

SPRING



2008

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT



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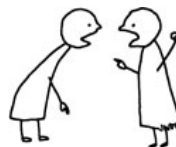
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Editorial



Dear Readers,

I greet you on the verge of the re-commencement of our academic year. The winter break is behind us, the exams are upon us and spring is almost sprung. In line with the changing of the seasons, NOTED has undergone a few changes since our last issue. NOTED has two new general editors in the form of me, Emma Depledge and my dear friend and colleague, Ioana Balgradean, a new and expanded student editorial team and a variety of new features.

NOTED is not simply a newsletter, it is a place to show-

case student talent and Ioana and I feel proud and privileged to be a part of it. The NOTED which you have opened comes as the result of great team work and I am very grateful to all those who've helped to put this issue together, from contributors and editors to our publicity officer and proofreaders.

Perhaps the first thing you will have noticed is that the front cover has changed dramatically and now features both a new logo and a photo montage. The new logo was designed by Jonas Hauert, winner of the competition set in the January 2007 issue. Jonas is now the proud owner of



a voucher from OffTheShelf bookshop. Spend it wisely, Jonas, and remember: books are the best gifts as they can be opened again and again! You will be treated to more examples of stunning artwork, courtesy of Jonas and Jennifer Wong, as you progress through this issue of NOTED.

The photo montage was designed and produced by the talented Mr Rösli, our layout wizard, film editor, former general editor and all round superstar! The decision to change the front cover came during a meeting with our vibrant and enthusiastic editorial team. The team wanted to use a photograph which was representative of the Department and its activities, but, try as we might, we just could not think of a single image which summed us up. As Professor Erne points out in his 'note from the director', we are a multicultural, multinational Department with staff and students from all over the world. Within this melting pot one finds a variety of talents and personalities, interests and opinions, hopes and aspirations. How could this be reduced to just one photograph or one image? It cannot, and Michael's artwork attests to this fact and rather than trying to reduce us or

contain us, his work reflects how multifaceted we are as a department. We are a road sign, we are a bicycle, we are a man with a German Shepherd dog, we are an old building with a large chimney, but most of all, we are a pair of trainers hanging over a telegraph wire up on high...we are anything but ordinary and boy do I love those trainers!

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading this issue of NOTED and wish you a happy and successful spring term.

Emma Depledge

Contributions & Mailing List

Please do **not** send your contributions to the individual section editors. Send them to noted@lettres.unige.ch, mentioning, in either the subject line or the body of your email, the section you wish your contribution to be published in.

If you want to join the NOTED team or be added to our mailing list, please send your details to noted@lettres.unige.ch, mentioning 'mailing list' or 'NOTED team' in the subject line of your email. ●



A Note from the Director

About a hundred new students joined the English Department in September 2007 – roughly 80 BA, 20 MA and 3 PhD students. I extend a warm welcome to you and wish to congratulate you on your choice: you have joined a fine university and one of the most dynamic departments within it. The English Department has a distinguished tradition for teaching and research at the highest level, with teachers who are demanding, work hard, and expect you to do the same. But work is not all we do. We also have a film cycle with free screenings every week; a student association that has recently risen from its ashes; a theatre group that has performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival among other places; and a terrific Newsletter, NOTED, which you are about to discover.

The Department to which we belong is large and international. At the BA level, one student in four has a mother tongue other than French, and twenty percent of our students have come to Switzerland after attending school elsewhere. Of our fifty-three currently enrolled MA students, only a little more than half are of Swiss nationality, with the remaining forty-plus percent hailing from widely different backgrounds, British and American, of course; German and French, unsurprisingly; but also Belgian, Bengali, Brazilian, Cameroonian, Ghanaian,

Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, as well as Senegalese. It is an asset for all of us to be able to teach and study in an environment that is intensely international and multi-cultural.

