



# InCognito

For your monthly study-related needs and feeds.

March 2015

Suggestions, feedback or comments? Let us know at [newsletter.cognito@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.cognito@gmail.com).

## Miriam Maan in Vancouver

Hey there, I am Miriam (2nd years MBS - CNS) I chose to do my second internship abroad. Why? Well besides all the stuff they tell you at uni (exploring your horizon, get to know how other labs are working, spread your scientific contact circle), it's just one big adventure. Not only to give yourself a different home base, also making new friends, get to know how public transportation works, or where to get the cheapest groceries all become challenges you would never know existed (although my new Vancouver friends can't top the peeps I met in Amsterdam, no diggity4ever).

Also, my mind feels in a different mode, living in another city really makes you an explorer (and that's a good quality to have as a scientist ;)). Where in Amsterdam, my life was pretty straight forward, here in Vancouver, I'm trying to fill up every weekend with new interesting things and Vancouver is the perfect place for this; not only is the city filled with nice restaurants (cheap sushi yay), the city offers over a 1000 interesting nature spots, and many of them are easy to reach by public transport. So every weekend, I am trying to make the most of it by performing my new hobby, hangover hiking (yes we do drink



Stargazing somewhere in the wild outdoors of Canada. Below: Miriam after climbing a mountain on what looks like one of her hangover hikes.

alcohol here as well), which is actually the best remedy against the feeling of being hung over, and I've already climbed some amazing mountains!

The lab where I work is pretty amazing; all the PhDs, PostDocs and graduate students are sitting in the same room which really makes it an open atmosphere. Also, Alan Kingstone, the prof. with whom I work, is such a nice and inspiring person, I don't know how he does it but it feels like he gets the best out of me. He lets me do my own project all by myself, which I really like. The only problem is that I also have to figure everything out by myself, which is a pain in the ass if you don't have that much experience with programming in Matlab or analyzing eyetracking data. But if you never fail you never learn, isn't that it?

The project I am working on is about mind wandering. We are trying to use eyetracking data (pupil dilation, gaze direction, blink frequency) and skin conductance measures to indicate episodes of mind wandering. Furthermore, because the lab is a social neuroscience lab, we will let participants observe their own behavior and see whether they can tell by judging their own behavior as recorded by a video, whether they

are mind wandering or not.

I like the topic of mind wandering a lot, because this type of behavior is happening so frequently, but the mechanisms are still so unknown to us (as is the case for most neuroscience topics).

Another nice thing about going on exchange is that you get confronted with your own culture. We, as Dutch people, are really direct and I knew that but I never experienced it in a bad way. Well, wait till you meet some Canadian people, they really are the nicest people on earth (ggag was right after all), if you would ask them something, and even if it was really unrealistic and hard and they actually didn't want to do it, they would still say yes. You really have to read their 'body language' to see whether they really want to help you or not. And now I feel like a bad person thinking about all the stuff I had other people do for me during the first weeks I was here. So, keep that in mind when meeting a Canadian! (Oh and buy bear spray, you apparently really need it in the summer. ;))

If you have any questions about my internship or my time here, let me know, I do have facebook (yes I really do.)



## AGENDA

### Drinks @ CREA

Every Tuesday, 21:00-late

### PhD Defence: Psychological mechanisms that govern avoidance learning

6 March, 12:00-13:00, Agnietenkapel: Oudezijds Voorburgwal 229-231

Angelos Kryptotos speaks on the psychological mechanisms that govern avoidance learning and how these insights can be relevant for clinical practice.

### ABC Lecture: Tecumseh Fitch

24 March, 16:00-17:00, REC M1.03

'The Syntax of Mind: Dendrophilia and Human Cognition'. In many cases, human cognition involves a capacity to generate and perceive tree structures (in language, music, social cognition, etc.). Research will be reviewed demonstrating that this human proclivity - our "dendrophilia" - represented a key cognitive innovation during recent human evolution.

### SMART Cognitive Science conference

25 - 28 March, Bungehuis: Spuistraat 210

Conference consisting of 6 workshops on the cognitive science of music, language, communication and art, and a common evening program with debates and plenaries, and will be free to attend. Registration required.

### Special Symposium: The Dutch Neurofederation stimulating developmental cognitive and affective neuroscience

26 March, 13:00-18:00, REC M1.02

This symposium highlights collaborative work initiated by Eveline Crone during the past five years of her Dutch Neurofederation professorship 'Neurocognitive and affective development during adolescence'.

