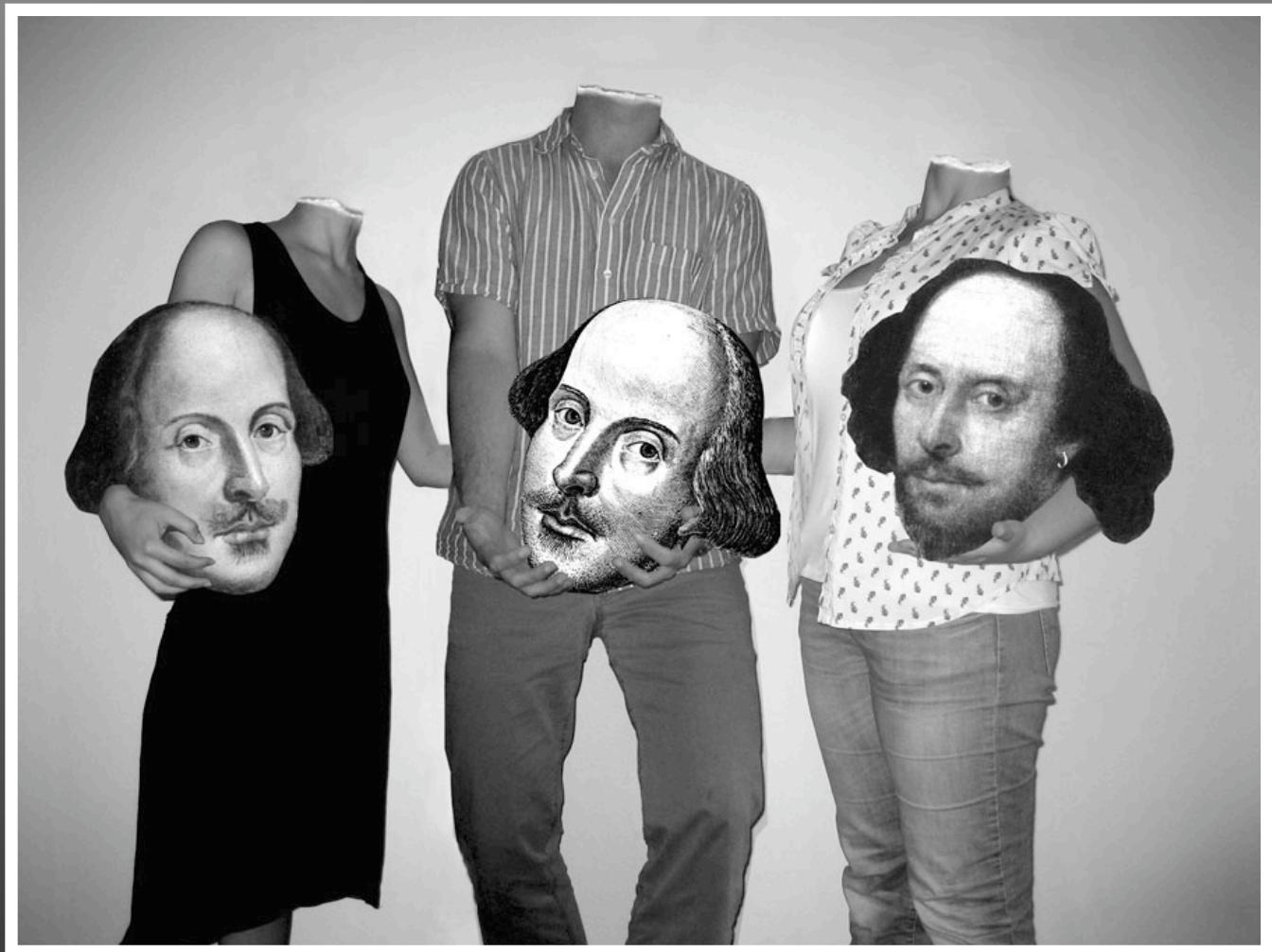


AUTUMN

2009

# NOTED

NEWSLETTER OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT



**"NOTED has lost its figure heads"**

**Editorial 3-8 Features 9-14 Theatre 15-34 Film 35-42  
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# Editorial



Welcome to the 2009-10 academic year, and the newest edition of NOTED. I hope your summers were filled with satisfying pursuits, academic and otherwise. This issue marks the turnover of the newsletter, as its figureheads Emma Depledge, Ioana Balgradean, and Michael Röösli hang up their (editorial) pens, and bequeath the publication unto Arnaud Barras, an MA student in the English Department, and me. We look forward to constructing and editing the next few issues, and gladly welcome your contributions, whether they be poetry, creative writing, book, film or theatre reviews;

and if you have any lexicographic interests, we would also relish articles about words, idioms, grammar, and the English language at large.

Without further ado, please enjoy this very thespian issue of NOTED. Highlights include an overview of Emma Depledge and Professor Erne's Shakespeare study trip to London and Stratford-upon-Avon, along with student reviews of the Shakespeare plays, Karen Klein's description of a selection of *Hamlets*, and an interview with a member of Cinecursus. Read on!

Susanna Gebhardt



# Department News

**Deborah Madsen** will still be on leave for the autumn semester 2009.

**Michael Röösli** has left the English Department. Michael was an invaluable member of the Department, contributing to its many activities and generally running the show from behind the scenes. His roles included NOTED editor, webmaster and director of the Film Club, not to mention his inspirational role as an instructor in contemporary literature. His fellow NOTED editors wish him a fond farewell.

**Sarah Van der Laan** has left the English Department to take up the position of Assistant Professor in Comparative Literature at Indiana University, Bloomington.

**Erika Scheidegger** has left the English Department. NOTED would like to wish Erika all the very best for the future.

**Julianna Bark** has joined the Department as an assistant in early modern literature. Julianna holds a licence ès lettres from the University of Geneva and an MA and PhD in Art History from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. NOTED would like

to congratulate Julianna on the completion of her PhD thesis, which explored the Genevan career of the 18th-century pastellist, Jean-Etienne Liotard. Julianna will now be writing a PhD on an aspect of the relationship between the visual arts and early modern literature.

**Sarah Brazil** has joined the English Department as an assistant in Medieval English Language and Literature. Sarah holds a BA in English and Classics and an MA in Medieval English Literature from University College Dublin.

**Johanna Harris** has joined the Department as a maître assistante on a research project directed by Professor Lukas Erne, Shakespeare and the Book Trade. Johanna gained her BA (Hons) in English Literature and Ancient History from the University of Sydney, and her MSt and DPhil in English Literature from the University of Oxford. Her doctorate examined the letters of Lady Brillian Harley and the epistolary genre in early modern England.

Former Writing Lab monitor **Kimberly Gaydon** has taken up a position as assistant in American literature. Kimberly holds a BA in Modern



Literature from the University of California at Santa Cruz, as well as a BA in French and English and an MA in English from the University of Geneva. She wrote her MA thesis on enfreakment in the American fairytale, *The Wizard of Oz*, and some of its modern reinterpretations. Her PhD thesis will focus on allegories of race, gender, and sexuality and the debates that surround them in contemporary fantasy literature and film.

NOTED would like to welcome the Department's two new Writing Lab monitors, PhD student, **Susanna Gebhardt**, and MA student, **Arnaud Barras**.

### Student Activities

NOTED has lost its figureheads. **Emma Depledge**, **Michael Röösli** and **Ioana Balgrudean** are stepping down as editors of the English Department newsletter. As of this issue, **Susanna Gebhardt** and **Arnaud Barras** are taking over as editors.

The English Department's theatre group, **Barbe-à-Papa**, performed their latest piece, An Ideal Party, on April 4 and 5, 2009.

**Anna Iatsenko** and BA student **Lilia Aghzafi** have taken over the running of the **Film Club**.

**Commission mixte:** The Commission mixte is a body of students, assistants and professors, who meet once a semester or, if necessary, more often to exchange views on Department issues and ways of addressing them. The discussions cover topics such as: the Plan d'études; examinations; teaching; other practical matters. The members of the Commission are: Lukas Erne (president), on behalf of the corps professoral, Valerie Fehlbaum and Erzsi Kukorelly (secretary), on behalf of the corps intermédiaire, and Lilia Aghzafi and Arnaud Barras on behalf of the student body. If you are interested in joining the Commission mixte, please attend the Annual General Meeting of the English Department early in the spring term.

### CUSO Doctoral programme in English Language and Literature

A **doctoral workshop on Theory**, entitled "Genealogies of Modern Literary Theory" took place at the Nietzsche Haus, Sils-Maria (Engadine) from 31 August - 3 September, 2009.

A special module, entitled 'Literature and the Environment' will be hosted by the University of Geneva from 16-18 October, 2009. The chief organiser is Dr Martin Leer.



## Scholarships for Students

### Bourses de mobilité de la Fondation Ernest Boninchi

This support programme addresses students of Swiss nationality who cannot finance their research project on their own, and who have either successfully finished at least two years' study or are doctoral students at the University of Geneva. Students who receive this mobility grant need to stay enrolled at the University of Geneva and return to finish their studies. Students from all Faculties are eligible. See the Department website for further details.

### Bourse Thomas Harvey

The Thomas Harvey scholarship provides up to Sfr. 2,000 every year for a student to travel to an English-speaking country for purposes of study and research. Applicants must be of Swiss nationality and have completed at least two semesters of study at the University of

Geneva. Doctoral students are also eligible. Applications (in the form of a letter describing the project and estimating anticipated expenses) should be submitted to the director of the English Department by December 30, 2009.

## Other news

### Plan d'études change

The Conseil de Faculté has approved a new 90-credit MA, i.e. five modules instead of six, with a mémoire worth 30 credits instead of 48: this will avoid an overlap for students wishing to take the MAS (teacher-training MA), since they will be able to complete their MA within one and a half years.

**The Semaine portes ouvertes pour les collégiens** will take place from November 26 to December 8, 2009. All 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>-year students from all the Collèges de Genève (approximately 7,000 students) will be required to attend this information week at various Faculties. There will be 1,600 students visiting the Faculté des lettres in conjunction with the Faculté de médecine, i.e. students will spend either mornings or afternoons in the Medical Faculty, alternating with our Faculty.