As for size, ours is the second largest department in the second largest faculty of the University.¹ We have more students than the departments of German and Spanish together. We wish we also had twice as many teachers, though we try to compensate with quality what we lack in quantity. Our current teaching staff of twenty-seven comprises five professors, two *maîtres d'enseignement et de recherche*, five *chargés d'enseignement*, a *maître-assistante*, twelve assistants, and two monitors. The Department also has two secretaries, a librarian, and several library invigilators. Our size makes certain things possible – NOTED would not be what it is if the editors could not draw on a large pool of students. Yet it makes other things more difficult: we teachers have seen most of you at lectures and have taught many of you in seminars, but we are still quite far away, I fear, from knowing all of you personally. You can help us get to know you by taking an active part in the life of the Department: speak up in class, give us your feedback, join one of the existing groups or found a new one. We may have a newsletter, a film cycle, a student association and a



theatre group, but we don't yet have a debating society, a French/English tandem scheme, or a football club. Perhaps we will have one soon, thanks to your initiative.

The University of Geneva traces its origins to the year 1559, when Calvin founded the Academy, so the 450th anniversary celebrations are only a year away. As the University is getting ready to think about its origins, I suggest that we in the English Department do the same and think about ours. It has been mentioned before in the pages of NOTED that the English *Department* did not come into being until 1969, but English language and literature had of course been taught and researched quite a bit earlier. The first professor of English was Louis-Frédéric Choisy. He taught as privat-docent as early as 1910 and was appointed to the newly created Chair of English Language and Literature in 1919, lecturing 'preferably on Shakespeare and the Romantic poets'.² As early as 1890, when the creation of a Chair of English had already been considered but one of '*littératures et langues du Nord*' was created instead, the professor who occupied the Chair, Emile Redard (1848-1913), published a study of *Shakespeare dans les pays de langue française* in 1901.³ Around the same time, courses of Old English were given by none other than Ferdinand de Saussure, better known for being the founding figure of modern linguistics.



Ferdinand de Saussure

Earlier still, the Chair of Comparative Modern Literature, created in 1844, had been held by Marc Monnier from 1864 to 1885, who is also known to have lectured on Shakespeare.⁴



Marc Monnier

Today, we still offer courses on Shakespeare, Old English, and Romantic poetry and thus continue the tradition initiated a long time ago. Yet our modern approaches no doubt share little with how our predecessors taught, plus we now cover a great many subjects – from medieval kinesics to postmodern simulacra – which →



earlier students knew nothing about. The subject of English language and literature at this university in the last century and a half seems interesting enough to warrant a longer treatment than I can give it here, so my secret hope is that a student will one day write a *mémoire* tentatively entitled 'The History of the Geneva English Department: Tradition and Innovation'.

If such a history ever gets written, I suggest that an appendix be devoted to Theodore Beza, the great reformer and first Rector of our university.



Theodore Beza

Beza was a professor of Greek, not of English, but he wrote a play which, translated into English by Arthur Golding, was published in London in 1575, with the title *The Tragedy of Abraham's Sacrifice*. Golding's translations found avid readers among his contemporaries in Elizabethan England, so perhaps our future *mémorant(e)* can decode echoes of *The Tragedy of Abraham's Sacrifice* in, say, the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*.



Theodore Beza, *The Tragedy of Abraham's Sacrifice*, trans. Arthur Golding (London, 1575).

If so, the student would be a strong contender for the Faculty's Harvey Prize, which awards CHF 2,000 for the best piece of research into the relationship between Geneva and the Anglo-Saxon world (the next submission deadline is 30 December 2009). For this and all other intellectual endeavours in our Department, I wish our students perseverance, wisdom, and the best of luck. ●

Lukas Erne

¹ See <http://www.unige.ch/dadm/stat/dernierepublication.html>

² G. D. Zimmermann, 'English Studies in the Universities of French-Speaking Switzerland', privately circulated, p. 5.

³ Emile Redard, *Shakespeare dans les pays de langue française* (Genève: Georg, 1901).

