

AUTUMN



2010

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT



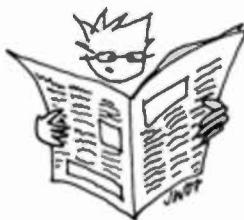
**Editorial 4-5 Features 6-19 Theatre 20 Film 21-27
Creative Writing 28-35 Impressum 36**

Poppies
Photograph by Michael Röösli

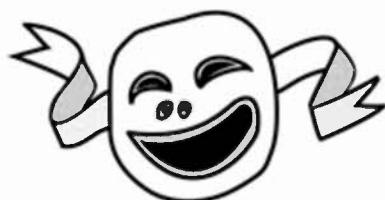
Contents



Editorial	4
Note from the Director	4



Features	6
Departmental News	6
An Insight on our Department Directors.....	7
Interview of Anja Siouda	12
Selection of travel trips for Berlin	15
English cuisine	18



Theatre	20
Theatre schedule	20



Film	21
Film club.....	21
Film club schedule	22
Films festivals and events.....	23

Film quiz	24
Solution to the film quiz	25



Creative Writing	28
The Lighthouse	28
Painful is the Weight (A Parody)	29
Ms. Fortune	30
Pocket Watch	31
Walking Man On Alfred Sisley's <i>Summer Landscape</i>	32
Mirror Men on the Wall.....	33
Eventual Madness	34
A Moment of Imagination	35
Impressum	36

Editorial



This is during a period of great joy somehow mixed with a touch of sadness, that NOTED announces the end of the Summer holidays and the beginning of the Autumn semester: joy, because it is the beginning of a new academic year, which I am sure will be both thrilling and rich in emotion; sadness, because along with the falling of the leaves, the amount of sunlight each of us will daily receive will drop considerably (and I am sure you all know that less sun means less fun).

On the other hand, the more time we spend inside, the more time we have to read and study, a piece of information that cheers most of you up, I am sure. Hum...

Bearing in mind that soon-to-come change in our daily dose of sunlight, we should all find a new generic source of enjoyment. And here comes NOTED, for not only will it bear you company during the gloomy days of October/November (or should I call them nights?), but you will also have the chance to work on your contributions for the next issue of Spring 2011! Indeed, NOTED is a newsletter written by students, for students. What I mean to say is that you can all contribute to develop NOTED: it

is a chance for you to voice your opinion and your creative side. For those of you who wish to pursue a career as a journalist, but also for those who simply want to express themselves, NOTED is a way to improve your writing by confronting with an audience.

What you can write for NOTED are reports, reviews (films, plays, books or music albums), interviews, poems, short stories, and so on. You can also volunteer to participate in the elaboration of the newsletter, and thus be involved in an extracurricular activity. Keep in mind that NOTED is a chance that you must seize!

In that Autumn 2010 issue, you will find three interviews, tips concerning life in Berlin, a report on a very special cooking class, theatre and film schedules, a film quiz and several poems written by students. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading NOTED, and I am looking forward to hearing your feedback on the brand new NOTED Facebook group (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=144480452253042&ref=search>).

Arnaud Barras

Note from the Director

... or should that be the "Directrice"? This grammatical shift is the least of the changes we will be experiencing in the English Department as we usher in the Autumn semester. Before I give

you a preview of what the semester has in store, allow me to record the great pleasure with which I am writing this inaugural note. To be Head of our Department is a great responsibility but it is also



a very great honour. Over the past few weeks, during my “apprentissage,” my appreciation of the dedication of my predecessor Lukas Erne has grown and grown. I think we all have been aware of Professor Erne’s conscientious efforts to ensure the smooth-running of the Department but it is only by walking in his shoes that I can truly know what an excellent job he has done for us all. And so, on behalf of us all, I would like to record our thanks to him in these pages. I would like also to thank Clare Tierque who is a living archive of administrative information. Many of us have benefited from her kind and meticulous assistance, offered to students, staff and Directors alike.

A number of valued colleagues are about to leave the Department. We wish Annick Challet and Louise Wilson the very best in their future careers. Our long-serving departmental librarian, Lise Magnollay, is also leaving to pursue a Master’s degree in Neuroscience research at University College London. The library will certainly not be the same without Mme Magnollay, who has been an efficient and conscientious colleague. Her work behind the scenes is unfortunately so low-profile as to be invisible to the vast majority of people who benefit from her dedication. The ordering of books, cataloguing them, preparing them for shelving, organizing the seminar shelves, ensuring that popular books do not end up in the *Compactus* (!), processing our inter-library loan requests ... this is the kind of work we often only notice when Mme Magnollay is on vacation and our requests are not met with her customary efficiency. Fortunately, the Faculty of Letters has acted quickly to put in place two part-time librarians to ensure that the English Library continues to serve the Department at the standard we have come to expect, until a permanent replacement is appointed in the spring semester.

We welcome a number of new staff to the Department. Tom Simkin has joined us as a new assistant in contemporary literature; he comes to us from the University of Leeds where he recently

completed his MA. Arnaud Barras and Fiona Tolhurst we welcome in their new capacities as, respectively, assistant in contemporary literature and maître assistante in medieval English. Tamsin Badcoe, who recently completed her doctorate at the University of York, will join the Department on October 1st as a maître assistante suppléante, contributing to a Fonds National sponsored research project directed by Professor Erne, and teaching a BA seminar. Anne Jobin joins Susanna Gebhardt as monitor in the Writing Lab.

Other changes that will affect the Department in the coming semester concern the physical environment in which we work: the offices in the Comédie which will be repainted and the transfer of the English Library from the Philosophes building to Uni-Bastions. The transfer of the library is scheduled to take place at the end of the Autumn semester and, while some disruption cannot be avoided in a project of such complexity, we will do all we can to minimize the impact of the move upon all students and staff.

Finally, September 2010 marks the date when our new *plan d’études* comes into effect and brings to fruition the hard work of staff and students over the past year. Our new curriculum responds to concerns that have been expressed by students in seminar feedback and elsewhere, and brings our programme of study into better harmony with the logic of the Bologna system, by offering more lectures and longer lectures as well as a much greater diversity of forms of assessment. A letter explaining the changes can be consulted on the home page of the English Department website.

It seems that the motto for our Department should be “All Change” for the coming academic year. We will face challenges, it is true, but we will also reap important benefits from these changes.

Bonne rentrée!

Deborah Madsen



Features



Departmental News

Chaos at the Comédie!

You will notice in the coming weeks that the staff offices in the Comédie are getting a facelift! The painters have begun work on the offices in the German Department and we are next. The timing of this work could have been better but when it is over, it will be worth the inconvenience to have a bright new office environment for our Department. Our wonderful secretaries, Clare Tierque and Angela Simondetto, are doing all they can to ensure that it will be "business as usual" during this disruption but it is unavoidable that some chaos will escape even their organizational magic. So we ask for your understanding during the early weeks of the semester when you visit the Comédie.

Staff news

Eric Haeberli is on sabbatical leave for the Autumn semester. Guillemette Bolens continues in her role as Vice-Dean and, from next summer, will become Vice-Rectrice of the

University. We will miss Professor Bolens' presence in the Department but congratulate her on this important appointment.

Commission Mixte

The Commission mixte is a body of students and staff who meet usually twice a year 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. Current members: Deborah Madsen (president) on behalf of the corps professoral; Valerie Fehlbaum and Erszi Kukorely on behalf of the corps intermédiaire; Emily Chaffer (2nd year BA), Giorgos Kottas (2nd year BA), Lilia Agzhafi (3rd year BA), Nicholas Weeks (MA), on behalf of the student body. If you are interested in becoming involved with the Commission mixte, please attend the departmental Assemblée générale in the spring semester.



An Insight on our Department Directors

By Lilia Aghzafi

Here is an interview of the former Director of the English Department, Professor Lukas Erne, compared to our new Director, Professor Deborah Madsen. Each of them gives us an insight on what it is to be the Director of our Department. This role is taken by each Professor for three years and then another one steps in. Therefore, this interview concerns the two Professors who exchange this place. Here is what they had to say about their old/ new line of work.



