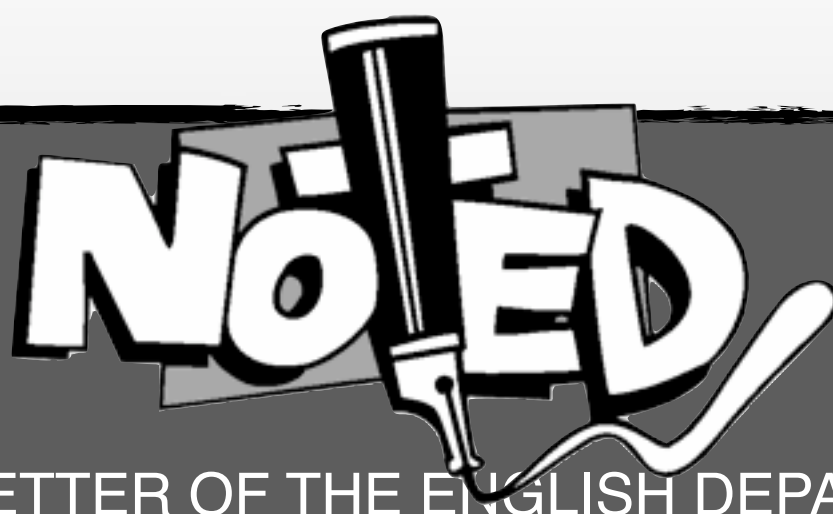


SPRING



2010

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Caedmon  
Beowulf Exeter  
Book Vercelli  
Book Nowel  
Codex Chaucer  
Langland  
Gower Julian of  
Norwich Rolle  
Bacon Dekker  
Donne Fletcher  
Ford Jonson  
Kyd Marlowe  
Massinger  
Middleton Milton  
More Nashe  
Rowley  
Shakespeare  
Shirley Sidney  
Spenser  
Webster Wyatt  
Beaumont  
Fletcher Marvell  
Locke Behn  
Dryden Pope  
Swift  
Philips  
Thomson Young  
Addison Steele  
Stevenson  
Potter  
Hopkins  
Housman  
Joyce  
Conrad  
Yeats  
Woolf  
Forster  
Lawrence  
Eliot  
Faulkner  
Hemingway  
Smollett Radcliffe Wordsworth Coleridge Byron Shelley Keats Godwin Wollstonecraft Scott Austen Blake  
Stevens Frost Moore Bishop Auden Nabokov  
Bronte Thackeray Eliot Dickens Hardy Tennyson Browning Barrett Arnold Rossetti Carroll Lear Hope

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Cover image: *READ! READ! READ!*  
by Arnaud Barras

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# Editorial



So, forth issew'd the Seasons of the yeare;  
First, lusty Spring, all dight in leaues of flowres.  
Indeed, spring is sprung, and in the wake of the  
retreating snows of yesteryear, comes a new  
edition of NOTED! At long last, Arnaud and I are  
pleased to bring you this collection of  
departmental news, creative prose and poetry,  
play reviews, and much more. We have theatre  
commentary from the June 2009 Shakespeare  
trip to London and Stratford-upon-Avon; an  
interview with a stage dresser in Berlin; a  
response to a student's time spent studying in  
China; a survey of the English department  
newsletters of Lausanne and Neuchâtel; a letter

from the head of department Professor Erne;  
the latest departmental news; an editorial on  
the perils of aesthetics; poetry and song lyrics;  
and my etymological meanders.

I would like to thank all the contributors,  
without whom this edition would not be  
possible. We always welcome student writings,  
and remember, it's a great venue to showcase  
your literary talents!

Without further ado, please enjoy!

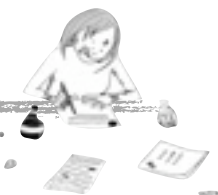
Susanna Gebhardt

## A Note from the Director

Shakespeare's Rosalind points out that a good  
play needs no epilogue, nor, surely, does this  
fine newsletter need a directorial prologue.  
Suffice it to say then, on this occasion, that my  
three-year term as director of the English  
Department is drawing to its close, and I look  
forward to passing on the baton to my  
colleague Deborah Madsen in July. Being  
director comes with its share of joys and  
frustrations, and I hope that the former will  
outnumber the latter during the term of my  
successor, as was generally the case during  
mine. I will single out only one frustration which  
I would gladly have done without, namely the  
plagiarism cases which produce no winners but  
many losers, the staff who spend much  
precious time documenting the cases, the  
director who needs to report them to the  
Faculty, and the students who have stiff

sanctions imposed on them. Among the chief  
joys of being director has been the quality of the  
intellectual and creative energy in the  
department (of which the newsletter in your  
hands is one of many signs) as well as the  
cordial atmosphere in which department  
interactions generally take place. This may be  
the moment then to thank all those who have  
been making my life much easier and happier  
than it could have been over the last three  
years, from the tremendously helpful  
secretaries and librarians, via my supportive  
and inspiring colleagues, to you students who,  
with your thirst for knowledge and passion for  
reading and thinking, make it all worthwhile.

Lukas Erne



# Features



## Department News by Susanna Gebhardt

The English department will have a new **plan d'études** from September 2010. Details are to be announced.

**Conférence Universitaire de Suisse Occidentale** is hosting a doctoral workshop entitled 'Material Texts : Means and Conditions of Publication and Reception' at the University of Geneva, from April 22-23, 2010. The guest speakers are David McKitterick (Cambridge), Peter McDonald (Oxford), and Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford). More information may be found at: <http://english.cuso.ch/>.

**Professor Robert S. Miola**, Gerald Manley Hopkins Professor of English and Professor of Classics, Loyola University, Maryland, will give a conference on 'Two Jesuit Shadows in Shakespeare'. This conference will take place on Tuesday, 13 April 2010 in room PHIL 006.

The **Swiss Association of Medieval and Early Modern English Studies** will be hosting a conference entitled 'Medieval and Early Modern Authorship' from June 30 to July 2, 2010 at the University of Geneva. The plenary speakers include Colin Burrow (Oxford), Patrick Cheney (Penn State), Helen Cooper (Cambridge), Rita Copeland (Pennsylvania), Robert Edwards (Penn State), Alastair Minnis

(Yale), and Brian Vickers (London). From the University of Geneva, Julianna Bark, Sarah Brazil, Emma Depledge, Susanna Gebhardt, Johanna Harris, Kareen Klein, and Louise Wilson will give papers. Sarah Van der Laan (Indiana) and Keith McDonald (Royal Holloway), formerly of the department, will be returning to give papers as well. More information can be found at: <http://home.adm.unige.ch/~erne/authorship2010/>.

The department is glad to welcome back **Michael Röösl**, who is teaching two Analysis of Texts groups this spring.

**Simone Oettli** is on research leave in New Zealand for the Spring 2010 semester.

**Annick Challet** has been awarded the CUSO 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary prize for her project entitled 'Of Cannibals and Zombies: The Migration of Caribbean Tropes'. The project is based on her thesis, which examines Caribbean women writers and literary hybridity.

The department welcomes **Angela Simondetto** to the Secretariat!





## *Steine auf dem Weg zum Pass: Review*

by Michael Rösli

Anja Siouda, a former student of the English Department whom you might remember through her lively contributions to NOTED, has just published her first novel!

*Steine auf dem Weg zum Pass* is a dramatic love story set on the Brünig pass and in Lungern in the adjacent valley. Martin and his two brothers are weary of their bachelordom. They need a hand in their household and through an advertisement meet the mysterious Halima, who will unsettle their single-track lives and confront them with linguistic, cultural and religious boundaries.

After finishing her degree in English, Anja is currently studying at the ETI translation school at the University of Geneva. We heartily congratulate her on her achievement and wish her all the best for her future projects as an author and translator!



# CUSO Conference on Literature and the Environment

## by Arnaud Barras

For those of you who don't know, CUSO, or *Conférence Universitaire de Suisse Occidentale*, regroups the universities of Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel, as well as Basel and Bern. The purpose of the Doctoral Program in English Language and Literature is to provide the best environment for doctoral study so as to create an active research community in English studies.

The conference *Literature and the Environment* was held at the magnificent *Société de Lecture* on the cold and windy weekend of 16-18 October 2009. It was proposed and organized by Dr. Martin Leer, with the help of doctoral student Annick Challet. The conference was divided into seven different panels, entitled *Writing Nature I - Between Justice and Utopia*, *Writing Nature II - Between Water and Waste*, *Navigating Rivers and Deserts*, *Mapping the Environment*, *Writing on the Environment*, *Cities as Environments*, and finally *Language and Space*. Fifteen papers were presented (seven by members of UNIGE), and three keynote speakers talked about their work (Professor Timothy Morton, UC Davis; Professor Timothy Ingold, University of Aberdeen; and Professor Helen Tiffin, University of Tasmania).

After this somehow tedious and formal, yet necessary account of the conference, let me tell you more about my impressions of it. First, the ambience was really cozy, and when we treat environment, it better be! The *Société de Lecture*, with its rooms named after colors (we spent most of our time in the blue room, even though it was rather greenish) was infused with excitement as we were about to tackle the complex and wide-ranging topic of the environment in literature. Thanks to Dr. Leer's inspiring introductory speech, that excitement was turned into concentration. Surely, the coffee available next door helped, for with fifteen presentations in two days (if I remember my math, more than seven presentations a day!!!) the drink was unavoidable.

