking the ferry back to Amsterdam. Another amazing event this year, organised and achieved with noticeably immense effort and leaving some great memories - we can't wait for Scopophilia 5.0.

WEEKEND COLLEGE AND DIVERSITY COACHING

[LEON LAN]

Stichting Diversity is a non-profit organisation that focuses on integrating multiculturalism in educational context. At the beginning of this year they introduced a community project for AUC students. The community project with Stichting Diversity connects AUC students with a local community in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost, where they are involved in two initiatives: helping out at Weekend College and mentoring a high school

Weekend College is a weekend school that brings together about 100 motivated students who are willing to improve their academic skills, but lack an encouraging environment to do so. Weekend College provides this environment, as students are given the resources which they do not get at their homes or at school. There are plenty of knowledgeable role-model teachers and volunteers, who give a lot of personal attention to the students. The atmosphere at Weekend College is relaxed; students are not pressured to do work, but many still work as hard as they can. Besides of academics, there are many kinds of workshops in the afternoon.



My task is to provide the resources that the students need: assisting with their homework, helping them out with other issues, but also to just have fun in social activities. There are fruitful discussions every morning about issues all around the world - child labour, human rights - and many students have thoughtful opinions regarding these topics. It is very inspiring to see that these young people from different backgrounds are willing to give up their Saturdays to attend extra school sessions. Definitely a great experience!

The second part of the community project is called 'Diversity Coaching', in which you and another AUC student are paired up with a high school student that has voluntarily signed up for this opportunity. The goal is to inspire the student in improving skills in all different kinds of fields: academics, social or professional. You help them out with their homework, prepare them for going to college, or teach them how to write a proper motivation letter. Many of these students are unable to ask their parents for their help, because they are too busy or not familiar with the problems that their children face. That is the main reason for this initiative. My mentee is currently working towards his driver's license, so I am helping him out with the driving theory. Besides that, we regularly discuss things about work and school, and we eat döner from time to time.

The beauty of this coaching programme is that you get paired up with someone you have never met before, but within weeks or months you establish a really great friendship. Not only do the students learn things from you, but you also learn things from them: their culture, ambitions, hardships; it is really enriching my own perspective on diversity [no joke].

In the end, if you are looking for a community project in the local community, I highly recommend you to partake in this community project. You get to learn a lot about the culture and people around Zuid-Oost. I took part in the pilot version of the community project, but I know that next year the official project will be really great!

FASTING,IFTAR AND RELATIONSHIPS

[IVAN SEIFERT]

Fasting. An empty feeling in my stomach. No energy during lunch time. Study breaks are just for grabbing a cup of coffee. So, nothing to do during those. More time to focus on the paper instead. Drinking a bit of water every now and then to stay hydrated. Becoming aware of how much time throughout the day is devoted to eating. Hunger finally killed my focus. Time to socialize. Meeting up with the R2E people and guest students to do groceries. Cooking with an empty stomach together with a bunch of hungry people. Having conversations. Some are very deep and political. The question arises: why is the world so fucked up? Still hungry. Waiting for the sunset at 21:59. Eating. Drinking. Happiness.

On Monday, June 6, 2016, Ramadan started. From this day until Tuesday, July 5, 2016, Muslims all over the world are supposed to fast during the day. This means that from sunrise to sunset you are not supposed to drink or eat. Once the sun sets, the fasting is broken with a communal dinner which carries the name 'Iftar'.

About two years ago, I traveled to Istanbul during Ramadan. It was hot. It was crowded. And I was thirsty. Naturally, I drank a lot. I wondered how people who were fasting were feeling under these conditions. In the evening, the fasting was broken. In front of mosques, restaurants, and in parks all over Istanbul people gathered to celebrate Iftar. The heat was gone, the crowds disappeared. What remained was a warm breeze, a communal atmosphere, and people celebrating the most precious things in life: food, water, and good relationships.



So, with this memory in mind, I have always wanted to know what it feels like to fast for at least one day. Last Tuesday, the Right2Education board organized an Iftar dinner at AUCafé for our guest students. Many of them are practicing Muslims. When someone dared people to fast as well, I didn't have to think twice.

It was surprisingly easy to fast. But I must admit that drinking water helped a lot. During Ramadan you are also not supposed to drink. Next time I'll try to do it without water. It is true, you appreciate something more when you miss it. The first bite after a full day of fasting was very satisfying. Together with the guest students, we cooked a variety of Middle Eastern dishes, such as Maqluba, a Persian rice dish, or Mhalabia for dessert. All dishes were delicious.

But most importantly, I really enjoyed the social aspect of this fasting experience. It created a bond amongst everyone who participated for one day and those participating in the regular Ramadan fasting. It was as if we found a commonality, something that unites us, which didn't need to be verbalized. We simply shared a feeling with each other. We related to each other directly through the shared experience of hunger. We just knew how everyone else was feeling at the moment.

This day of fasting felt a little bit as if I was back in Istanbul for Ramadan. All the people fasting throughout the day, some of them perhaps struggling with being hungry the entire day, just to share food with loved ones in the evening. On this day, I was one of them. It was beautiful.