Prof. Deborah Madsen

Can you present yourself in a couple of words:

In a couple of words, no! (laugh) It's too difficult. I'm British-Australian, Professor

of American literature; I've worked in Universities in Australia, in Britain and in the USA. I find it very interesting comparing different systems.

As well as the work I do here in Geneva, I'm President of the Swiss American Studies Association and I'm involved with the American Studies Association which is an international organization of all American studies scholars and I work on their International Committee to help to promote international cooperation amongst scholars in the discipline.

What do you expect from your new line of work?

I have worked with three colleagues before I came to Geneva so I'm in a rather privileged position because I've worked with these very good colleagues; Prof. Waswo, Prof. Spurr and Prof. Erne. So I have a pretty good familiarity with how the routine business of the Director works. I guess that I am also expecting the unexpected because that is something that I have learned over the years. Just when you think that everything is going very smoothly something happens like they move the library from Philosophes to Bastions (laugh). So in fact the library move will be one of the challenges for the coming academic year, particularly for students and for their teachers. Even before

that though, I think the first challenge that I have is to help the students through the new "Plan d'études" which will be implemented in September 2010. So just making sure that everyone is comfortable with knowing what they have to do to fulfill the new requirements. I see that as the major job.

What are you looking forward to?

I'm looking forward to a smooth ride. My personal ambition for my term as Director is to try to encourage more students to study abroad. We do have some issues that are outside the control of the Department, which prevent a number of students from studying abroad and I'm very aware of that. There is always the problem of accommodation in Geneva and there is the fact that many of our students work and so trying to reconcile keeping a job while studying abroad is difficult, I know that. But given those kinds of problems, just seeing what we can do to encourage more students to spend some time with our Erasmus partners and also with our Exchange partners, in places like Canada, the USA and Australia.

Do you think that your relationship with others will be influenced by your new post?

I don't think so, except that I think we will talk about different things (laugh). And we will work together on projects that are different. So, there are things that I will need to report to them from meetings that I have attended at the Faculty and elsewhere. There are issues that I will ask them to raise with me, for me to take back to those meetings. So, we will talk about different things but generally we work in a very cooperative way in this Department. It's



wonderful that we have a Department with such great "esprit de corps". There are different things that I will talk about with the secretaries I never had to talk to them about, for examples how much photocopies we use. Maybe that will become a topic of conversation (laugh). So no I don't think that my relationship with my colleagues will change. I think that in a way we all share the responsibility of Director as it is now; it's just that there is one designated person who then has to go and represent those discussions or idea proposals to different people within the University.

What would you hate to have to do?

I'm really lucky that there is nothing about my job that I hate. But if there is one thing that I dread and I think that as Director I would have to deal with it more and that's the problem of plagiarism. And the reason for disliking that particular issue so much is not only that it's time consuming because it takes a lot of time on the part of the teachers to document these cases of cheating. It's not only that it's that plagiarism is always at some level an act of desperation. So, there's usually a sad story behind it. So that's probably the thing that I dislike most having to deal with it. Then of course as a Director, one becomes familiar with all the cases because the Director then has to take all these cases to the Faculty and see them through the Faculty disciplinary procedure because it always involves inter-departmental relationships.

What does it mean to be the Director of the Department?

It's a great privilege to be in the position of representing one's Department. So for me, well it means my time has come so I don't attach any special status to the job. Except that I do see it as something that is a privilege to be able to be the representative of one's colleagues. It's also a constructive thing to be able to be more involved in workings of the Faculty and the University, which is something that as a regular Professor we do a little bit. But to be involved more in the day to day running of the Faculty is a very nice constructive thing to be able to do. To have a voice in those kinds of decisions is nice although I think a good Director is always

someone who is able to put the views of their Department forward - the students, the "corps intermédiaire" and also the Professors - and put those views forward rather than their personal views. To be in the position of the person who gets to do that is pretty cool.

What does the job consist in?

The job is a cooperative job because it's acting on behalf of the Department as a unity. So the job involves being the nominated person who is the first person to be in contact for matters concerning the English Department. So it means representing the Department's views, its interests on various committees. It's being the face that new students see at the welcome meetings, it means being the person that others from outside the Department will come to first for direction or to be told about our procedures or about a more appropriate person who can help with whatever enquiry it might be. It takes one out of the limit of simply being a Professor. So, I'm looking forward to getting to know more students, not only the students that take my courses. Of course, one of the things that I like about teaching BA1 is that I get to meet all the first year students when they come into the Department.

What experience do you think you will be able to add to your knowledge?

I think that it will be a further addition to the experience I've had of working in different university structures. The way that universities operate in Australia is different to Britain, different to the USA and different again to Switzerland. So I think that the work of Director will help me to understand even more fully how the administrative structures work. It also enables me to see how administrative structures are changing. And they are changing in quite interesting ways, not altogether good but not altogether bad, either. We have made the Bologna reforms and we are moving more into that modularized system of learning. We are living through a quite rapid change in the way universities function and how they are perceived in society. This makes it an interesting time to learn more about the details of university administration. I find it particularly



interesting because of those comparisons that I can make. I think that being Director will help me to think even more about how universities as institutions operate and how they are embedded in rather different social contexts and different places.



Prof. Lukas Erne

Can you present yourself in a couple of words:

It's going to be difficult (laugh). I studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Exeter, and Oxford.

After that I came to Geneva where I was hired as an assistant and later as a "maître assistant". I first became a professor at the University of Neuchâtel and then I was appointed here in Geneva where I've been since 2005. That's a short academic self-presentation.

What did you expect in your new line of work?

I expected a lot of administrative work of a rather dry nature and there was some of that. But also far more contact with people outside of the Department that you get if you're not Director. And I think that my experience matched that expectation. I expected to get to know much better the functionings of the institutions we are part of, the Department, the Faculty and the University. Again something which was borne out by experience. I expected it to be a lot of work in the first year where I would learn the ropes and less in the second and third years. That was true, but it was still a lot of work even in the second and third years. Perhaps my experience didn't quite match my optimistic expectations there.

What didn't you expect to have to deal with?

It's always individual cases which you can't predict. You spent 10% of your time dealing

with 90% of students, and staff, and that's what you expect. But then you spent the other 90% of your time dealing with 10% of students, and staff. And some of that is simply unpredictable because it's individual. It can be matters of illness, dissatisfaction, career changes, anything like that. All those things which are so individual that they are by definition unexpected.

Has your relationship to the staff changed?

My relationship to the other staff members has certainly changed. It's changed simply because I have had much more to do with them and I think that's one of the joys of being Director, moving on from what I said earlier about all those problems, you also quite naturally get to work with staff members on a regular basis over Department matters and that's actually very pleasant or at least it has been pleasant in the English Department because I thought that I was very lucky in being Chair of a Department full of responsible professionals, who know how to behave professionally and who it is easy to be the Director off. One hears stories about other Departments and how unhappy some of them are and about tensions and so on. And I've been really lucky in being spared that.

Did you change?

Yes I suppose I did. I take the question as meaning "did I change as Director over these three years". Yes because when you've never done something, when you've never been in a position, then, in the beginning, you need to learn and I suppose that made me careful. The first time you have to do something, you have to be very careful in order to get it right. And then



you grow by experience. That means that you can do things with greater ease, with more confidence because you know what the job involves. You learn from your errors -- one hopes. I hope I did (laugh) -- and you don't repeat it -- I hope I didn't. So it's a process of getting more comfortable in the job and I think that was certainly the way I changed.

What was the one thing that you didn't want to experience or deal with?

I would be lying if I said there was only one. I'm sure there are several; as I think I mentioned in my last 'Note from the Director' (issue of spring 2010 "Noted") the most unpleasant thing to deal with was the plagiarism cases. It's unpleasant for all kinds of reasons: It's time consuming, because of all the work it means for one's colleagues who would rather spent their time doing something useful than documenting cases of plagiarism. It's sad to see students, who try to cheat. It's sad in itself because it's unethical, but often it's also sad because some students do it because of the specific situations they're in, so it's sometimes less a matter of ethics than of desperation, so it's sad because you find out about the pressures that forced them into committing plagiarism. But it's also difficult to understand because plagiarism is very easily detected. I mean one wouldn't mistake the prose of a non-native speaker student for the academic prose of a professional critic who's a native speaker. So that's clearly my number one pick when it comes to one issue that I would rather not have had to deal with. No more of that please!

