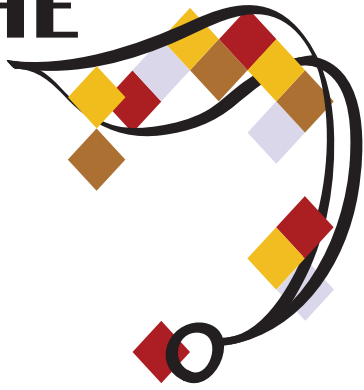
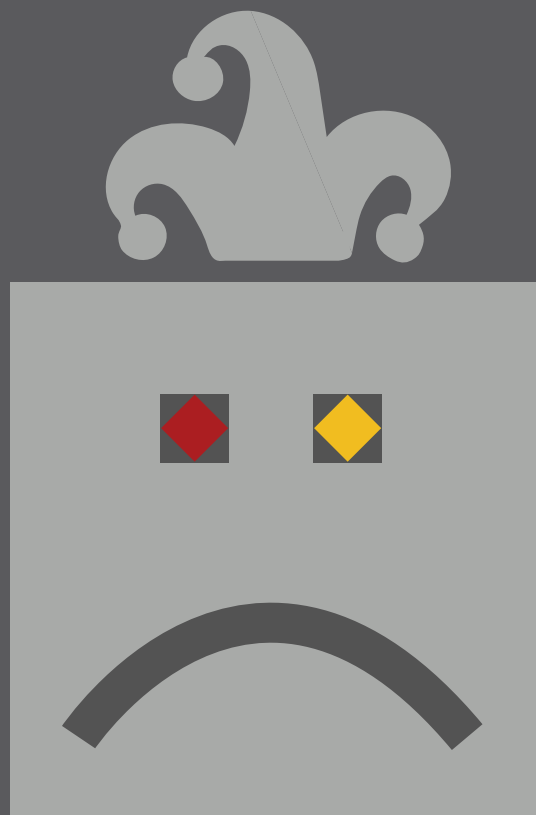


THE



ESTER

The Jester. A Student-Driven Magazine



NOT FOUND

***help us! we need a real cover**

thejester.wageningen@gmail.com

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Colophon

The Jester originated as an idea within the team of RUW foundation; a critical student platform in Wageningen. Calls were send out, and a group of 9 students gathered to make the first edition. Towards the future the team is open to anyone who wants to unleash their creativity in making entertainaly sharp WUR journalism. Come 2020 the Jester aspires to be the primary journalistic source for anyone who wants to really know about Wageningen, it's students, and the WUR.

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Editorial

Dear students of Wageningen!

We are proud to present to you the first edition of Wageningen's own university magazine: the Jester! For now, there is a noticeable lack of a truly student-driven, university magazine here at Wageningen. This is a shame because not only is a university fertile ground for discussing and sharing interesting topics and debates, but student magazines are also supposed to inspire laughter and satire – wherever did those go? With the support of RUW Foundation, and the coming of the Jester, the dry period is now over.

So, what is this magazine going to be about? In principal, we want to contribute to campus dynamic by sharing, informing, criticizing and laughing amongst each other. The Jester is an easy accessible, student-centred and critical platform for students to test, develop and debate perspectives, ideas and narratives without prejudice or fear. At the Jester we want cater to all ideas and formats; however, nobody but the university itself may be severely ridiculed. None of us creating this magazine purport to be anything but amateurs; none of us have ever created a magazine from scratch, nor do we expect that the content will be anything but a little bit rough around the edges. This does not mean that we set the bar low; just that we think it's important to uphold a certain leniency for what will be published. Let's call it an "advantage" – for now! This being said, the magazine is a work of passion; it will be made voluntarily and from free time.

While making this first edition, we certainly did have a vision for how we would have liked it to look, converse and engage. As with any first try at anything, many of the initial ideas and concepts we had were dismissed quickly as either unviable or unenviable. Do we believe that we have held true to our core values? Absolutely. Do we think we have achieved most of what we had envisioned one month ago? Absolutely not. However, we will say, with certainty, that we are happy to go into the future and to take this magazine into the long-term and structural happening. And, we are open to receive all future input – whether that is advice, opinions or contributions! First possibility: 14/06, 12:30, @Impulse.

Let's see where the Jester is a year from now. Till then, we wish you all a very pleasant encounter with our first edition!

With love,

J.



(Don't) Come

We study and work at one of the greenest universities worldwide. In January this year, WUR was rated the greenest and most sustainable university in the world according to the GreenMetric ranking for the second year in a row. In the Dutch SustainaBUL competition for most sustainable (applied) university, WUR ranked second (after Eindhoven) in 2018. These are impressive accomplishments which have become embedded in the identity of the university, it seems. However, is the sustainability of the University really maximized? Are we practicing what we preach on all fronts? This month, we are diving into the sustainability of the mobility practices of WUR, and specifically: flying around the world to save it.

Last March, all 14 Dutch universities lent their support to the Climate Letter published by a group of academics on 4th February. The letter protests against the large carbon footprint universities leave by, amongst others, flying their staff all around the world: "Researchers make a particularly high contribution to carbon emissions, especially by using air transport to travel to conferences, to conduct research, or to participate in consultations or commissions." The letter, calling for a more ambitious climate policy on universities, ended up being signed by 1,433 professors, PhD candidates and other people working at or connected to Dutch universities.

Dutch universities are aware of this incongruence between what their research promotes and what they practice, and all are trying to keep flying to a minimum. Some are more ambitious than others. Erasmus Magazine (University of Rotterdam) and Univers (University of Tilburg) investigated their respective university's policies towards flying. The University of Rotterdam only offers travel advice to minimise flights. Tilburg has a discouragement policy aimed at avoiding flights to relatively nearby destinations, but at the same time has no mechanisms to supervise the flights that are actually made. The universities of Groningen, Utrecht and Leiden, on the other hand, have a discouragement policy, offer

travel advice, and also register and monitor the flights made by their employees. Groningen comments that introducing these policies has led to a decrease in the number of flights taken. Utrecht and Leiden are also monitoring to see if further improvements can be made, and are considering the system that the University of Gent, an example for many universities, is using: not reimbursing journeys by aeroplane that can otherwise be made in less than 6 hours by travelling with public transport.

Flying is the second largest contributor to WUR's total emissions

WUR too keeps track of the flights that take place for academic purposes. WUR presented its new Mobility Vision for 2030 on 21st January 2019, two weeks before the release of the Climate Letter. In this Mobility Vision the university aims to decrease CO2 emissions resulting from travel by 2% yearly, resulting in a 25% decrease by 2030. However, Erna Maters, the policy officer Corporate Social Responsibility at WUR, says that "a discouragement policy has not been implemented yet. A plan will be

made this year (2019), similar to the policy Gent has. But for now, there is only a passage in the travel policy on the importance of sustainability for the university, and the urge to take the train for nearby destinations." Other, more ambitious measures are outlined, but before we delve into those, we must first assess what the impact of flying on WUR's carbon footprint really is.

The Mobility Vision shows that, despite a generally steep decrease in emissions since 2010, the share of emissions resulting from travel had grown by two kilotons by 2017. However, this figure is for all travel: what of WUR's specific CO2 emissions made by flying? Is it as significant as it is insinuated, or is it more effective to focus on other mobility-related or emissions issues? When closely inspecting WUR's carbon footprint of 2017, the answer to this question is simply: yes. It really is such a large amount.