The first UNIGE speaker was Dr Rachel Hosein Nisbet, with a paper called "Navigating Doubled Terrain: Re-reading Literary Texts as a Geologic Record, and Earth History as a Literary Text." Rachel demonstrated that the geology of earth could be read as a historical text, and that in turn, literary texts could be considered geological records.

Rachel's presentation was followed, after a reinvigorating coffee-break, by Professor Timothy Morton. In his intellectually challenging paper called "Ecology as Text, Text as Ecology," Prof. Morton claimed, among other things, that all texts are environmental, since they necessarily include spaces within which they are written and read, and that environment might be assimilated to a text, for one reads and interacts with it as with an environment.

I realize, as I write this review of the conference, that it looks very much like a paper on the benefits of coffee-drinking, and I apologize for that digression. Yet, as I register the length of my review, and the time I'll need to finish it, hum... let's say concisely, I think I'll get myself a much-needed espresso before I go on.

On Saturday 17 October, the day started with a thrilling presentation of Prof. Tim Ingold's on the ways of mind-walking, a project he was working on using medieval monasticism, Aboriginal art of Australia, Kandinsky's paintings and an ancient Chinese painter whose name I haven't recorded in my notes. He compared the act of writing to path-making, and the act of reading to traveling. In this sense, a journey of the mind is comparable to a journey on the land, the act of reading to a journey on the page, and the act of walking to a journey on landscape.

I had the great honor to present my paper on "Aboriginal Dreaming, Trajectories and Environment in Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria*" after Prof. Ingold's presentation (not before I had a coffee though). The funny thing is that I used many of his anthropological concepts, which, when I learned he would be at the conference, had scared the hell out of me. My





presentation went well, though (at least, that's what I believe), and I was able to talk with Prof. Ingold about his and my work in an enriching post-presentational discussion.

Susanna Gebhardt and David Warner did their presentations in the Panel 5, *Writing on the Environment*. Susanna talked about the materiality of early modern writing, as public and private spaces (spheres) were covered with texts, be they prayers, commandments or biblical verses. David talked about the culture of graffiti and how it covers contemporary urban spaces with "writing." David's awesome presentation using photos of graffitis triggered a lot of good reactions.

Next in panel 6, *Cities as Environments* saw the presentations of Dr Louise Wilson called "City Space and Romance Space in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*", and Anna Iatsenko on Toni Morrison's "Jazz and the City." Louise showed the incompatibility of two conceptions of place, as she demonstrated that the features of the romance were incompatible with the space of the city of London. Anna explored the multiple and complex function of the city of New York in *Jazz*, especially how deception was such an important part of the environment in NYC that it physically influenced its organisms.

Dr David Glyn Wilson wittingly presented a complex paper on "The Utopian Environment in William Morris's later writings." He focused on how Morris uses material anchors to blend environments into a vision of Nowhere, so as to appeal to the reader's emotions.

The presentations of the conference ended with the last keynote speaker, Helen Tiffin,

speaking about "The Speech of Dumb Beasts: Voicing Animals in Literature for Adults." In this fierce presentation, she showed the importance of animals in the study of environmental literature.

On Sunday 18 October, workshops were organized. We had the opportunity to talk about the presentations and environment in a more relaxed way. I was impressed to see our three keynote speakers argue with such enthusiasm on the issue of global warming. Even though we seemed to stray from the main point of the conference, it made all of us think about how our work could be used in a debate of society. In the second part of the workshop, every one of us brought an object, item, or book related to the topic of the environment, so that we could talk briefly about it. I remember especially the bag of nuts, a mix of nuts from all around the world. It seemed to me that that simple item had travelled more distance than all of us united. A flight ticket was also brought, this to express the modern means of transportation and communication. A Tasmanian Devil stuffed animal, a Scottish pebble, a medieval psychedelic map, a fifty-page long article of Heidegger (!?!), all these were items brought by the participants to close the conference.

This is how the CUSO conference on *Literature and Environment* played out. For me with a lot of anxiety at first, then with a lot of fun, as we had the chance to speak during breaks and dinners. I must admit, when I got home on Sunday afternoon... I had a large cup of coffee.

Arnaud Barras

## China: This decade's must-see by Nantana Mckinlay

To most tourists, a booming economy, rich culture and ancient history is the overall picture they acquire while visiting China. It would require a fair amount of thorough reading and the utmost valuable experience living abroad in China in order to better understand the society and culture. Many attentive observers would

remember the media's portrayal of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, and realize that the gargantuan communist country has appalling human rights conditions and is a state where all forms of public protestations are severely repressed. Another aspect that the name of China reminds most people is for the





major role the country is playing in world economy. Despite all the media attention China has been attracting within the last year, dating back from the Sichuan earthquake to the melamine milk scandal, not forgetting the Beijing Olympic games, what really lurks through the small village alleyways and the smog covered urban metropolises is rather different from these preconceptions.

It is no secret that China's economic force has been driven, since Deng Xiaoping opened up the country in the 1980s, by the massive availability of labor force brought by its ever increasing population. Nevertheless there are several cracks in the image China portrays of its constantly booming economy: 'These include environmental problems, increasing consumption of natural resources, water pollution and shortages, endemic corruption, growing and disruptive migration from countryside to cities, drug abuse and prostitution'.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the vastness of the country, the experiences of living there will vary according to region. In Guangzhou, the biggest city south of the Yangtze River, well known for its large factories and international import-export trading companies, the experience of spending one academic year studying in a Chinese university was absolutely unique. Unlike other major Chinese cities that are visited on most touristic routes, Guangzhou is a modern Chinese city where a lot of contrasts can be seen. Whether it is from the skyscrapers to the shanty town dwellings in which many migrant workers live, or from the luxurious five star hotels and restaurants charging exorbitant prices, to the back streets behind Shangxia Jiu Lu, the main street where most locals do their own lot of shopping, the wide gap between the wealthy and the poor is very palpable.

Since Guangzhou is famous for its wonderful culinary products and restaurants, even within China, this leads many people to think that people eat like kings all the time. The reality is far from this illusion. While attending the best university in the whole area, 中山大学 or Sun Yat-sen University, my canteen meals generally consisted of hard rice, sauce, little bitter green vegetables and a chicken leg or fried egg omelet. All other food options were either

extremely greasy, contained intestines, some form of animal innards or meat balls that I didn't trust. Eating out and going to restaurants was reserved for special occasions. As foreign students, we often chose a foreign cuisine within the Asian panoply: Thai, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian and Indian were our main picks and quite costly on a student's budget. The rare times we ventured to Chinese restaurants were to try out the specialty cuisine originating from different Chinese provinces, such as North Western cuisine with its meat sticks and fried or boiled delicious dumplings.

Much of the international media coverage is biased and one sided. It has a tendency to portray the country as either good or bad. Since understanding China is an extremely difficult task as many aspects are interwoven, very few reporters managed to understand and communicate a true picture. Some recent books such as *Factory Girls* by former Wall Street Journal correspondent Leslie T. Chang or *The Last Days of Old Beijing* written by Michael Meyer, artfully expose a facet of Chinese society. The composition of such books takes time, which most reporters do not have.

Because of this wide diversity, even after three years of studying Sinology, with classes on Chinese history, literature, classical Chinese texts and much more, there are still many aspects of China of which I remain ignorant.

[1] Society Guardian, Tuesday 14 November 2006 09.17



# QUIZ: "Which English department staff members are you most like?"

by Julianna Bark

*This questionnaire is dedicated to my A/T students from the Fall 2009 term.*

**Ever wondered whether you had anything in common with your teacher last semester? Here's a way to find out!**

**1. Which is your favorite poem in the A/T Reader?**

- a. "The Altar" by George Herbert
- b. "The Flea" by John Donne
- c. "She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways" by William Wordsworth
- d. "Strange Meeting" by Wilfred Owen
- e. "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold
- f. "O Where Are You Going?" by W. H. Auden
- g. All of them. What a fabulous selection!
- h. "Jack Sprat" (English nursery rhyme)

**2. Your favorite English phrase or expression:**

- a. "Flipping heck!"
- b. "Always look on the bright side of life" (set to music as in Monty Python's *Life of Brian*)
- c. "Me fail English, that's unpossible" (spoken by Ralph Wiggam in *The Simpsons*)
- d. "Rats!"
- e. "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!"
- f. "The world is your oyster"
- g. Both "Fiddling while Rome burns" and "To have a finger in every pie"
- h. "There goes your ball game, Pink"

**3. Your favorite book of all time:**

- a. You can't make up your mind between *A Room with a View* by E. M. Forster or *Possession* by A. S. Byatt

b. *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift

c. *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller* by Italo Calvino

d. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by C.S. Lewis

e. *Middlemarch* by George Eliot

f. *L'histoire du prince Pipo, du cheval Pipo et de la princesse Popi* by Pierre Gripari

g. "Paradise Lost" by John Milton

h. *This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

**4. Your favorite composer/ musician:**

- a. Sufjan Stevens
- b. Smokey Robinson
- c. Jeff Buckley
- d. You have eclectic tastes: you like Frédéric Chopin just as much as Depeche Mode
- e. Giuseppe Verdi
- f. You can't decide between Sergei Prokofiev and Tori Amos
- g. Johann Sebastian Bach
- h. Fred Astaire

**5. Your favorite artist:**

- a. Marc Chagall
- b. Alphonse Mucha
- c. Francis Bacon
- d. Leonardo da Vinci
- e. James Abbott McNeill Whistler



f. Jean-Etienne Liotard

g. Maybe Rembrandt? Or Vermeer? Or even Matthias Grünewald?

h. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

**6. The sport you most enjoy playing/ following:**

a. Hockey

b. Rugby League

c. Rugby Union

d. Volleyball

e. Lacrosse or cricket

f. Swimming

g. Playing: all racket sports, especially tennis, squash, badminton, and table tennis.