In these days, where the complexity of the world so often seems to overwhelm us, we sometimes long for simplistic answers. But most simple answers miss the point, may be partial truths, or complete lies. But in fasting, I found a profound simple answer which holds true no matter what: we need food and water to survive, but eventually it's not the food that keeps us alive, but the relationships that make us thrive.

DUMMIE'S GUIDE TO STRESS-BALLIN'

[BLIJDE LIGTHART]

Since starting AUC in 2014, I have noticed a gradual decline in my physical health, which have ultimately lead to a change in my diet and a long battle with working on stress issues I faced everyday. In January 2016 I reached my breaking point, where I was completely limited in my academic and social life, as my body immediately rejected most food I consumed. I was therefore not absorbing any nutrients whatsoever and therefore, I had to seek professional help. It has now been 5 months since I have actively changed my diet and stress habits. It has been a long process and takes discipline (there are of course cheat days), but I am currently at a much better place with my overall health. One of the most difficult parts to all this was that for the longest time I thought I was alone. I didn't talk to many people at AUC about what I was and I am still going through; only my close friends knew about it. Luckily, I did have the support of my tutor whenever I needed him. However, when I started opening up, I realised I was not alone, and that other students were also having health issues, some physical and some mental. The root cause of many student health issues: Stress. Besides AUC and school work, we also experience difficulties when managing our finances or if someone passes away in our family. All these things adding up and directly affecting a large portion of the students at AUC.



At the beginning of 2016, I began brainstorming with Carla, chair of the committee Zen about stress at AUC. While brainstorming, we found that we were both perfectionists and that we were not the only stressed out kids at AUC, thus, we decided that we wanted to offer a solution for the students at AUC. At the time, the UvA had stopped their stress relief walk-in hours, and unfortunately, the Mindfulness course offered clashed with some courses at AUC. We decided that it was necessary to set up classes that would help students with their stress, something we could leave behind for other AUC students when graduating ourselves. At this point, we proposed our ideas to the Zen board and I decided to join them as "Head of Stress Relief".

When I was talking to a new friend, I mentioned working with Carla on a 'Reducing Stress Course.' She laughed and said in a surprised manner: "You? In charge of stress relief?" There was obviously something ironic about someone such as myself, a perfectionist and stress ball, setting up a course to help other students deal with stress in a healthy way. Thankfully, I saw the irony in it myself. Through countless emails, contact with the student life officer, head tutor, AUCSA, and teachers about student and staff well-being, we are proud to say that Carla and I have set up the first 'Reducing Stress Course' at AUC. We are lucky to have the expert Maureen Cooper, founder of Awareness in Action, an organisation which trains companies and individuals to transform their working life with secular techniques of mindfulness, meditation, and compassion. Over the last three weeks, Maureen has applied all her knowledge to the stress experienced by AUC students, and we have been working with these techniques throughout the "intensive" period. Some of the students commented that they were disappointed there hadn't been a 'Reducing Stress Course' earlier in their AUC career.

Research has shown that our brain and mind directly affect our body. Therefore, in the last few months I have been working with my mind, with my perfectionism, to let go of a constant strive to obtain A's for all my subjects. What is really the significance of an A in the bigger picture of my whole life? Especially if it can bring about so much stress? Having said that, I still feel disappointment occasionally when I get a B+ on a paper, but in general I am improving, becoming better at accepting things and thereby really helping my own body by being less stressed about achieving the highest grades possible.

Our real hope is that student and staff well-being, stress, mental, and physical health issues will become more central at AUC. Ideally, AUC would offer a personal development programme, which would include workshops on transforming stress, time management, effective nonviolent communication, leadership, whilst helping students become aware of their individual strengths and skills. Self development is not only essential in our university years but is also necessary for our future.

THAT'S SO REVE

[WILLEM PIJE]

Gerard Reve, along with Harry Mulisch and Willem Frederik Hermans, form a trio of authors that together have shaped the face of Dutch, post-WWII literature. His most famous work *The Evenings* (*De Avonden*), published in 1947, is lauded for capturing the spirit of the post-war generation, who grew up in a period of transition where traditional moral values seemed to be less and less valid. This book was released when Reve was only 24, and immediately established him as one of the most discussed authors in the Netherlands. Throughout the decades, Reve continued to be a controversial figure of Dutch literature, but with his ironic self-awareness and sense of humour, he easily transcended this label, and for me personally, he is one of the most interesting figures the Netherlands has produced in the 20th century.

Reve's voice and humour are at its strongest in his two epistolary novels *En Route to the End* (*Op weg naar het einde*) and *Nearer to Thee* (*Nader tot U*), published in 1963 and 1966 respectively. In these stories, he uses a slightly archaic style to, for instance, report on the ridiculousness of an international writing convention. He also uses this style to introduce for the first time something he later described as "revisme": the lyrical celebration of (sado-masochistic) homosexuality through Catholic imagery and symbolism. This initially might sound like an outright contradiction or at least a preposterous

effort at literary trickery, but Reve pulls it off like no other. At this point in his life, he has publicly converted to Catholicism and regularly goes to mass, but this does not stop him from writing about the almost transcendental experience of beholding the submissive ass of a twenty-two-year-old student he picked up on the street. The effortlessness of combining the two is hinted at when he writes the following: "Meanwhile I have become a Catholic, which obviously does not change much, although it does not hurt either".