Flying is the second largest contributor to WUR's total emissions, after buildings (natural gas). For comparison: in 2017, the emissions due to flying were 7,474 and 1,597 tonnes for employees and students, respectively, against 11,430 tonnes for all buildings on campus (natural gas, electricity and refrigerants). Kerosene is attributed for 22% of total CO2 emissions at the university; the same as all vehicle emissions, business trips and daily commuting of all employees combined. The Social Sciences Group and – ironically – the Environmental Sciences Group are the largest contributors, due to their size and the international character of their work. More positively, compared to 2016, emissions decreased in 2017: -17% from business trips and -21% from student travels. In the footprint profile, it is not specified what caused this decrease, but Erna Maters clarifies that this decrease in flying was mainly due to the financial issues that some projects were dealing with, leading to lower travel budgets. However, in 2018, these issues were main-

fly with me

ly over and flying increased again. With it, the need for policy interventions rises, too.

Degrowth seems to be the only possible answer here

Considering that the Mobility Vision was announced 4 months ago (it had already been taking shape in 2018), and that WUR pledged its support to the Climate Letter 2 months ago, one may ask: have these actions had any effects on policy? In the Mobility Vision, different options are discussed to realise further decreases in emissions resulting from flying. The first of which is to establish a CO₂ budget. Maters comments that this is not being actively pursued at present but that setting a budget of flight kilometers for every employee, which would be transferable to others if the employee does not fly, could be a viable option. Choosing airlines that are actively decreasing their emissions is another option, but no supervisory mechanisms are currently in place. Facilitating video- and teleconferences is also a good example of a proposed measure and is being looked into as a viable alternative to traveling in general. Policy is seeming to primarily focus on promoting rail travel for shorter distances. Price agreements have been made with Dutch and German rail companies and university employees can travel internationally with their corporate public transport card. The university has further aims to make it even easier to book tickets in the future, says Maters. However, it is evident, according to Maters, that relatively little has advanced since the announcement of the Mobility Vision. Drawing from the rise of the rising ecotourism movement, degrowth seems to be the only possible answer here, at least in the short-term; as there is no concrete outlook on a more sustainable way of flying, the only option to de-

crease emissions in the short-term is by decreasing flights.

Maybe the most essential question in this debate is: is flying necessary? Most academics interviewed in other inquiries seem to say that it is, underlining the importance of being able to network at international conferences, especially for younger academics who still have to establish themselves. None of the policies described above have considered stopping flying altogether. However, as Dr. Casper Albers describes in Ukrant (University of Groningen), these trips can feel a bit like jaunts. It is useful to network and catch up on ongoing research but visiting conferences and symposia in faraway countries is also just fun.

The choice of which conferences to attend needs to be evaluated more consciously and critically

There is no harm in having fun, but with the climate at stake, the choice of which conferences to attend needs to be evaluated more consciously and critically. One such way to do so is by “clever bundling” (something that is also proposed in the Mobility Vision) which consists of combining multiple goals into one trip and going so long as it is relevant to one’s work and research.

The issue of flying remains a complex one. The result of the subsequent discussion is always that there is a trade-off between international participation and practicing what you preach. In any case, the first logical step is to generate awareness. Academics should actively be informed about and confronted with the impact their flying has on university emissions; for example, when booking, giving

the amount of emissions caused by this trip and a comparison with other emitting sources to put it in perspective. This could be part of the discouragement policy there already is. Besides that, another question is: for how long can WUR afford to keep on flying as much as it has while also claiming to be the greenest university on the planet and having “improving the quality of life” as a mission. As four professors wrote in March on the American political news website The Hill: this is an opportunity for universities worldwide to lead by example, to be the first to act on their own scientific findings regarding the ever-growing impact that aviation has on climate change. Setting a moral example will make their message all the more powerful and people will be more amenable to a ban or limit on flying if they see that the ones encouraging its disuse act in accordance. In any event, WUR should – or rather, must – be willing to implement more ambitious solutions than Gent. For WUR, this is an opportunity to once again establish its position amongst the greenest universities worldwide, to boldly go where no university has gone before; saving the world, while minimising the need to fly around it in order to obtain that goal. 🌱

This is an opportunity for universities worldwide to lead by example



Louise Fresco

a literature review

One of the most heated and prevalent discussions in the hallways of this university is the communication from and positioning of the president of our board; Louise Fresco. The critique over Fresco's position and actions lies in the debate over her links with big businesses and how she is strengthening the links between the university and these corporations.

Fundamentally, this argument stems from the fact that Fresco is promoting a 'sustainable' future which is guided by technologic optimism and a push for 'green(er) capitalism', something that many parts of both the university and society disagree with. She has had non-executive board functions at Rabobank and Unilever, and more recently she accepted a commissioner position in the board of plant breeding giant Syngenta. This raises the age-old question troubling universities worldwide: how independent is our institute – or head mistress - from the influence of big corporations? In her new function at Syngenta, Fresco is "particularly interested in how the best science can help smallholders increase yields sustainably". However, Syngenta is a large, Chinese state owned, multinational that sells chemical crop protection and genetically modified seeds. A company whose influence many at the institute protest to and whose interests makes one question where the benefit is to smallholders. Many have started to wonder whether our board is not mixing up scientific and societal values with corporate interests.


The books of Louise Fresco are generally ignored in the public debate surrounding her, but much can be gained from their analysis. A first critique one might have of 'big industry' Fresco is that she does not understand many of

the arguments in the environmental movement. However, if you read her novel series 'The Kosmopolites', 'The Utopists', and 'The Idealist', you will see that Fresco goes to great lengths to explore the nature of idealism, and the urge 'to make the world a better place'. Especially in *The Utopists*, she explores the psychology of the environmental movement through telling the story of a group of activist friends.

Over time they grow up to make fundamentally different choices about their lives, based on the way they feel responsibility for the world. The book aptly shows how all idealistic students will eventually face tough and complex decisions about how to manifest themselves and their ideals in society. Fresco is able to empathize with all these characters in the environmental movement from a sort of birds-eye perspective (although that doesn't mean she sympathizes). The sad and telling conclusion of her book is that not one of the characters was actually able to integrate their ideals with the inherent messiness of adult life and the world.

The theme of 'having ideals in a messy' world also resounds in her greatest non-fictional work; 'Hamburgers in Paradise'. In this book she makes a grand effort to navigate the moral waters of the past, present and future of our food systems. The title stems from the 'Paradise Theory' she introduces in the first chapters, which states that humans tend to long for a state of harmony that only exists in our cultural imagination. Her argument is that this longing might cloud our judgement when we think about food and agriculture. This idea is an extension of her Huizinga lecture (1998) 'Shadowthinkers and Lightseekers'. Herein she describes how people tend to think about the future of the world either from an unfounded sense of crisis, or an irrational longing for authenticity or 'naturalness'. She claims that most calls for the 'Bio-Organic Revolution', and its inherent scepticism of new technology, can be traced back to these tendencies.