⁴ See Zimmermann, 'English Studies in the Universities of French-Speaking Switzerland'; and Charles Borgeaud and P. E. Martin, *Histoire de l'Université de Genève*, 6 vols. (Genève: Georg, 1900-1959).



Department News

September Exam Session

The *Décanat* has announced that exams in September 2008 will be confined to a *session restreinte*. As in last year's *session de rattrapage*, students can enrol for retakes of exams they have previously failed. They can also submit attestation essays, graded papers, and the *mémoire*. What's more, students who are finishing a degree, be it the BA, the MA, or the *licence*, can enrol for exams independently of whether they are retakes or not.

Interlibrary loans

During a trial period from September to November 2007, the Faculty departed from its traditional policy of covering costs for interlibrary loans (*prêts interurbains*), instead making students pay for them. We are pleased to announce that this trial period has ended and that the *Décanat* has decided to revert to its earlier practice.

Renovation

According to a project of not-so-recent date, called 'Bastions Horizon 2003' in accordance with the original projected completion date, the offices of the English Department staff were going to be moved to the freshly-refurbished second and third floors of the east wing of the Bastions building. Now, we have good news and bad news, as the old joke has it. The bad news is that renovations still haven't started. So much for '2003'! The good news is that, according to the latest plans,

renovations will include not only Bastions but also the Philosophes building. If rumours are to be trusted, the English Department offices will now end up at the Philosophes building and not at Bastions (as we've been expecting for the last ten years or so) and the English library, currently on the first floor of the Philosophes building, may be moved to Bastions instead. Got it? Despite various affirmations that renovations should start very soon, one hesitates to make any predictions about dates of completion. So for the time being, keep treading carefully at Philosophes as you make your way across broken floor tiles and curled-up carpets.

Doctoral Programme

2008 sees the beginning of the new Doctoral Programme in English Language and Literature, sponsored by the Commission Universitaire de la Suisse Occidentale (CUSO), in which most of our PhD students will be involved. Two modules are planned for the first half of 2008: 'Origins: Medieval and Early Modern English Texts and Contexts', 4-5 April, in or near Fribourg, co-organized by Prof. Lukas Erne; and 'Reading Visual Media', 6-8 June, in Crêt-Bérard, co-organized by Martin Leer and the ex-editor of NOTED, Michael Röösl. Prof. David Spurr is functioning as the Director of the Doctoral Programme and Christophe Rose as its administrative assistant. →



Barbe à Papa

The English Department Theatre Group, Barbe à Papa, has a new director, Nicholas Weeks, and a new website:

<http://web.mac.com/nickweeks1>

The group meets on Fridays, 2-4 p.m., Room S 140, in the basement of Uni Mail. Nicholas can be contacted by email at:

nickweeks@hotmail.com

ADEA

Wednesday 28th November saw the ADEA's latest party at the Datcha. The party involved fun, games, quizzes and some interesting voting! Keep your eyes peeled for the next exciting ADEA event!

<http://www.asso-etud.unige.ch/adea/>

Book Sale

A second book sale will take place during the Spring semester of 2008, so look out for posters with more details!

LION and EEBO

We have access to two new electronic databases which are of outstanding interest to specialists of English literature. The first is called Literature Online (short LION) and can be accessed at <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>. Not only does it contain an abundance of primary texts (more than 350,000 poems, English, American, African American and Canadian, from Old English to contemporary; more than 5,000 works of English and American drama, and more than 2,000 works of English and American prose), but also the full text of 208 literature journals, many leading reference works, links to more than 5,000 websites, biographies for thousands of English-language authors, and 845

recordings of poets reading their own and other poets' work. To find out how to get the most out of the database, see the 'Getting Started' demo accessible via the website's 'Information Centre'.