### ABC Colloquium: Simon Hanslmayr

27 March, 16:00-17:00, Diamantbeurs 5.01

The role of synchronized and desynchronized oscillations for episodic memory - association vs. information.

# Protests for a New University

By Lionel Newman.

A large-scale protest movement has taken hold at the University of Amsterdam. This 'New University' movement showed its strength on Wednesday, 25 February when a protest march, attended by at least 1000 demonstrators, culminated in the protesters' occupation of the Maagdenhuis administrative building. This is the fourth university building to be occupied, and follows the 11-day occupation of the Bungehuis building, where protesters were forcibly evicted just days before the march on Maagdenhuis. Even though the university dealt with the previous Bungehuis occupiers by turning off heat and internet (casting blame on protesters for disrupting research), forcibly removing them with police, and suing them each for €100,000 per day, the current Maagdenhuis occupiers still show no signs of leaving on their own terms until changes are made to the governance of the College van Bestuur (CvB), the executive board that runs the UvA and HvA. And with support from the likes of Noam Chomsky, Judith Butler, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Jacques Ranciere, it is worth hearing what these protesters have to say.

Students and faculty have rallied against the CvB because of massive organizational changes to the university—changes made in the name of increased efficiency, despite the effects they would have on quality of education. Of these cost-cutting measures, the one that has galvanized the most opposition has been to almost completely dissolve the humanities departments, reducing them to either one 'liberal arts' programme or a small handful of bachelor programmes. This change in particular puts dozens of faculty positions in jeopardy and increas-



Protestors carried a coffin saying: "don't put us six feet under" and other banners. Photos by Wieke Rutgers.

es homogenization. Other issues that have roused opposition include appropriating and selling university property for profit, as well as the forced merger of science faculties of the UvA and the VU. Even though the latter issue was stopped by the student and employee council, the UvA continued with the merger behind the scenes, showcasing a source of protesters' frustration with the way the board handles official democratic channels that should provide a voice for students and faculty.

The disconnect between goals of the CvB and goals of students and faculty serves as the defining problem. Protesters argue that the CvB represent monied interest. The CvB is appointed by a Supervisory Board, which is in turn appointed by the Ministry of Education. The New University seeks to instate an elected executive board that is held accountable directly by the students and faculty who compose the university, and who would therefore govern on their behalf. They follow a form of democracy without hierarchy, similar to the Occupy movement, in which a small set of fixed organisational rules allow for anyone to speak his or her mind and

for decisions to be made collectively. On the first night of the Maagdenhuis occupation, CvB members including its president, Louise Gunning, as well as Mayor Eberhard van der Laan, met with protesters late into the night and early morning to discuss the issues with the group as a whole. Just days later, the board conceded by delaying changes to language programmes by two years, and including a student on the board. However, protesters say, this is just the beginning. They want the board to be entirely represented by the students and faculty that they serve, instead of a situation where one student's voice could be overpowered by experienced administrators appointed from higher up.

As this drama unfolds, it is clear that the New University has a momentum that cannot be easily halted by vague or distant promises. They strongly believe that Dutch universities should be democratic and autonomous. We have reached a crossroads where their vision can still become a reality, but where the current structures of power can still exert enough pressure to cripple the university's ability to produce citizens who think critically about social issues and act on their own behalf. Universities worldwide are faced with increasing financial pressure, especially to cut humanities research and education. Here in Amsterdam, we have a rare chance to stem the tide of overzealous corporatization—to make the honest case that austerity might be a useful strategy for profit-making institutions like businesses, but that it is a mistake to treat education as just another special interest. The effects of slashing ventures in business will be very different from the effects of slashing efforts to cultivate a thoughtful, intelligent, active citizenry.



## BIRTHDAYS

**Jamie van Langelaar**  
1 March

**Alastair Haigh**  
5 March

**Carola Werner**  
7 March

**Cognito**  
10 March

**Suzanne Martens**  
12 March

**Lynnet Frijling**  
16 March

**Andrea Arciniegras**  
20 March

**Lionel Newman**  
21 March

**Suzanna Berg**  
23 March

**Marjolein Boots**  
31 March

## HOROSCOPE



**Aries**  
21 March - 20 April

As an Aries, your bold, aggressive, and energetic nature means that you enjoy leading others in efforts that are risky yet innovative, oftentimes appearing arrogant and domineering to others. You thrive with competition and tend to start grand projects when pushed to prove yourself, but you are usually too impulsive to finish them. Sometime this month, as you take your daily walks through the park to get into fights with the dogs, you will notice a group of small children playing together and pretending they are exploring outer space. You will run into their group and immediately begin drawing up plans for a solar-powered rocket ship, and start intensive training for the children to survive in space without breathing, because "helmets are for pussies." However, your ambitious project will tragically end prematurely when you see a dog attempting to catch a frisbee, prompting you to abandon your astronomical endeavors so that you can run over and snatch the frisbee from the air to "show [the dog] who's the master."