## Studying abroad

### Language Assistant Programme (LAP) in the United Kingdom

Students of French mother-tongue from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, aged between 21 and 30, who are already graduate students or have studied at the University of Geneva for at least four semesters (two academic years) by the time they go abroad, can benefit from a sponsored



programme to teach French in the United Kingdom. Requirements are a good general education, a certain amount of proficiency in French and English and the ability to work with young people. More detailed information and electronic versions of the application forms are available via the Department website, or directly from Ms Renata Leimer: [leimer.renata@wbz-cps.ch](mailto:leimer.renata@wbz-cps.ch).

There are also 20 assistant posts available for German mother-tongue students. The conditions and the deadline are the same as indicated above. Interested candidates should consult the Department website, or contact Eric Haerbeli, acting coordinator of the LAP programme in the English Department.

### **The ERASMUS Programme**

All students interested in ERASMUS study in the UK or Ireland in 2009-10 should send an e-mail to Professor Eric Haerbeli: [Eric.Haeberli@unige.ch](mailto:Eric.Haeberli@unige.ch) by the end of the autumn semester 2009.

These should normally be BA students intending to spend all or part of their third year of study abroad. A number of ERASMUS places may be made available to English Department students through ETI exchanges. The number of places and the universities where these places are available are made known in the spring of each year. ERASMUS places in the UK will be assigned competitively, based on students' average grade in English

For more information, please consult the webpage of the ERASMUS programme of International Relations <http://www.unige.ch/intl/erasmus/>, especially the section for students of the University of Geneva considering a stay abroad: <http://www.unige.ch/intl/erasmus/OUTpourquoiframe.html>.

For a more personal account of ERASMUS stays, please consult the four student reports which are currently available via the Department website.

## **Note from the Director**

As Director of the English Department, it is my pleasure, at the beginning of this academic year, to welcome all new students, and to welcome back everyone else. I will seize the opportunity of this 'Note' to introduce

you to our department. The English Department has

- over 260 students, more than 200 at the BA, 40 at the MA, and almost 20 at the PhD level, which makes us the third largest discipline



in the Faculty after History and French,

- almost thirty teachers, five professors, two maîtres d'enseignement et de recherche, four chargés d'enseignement, two chargées d'enseignement suppléantes, two maître assistantes, two maître assistantes suppléantes, ten assistants, and two monitors,
- seminars and lecture courses on a vast range of subjects, from Old English to contemporary, from linguistics to literature, from English and Irish to Australian and Caribbean literature, from canonical works so powerful that they will stay with you for the rest of your lives, to non-canonical works which will open up new worlds for you,
- an active research community – in the present decade, the teachers in the English Department have published more than twenty books and well over two hundred articles, the fruits of research which enhance the reputation of our department abroad, and add to the quality of our teaching,
- a library, headed by an expert librarian and her devoted staff, with almost 30,000 volumes (which does not include the vast holdings of the Bibliothèque de Genève to

which we also have easy access), a well-oiled interlibrary loan system, and terrific digital resources, with vast corpuses of primary texts, lots of reference works, countless electronic journals, and so on,

- two very helpful secretaries, whom you will find on the second floor of the Comédie building, Boulevard des Philosophes 12,
- the best website of the Faculty – you are urged to visit it often: [www.unige.ch/lettres/angle](http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle),
- an active Commission mixte (consisting of students and teachers) which meets twice or three times per year to discuss important matters relating to the department – members are elected at the Annual General Meeting early in the spring semester,
- the most dynamic student body in the Faculty, as witnessed by our newsletter (NOTED), theatre group (Barbe à Papa), film club, and student association (ADEA).

This is your department. I hope you will grow in it, contribute towards it, and thrive in it.

Lukas Erne



# Features



## Doctoral programme in English Language and Literature

The doctoral programme in English Language and Literature, sponsored by the Conférence Universitaire de la Suisse Occidentale (CUSO), officially began its activities in teaching, research, and scholarship in 2009. This programme brings together the talents and resources of faculty and doctoral students from the CUSO universities of Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, and Neuchâtel, as well as the associated universities of Basel and Bern. The purpose of the programme is to provide the best possible environment for doctoral study by creating an active, collaborative, and lasting research community in English studies.

The most visible form of this collaboration will be an annual series of seminars or workshops designed to appeal to a wide range of intellectual interests, while also demonstrating how research is conducted at the highest level. The faculty of the programme will also offer practical advice to doctoral students on the organisation, composition, and eventual publication of their theses. The aim of the programme is to prepare doctoral students for professional life, whether in academia or elsewhere, through research.

David Spurr



Emma Depledge reports on the module entitled 'History: Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and the Question of Periodization'.

The doctoral workshop on 'History: Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and the Question of Periodization', which took place at the University of Basel from 17-18 April 2009, provided a wonderful opportunity to mix with fellow graduate students, whilst enjoying stimulating and thought-provoking discussions.

The two-day workshop began with informal introductions, with each participant identifying the period in which their research lies: 'early modern', 'Jacobean', 'Elizabethan', 'Medieval', 'Renaissance', 'Restoration', and so on. Having confidently catalogued our research, we were then asked to question the labels we had used, along with all that we thought we knew about periodization. Where did these labels come from? Who coined them, and why? When do these periods start and end? Why use labels which describe a monarch's reign? The room was brimming with thoughts and ideas as the workshop leaders, Professor Gordon McMullan (King's College London) and Dr David Matthews (Manchester), guided students of two, now apparently not-so-distinct,

disciplines on an exciting journey of discovery.

The second stage of the workshop involved students introducing their thesis topic and argument to the other participants, without the aid of notes or prompts. Those still in the process of defining their thesis topic, who thought they would have very little to say, received a noticeable confidence boost as they realized how much material they did have and how interested their audience was in what they had to say. The more advanced students were treated to a mini-viva, and a chance to see their topic through the eyes of others, receiving new ideas and new ways of looking at issues which they had started to take for granted. I know that I am not the only one who left the room feeling revitalized and extremely grateful for suggestions which would help me to write a better thesis.

As advertised, the workshop enabled us to consider both 'Medieval' and 'early modern' texts in the context of periodization, and I was delighted to get the chance to both study a text which was new to me, *Mandeville's Travels*, and approach familiar and much loved texts, such as Shakespeare's *King Lear* and the Anonymous play, *King Leir*, from a new angle. The sense of isolation which comes with writing a PhD seemed a million miles away as we were unified



by our passion for these wonderful texts, with Mandeville experts infecting new-comers with their enthusiasm, and the *King Lear* club helping to guide virgins through the confusing world of Quarto and Folio variants.

The event was rounded off by fascinating key-note lectures from David Matthews and Gordon McMullan, prompting yet more enthusiastic discussion of the issues raised during the workshop. That the event was so pleasurable is surely down to the

excellent choice of workshop leaders, who proved to be both outstanding scholars and inspirational instructors, and the beautiful setting and warm hospitality of the University of Basel. All in all, I found this to be a very rewarding experience, which helped to enrich my doctoral work while allowing me to network and bond with fellow doctoral students over a glass of wine or two.

Emma Depledge

## Venice Through the Looking Glass

By Susan Heller

Tethered to mainland Italy by the five-kilometer-long Liberty Bridge on one side and abutting the Grand Canal on the other, Venice's cul-de-sac Santa Lucia train station gives new meaning to the phrase "at the end of the line." And for the seven of us who spent Spring Semester 2009 attending Professor Spurr's course, "L'idée de Venise dans la Littérature Moderne," and signed up for the optional study trip he proposed to the near-mythical city itself, the end of the line was a very welcome "prochain arrêt" indeed. Narrow walls hug each street so snugly that one is compelled to look up at pastel-colored sheets that hang on lines that droop from one window to another; at bright pink and purple geraniums in



windowsills; at halfway-peeled-off posters and advertisements that have been pasted on walls. Street signs are erratically posted, and a narrow alley may deposit you in St. Mark's Square or, just as likely, a watery dead-end street. As we disembarked from the train, stumbled down the station's front steps, and saw the panorama of the Grand Canal unfold before us, the transformation from the landscape of Italy to the waterscape of Venice was so drastic that it felt like stepping through the wardrobe into Narnia, or falling into Alice's Wonderland.

In an effort to describe Venice, it seems that similes and metaphors are the closest one can get to capturing the essence of a city that is so different from any other place that it almost feels beyond language. And perhaps the otherworldly nature that permeates Venice is the very thing that has drawn writers, such as the ones we read—from Casanova, Proust, and Mann to Byron, Ruskin, and James—to try, time and time again, to “eff the ineffable” Bride of the Sea.

After obtaining our multi-day Vaporetto and Museum passes outside of the train station, we schlepped our suitcases along the cobbled streets that blanket Venice's land portions, and, after a few minutes, turned down an alley the width of a hallway and located our charming base: Hotel

Caprera. After checking in and dropping off our luggage, we zigzagged our way by vaporetto and by foot to a quiet café that Professor Spurr recommended that was located around the bend from the Rialto Bridge. As daylight waned, we sipped Spritz Aperol—a local Venetian aperitif made with Prosecco, Aperol Orange liqueur, and soda water—while watching boat traffic shuttle by along the Grand Canal. Not a bad first day in Venice. Not a bad first day at all.

On day two, Ascension Day, we visited the Ducal Palace, Basilica San Marco, and Harry's Bar, an understated, elegant bar credited with inventing the Bellini (a cocktail made with Prosecco and peach purée) and once frequented by the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Charlie Chaplin, Truman



Capote, and Peggy Guggenheim; and now, thanks to Professor Spurr's kind offer to treat us to a round of Bellinis,



by us. As we sipped our Bellinis and admired the bar's simple decor, Professor Spurr pointed out a plaque on the wall that stated, in Italian, that the table next to us was reserved for locals. But the plaque hardly needed to be there, as the boisterous nature of the men sitting at the coveted table was evidence enough that they were Venetians through and through.



Somehow, even amidst the city's kitschy tourism industry (replica black-and-white gondolier shirts; small animals fashioned out of Venetian glass; lots and lots of masks) and numerous tourists who filter into its every nook, cranny, and canal, Venice seems to have maintained its sense of self. It is almost as if Venetians have accepted, even embraced, the fact that tourists are an essential part of their city without feeling that they detract from what it means to be Venetian. And so I, too, took picture after picture of quiet canals and hanging flowers, of

gondoliers and Venetian masks, of palaces and prisons, without feeling the usual sense of guilt that comes with walking around an unfamiliar city with camera and map in hand.