What does it mean to be the Department Director?

Well, as you know we Professors take turns and so I suppose it's something I knew I was going to do sooner or later. I think with any office, the way it's often perceived from the outside is that it's about power, but actually it's not (laugh), you don't have much power but you have got to do a lot for others. Being at the head of an institution and of this particular institution here actually means being its servant and that's what it should be. So I've been happy to serve this institution in this role since this is

an institution which I enjoy being a part of, which I'm honored to be a Professor in.

What does the job consist in?

Dealing with student matters, obviously, most importantly, seeing that things run smoothly. Answering students' questions, concerns and so on. Also, chairing Department meetings, the annual "Assemblée Générale", which includes the students, the "commission mixte" with student representatives. Advising prospective students about applications, and "équivalence". Then, staff matters. Teachers need to be hired, need to be renewed; sometimes they have questions, concerns. We have a staff meeting at the beginning of the academic year. Then Faculty matters, as Director of Department you are the person who represents the Department within the Faculty, so you attend the "Conseil Décanal" meetings which brings together the members of the "Décannat" and all the other Department Directors. And then occasionally, there are matters that come from the outside, requests for information, situations where you have to answer questions as the Department Director. I think that those would be the four categories which I would break it up into. And I think it's approximately the order of importance: students, staff, Faculty, and everything beyond that.

Experience of being Director:

It's a lot of work (laugh), we don't do any less teaching or we don't get a sabbatical, which means a time of research leave, so in that sense being Director simply adds to our work. On the other hand, as I've said, it's also a positive experience because there are a good number of really smart and active students in the Department. We have responsible, cordial staff members, both academic and administrative staff. We have wonderful secretaries who have made my life so much easier (for students too!), very efficient librarians. There's a general atmosphere among staff which is I must confess very pleasant. And that's made it often a real source of joy I suppose. My bottom line would be: a lot of work but rewarding work.



Are you going to miss it? (laugh)

The honest answer is no! (laugh) But I'll be available when the job comes around again and it's not going to cause me any sleepless nights. But now of course I'm happy to get back to more research because that's basically what you have to cut down on. You can't cut down on teaching it's the same teaching load and so you naturally cut down on your research which is something important. It's also something that we really tend to like doing because if we didn't like it and we weren't good at it, we wouldn't be here as Professors so that's certainly something I have missed not being able to do more of and which I'm looking forward to now. So, no I'm not going to miss being Director nor am I going to look back at these three years as a horrible experience.

There it is, a close-up on our Directors. So, fellow students don't forget that plagiarism won't get you anywhere, and if you really are in a bad situation talk about it with our teachers or assistants within the Department they can maybe help you. And on a more positive note, our Department works like the "Conseil Fédéral" of the Swiss government where the President doesn't have more power than the other members, like our Department's Director. If you want to know more about the staff of the English Department don't hesitate to check the website (<http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/>) where you can find all the facts you want.

Lilia Aghzafi



Anja Siouda, author of *Steine auf dem Weg zum Pass* (2010)

An interview by Michael Röösli

Steine auf dem Weg zum Pass - literally *Rocks on the Way to the Pass* - is Anja's first novel. It relates the encounter between Halima, a young Islamic woman from Morocco, and three brothers who are running a farm near the Brunig Pass in Switzerland. Looking for a hand with their household, the three bachelors chance upon Halima, who moves in with them and turns their lives upside down. Set in the seemingly idyllic environment of the Swiss Alps, the narrative starts a chain of unexpected events. The ensuing cultural and religious confrontations are first mediated through the three farmers, who never quite manage to communicate with the French and Arab speaking Halima, but then find their counterpoint in the lengthy epilogue, in which the occurrences emerge from Halima's own voice in the form of her diary.

Anja, could you briefly introduce yourself?

I was born in 1968, and grew up in Lucerne and Sursee. I got married very young. After my



licence in Islamic studies, Arabic, German Literature and General Linguistics in Geneva, I concentrated on my two children. I returned to the University three years ago for my studies at the ETI translation school.

How did you get the idea to write a novel?

Writing was my childhood dream. Three years ago, my husband went for three weeks to Algeria with the kids, and I just thought: now I'm going to write this novel. And I did so within two months (July and August 2007). I worked day and night, but of course I had been thinking about it for a long time. It just took a trigger to dare and actually sit down to start writing. I first wrote the ending of the narrative, and then everything started to flow - like playing the piano. It was a highly intoxicating experience. Time pressure was one of the reasons why I managed: I knew I would begin my studies at the ETI in September, so I only had these two months. Obviously, finding a publisher afterwards is a rather sobering enterprise and takes much longer. The market is very competitive.

How did you conceive your characters?

Halima, the protagonist, emerged to a certain extent thematically from the clash of two cultures and religions. But of course, each of the characters also carries a part of myself (as they say first novels tend to do). While the story is completely fictional, the issues of living together across cultures and religions is a very engaging and personal topic for me. The same goes for the setting of the novel: my parents bought an 'Alp' on the Brunig pass in the 70s. That's where I spent all my weekends as a child. When my parents separated in the 80s, my father lived up there. Moreover, I always spent my summer holidays on farms. These experiences of course find their way into the text.



Are there any works that influenced you, apart from openly mentioned sources like Astrid Lindgren's *Michel aus Lönneberga* (which I remember quite well from my own childhood)?

It's funny you should mention *Michel*, nobody picked me up on that yet. Of course, he plays a certain role, and so does Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*. Both eponymous heroes are part of our collective memory, and Spyri's character even lives in a similar environment. I used to feel a little like Heidi during my weekends and summers spent on my father's Alp. This is reflected in Halima, the protagonist. Funnily enough, my husband also remembered watching the Heidi cartoons on a TV set attached to a car-battery at his neighbour's place in Algeria! Structurally, I was also inspired by a film with Audrey Tautou, *A la folie... pas du tout*. A strange love relationship is told twice, from the individual perspectives of the two lovers. The double-perspective in my novel was inspired from this film. Another influential work is Jeremias Gottelf's *Die schwarze Spinne*, where a very idyllic frame narrative depicts the feast of a baptism on a majestic farm. The grandfather starts telling his story about a female stranger who confronted some wicked farmers with their own religion that they had completely forgotten when they made a deal with the devil. Halima's suitcase with sexy underwear from her difficult period in Zurich that looks to Martin like a huge black spider is my intentional wink to Gottgelf.

How much of your story was prepared, and what emerged in the process of writing itself?

I started with the ending, which considerably preoccupied me. Knowing the structure of the whole novel in great detail before starting to write, I could write the other scenes out of their chronological order. And I usually wrote the items of Halima's diary (which follows the novel as an epilogue) right after the corresponding scene from the main narrator's perspective. But the novel was indeed thoroughly structured beforehand. It was rather tiresome to get the timing of events right, coordinating the Ramadan with the regular gestation of the

cows, their departure with the calves to the valley before winter, and Halima's pregnancies. As a reader, one departs from the fact that all this is correct, but it takes a lot of calculation to get it right.

Your novel counterbalances daily activities with a chain of rather dramatic events.

One reader told me she was rather unsettled by these events, because like me, she is familiar with the nature and environment of the novel's setting and enjoyed its rendering by the novel very much, but this wonderful nature is constantly punctured by tragic moments, and whenever you have more or less digested one, the next is already lining up. Maybe these events are indeed a bit dense, but then they do not occur gratuitously, and they always remain realistic.

There are a few technical necessities, however. Martin's two brothers had to get out of the way. Their jealousy is important for the story, but it shouldn't have taken up too much of the narrative. Thematically, the lovers also have no future, because they insist on their religious dogma. As an auctorial storyteller, I felt I had to intervene at such strategic points.

To me it seems that the unexpectedness of these events has a crucial function in the novel. If you had started with the ending, you could have created a great deal of suspense (making the reader wonder what led up to this point), but the reader's trajectory would have become more sensational, and less constructive.