Reve appropriates the labels of Catholicism and homosexuality, including all the imagery and meaning these labels carry with them, and creates an original, contradictory, and unstable literary identity. At one point, he even warns his reader that he is "not a libertine, but actually quite conservative", while he just as easily writes about subjects that no Conservative, in the political sense, would ever talk about. In the age of identity politics, where, besides the many positive sides of this approach, the policing of identity sometimes touches on the absurd or even has a totalitarian taste, Reve can serve as inspiration. In his works, labels like homosexuality and Catholicism and conservatism are there to be played with. By doing this, these labels do not become meaningless but simply more complicated and self-referential. This ironic self-awareness and the carefully-crafted, elusive literary identity don't place him outside the sphere of criticism, he constantly expressed his disdain for the "common man" and wrote some very questionable stuff about black people, and he should not be carried into the present casually. At the same time, Reve demonstrates through his books that (a possibly controversial) identity is not tragic nor rigid but a source of great creative freedom, and this is exactly the reason, besides his style and sense of humour, that gives him relevance today.



A FOODIE'S SUMMER BEGINS

[DIANA GHIDANAC]

"Saturday June 4th: BBQ; Sunday June 5th: Food Festival; Monday June 6th: Event in Amsterdam Noord; Saturday June 11th: Brunch in De Pijp," I check as I read some of my dates for June.

This was the beginning of my Intensive Period at AUC. Knowing that I would be completing a language course, I couldn't be more excited at all the opportunities I would have for scoping out the city, going out to brunch, and free-loading on all the samples at the food festivals (that has to be half the reason we all go to them right or is that just me?). If you're one of the lucky ones not doing a lab-course (science students I feel for ya - hang in there!) or an intensive internship/community project, then I hope you're taking the opportunity to discover more of our lovely city and beyond, especially if you're travelling home after this month. Wish you could but just



If you're staying in Amsterdam...

Did someone say Burritos? Burritos are perfect for any season, any occasion, and any time of day, and what a better place than to grab your grub than at The Salsa Shop? Now with their new location open at Centraal, it makes for the perfect pit stop in between travels, or, say, breakfast burritos when you're coming back from a party in Utrecht at 6am - sadly, I did not have this opportunity when I was in this situation. For the slightly more health-conscious, you can opt out for the burrito bowl, which is also more shareable with friends, or tacos. If you're wondering, like I was, they unfortunately do not offer fish tacos (petition to get that on the menu? I'm in.)

If this heat is making you crave brunch on the terrace with a side of cocktails look no further for places like G's in Oost or in the West, Bakers and Roasters, or Bar Bukowski. Recently I helped myself to a poached egg on toast with grilled asparagus and pan-fried mushrooms at De Wasserette in De Pijp, which I highly recommend as a brunch, or even breakfast option for the early risers. Walk around the Albert Cuyp and you'll be overwhelmed by the choices you have for both breakfast, lunch, dinner, and evening drinks - you honestly can't go wrong. Lastly, I recommend to you Lite/Dark on Utrechtsestraat, and Frederix Micro Roasters just by the end of that street; the latter is a cute cafe not very visible from the outside, but is a true gem once you step inside. Friends recommend to me their poached

If you're getting out of the city...

My first summer back in Canada after a whole year in Amsterdam, friends consistently asked if I travelled a lot. First things first, being on exchange and being an international student completing a whole bachelor is not the same. I definitely do not have as much freedom as an exchange student would, and it's for this reason that I will take every opportunity I can get for crossing as many borders as possible - and tasting as many international cuisines as possible...

In my first year, I got around a fair bit but probably not as much as people expected. I did not manage to visit 10 countries in the 10 months I've studied, but rather I got a little bit closer with the Dutch plains. I've made my way around the north, south, east, and west, and thankfully its small size can make this feat totally within reach.



Many people like to express their dislike for Rotterdam, especially those that are native to Amsterdam because of a so-called “rivalry” that I hear going around, yet the first time I laid foot on the metropolitan city I was able to see through its character-less modernity and enjoy what it has to offer. Although it might seem touristy, probably parallel to the Foodhallen in Amsterdam, the Markthallen is worth checking out for any foodie enthusiast. In fact, from what I recall the variety in the Markthallen is more than you can find in the Foodhallen. I recommend the macaron ice-cream or sushi for lunch, but I assure you there's something for even the pickiest of eaters. Next up, I came across the Fenix Food Factory, which is a hip food area filled with cafes, antique furniture stores, photo galleries - you cannot miss it! I recall having quite an awesome brownie and cappuccino there...

Next up, we've got Maastricht, which is a little further down south but may be one of my favourite cities in the Netherlands. Its quaint, medieval character makes the 3-hour train ride all worth it. One of my first stops was to the Dominican Church, circa 1924, now built into a bookstore. After hours of searching through its multiple floors and rows of books you'll definitely want to take a break at their cafe, Coffeelovers (the name speaks for itself). Grab yourself a good read and treat yourself to either a cold or hot brew, sweet or savoury snack, while enjoying the beautiful view of the library that you get from sitting in the cafe. For the tea-lovers, I recommend you to check out The Teazone in Maastricht, which almost mimics the feeling of a small tea palace, filled with comfortable seating in a colourful and relaxed ambiance. Have your choice of royal or afternoon high tea, or simply choose one cup from their vast selection; I assure you it won't be an immediate decision.