In the book she also uses the theory to argument well for the case of using GMO's to increase smallholder farmer yields, which is exactly what prof. Fresco is prospected to do at Syngenta. However, in total the book fails to convince in the diversity of its argumentation to fully support her claims. The Paradise theory, despite proving useful to eliminate some recurring flaws in our thinking about food, lacks real substance to dismiss all 'romantic' or 'sentient' or 'idealistic' arguments in future food decision making.

Up until now, the life of Louise Fresco differs from the characters in her books, in the sense that she somehow appears to be able to integrate theory, ideals and practice in her life. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in both her literary and professional life, she goes to great lengths to explore the question; 'What responsibility do I have towards the world?' Therefore, it is a shame that her persona, and the institute at large, are ridiculed more-and-more as being sell-outs to corporate interests. Clearer communication about these subjects to the broader public is necessary. For example, when asked to respond on her new connection to Syngenta she says that "the independent positions of our researchers and the WUR in general are not at stake. I stand firmly for the independence and our critical capability..." (Gelderlander, 2019). However, apart from sketching the prospected impact of her work with Syngenta, she never continues to explain why this is the case. And in my extensive exploration of her work, this is a continuing theme: when asked about her connections to, or the role of big business in sustainability, her responses are always uncharacteristically short and political instead of argumentative. Besides from what you think is the right directive for this world, it would certainly help if our board president would make the extra effort to communicate more argumentatively and openly about these issues. If not for her own credibility, then for the scientific credibility of the researchers she represents. 

The new Syngenta building

The years of Louise Fresco in the board of Unilever were not without merit. On campus we can now enjoy a state of the art research laboratory. However, the recent appointment of Louise Fresco to the board of directors at Syngenta leads to a new question: Where should we build the new Syngenta Office? The Jester investigated the best locations on campus.

Option 1

The big field on Droevendaal: The inhabitants of Droevendaal are known to be amongst the most activist and green around campus and with Fresco on the board, Syngenta has set out to be the most sustainable company in the world: a perfect match! For the housing of the Syngenta employees Idealis already planned to build four new sustainable barracks right next to the office building.

Option 2

The 'Dassenbos' (badgers forest): Previous plans to construct a road through this exquisite stretch of nature have up till now been prevented, because of environmental concerns. However, with a plant breeder such as Syngenta, the forest could benefit from the experience and expertise in plant breeding. The end result: a more sustainable 'Dassenbos' that even the biggest environmental freaks would be in favour of.



Option 3

The new education building: It is not easy to have a true influence on the educational activities of the WUR. How can we get rid of this big, bureaucratic hassle? Would it not be more effective to let Syngenta organize courses themselves? The course SYN230902- Monopolizing Agriculture in Third World Countries is a 6 ECTS course that covers all aspects of development.

Option 4

Top floor of Atlas: It is important to keep lines short. Sharing office space with Syngenta would be a great opportunity for Louise Fresco to share her independent thoughts with the company. To prevent Unilever from getting jealous, we suggest that the offices of the Supervisory Board will be replaced by a Calve experience centre.

The faces of activism @WUR

Young people, mostly students, are marching down the Hoogstraat in the city centre of Wageningen. It is Friday the 17th of May. Attracted by the chants and the noise, curious bystanders stick out their head from the shops and the windows. Some hail, some pant and laugh, some bring their children on the sidewalk and try to explain what it is going on.

Scratched but powerful voices repeatedly chant and make sure to be as loud as possible, thus their demands are clear to everybody: climate justice, now. This is the first climate march organized in town by the Wageningen section of Extinction Rebellion. A direct action and non-violent movement that made the headlines when blocking the streets of London to protest against the government inaction against the climate and ecological crises.

With less disruptive purposes, the Wageningen climate march wanted to raise awareness on these crises, as well as addressing both WUR and the municipality to remind them of the urgency to act.

I would like to reflect on the “exceptionality” of this march for the context of Wageningen, which lies in the fact that something like this has not happened here in a long time. This does not come as a complete surprise given the two main institutions of the city, WUR and the Municipality, are clearly committed to sustainability and a high quality of life. WUR is the greenest university of the world as well as one of the major institutes in life sciences wherein sustainability is a central topic of debate. As for the municipality, it is regarded as the “green” hub of Gelderland with its plan to become carbon-neutral by 2030. Thus, one might wonder - quite legitimately - Is there room for, and what is the role of climate activism in Wageningen?

“We need climate activism at WUR”. Malik Dasoo and Minke van Oeffelt seem to agree on this point. I interviewed them a few days before the climate march. Malik is sitting on the grass in front of Forum.



On the blue jacket that he is wearing there is an Extinction Rebellion pin. He is one of the founders of Extinction Rebellion Wageningen that started to be active in January and he co-organized the climate march. Minke, has been active in Fossil Free Wageningen for some years now.

“I think you particularly need climate activism in this University” Malik says, as a smile appears on his face - probably aware of the challenging nature of his statement. “Awareness alone is not enough anymore, we need direct climate action”. Knowledge production, Malik agrees, is essential but there is a problem with the system when science is published and actively ignored.

Thus, Extinction Rebellion stresses the importance of a more direct approach through disruptive, striking and non-violent demonstrations, like road blockages. Listening to Malik, I have the impression that action is needed for a

significant change - be it social mobilization or legislation for climate and environment. It is a state of mind and an attitude that must be learned by doing. This makes for a sort of dilemma that Malik says students are posited with. They are aware of the climate and ecological crisis, but they feel their options to act are limited.

It can be argued that because of their capacity to address this dilemma and bring visible action (i.e. road blockage, die-ins), Extinction Rebellion - both internationally and locally in Wageningen - has been joined by many. In Wageningen, the group has been having a large success in the past months, collecting around fifty members from both the student and local community.

However, not all climate activism is roses. The climate march was one of the biggest actions within Wageningen in recent years but only gathered around one hundred and fifty people. You can hardly call this a success considering that WUR has over 10,000 students, who I like to believe are all concerned about climate change.

Minke has a disillusioned smile when we touch this topic. She tells me that her group, Fossil Free, tries “to break all ties that Wageningen University has with fossil fuel industries”. Fossil Free doesn't only engage in civil disobedience

ence actions but also lobbies the university by conducting research on the connection between WUR and fossil fuels companies.

“Think of the relation with Shell. Last year Shell came on campus to do their “generation discover” festival. That is something that Wageningen university allowed and it is wrong message, you know? Shell is not a sustainable company. When you see Shell and WUR together, you think that Shell is not that bad, after all”. Fossil Free organized a protest when the company arrived in Campus. A lot can be done, but lately less people have been active in Fossil Free. “There are so many young people here [at WUR], they are all studying something related to sustainability. This is a very potential group of people that could change the course of where we are going”.

The perfect target group, it seems. However, the numbers are still not quite there. Minke says that people find it hard to relate to things and problems that are happening far away. However, the system we are all partaking in is causing these very issues and this is known to most of us. Both Malik and Minke agree that by engaging in activism we can strive for a different system. But here comes an important

question, of- t e n what does left unresolved: what does climate activism propose as an alternative? Malik is fully aware of this problem, but he argues that presenting a comprehensive alternative is not their responsibility. “We don’t want to put forward a romanticised picture of the future”. He refers to examples of the civil rights movement in the US and the anti-apartheid in South Africa. He says that “they identified the problem, they saw the system that is perpetuating the oppression and they acted against it. They did not present and idealized picture of what the future will look like according to them”. However, this point remains controversial and Malik admits: “I understand that people can struggle to get on board [with climate activism] when there is not a precise future worldview”.