It's funny you should mention this; I was indeed wondering at first whether I should start the novel with the ending.

A translator plays an important role in your novel. Is this a mere coincidence? Could you imagine working in an isolated environment like the farm on the Brunig Pass?

You have to remember that I was only about to start my translation studies when I wrote the novel; maybe I would write the translator's character somewhat differently now. But



translators always have an important function as cultural mediators. As for working on the Brunig Pass, well, I'm not afraid of reclusion while I'm writing, and though I wrote this novel in my home in France, I was incredibly immersed in the world of my characters — I laughed and I cried with them, and was indeed virtually leading their lives up there. But this would be a whole different story in actual life...

How did people react to your first public reading in Lungern (since your audience mostly came from the place in which your narrative is set)?

Thanks to the great publicity by the theologian of the village, about 45 people showed up. They were intrigued but did not ask too many questions. I know this theologian, because when I was finishing my novel I needed to check something about the echeloned cemetery of Lungern, and I didn't get a chance to travel there personally. He helped me out with the necessary information. Interestingly, this theologian was not struck by the religious dimension of my novel at all, but rather by the tension between love and violence. I was very much surprised.

What kinds of feedback did you receive in respect to the religious issues at stake in your novel?

I was astonished how little people responded to the religious aspect of the text. A few people told me they learnt something about Islam through the narrative, but for the most part, they responded rather strongly to the fate of the female protagonist. People read the text in a great variety of ways. While my mom was really intrigued by the religious confrontation, others responded more to the depiction of nature and the setting, and the dramatic events of the novel.

You converted to Islam. How do you live this religion in Geneva? (In the novel you clearly do not take position for either Islam or Christianity, and both sides quite literally receive their own 'voice'.)

First of all, I am not converted in a way many others are. I'm thinking about it in a rather

relaxed manner. I'm quite happy my husband is not a fanatic, this couldn't have worked out. During my Islamic studies at the University, and at the beginning of my marriage, I engaged very closely with Islam and its culture. My relationship to Islam of course developed over time, and I'm rather keeping a certain distance again these days. I also leave the matter open for my children. They can decide for themselves whether they want to participate in the Ramadan or not etc.

Would you like to add anything that has not been addressed in this interview?

There were a few things that were rather tricky in writing this novel. For instance, bringing the two religions into a dialogue without taking a specific position. It was very difficult to orchestrate this dialogue, because I had to stick to the real aspects of the two religions. I couldn't just write out of my imagination. Another difficult task is writing a love scene. We are extremely familiar with such moments in narratives, but it isn't easy to write one, if it is not supposed to turn terribly kitsch.

Do you have any future writing projects?

Actually, in the summer of 2008, I wrote a second novel ... this time in 3 months (laughs). It's on a completely different topic, and I also only had time during the summer break of my studies. It has to do with the dictates of beauty and involves an obese female protagonist.

Many thanks for the interview, Anja, and best of luck with your second novel. Of course, we're anxious to find out more about your latest project!

You're welcome!

This interview was conducted in Swiss German on June 23, 2010 (translation by Michael Röösli).



Selection of travel tips for Berlin

By Karen Klein

The other day, a friend told me of a piano concert taking place in the studio of a piano tuner/repair shop – free of charge, for a small audience. It sounded intriguing. When I reached the given address, the place looked like a cross between a construction and a demolition site. Nevertheless, I ventured through the rubble and mud towards the second courtyard, where the concert was to take place. And, indeed, although most of the buildings in-between had been torn down or were in the process of being torn down, there was a door at the end of it all, which led to a the alternative venue – a piano studio. As my friend made her way towards me, jumping over puddles and avoiding piles of rubble, I spread my arms in a motioning gesture: "Berlin!" And that just about describes the city. You discover things in the most unusual places... This is the piano concert place: http://www.konzertfluegel.com/N_konzerte.html (It may however, not exist anymore as this goes into print, as they are in the process of being evicted ...)

Berlin is a huge city and there are a zillion things to do at any given time. It can be overwhelming. Here are just a few tips and hints – but only the tip of the iceberg ...

To begin with, getting there: You can get flights from Geneva, Basel and Zurich with diverse low-cost-airlines (sometimes the tickets from Basel can be considerably cheaper than from Geneva), or you can take the night-train, also from Basel – an experience in itself. If you book early enough, you can get some pretty good deals. If you take public transport from Schönefeld airport, be sure to get an ABC-ticket, inside the city AB-tickets are enough. By the way, ticket inspectors are not colourfully signaled as in Geneva. They rather work incognito, looking more like hobos or punks – so they can jump a ticket control on you rather unexpectedly.

Next, food: for breakfast (or rather brunch), here are a couple of suggestions. There is a

cute little French café called **Fleury** (Weinbergsweg 20, 10119 Berlin) where you can have breakfast or hot and cold snacks throughout the day (around €6 to €10, plus drinks). They sell a lot of French products, as well as cakes. If you want to have breakfast there on the week-end, be sure to be there at 10 sharp. It's jammed any time after this. The same is the case for **Nola's** am Weinberg (www.nola.de) – a Swiss restaurant, for the homesick among you (the prices are also slightly Swiss, but still perfectly reasonable when compared to Geneva). From a Swiss perspective, it's of course cute to call this place a "mountain" (it's barely a hill). But in wintertime, all local kids come here with their sleds – it's one of the few elevations in the region after all ... If you want to get away from the crowd, and don't mind a brunch that tends more towards lunch, check out **El Sol** (Stargarder Straße 14, 10437 Berlin) and their week-end brunch buffet (€8 all you can eat, drinks go extra). They also serve reasonable Mexican food throughout the day and add a selection of cocktails at night.

For cakes ("Kaffee und Kuchen" is a must!) I suggest **Sowohl als auch** (www.tortenundkuchen.de). They have a big choice of cakes at reasonable prices, as well as some savory dishes. They also serve breakfast all day. If the place is full, try **Anna Blume** across the street, and be sure to get a peek at the "Tortenmanufaktur" just next door – this is where the yummy cakes come from. If you walk down towards the center for a block or so, you can get an impression of Prenzlauer Berg at its best – the playground at the Kollwitz-Platz, where all the trendy young families of the Bionade-bourgeoisie hang out. (**Bionade** is also a must, by the way – an organic lemonade, with reduced sugar, extant in several flavours.) If you want a more high-class location, with the chance to spot a politician, go to **Café Einstein** (www.einsteinudl.com). This is where journalists and politicians meet – unofficially. The place is



slightly pricier, but also has cakes, a selection of teas and coffees as well as some hot dishes.

For dinner, my personal favorite is **Frau Mittenmang** (www.fraumittenmang.de). You can have the latest nouvelle cuisine dishes, along the lines of so-and-so purée with mango-chestnut-sauce (the dishes are astonishingly filling). Their menu changes daily, starters are 6-8€, main dishes 10€-15€ and desserts about €6. They also know a thing or two about wines. The place is run by a friendly red-haired Welsh guy who speaks extremely good German. The atmosphere is trendy, but low key. And the food is simply amazing.

You can eat the cheapest pizza in town at **Aceto Lokanta** (Wichertstraße 4, 10439 Berlin). Pizzas are €2.10 or €2.50 (I kid you not) and they also have a range of pasta, risotto and casseroles for similarly reasonable prices. You can eat in (they've recently refurbished the place), but I suggest take-out. The staff is really friendly, the food is yummy (if you don't expect "real" Italian-style) and the portions are generous.

"If you go hungry in Kreuzberg, it's your own fault", I've been told. One of the many good recommendations in that part of town is the Turkish eatery **Rissani** (Spreewaldplatz 4, 10999 Berlin). You can get kebabs, falafels and the like, and they have a huge plate with "everything" on it, which is enough for two to three people and costs €8. Sit-in, but you have to clear up your table afterwards.

Of course, you have to eat "Currywurst" if you come to Berlin. **Konnopke's** (www.konnopke-imbiss.de) is supposedly the best place to do so. It's been around for 80 years, so they know what they're doing. Don't expect to sit down and there may be cues – but the prices range between €1 and €3. Unfortunately, at the moment, the place is surrounded by a construction site.