On Friday, day three of our five-day sojourn, we spent the morning touring the Gallerie dell'Accademia, and then went hunting for the one-time residence of poet Ezra Pound. The afternoon was reserved for independent sightseeing, and while I spent most of my afternoon drinking coffee and eating gelato near a large public park on the edge of town, others had more adventurous afternoons, such as the two students who were whisked around the canals of Venice by a Venetian man with a motorboat, a head full of interesting but far-fetched stories, and a patent disregard for signs marked, "This Canal is Reserved Exclusively for Gondolas."

On Saturday, we visited the Ca'Pesaro, Venice's modern-art museum; Il Redentore and San Gorgio Maggiore churches; a beach on the island of Lido; and the Hotel des Bains, the once-luxurious hotel featured in Thomas Mann's novel *Death in Venice*. It's funny how time and history can play tricks on one's perception of things, as we learned when visiting the Hotel des Bains in search of famed green-and-white-striped beach huts that Mann so frequently mentioned in *Death in*





Venice. The green-and-white huts at the Hotel des Bains had long since been replaced by more modern-looking ones, but when we visited a public beach on the other end of the island, we found our green-and-white-striped huts exactly how we had pictured them, albeit in a setting 30 kilometers away from the one we had imagined.

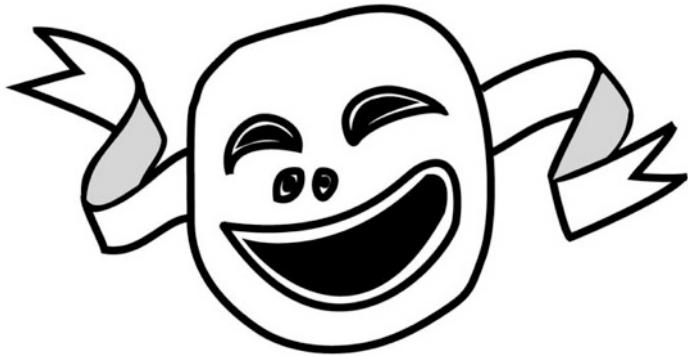
Sunday marked both our last day in Venice as well as "La Festa della Sensa," a festival celebrating Venice's symbolic relationship with the sea. The festival's roots sprout from an episode that occurred on Ascension Day in 1177 when Doge Ziani served as mediator between Pope Alexander II and Empereor Frederick Barbarossa,

thereby maintaining peace and prompting the Pope to bestow many privileges upon the city of Venice. The Doge was even believed to have thrown a gold ring into the sea in an effort to demonstrate both Venice's "marriage" to the sea and its dominion in the gulf. While we did not witness the annual ring-throwing ceremony, we did see bits of the water procession and one of the many gondola regattas that took place throughout the day. With our shoes full of sand and our cameras full of pictures, we boarded our train back to Geneva.

Two weeks later, I was still finding sand in my shoes and between my toes, each grain a reminder of a city whose spirit seems to stick with you long after you leave its boundaries.



# Theatre



## Theatre Schedule

Compiled by Michael Roosli

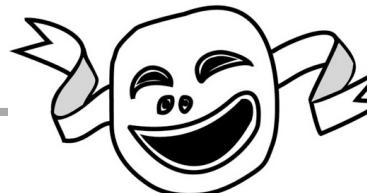
08.09.2009	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i> by Elizabeth Fuller	GEDS
18.09.2009	<b>Eternity in an Hour</b> (original work)	Howard Productions
22.09.2009	<i>Return of the Prodigal</i> by St. John Hankin	GEDS
06.10.2009	<i>Quartet</i> by Ronald Harwood	GEDS
20.10.2009	GEDS Newcomer Evening: <i>Stiletto</i> by Peter Hartley <i>Sophie</i> by Marjorie Dickenson	GEDS
03.11.2009	<i>Ivona, Princess of Burgundia</i> by Witold Gombrowicz	GEDS
10.11.-14.11.2009	<b>It Runs in the Family</b> by Ray Cooney	GEDS
24.11.2009	<i>Rabbit Hole</i> by David Lindsay-Abaire	GEDS
08.12.2009	<i>Snake in the Grass</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	GEDS
05.01.2010	<i>84 Charing Cross Road</i> by Helene Hanff	GEDS
19.01.2010	<i>No Exit</i> by Jean-Paul Sartre	GEDS
02.02.2010	<i>The Lieutenant of Inishmore</i> by Martin McDonagh	GEDS

Playreadings are printed in regular typeface, **full productions** are printed in **bold**. Please check the respective websites for information about venues, dates, and times:

The Geneva English Drama Society (GEDS): [www.geds.ch](http://www.geds.ch)

Howard Productions: [www.howardprod.ch](http://www.howardprod.ch)

The Geneva Amateur Operatic Society (GAOS): [www.gaos.ch](http://www.gaos.ch)



# Three and a half Hamlets

By Karen Klein

Three: that's the number of times I've already reviewed *Hamlet* for *Noted*. Here come three and a half more but, due to a lack of space, only a glimpse at each will be possible.

The first *Hamlet* was a production at the Staatstheater Mainz (November 2008, directed by Barbara-David Brüesch). The set was a NATO or UN conference room, with a semicircle of desks, blue carpet, microphones, laptops, telephones and numerous hidden and not-so-hidden cameras. Letters were e-mails, the crowing of the cock the ringing of a telephone.



*A plastic ghost Hamlet's techno rave*

If anyone was spying on someone else, they appeared in the interpreter cabinets, half a floor up, behind window panes. The visible cameras were operated by the actors, the videos being projected onto TV monitors facing the audience. Reynaldo and Polonius, for example, communicated via video-conference. Claudius was a politician, fond of smiling and waving; he controlled his applause via remote control. Part of the audience sat onstage, with actors (e. g. the mad Ophelia) running through the rows of seats from time to time. There was not one ghost, but several, whose eerie appearances were due to the plastic and canvas covers that constituted their costumes. Hamlet was very young, thin and wore Ophelia's costume in his madness – no hat upon his head, but instead dirty stockings (Ophelia's



*The fencing match*

tights). This accentuated his already feminine appearance. Hamlet's headdress was only topped by those of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who sported constructions made of coat hangers and foxtails on their heads.

Horatio was omnipresent, to the point of nudging Hamlet into his most famous soliloquy – Horatio was the first to pronounce "To be or not to be" in this production. Throughout, he seemed to portray something like Hamlet's alter ego. In a discussion after the production, the actor playing Hamlet mused: "I wondered whether it was really necessary that Horatio did a series of gymnastics, push-ups and yoga positions throughout my monologues – apparently it was."

Ophelia drowned herself in a water dispenser (one of those that are frequently found in large offices), a scene that was rather distressing, also because the ever-present Horatio assisted her in the process.

There were a lot of young people in the audience. They seemed to appreciate the production, especially the moment when Hamlet was jumping up and down with a microphone in his hand, shouting over rampant techno beats.

That was a glimpse at the first *Hamlet*. One down, two and a half to

go. To explain the half *Hamlet*: at the "neues theater" Halle, we arrived late and since the spectators entered the auditorium over the stage we had to wait for the interval. That's half a *Hamlet*. The second time (when we saw the entire production, January 2009, directed by Christoph Werner) it was, above all, still refreshingly brief, just under two hours, including the intermission. One of the main attractions of this production was the set (mainly huge wall hangings) designed by famous local artist Moritz Götze, as were the costumes. My favourite piece of costume was Hamlet's hoodie, on which sprawled "Universität Halle Wittenberg" in big letters, à la Americaine. The universities of Halle and Wittenberg are indeed joined nowadays. A nice *clin d'oeil* for the audience in Halle. In contrast to the production in Mainz, Horatio was entirely cut. Instead, the ghost kept appearing, and Hamlet's conversations with Horatio turned into rhetorical questions addressed to his dead father's spirit. When the plot really required it, some other character took on a bit of Horatio's text.



*Hamlet* wearing "Universität Halle Wittenberg" merchandise



The production started as follows: the ghost crossed the stage once, slowly, then Hamlet (kneeling under his father's statue) cried: "I can't, I can't do it". I thought, if we now have "To be or not to be" that would make a very condensed version - and so it happened. (Incidentally, just that beginning would also have made a nice summary of the whole play.)

All three productions were in German. Halle's version presented a radically modern text. Interestingly, Hamlet's advice to the players was turned on its head. He urged them to make grimaces and to gesticulate as wildly as possible.



Polonius, Ophelia, Hamlet and Claudius, backdrop by Moritz Götze

An interesting detail: the "remembrances" Ophelia returned to Hamlet were kept in a white plastic bag.

I like a stage that is littered with leftovers at the end of the play (and, possibly, with bodies, in *Hamlet*). This was certainly the case here. Petals from a rose that the Queen had smashed against her former husband's monument, bits of equipment from the fencing (carried out with modern electronic equipment that went "beep" for each hit), torn-up papers, and, of course, bodies. So much for the one-and-a-half *Hamlets*.

Quickly moving on to the third, at the Schaubühne in Berlin, directed by Thomas Ostermeier (March 2009). Those who are familiar with this director's work would expect to see mud and blood and he made no exception for *Hamlet*. However, what took some getting used to for me, was regarded as a softer version of "the usual" by most critics. The whole stage was covered with earth. The play started with old Hamlet's funeral. While one actor sprayed the whole scene with rain showers from a garden hose, and Claudius and Gertrude stood by under an umbrella, an extremely clumsy young gravedigger tried to drag the coffin into the grave, constantly slipping in the mud, falling into the grave, getting the coffin in upside down, until he finally succeeded. One of the first things Hamlet did was to fall headlong into the freshly made mound of earth

on his father's grave. Later, he got up close and personal with Ophelia on the same spot.



*Mud, blood, and a fat Hamlet.*

The cast was made up of only six actors; one actress doubled as Ophelia and Gertrude and the ghost was doubled with Claudius. As in Mainz, cameras played an important role: more precisely, Hamlet's camera, which he used constantly. His live filming was projected onto a half-transparent curtain of metal chains that hung in the middle of the stage. The shots had the effect of a rough kind of film noir, very artistic and impressive. The ghost, for instance, was usually shown on film.

The funeral/wedding banquet was set as a very cheap event, with beer cans and disposable plates, plastic chairs and a paper table cloth. The invited guests did not display particularly good table manners, incessantly gobbling food.