At the end of the interview, both Malik and Minke tell me that they are excited about the climate march. They believe that it will be something quite unique for Wageningen. “I hope it will start a movement of people. The university and the municipality will see that there are people that want a different attitude and that ask for it.” Minke says to me. Malik hopes to spark solidarity: “What we need to convey is the fact that, more

or less, we (in the Netherlands) will be okay, relative to other countries. We need to bring out the spirit of solidarity towards those who are already suffering and will also suffer the most”.

This march was indeed something new and fresh in Wageningen. As Wageningen Counsellor Laura de Brito reminded in her addressal speech to the marching crowd: “It has been long since we last saw something like this in Wageningen. Thank you!”. Now remains the question of what will be next? Climate activism is on the surge worldwide and lots of actions have been organised to sensitise politicians during the European elections about the urgency to act. Where will Wageningen and its students place themselves in this historical moment? 🌱



The life-chan

Thesis writing... We all have to face it at some point, and whether we dread it or can't wait for it, we all are caught by surprise at some point. A 6-month-long conversation on theses, based on true events; and all with a cynic's advice to boot.

21/09/2018

Lou How are you?

I have a meeting with my supervisors in 2h and I am freaking out! I just have to present what I did so far and how I should go from now on...

The constant struggle between denial and fear of failing

No one knows what they are doing for the first two weeks (or months). No one. Despite our inspiring ideas on changing the world/agricultural systems/way we look at a subculture, when translating it to a research proposal we stare at our screen and wonder "what am I even trying to say?". By the time the proposal is finished you have long since forgotten. A crucial piece of advice: find a good supervisor, that knows your topic and that is on the same wavelength concerning supervision practices.

Do you want weekly meetings, or do you see each other at the defense?

26/09/2018

Lou What do you present for your proposal? I realize now that I did not really pay attention during any of the presentations.

Haha good question! The others did: Background, Problem statement, Research question, Theory and finally Methodology.

Lou Ok! Clear. Are you ready to present yours?

Absolutely not...

Presenting your proposal in a comprehensive way

If the proposal is finished, the time has come to present it to your peers. You will have a compelling story and a clear research gap, and they will provide you with new insights and clever feedback. In theory. However, once the time has come, you are buried so deep in theory that you just talk randomly during your presentation until your time is up. Your peers will applaud semi-enthusiastically and say something positive about the make-up of your slides.

10/10/2018

Lou "Where do you place yourself in the scientific debate?" Eh, really nowhere yet...

Ehm, it's just that I have been asked to do research in my curriculum, so I am just doing it to graduate.

Lou I place myself on the bench.

Finding your place in the scientific world

It is important that, while writing your thesis, you do not only learn handy skills on doing fieldwork and how to receive Wi-Fi in a faraway place, but also reflect on your place in the scientific world. The timeline on this is a bit off. In the first three quarters of the process this question will probably scare the daisies out of you. However, keep calm and trust that in the end, it will all become clear to you. Or not, in which case it's probably best to kick a scientific career off your list.

ging journey?

15/10/2018

Lou Hey do you know when you are leaving for Senegal already?



In a land far, far away...

Once you have some idea of what you will be doing, it is important that you pick the right research site for this; in order to get relevant results and a sensible answer to your research question, of course. Many, though, take it as a chance to escape the Dutch cold, taste the beer on the other side of the world and get that perfect instatravel-pic. Okay, flying to the other side of the world is not too sustainable, but it is all for a good cause. You just cannot put a price to academic development, right?

16/10/2018



A question, did your supervisor tell you anything about the informed consent?

Lou Nope



Designing your research

A word of caution: this time, you are on your own. You have followed all the methodology courses: now it is up to you to think of everything.

28/10/2018

Lou Are you excited and ready to go? I arrived in Guatapé in my house! It's super nice and I have nice roommates, and my Spanish is increasing very fast as everything is in Spanish 😊



Starting Fieldwork

Again, dreams and reality often seem to clash here. When you dream about wonderful times at the other side of the world, this fantasy usually takes place once you are all settled in and surrounded by beautiful international friends. Uh-uh. When you arrive, you will lie on your bed, in a country you do not know and with people you do not understand. Staring at your ceiling, you will wonder why you wanted to do this in the first place. But trust that when the weeks pass, talking to people, trying to understand the reality of your research topic, sitting under the stars with a beer in your hand, you will remember why.

08/01/2019



I am trying to make the research question and the lay-out of my thesis now. Then I will analyze the data depending on the structure that I decided for.

The circle of (thesis) life

When coming back, don not expect that you will just carry out your research plan and be done with it. Or that anything you have thought of, from research question to the participants, will have turned out the way that you expected.

02/04/2019



I am going to rearrange my entire thesis before Friday 🤖

The final sprint

Where so much still has to be done. And no one will be able to reach you or have a sensible conversation with you.

19/04/2019



Louuuuuuuu!?!?Hello!?


Lou Haha sorry! I wassssss finishing my thesis! But I handed it in yesterday!



The moment you thought would never come

But it will! Have faith. Keep on typing. And on one day, just like that, it will be done. You can do it! 🦋