Lastly, I want to share with you a place which, as an international, you would probably have no motive of visiting, but how could you ever know if you don't see for yourself? The Netherlands, despite its small size has many smaller cities, villages, and plains, and even though many of them start to look very familiar after a while, you may find that each contains its own little hidden gem that adds to their uniqueness. During one of my weekend trips, I stopped by in Dordrecht, which to me sounds like a random Dutch city that doesn't have much to offer. Right before we were making our way out, considering it didn't take long to walk around everywhere, we came across one particular place that had me saying: “If I were to ever come back here, it would only be for Christa's Cookies”. Christa's Cookies is a small cafe/bakery in Dordrecht with an open kitchen where you can very clearly see the bakers and cooks preparing the sweets. We decided to enjoy an afternoon tea there, and we were left in complete awe at how amazing everything tasted. I got the chance to talk to the owner who runs the place with her daughter and a couple other bakers she hired. She shared with me how she travelled to Australia and New Zealand and discovered her love for baking there and decided to come back to the Netherlands to start her own business. She aims to use only organic and biological products to ensure the highest quality. There are also cooking workshops, and an assortment of cookbooks for sale. Within the deliciousness of the pastries, to the overall environment of the store, you can truly see this is a baker who has put her heart and soul into it (as cheesy as it sounds, I wouldn't kid about it).

Conclusion...

I got to say we're lucky enough to be living in a city like Amsterdam, and while the many restaurants, markets, festivals, and events are enough to keep you busy for months, it's worth exploring even the most obscure sounding Dutch areas. If you're already lusting for travel, and want to be up to date with all summer events, check out sites like: yourlittleblackbook.me, awesomeamsterdam.com, inoost.metmik.nl, inamsterdamwest.metmik.nl, or the best yet - go out and create your own little black book for your favourite cities. Happy travels!



CONSTRUCTED REALITY

[SHELBY DEMMERER]

When I heard that I was accepted to the course “Peace Lab” offered at AUC, I could not stop telling my friends and family about how excited I was to take this course where I would go to Kosovo, studying: peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Curious, dedicated and excited I started with the history of the Balkans: an overview from the pre-history until 2016 with a special focus on Kosovo, because this would be the country we would visit the next week. It felt like my brain would explode on Monday when we had the exam that covered all this material. But thank God that it did not because I would never be able to share my personal experiences so far in Kosovo. It is important to note that that I wrote this piece on the 12th of June, half way through our stay. Something that caught my attention so far is the similarities between Kosovo and Suriname: the country I call home. It started with very simple things such as barking dogs on chains when you walk by, big gardens and car drivers not following the traffic rules. I, however, ended up finding more complex similarities such as ethnicity and identity, concepts that will be discussed throughout this paper connecting Kosovo to Suriname by looking at how things overlap and are different paying attention to the history.



It is most important to note that Kosovo has a complicated history with different emperors, borders being redrawn and many wars between different groups. With this in mind, my aim is to present a simplified version of the current situation in Kosovo. Many groups that are now supposed to live together such as Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs have a long violent history which includes mass killing and armed conflict from both sides. Equally important is the fact that the majority of the Kosovar Albanians wants the independence of Kosovo, declared in 2008, to be recognized by all states. However, many Serbian Kosovars still refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence from Serbia. Additionally, there are also numerous marginalized groups such as the Roma, Ashkali and the Egyptian communities that find themselves involved in the conflict between the two sides.

To then come back to the connection I made with Suriname, I should mention that this started the first day of class when we had our first reading. I read about Kosovo and realized that its population mostly consists of migrants. I stopped reading and thought for a second: How would it feel to be a migrant in the country you call home? However, I then realized that I come from a country whose majority of the population constitutes of “migrants”. This is when the magic word popped-up: labels. I already started labeling, which is exactly what is being done in Kosovo as well. People are being labeled, which creates divisions between different groups. These labels are very powerful, and I would call them: Ethnic labels.

I started asking myself questions: What is a migrant? Can you still be considered a migrant when many generations have lived in that country? For me, as the 5th generation of one of the ethnic groups I form a mix of, and probably the 7th generation on the other ethnic group, I feel like everything but a migrant! Suriname is my country. That sounds very nationalistic, doesn't it? It sure is a big part of my identity. But what is the Kosovar identity?

Arguably, this is what divides Kosovo. People feel like they have different identities, but no general Kosovar identity; something I've heard many say here in Kosovo. Ethnicity is what divides many: Are you Albanian? Are you Serbian? Are you Roma? Etc. I've never heard “are you Kosovar?” This reminded me of similar questions sometimes asked in Suriname: Are you Hindu Surinamese? Are you Javanees Surinamese? Are you Chinese Surinamese? Many Surinamese people have stopped asking these questions though, because of all the different mixes. Don't bother asking me about my ethnicity because its diversity would be impossible to explain after so many mixed generations. So what does ethnicity mean? This is where Kosovo differs from Suriname.