In this production's play-within-a-play, Hamlet took on the role of the Player King. When he appeared half-naked, I realized that he had hitherto worn a bodysuit, making him look much more corpulent than he really was. During the play-within-a-play, both the (actually) fat Horatio and Hamlet wore only tiny underwear, they poured fake blood and water out of Tetrapacks, threw earth at each other – you get the picture. Hamlet also enveloped Horatio in a huge piece of cellophane. This cellophane was later used to depict Ophelia's drowning; it was very moving and a bit scary as she seemed to suffocate against it.



*Rain and mud*





*"To be or not to be"*

Again, the translation was rather free though more stylized than the production in Halle. At times, Polonius talked so fast that you really couldn't understand him. The production could certainly have used an interval: after

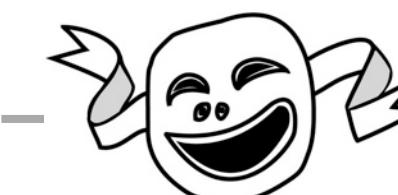
two-and-three-quarter hours, it becomes difficult to focus on an ending that everyone sees coming.

As you might have guessed, *Hamlet* continues to be very popular in Germany. Recently, a German journalist saw five *Hamlets* in five days, all over the country (two of those discussed here also featured in his review). His favourite production was one where the older generation was portrayed by amateur actors from a nursing home, and the younger roles were played by school kids.

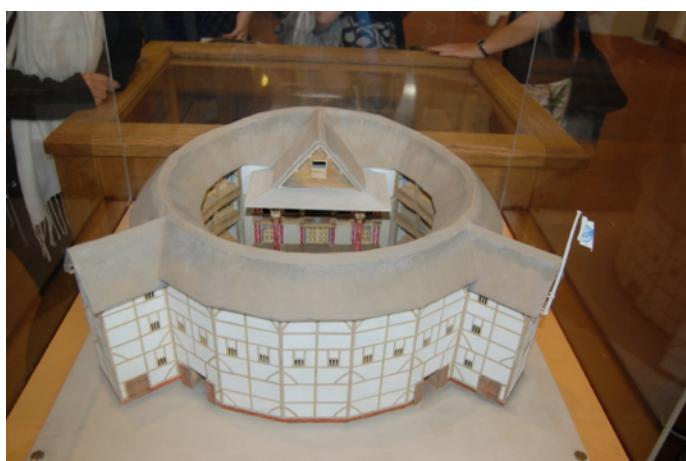
## **'Call it a travel that thou takest for pleasure': The 'Shakespeare and Performance' Study Trip to London and Stratford-upon-Avon, 14th-19th June 2009**

**By Susanna Gebhardt**

After digesting the performative aspects of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Winter's Tale* in the classroom, we arrived in London eager for a week of bardic revelry. Our first stop was the rebuilt Globe theatre, located on the south bank of the River Thames. The old Globe was demolished in 1644, and its rebuilding was initiated by director Sam Wanamaker, completed in 1997. We were



groundlings for the Sunday evening performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. The mediocrity of the production was outweighed by the sheer novelty of the Globe experience: leaning onstage, the actors mulling around before the performance properly began, the absence of the general trappings of a twenty-first-century theatre visit.



We returned to the Globe on Monday morning to discuss the previous evening's performance, before listening to a lecture by a King's College/Globe graduate student on the history of the early modern Globe theatre, and the historical accuracy of the new Globe. As the Globe website notes, it is as 'faithful to the original as modern scholarship and traditional craftsmanship' allow. This was followed by an acting workshop with a Globe actress, who explained the challenges of acting in such a unique space – namely the difficulty of maintaining the audience's attention amidst a myriad of distractions. Indeed, I can attest to the

lure of aimlessly staring at a groundling standing opposite the stage during a lull in action. She regaled us with a few tales, such as the changes to the stage when a distinguished guest visits the theatre (they shift the action so that stage-right, where such guests are often seated, becomes centre-stage, thus accommodating and performing to the most important members of the audience), and one particularly harrowing occasion involving audience members, champagne, disgorging, and a mass mid-performance exodus.

We rehearsed a scene from *Julius Caesar*, using the Renaissance practice of 'cue-acting' and explored space and movement through a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Subsequently, we attended a lecture by a member of the costume department in which we were introduced to the sartorial particulars of early modern England, and how these would have translated, and currently translate, to the stage. The complications of costume changes were demonstrated with the help of one of our lovely BA students, and my favourite fact of the lecture concerned the cape, which was worn slung over the right shoulder to facilitate sword-drawing. Our lecturer had yet to find more than one painting depicting a man with a cape over his left shoulder, which has interesting implications to a culture in which ambidexterity is the



exception rather than the rule. While the rest of the group had had enough 'understand'-ing, Susan Heller and I could not resist the siren-call of the pit, and were groundlings for that evening's showing of *As You Like It*.

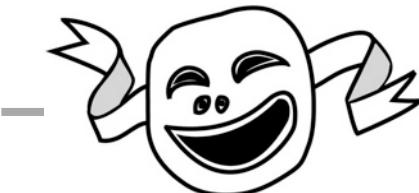


After barely ten hours away from the Globe, we returned for a discussion of the play and an interview with Jack Laskey, the actor playing Orlando. Our time at the Globe concluded with a tour of the museum's exhibition, including a synopsis of the history and original location of the old Globe theatre. Amidst the early modern instruments and costumes was a section on Elizabethan and Jacobean staging of special effects. Onstage hanging, which did not occur in any of Shakespeare's plays, *per se*, but was present in the work of other playwrights, was performed on the Globe stage by attaching a hook to the actor's shirt-collar, as well as a noose around the neck, the hook preventing strangulation. The staging of blood was

explained through the scene in *Titus Andronicus* when Marcus describes how a 'crimson river of warm blood, / Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind, / Doth rise and fall' between Lavinia's lips (TA 2.4.22-4). This effect was achieved by placing a piece of sheep's intestine inside the actor's mouth, which would be bitten on to release a torrent of blood.

We had a brief interlude before reconvening at the Old Vic for *The Winter's Tale*. Directed by Sam Mendes, it was part of a venture known as the Bridge Project, a three-year partnership amongst the Old Vic, Neal Street Productions and Brooklyn Academy of Music. The difference between the Elizabethan Globe and the Georgian Vic was initially striking, and though certain scenes strove to include the audience in the action – namely Hermione's resurrection – I was very aware of my distance from the stage, and my status as isolated spectator.

After the morning discussion, we travelled by bus to Stratford-upon-Avon – which would have been a three-day journey by horse in the most optimal conditions, in Shakespeare's day – where we divided ourselves amongst three bed-and-breakfasts. We toured Nash's House and (the ruins of) New Place. Shakespeare purchased New Place in 1597, where he later died in 1616; after which, the house passed



down to Shakespeare's daughter, and then granddaughter, who died without an heir. Eventually, the house was purchased by Reverent Francis Gastrell, who later destroyed it, after growing weary of the constant influx of visitors paying homage to the Bard. Nash's Place, now a museum dedicated to the memory of Shakespeare, is located aside the ruins of New Place. Interestingly, the disputed Cobbe portrait, proposed as a likeness of Shakespeare in March 2009, was proudly displayed as the newest portrait of the Bard.

The evening saw us at the Courtyard Theatre, which opened in 2006 alongside the River Avon. The Courtyard, currently serving as the Royal Shakespeare Company's main theatre while the Royal Shakespeare Theatre undergoes refurbishment, seemed to lie midway between the Globe and the Old Vic, as an indoor theatre with a thrust stage. After reacclimatizing to the atmospheric openness allowed for by the thrust stage, we settled in to watch *The Winter's Tale* for the second time in twenty-four hours.

Thursday morning began with a discussion of the previous night's performance, and we were later joined by the RSC actors Greg Hicks (Leontes) and Noma Dumezweni (Paulina). The

discussion elucidated certain directorial choices that students had noticed: the bourgeois feel of the props and costumes, the Russian undertones, the importance of the material book, the reduced part of Autolycus (which was a change from the Old Vic's *Tale*, where the character was played by the most famous member of the cast, Ethan Hawke, and the play suffered by retaining nearly all of his very long part, while abridging the others).

We proceeded to Holy Trinity Church, the site of Shakespeare's baptism and burial, and the famous epitaph, warning against the exhumation of his body:

GOOD FREND FOR IESUS SAKE  
FORBEARE,  
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED  
HEARE.  
BLESTE BE Y<sup>E</sup> MAN Y<sup>T</sup> SPARES THES  
STONES,  
AND CVRST BE HE Y<sup>T</sup> MOVES MY  
BONES.

We continued on to Hall's Croft, the home of Shakespeare's daughter Susanna and her husband, the physician Dr. John Hall. It contained fascinating medical paraphernalia, including a first edition of Hall's patient-notes and a frontispiece of Vesalius's 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*. We received an explanation of seventeenth-century medical diagnosis,





performed through analysis of urine, and a brief overview of Hippocratic and Galenic humoural theory, which posited that humans had four humours, and temperaments were dictated by the dominant humour; an excess of blood corresponded to the sanguine, yellow bile to choler, black bile to melancholy, and phlegm to the phlegmatic.

*This trip was amazing! Intense but really enriching. Everyone was very enthusiastic and I had the feeling that it was also the opportunity to discover a different side of London (and Stratford) and to create friendships! This trip gives concreteness to your English literature studies.*

Eléonor de Pesters, BA student

*This study trip surpassed all my expectations: we saw the plays staged, we learnt some acting techniques first-hand and we became an engaged audience of the performances. It was an experience that completely changed my view of Shakespeare's plays.*

Beatrice Montedoro, BA student.

# Review of *The Winter's Tale*

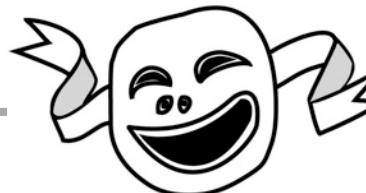
## By Beatrice Montedoro

Presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon, England on June 18, 2009. Directed by David Farr. Assistant Director Helen Leblique. Lighting Designer Jon Clark. Music composed by Keith Clouston. Music Director Bruce O'Neil. Sound by Martin Slavin. Designer Jon Bausor. Choreography by Arthur Pita. Aerial Consultant Lyndall Merry. Director of Puppetry Steve Tiplady. With Greg Hicks (Leontes), Kelly Hunter (Hermione), Noma Dumezweni (Paulina), Darrell D'Silva (Polixenes), John Mackay (Camillo), Philip Edgerley (Cleomenes), Samantha Young (Perdita), Hannah Young (Emilia), James Gale (Antigonus), Tunji Kasim (Florizel), Brian Doherty (Autolycus), Larrington Walker (Old Shepherd), Patrick Romer (Time, Mariner, Servant), and others.