To stay overnight: If you're not travelling alone, check the internet for **apartment** rentals. You can rent a fully furnished apartment, even for just two nights, starting from €40. Alternatively, there's the Circus Hostel (www.circus-berlin.de).

berlin.de). Or, for a funky experience, stay in the "**GDR-Hotel**" (www.ostel.eu) from €35.

There are **free tours** around Berlin (on foot) in several languages. They start every day at 1pm in front of the Starbuck's at the Pariser Platz (Brandenburg Gate) and last about three hours. At the end, they pass around a hat and everyone can pay what they want to. (Note: I've heard that the tour guides only make a profit if you give more than €3).

If you're tired from walking around, take a **boat tour**. There are several companies that offer anything between a one-hour trip along the Spree, to a whole-day tour of the surrounding lakes (e.g. www.sternundkreis.de).

An insider tip if you want to avoid cuing (for what can be hours) at the **Reichstag** (to get up to the cupola). Go up to the entrance and ask them if they have a couple of spare places in a guided tour. You might get in quite quickly (you may have to sit through a 30-minute speech in German, albeit in the hall where the German parliament usually assembles).

A place that I can definitely recommend is the former **Stasi prison** (the Stasi was the GDR's secret police – you might remember them from the film *Lives of Others*). It's located in Hohenschönhausen, not exactly in the center, but definitely worth the trip (<http://en.stiftung-hsh.de/>). Former inmates provide tours. This is certainly not a "fun" experience, but it does give you an impression of a part of Berlin's history which some people tend to forget. English tours are Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.30pm. Admission is €5.

In contrast, you can take a more pleasant trip down memory lane at the **GDR museum** (<http://www.ddr-museum.de/>), which rather furthers the so-called "Ostalgie" (nostalgia of the east, or "eastalgia"). This is a (small) hands-on museum where you can touch and try out pretty much everything. Admission is €5.50.

A place that is in every tourist guide but that you should definitely not miss out on is the **Holocaust memorial** (between Brandenburg gate and Potsdamer Platz). I find that the sensations you experience while walking



around in it alone might have been what the artist intended ... For more history, keep your eyes on the ground as you walk through town, there are often golden cobble-stones in the sidewalks in front of houses, bearing the names and dates of deported Jews that used to live there – they are called "stumbling stones" and can be found in many German cities.

For a little "cultural shopping", check out **Dussmann** (www.kulturkaufhaus.de) – they have a large selection of books, music, stationary etc. in a relaxed atmosphere on several floors. They are even open in the evening.

Should you fancy an evening at the theater try the **Berliner Ensemble** (www.berliner-ensemble.de) or the **Maxi-Gorki Theater** (www.gorki.de), they have student tickets at fair prices (€5 to €10). English movies are shown at the **Cinestar** at the Potsdamer Platz or at the **Hackesche Höfe** ([http://www.hoefekino.de/](http://www.hoefekino.de)), an assembly of courtyards which are a sight in themselves. You can spot English (or other original-language movies) by the note "O. m. U." (Originalfassung mit Untertiteln = original version with subtitles).

For a drink, in the summer, try one of the many beach bars, for instance Strandbar Mitte, (<http://www.strandbar-mitte.de/strandbar/index.html>) where you can relax just opposite the famous **Museumsinsel**. Or the Ankerklause (<http://www.ankerklause.de/>), a ship made bar, where they also serve food.

For a night out, some interesting places are Klärchens Ballhaus (<http://www.ballhaus.de>) where live bands (e. g. jazz) perform occasionally, and the atmosphere is generally retro. One of the highlights is the cloakroom attendant, always wearing black tie – he seems to be as old as the establishment.

Also retro, but with a touch of nautical kitsch is the Hafenbar (<http://hafenbar-berlin.de/>), where the decoration seems to be taken from an old boat. The music slightly leans towards German Schlager ...

There is also the Kulturbrauerei, literally "culture brewery", the site of a former brewery where you can find a host of clubs, concert halls, bars, a cinema – even a supermarket (<http://www.kulturbrauerei-berlin.de/>). In December, they also have a Christmas market.

A little warning to conclude: Berlin-people don't have the reputation to be friendly. In fact, they can be pretty rude. This is, however, their style so don't take it personally. Sometimes, it's good to simply talk back. Allegedly, the biggest compliment you can get in Berlin is "Da kann ma nich meckern ...", i. e. "There's nothing to complain about."



English Cuisine

By Erzsi Kukorelly

Season your Lamb with Salt, Pepper, Cloves, Nutmegs and Mace; then put it into the Coffin of Paste, with Lamb-Stones and Sweet Breads seasoned as the Lamb; then add some savoury Forc'd Meat Balls, Yolks of Eggs, some large Oysters, and Tops (about two Inches long) of Asparagus, having first boil'd them green; then put bits of Butter all over your Pie and close it up, and let stand about half an Hour in a quick Oven. Then having made Liquor with an equal Quantity of Gravy and Oyster Liquor, a little Claret, an Anchovy, and grated Nutmeg, and having boil'd them, thicken it with the Yolks of two or three Eggs, pour it into your Pie and serve it up.



Mmmm savoury lamb pie

At the end of last semester, I was in the privileged position of being able to bring to life a text that I was teaching, in a rather unusual manner.

During a seminar on Eliza Haywood, I included a pragmatic and functional text entitled *A Present for a Servant Maid* (1743). Haywood, until recently best-known as the prize in a pissing competition included in the scatological and fairly repulsive third book of Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*, has happily found her way into many anthologies and curricula on account of her versatility and professionalism in the eighteenth-century print market. Her early output was mainly in the genre of amatory novels, breathless bodice-rippers that for centuries incurred the wrath of moralists, but that have recently been found to have a lot to say about autonomous female desire. After a stint as a theatre producer working with Henry Fielding, in the last decades of her career Haywood seemed to move towards becoming a "proper lady" novelist, who also wrote periodicals and conduct manuals. Some critics have suggested that this was due to a personal reformation, but others – more convincingly, to my mind – propose that she was merely complying with a market that, post-*Pamela*, was looking to be warned rather than warmed by what it chose to read.

In any case, *A Present for a Servant Maid* is a wide-ranging and accessible manual for



Very busy in the kitchen



Preparing the pudding cloth



Wrapping the pudding in the cloth



urban maidservants, who are instructed to look after their own virtue and their mistresses' affairs with equal prudence. Sections include: "avoiding sloth", "giving saucy answers", "apeing the fashion", or "being to free with men servants". The last part is entitled "Directions for going to Market; also for Dressing any Common Dish, whether Flesh, Fish, or Fowl. With some Rules of Washing, etc.". I suggested to students that we try to follow some of these directions. Marketing eighteenth-century style would have been fun, but called for a degree of touching and smelling unacceptable at the Migros: if ox beef "be young, it has a kind of oily Smoothness, and if you dent it with your Finger will immediately rise again" (245); "smell under the Kidney" of lamb we are told (246); and how would we check for "many small Kernels in the Fat [of pork], like Hailshot", a sure sign that it is "meazly, and dangerous to be eaten" (246)? Washing clothes sounded like too much hard work: "if it is not very dirty two Lathers will suffice, but if it has been worn long, you must give it three" (261). But cooking – well, most of us can, most of us do – so why not try to cook an eighteenth-century meal? The students were all for it – and in the event everyone who followed the seminar attended the cooking evening.

I cheated a bit, though, and rather than use Haywood's *Present*, I suggested a couple of recipes from a contemporary advice book, *The Accomplish'd Housewife, or Gentlewoman's Companion* (1745), where we had greater choice. We decided to keep it simple: stewed trout with sippets, savoury lamb pie (see above), stewed mushrooms, salad, and the pièce de résistance: two sorts of boiled pudding (one with raspberries and the other with ginger and grappa-soaked raisins). I asked my good friend Cathy, a professional *traiteur* with great kitchen facilities, if she would host the evening, and not only did she agree, but also acted as a consultant. The challenge was manifold: how to know what to buy? how to move from the rather vague measures given in the recipe to real quantities on the kitchen counter and real time and temperature in the oven? what were the actual manipulations that we needed to do? how, crucially, were we to butter the pudding cloth?