Following: all these, and many others, such

as football, baseball (when in the US), cricket (when in the UK), and so on.

h. Horse riding

**7. Your favorite meal:**

a. Anything Thai

b. Passion fruit

c. Anything Greek

d. Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding (with gravy!)

e. Salad, whether vegetable or fruit, with cheese

f. Anything Italian

g. Traditional Christmas goose

h. Korean BBQ

*See your score on  
next page...*



## QUIZ RESULTS: "Which English department staff members are you most like?" by Julianna Bark

	A's	Johanna Harris!
	B's	Emma Depledge!
	C's	Sarah Brazil!
If most of your answers are mostly	D's	Fiona Tolhurst!
	E's	Valerie Fehlbaum!
	F's	Julianna Bark!
	G's	Lukas Erne!
	H's	Susanna Gebhardt!

## Two new English Newsletters: UNINE and UNIL by Arnaud Barras

The Universities of Lausanne and Neuchâtel have each started their own Newsletter last year. They are respectably called *Muse* (Magazine for Unil students of English) and *The E-Paper* (The Electronic Newsletter of the English Institute of Unine).

*Muse* published its second issue in December 2009, at a formidable frequency of two issues per semester! The magazine comprises the traditional editorial and departmental news, as well as four sections: reviews, travels abroad, fiction and poetry, and a special section called "The Very Merry Christmas Section." The 28-pages magazine is edited by Sarah-Jane Moloney, who is assisted by Melissa Allcock. Its next issue will be published on 1 April 2010.

*The E-Paper* published its first issue in April 2009. The six-pages newsletter, whose editor is Ali Assad, was composed of an editorial, a report from a student on her Erasmus stay at Sheffield Hallam University, an album of the month, interviews of members of the staff, a report on Dubai, a report on the NATO meeting in Strasbourg, and finally a review of the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*.

I am particularly happy to notice that NOTED has company in other English Departments of *Suisse Romande*. Not only variety is important in the media industry, but it is essential to give a voice to the students of the English Departments throughout Switzerland. I can only encourage students to voice their opinions, their comments and creative minds through these newsletters. I also wish those two new offshoots great success in their future.

You can find the electronic versions of the *Muse* and *The E-Paper* at these addresses:

**Muse:** <http://www.unil.ch/angl/page73401.html>

**The E-Paper:** [http://www2.unine.ch/anglais/page29330\\_en\\_GB.html](http://www2.unine.ch/anglais/page29330_en_GB.html)





# Theatre



## Behind the scenes – An Interview with a dresser by Kareen Klein

After a couple of reviews from the conventional point of view of the spectator, looking straight at the stage, I'd like to take you backstage. Julia works as a dresser in one of Berlin's many large theatres. This means she's responsible for the costumes – and even for (un)dressing the actors. I met up with her and gave free rein to my curiosity as to this unusual job.

**Noted: What are your daily routine jobs? What do you do on a 'regular day' (if such a thing exists)?**

**Julia:**

That depends on whether I work at a play during its final rehearsal-period before the premiere or am in charge of an already running show.

Then I'd come to the theatre about 4 hours before the play starts to iron some of the costumes, collect all the washed items from our laundry and start to set up the dressing rooms so everything will be in place when the actors arrive.

Depending on the play performed, I'd then go backstage to prepare everything for changes happening there, and/or place the necessary items on the stage. Once the show has started, I'm there to help the actors change, especially during quick and very quick changes.

Finally, my working day usually ends with getting everything on- and backstage back to its positions, tidying up the wardrobes, collecting

everything that needs washing and taking it to our laundry.

**Noted: What relationship do you have with the actors, with the director and the rest of the team?**

**Julia:**

Of course, that always depends on the individual person you meet. But as we dressers are so close to the creative staff – and especially to the actors, sometimes you could barely be closer – we usually have closer contact than other 'helping hands' like scene-builders. But then again, there seems to be a bit of a dressers'-codex saying: 'We try to be as invisible as possible so as not to disturb those creative geniuses at their work'. Of course, there are actors and directors who seem to share that opinion, but in general there's good teamwork as everybody knows that everyone involved in the play is needed to make it run.

**Noted: Are you part of the rehearsal process?**

**Julia:**

Yes, during the last one or two weeks of rehearsals before a play's premiere. At that time the team moves from our rehearsal-stages to the main-house. And there we have an intense time of run-throughs – usually two of them daily.



Then I'm kind of an assistant to the assistant of the costume designer and work as the linking part between them and the theatre – as the design-team usually is an external one and I know the local staff, working-structures and whereabouts of the house. And when I don't help looking for clothes or accessories in our props room or prepare shoes for their stage-use, I already take care of the actors and their rehearsal costumes and their changes.

**Noted: What do you like most about your job?**

**Julia:**

That it takes place in a theatre.

I love the moment at the end of the play when the lights go out and there is this short deep silence before the applause. When the audience is thinking, 'Is that it?'. I hold my breath knowing that something good has just happened out there and in a moment a wave of joy and enthusiasm will hit the stage and make the actors smile.

**Noted: What do you like least?**

**Julia:**

The time I spend waiting. Be it for a play to start – during the last hour before the play I have to be there in case anything happens – or a play to end when there are no changes and I have nothing to do. Or the time after the play when I wait for the actors to leave the dressing rooms so I can tidy them up and go home.

**Noted: Was there ever anything that went wrong and you had to improvise?**

**Julia:**

Luckily so far I had no big incidents. Only small things like noticing right before the show that a button is missing and sewing it on very quickly. Oh, and one time I put the wrong shoes onstage and the actor had to play in shoes far too small for him. That was embarrassing!

**Noted: Are you able to be creative in your daily job routine? Can you decide about things or give your opinion?**

**Julia:**

Well, sometimes when I need some excitement I start to fold the underwear slightly differently and imagine the surprised and astonished looks on the actors' faces ...

But during rehearsal times and also in smaller productions when you work with no assistant but only with a costume-designer I am closer to the creative process and sometimes get the chance to express my opinion.

**Noted: Do you get to see (part of) the play while you're working?**

**Julia:**

That depends on whether there are changes during the play and what the stage design's like. In some plays you can see parts of the stage from behind and in some you can't. But in general I always have the possibility to at least hear a radio play, as we have microphones transmitting everything going on onstage to speakers distributed throughout the whole building.

**Noted: What show or dramatist or theatre or director or actor would you like to work with if you had the choice?**

**Julia:**

I'm not too well versed in the theatre world. It would probably be somebody easy to work with.

But as you ask me to dream... Alan Rickman would come to play at our house and my job wouldn't be a dresser's. I'd be the theatre education practitioner working with the play – it would not be the traditional form of theatre but something growing and being experienced differently by actors and audience together!

But maybe one should separate those two dreams from each other as I can't really assess Mr. Rickman's opinion on interactive theatre...



**Noted: What was your most memorable moment in this job?**

**Julia:**

Recently I found myself backstage with two bottles of theatre-blood (tempered at body temperature) in my hands. I was suddenly part of the big battle at the end of the Nibelungen and my job was to splatter the actors with blood every time they came backstage to pick up one of about 95 buckets of blood to pour down the huge steps that were the stage. That literally

blood-dripping moment – giving me a rather intense insight into the director's idea of this moment's atmosphere on stage – and the moment right after that when a couple of good looking actors (all about my age and all smeared with blood) start to strip off all their clothes and run away while you are left behind with a huge basket of clothes drenched in blood; that – right there – probably was a moment I'll remember for a good while.

Interview conducted by Kareen Klein

## A comparison between *The Winter's Tale* performances at the Old Vic in London and at the Courtyard Theatre in Stratford by Sophie Badoux

The two performances of the *Winter's Tale* in London and Stratford were two impressive productions. A first distinction to mention that can influence the audience's opinion on the play is the general setting, including the form of the stage and the position of the public towards the acting space. The acting space was very different in each production. In London, the stage was a proscenium one, which gave an impression of distance from the performance. The size of the room was much bigger than the one in Stratford and the balconies were already at a great distance from the stage. It seems that it was more difficult for some members of the audience to be completely fascinated by the performance. On the contrary, in Stratford, there was a thrust stage, which helped the audience feel closer to the actors and therefore more concerned and more into the play than with a 19<sup>th</sup> century stage. Concerning the production at the Old Vic, knowing that the play director was the great Sam Mendes and that Autolycus, one of the leading roles, was played by Ethan Hawke, could have influenced one's judgment at first. However, the actors and the production in general did not fall short on the reputation that had preceded them. In Stratford, the performance of the well-known Greg Hicks as Leontes was very impressive. The interpretation of Hermione by Kelly Hunter was

a bit deceiving as she sometimes seemed too aggressive and energetic for a feeble Hermione at some decisive points, like her judgment. The young couple Perdita and Florizel did not really convince the audience either. Perdita, especially, did not look like a lost princess in Bohemia and failed to convince me at the reunion with her mother at the end. In Stratford, what held elements of performance together was the magnificent setting and the impressive performance of Greg Hicks.