The second database is called Early English Books Online (short EEBO). It offers access to digital facsimiles of more than 100,000 of the roughly 125,000 books published in England between 1475 and 1700, and it is anticipated that the remaining 25,000 books will be added in the coming years. Since we have purchased the database, the number of simultaneous users to which we are entitled is unlimited. For more information: <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/about/about.htm>. Happy browsing!

Fonds National Research Project

As of January 2008, our Department will be hosting a research project financed by the Fonds National Suisse (FNS): 'The Textual Life of William Shakespeare, 1593-1623'. Directed by Prof. Lukas Erne, the aim of the project – which draws its methodology from book history, bibliography, and textual studies – is to provide a full picture of the position Shakespeare occupied amidst the textual culture of his own day. (Read also the entries 'Louise Wilson' and 'Anna Gebhardt' below.)

Short Guide to Research

A 'Short Guide to Research' has been made available on the Department website (see under 'Activities and Services'). The Guide provides invaluable information for those doing research in the English Department (meaning all of you!), about using the libraries, the online catalogue, the card catalogues, the



online databases, and so on. Plus it tells you how to use, and how not to use, Wikipedia!

Keith McDonald

The Department welcomes a new assistant, Keith McDonald, who holds a BA from the University of Bristol and a Masters degree from the University of Edinburgh. He is a specialist of early modern English literature, in particular poetry and politics of the seventeenth century, and is working on a PhD on Andrew Marvell, supervised by Prof. Lukas Erne.

Louise Wilson

Louise Wilson, a brand-new addition to the Department (January 2008), is joining us as a *maître-assistante suppléante*. She holds a BA in English Language and Literature from the University of Oxford and an MA in English Renaissance Literature from the University of York. She has recently completed her PhD at the same university, with a thesis on 'Reading, Romance and Humanism in Early Modern England'. She is teaching a BA seminar on 'Shakespeare and History' in the spring semester and will be contributing to the aforementioned Fonds National research project.

Anna Gebhardt

Anna Gebhardt is a new PhD student in the Department, working on the figure of the hermaphrodite in early modern English literature, under the supervision of Prof. Lukas Erne. She holds two degrees from St. Andrews: an MA in English Literature and an MLitt in Shakespearean Studies. For part of the autumn semester 2007, Anna Gebhardt was working in the

Department as a research assistant in order to help prepare the aforementioned Fonds National project.

Gregory Ellison

Previously employed as an 'assistant suppléant', Gregory Ellison has recently been appointed as a regular assistant, so we look forward to having him on the English Department staff for the years to come.

Petya Ivanova

After spending one year as an assistant in medieval English literature at the University of Lausanne, Petya Ivanova has returned to the University of Geneva wherefrom she graduated in 2006. Petya Ivanova is currently working on the cultural production and transmission of ontological concepts in medieval literature under the supervision of Prof. Guillemette Bolens.

Eszter Varga

Congratulations to Eszter Varga, assistant in English linguistics, on having been awarded a Fonds National scholarship.

Genoveva Puskas

Genoveva Puskas is back in Geneva after a productive sabbatical at McGill University, Quebec, Canada. We are happy she enjoyed it and glad to have her back!

Valerie Fehlbaum

Last November, Dr. Valerie Fehlbaum was invited to attend the 'Setmana Cultural de Tardor', a conference hosted by the University of Alicante, where she presented a paper entitled 'To Wed or not Wed? Marriage and Marriageability in Nineteenth-Century English Fiction'. ●



unige Highlights of the English

The play



The Guide

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Student Experience

By JENNIFER WONG

The trees



The "Bible"

(updated version)



The cup of tea



Wong



Features



Thank you so much to everyone I have had the pleasure to meet for welcoming me so warmly to Geneva. I am privileged to join the editorial team of NOTED, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce the Features section.