We have pudding! (I promise, it tasted better than it looked.)

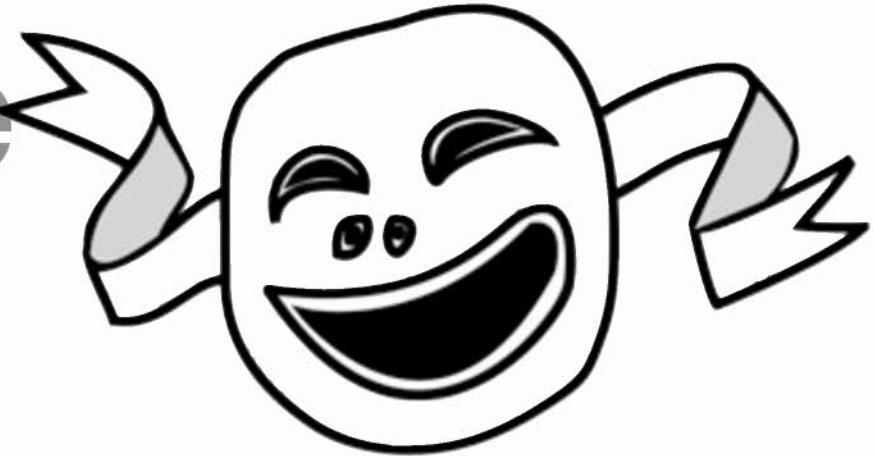
In the event, things went fairly smoothly. Participants enjoyed themselves, some true chef talents emerged, and those not born with a proverbial rolling-pin in their hand did wonderful things with the sponge and washing-up liquid. Although in the eighteenth century French cuisine was being already being touted as infinitely sophisticated than basic British grub, we were agreeably surprised to find that the food we produced was pretty good: though the trout was a bit overcooked, the savoury lamb pie was a triumph, and *ah, les puddings...*



The Eliza Haywood cookery club!



Theatre



Theatre Schedule

Compiled by Michael Röösli

27.-29.01.2011	Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw	Howard Productions
07.09.2010	The Actor's Nightmare by Christopher Durang	GEDS
21.09.2010	Flare Path by Terence Rattigan	GEDS
05.10.2010	An Evening of Improvisation organised by Charles Kerpelman	GEDS
19.10.2010	Henry V by William Shakespeare	GEDS
02.-06.11.2010	Quartet by Ronald Harwood	GEDS
09.11.2010	The Little Foxes by Lillian Hellman	GEDS
23.11.2010	Katia's Ghost by Marina Alexandrovskaya	GEDS
04.12.2010	Intimate Exchanges by Alan Ayckbourn	GEDS
11.01.2011	Neville's Island by Tim Firth	GEDS
25.01.2011	A Voyage Round My Father by John Mortimer	GEDS

Pygmalion and Quartet are full-blown theatre performances. All other entries refer to playreadings by the Geneva English Drama Society (GEDS), and take place every second Tuesday at 8 p.m. in the basement of the English Church of the Holy Trinity (14 bis, rue du Mont-Blanc). The GEDS also welcomes non-native speakers for the playreadings.

For more information about the above activities visit:

Howard Productions: www.howardprod.ch

GAOS: Geneva Operatic Society www.gaos.ch

GEDS: Geneva English Drama Society: www.geds.ch



Film



The English Department Film Club

Dear students, staff members and friends of the English department. The beginning of the academic year is always an exciting time for everyone and we would like to partake in this excitement by introducing ourselves to the new arrivals and presenting our new program for the Fall 2010/2011 semester.

“The Film Club” of the English department is an extra-curricular event organised once a week during which the students have an opportunity to watch films in relation to their seminars. Although the films we show are suggested by the English department’s 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. Also, feel free to bring food and drinks with you as “The Film Club” is held every Thursday evening, starting at 19h15 in room B112 of the Bastions building.

This semester’s program is full of exciting films. Amongst them you will find the

vampires of *Blade* and *Dracula*, an amnesic character of *Memento*, Maori people of *Once Were Warriors* and *Whale Rider*. We would also like to inform all the First Year students that the third screening of the semester is reserved especially for them with a screening of *Hamlet* directed by Tony Richardson with Marianne Faithful in the role of Ophelia. All these and more can be found in our full program in this edition of NOTED and on the notice boards of the English department at the Comédie and Philosophes buildings.

We are looking forward to seeing you on Thursdays starting October 7th. In the meantime we would like to wish you a good start of the semester and we hope that you will enjoy your studies at the English department.

Anna Iatsenko, Lilia Aghzafi and Michael Röösli.



The English Department Film Club - Fall Semester 2010/2011

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>

Date:	Film Title:	Director:	Proposed by:
THU Oct. 07, 2010	Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992)	Francis Ford Coppola	Kimberly Gaydon
THU Oct. 14, 2010	Interview with the Vampire (1994)	Neil Jordan	Kimberly Gaydon
THU Oct. 21, 2010	Hamlet (1969)	Tony Richardson	Lukas Erne
THU Oct. 28, 2010	Blade (1998)	Stephen Norrington	Kimberly Gaydon
THU Nov. 04, 2010	Whale Rider (2002)	Niki Caro	Simone Oettli
THU Nov. 11, 2010	The Libertine (2004)	Laurence Dunmore	Emma Depledge
THU Nov. 18, 2010	Memento (2000)	Christopher Nolan	Deborah Madsen
THU Nov. 25, 2010	Once Were Warriors (1994)	Lee Tamahori	Simone Oettli
THU Dec. 02, 2010	Duchess (2008)	Saul Dibb	Elizabeth Kukorelly
THU Dec. 09, 2010	Stage Beauty (2004)	Richard Eyre	Emma Depledge
THU Dec. 16, 2010	Yiimimangaliso: The Mysteries (2001)	Mark Donford-May	Fiona Tolhurst



Film Quiz

by Michael Röösli

Each of the following quotes was snatched from a famous film dialogue. Can you identify their sources?

1. Aristotle was not Belgian. The central message of Buddhism is not 'every man for himself.' And the London Underground is not a political movement. Those are all mistakes, Otto. I looked 'em up.
2. C: We all have these terrible stories to come over.
M: That's not true. Some of us have great stories. Pretty stories that take place at lakes with boats and friends and noodle salad. Just... no one in this car. But a lot of people. That's their story. Good times, noodle salad. What makes it so hard is not that you had it bad, but that you're that pissed that so many others had it good.
C: No, I don't think so.
S: Not it at all, really.
3. You know, I have one simple request. And that is to have sharks with frickin' laser beams attached to their heads! Now evidently, my ... colleague informs me that that can't be done. Can you remind me what I pay you people for? Honestly, throw me a bone here. What do we have?
4. Gentlemen, you can't fight in here. This is the War Room!
5. Je m'excuse de vous déranger, mais il y a votre amie qui est coincée dans l'ascenseur. Et ça fait une heure qu'elle joue la trompette.
6. Well, A boy's best friend is his mother.
7. [Literary] awards are like haemorrhoids. Sooner or later every arsehole gets one.
8. G: This was a valued rug, Dude.
D: Yeah, man, it really tied the room together.
9. I fart in your general direction. Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries.
10. My brother beat me. My sister beat my brother. My father beat my sister and my brother and me. My mother beat my father and my sister and me and my brother. The neighbours beat our family. People down the block beat my neighbours and our family.



Solution to the Film Quiz

by Michael Röösli

1. A Fish Called Wanda (1988) by Charles Crichton.

Although this is not strictly speaking a Monty Python production, most of the mythical crew incarnate the hilarious characters of this delightful gangster comedy. The quote belongs to the female member of the culprits (Wanda, played by Jamie Lee Curtis). She confronts the macho would-be leader/philosopher (Kevin Kline) of the gang, who keeps trying to impress Wanda with his knowledge and less-than-common theories.