David Farr's *Winter's Tale*, performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, was set in the circular arena of the Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon. I was impressed by this production's experienced ensemble and its scenography, two elements which helped in the creation of meaning. In fact, the actors and the settings conveyed the contrast of the two worlds

and the two "times" of the play, Sicilia and Bohemia, winter and spring. The end of the Sicilian winter was marked by the most spectacular event on stage: a cold wind began to blow, making the two big bookshelves, which had been used as a backdrop in the scenes played at the Sicilian court and which characterized a closed, bookish and static atmosphere, fell down. The destruction and ruin brought by Leontes's mad jealousy was visually represented by the fall of the books.

The progression of the year turning to springtime, as well as the Sicilian princess, Perdita's growing up, was signaled by the entering of Time, a divine-like figure lowered down in a hemisphere. The shift of the two worlds, temporally and spatially, was also highlighted by the timing of the break. It was inserted just after the discovery of Perdita's, and therefore before Time's speech. The parallel of the regeneration of the cycle of life and nature is thus made: Perdita, who had been a "cause" of Sicilia's ruin – metaphorically also represented by the Sicilian winter – in the end becomes the "inspiration" for life and regeneration in her native land, bringing back springtime in Leontes's gloomy reign.



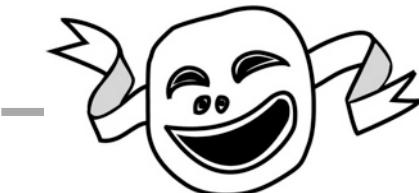
Perdita's almost divine nature is shown by her costume, made of a simple gown recalling those of antique statues, or even those of fairies. Moreover, she is barefoot and has her hair down, which was an unacceptable state for a woman who wanted to show herself in public. She first appears on a tree that is lowered from the top of the off stage: this dynamic change of setting gives a hint of the different aspects of the Bohemian world, more energetic and in closer contact with the power of nature than Sicilia, but it also gives the idea of a "superior" world. It is not insignificant that Florizel calls her Flora in their lovers' conversations.

The different settings not only distinguish Sicilia from Bohemia, but also show certain continuity and paced flow (also due to the fast changes on stage). The repeated use of the centre of the stage for the most significant events of the play conveys a sense of unity. It is in the centre of the stage that Farr decided to place a Christmas banquet, where Leontes's jealousy starts; that the chandelier falls, leaving a large indentation; it is in this centre-stage indentation that Antigonus places baby Perdita, and it is again in the centre that the biggest tree, on which Perdita and then Florizel exchange their promises of love, stands. The production's recurrent symbols (leitmotif), for example the books and

in general the theme of art as a counterfeit of nature, also add to this sense of continuity.

Farr decided to represent Leontes's jealousy as senseless, this being the production's interpretation of the play. The first scene is a public one, a Christmas banquet set in an atmosphere reminiscent of the nineteenth-century Russian court because of the actors' costumes and the cold ambience. It is a public moment, so everybody is quite "rigid", following court protocol, all except Hermione and Polixenes, who seem to act in a more familiar manner. This cannot be really perceived by a contemporary audience, so Leontes's line "too hot, too hot" seems to come from nowhere and for no reason at all. The king's jealousy is shown as pure madness and the public is not encouraged to sympathize with him. Rather, they are prompted to see him as the sole cause of his own ruin and pain.

Lighting was used to dramatize the jealousy scene, putting the protagonists, Leontes on one side and his wife and friend on the other, under two red spotlights. Fundamental for the representation of such a character was the performance of Greg Hicks, who consciously showed the restless temperament of the Sicilian king, a man that tries to personify the dignity due to a humanist court's king, but that is

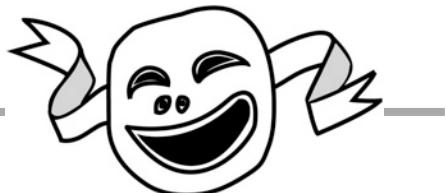


trapped by his own mind. Leontes's restlessness becomes even stronger during his penitence, when he realizes what he has done; he is unable to find peace in his spirit, and even his earthly powers are not capable of reversing his mad acts. When the strength of the king reels, it is the spiritual power of Paulina, the female counterpart of Leontes, which intervenes. The intimacy between the rotten king and the powerful Paulina, played by an energetic Numa Dumezweni, who took up her first major role during this RSC season, played an extremely important role in the play. It underlined the strange social relationship between the weak king and the strong woman who becomes Leontes's counselor, or even the spiritual guide in his redemption. She is overwhelming, actually molding the king into the shape she wants: Dumezweni acted using a strong tone of voice and was physically imposing, for instance standing upright in front of a kneeling king.

The contrast between the ruined Sicilian court and joyful of Bohemia was also reflected in the costumes: the Sicilian courtiers wore black mourning suits covered in dust, whereas the Bohemians wore colorful, countryside costumes associated with festivals and celebrations. The two worlds also showed two different social classes: royal soldiers and courtiers versus

shepherds and peasants. The costumes were also distinctive in this case and caused several allusions: on one side, one sees a darker and more rigid world, closed in a rich interior, while on the other side, one finds an open world in direct contact with nature, one that is colourful and free. The Sicilian court, by contrast, seems to be in contact with nature only through the world of art.

It is also interesting to look at how the director decided to stage the final scene, the statue scene. The statue of Hermione, acted by an ethereal Kelly Hunter, faces the public, thus permitting the audience to share this "sensitive" experience with the characters of the play, who are also staring at the statue. In this way, characters and audience members are unified as one sole group of spectators, all looking at the statue of Hermione. Paulina is the "director" of this final scene, a moment of reconciliation which Leontes's penitence was aiming towards. The mysticism and magic tone of the text at this point - Paulina invokes the faith of her audience in order to reanimate Hermione's statue - is reduced because we actually see Hermione's face and we know that she is not really a marble statue. Hermione was not presented in disguise; the statue was represented in a natural way. Paulina's speech in fact generated laughter among the audience, as a result of the dramatic



irony created through their possession of superior knowledge. The pace was faster at the beginning of the play and slowed down towards the end: each gesture was underlined and therefore acquired a ritual importance in the final climatic scene where the queen is reborn.

Autolycus (Brian Doherty), the irreverent thief of Bohemia, does not play an instrument as is usually the case; his voice is accompanied by country music, played by other members of the country world. This meta-theatrical aspect was added in as an amusement by the RSC production. The director also decided to use

Autolycus in order to end his *Winter's Tale*: after the happy ending of the statue scene, everybody exits through a backdrop door. Autolycus would like to join the jolly company but unfortunately he is shut out, alone. The snow starts to fall again; winter seems to have returned. This melancholic ending, which reflects David Farr preference for ending on a sad note, is rather ambiguous, perhaps suggesting that the repentance and reconciliation which we have seen is merely an illusion, or a temporary state, with the winter snow reminding us that life is a circle of repetitive events.

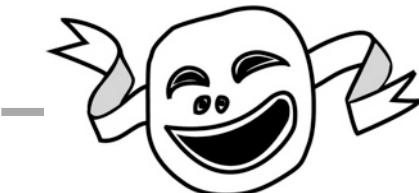
## Review of *Romeo and Juliet*. The Globe, London. 14 June 2009.

By Yassin Megzari

Dominic Dromgoole's production of *Romeo and Juliet* opens with a trio of actors, including Jack Farthing – who portrays a vibrant Benvolio – singing for the audience. Music is an element that will remain throughout the production, and the trio, with a clever touch of humor, remind the audience that the performance is about to begin and that their mobile phones should be switched off, or else "surely [they] shall

die." It was a very ingenious way of preparing the audience for the play's first scene, since the Globe offers nothing in the way of special lighting or curtains, and it set the tone for the overall way the play was to be dramatized.

Humor played an important role throughout, and this production focused more on the amorous, jovial side of the



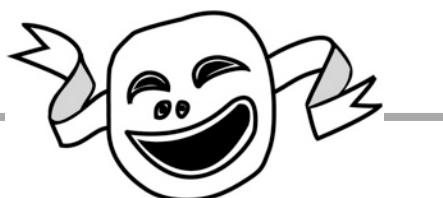
play, a task made easier thanks to the Globe's particular acting space. Seeing the reaction of other audience members helps to create a feeling of unity between them and, in this way, laughter becomes contagious. Even the seriousness of a scene like the apothecary's was downplayed, as the apothecary very suddenly appeared through a trap-door not far from the audience, with the surprise effect creating a wave of nervous laughter. Also, the actors readily played along with the audience's mood, and actor Fergal McElherron, who was double cast as the Capulets' servant Peter and Balthazaar, did a splendid job with his comical portrayal of illiterate Peter.

Furthermore, the actors freely used the space reserved for the "groundlings," unafraid of mingling with them as they entered a scene. For instance, before attending the Capulets' party, Romeo and his friends pushed their way through the crowd saying "Excuse me, lost our way," or Friar Lawrence would give a kind "Bless you my child" to surrounding audience members before he walked on stage. Amongst other things, this helped create a pleasant atmosphere for the audience members standing, a nice touch considering how painful the standing can become during a three hour performance.

Another way in which the play's more jovial aspects were put forward was that the text was left almost entirely unchanged, and the musicians' scene, which takes place after the discovery of Juliet's death, was not cut from the production. This was a good idea as it helped lighten the mood of the play, which had become increasingly melancholic at that point, and prepared the audience for the play's final, dramatic scenes.

However, the play's joyful mood also tended to lessen the emotional impact of certain key scenes, which was one of the production's shortcomings. Philip Cumbus's performance as Mercutio was remarkable, but he did not manage to fully bring out the seriousness and grimness of his Queen Mab speech, as the audience was not in the mood to take it seriously. Such cases as this cannot be fully blamed on the production itself, but also on the particular difficulty of rendering a serious performance at the Globe, where laughter is much more easily elicited than tears.