Something that seems to come back in many performances of the *Winter's Tale* and, that clearly did in these two, was the choice of the costumes. At the court in Sicilia, dark colours were privileged, while in Bohemia the stage was suddenly colourful, expressing springtime and fertility. However, the point of view chosen to approach the play was very different from one performance to the other. I had the impression that the performance at the Old Vic focused more on the transmission of emotions to the audience, and personally, it worked very well for me as I was completely absorbed by the story that was unfolding under my eyes. The production in Stratford was less impressive in terms of the transmission of this energy to the public. Moreover, some disturbing laughs from the audience were sometimes not in keeping with the tragic action that was



happening and did not help to feel involved emotionally in the production. In Stratford, the cast concentrated more on achieving a complex scenography and developing themes present in Shakespeare's play. In an easy manner, it could be said in my opinion that the *Winter's Tale* in London was more emotional and the one in Stratford was more intellectual. This can also be noted simply by the setting in Stratford, which was composed of impressive bookshelves that then transformed into a scary bear and colourful trees in Bohemia. An emphasis was clearly put on books, culture and imagination. Furthermore, in London, to emphasize this impression of "emotion versus intellectual aspect", the first part of the play, which happens in Sicilia, was taking place in a sort of private space. We were following the action from Mamillius' bedroom. Then, the second part of the play when we move to Bohemia, we moved to a public space. On the opposite, in Stratford, the first part was already in a public space at the court, and did not emphasize this intimacy and those emotions that we had in the first production of the *Winter's Tale*.

Generally, the setting at the Old Vic was minimalist and the lighting played an important role in explaining where the action was happening. The scenes at the court were quite bare in terms of set and props while in Bohemia there were far more props used. However, this nearly bare stage helped to intensify the actions. There were not many gestures and movements in the first part in Sicilia but when there was a movement, it seemed more significant in this minimalist atmosphere. As said before, the setting in Stratford was more furnished by the books and other props that conveyed a totally different atmosphere, more public.

In both productions, the figure of Mamillius was a very important one. However, in London, his character bore more meaning all along the performance than in Stratford. At the Old Vic, the production began with Mamillius saying that "a sad tale's best for winter" (Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* 2.1.25), announcing by that the coming tragedy and his predictive role. Mamillius, from his bed, will then follow all the developments until Hermione is sent to prison.

Moreover, Mamillius seemed to have a friendly relationship with Polixenes, which challenged Leontes not only as a husband but also as a father. Those aspects are not to be found in the production in Stratford.

Regarding Leontes' jealousy and his general behaviour later in the play, there was a major difference in the interpretation in London and in Stratford. At the Old Vic, Leontes' jealousy seemed justified because of the obvious flirting between Hermione and Polixenes at the beginning. However, as the scene happened in a private space, nobody from the court can tell

Leontes that he was right to be jealous. On the contrary, Leontes' jealousy still seemed unjustified, as nobody has noticed apart from him. He is perceived as mad by the people at the court. Nevertheless, the audience had witnessed the flirting between Hermione and Polixenes and had a tendency to sympathize with Leontes, which is something that people do not tend to get while reading the play. In Stratford, the production did not play on this aspect and, as the scene happened in a public space, Leontes' jealousy can only be seen as unfounded, which changed the whole interpretation of Leontes' character all along the performance.

In the same way, at the Old Vic, when Leontes is presented with his newborn child, he has some moments where he seemed to be touched by the baby and the audience gets the impression that he is maybe going to change his mind and keep the child. The audience clearly sympathizes with Leontes in this scene as he seemed torn by the choice he has to make. Once more, at the Courtyard, the opposite interpretation is preferred. Leontes was not at all touched by his child but considered it as a new example of the betrayal of Hermione. This interpretation also results from the first choice of the unfounded jealousy of Leontes. While in London, as his jealousy was maybe justified, it also seemed more subtle that Leontes could get touched by his baby.

Another important aspect that was treated very differently by the two productions was the involvement of magical or godly elements. At the Old Vic, it was clear that the magic had an important role to play in the performance. Be it





at the judgment where the oracle is delivered by a magical feather that wrote alone on the table, or during the statue scene where Hermione seemed literally to resurrect, the magic is very present during all the turning points of the play. Paulina was also shrouded in mystery but, on the other hand, she was not the only one who triggered those magical moments. She was not interpreted as a witch because the lines that described her as such were cut out from the production. On the opposite, there was a higher power that manipulated those characters who were blinded by their problems and chained to their poor human condition. This supernatural interpretation was not at the centre of the production in Stratford. It seemed that there was no magical element at all at the Courtyard. The oracle was delivered in a simple manner without any reference to a magical or godly power. In the same way, it was chosen to interpret the statue scene as if Hermione had not died and was not going through resurrection. At the Old Vic, Hermione seemed not aged when she appeared as a statue, which suggests that she is really coming back from the dead as her lost child is found. At the Courtyard, Paulina and Hermione seemed more accomplices and even the audience appeared as being part of the secret, knowing that Hermione is not a statue but the real woman that Leontes had wept for all those sixteen years.

To conclude, the production at the Old Vic dragged the spectator into a fully emotional and

sometimes supernatural story that is told with all the subtlety needed for a Shakespearean classic such as the *Winter's Tale*. The audience swayed between a real tragedy in which it can recognize its own humanity and a more comical world where it can lose itself in laughter helped by a brilliant singing Autolycus. At the end, the production did not finish with the perfect happy ending but rather let the audience chose its own interpretation as the curtain dropped on Leontes extending his hand towards Hermione but not managing to reach her.

At the Courtyard, the atmosphere was more a reflexive one. The impressive setting composed of books was a complete success. However, the pastoral world was a bit dull, maybe helped by a country music not very cheerful. Autolycus had also some exceptional moments though, and he did not exceed the other characters, which was maybe the only problem of the Autolycus at the Old Vic.

Personally, I was so moved by the outstanding performance of the *Winter's Tale* at the Old Vic, that I could not do otherwise than to find the second performance a bit less outstanding! However, in general, the actors were of a very good level and the only fact that they had so many lines to learn and that they interpreted them in a so fair manner was already impressive and deserved loads of applause, which unfortunately the British public is not used to giving.

## **“Let every eye negotiate for itself”: A review of *Romeo and Juliet* by Tania Gentet Ganose**

Dominic Dromgoole's young and energetic *Romeo and Juliet* was a centrepiece of the Shakespeare's Globe 2009 season. Whilst this play has been categorised as a tragedy, this performance seemed to be focused on the entertaining and amusing aspects of the play rather than on its literary, social, psychological, even intellectual, aspects. As a result, the tragic nature of the play seemed to have been set aside in favour of the purely entertaining and

frivolous components of *Romeo and Juliet*. With a strong emphasis placed on the sexual puns found in the text, the love theme of *Romeo and Juliet* took on an erotic and physical dimension, creating a certain amount of satire for the audience. As a matter of fact, most emotions were translated by physical actions, leading to a loss in the emotionality of the play. This was aggravated by the division of the play. With the first part being so comical and lively, the



remaining acts, which were more sober and less dynamic, failed in fully capturing the audience's attentions and sympathies.

Although the emotional aspects of the play were difficult to appreciate, this production certainly deserved praise for the overall performance of its actors. *Romeo and Juliet* was acted in a very natural way, making it fluid and easy to follow. Furthermore, Dromgoole chose to distinguish the characters socially by the use of accents, thus guiding the audience's awareness of the differences between the rich and the poor of 16<sup>th</sup> century Verona. This was done in such a way that the demarcation of the social hierarchy of the characters in the play reflected what would have been that of the audience of the Globe in Shakespeare's time. Indeed, as a groundling, one could almost identify with the lower class characters of *Romeo and Juliet*. As for the importance of doubling in this production, it was interesting to see how important characters became lesser ones, or how actors playing high class characters doubled as low class characters. This not only reminded the audience of the doubling pattern of the early modern period, but also suggested how one's fortunes in life can suddenly change for the better or worse, as do Romeo's and Juliet's.

In terms of text in performance, this production made only very few cuts and some additions which helped give meaning to certain parts of the play. For example, in the last act, Friar Lawrence's relating of what has just happened added meaning to the deaths of the lovers. The main textual alterations were in the order of certain speeches, especially by the character of the Nurse. There was also a very strong play on words by certain characters, especially by Mercutio, which, whilst highlighting the wealth of Shakespeare's language, also contributed to the sexual innuendo of this performance.