A Fish Called Wanda

2. As Good As It Gets (1997) by James L. Brooks.

Jack Nicholson in his probably most amiable role since *The Shining!* His character, an isolated, eccentric and misanthropic author (ironically of popular romance novels) suddenly falls prey to an improbable love for a waitress. He is jolted out of his comfortable four walls and brought into contact with other human beings (and an ugly lap dog). The power of this snappy comedy lies in its amazing, biting and unforgettable dialogues. Enjoy!



3. Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery (1997) by Jay Roach.

A colourful and gloriously funny pastiche, mixing the James Bond series and other productions of the genre in the setting of the crazy 60s. Mike Myers impersonates both the secret agent and the bad guy — subtly called Dr. Evil. What happens when the camera doesn't stop shooting after the generic mad laughter of the evil genius? What about the families of the henchmen the good guy kills en masse? How can the offspring of Dr. Evil be indoctrinated in order to fill daddy's shoes? And what happens to the charm of sexual innuendos in the movies when there are no longer any censorial constraints? There's only one way to find out...



4. Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964) by Stanley Kubrick.

Dr. Strangelove found a new access to its contemporary movie-goers, who were numbed by the crushing threat of an impending nuclear war and no longer responded affectively to serious literary or cinematic treatments of the subject. Kubrick caught them aback with his brilliant comedy, and brought them uncanny laughter, to go with uneasy goose bumps. The quote of the US president (Peter Sellers) addresses the Russian Ambassador (who is secretly taking pictures of the famous War Room of the American Government) and General Turgidson, who discovers him and starts a fight. In the tense situation of the nuclear threat, the people in control of the fate of mankind regress to the state of children haggling over their toys in a sandpit. By the way, the famous set of the War Room has been re-constructed for a video clip to the song 'Time is Running Out' by Muse (easy to find on YouTube). This iconic space representing the Cold War is juxtaposed in the clip to the lyrics about shadows on an amorous relationship.



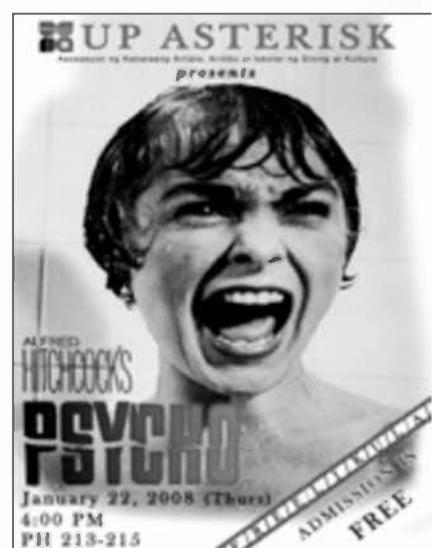
5. Le père Noël est une ordure (1982) by Jean-Marie Poiré

Who said there's no such thing as French black humour? Let your lingering romantic penchant for the Christmas Holiday be thoroughly shattered by the troupe du Splendid, who are adapting here their own play from stage to screen. Two volunteers operating an 'SOS friendship'-style phone service manage to plunge every single one of their clients (as well as the spectator) into a nightmare of a Christmas they certainly won't forget. In a burlesque mood, mythical lines chase each other densely and have given the film its cult-status.



6. Psycho (1960) by Alfred Hitchcock.

Enjoy letting yourself fall prey to Hitchcock's sense of insufferable suspense. Due to the unexpected trajectory of the narrative, the director insisted that spectators be only admitted to the theatre at the beginning of the film (usually films were shown in a loop at the time, and people entered and left the theatre as they pleased). While many of the film's strategies have become very familiar through subsequent productions, like a murderer who looks like your next-door neighbour instead of a markedly evil type, the film remains a great classic today.



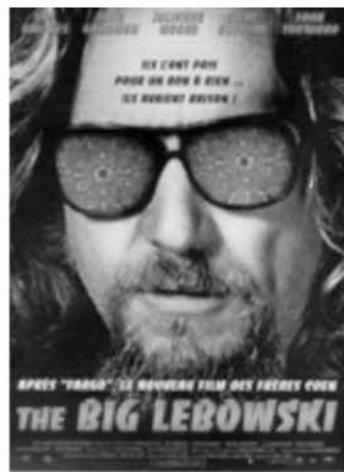
7. **Swimming Pool** (2003) by François Ozon.

The arrogant quote belongs to the female protagonist (Charlotte Rampling), a frustrated and eccentric writer of crime novels, who retires to her publisher's weekend home in France where she hopes to find inspiration. The unexpected arrival of the publisher's adolescent daughter (Ludivine Sagnier) precipitates a series of strange and uncanny events. With a great mastery of the image (look out for who's lying by the pool, reflected in it, or disturbing somebody else's cast image by taking a dive) and a strange conflation of the actual with the imaginary, the film takes a disturbing hold of its spectator and is not ready to let go easily.



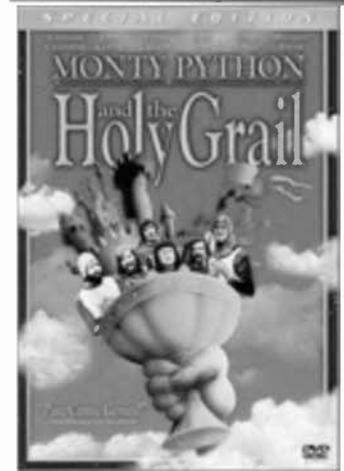
8. **The Big Lebowski** (1998) by Joel Coen.

Nothing has to be added on Joel and Ethan Coen's legendary brand of humour and taste for tiny accidental elements that make their narratives veer into unexpected territories. The film is equipped with a rather unusual narrator and a top cast (including Jeff Bridges, John Goodman, Julianne Moore, Steve Buscemi, Philip Seymour Hoffman and John Turturro). The quest for compensation (for his erroneously befouled carpet) plunges the protagonist into a kidnapping scenario that went wrong because of a mixup of two identical names — but this is merely the beginning.



9. **Monty Python and the Holy Grail** (1975) by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones.

The strange insult quoted in this little quiz is thrown by a guard of an (unaccountably) French castle in England where King Arthur and his 'Knights' of the round table seek accommodation. Monty Python has become a synonym of British humour, and their filmic take on Arthurian Legend performs a familiar but nonetheless hilariously efficient tightrope walk between the incredibly clever and the shamelessly silly. Careful, the spectator may suffer from extensive muscle aches after watching this film!



10. **Zelig** (1983) by Woody Allen.

This hilarious mockumentary (or fake documentary) presents the life of Leonard Zelig (Woody Allen) who has a strange pattern of behaviour: he 'blends in'. Talking to an Asian American person, he will turn Chinese, and when addressing an obese person, he will instantly put on weight. The passage is drawn from a conversation between Leonard (under hypnosis) and his therapist. It mocks the traditional psychoanalytic assumptions of Dr. Eudora Fletcher (Mia Farrow), who is looking for traumatic events in her patient's past that might have led to his predicament. Brilliantly funny — and definitely a must-see!



Film Schedule: Festivals and Events

Compiled by Michael Röösli

30.09. - 16.12.2010

English Department Film Club

http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/vie/film_en.html

Thursdays, Uni-Bastions B112, 7.15 p.m. (entrance free).

27.09. - 20.12.2010

Cinéclub Universitaire (<http://www.a-c.ch/index.php?p=102>)

Cycle of Films: "L'amour fou"

Mondays, Auditorium Ardit Wilsdorf, 8 p.m.

Tickets: 1 for 8 CHF, 3 for 18 CHF, the whole cycle for 50 CHF.

02.10. - 10.10.2010

Cinématou: International Animation Film Festival

www.cinematou.ch

01.11. - 07.11.2010

Cinéma Tous Écrans: International Cinema and TV Festival

www.cinema-tous-ecrans.com

05.11. - 21.11.2010

Film en Amérique Latina

www.filmar.ch

10.01. - 28.03.2011

Cinéclub Universitaire (<http://www.a-c.ch/index.php?p=102>)

Cycle of Films: "La Screwball Comedy"

14.01. - 15.01.2011

Écran Mobile Short Film Festival

www.ecran-mobile.ch

11.02. - 20.02.2011

Black Movie Film Festival

www.blackmovie.ch



Creative Writing



The Lighthouse

By Beatrice Montedoro

Dark. Light.
Again dark. Light.
Have you heard the sea
These days is
Calling? You. Light.
On the threshold stand I.
On the cliff the seagull
Calls. You. Dark.
Washing away past memories.
The foamy ocean waits
For a signal. Land!
I
From that lighthouse.
Dark. Light.