A Kosovar Albanian woman told me that she would never marry a Serbian man because even though he is her friend, she does not want to be the one breaking the taboo. I do remember stories that this was the same in Suriname until the second half of the last century. However, these views are becoming more and more difficult to hold on to. For example, marriages between the Hindu ethnic group and the Creole ethnic group were not accepted in the past. This mix is now widely accepted and common, which is why traditional 'ethnic' communities are challenged to accept these inter-ethnic relations. I also realized that the ethnic differences in Suriname never led to large ethnic conflicts that divided the country. The acceptance of other cultures and groups as part of society in Suriname is I think due to the educational system where different groups of the

small population living on a small occupied coastal area in the north of the country, around the city, were forced to interact economically and socially with each other. Due to our colonial history, only a rather small percentage of the Surinamese people live in ethnically grouped communities mostly situated in the interior and far away districts, as they are less exposed to and familiar with other ethnic groups. However, this still has not led to conflict situations. In Kosovo, many politicians try to bring ethnic groups together by having the common goal of becoming part of the European Union. This, however, sounds a lot better in theory than in practice. Due to the numerous attempts in the past to dehumanize groups, and due to the deep wounds that are carried through generations, reconciliation is much more complicated. The common ground of coming together in Suriname however seems stronger than the ethnic differences, which I think is due to the different history of Suriname. I never felt like ethnicity was something that divided me. On the contrary: I am proud of being a mix because I feel like I am proof that Ethnicity is not something that divides people the way it does for example in Kosovo. Although Suriname and Kosovo have a different history, I feel Suriname proves that divisions are constructions created by people and therefore can be deconstructed.

Therefore, my question was: How would it be possible for these groups in Kosovo to start interacting? In Kosovo I met people saying that they had friends or neighbours of other ethnic groups. I was even told by a young man (27) that he was tired of this division and that he believes that politicians decide what happens and who dislikes who. He had no problem with his neighbours from another ethnic group; he even told stories about how he used to play together with kids from different groups until the war divided everyone. However, we also met other people who did not want to interact with other groups because of the history of the area. These different views not only illustrate how complicated the situation is in Kosovo, but equally illustrate that finding a common interactive interest for Kosovars is difficult. Nevertheless, through one of their projects, an NGO, called Community Building Mitrovica (CBM), managed to bring Kosovo Albanians and Kosovar Serbs together. CBM is located in Mitrovica, a city in the North of Kosovo. Mitrovica is known for the famous bridge which divided numerous Kosovar Albanians in the South from Serbian Albanians in the North. The project gives young people from the neighbourhood the possibility to follow English classes and classes about the American history and culture provided by the American Embassy. The classes are mostly separately to the Kosovo Albanians and the Kosovar Serbs due to the language barriers, but they come together once a week for other activities. To answer the question how this NGO managed to get people to cross this bridge, the members of the NGO informed us that people are not forced to cross the bridge, and that the project does not exist to bring people together. People participate to gain knowledge. Education is therefore what leads students to cross the bridge. I think this is a great initiative because, as I mentioned before, one of the reasons why the Surinamese population is now so ethnically diverse is because of the education that has been, and still is, given together which automatically makes people interact.

Focusing on peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping in this course, drawing borders as part of peace building will not mark a country, neither bring them peace. Coming from a Surinamese background I therefore feel like I have the advantage of knowing that ethnicity is what you make of it and that identity only becomes important when it divides you from others. This is an advantage because my view on the future is very positive, thus instead of asking: Will it ever be possible for the ethnic groups in Kosovo to live in peace? I find myself asking: How can we deconstruct these ethical barriers? CBM, with education as its main purpose, is therefore also a great initiative that helps me to stay positive when it comes to the Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs working together. It should be noted that staying positive is not easy because the situation is still very complicated. My phone company is even confused about the borders of Kosovo. It first sends me "Welcome to Kosovo", which then changes to "Welcome to Serbia" and "Welcome to Kosovo" again. While I am still processing lots of information and trying to analyze and understand everything better, I am happy to be able to share part of my experience and thoughts about Kosovo and to connect this to my Surinamese background.



ENCOUNTER WITH THE EMBODIMENT OF ALL EVIL

[JORIS ALBERDINGK THIJM]

A couple of months ago, right after the Brussels terror attacks, a friend of mine shared a Facebook post explaining that Islamist terrorist attacks are not an isolated phenomenon, but a symptom of the structural subjugation of the middle east by the west. This is something I agree with, and therefore I scrolled down to look at the comments. That is not to say that I wouldn't have scrolled down to see the comments if I hadn't agreed with it, in fact, I actually scroll down to see the comments of most posts that strike my attention, because hey, I suffer from Facebook OCD. Anyway, what I encountered among the comments sparked the strongest inner Facebook Social Justice Warrior rage I have felt in ages. Some guy had commented, claiming that Islamist terrorism can only be explained in terms of a culture clash between the West and Islam, whatever that may be. He argued that Western culture is superior to any other culture, for, among other things, it had been responsible for ending slavery. Right. He ended his little essentialist rant by telling my friend to be ashamed of himself, as he was supposedly a disgrace to the Netherlands. Evidently, this person was not just a person, but the embodiment of all evil and he had to be taken out. So I loaded my discursive guns and jumped on him like there was no tomorrow.