All things flow



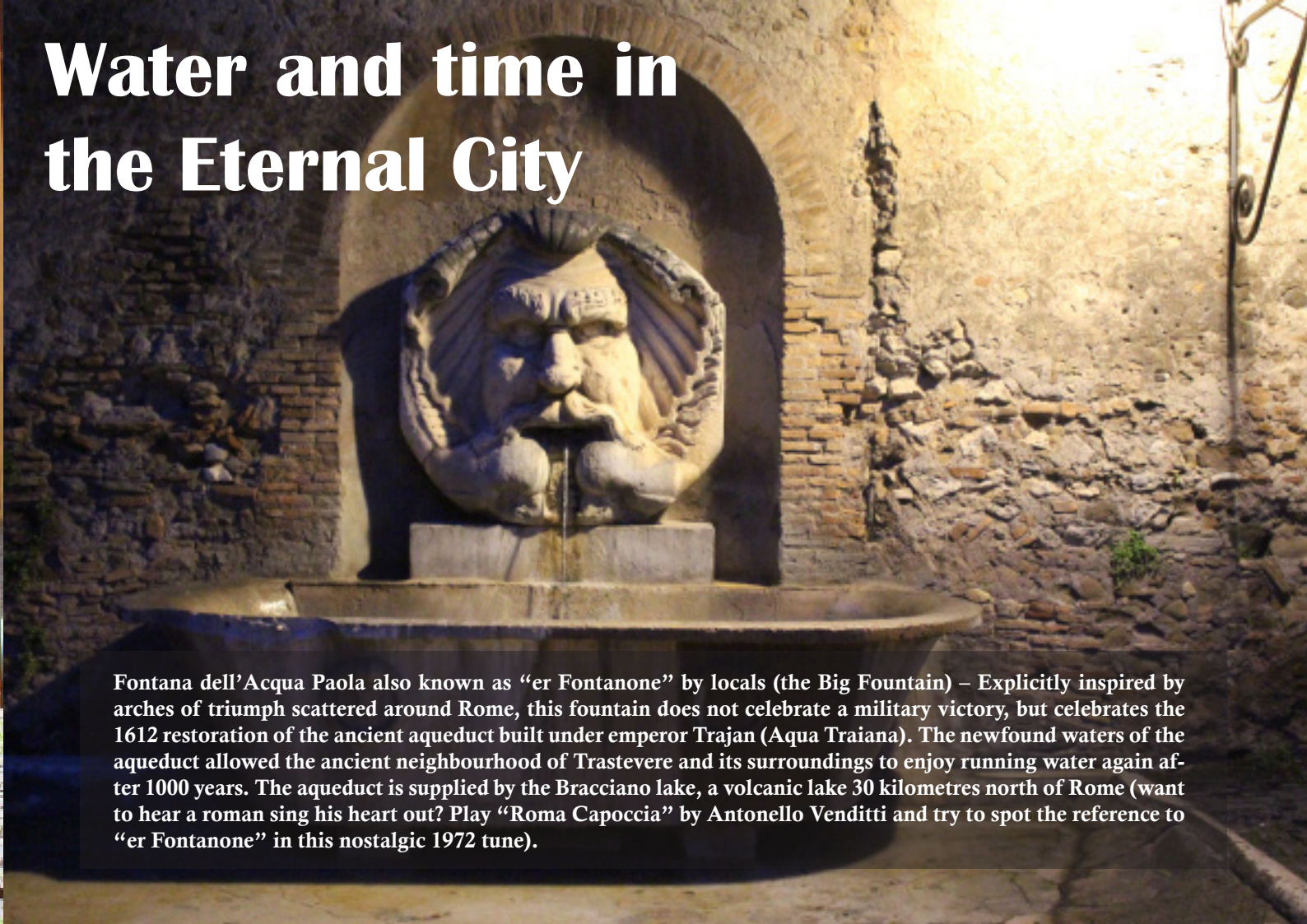
A “Nasone” (big nose) – This is one of the 2500 public drinking fountains in the city of Rome. Water is continuously running and recycled, if not used, by falling into the hole under the spout. The “Nasoni” hold two major functions: they act as an exhaust thus keeping water pressure stable in the water supply system of the Eternal City and as a free drinking water source for the people and the animals of the city (tip from a local: go to Villa Borghese and try to spot the local parrots drinking from one of these iconic fountains).




ANNO DOMINI MDCXII PONTIFICATVS SVI SEPTIMO

Fontana del Mascherone di Santa Sabina – This enigmatic fountain adorns the walls of the arguably most beautiful sunset-watching spot of the City, il Giardino degli Aranci (the Garden of Oranges). While recorded history has little to say about this fountain, it has witnessed many first kisses and the stories that stemmed from them (Spot this marble masterpiece in a few scenes of the Oscar-winning film “The Great Beauty”).

Water and time in the Eternal City

A close-up photograph of the Fontana dell'Acqua Paola. The central feature is a large, weathered stone mask of a bearded man, likely a personification of water, set within a semi-circular stone arch. Water flows from the mouth of the mask into a wide, shallow stone basin below. The background is a rough, textured stone wall.

Fontana dell'Acqua Paola also known as “er Fontanone” by locals (the Big Fountain) – Explicitly inspired by arches of triumph scattered around Rome, this fountain does not celebrate a military victory, but celebrates the 1612 restoration of the ancient aqueduct built under emperor Trajan (Aqua Traiana). The newfound waters of the aqueduct allowed the ancient neighbourhood of Trastevere and its surroundings to enjoy running water again after 1000 years. The aqueduct is supplied by the Bracciano lake, a volcanic lake 30 kilometres north of Rome (want to hear a roman sing his heart out? Play “Roma Capoccia” by Antonello Venditti and try to spot the reference to “er Fontanone” in this nostalgic 1972 tune).

A wide-angle photograph of the Aqua Claudia aqueduct. The structure is a long, multi-tiered stone bridge with numerous arches, stretching across a green field. In the foreground, there is a large, fallen tree trunk. A few people are visible walking in the field near the base of the aqueduct. The sky is clear and blue.

The Aqua Claudia (“Waters of Claudius”) was a 69 km aqueduct supplying all 14 districts (neighbourhoods) of ancient Rome with fresh drinking water. Built between 38 and 51 CE, this aqueduct was the greatest of the eleven supplying Rome in the imperial period. The aqueducts were effectively disabled in the siege of Rome during the Gothic Wars (537 CE). The destruction of the aqueducts led the already plummeting population of Rome (which had peaked at almost 1.3 million in the 2nd century CE) to fall to less than 30.000. Ancient Rome as the world had known it effectively ended with the demise of its waters. It would take until 1951 for Rome to reach the same population levels of its glorious past.

The Bracciano lake - This 57 km² lake lies 30 km to the north of Rome and currently supplies the Eternal City with most of its drinking water. The waters of this volcanic lake also quench the thirst of the city through the ancient Aqua Traiana aqueduct and formerly the Aqua Alsietina. Plummeting levels of rainfall and increased evaporation due to ever-increasing temperatures are leading the lake to continuously recede. In the distance, sunbathers continue to enjoy the lake and its ever-growing beaches.



A Fridays for Future march in the central via Cavour. Students from various high schools strike to protest the inaction of governments and institutions to combat climate change. From requesting the respect of the commitments of the Paris Agreements to more radical demands of reshaping the current economic system, students filled the streets of Rome and upheld their right to shape and protect the world they live in.



WUR meets GLF



Some music came to my ears as I was walking through the Boerderij De Hoge Born, the farm just to the north of Wageningen campus. Two guitarists and a violinist were playing traditional Greek music in an informal and cosy setting. After the crowd applauded the musicians, a voice called through the megaphone for the first round of workshops. “Let’s get started, everybody!” It was Saturday 11th of May and the sun was shining on Wageningen in an otherwise dull month. I came here to take part in the workshop day “Working towards ‘Climate Smart Landscapes’” organized by Wageningen University Youth for Landscapes Forum (WUYLF). This is a platform of young WUR students that started a few months back through the initiative of Esther Milberg. I reached out to her a few days after to discuss the event with her. “This wouldn’t have started hadn’t I been so annoying” she told me laughing. And I had to take her literally. She and other WUR students - the future WUYLF team - attended the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) - a knowledge-based, multi-sectoral platform - in Bonn last winter. After this experience, she could not hold back some critical remarks about the conference and she jotted them down in an email that was later sent to the GLF organization. “I absolutely love your email, Esther. Why don’t you organize something yourself?” This was the reply and thus Esther took on the challenge.

Four months on, WUYLF now consists of a proactive and committed handful of WUR students that organized a two-day event in Wageningen on the theme of “Climate Smart Landscapes”. The first day (11th of May) was dedicated to workshops hosted by local and non-local organisations. The aim of these was to encourage young people to think about landscapes (be it a city, a forest, a riverfront, etc.) in a transdisciplinary way, involving research and practice-based experience. This was done through interactive workshops where the attendees were given basic information about the topic and immediately required to employ the tools they have and make something out of it. For instance, I attended a workshop about ethnovision and the advantages of visual methodologies in research. Halfway through we were asked to go outside, take pictures and discuss them. The point was to make us reflect on the stories, narratives and views that a picture can convey better than a written text.