As mentioned before, music played a very important role in the production, and was carefully woven into the play's action, heightening the emotional output of certain scenes. This was done especially with chanting or singing in between the play's scenes, but also thanks to the talent of the



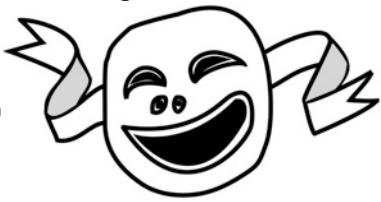
production's musicians, who really brought out the tension in the beautifully choreographed fight scenes with drums and cymbals. In fact, the fight scenes were arguably one of the production's strong points, and it is clear that a good amount of care was put into them.

The costumes were all Elizabethan, and varied according to the characters' social ranks and loyalties. The Capulets were in red hues, while the Montagues wore more blue, and in a clever touch, both Romeo and Juliet's costumes tended to incorporate elements of both families. Paris, a neutral character, was in white, and Mercutio's costume was also irregular. The lower classes were dressed less elaborately and in varying degrees to reflect their social status, such as the apothecary, who wore a simple, dirty white shirt. Later in the play, to reflect his melancholy mood after having been exiled, Romeo is seen wearing brown, and after he hears of Juliet's death he is dressed entirely in black, as are all the other characters who mourn her death.

Props such as oil lamps were cleverly used to convey the impression of night, something essential in an open air theater like the Globe. There were also at times a few extras on stage, selling vegetables and the like, to make the setting of fair Verona come to life,

which was a welcome touch and added a layer of realism to the production. These bystanders would act frightened and shocked when the Capulets and Montagues fought, as in the opening scene, further heightening the sense of realism and reminding the audience of the consequences which the ongoing feud has on everyday life and everyday people, and of why it is so necessary for the Prince to put an end to it.

Regarding the actors, the performances were generally very impressive, but there were a few weak points. Adetomiwa Edun portrayed a very energetic – perhaps too energetic – Romeo and, though he was able to deliver his lines in a refreshing manner, his performance ultimately lacked emotion. There were sadly many points in the play where one did not feel any genuine love between Romeo and Juliet, and Edun's lack of emotion played the biggest role in this shortcoming. That is not to say he lacked talent, or convincingness in most of the scenes, but unfortunately, in a play like *Romeo and Juliet*, a feeling of strong love and passion between the two main protagonists is essential if a production hopes to trigger any kind of emotional response from the audience. The scenes involving the young lovers were thus rather weak in comparison to other parts of the play. Luckily, this was



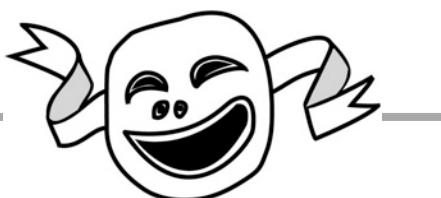
probably one of the performance's only weak points, along with the aforementioned difficulty of prompting a serious and emotional response from the audience.

Ellie Kendrick was very convincing early on in the play as a young, naïve, and love-stricken Juliet, but she was slightly less compelling in portraying the strong-willed and more mature Juliet of the second half of the play. Nonetheless, her performance was admirable on the whole, and she truly sparkled at times. Other performances were first-rate, particularly Rawiri Paratene as a passionate Friar Lawrence and Penny Layden as the nurse. As mentioned before, Fergal McElherron was riotous as the Capulets' servant, Peter, as he really knew how to elicit laughs from the

audience. The same was true of Tom Stuart, who played an apparently clueless Paris in a wholly credible manner. Finally, Ian Redford as Capulet was riveting, delivering a strong performance from start to finish.

Music and singing were put to good effect, and the dance at the end of the play provided a nice finish to a good performance; the practice of including dance and music having been frequent in Shakespeare's time, it would also be interesting to know whether or not Dromgoole had this in mind when staging the production. All in all, Dominic Dromgoole's production was a success, and a very entertaining one at that.

*More fantastic theatre reviews from the 'Shakespeare and Performance' study trip will follow in the spring 2010 issue of NOTED.*



# The comedy that could have been transformed into tragedy...

By Sophie Badoux

The theatre group *Barbe-à-Papa* presented *An Ideal Party* this year at the beginning of April. The nine actors of the troupe had been rehearsing since September to finally reveal their sketches to the audience on the evening of April 4<sup>th</sup>. Naturally, the troupe had a bit of stage fright, but this was incomparable to what had happened a few hours before the show. Instead of ideal, the party could have been a disaster...

Firstly, the two managers of the group, Tania and myself, nearly had a heart attack on the Friday before the show. Due to the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Geneva, we were unable to get the usual theatre room at Uni Mail, so we had to rent one ourselves with the help of the English secretariat. The room was perfect for our show and the lights were already set up and ready to use. We could not have asked for a more cosy and intimate room. It was truly perfect!

However, on the Friday, as we arrived at the room with the props, costumes, and all the sets, we met the

janitor who delivered the most terrible of news: there had been a misunderstanding in the renting hours of the room. As a result, we would have to leave the building on Saturday and Sunday at 6 pm at the latest. If we did not respect those schedules, the alarms would go off, the doors would automatically lock themselves, and the police would arrive! The fundamental problem lay in the fact that the show was planned for 8 pm on Saturday and 5 pm on Sunday, and we had already distributed over 400 flyers announcing our performances! For a moment, time seemed to come to a complete stop as we digested the news that could have proved catastrophic. The beautiful dream of our show and the intensive work we had put into it seemed to turn to ashes. There was no solution, it was impossible to postpone the show or change the starting hours as we had no way to inform our audience of these changes.

The janitor saw our despair and, because he was convinced that we were good, young and innocent people

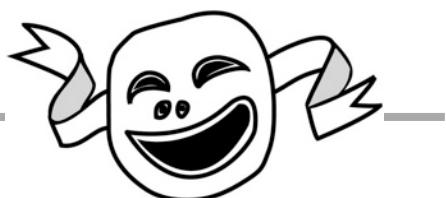


with a project that was productive and positive, he decided to help us out. Nearly risking his job, he called an electrician to change the time of the alarm and save our show from an inevitable empty room. Everything was back to normal. The actors relieved, we could concentrate on rehearsals and setting everything up. However, it seems that a curse had been laid on our show because our troubles did not end there.

The following day, we had an appointment with our light technician, who had kindly accepted to help us out for free. Unfortunately, we had hoped that she would arrive before 6 pm when the show was starting only two hours later! As a result of her very late arrival, we were unable to do a general run through of the show with costumes and lighting. We barely had the time to set the lighting up when the last and most terrible event happened: a fuse blew due to the equipment overheating. From that point on, we not only lacked lighting and sound, but also started worrying about all the lighting and music-related cues of the actors. These were really essential for the overall working of the show as most of our scene changes were dependent on

the use of ultraviolet lights and music. It was both a figurative and literal *pétage de plombs*. Whilst one of us was on the telephone with the janitor trying to find a solution to the problem, the other was desperately pressing every single button in the place willing the light and sound equipment to work. To make matters worse, the electric cables of the mixing table were so old that they disintegrated before our very eyes. The lights were definitely out of use and it was 6:45 pm... Fortunately, some boys in the troupe knew a few things about electricity and managed to fix the cables and mixing table just in time for the show.

People were now beginning to enter the room and we had no choice but to perform immediately, without a single rehearsal. The stage fright and worry that anything might go wrong was definitely visible on the faces of each of the actors but we were also very excited. Finally, our luck changed for the best and we had the chance to show the work we had accomplished and the passion that we were eager to share with the audience. On that first evening, the atmosphere within the group was electric; we had never been



so united. Once we were on stage, the public gave us an inner force that made us perform like never before. We were all shining from the inside, happy and

full of positive energy, and what started out as a tragedy became what it was meant to be: a comedy.

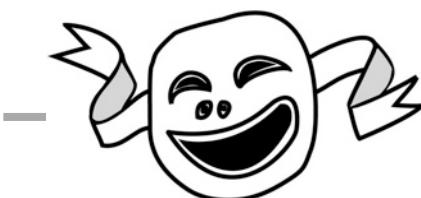
## Review of An Ideal Party by Barbe-à-Papa Aula de l'école des Grottes on 4th and 5th April 2009

By Emma Depledge

Having received Barbe-à-Papa's flyer cordially inviting us to 'a theatrical dinner', we sat down to a menu of bite-sized theatrical scenes. The dishes included *Waiting for Godot* - quel *amuse-bouche!* *The Importance of Being Ernest*, served on a bed of dry English humour and lightly seasoned with tart wit. An impeccably reared *Ideal Husband*, followed by *Pyg à la Malion*, all washed down with a palate-

pleasing treat from the Pemberley estate.

The cast, which included Sophie Badoux, Nadim Boutemine, Tania Gentet-Ganose, Alex Gjerpe, Marisa Jotikasthira, Evren Kiefer, Kristijan Marinkovic and Dimitri Monnin-Gillot, were incredible and they left us full of delight, sated with their skills and bursting with pride.



# Film



## The English Department Film Club Fall Semester 2009/2010

**Schedule:** Films are screened every Thursday evening.

**Place:** Room B112 at Uni-Bastions

**Time:** 19h15

**Who?** All students of the English Department are welcome.

This programme is displayed on the notice boards of the Philosophes and of the English Department at the Comédie.