After some heavy shots had been fired back and forth in this ideological battle, he came up with the following proposal: "You and me in front of a camera, we're gonna sit down together and have a little talk about this. And whatever happens, we'll both put the video on our Facebook walls. I'm not gonna type for hours about a topic when I can talk you under the table in 5 minutes". As you might have guessed, 'talking someone under the table' is a Dutch expression that means to completely obliterate someone in an argument. He had put me into a difficult position here: on the one hand, I really didn't want to meet the embodiment of all evil in real life. On the other hand, I had to preserve my honor in what had become an ego battle between us two cis men. So I accepted the offer. "I have time in about three weeks", he wrote. "Deal. message me by that time", I replied.

The next three weeks were absolute terror. I kind of expected him to forget about it and not message me, but still, there was this intense fear that he would, and that I would have to face the embodiment of all evil in real life. Every day, I stalked the guy's Facebook profile, to gauge exactly how evil he was. I didn't find much more than a picture of him ice-skating and one of him in orange football garb and sunglasses, his arm resting around a girl's shoulder. I kept on visualizing the imminent discussion between us, imagining what sort of arguments he would come up with, and constantly running through my own arguments, which began to repeat themselves like a broken record. Fortunately, the event gradually escaped my memory over time, and peace and order were restored in my mind.

Two weeks later, when I opened my laptop for a little Facebook session, of which I have about 500 a day, my heart skipped a beat. There was a message from the Embodiment. "Are you up for a little chat this weekend?" I saw my fingers moving towards the keyboard and typing a confirmatory reply. "Let's just go and chill at Roest", he said, "they have cheap beer there: that's food for good discussions". Where did this friendly tone come from? Was it a trap? Perhaps he was gonna kidnap me together with a gang of fellow fascists, who would bring me to a secret PVV concentration camp somewhere in Limburg, where they would teach me to love my country.

I navigated my bike onto the industrial area at which Roest was located, train tracks on the right, tall buildings with neon letters spelling out the names of prominent newspapers straight ahead. This was the perfect place for a kidnapping, why had I been so stupid. I was just some naïve socialist that they had managed to trigger, who was now cycling to a bar at a dodgy industrial area to argue some right-wing guy in order to try to convince him of the inherent goodness of humanity. To my surprise, however, I made Roest without anyone pulling me off my bike. But perhaps it was too early to celebrate; who knows, the fascists had already taken over Roest, and were now hiding inside, waiting for me. But hey, if I died, it would be an honorable death. So I proceeded into the bar.

After also managing to enter Roest and ordering a beer, I started to calm down. Perhaps I had exaggerated things a little bit. I felt my phone vibrate in my pocket. Another message: the Embodiment of all Evil informed me that his bike chain had broken and that he would be five minutes late. I decided to sit in a central position so that he would be able to find me, taking little nervous sips from my beer while awkwardly looking around me. Everyone was just talking to one another. No need for suspicion.

About five minutes later I say the Embodiment. I recognized him from his profile picture. I waved at him. He approached me and shook my hand. I had touched the hand of the Embodiment. But that was not the biggest shock: he was shorter than me. Now, this means something. And I need to provide a little bit of background here on some internalized patriarchal instinct. In the world of alpha males, one's height determines one's place in the hierarchy. And, being a male around global average height living in the Netherlands, I had always been so uncomfortably at the bottom of that hierarchy, that I had accepted it as part of my identity. Now, whenever I meet another male who is shorter than me, which is about as rare as finding a pair of mating unicorns, my brain jams. I simply don't know what to do. An intense feeling of guilt comes over me, such that I have the urge to apologize for being taller. 'Ah... umm... I'm sorry... I didn't mean to be taller than you,' I wanted to say. 'I would shrink if I could, but I can't'. But I didn't say that. The Embodiment of All Evil, who had now become the Embodiment of all Paradoxes, turned out to be a rather pleasant person. We actually agreed on many things, such as global warming, and he actually said he learned some things from me! Yay. That is not to say that he still held views for which I would shoot him in case civil war broke out, but hey, at least we had a nice discussion.

THOUGHTS ON SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

[NICK HANDFIELD JONES]



When I think about the stories that have influenced me most, I find they often fall within the realm of science fiction and fantasy. These are the stories of dreams, the stories of passion and fire. They are the stories the young children thought of, back when the idea of imagination was still a fresh emerald green. They are the stories of daring adventures in far-off lands, of the exploration of ruined castles long forgotten, of the birth of planets, and their dying. These are the books we read past midnight, being so absorbed in discovering who the king's murderer is that we stay up till the birds start chirping in the dawn. These are the movies of our youth, that made us want to go to space to fight bad guys and travel the cosmos afterwards. These are the comic books that sparked a desire in us to dive in submarines to find fortunes of forgotten treasure. These are the stories that made us want to fly. They stimulated our deepest dreams, the ones we had once we first saw a setting sun. They made us feel alive.