Two concepts I find pivotal to everyday life are **variety** and **balance**. Often, we are curious to try something new, to investigate something further, to progress and advance, and to feel accomplished in whatever we choose to pursue. The almost limitless field of English Literature allows the kind of variety which is indicated in the popular saying 'variety is the spice of life'. Consider the range of research interests within the staff of this very Department, for example, and how the personnel collectively uphold a wide and varied span to keep the

chronological spectrum balanced. Through this section, and elsewhere in NOTED, it is inspiring to realise that accounts of experience from literature students, from personal to instructive experience, also demonstrate these very same qualities.



William Blake, 'A Whirlwind of Lovers'

If we parallel this section pedagogically with English Literature, one might like to consider it in relation to the work



of the Romantic poet William Blake (1757-1827). Like Blake's composite art, these contributions not only display variety, but they also include words and images combined, they relate to the concepts of *innocence* and *experience*, and range from the analytically detached, via the scholarly, to the acutely personal. We are grateful for terrific essay guidance from Jennifer Wong; for informative insights into academic experiences from Sarah Braccianti (the Postgraduate Oxford Berrow Scholarship), and Shirin Tavakoli (the Language Assistant Programme); for a colourful account of the May 2007 Shakespeare seminar sojourn to Venice from Adwoa Bart-Plange; and for a touching contribution which traverses the boundaries of innocence and experience from the anonymous author of 'The Wound of a Name'. Transcended outside of the play, the plea of Shakespeare's Juliet, 'What's in a name?' has received a new, emphatic and emotive response.

NOTED takes pride in its contributions as works of art, making the newsletter a rich artistic collaboration. When we consider a theoretic example of the perils of interconnecting art forms, the *paragone*, which campaigns one 'sister' art form as superior to another, what we are

surely recognizing is the power of one of these forms to leave a footprint upon the other, to add something to the interpretation that cannot be reversed or undone. Accordingly, my delightful mental image of Venice may long be amusingly perturbed by the 'post-coitus' depiction of *La Venexiana* as playfully told here. On another, much more poignant note, I may never again encounter Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* without recalling its own recollection in 'The Wound of a Name'. It is a triumph to feel that language provides us with one of our potentially greatest strengths - either in celebration, or against any adversity - the power of one's own voice. As the art form, NOTED, in these ways, develops its parallels and wider ideas from within. From the domestic, the insular, the private, and the page, to the widespread, the European, the public, and the stage, the features section presents a balanced variety, a wealth of experience, and something of interest to every reader. ●

Keith McDonald

For more information about the LAP programme and the Berrow Scholarship, please see:

http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/bourses_en.html



Improve Your Writing: Tackling Thesis Statements

by Jennifer Wong

Surviving the English literature major means understanding the art of that oft-dreaded obstacle of essay-writing: the thesis statement. Contrary to essays written in other languages such as French, where your findings and/or arguments are revealed little by little as you write (and are eventually developed more thoroughly in the conclusion), the English essay presents its argument, or thesis, at the *beginning* of the paper, leaving the body of the essay to prove the chosen argument. Still not sure if you have a thesis statement for your paper? Here are some tips to help you on your thesis quest:

Don't forget the argument

The thesis states, in a single sentence, a specific claim you would like to make about a text or texts you are analyzing. This means that it needs to assert an idea, to *argue* something. As one assistant and NOTED editor suggests, it might be useful to compare the process of essay-writing to that of a court trial. Just as the prosecution states their case at the very beginning of a trial, a thesis statement announces its claim at the beginning of an essay. Once the ideas have been presented to the

judge and jury, the prosecution then begins to prove their case, using evidence they have gathered. Likewise, the body of your paper serves to demonstrate and prove what the thesis has set forth to the reader - again, using evidence from the text. Imagine that, as in a court of law, there is always the potential threat of your points of view being challenged by another party, like the defence. Thus, to avoid the red felt-tip "Objection!" of your instructor, your arguments must be well supported and convincing.

Avoid using descriptive statements as your thesis statement

A common error is using a sentence such as the following as the paper's supposed claim:

In this essay, I will attempt to explore how the theme A functions in text B.