Alternative methodologies were indeed an important part of the day, “soundscape” was discussed as a way to understand and interpret a landscape. However, WUYLF brought also alternative perspectives and worldviews into the discussion. Indigenous representatives from Papua New Guinea and Chile joined the Wagen-

ingen community to share their perspective and knowledge on climate change.

Two days later, on the 13th of May, a panel discussion was hosted in Impulse. Six young and inspiring panelists started the day by sharing their experience and knowledge on different topics ranging from commercial agroforestry to climate activism. After that, the talented mediator, Kimberly Merten, engaged the guests and the public in discussing issues that came out from the workshop session of two days before. This was the truly exceptional part of WUYLF and of the panel discussion. Esther tells me that “this is the essence of ‘co-creating

knowledge’”. Using the knowledge as well as the doubts that emerged from the workshop session allowed everybody to actively contribute in co-creating the content of the panel discussion. This is even more relevant if you consider that the panel discussion was live broadcasted by the GLF Kyoto 2019 platform.

With this two-day event, WUYLF wanted to create a bridge between WUR and GLF because we, as Wageningen students and practitioners, can offer a new, refreshing and more critical perspective to the global discussion on climate change. And our voice and experience is worth being listened to by the world. 🌍



The Wageningen

Consider for a second what you value the most about education in Wageningen. Every single one of us may have a different answer but a sizeable portion would agree that it is quite a unique place. WUR has made a name for itself in the agricultural and environmental sciences and yet, if that is not enough, one would have a difficult time sidestepping the insistence of the academic authorities on how well positioned our institution is in national and global rankings. They certainly have a point; students and staff alike hold our institution in high esteem, as reflected by both in-house and independent surveys.

Coming from outside of the Netherlands, I found myself amazed during my first weeks in Wageningen by the many changes and fresh ideas entering my daily life. Therefore, and incidentally, with the opportunity to write for a new student magazine, I have a serious chance to think carefully about the factors that make Wageningen such a unique place and be able to share them with you.

Multiculturalism is one of the first features that stand out, made all the more remarkable in such a small town as Wageningen. As a foreign student I acknowledge the international ambience at Wageningen; it is difficult to stroll around Wageningen and not hear myriad languages. Naturally, allowing different cultures to co-exist strengthens the bonds between cultures (and uncovers oftentimes unexpected similarities) while at the same time helping to tear away prejudice and mistrust between them.

The multicultural environment of Wageningen may well be a good indicator of its international reputation. The benefit of this is twofold. On the one hand, forming close partnerships with other leading institutions allows WUR to partake in ground-breaking projects. Consequently, the chances of obtaining successful results with interesting applications improve exponentially, much to the delight of stakeholders.

In this sense, wealth in academia has consistently correlated with so-called 'excellence'. WUR has pursued a smart strategy over the years by specialising in agricultural and environmental research. Focusing efforts in this way ensures that investments are made here rather than being scattered across different institutions. In addition to funding, which – though vital – is not by itself sufficient, many other elements hallmark education at Wageningen. A careful analysis of these may allow us to first identify and later assess their impacts, identify their weaknesses, and enable prompt responses should they become at risk.

Wageningen may be a unique place but it would be complacent to say that is without parallel. Education at WUR does share features that are common to other world-class institutions, and some aspects in the way that students learn at Wageningen may not be inherently bound to the 'WUR model'.

For instance, and as is common with other Dutch universities, teaching at Wageningen is noticeably hands-on and affords – relatively – less attention to theory. A major part of the learning process takes place in the form of research or projects that are action-oriented and carried out in small groups. Frequently, students are provided with a few key goals and aims and are thereafter given fewer instructions. In turn, the reward is an enormous feeling of fulfilment and students should be confident that they will remember their



Wageningen model lessons in education

lessons. Besides, students are granted certain real life-like responsibilities in favour of their learning (say, the pleasure of having 24/7 access to a supercomputer for a Bioinformatics course or the opportunity to work with cutting-edge instruments) which also maximises the educational experience and applicability of studies.

The highly-interacting environment in Wageningen is reinforced within our small town. Wageningen is not only set out as a niche nook for talented researchers but also as a habitat for motivated students. As many students stay in Wageningen for a short period of time (perhaps for an academic exchange or a master's degree), they tend to make the most of their time both in and out of campus. In this sense, I see the work hard, play hard mind-set among students to be highly stimulating and personally find it enjoyable to spend time among my peers who, in bearing diversity of experience and culture, have many fascinating stories to tell. Admittedly, time moves very fast and the bittersweet flavour of increasingly frequent goodbye parties is always at the tip of your tongue.

Of course, education in Wageningen is satisfying but it is not flawless. Challenges in recent years have exposed cracks in the 'model' that could jeopardise it as we know it. For instance, one could argue that the rising number of students reflects an increase in reputation and quality, especially on the international stage, but is equally cited for some criticism, particularly as of late. This issue may have in fact existed for some time already, but it is only now that WUR is opening its doors for more students that it has become evident that it has not done so in the smartest way.

Many students and staff members, particularly of Dutch nationality (for the most part because they know their universities the best), have expressed concerns about a drop in the quality of education. They claim that the underlying cause is that the number of incoming students keeps rising at a faster pace than the increase in funding and infrastructure – see for example the latest iteration of the daily timetable. While I share their concern in dropping quality, this ought not prevent the entry of more international students as some domestic students hold.

The fact that English is halfway established as a lingua franca in teaching is a trend common to other non-English speaking countries in order to lower the language barriers that heavily impede research. More conservative minds

should know that this will not destroy self-cultural identity, but that isolation will. Doors should be kept open for international students more than ever as global outreach in academia grows more important. We will otherwise lose what we understand as WUR today, including our international reputation and far-reaching research.

True multiculturalism has also not resoundingly been attained, in the sense that only a minority of students come from beyond Europe. Even among that minority, many come from Western countries that share similarly high academic standards and accessibility. It is difficult to determine what holds back international students from further afield: could it be that studies abroad are less promoted, less accessible, or costlier? It is tempting to wonder if enough efforts are being made to support talents from all backgrounds, and time will tell if already existing measures, such as exchange programmes and collaborations, are effective in increasing diversity.

My final words shall be a call for action. We all naturally want WUR to maintain and improve its high standards. Unfortunately, though, institutional surveys are answered by a disappointing minority of students. By extension, policy decisions concerning students and staff both here and all over the Netherlands must be made without the weight of universality. The effort on our part to participate more is minimal and wipes off of the table an easy excuse for policy makers to discard students' opinions. Other ways to draw attention to the WUR model include student protests, which are effective and draw immediate attention but run the risk of being overlooked from an institutional point of view. We should be open and critical about our educational experience. I encourage you to debate with other students and be suggestive to your lecturers and study advisors.