It is difficult to say what makes a story classified as science fiction or fantasy—indeed, such categorizing measures are often meaningless, and are determined by big box bookstores to simplify shopping for their literary customers—but there is a common thread, I think, that runs through even the fringes of what might be considered SF or F. They are the stories that ask ‘what if.’ They are the stories of mind readers and bug queens, of shape shifters and spacecraft, of intergalactic trade policies and a bounty hunter’s insecurities. They are the stories of expansion. They are the stories of ancient halls of the hill, of ethereal beings wondering what happens when the universe ends. They are the stories of birth, unbirth, rebirth. They are the stories of light and shadows. They are the stories of wars, each of which began with a simple romance between two hopeless heroes. They are the stories of us.

More difficult, I believe, is the distinction between the two. In my view, science fiction and fantasy are not categorized by their setting. Science fiction does not necessarily mean space, flying cars, and robots, just as fantasy does not mean swords, sorcery, or a high medieval setting. Star Wars is a fantasy story, just as A Song of Ice and Fire is a science fiction story. To me, it’s the spirit that places a story as science fiction or fantasy. Science fiction is about tangibility, explanation, a sense of realism: it’s classic. Fantasy does away with all that and makes dreams reality, allowing one to taste the stars. Fantasy is Romance. In the end, though, none of it really matters. SF? F? Who cares? There is no real divide at all. A great story can be realistic, unrealistic, arealistic. It can feature humans, superhumans, bug people. It can be set in a single room or expand to the edges of the cosmos. The only thing that really connects a good story to another is a set of fascinating characters undergoing crises with their internal selves.

Science fiction and fantasy have an unusual ability of making us understand ourselves. It is this divine trait that prompts me to write within these genres. The limitless possibilities at my hand give me the freedom to explore myself, far more than a story constrained to reality would ever allow. I see the recurring patterns emerge. I find my tastes. I find the reasons I’m alive. I find them in the places I’ve created: in the Mines of Ranvier, in their deep cavernous walls. I find them in the lands of Accretia, so long trodden. I find them in a hidden cave seven days east of New Penthouse. It gives me sense of belonging, these fictional places of mine. But, for me it is truly the characters that bring me solace. It takes investment to create a character. It takes time. You have to get to know them, to imagine what it would be like to go on coffee dates with them. You need to imagine what goes on in their head. You paint them, you are them. Sometimes, I think that I know my characters more than I know most people; in some cases, I even think I know them more than I know myself. They are whatever you want them to be. Of course, one could say the same of a character written in a non-SF/F story, but I would find myself so constrained by their real surroundings, their real situations, that I would not be able to help it but to insert myself into them, to insert my own perceptions into their being. I’ve been to New York City, but I’ve certainly never been to Kallador Crescent. Not in real life, anyway.

In the end, when I think about the stories that have influenced me most, I find I want to return to the science fictions and the fantasies. They are the stories I want to live in once again. Give me the pillars of Hogwarts. Give me the gothic halls of Ghormenghast. Give me the battle room where Ender learned to command. I’ll even take Westeros—for despite the danger of that ghastly place, there at least exist dragons. Give me Chains and Locke Lamora. Give me Katniss Everdeen. Give me James R. Holden.

I want to escape this present, so give me something that will bring me into the Romantic fields of the past, or to epic calculations of the future. These stories can do just that. At least, for a short, sweet moment.

HOW TO GIVE HEAD

[CHARLOTTE VERBOOM]



Since Google and magazines these days are our great sources for tips and advice when it comes to sex, I would like to give you a small guideline for both men and women on how to pleasure a man down there with your mouth. Nothing is more fun than being able to make him say "wow". Inspired by a Dutch article on VICE by Linda Gondelle, I will now give you my own version of "how to suck dick like a princess".

Step 1: Love the penis. Be dedicated to that penis. Adore his penis as if it's your favorite ice cream that you cannot wait to lick. Nothing is more important than having the right attitude. If you don't fully love his dick and you don't see it as your personal toy, then you probably should not suck it. Linda is right to say that you're both 'slaves of his dick', only you have all the power to make him beg for more.

Step 2: So when the right mentality is there, you start warming him up. Use a lot of spit or lube (for example one that tastes nice) to rub over the boner. Prepare him with your hand while you spread the lube. Don't forget that even though the top part of his penis is the most sensitive, he likes full attention to his entire shaft.

Step 3: Lick it. Tease him a bit with your tongue. Make him want your mouth. But don't give in too quick. Unless you're very thirsty and his mom is picking him up in 10 min.

Step 4: Now the real work starts. Make a soft pillow of your lips and suck in your cheeks. Try to become Kylie Jenner when you form your mouth into a duck face kind of kissing position. It looks a bit like a fish trying to breathe when you press your lips outward and you open your mouth while not losing the duck face. If you don't try hard enough, you might hurt him with your teeth...

Tip: Make sure the rest of your body is comfortable. There are different positions to suck his dick; either you prefer to sit on your knees while he is standing or sitting, or he's lying in bed and you bend over him or doing 69, either way make sure your body is ready for the exercise. You will notice that you've never used your neck muscles more than that time you were head-banging to Greenday.

Step 5: Okay, so your lips look like an anus, you have licked your lips to make them wet too, and you have grabbed his penis with your hand(s). Now you move your head down (or forward) and when the top of his dick touches your lips, you literally suck it in. Move your hands down while sliding the penis in your mouth, and up when you move up with your head too. While doing this movement, your tongue functions as a soft wet bed where the penis lands on when he enters your mouth. Or more like a moving bed, when you use your tongue to lick around his top and make circles. You keep sucking in your cheeks, even when you move the dick out of your mouth. It will feel for him as if his dick is sucked in, stuck in your mouth and every time you move up you both get sucked in again. See, you're both slaves!