This sentence indeed describes very well what you *intend* to discuss in your essay. But, while solely evoking what you plan to write about in your essay might work for a French paper, it unfortunately doesn't make an assertion for your English one. Instead, try rewriting the sentence in a way that perhaps expresses why the themes you



are "exploring" in your essay are significant. A better thesis statement might be something along the lines of:

By exploring how the theme A functions in text B, one discovers that...

Here, in addition to mentioning what the writer intends to analyze in her essay, the last phrase, "one discovers that..." proposes her (justified) point of view.

Remember statement placement

As essays in English are written in double-spaced text without any special headings separating topics, form is important in helping your reader follow your ideas. As a general rule, your thesis statement should be positioned at the end of the intro paragraph. For those who are accustomed to saving their best ideas for the conclusion, it might be helpful to consider what you would normally write at the end of the paper, and transpose those ideas into the introduction.

"Trick yourself!"

If finding an argument is still weighing you down, try the following technique, which assistant Erika Scheidegger kindly shared with NOTED. Start by writing "In this essay, I will argue (that)..." and complete the sentence with your ideas about the text(s) you would like to

analyze in your essay. Writing out these few words helps you focus on asserting an idea, instead of writing a vague sentence about how you e.g. "plan to analyze the importance of the ghost's appearance *Hamlet*." Once you have your argument, take out the "I will argue..." and restructure the sentence so that the argument still stands. (An obvious argument will not need the expression "I will argue" in front of it.) If, during the course of writing your paper, you find your essay going in a direction other than that proposed by your original thesis, don't be afraid to modify it. With the thesis statement now found, all that's left to do is to prove it and write the rest of the paper...

Speaking of proof...

Keep in mind that while the claim of your essay should be your own idea, it should also, to use the words of Gordon Taylor in *The Student's Writing Guide for the Arts and Social Sciences*¹, be a **justified judgment** and not just a personal opinion. Remember to back up what you state in your thesis! ●

¹ For more information, please see *The Student's Guide for the Arts and Social Sciences* by Gordon Taylor, Cambridge University Press, 1989.



The Berrow Fellowship

by Sara Baccianti

After my studies in English Philology and Literature at the University of Fribourg, I worked for one year as Prof. Denis Renevey's assistant at the University of Lausanne. It was Prof. Renevey, a past Berrow scholar, and some other members of the English Department, who told me about the Berrow Foundation Scholarship.

After putting together a dossier to send to both the University of Oxford and the Berrow Foundation, I had to wait several months before receiving a letter of admission to the University and an invitation to an interview for the scholarship.

I started my PhD on the narrative form of historical writing in medieval England and medieval Iceland in October 2006. I must admit that it has not been easy to adjust to my new life in Oxford, a life in

college, rules and tradition, and a different approach to academic research. Nonetheless, I am now used to my new Oxonian life, college is no longer an unknown place full of intricate corridors, traditions and rules, but it has become a sort of new home. Moreover, this academic year I am the secretary of Lincoln MCR (Middle Common Room, i.e. the

association of graduate students), a position that has helped me understand collegiate life and know more graduate students working in mine as well as in other fields, but mostly to meet people from different cul-

tural backgrounds. Lincoln College has thus proven to be a place for cultural and academic exchanges, with a graduate community committed to their studies, but also interested in establishing a close connection among its members.



Just like the college, the English Faculty is a vibrant community which offers a varied array of excellent courses and outstanding facilities. The Faculty Library and the world-renowned Bodleian Library are magnets for academic researchers. The size of the Department is extra-ordinary (nearly 70 professors), the teaching staff is excellent, with experts in every field, and a graduate community that meets regularly at seminars and social events to exchange ideas about their work and life as a graduate student in general.