The technical details of the play, such as set, costumes, stage properties and music, are also praiseworthy for their attention to detail and intricate role in the overall production. Firstly, the set was built in such a way that another clear distinction could be made between the three social levels of the play. The balcony was

adorned with what looked like marble walls and columns with rich designs. In between the higher level of the balcony and the ground floor of the actual stage could be seen small iconographic paintings, suggesting the small, yet important, role of the religious characters such as Friar Lawrence. Finally, the ground floor of the stage was set up to represent a market square, with stalls of food and a general lower class working environment, such as a blacksmith's workshop. The costumes served two purposes in this production. Firstly, their intricacy distinguished between the different social classes of the play. The higher classes wore richly embroidered gowns, with warm and heavy materials. They also were the only ones to wear jewellery. The friars were dressed in Franciscan attire, with crosses to mark their religious status. The lower classes wore looser, often tattered clothes in drab colours and lesser quality materials. The second purpose of the costumes was to distinguish between the two families of *Romeo and Juliet*. On the one hand, the Capulets' costumes and those of their followers were in red tones. On the other, those of the Montagues were in blue hues. Moreover, characters such as Benvolio, the Prince and Paris, wore green or earthly tones, suggesting their neutrality or pacifism. Lastly, the characters of Romeo and Juliet wore costumes that suggested that they clearly belonged to a particular family whilst simultaneously being in between both houses. For example, Romeo wore a blue costume with red stripes whereas Juliet wore a green dress with a red bow as a belt. The stage properties were closely weaved into the patchwork of the performance and the focus was placed on the smaller props. For example, Romeo's dagger is seen in the hands of several characters, suggesting that they all contributed to the death of the lovers. Props also played a role in staging gender issues as it was mainly women that one saw working in the background whilst the men were idle. This use of secondary props in the background of the stage also helped in transmitting the immediacy and social reality within which the play is set. Lastly, props also served to convey the time of day through the use of candles and torches. This created a greater proximity between the fictional world of the play and the non-fictional



world of the spectators. Finally, music and sound effects also had an important role in this production, serving as intensifiers of emotions in particular moments of the play. Music, and especially song, was also what held the different elements of the performance together. The chorus of four singers was the only element that remained constant throughout the play, not only helping to link different parts of the play together to form a whole, but also serving the practical purpose of facilitating stage and costume changes for the other characters.

In conclusion, the emotional shortcomings of the play, and especially of the two lovers, made this *Romeo and Juliet* more about fighting and sex than about love. It is certainly curious that whereas the technical aspects of the performance, such as set, costumes and music, suggested a detailed, researched and profound approach to the text of *Romeo and Juliet*, the acting and interpretation of emotions of this play failed to do so. If one considers that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a play which, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, has been acted, filmed, sung and rewritten countless times and which has been studied, analysed, discussed,

even criticised by scholars, journalists, and critics from all over the world, one wonders how, with so much knowledge at hand, this production failed to convey the profound meaning of this universal play. How is it that this production, of a play which is universally acknowledged to reach the very foundations of human nature and emotion, and hence touch its readers and audiences so profoundly, somehow only managed to entertain and amuse? Perhaps Shakespeare holds the answer to this when he writes that "Oft expectation fails, and most oft there where most it promises" (*All's Well That Ends Well*, II, 1, 145-147)? Or perhaps art, in its very objective quality, pleases some and displeases others? If this is so, then let us take Shakespeare's advice on this and close the curtain here:

"Let every eye negotiate for itself  
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch  
Against whose charms faith melteth in blood"  
(*Much Ado About Nothing*, II, 1, 178-180)

*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare.  
Dir. Dominic Dromgoole. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London. 14 June 2009.

## "It's fun, tragedy, isn't it?"<sup>1</sup> by Kareen Klein

*Macbeth* at the neues theater in Halle, 16 January 2010 (premiere), directed by Herbert Fritsch, translation by Sabrina Zwach

On the tickets, it said "Das Trauerspiel von Macbeth". Although "Trauerspiel" translates as "tragedy", it can also be taken figuratively, as "a fiasco", a "sorry affair", a "sad spectacle" – something inspiring pity, where you go "oooohhhh" in a low voice. So, my friend joked, we don't want to go and see *that!* But of course we did.

In fact, this "Tragedy of Macbeth" was hardly tragic at all. The production tried to make *everything* funny. Any possibility for slapstick was shamelessly milked; no pun was left unpunished, no occasion for a joke left out. And

the production was not just "funny" in the sense of comical and inspiring laughter, but also in the sense of "weird". Hardly anyone on stage (except perhaps Macduff when he was mourning for his family) was normal. Everyone seemed to have about half a dozen screws loose. There were hardly any "real" tragic moments in the play. The tragedy only seemed to consist in everyone's pathetic and ridiculous behavior. A "Trauerspiel" in the figurative sense. (Small parenthesis here: apparently, this is not the only "comic" production of a Shakespearean tragedy – the Hamburger Schauspielhaus showed a *Romeo and Juliet* that was "rather un-tragic – and rather corny" [Ulf Pape, "*Romeo und Julia* in Hamburg: Abtanzball statt Nachtigall",



*SPIEGEL-ONLINE*, 17.01.2010; my translation].)

To come back to the un-tragic *Macbeth*: Duncan, for instance, the majestic king, the father-figure, the alpha-male was an incapable, dim-witted, childish creature. He incited his followers to join him when he was laughing and his prime achievement seemed to be to re-hook a red-velvet cord that had come loose from a barrier that surrounded the set – this was complemented by great applause from everyone onstage. Duncan's murder thus hardly inspired pity. At least Banquo showed a little bit more of a backbone. Another normally inherently serious character, the doctor who diagnoses Lady Macbeth's madness, was portrayed as an incompetent, lecherous, crack-pot quack. He eagerly put on Lady Macbeth's fur coat (which she had stepped out of in her sleepwalking, to stalk "to bed" in her negligee) and lasciviously stroked it (and himself) during his next appearance.

Also, hardly anyone moved about normally. An actor standing up straight was an exception. Everyone was constantly moving, bending over backwards, forwards, sideways, moving about in snake-like movements, on the floor, lying, sprawling, rolling, jumping, crouching.

All of this movement, which initially was rather fatiguing to follow, was partly due to the special arrangement of the stage: the audience sat on four sides of a red square carpet, surrounded by elegant barriers of golden metal and red velvet (of the kind you find at official events or in fancy hotels). The stage had four entrances which were abundantly used to increase the constant movement. This really created something of a boxing ring atmosphere. Furthermore, all props (except a letter, a handkerchief and a few flashlights) were disposed off. No set, no weapons, no blood.

The scene was set somewhere in the swinging fifties (as the ladies' dresses and the music suggested). All men were clothed in GI-like uniforms (but the fancy kind). A dozen young actors complemented the different armies and made for quite memorably choreographed crowd scenes. Unfortunately, it was extremely visible that everyone was wearing wigs, since a broad band of cloth peaked out beneath the hairline – this may, of

course, have been intentional. The witches were three vulgar ladies in fashionable evening dress. The trio was embellished by a star appearance of a singing Hecate in drag. The witches circled around a microphone that hung from the ceiling in the middle of the stage. For the apparitions that inform Macbeth about his future – "Beware Macduff" – "None of woman born shall harm Macbeth" – "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until / Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him" – the witches fed him drugs and Macbeth's voice then spoke the prophecies himself; his body was held down on the floor by the witches during his convulsions.

Another odd scene was the discovery of Duncan's murder. Macduff's lines "O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart / Cannot conceive nor name thee!" were jumbled into a speech where he repeatedly said "Horror" but in an absolutely neutral way as one might say "bless you" or "Quite a cloudy day, today, isn't it?". As soon as the other characters realized what had happened, a piercing scream from Lady Macbeth initiated pure chaos and a cacophony of voices, accompanied by everyone running across the stage like headless chickens. Strange, but why not ...

The only real comic scene in the text of *Macbeth*, the porter's scene, which (in Shakespeare's text) serves as comic relief after Duncan's murder, was cut. In a way, this seemed consistent. After all, who needs comic relief in a comedy?

A sequence that could be accorded a near-tragic tone consisted of the final scenes where Macbeth is nearly alone in his castle, is awaiting the enemy's army and receives nothing but bad news from his few remaining followers. The fact that Macbeth was quite alone was accentuated. The only people still keeping him company were the horny doctor, a tight-lipped messenger who lapsed into elliptic fits because of his nervousness and a mute, handicapped, very young Seyton. This crazy atmosphere reminded one of the *Führerbunker* in the last hours (as my friend suggested) – madmen on their way to certain death. And, in an odd way, this pathetic sequel of scenes was indeed somehow tragic.





What was also somewhat pathetic, if not tragic, were the English lines interspersed into the largely modern German translation. "Macbeath" or "Macbess" simply hurt. And the German accent didn't exactly help comprehension. Why the most famous lines had to be repeated in English completely eluded me ...

Yet Birnam wood was admittedly a real coup



Mr and Mrs. Macbeth (Danne Hoffmann and Jörg Lichtenstein)

de théâtre. As is known, the enemy forces decide to have each soldier cut off a tree branch and hide himself behind it, so that the size and advancement of the army will be difficult to gauge from Macbeth's castle – the wood thus seems to move and one prophecy is fulfilled.

In this production, the whole cast appeared in Chewbacca-like dress, made of hairy, military camouflage-green fibers, entirely covering their bodies, making them indistinguishable from one another. Macduff and Macbeth also donned these costumes and blended into the crowd during their duel – thus participating in the final showdown. The last scene presented the audience with a rhythmically stomping and moving crowd of "trees" who shouted and/or sang "Death – brother – daughter – friend – father – death" etc. Quite spectacular. But, of course, the comedy had to strike back and the very last bit of song was thus "Ihr könnt nach Hause geh'n", i. e. "you can go home" – a well-known football chant in Germany, addressed to the losers of a game.

The "comedy of Macbeth" thus ended in peals of laughter from the audience, followed by an astonishingly enthusiastic and long-lasting applause. I went home with mixed feelings.

Possibly, my preconceptions about tragedy are simply too deep-rooted. It's okay to play the first half of a tragedy as a comedy. The text of *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, might even demand a comic performance. And I've also seen some successful *Hamlets* with a comic first half. But here the tragedy of *Macbeth* was precisely the strained comedy.