It is also available online on our department website, together with more detailed information about the film club:

<http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/vie/film.html>

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Film Title:</b>	<b>Director:</b>	<b>Proposed by:</b>
THU Oct.01,2009	<b>Get On The Bus (1996)</b>	Spike Lee	Anna Iatsenko
THU Oct.08,2009	<b>Possession (2002)</b>	Neil LaBute	Valerie Fehlbaum
THU Oct.15,2009	<b>Charles II (2003)</b>	Joe Wright	Emma Depledge
THU Oct.22,2009	<b>Hamlet (1991)</b>	Franco Zeffirelli	Lukas Erne
THU Oct.29,2009	<b>Wit (2001)</b>	Mike Nichols	Lukas Erne Johanna Harris
THU Nov.05,2009	<b>The Libertine (2004)</b>	Laurence Dunmore	Emma Depledge
THU Nov.12,2009	<b>A Cock and Bull Story (2006)</b>	Michael Winterbottom	Elizabeth Kukorelly
THU Nov. 19, 2009	<b>An Angel at My Table (1990)</b>	Jane Campion	Simone Oettli
THU Nov. 26, 2009	<b>Excalibur (1981)</b>	John Boorman	Lucy Perry
THU Dec.03,2009	<b>Clockers (1995)</b>	Spike Lee	Anna Iatsenko
THU Dec.10,2009	<b>The Hours (2003)</b>	Stephen Daldry	Kimberly Gaydon



## News From the "Film Club"

By Anna Iatsenko, Lilia Aghzafi, Valerie Fehlbaum

With the new semester bringing its load of new exciting things, we would like to add to this excitement by introducing the newly made-over "Film Club" which will replace the previous "Film Cycle" so many of you are already familiar with. With the departure of our dear colleague Michael Röösli, the "Film Club" team gains two new members: Lilia Aghzafi and Anna Iatsenko who, along with Valerie Fehlbaum, will be delighted to welcome you to the event. As before, the "Film Club" will take place in the Fall semester the Bastions building (Room B112) on Thursdays from 7 p.m. For the Spring semester, we are hoping to find more comfortable lodgings, and we are grateful to Lilia Aghzafi who is working on helping us find a cosier spot.

As for our Fall program, we can inform you that it will include films such as Neil LaBute's *Possession*, Michael

Winterbottom's *A Cock and Bull Story*, Jane Campion's *An Angel At My Table*, Laurence Dunmore's *The Libertine*, a film by Spike Lee and a few more instructive and entertaining films.

Although the films we show are suggested by your instructors and are directly related to their seminars, you are welcome to invite your friends, family and those you think may be interested in attending. We are looking forward to seeing you on Thursday evenings.

Valerie, Lilia and Anna



# Filmic Events and Festivals

## Compiled by Michael Röösli

### In and Around Geneva

Sep. 21-Dec.14 2009	<b>Cinéclub Universitaire:</b> <b>Cycle: Wonder Women</b> <a href="http://www.a-c.ch/index.php?p=102">http://www.a-c.ch/index.php?p=102</a>	Geneva
Oct. 03-11, 2009	<b>Cinématou</b> <a href="http://www.cinematou.ch">www.cinematou.ch</a> Festival du film d'animation et de fiction.	Geneva
Oct. 14-18, 2009	<b>Underground Film &amp; Music Festival</b> <a href="http://www.luff.ch">www.luff.ch</a>	Lausanne
Nov. 02-08, 2009	<b>Cinéma Tous Écrans</b> <a href="http://www.cinema-tous-ecrans.ch">www.cinema-tous-ecrans.ch</a> TV feature films in cinema quality, and short film nights with international competitions.	Geneva

### In Switzerland

Aug. 21-23, 2009	<b>One Minute Film &amp; Videofestival</b> <a href="http://www.oneminute.ch">www.oneminute.ch</a>	Aarau
Sep. 08-13, 2009	<b>Fantoche Baden</b> <a href="http://www.fantoche.ch">www.fantoche.ch</a> International competition and forum for animated films.	Baden
Sep. 16-20, 2009	<b>Festival du Film Français d'Helvétie</b> <a href="http://www.fffh.ch">www.fffh.ch</a>	Bienne
Sep. 24 - Oct. 04	<b>Zurich Film Festival</b> <a href="http://www.zurichfilmfestival.org">www.zurichfilmfestival.org</a>	Zurich
Oct. 07-11, 2009	<b>Shnit Shortfilm Festival</b> <a href="http://www.shnit.ch">www.shnit.ch</a>	Berne
Nov. 04-08, 2009	<b>Internationale Kurzfilmtage</b> <a href="http://www.kurzfilmtage.ch">www.kurzfilmtage.ch</a>	Winterthur
Nov. 16-20, 2009	<b>FilmON!</b>	Lucerne
Jan. 21-28, 2010	<b>Solothurner Filmtage</b> <a href="http://www.solothurnerfilmtage.ch">www.solothurnerfilmtage.ch</a>	Solothurn



# Film Quiz

## By Michael Röösli

You probably recognise hundreds of film actors from the screen, from posters, magazines and newspapers, but how good are you when it comes to identifying the faces behind the camera?

Can you guess which contemporary (except for one) directors these portraits belong to? Find the solutions on the next page, together with a few of their best-known films, which you should immediately recognise...shame on you if you don't!



# Film Quiz Solutions

By Michael Röösli

## 1) Gus Van Sant

Famous for his work on parallel tracks between mainstream cinema (*Good Will Hunting* [1997], *Finding Forrester* [2000]) and experimental approaches like in *Elephant* (2003), *Gerry* (2002), or the quasi-identical shot-by-shot remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (*Psycho* [1998]). Most recently on screen was *Milk* (2008).

## 2) Julie Taymor

See review in Spring NOTED 2008 for *Across the Universe* (2007), a quest for the myth of the 1960s through the lens – and ear – of the Beatles. Other well-known films include *Titus* (1999) and *Frida* (2002).

## 3) Mira Nair

An Indian director well-known on the international film market (*Vanity Fair* [2004]), working among other things on and with the Bollywood genre (*Salaam Bombay!* [1988], *Monsoon Wedding* [2001]).

## 4) David Lynch

Cult director with a broad spectrum of work reaching from the surreal *Eraserhead* (1977) over *The Elephant Man* (1980) and the slow-paced and sentimental *The Straight Story* (1999) to *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Twin Peaks* (1992) and the mind-bending *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001).

## 5) Ang Lee

A Taiwanese director less known here for his early work than for his approach to Western culture with a keen and accurate eye. Prime examples are *The Ice Storm* (1997), *Hulk* (2003), and *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). Note also his memorable films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and *Sense and Sensibility* (1995).

## 6) Alfred Hitchcock

Probably the only director whose face can be recognised from a few simple strokes of the pen. Among the most famous of his 65 + films are *The Birds* (1963), *Psycho* (1960), *Vertigo* (1958), and *Rear Window* (1954).

## 7) David Fincher

A master of the clever thriller. The most memorable works so far remain *Fight Club* (1999) and *Se7en* (1995). Also remember *Panic Room* (2002) with Jodie Foster and, more recently, *Zodiac* (2007).

## 8) David Cronenberg

Famous for his strange angles on the human body and its transformation (*Videodrome* [1983], *The Fly* [1986]), the Canadian director also loves the challenge to adapt the inadaptable, such as William Burrough's *Naked Lunch* (1991) or J. G. Ballard's technopornographic *Crash* (1996). After



*Spider* (2002), a psychological drama adapting a novel consisting entirely in introspective discourse through an ingenious mise-en-scène, Cronenberg changed directions and confronted his spectatorship with *A History of Violence* (2005) and *Eastern Promises* (2007).

**9) Sofia Coppola**

Through films like *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003), and *Marie Antoinette* (2006), the daughter of famous director Francis Ford Coppola has proven her vast talent.

**10) Jane Campion**

Well-known for *The Piano* (1993), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1996), and the dark and erotic thriller *In the Cut* (2003). In the latter, digital techniques are used to blur parts of the screen, creating a peculiar, highly intriguing, and uncannily intimate involvement with the spectator.

**11) Tim Burton**

The master of gothic and pleasurable strange and twisted tales has enchanted us with *Beetle Juice* (1988), *Ed Wood* (1994), *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), *Big Fish* (2003) as well as the musical *Sweeney Todd* (2007).

**12) Danny Boyle**

Instantly famous after his cult film *Trainspotting* (1996), Boyle set out to explore radically different genres and intertextual techniques in *The Beach* (2000), the wonderful horror film 28

*Days Later* (2002) (generically a zombie film, but without any zombies), *Sunshine* (2007), a science-fiction film playing with references to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Event Horizon*, and themes familiar from Ballard novels, and most recently *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), in which he flirts and interacts with the Bollywood genre.

**13) Kathryn Bigelow**

Most noted for her sci-fi thriller *Strange Days* (1995), Bigelow also deals with various genres such as the vampire film *Near Dark* (1987) or the surfer/gangster movie *Point Break* (1991).

**14) Pedro Almodóvar**

The Spanish director who managed to set up a bridge between small, unusual productions and a mainstream spectatorship, and brought his earlier cult-classics, hailed by the gay community, to a broad variety of audiences. Among these magic, witty, and sometimes hilarious moments are *Law of Desire* (1987), and *High Heels* (1991). His more recent productions may appear more sober and less overtly humorous, but don't underestimate the technical and thematic marvels that appear if you take a closer look. *Talk to Her* (2002), *Bad Education* (2004), and the most recent *Broken Embraces* (2009) are great examples.

**15) Woody Allen**

Trust your Woody to bring a new gem



to the screen once a year with clockwork precision. However, don't think of him only as the neurotic and clumsy but hilarious character of *Annie Hall* (1977). His incredible mockumentary *Zelig* (1983) and his Dostoyevsky-inspired *Match Point* (2005) show not only the cleverness and filmic skill of the director, but also his broad generic and thematic range. Films that appear as inconspicuous little comedies, like *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008), actually reveal themselves as highly innovative pieces of cinematography under closer inspection.

#### 16) Lars von Trier

The enfant terrible of the film world rebelling against the institutions of film criticism and American Culture. Apart from his dogma films (e.g. *The Idiots*

[1998]), von Trier is well-known for *Breaking the Waves* (1996) and *Dancer in the Dark* (2000), as well as for his USA-trilogy in progress, which uses an intriguingly minimalist film set: *Dogville* (2003) attacks the romanticised image of the poor during the Great Depression, *Manderlay* (2005) controversially dissects the hypocrisy and self-congratulation of the whites in liberating black people from slavery, and who knows what he will be up to with Washington. His latest film, *Antichrist* (2009), is currently projected at Geneva theatres and has caused highly ambivalent reactions due to its defamiliarisation and distortion of politically correct feminist and religious discourses.

## Cinecursus: An interview with Aberrahmane Bekiekh By Michael Röösli

### What exactly is Cinecursus?

Cinecursus was founded 15 years ago within the framework of the activités culturelles of the University of Geneva, and offers a variety of courses in the field of film studies.

Most courses last two days, and usually take place on weekends. They include the history of cinema – now spanning over one hundred years –, the discovery of

filmic language, the familiarisation with cinematic vocabulary and grammar, as well as the initiation to script writing. For those who wish to push their knowledge of filmic language further, 150 works are presented for a close reading on weekday evenings. We also have a script-writing workshop where each participant is supervised in the process of creating and finalising their



own personal screenplay. Finished scripts can also be discussed on an individual basis.