My experience here in Oxford is unique. Thanks to the Berrow Foundation Scholarship I have a chance to undertake my research in an interesting, challenging, stimulating and dynamic environment. I study with professors, lecturers and students who work in different fields and who can bring new views and ideas to my work. The other Berrow scholars, past and present, would tell you the same! Applying for a post-graduate degree at Oxford University and to the Berrow Foundation Scholarship will broaden your horizons and open new doors. ●



Jennifer Wong, Untitled 2004.
Drypoint, 22 x 7.5 cm



The LAP Programme

by Shirine Tavakoli

Dear 'Foreign-language-assistant-teacher' candidates: it is me again with some words of advice on what to expect (or, more to the point, what not to expect) from the programme.

The experience can be a great one provided you make it so. Although I found them helpful and, in the end, supportive, you should not expect the local teachers to go out of their way and hold your hand every step of the way. This is only normal and to be expected for two reasons: first, the teachers are busy and need to prioritise their time, and, second, as anyone else would, the teachers prefer to invest whatever available time they have in long-term relationships. However, if you come up with good ideas and show determination to see them through, this will make all the difference and you'll soon become the focus of much attention.

Let me share an experience. Four months into the assignment, I proposed the idea of a few students performing a play by Molière (*The Miser*) in French. Initially, the teachers were unenthusiastic, finding reasons why this was not a workable idea. But I decided to go

ahead anyway and gathered a mixed group of students together for rehearsals (mixed because, in the UK LAP scheme, the secondary schools are either boys-only or girls-only, not mixed!!!). In the end, the play went very well and everyone enjoyed the experience.

The boys liked it because it gave them a rare opportunity to mingle with the girls! The teachers liked it because they saw that their students were showing interest in a new idea. And I liked it because... well, it made me popular.

So, if my experience is anything to go by, you have the power to make the assignment into what you want it to be: either "yeah I spent a year in London as an assistant teacher" or "yes, I did spend a really great year at xxx high school and made a difference".

Oh, I almost forgot. For those of you who wish to see Molière with a decidedly American accent, it is now showing on Broadway in New York and you have to book 6 months in advance! ●

Till we speak next,
Bye!!



Quoted for NOTED

compiled by Anna Iatsenko

We have no interest in spreading our culture.

George W. Bush, from State of the Union address, January 2002

* * *

"Which is worse: Hell or nothing?

Chuck Palahniuk

* * *

A certain degree of neurosis is of inestimable value as a drive, especially to a psychologist.

Sigmund Freud

* * *

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes).

Walt Whitman

* * *

Did perpetual happiness in the Garden of Eden maybe get so boring that eating the apple was justified?

Chuck Palahniuk

* * *

[King Arthur, Woman, Dennis]

KA: I am your king.

W: Well I didn't vote for you.

KA: You don't vote for kings.

W: Well how'd you become king then?

[*Angelic music plays...*]

KA: The Lady of the Lake, her arm clad in the purest shimmering samite held aloft Excalibur from the bosom of the water, signifying by divine providence that I, Arthur, was to carry Excalibur. THAT is why I am your king.

D: [*interrupting*] Listen, strange women lyin' in ponds distributin' swords is no basis for a system of government. Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony.

Monty Python,
The Holy Grail

* * *

No matter how much you think you love somebody, you'll step back when the pool of their blood edges up too close.

Chuck Palahniuk

* * *

We are no longer the knights who say ni! We are now the knights who say ekki-ekki-ekki-pitang-zoom-boing!

Monty Python,
The Holy Grail

* * *

It is a dark, cool, quiet place. A basement in your soul. And that place can sometimes be dangerous to the human mind. I can open the door and enter that darkness, but I have to be very careful. I can find my story there. Then I bring that thing to the surface, into the real world.

Haruki Murakami

* * *

As the poet said, 'Only God can make a tree' -- probably because it's so hard to figure out how to get the bark on.