<sup>1</sup> This quote is taken from *Educating Rita* (directed by Lewis Gilbert, 1983). Here is part of the dialogue between teacher and student:

**Frank:** We must not confuse tragedy - well, the real tragedy of drama - with the merely tragic. Let's take a tragic hero, Macbeth for instance. We see that the flaw in his character forces him to take the inevitable step towards his own doom. Whereas, what we read in the newspaper as being tragic - err, "man killed by falling tree" - is not a tragedy.

**Rita:** It is for the poor sod under the tree. What are you laughing at?

**Frank:** It's tragic, yes, absolutely tragic, but it is not a tragedy in the way that *Macbeth* is a tragedy.

**Rita:** Why?

**Frank:** Because the tree...

**Rita:** I wish I could think like they do.

**Frank:** It's quite easy, Rita.

**Rita:** Oh, it is for you, and them. I just thought it was a dead exciting story, *Macbeth*. But you lot, you see all sorts of things in it, don't you? It's fun, tragedy, isn't it? ([http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie\\_scripts/e/educating-rita-script-transcript-caine.html](http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/e/educating-rita-script-transcript-caine.html), 27 February 2010)



# Film



## The English Department Film Club Spring Semester 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>

Date:	Film Title:	Director:	Proposed by:
THU Mar. 04, 2010	<b>The Blues: Warming Up By Devil's Fire (2003)</b>	Charles Burnett	Anna Iatsenko
THU Mar. 11, 2010	<b>Stranger Than Fiction (2006)</b>	Marc Forster	Deborah Madsen
THU Mar. 18, 2010	<b>Otello (1887)</b> Live recording of 1996 New York Metropolitan Opera production	Giuseppe Verdi	Lukas Erne
THU Mar. 25, 2010	<b>Get On the Bus (1996)</b>	Spike Lee	Anna Iatsenko
THU Apr. 01, 2010	<b>Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1996)</b>	Terry Gilliam et al.	Sarah Brazil
THU Apr. 15, 2010	<b>West Side Story (2006)</b>	Robert Wise	Lukas Erne
THU Apr. 22, 2010	<b>Titus (1999)</b>	Julie Taymor	Fiona Tolhurst
THU Apr. 29, 2010	<b>Killer of Sheep (1977)</b>	Charles Burnett	Anna Iatsenko
THU May.06, 2010	<b>Dumplings (2004)</b>	Fruit Chan	Deborah Madsen
THU May.20, 2010	<b>ShakespeaRe-Told: Macbeth (2005)</b>	Mark Bronzel	Lukas Erne



# Etymology



A few etymological brevities I noted when researching this article: heresy derives from the Greek verb *hairein*, 'to choose'. The words 'big' and 'dog' are etymologically unaccounted for. 'Ketchup' was first the Chinese *ke-tsiap*. The original 'cretins' were 'Christians' (from the French *crétin*, and the Swiss patois *crestin* or *creitin*), and the verb 'to walk' is from the Old English *wealcan*, meaning 'to roll'. Now onto the Romans.

Roman soldiers seemed to have inadvertently lent a good many words to the English language. In the salad days of the Roman republic, the Romans established a saltworks in Ostia, and founded the first road, the *Via Salaria*, to transport this delicious spice to and fro. Each soldier was given a portion of salt each day, which was replaced by a sum of money, presumably used to buy salt. This was called, in Latin, *salārium* from *sal* or salt, giving us the English noun *salary*.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes the first English usage in 1377, and the specific application of the word to a priest's stipend from c1390 to c1520. The Latin *sal* became the French *solde*, the basis for the English *soldier* (Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History*, 47). Indeed, the Roman habit of salting greens additionally gave rise to the word *salad*, or salted (Kurlansky, 48).

When the Roman soldiers weren't running about, exfoliating, exchanging salt, or curing things, they were giving rise to words such as 'addict' and 'decimate'. In Roman law, 'addiction' was a 'formal giving over...a surrender, or dedication, of any one to a master' (*OED*). An etymology website goes a step farther, proclaiming that an 'addict' was a slave given to a Roman soldier for valorous military service. It enters English in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with some sense of being bound, or employed in service to something: as in 'He addicted him selfe to neyther of them' (J. Daus, *Sleidane's Comm.*, 138a).

While Shakespeare used the word to express a dalliance with drug, as in 'to addict themselves to Sack' (meaning wine, *OED* n.<sup>3</sup>; 2 *Henry IV* 4.3.135), the word did not acquire an association with narcotics until 1906, referring to opium, and in 1909, morphine.

'Decimate' comes from the Latin *decimare* meaning 'the removal or destruction of one-tenth', from *decem* (ten). In English, 'decimation' was first used in 1549 to refer to a tax of one-tenth, and particularly applied to Cromwell's 1655 tax on the Royalists (*OED*). It also retained its military meaning 'to select by lot and put to death one in every ten', particularly of mutinous soldiers; which I suppose is better than a 1867 meaning of 'the execution of nine out of every ten' (*OED*). This



draconian practice came from the Romans; etymologist Charles Hodgson explains that a legion – which included 3,000 or 6,000 men – was lined up, following mutinous action. The first soldier picked a number from one to ten, and the soldier corresponding to that number (so the fifth soldier, if the number five was chosen) would say *unus*, the sixth soldier, *duo*, etc. The tenth soldier, shouting *decem*, was killed (podictionary.com). The first victims of English decimation were the Irish; it was described of a group in 1600: ‘All...were by a martiall courte condemned to dye, which sentence was yet mittigated by the Lord Lieutenants mercy, by which they were onely decimated by lott’ (J. Dymmok, *Treat. Ireland*, 42); and how ‘In Ireland...he [Earl of Essex] decimated certain troops that ran away, renewing a peece of the Roman Discipline’ (*Reliq. Wotton* 1651).

On to a slightly more cheerful etymology (although not for elephants): that of the ‘orange’. ‘Orange’ dates to the Anglo-Norman *pume oreng* from c1200, tracing back to the Sanskrit *nāraṅga*. It did not come from the Latin word for orange, *citrus aurantium*. A quite fanciful tale explains its origin away to a Malay fable (dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), in which a gluttonous little elephant encounters an orange tree, and eats so many that his stomach explodes. When a man happens upon his remains a time later, seeing an elephant fossil with orange trees growing out of it, he exclaims, ‘What a *nāga rāṅga*!’, or ‘fatal indigestion for elephants’ (westegg.com/etymology). There is little etymological evidence to support this, although *nāga* means ‘relating to serpents and elephants’ in Sanskrit. The color ‘orange’ first dates to 1532 (*OED n<sup>1</sup>, adj<sup>1</sup>*).

Moving on from the elephant to the goat: the ‘scapegoat’, that is. The noun comes from a mistranslation, coined by the Protestant reformer and Bible translator William Tyndale in 1530. The Hebrew *Azazel* is mentioned in Leviticus 16:8, 10, and 26, in an episode involving Aaron’s sacrifice, and ‘the Mosaic ritual of the Day of Atonement...that one of two goats that was chosen by lot to be sent alive into the wilderness, the sins of the people having been symbolically laid upon it’ (*OED, n*). Tyndale presumed that *Azazel* was not a proper name – *Azazel* is in fact a demon – and ‘*Azazel*

was rendered as ‘*ez ozel*’, or, the ‘goat that departs’ (etymonline.com); or, ‘The goote on which the lotte fell to scape’ (Tyndale, Lev. 16:10). Thus, the passage was read in such a way that the goat was labelled ‘*ez ozel*’, instead of the goat being symbolically linked to the demon *Azazel*. Although Tyndale was translating from the Hebrew, a glance at the Latin Vulgate, and other contemporaneous translations, would have landed him in the same kettle of fish. The Vulgate introduced *caper emissarius*, leading to the French *bouc émissaire*, and Luther’s *der ledige Bock* (*OED*; etymonline.com).

‘Scapegrace’ may also have been influenced by ‘scapegoat’; first used in 1809, it likewise derived from ‘scapethrift’ and ‘want-grace’ (*OED*). Incidentally, escape (whence ‘scape’) comes from the Latin *excappāre* from *ex*, out, and *cappa*, cloak (*OED, v.*); this is purportedly linked to the evasive Roman art of throwing off a cape when fleeing (westegg.com).

Sources: *Oxford English Dictionary*, podictionary.com, etymonline.com, westegg.com/etymology; Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Penguin, 2002).

Susanna Gebhardt





# Creative Writing



## One Word

If I was ever asked what's difficult with you  
The answer is express my feelings towards you  
How much you all possess what's in me and how you  
Gentle, cruel mistress, can call me back to you.

And when I disobey, your silence still makes you  
The keeper of the way my thoughts must turn to you.  
Mark: if I am your prey, I too do feed on you  
But go on, anyway, my soul's all lost to you.

I tremble caught in fear I might have displeased you  
By holding you so dear that it hath scared you  
'Tis true must restrain, I wish too much from you  
But love's a silver chain that has bound me to you.

How I hate space and time that sep'rate me from you!  
I try to overcome distance by writing you  
But all poems I've done are nought, must confess you:  
No elaborate rhyme is worth one word from you.



## Anonymous

Your sleep is so deep,  
I wonder, what are you dreaming of?  
The wolf or the sheep?  
With your fangs, who are you chasing, love?