Altogether, it is my hope that the university continues to enrich itself through the efforts of passionate students committed to improving our institution. The incorporation of fresh ideas and a constructively critical environment will push education forward at WUR. We should keep our eyes wide open to both preserve what is already built and to adapt it to modern times and new challenges. I am confident that the future is bright if we persevere. 🐘

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Through the eyes

There is no one better to teach us about the fundamental nature of Wageningen than it's city poet. Ivanka de Ruijter is 25 years old and was born and raised in Wageningen. When studying Dutch Literature at university, she also started working at Boekhandel Kniphorst (the local book store) and fell in love with the books and telling people stories. In 2018 she became city poet, winning the national city poet of the year contest with a poem named 'For Wageningen' and this year she became manager of the store. Therefore, there is no one better to give insight into the city itself and the life it creates.

Ivanka, what do you think is the essence of Wageningen?

It differs from situation to situation, but as city poet I try to explain her voice. My poem that won the national city poet of the year contest was about both her sound and about everyone's sound. She hears your sound, my sound, the sound of the river, the fountain and the children. We hear each other. The poem is from my perspective but I hope to catch the perspective of everyone. I hope they have that feeling of when you're far from home but you still know what your home city sounds like. That is the most important part of the feeling for any city, not only Wageningen, the feeling that you are home.

You refer to Wageningen as she, why is this?

I told a friend about my experience on the 5th May. I told him about how the city is too small for this big event and she is breathing really fast. She is proud but anxious at the same time. When all the people leave and they are walking on the plastic cups you can hear her sigh with relief and relax. Then she can have her real party of freedom once everything comes to rest. I think we should all celebrate freedom but for this city it is too much. I really care for her and I feel like she is a person. It's hard to tell why she is a female, she's just not too big and her sounds can be gentle.

Do you think 5th May is important culturally for the city?

5th May is an important day to celebrate and I like celebrating freedom but I'm not sure if it is real Wageningen. I think Woetstok is much more Wageningen, it

is actually organised by the people from Loburg, it is in the Torckpark and they have 70s bands.

It is really nice, everyone is on the grass, the people are local and the feeling is more authentic.

Is there anywhere in Wageningen that you think is extra special or inspiring?

Yes, the Theekoepel. It's a small eighteenth century tea house that is falling into disrepair on the side of the city wall. I am trying to rescue it with a group of people since it is for sale. It's very small but I really like to be there and look over the dyke.

What is your favourite medium to express the city?

Poetry! I can express myself really well in Dutch. Do you know the term mimesis? It refers to an idea in art history that stems from Plato. He argues this world is a copy of the ideal version, so there is an ideal but what you see is always a copy. If I make a painting or a photograph then it is a copy of a copy, but if I make a poem, it is something new.

Of course I reuse the words, but I try to come close to a new reality that includes the reality that inspired it.

When I write a poem I try to add something to this world. I always say good poetry or art may not give you something new but instead it makes a new order, one that is different from what you thought you knew. You may see reality in a different

way that has been there the whole time. That is what I hope to add, a new view.

How did your life change after becoming city poet?

I have become more conscious about my position. At first you just do your own thing, but now I can achieve something. I can organize or take part in cultural activities or write about things that bother me or other people of the city. As a city poet you don't express only yourself but you also look at the people and try to capture what they see or experience.

Do you remember the city always having such strong links to the university?

Since the university was born in the city centre, there originally was a strong connection between them. Boekhandel Kniphorst used to deliver the academic and scientific books. Things changed with the coming of the internet and the increase in the amount of students. The campus is still an important part of Wageningen, but it acts more independently. I wouldn't say it's a separate world, but probably not all students are as involved with the city as before. They are more anonymous.

*"She hears your sound,
my sound, the sound of
the river, the fountain
and the children"*

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It is interesting, it seems like a lot of people are struggling with the connection of the university and the town. There is work to be done. In 'Reflection' I wrote about 'here and there', because it started 'here' and now it is 'there.' It is about a plant that grew and curls like a question mark, because I think science is about asking ques-

“The campus is still an important part of Wageningen, but it acts more independently”

tions which makes you research things. But when you pose a new question, you should be aware of the history. The one thing we shouldn't forget is the way it all started within this small town.

What do you want to see for Wageningen in the future, how do you see this city progresses?

I find this a hard question. Maybe campus and the city can move more towards each other, in both directions. In a way, I think this city is already really beautiful as she is. 🌿



Ivanka de Ruijter became Wageningen city poet a year ago at the age of 24. Now, one year later not only is she tasked with capturing the essence of the city and its inhabitants, but she is also manager of Boekhandel Kniphorst in the centre of town. Ivanka grew up in Wageningen and on top of poetry, she is involved with many cultural aspects of the city such as the language café at Café Loburg and a campaign to restore the Theekoepel.

Wageningen and the Fifth of May

a brief history of the story behind liberation

The Fifth of May is a renowned festivity in the Netherlands. Liberation Day, of course, commemorates the 5th May 1945, when Nazi German troops surrendered in Wageningen and put an end to their occupation of the Netherlands. In this article we will provide a historical overview of the Fifth of May and why it is so wholeheartedly celebrated by the Dutch.

World War II officially began in September 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. The Netherlands declared its neutrality but nonetheless began preparations for the worst; should the Nazis decide to invade they would be delayed at the border. The Netherlands were invaded on the 10th May 1940, though no clear reasons supported the invasion, nor was a declaration of war announced by the Germans. The invasion of the Netherlands coincided with the invasions of both Belgium and Luxembourg. Immediately, an order was issued to evacuate the border towns and relocate their inhabitants to cities further away from the front, as the Dutch army planned to attack along the Grebbe line, and therefore the whole Gelderse Valley was to be evacuated. Wageningen was included in this order and was evacuated by ships on the Rhine on the very same afternoon as the invasion.

However, the Dutch army was unprepared for the German blitzkrieg – lightning war – that swept through the eastern portions of the Netherlands; Wageningen itself sustained major damage. Seeing themselves severely disadvantaged and following the severe bombings in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the Dutch government surrendered five days after the invasion. Wageningers started to rebuild the city as soon as they were granted permission return to their homes, immediately after the Dutch surrender. This was the first attempt to recover from the damages caused by the war. In the years that followed, the Netherlands were occupied and consequently put under strict German control. With regards to Wageningen, the city was not only occupied but was bombarded again in 1943

and 1944, causing extensive damage to the property and the deaths of dozens of civilians.

On the 6th June 1944, the Normandy Landings took place, and, as we now know, this proved to be the definitive operation by the Allies to defeat Nazi Germany in Western Europe. Some months later, and in spite of the failure of Operation Market Garden to liberate the Netherlands by the end of 1944, in September British and Polish Allied troops entered the Batavia region (or Betuwe in Dutch) marking the beginning of the end of the German occupation. Wageningen was again under threat of bombardment was evacuated for a second time in the late 1944. The second evacuation was notably longer than the first. While it was expected to last for only several weeks, it instead lasted 8 months and coincided with the Hunger Winter famine (the Hongerwinter). By this time, the Nude region connecting Rhenen and Wageningen had become a no man's land between the occupied and freed territories and massive amounts of food stocks set aside for the occupied regions were piling up.