Lucky headgear: tinfoil hat  
Lucky finger: pinky  
Lucky roadsign: moose crossing



# Book review: Generic – The unbranding of modern medicine

Book review by Marco Heuvelman.

*Generic – The unbranding of modern medicine*  
Jeremy A. Greene; John Hopkins University press, 2014.

Generic is a history book which describes the rapid development of the pharmaceutical industry in the United States of America from the early 20th century up to 2014. It offers an insight into the mysterious world of the pharmaceutical industry, a world worth billions of dollars,

full of intrigue, competing interests, and strict federal regulations.

Generic successfully integrates an interdisciplinary take into how the pharmaceutical world has developed from the perspective of the generic drug industry. The generic drug industry is a perfect example of how conflicting interests and billions of dollars bring out the very worst in individuals and groups from all sides of the spectrum.

The development of how government, patients, and corporations interact in the present

are elucidated through knowledge of its history, often leaving the reader befuddled. All this knowledge leaves the reader wondering how it was possible a world can exist which has been crafted by such misguided actions.

The book is full of fraud, misinformation, pride, and big fat lawsuits. History at its finest. A must read for any academic interested in the pharmaceutical world.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT: VEGETARIAN FLAMMKUCHEN

German recipe by Katharina Müller.

I know you have all been waiting for a German recipe! And finally, here is one – and it is not a giant Currywurst! The original version of this dish mainly consists of bacon, but since I am an animal-lover, I am presenting you here my much more delicious Veggie version.

To make two hungry people feel nice and full:

**Dough**  
250 g flour  
2 big spoons of olive oil  
125 ml water

Mix it all in a big bowl. If it feels not too wet and not too dry, it's done. Then roll it out really thin. Line a baking tray with paper and put the dough on it. Pre-heat oven to 220 degrees (yes, Celsius).

**Topping**  
250 g Crème fraîche (one cup)  
2 medium-sized onions  
Leek / Spring onions  
Mushrooms  
Tomatoes  
Olives  
Sun-dried tomatoes  
Chives  
Salt  
Pepper

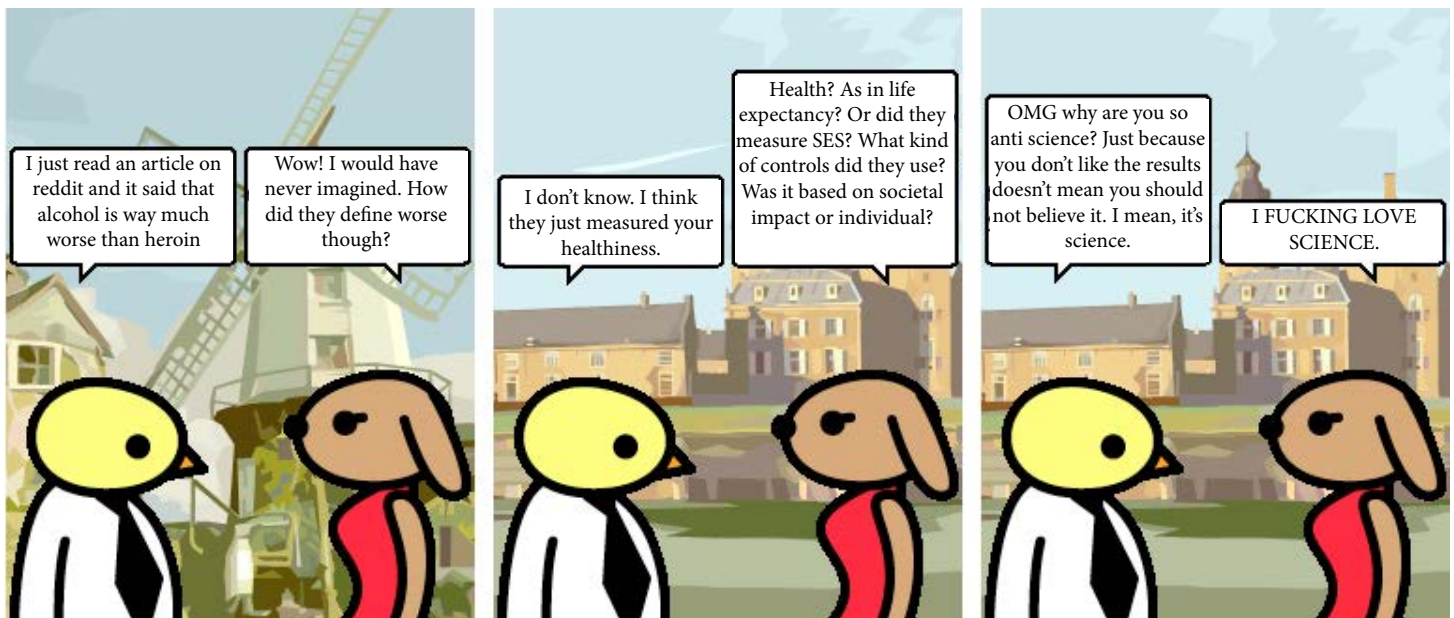
Put lots of Crème fraîche on the dough. Spread lots of onions on that. Then comes your time to shine! Be creative, and put on it what ever you like from the above list. Just be careful with the sun-dried tomatoes; put them in shortly before you take out the Flammkuchen from the oven, otherwise they burn. (been there, done that) Put it in the oven for about 15-20 min. Before serving, put chives on