Tip: Look him in the eyes if you want. Don't worry if you feel uncomfortable to do that right away, but it helps with the connection between each other. As Linda says: Looking each other in the eyes reminds you of what you're doing and who you're doing it with. It shows the guy you're there to pleasure him, not just to get it over with. Also, it looks super hot. You'll feel like a pornstar.

Extra tip: Squeeze your hand(s) like you would when giving a handjob. Don't squeeze it too hard though, you don't want to hurt that dick. Also, it helps forming your hand as if you're giving thumbs up. This way the thumb will slide over his top, and gives him extra stimulation.

Remember: Don't let him fuck your face. It's very annoying when he starts moving his hips, because he has no idea which rhythm is right. You're the star of this movie, not him. Plus if he tries to push your head, or to push his dick deeper in your mouth, then grab his hands and put them next to you and tell him you're in control. When he gives himself all over again to the power of your mouth, award him by letting him hold your hair. This way he'll get fooled by thinking he is having any control, while all he's doing is preventing you to eat your own hair.

Step 6: Move the speed up. You don't have to start very slow, but it's important you're working up towards a climax. To do that, it helps to make him like what you're doing more and more, and thus going faster, squeeze harder, and suck more. But remember that you hold on to a consistent tempo; it is very disturbing for him when you stop all the time or when you change your speed too often.

Tip: You can hold his balls with your other hand and play with them. First check what he likes and what not though, because some guys are very sensitive there and don't like it when you all of the sudden squeeze them.

Step 7: The final countdown. You feel his balls moving up (at least if you're holding them), he's making more and more "oh yeah" noises, he starts breathing deeper, and his toes are constricting (you probably won't see that happening, but trust me they are). He's ready, but are you? Your neck is tired, and so is your hand, but don't let that ruin his climax. You have both worked very hard for this moment, so give all the power and energy you have in the final minutes and moan to let him know you want it. Now here it comes... if the sperm hitting your throat makes you retch, then use your tongue as a shield to obstruct the sperm from shooting around in your mouth. You can also try sucking the top while he's coming, so you have more control over where the sperm is going to land in your mouth. But to be honest, it's something you have to try out to see what works for you both.

Step 8: Swallow. Or not. Doesn't really matter, as long as you don't make a disgusting face. Remember, you love that penis, thus also his sperm (even though it tastes disgusting, you don't have to make him feel bad about that).

HOME (VOL 5)

[TEKLA TEVDORASHVILI]

I think home is not really a place. I think it's feeling that you can completely be yourself somewhere. It has more to do with the people around you than the physical place. For example, I really see my dorm room at AUC as my home now, even though I have to leave it quite soon, much more than the place where my parents live, because my dorm room, my house, legally, is completely mine. I put the furniture exactly the way I wanted, I got exactly what I wanted in there and I live my life there. I can be me completely, without having to take into account wishes of other people, which I have to do at home, with siblings and parents. So I think the feeling of completely being myself is the most important feeling for me concerning home. I really have that here in Amsterdam.



RUBY DE HART

Before coming to Amsterdam, I lived in small town near Haarlem, which is half an hour by train from Amsterdam. So it's quite close, but different surroundings. It's not as big city as Amsterdam is, although I wouldn't consider the entirety of Amsterdam my home either. AUC is an institution, a place where I could develop and get to know myself and what I find interesting in studying, but way more important for me is the people I met at AUC. They are also way more tidy in this sense of home than the institution itself. Although I think that institution allows people to meet each other. It's kind of a meeting place, where you can get to know people who are very different and at the same time similar to you. In that way, I got to know myself better.



YIN HSIEH

Home is something that I find at end stages of life. When I was young my family moved to United States from Taiwan. I was born and raised in Taiwan, but then we moved to the states and then I moved here. So, I have family scattered all over the place and it always feels like you are divided in countries I hope that I can achieve the idea of home later in the life, where everyone I want to live around is around close enough to reach by train or something.

AUC is a learning experience. A lot of times I found the courses or the professors not ideal and I wasn't very happy about it, but overall it's a whole experience of moving away from your parents, also meeting amazing people and learning. After AUC, I want to do the masters in applied mathematics, but then after my master's I don't know. I am interested in cryptography, so I was thinking of maybe working for some sort of security organisation. Maybe in the future I will end up in the NSA.

I have traveled around quite a lot, so home isn't necessarily a place, it's people, I guess. So, wherever I feel safe and comfortable I suppose is home. If you move often enough, it doesn't become this bigger thing, you kind of just do it and every place you go feels the same in the end. You take home with you. I lived in Haarlem till I was 9 and then I moved to Shanghai for about one and a half years, then to Seoul, Korea for half a year and then to Kuwait for 7 years till I got here. When I got to AUC I didn't know what I wanted to do, it was a mix between physics and biology and I really didn't know which one, so it was kind of my copout I could kind of do both. So really for me, AUC was a place where I could find what I actually wanted to do, which I succeeded in.



MARISSA KOOPMAN