By the end of April 1945, the situation had vastly deteriorated for Nazi Germany. Berlin was being besieged by the Soviet Union, and, unwilling to surrender, the leader of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler, committed suicide on the 30th of April. The German troops began retreating from the Netherlands in early May 1945 putting an end to rationing and, on the 2nd May 1945, Operation Faust was initiated to mobilise and distribute food. Coincidentally, Wageningen was the place where Allied General Foulkes and German General Reichelt

arranged for the transportation of the goods. On the very same week, Foulkes arranged a meeting to negotiate the official German surrender in the Netherlands.

On the morning of the 5th May 1945, Allied Generals Foulkes and Kitching, German Generals Reichelt and his superior Blaskowitz, Dutch Prince Bernhard and an interpreter assembled at Hotel De Wereld to determine the terms of the German capitulation. Initially, the Germans were offered the general conditions for their surrender in northwest Europe, but additional points were raised, and a new document needed to be composed. It is believed that not a single typewriter could be found in war-torn Wageningen and consequently the actual signing of the surrender took place the following day in the Aula.

As it is commonly said, the rest is history. Liberation Day is celebrated every year in Wageningen and is a national holiday every five years (that will be next year, in 2020). If the reputation of Dutch parties and festivities are anything to go by, it will likely be an unmissable event!

Most of the information in this article is summarised from <http://www.wo2meteigenogen.nl>, where more information, interviews and testimonies can be found along with priceless pictures of Wageningen before, during and after WWII. 📷

14 June 12:30 - 13:30

@impulse

Come and give your input

Jester.





Comments from

Dear Reader, under the rubric *Comments from the community* we will invite members of the community of Wageningen to comment on a relevant subject, this can be related to a variety of things from initiatives on campus, political issues or just a random thought you want to share.

All is too well.

Yes, you are not mistaken, all is too well at WUR. After taking poll position for 15 years in all the lists that matter, that is my diagnosis. Researchers are busy and publish one publication after the other, and in addition show up on time for morning, afternoon and evening lectures. Even with rising student numbers they make the brave effort to remember the names of all the driven students that cross their paths.

Students themselves are also busy day and night. Whereas in the 90's a student would easily take 10 years to attain their diploma with an impressive list of extra-curricular activities, a student nowadays manages the same amount of work in 5, maximum 6. When I walk around campus I breathe the dense air of stress. Although complimented by a strong scent of idealism, we are breeding stress amongst each other. We all do more: more impact, more efficiency, more in less time. Nominal and excellent. Inside the budget, but outside expectations. We are all made to be busy.

On students the pressure is rising as student debts are building. I don't think all students know to what extent this puts pressure on their lives, but I'm certain it's felt unconsciously. Compare the ambitions and dreams of a new student (mission-directed, save the world, work at an NGO, you know) with the cynical worldview of most recently graduated alumni of Wageningen and you can taste the defeat. Luckily we are attracting lots of business to the campus! And really, even without all that, through social media, students are perfectly capable of breeding competition and stress among themselves. #Quarter-lifecrisis.

The fucked up thing is that we are too busy to pause and look at our business, or pause at all. Standing still in the dynamic of Wageningen is seen as decline and decay. And almost nobody at the institute is able to resist this direction. The pressure cooker that is Wageningen will continue to build into the future, since the teachers, researchers and managers of tomorrow will be the stressed students of yesterday. That is why we desperately need critical and relatively fearless students to help us return to the core issues of the WUR, in short: to those important things we are all too busy for.

-The Owl-



the community

Girls Club Wageningen in a nutshell

Girls Club Wageningen was born by our need to have a safe space to share and grow. It is not a club and it is not only for girls. Everyone wishing to build a more equal future for all, no matter the gender label, is more than welcome. Girls Club Wageningen is a breathing project. Through creating this space, our aim is to connect people offline as well as online to explore the meanings of feminism. There is no “right” form of activism and our take on it is to start a dialogue.

Girls Club Wageningen is first and foremost a space to share ideas.

A space to share feelings.

A space to share art.

A space to share opinions.

A space to learn.

A space to listen.

A space to speak.

A space to celebrate women, femme-folks and female identifying individuals that fight and break the barriers every day.

A space to explore feminism.

In the words of bell hooks: “To be ‘feminist’ in any authentic sense of the term is to want for all people, female and male, liberation from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression.”

Feminism is held up as one of the most successful social movements of the 20th century. In a world where inequalities continue to thrive, it is important to help this movement evolve. Social media is a great platform to connect with feminists around the world and learn about their dreams and struggles. It is important to understand that feminism has different meanings for different people- age, country of origin, religion, political views and ideology are only some of the factors that might shape your perception of feminism. In this international bubble that Wageningen offers, we want to explore together what being a feminist is for you.

Girls Club Wageningen started with four girls over dinner and wine discussing about the struggles of being a female in science, politics, business, media, leadership and society. “Hey...I love this! But, what about discussing about all of these topics, with more people? Wageningen does not have such a thing!”

And for the past three months, we have been trying to hold an open space for dialogue in all our little meetings. From debates about sexism to safe, heartwarming discussion circles about rape culture - we have chosen to not shy away from any topic.

Connect with us.

Instagram @girls_club_wageningen

Facebook: Girls Club Wageningen

Voor Wageningen

Ik leerde je horen en jij mij het schrijven
over je mensen, je stegen, je hotel op het plein,
over 's nachts op de dijk, over hoe je nog jaren
mijn altijd gonzende muze zal zijn.

Want ik hoor je, als ik weg ben,
in de ruis van de rivieren.
En ik hoor je, als ik thuiskom
fluis'tren met de populieren.

Op zaterdag hoor ik je roezemoes zwellen
in je bieb, in je wijken, in winkels, op straat.
En op donderdag hoor ik je vergenoegd zuchten
als de tevreden klanten in 't antiquariaat.

Je bent live muziek in je eigen cafeetjes,
maar klinkt ook in de stilte van de tuin op je hug.
En zelfs als de nacht bijna uit is geslapen,
keert in de toren je stemgeluid terug.

Jij bent het geluid van je eigen bewoners.
Ze zijn als je kinderen: trots prijs je ze aan.
Jij kent de galm van studenten, absenten,
van zij die hier blijven en zij die weer gaan.

Je echoot de lach van ouders die niet zagen
hoe hun grut zichzelf nat spatte in je fontein.
Ik hoor jouw geluid, zoals jij het mijne
en ik wil, als je dochter, je stadsdichter zijn.

Ivanka de Ruijter
City poet of Wageningen 2018-2021

For Wageningen

I learnt to listen and you taught me to write,
about your people, your streets, your beauty at night.
Gazing from the dyke, now and in coming years,
you inspire me to write for your people's ears.

Because I hear you, when I'm gone,
in the quiet sighs of the river.
And I hear you, when I come home,
whispering through the poplar's quiver.

Saturdays you swell with the crowds chatter,
in your library, your houses and on your streets.
And on a Thursday soft sighs are scattered,
from old books who had new owners to greet.

You are live music in your own cafés,
you're the silence in gardens through which I wade
Even when the night has almost awoken,
your voice rings from the tower unbroken.

You are the sound of your own people,
with secrets that only children can know.
You're the chime of singing students, movements,
of those who stay and those who go.

You echo the sound of the parents who did not see,
how their children played in your fountain with glee.
I know your voice, like you know mine,
and contentedly writing I will serve you in rhyme.

Translation: Noud van Dam