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**While cooking / while eating / after eating**  
White wine! :D

## COMIC: A CASUAL DISCUSSION



# Words inCognito: cryptic crossword

A cryptic crossword is somewhat like a normal crossword puzzle, except all clues are riddles in themselves. An example of a typical cryptic crossword clue is "Disguised as a newsletter," which would be 'in cognito', the title of this newsletter and a synonym for 'disguised'. Good luck on this MBCS-themed brain teaser!

The winner of last month's newsletter is... Steven Miletic! Congratulations! You've won the awesome prize of a free improv workshop and a free ticket for a Saturday night show at Boom Chicago! You'll be contacted about receiving your prize as soon as possible.

Inspired by this achievement? This month you can again send in your own solution of the puzzle to [newsletter.cognito@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.cognito@gmail.com). This will give you the chance of winning this month's amazing prize.

Has the review of *Generic* sparked your interest and do you want to learn all about history of the pharmaceutical industry? Then you're in luck because this month you'll have a chance at winning a copy of *Generic - The unbranding of modern medicine*

## Across

- 2 A ghost is hurting me! (7,4)  
 5 I'm going to take another look at that overview paper (6)  
 7 Built a wall around himself to keep his family from invading his thought (5,5,7)  
 9 These cells would feel at home in Egypt (9,7)  
 11 Neuroscientists blame psychologists for surfing here (5,4)  
 12 Testing make-up indicates self-awareness (5,4)  
 13 Had a seizure during a baseball game (6)  
 15 The programming language that was used to create LinkedIn and Facebook (7,4)  
 17 The mathematics are just a tryout (11,4)  
 18 Does this rock band play lullabies?! (3)  
 20 Hesitant about joining (2,2,2)  
 21 You're instructed to eat your pancakes with Dutch syrup (6,4)  
 22 The pet of one of those people that makes pictures all day long (6,5)

## Down

- 1 Popular activity for corpus callosotomy patients (5,7,5)  
 3 Your fellow students are your professional connections automatically (7,7)  
 4 He absolutely nails performing science (7,7)  
 6 Scattering a wine bottle to pieces (7,5)  
 8 Only being thrifty as long as the sun's up (3,5,6,4)  
 10 You light-headed fool! (7,5)  
 14 Publishing in journals is part of my character (6)  
 16 Ceasing to live at the same day as being born? (4,7)  
 19 This time of year makes me jump! (6)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

**Across:** 2. Premotor, 4. N-back, 6. P-value, 8. Chandelier cells, 9. Brain reading, 11. PET scan, 13. Battle of IWO, 17. Mind, 18. Oscars, 21. Unconditioned stimulus, 22. Electives

**Down:** 1. Artificial intelligence, 3. Machine learning, 5. Brain areas, 7. Viral injections, 10. Bachelor, 12. Post, 14. Leap year, 15. Cupid, 16. Plaque, 19. Vision, 20. Life