At this darkened hour of the profound night  
Your person asleep 's an ad'able sight  
And I lie awake a few thumbs from it  
But enter your sleep, I'd never permit.  
I don't even dare, in spite of my longing  
This vision too rare disturb by one touching.  
How soft is your hair, how worth to caress!  
Your body so fair, how worth to possess!  
I can feel your breath, sweet blow on my cheeks  
The dream of the wind eternity seeks.  
At quiet your face all love does express  
That in awake time you'd never confess.  
Alas! How on earth could I still restrain  
The tenderness that slowly fades to pain?  
Beloved, awake! Realize my feeling  
But you're not aware and continue dreaming.

Your sleep is so deep,  
I wonder, what are you dreaming of?  
The wolf or the sheep?  
With your fangs, who are you chasing, love?

## Anonymous

From the advent calendar  
Some tiny crystals fell  
Upon my bed, the keeper  
Of dreams' enchanted bell.  
This soft and silver powder  
Is all that's left for true,  
For the advent calendar  
I gave away to you.

All that remains is dust  
Whenever you leave me;  
Sorrow and pain are just  
Price for your company.



# Flip-Flop

by Aurelia Clavien

*Waves tumble onto the hot sand.  
A humid bathing suit sticks to my skin,  
As the enemy makes his entrance.  
Oh! Sordid silence!*

*Tears fill the eyes I first gazed into upon birth.  
Green eyes of envy!  
Green eyes of sorrow!  
Like a soldier's tired steed, I bear the weight of the enemy.  
A single noise shelters us both:  
Flip-flop, flip-flop, flip-flop.  
Oh! Sordid, sordid silence!*

*The past lingers over our heads,  
A vulture awaiting a last breath to be gasped.  
Two generations walk side by side.  
One,  
Overcome with anguish.  
The other,  
Overcome with fear.*

*As the green eyes swell with tears,  
My throat dries.  
I turn my head.*

*Ocean breeze carries a seagull above our heads,  
While a pelican protects a 'little one' from passers-by.  
Again, peace is broken:  
Flip-flop, flip-flop, flip-flop.*

*Recurrence fills my mind with irritation.  
My heart tells me to speak words of kindness,  
My head lacks the patience.  
Oh! Sordid, sordid, sordid silence!  
Like an abandoned cub,  
I turn to this stranger in search of guidance.*

*A terrible thing it is to wish for the divorce of one's parents.  
Role models we hold dear throughout our lives.  
Ha! How foul the stench of reality truly is!*



*Quarrel after quarrel.  
Tear after tear.  
A future like this, I do fear.*

*I glance at my watch.  
Four o'clock.  
An hour has crept away,  
The eyes remain filled with tears.  
"All for nothing, for nothing."  
Murmurs carried to waste.*

*I turn around.  
I walk away.  
The seagull bathes in the warm water.  
The pelican moves to its nest.  
Flip-flop, flip-flop, flip-flop.  
The sound seems interminable to me now.*

*I throw my sandals to the side,  
Allowing my feet to sink into the soft sand.  
Peace is restored,  
Pain remains.  
"This is not your battle!" My head pounds,  
As my heart aches.*

*A fiery sun sets in the dark blue sky.  
Two pairs of green eyes gaze of into the distance.  
Burning with tears of solitude.  
Oh! Sordid silence!*

## **Wearing Walk** by Arnaud Barras

*The soft glow of the sun  
Reflects on the sea of my heart,  
Where a cloth of dream  
Weaves itself into art.*

*The sea speaks, invites me in,  
Reflects upon my loneliness  
To move me into moving in,  
To walk into the wrap of her dress.*

*Her waves wear my unwary body,  
As I step on her eroding loci,  
Places of pleasure for her and me,  
Where her breath blows my skin in the sky.*





# Sweet Little Bird

by Aurelia Clavien

I once had a little bird too afraid to fly.  
She would just sit alone and cry, cry, cry.  
I tried to make her laugh—  
I tried to make her smile—  
But after a while,  
the sky remained too high.  
Until—  
I sang this lullaby.

Sweet little bird,  
Life isn't always black and white.  
Sometimes we fall,  
we scrape our knees, with no one to call.  
But if you learn to keep your eyes open wide,  
you'll find light is always by your side.

O—it's your time to shine.  
Go out and explore—  
Hold your head up high and ignore—  
Those who will always want more.  
Your dreams are what guide you—  
They'll fortify and try you.  
So, go ahead—  
Spread your wings out wide.

You sit,  
perched in your tree,  
looking at me helplessly. O—  
life is a melody you must play on your own.  
Close your eyes,  
sing it loud, it'll bet he one carryin' you home.

O—it's your time to shine.  
Go out and explore—  
Hold your head up high and ignore—  
Those will always want more.  
Because—  
Sweet little bird,  
I know the pain your troubles cause—  
for, my heart was once trapped by these same laws.  
Kneeling by my window,  
I often looked out in fear.

Others will push you around—  
They may laugh, point, make you frown.  
But, you must never let them put you down.



O—it's your time to shine.  
Go out and explore—  
Hold your head up high and ignore—  
Those who will always want more.  
I'll be standing right behind you.  
I'll be cheerin' you on—

So, little bird don't be shy.  
Spread your wings out way up high.  
For, darlin'—  
It's your time to soar.

## I Don't Know (song)

by Circé Luginbühl

I've come to a point in my life, where nothing seems to be right  
My beliefs have fallen apart, There's nothing I'm sure about  
I'm trying to release tension, But it's all too deep in motion  
I'm sick of this game at last, help me get out of here fast

*I don't know if I'm right, All I can do is just, hold on, tight  
I don't know if that's right, but I am, confident in, life*

A trip to Egypt brought me back, to finally got to face the fact  
That I'm fooling my world around, seduction to power keeps me bound  
Hiding afraid to face the truth, I just end up breaking my tooth  
Crying out could be a good start, then I should just admit these facts

*I don't know if I'm right, All I can do is just, hold on, tight  
I don't know if that's right, but I am confident, in, life*

I'd like to have, a direct access, to my emotions  
But I've blocked, the way to, their expression  
If only I could stop my mental delirium  
Find the way to my heart and admit what I've done

Be able, to laugh at myself, is a start  
Next step is to, integrate it in my heart  
The kozmic game is up, you decide if you want to keep up  
There's no time left, you've got to do it right now (integrate yourself)

*I don't know if I'm right, All I can do is just, hold on, tight  
I don't know if that's right, but I am confident, in, life.*

November 2007  
Lyrics: Circé Luginbühl  
Music: Circé Luginbühl and Louis Pisconte



# The Wind (song)

by Circé Luginbühl

The wind is blowing strong  
I have an endless feeling  
Of freedom all around

The wind is blowing loud  
I have an endless feeling  
Of softness in my heart

I hope the force will come healing  
The pain I feel is like the wind  
Smooth, soft, strong, devastating  
It's sometimes hard to keep on living

When the wind in a storm is blowing  
Everything seems to be breaking  
Tearing us apart, we're crashing  
Petrified by lightening we're falling

## Chorus

*Where am I going now? Will I survive here now?  
Am I going towards the light?*

Tears dry but wounds don't heal  
Ten years and still I hear  
Your voice never seemed so near  
My head is turning and my soul's burning

Wild horses come rushing  
I sing to the light, for the wind to come  
And wash away the past in the run  
So I can start to live a new life

## Chorus

*Where am I going now? Will I survive here now? Can I forget my past?  
Will I follow my heart?  
I am going towards the light.*

There is wind coming from the East  
And there is wind blowing from the South  
It is blowing in my face  
Driving me to a higher state

The light is coming very fast  
Slowly warming up my heart  
To the light I am healing

November 2007

Lyrics : Circé Luginbühl

Music : Circé Luginbühl and Yael Miller



# The Weight of Appearances

## by Aurelia Clavien

*"How great is the number of those in whose minds no source of thought has ever been opened, in whose life no consequence of thought is ever discovered; who have learned nothing upon which they can reflect; who have neither seen nor felt any thing which could leave its traces on the memory; who neither foresee nor desire any change in their condition, and have therefore neither fear, hope, nor design, and yet are supposed to be thinking beings!"*

*--Johnson: Idler #24 (September 30, 1758)*

Rob: that was her name, the name of a girl I once knew as a child. She was not a very pretty girl and to her misfortune, did not swim in luxuries. To this day, I have never forgotten her smile and constant laughter, even when the world seemed to have permanently turned its back on her. Indeed, she was different from the other kids at school, filled with honesty, kindness and naivety, her hamartia.

At the age of ten, children can prove to be cruel, as they do not comprehend the value of difference. Unfortunately, once this comprehension has been anchored into the minds of children, it rarely completely disappears. Fear of those who are different only grows stronger and deeper with age, if we do not fight it and attempt to appreciate the real beauty that surrounds us.

I will never forget that day, when I felt stripped of all strength and courage: the courage to fight for what I believed in, the courage to defend this precious difference. It was a normal day, insignificant at first. I was merely discussing the latest Britney Spears' CD with my friends, when I saw it happen. The whole fifth grade had formed a tight semi-circle, with Rob trapped in the center of it, desperately trying to defend herself against five of the tallest boys of the grade. Insult after insult spewed from their mouths, as they attempted to knock her over with brutal force. And, to their great content, she finally fell, tumbling down the steep hill that separated the playground from the dense forest. While falling, Rob lost one of her shoes, which only encouraged the boys to pursue teasing her about the highlighter-yellow color of her socks. As could be expected, it was not long before this girl, who had never been even the slightest bit rude to any of her classmates, was drenched in tears.