**What qualifications does one require in order to follow the courses, and is Cinecursus only aimed at hardcore film buffs, or does it also cater for the larger, curious, general public?**

No prior skills are necessary.

Everybody goes to the movies... so these cinematographic courses and discussions are suitable for all, whether beginner or professional, student or non-student.

**How do you approach film in your teaching?**

When analysing a film, I propose close readings, image by image, of extracts which the participants have watched at the beginning of the class.

**When did you discover your passion for the cinema, and what brought you to Cinecursus?**

I discovered the seventh art rather late, in 1983 with Woody Allen's film *Zelig*, which I watched again immediately. This is how I discovered the complexity and richness of cinematographic language, and understood that one cannot see everything when first viewing a film. You need to see a film twice at the very least. That's when I decided to go back to school. I spent seven years at the Université de Paris, where I studied communication and cinema.

I arrived in Geneva 15 years ago and have been teaching film studies ever since. ....

**How would you define the role of a spectator watching a film?**

The spectator has to be active and involved while watching a film.

Filmmakers construct and solicit the spectator; they create while remaining recreational, and engage the spectator in a creative process of their own.

Filmmakers achieve the viewer's activity by producing filmic texts pervaded by ellipses, gaps and interstices which the audience has to fill.

**What fascinates you most about the analysis of a film; which filmic characteristics do you find most challenging?**

Every film is interesting; they all carry their own secrets, and behind every one of them there is a spark of humanity waiting to be discovered.

Course participants love complex films which are hard to decipher, like *Un Chien Andalou*, a surrealist film by Luis Buñuel (1928), but also more recent films, such as *The Matrix* or *Mulholland Drive*.

Every film is a challenge, a great new adventure.

**Many thanks for the interview!**

For more detail consult:



[www.cinecursus.ch](http://www.cinecursus.ch)



# Etymology

Perhaps because I was quite peckish while thinking up this article, I ended up focusing on the vocabulary of food and dining. It started with an oft-repeated etymological theory, reductionist in its scope, and generally incorrect; a fact that reared its ugly head in my summer French class debate, entitled 'Ce qui est meilleur: français ou anglais?' (It was a tie.) Language historians, as well as Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, have noted a snobbism within the English language, an inbuilt hierarchy of words stemming from the Norman Invasion of 1066. It goes like this: English words for animals are derived from the Anglo-Saxon: cow, calf, deer, sheep, and pig. Their doublets, when presented as food, adopt the French terms: beef, venison, veal, mutton, and pork. The 'reason' behind this, is that the conquered Anglo-Saxons tended the animals for their victorious overlords, the Normans, who ate the meat. Linguist Steven Pinker dispels this rumour when he notes that 'the Anglo-Saxon and French words didn't sort themselves out until centuries

later'. This, and the amazing BBC programme 'The Supersizers Eat...' in which food critic Giles Coren examines the history of food, led me to consider the etymology of culinary vernacular.

The blanket terms for meals – breakfast, elevenses, lunch, tea, dinner, supper – have gradually changed in meaning over time. 'Dinner', dating from 1297, from the Old French *disner*, originally meant 'breakfast' and later 'lunch'. 'Supper' from 1275, referred to the evening meal, from the Old French *super*, probably from *soupe*, which was the then-traditional meal of French workers; and before that, the Old English *supan*, meaning 'to sip'. Thankfully, the following terms are more specific.

'Jentacular' means 'of or pertaining to breakfast' (OED). While 'breakfast' dates to the Middle English of 1463 – 'brek' + 'fast' – the root of 'jentacular' comes from the Latin *disjejunare* (*jejunus* meaning 'empty' or hungry) via the French *déjeuner*. Other alimentary vocabulary includes the



verb 'bedinner', meaning the act of treating another to dinner. This, as author Ammon Shea points out, is an unusual use of the prefix 'be'. For when the prefix is used in this way, as a complement to the predicate, it generally becomes 'in modern usage, nearly all contemptuous' (OUD). Examples include the verb to 'bemissionary', or annoy with missionaries, or to 'bespawl', or 'bespatter with saliva' (OUD). 'Prandial' comes from the Latin *prandium*, 'luncheon, meal', from *pram*, early, and *edere*, to eat. 'Pre-prandial' dates from 1815, and 'post-prandial' from 1820. 'Coenaculous', describing the act of 'supper-eating' or 'supper-loving' (OED), takes its name from the *coenaculum*, or the eating-room of a Roman house where supper, *coena*, was consumed.

A 'deipnosophist' is described by the *Oxford Universal Dictionary* as 'a master of the art of dining'; or more specifically, 'a person who is an adept conversationalist at table' (Random House). The word first entered the English language in 1656, appearing much earlier, circa the third century B.C.E., in the title of a literary work by the Hellenist Athenaeus of Naucratis. *Deipno(n)* refers to 'meal' or more specifically, 'dinner', while *sophistai* identifies a 'master of his craft' (OUD). *Sophist*, from the Middle English

*sophiste* comes from the Latin *sophista*, from the Greek *sophistes*, from *sophos*, or 'clever'. The work depicts a compotation of sorts, in which a group of erudite men 'discuss dinners, literature, and miscellaneous topics of every kind' (OUD). Although disparagingly hailed by the poet James Russell Lowell as a 'somewhat greasy heap of a literary rag-and-bone-picker' in 1867, it enjoyed a revival by the Genevan philologist Isaac Casaubon in 1612, and was mentioned in an essay by Sir Thomas Browne. In order to be a deipnosophist, one must be free of 'deipnophobia', or the fear of dinner parties.

Two other verbs related to the original 'deipnosophist' are the verb 'obligurate', defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'prob.: to spend (time) feasting', and the noun 'residentarian', one who is inclined to 'remain at table' (OED). Two famous residentarians were thirteenth-century theologian Saint Aquinas, and nineteenth-century industrialist Diamond Jim Brady; the former was said to have cut a crescent out of his table to allow for his turgid belly, while the latter would dine until his stomach expanded to reach the edge of the table.

One might be tempted to label these last two specimens as 'epicures'. 'Epicure' entered English in 1380. An 'epicure' was a follower of the



Athenian philosopher Epicurus. The modern sense of the 'epicure', as a glutton or gourmand, results from misunderstanding, or mudslinging, on the part of Epicurus's opponents – at first the stoics, and in early modern Europe, Christian polemicists. While Epicurus did indeed advocate the pursuit of pleasure, it was namely pleasure as the absence of pain – hardly akin to the gastronomical undertakings of Augustine and Brady. But I shall cease my armchair philosophy. Shakespeare uses the word six times, in varying forms, nearly all pejorative. The traitor Cassius reveals that he 'held Epicurus strong' (JC 5.1.80); Macbeth bids the 'false thanes' to 'mingle with the English epicures' (Mac 5.3.7-8); Goneril declares that 'Epicurism and lust' make Lear's court 'more like a tavern or a brothel / Than a grac'd palace' (KL 1.4.241-3). What I find interesting is the development of the antonym to 'epicure', which is 'petecure', derived from the Old French *petit keuerie*, or small cookery, which came to refer to modest, ascetic eating – ironically, what Epicurus originally proposed. One of the earliest appearances of this word in English comes in the 'Liber Cure Cocorum' of 1430, from Lancashire. The author gives an englished title of 'The Slyghtes of Cure', 'cure' as 'cookery'. The poem, which includes

the first mention of the Scottish dish haggis, treats 'Of Potage, hastery, and bakun mete, / And petecure'.

The last two interesting terms I came across were the absurdly specific 'fleeten', meaning 'having the colour of skimmed-milk', which is used as an insult in the case of 'Fleeten face', from a Beaumont and Fletcher play. The other term, 'mette', now out of use, once referred to a 'companion at the table' (OED), or family relations, coming from the Old English *gemetta*, which retained the Germanic base of *mette* or 'meat'. This is culturally interesting when compared with the English *companion*, that literally translates as 'bread-fellow' from the Latin *com-* or with, and *panis*, bread. *Bon appétit!*

Susanna Gebhardt

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# Creative Writing



## To My Milky Way Dream

By Lea Grammatopulo

A poem isn't easy to write  
A poem isn't easy to bite

Dr Seuss makes it look easy  
Dr Seuss makes it feel groovy

His pen flows like a bat  
From his hat to his cat

My pen in the groove  
Of the Seine on the move

From your feet to your head  
My pen is never dead

From my sodomite to my twilight  
It never says a kite is a dike

But it can sure fuck a duck  
And it can sure flush a dick



It can sure draw a stream  
It sure can even dream

So off it goes  
But it never shows

From drewly Snoopy  
To dandy Droopy

The beat takes us high  
The sheet thinks it's dry

Whoopee's sticky  
Doggy's slip'ry

My soul is now liquefied  
So it is yours to decide

Whether our tangled bodies  
Will crack like crispy cookies

Or whether we'll take the milky way  
And soften like a spacecake through whey

So before we get thrown out of the steam,  
Take me, my darling, in my Milky Way dream,  
    Take me and keep me,  
For there is no place I'd rather be,  
    Than in my sweet fantasy.



# Impressum

## **Contributors:**

Ioana Balgradean  
Michael Röösli  
Emma Depledge  
Lukas Erne  
Susanna Gebhardt  
David Spurr  
Susan Heller  
Lea Grammatopoulo  
Kareen Klein  
Eléonor de Pesters  
Beatrice Montedoro  
Yassin Megzari  
Sophie Badoux  
Anna Iatsenko  
Valerie Fehlbaum  
Lilia Aghzafi

## **General Editors:**

Ioana Balgradean, Emma Depledge

## **Assistant Editors:**

Susanna Gebhardt, Arnaud Barras

## **Theatre Editor:**

Ioana Balgradean

## **Other NOTED Team Members:**

Illustrations & Logos...Jennifer Wong,

## **Title Page:**

NOTED Logo.....Jonas Hauert  
Cover Picture.....Michael Röösli

## **Newsletter Layout:**

Arnaud Barras

## **Proofreaders:**

Ioana Balgradean, Emma Depledge,  
Susanna Gebhardt



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For Contributions and Feedback: [noted@lettres.unige.ch](mailto:noted@lettres.unige.ch)