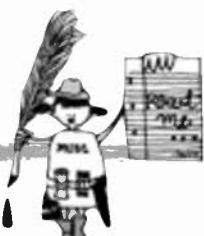
Painful is the weight (A Parody)

By Beatrice Montedoro

Painful is the weight
Of that volume of the encyclopedia.
I tried to stretch
High, to reach it, but
It fell
Opening the wound in my head.
Letters L-M.
The first word I find is Love
The last
Madness.

Painful are the chronicles you tell
Of unlucky lovers.
Memories collected in the dust
Of your pages, irritating my eyes.
Your odour pierces my mind.
I would let you hang
Above
The pile of fire
With all your martyrs.
Aren't you afraid?

Yet, painful is the vengeance,
Alas, too long lovers have hesitated,
Foolishly spinning the wheel of Ms. Fortune.
And what a Misfortune! Now
You are only a memory to me
And your bad smell
Is sweet.
Your oppressive weight
Delivers my soul
From earthly garbage. Dear fourth volume.
Third shelf.



Ms. Fortune

By Beatrice Montedoro

I once fell in love,
With a woman called Fortune.
A true beauty.
Yet nobody had ever seen her face.
Nor I.
The sound of her voice was seductive enough
To make me blind.

Always in a hurry,
My Lady. And I couldn't
Stop her.
Partying, drinking,
Sleeping with random men.
Oh, what a miserable lover
I was.
The second time
I met her,
I asked her name: Ms. Fortune.
Was she so old and alone?
By the way
She already knew my name.
Was she a clairvoyant?
Who knows. I was a mere
Fool on her wheel.
Meeting her, I did not know,
this was Ms. Fortune.

She leads women's fickleness.
She rides the waves
Of lunatic oceans, shrieking,
"Spin, spin, it's your turn!
Spin the letters of this whimsical wheel".
"Oh I read it now:
m-i-s-f-o-r-t-u-n-e".
Game over.



Creative Writing: Writing in Response to Art

[Note: The following poems were written as a homework assignment for the seminar “Ekphrasis in Early Modern Poetry” last spring. Most of the poems were inspired by a particular artwork exhibited in a museum in Geneva. Sadly, no artwork could be reproduced here because of copyright restrictions, so information about the artworks has been included in italics following each poem. – Julianna Bark]

Karolina Lipczyńska, “Pocket Watch”

Time has stratified
into various forms

most peculiar and pleasing
to the eye

are pearls mounted shinily in silver
depth of sapphire
smoothness of enamel
bright and noble as works of old masters
depicted in a miniature

high art trapped like
a fly in a precious amber
for amusement and luxury
of people,

who left their names engraved
in style,
classical beauty of a golden plate

what moments were measured to them?
calm and quiet hours in shades of the gardens
shivering minutes just before the tryst
endless seconds in the rush of a battle...

their secrets are gone as their time had passed
little time of their lives, great time of their age
echoes from a distance in an imaginary ticking
of a deadly silent, but immortal clock

Written after a visit to the Patek Philippe Museum, Geneva.



Eléonor de Pesters, “Walking Man”

No face, no identity, I imitate you all
Speeding in the streets, following the flow.
Looking ahead of me, I don't fall.
My metallic skin responds to the blackness of a shadow,
And agitates itself in torment.
I thus silently stand as the essence of movement.

Pursuing my dear creator's pace, I mark my heavy and eternal step.

*Written in response to Walking Man I by Alberto Giacometti (1960, Paris,
Alberto et Annette Giacometti Foundation).*

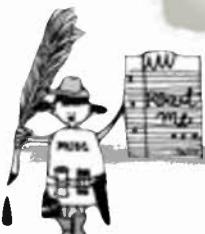
Daniela Oldenburg, “On Alfred Sisley’s *Summer Landscape*”

Dream is the first word to come to my mind
When I see this marvelous landscape unwind.
A soft and airy and sweet dream it is,
One that is protected, by man untouched.
In its trees I feel a soft summer breeze ;
Oh could this in reality be fetched.

The grass with no given or drawn path :
A sense of liberty ; I lose my breath.
Forever could I in this field lie down,
Light breeze on my rested soul and body,
My sorrows forever and ever drown
Into this green sea, where I rest fully.

Drowsing and dreaming I start visioning
What could happen, were these white clouds moving.
The sun, warm, comforting and majestic
Would bathe the whole scenery in its light.
I see couples walk, friendly, romantic,
Down to the hidden lake in pure delight.

Long dresses brushing the meadow lightly,
Where before the light wind blew, almighty.
People laughing, singing in clear voices,
First walking, then running or just dancing.



Birds singing melodies, their own pieces ;
Nature, love, living, singing and swaying.

Opening my eyes again to the world,
The vision dies, as if cut by a sword.
But somewhere in my mind it's still lively,
And always in there will I be wandering,
Trying to make it real, for it could be.
Forever I am lying there, dreaming.

Written in response to Summer Landscape by Alfred Sisley (1887, oil on canvas, Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire).

Rikka Tupaz, “Mirror Men on the Wall”

Mirror, mirror on the wall
I see four faces all in all
One looks down, one looks at the side
The other looks at me coldly, the other with his eyes bloodshot and wide
They are stabbed with knives, swords, blades and other such shapes
Their hairs and noses are crumbled like grapes
Their lips are zipped
Their voices are ripped
A hand sticks out
It's the only voice that comes out
I see arrows and explosions
But numb are their emotions
They want me to understand
So they transport me into their land
I look in front of me
And what is this I see
A single reflection in this wall of mirror
I have become part of their world of horror

Written in response to Loredana Sperini's Untitled (2007, mirror fragments glued on wood), exhibited at the Musée Rath, 31 March-15 August 2010.



Lucas Lane, “Eventual Madness”

He, the one who transcends this earth
You and me celebrate his birth

He, the one who from a thin loaf
Split it in two as under oath

They come along, attend this act
They're old, they're young, they see this fact

The field is full of crowds waiting
But you made him as if gliding
Over this scene of men's madness
Along this tree of holiness

They beg, they ask, they shout, they yell!
“Apply your gift, your miracle”

Why does his face look so naive?
Applying tasks, so inactive
Can this wonder last forever?
Or is it a rising fever?

They praise, they beg, they ask, they claim
Soon or later, it'll lead to damn

A vicious word: humanity
He gave, he worked, so peacefully
They took, they spoiled, his courtesy
Humans divert eventually

Written in response to Multiplication of the Loaves by Willem van Herp (ca. 1650-1655, oil on canvas, Musée d'art et d'histoire).



Natasha Appadoo, “A moment of imagination”

I pace the rooms of the museum slowly,
Languidly, as usual
On an exceptionally dull day.
Guardian of the works of art,
They are but familiar objects to me.
From Witz to Cézanne, I know all the names.

Fanning myself with a sheet of paper,
My eyes linger on an Italian landscape
By Boguet, I know.
Idyllic greenery, refreshing shade of the trees,
All bathed in a warm light.
My imagination is aroused.

Taking a step closer to this other world
The title tells me Meliboeus and Tityrus are painted.
There! Not very noticeable.
I brush aside the two shepherds
From my mind.
I prefer to think them as ordinary people
Enjoying the pleasant scenery.
I get more and more drawn to the painting.

Wishing I could join them
I close my eyes. There I am.
The soft grass on my bare feet,
The sunshine gently caressing my skin
The sound of the goats and the shepherd's music
Sweet to my ears.

Suddenly a hand on my shoulder,
A voice, a tourist:
I must get out of the way
So he can take a picture of the artwork.
I step aside and pace the rooms of the museum
Again. A vivid impression on my mind
Of a voyage in another world.

*Written in response to Italian Landscape with Meliboeus and Tityrus by
Nicolas-Didier Boguet (1790, oil on canvas, Geneva, Musée d'art et
d'histoire).*



Impressum

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