I remember standing there, motionless, filled with pity and melancholy, and yet, so frightened. Even though this scene ended well, as a teacher was called to Rob's defense, I cannot help wondering what power prevented me from acting upon my sincerest emotions, my instincts. How selfish was I to watch with cowardice, as an innocent girl was intentionally pushed down a hill, in order to save my own precious reputation? How meaningless this reputation seems now. It is for this reason that I am writing this article today, in the hopes that I may prevent others from living with the torment of similar regrets, and in order to answer a question that has haunted me throughout my adolescent years: 'How can we, with our human greed and superficiality, survive in a society where one must correspond to a set image, the image of "perfection"?"

A few weeks ago, while flicking through the television channels, I came across a show, in which several people were invited to answer this specific question using their own experiences, as they all suffered from physical abnormalities. With admirable honesty and audacity, they described the endless discrimination they were forced to endure at school, at work and even within their own families. The continuous stares they received day after day left a scar on their faces that could not go unnoticed. Determined, they repeatedly attempted to fit in with society's image of 'perfection', only to see the same distressed faces in the mirror. I particularly remember the story of a woman, who suffered from albinism. While tears irritated her eyes, she turned away from an image shown of her as a child, and described how much effort she put into 'blending into the crowd', continuously dying her hair an auburn red as well as hiding her light





eyes behind dark glasses. The veracity and generosity of these 'ordinary' people touched me, leading me to realize how diligently we, as a society, try to hide such differences, which cause intense suffering to their victims. Like many delicate topics, it is simply easier for us to turn a blind eye, as if to pretend that such burdens do not exist.

I realize that while reading this article, I may come across as arrogant or hypocritical. Veritably, I am a teenager as ordinary as they come, occupied with raging hormones and the crises of average adolescent life, such as arguments within friendship circles and the search for the perfect date. And yet, it is exactly my age that makes me feel directly concerned by this new emergence of an unattainable, media-produced, superficial image.

According to Wikipedia ("Body image." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. 4 Jul 2007 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body\\_image](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_image)>.), body image is 'a person's perception of his or her own physical appearance'. In short, if we have a poor body image, then we will inevitably feel repulsive and unattractive to others, and vice versa. Numerous are those who avoid looking in the mirror as much as possible, due to personal dissatisfaction, rather than the reproach of others. However, my concern has to do with society's influence on individual perceptions. What has led us to create a society, in which one may profit by setting unattainable goals for others to follow? Since when has progress been measured through the creation of an environment, in which each individual is slowly and steadily being redefined to resemble an image created by a computer?

Recent research indicates that, although both men and women are directly affected by self-esteem issues linked to body image, this relation appears stronger in women. Usually, when compared to men, women are more apprehensive of their physical appearance, and are more susceptible to eating disorders, more likely to perceive themselves as heavier than they actually are. Similarly, men have shown to express a desire for additional muscle. This came to no great shock to me, being a city girl, regularly confronted with overpowering billboards and touched-up magazine covers.

In a matter of interest, I attempted to test society's definition of 'beauty' and 'handsome'. To do this, I googled both words and observed the

images I was given. The results for 'beauty' were as expected, pictures of artificial women—full lips, perfect hairstyles and light, sparkling eyes—pictures of women taken, for the most part, straight from magazines. Contrarily, the results for 'handsome' were quite surprising, with many random pictures, pictures of your average Joe, and the occasional picture of Prince William. This has led me to ask, 'since when has it become more socially acceptable for a man, rather than a woman, to be less physically attractive?'

When looking at pictures of those considered to be the 'beauties' and the 'handsome men' throughout history, it became clear to me that what really appears attractive to us is wealth. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, pale men and women, who seemed well fed, were models for others around them. Indeed, for most, they represented the utmost wealth, able to host luxurious banquets and lounge comfortably in the shade, while others desperately scraped for food. Today, this 'perfect' image has changed significantly, as pale has been replaced with tanned and chubby has been replaced with stick-insect-thin. Obviously, those who are tanned are those who have the money to travel to warm parts of the globe, and those who are thin are those who have the luxury to eat more expensive, gastronomic, healthier meals. Of course, there are exceptions to this theory. Needless to say, it comforts our human greed to have a secure life with someone who is wealthy, rather than someone who is barely scraping by.

No matter how hard we may try, it is impossible for us to agree upon a definition of 'beauty', ironically, due to our differing personalities. It is a natural human desire to want to 'fit in'. It is for this reason that these inaccessible portrayals of the 'perfect, flawless' human ideals are so dangerous. Following our instincts, we cling to those images, hoping and praying, to the point where we may even consider under-nourishing ourselves, that we may later be admired just a little more. And yet, in reality, would our lives really be that different if we resembled the models we repeatedly see on billboards? After having turned several more heads, would we really have accomplished more profound aims than before? If the answer is 'yes', then this only serves to underline the superficiality of our society today, as the popular saying, 'beauty lies on the inside, not on the outside', loses all its importance.



# The Book

by Maria L. Schneider

"Good morning, mother, here is your...You're already up? But today is your birthday, and I wanted to surprise you and serve you breakfast in bed."

"Why should I not be up and around? It is 8 o'clock."

"But today is your birthday!"

"I know. 70. Does it mean that I have to change my habits? Just because of a birthday?"

"But..."

"Why do you insist? I am not returning to bed just to indulge you. You will have to get up earlier if you want to catch me in bed. Perhaps next time, eh?"

"Next time? But...Why are you so different from all the other mothers? All the others would have been happy to be served breakfast in bed. Especially today."

"Do not be upset. Now..."

"The Letter arrived. It's waiting downstairs on the kitchen table."

"The Letter? Already! Hmpf, they do not waste any time, do they! What could they want..."

"You know why you received the Letter."

"Yes, yes, I know. Now, shoo, I'll be down in a minute."

-----

"Well, well, well, let me see..."

*Dear Mrs. Johnson,*

*We wish you a very happy birthday. For this special day we present you your relief. Finally you may depart and join your ancestors.*

*The Pill is in the container, prepared and packed according to § 94 in the Book.*

*Rest in Peace,*

*The Authority.*

*P.S. As soon as you open the container we will be notified and take your left behind vessel to the Incinerators.*

"The nerve! How dare they presume that I have been yearning to end my life! Why should I! I am healthy, it is my birthday, I have to weed the strawberries and I was planning on going swimming tomorrow, if the weather allows it. And..."

"Mother! Why wouldn't you take the Pill? It'll free you from all your problems...above all, you'll be freed from this old body of yours that can no longer..."

"Flee my problems, old body? Death is not to be used as an escape! Death does not solve any problems, because you will have to face every unfinished business when you reincarnate. Death does not free us from our mistakes, we will have to correct them, if not now, in another life. And what do you mean by old body! I have just turned 70! I am not old, nor do I suffer from anything. Why should I, since I lead a healthy and orderly life! Would you have me end my life just because a piece of paper asks me to? I will die when my time has come."

"It's not a piece of paper, it's the Letter from the Authority. And would you please refrain from mentioning fairytales, reincarnation is nothing else! You're not supposed to oppose the Authority..."

"Are you sane? You will find books on this topic in my study, and if you still do not understand, then go to Asia, India, and speak with those who can educate you in this matter. I will not go into it now."

"Nonsense..."

"Do you not find it peculiar that the only thing you are given by the Authority is a letter demanding that you kill yourself? It is not to be believed! It reminds me of an earlier Japan."

"Not kill, pass away in peace. They facilitate the passage into another..."

"Refrain from quoting that damned Book in my presence! Can you do nothing else? I know it by heart just from listening to you!"

"That's not true, I don't quote..."



"Hmpf! I have been keeping an eye on you, child, hoping you would learn to use your common sense. Hoping you would develop your own opinion about things. But all you ARE, your very self, is based on this Book!"

"This book is very important for our society. It gives us the guidelines on how to live life without hardship. Without this Book, people would get wild, spread like weed. They would get older and older, suffering from sickn..."

"HA! I always said: 'Too many rules result in an unhealthy society.' It seems I was right. Is it such a bad thing to wish to get old? You have never even seen an old person."

"You're old."

"No, I am not. You do not even know what it means to get old, to be old. Neither do I. We humans could reach an age well above 120 years. That would be old. I am no longer in my prime, but I am not yet old."

"Why do you defy our society, how dare you oppose the Authority! Are you not glad that we've gone back to respecting nature, that we use all the available renewable energies? Why must you be against all and everything the Authority has worked so hard to achieve? Why!"

"You misunderstood, child. I am grateful and I do accept all the positive changes the Authority has brought about, but I do not agree with this legalised murdering of people as soon as they turn 70. I remember a time when it was forbidden to end one's life, if you would have preferred it. I was not happy with this either. Why were we allowed to put down a sick animal without its consent, and not a human being who has given consent. Today we do the exact opposite: We are required to end our lives, whether we are still up and about or in pain. Are we all not entitled to our own decisions and opinions? It seems not."

"Why must you be such an abnormal person? Can't you see the good in this ending of one's life?"

"Do not insult me, child, just because I have an opinion. I cannot see any good in it. Can you? Tell me, can YOU?"

"...Let me get the Book, and I'll tell you what's good..."

"YOU! I want to know YOUR opinion about this matter. Not that Book's, not anyone's except YOURS! What do you believe is the point in ending one's life prematurely, before your natural time has come? YOUR opinion is what I want. YOURS!"

"...I..."

"I see...Well well! If someone needs me, I am outside, doing some gardening."

Maria L. Schneider



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