Woody Allen



A Week in Venice

by Adwoa Bart-Plange

From the 6th to the 12th of May 2007, Professor Lukas Erne's 'Shakespeare in Venice' class spent a week in Venice as part of their ongoing scholarly quest to discover the bard's fascination with that city, particularly as expressed in his plays *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*.

We left by train on the morning of the 6th, a Sunday – five students and two PhD assistants boarded the train in Geneva, and the professor as well as another student joined us in Lausanne. While Raphael Piguet might have liked nothing better than to snooze throughout the journey due to a rather lively Saturday night, Professor Erne insisted there was no better time to rehearse our planned dramatic reading of *La Venexiana*, which we would be putting on for the Munich contingent. We approached the task with no small measure of embarrassment, as the play contained some rather raunchy bits we didn't care to read out loud on the train. The professor and KJ Müller-Griffiths kept straight faces as they read through their love scene with apparently heartfelt emotion; I wouldn't know, I was too busy trying to fit my considerable bulk under the seat, lest the other passengers assume I knew those two. Post- (simulated) coitus, we

all heaved sighs of relief and attempted to get on with our lives – mine, I have to admit, hasn't been the same since.

KJ, the designated gregarious one, also struck up a conversation with a stranger on the train, who helpfully volunteered the information that he was circumcised, as part of our discussion on Shakespeare's depiction of Jews in Venice.



Once in Venice, around 4 p.m., we were dismayed to discover that the seven-day transport pass cost far more than we had bargained for, but most of us gamely put up approximately eighty Euros for a pass that included free state museum and bathroom visits.

We then enjoyed a leisurely coffee on the terrace of a hotel overlooking the Grand Canal while we waited for a boat, or vaporetto. There were gasps around the table when the bill arrived, as we all silently converted the prices into francs



and recognized the tourist trap we had naively gamboled towards.

We piled our luggage onto the boat for San Servolo, the island which houses the Venice International University, where we would be spending the week. After a ten-minute boat ride and a fifty-minute check-in procedure, we were delighted to discover our spotless, high-ceilinged, well-lit living quarters. Dinner at the school cafeteria was disappointingly, if also com-fortingly, remini-scent of every other cafeteria I've ever been to.

The meeting with the Munich group later that night was resplendent with much wine and an assortment of baked goods, and we played a name game in which I learnt that Professor Erne's son is also called Raphael. Professor Döring from Munich was born in Switzerland, and Bernhard from Munich had written and successfully published a short story about Florence. The Shakespeare contingent was 23-strong, all in all: 2 PhD students, 6 students, and a professor from Geneva; and 2 PhD students, 11 students, and a professor from Munich.

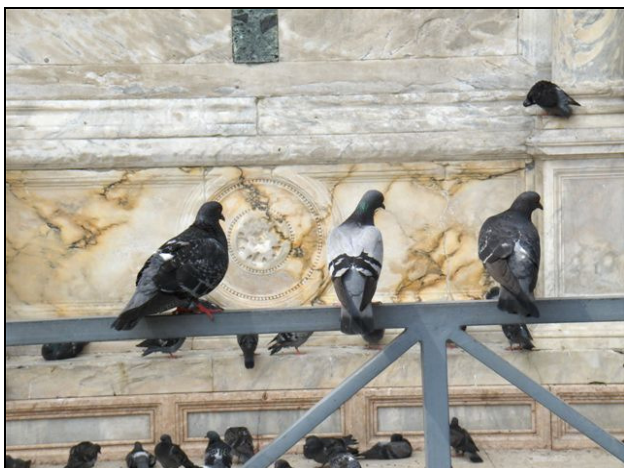


The rest of the week was spent alternating scholarly pursuits with – well, not-so-scholarly ones. We held morning sessions from 9 to 12, with a twenty-minute break, where each of the students finally got to make the presentations we had slaved over for weeks, and we collectively discussed various themes of the assigned texts, as well as issues that had been raised during the presentations. Evening sessions were held from 8 to 10, but we were free to explore Venice as we liked in the afternoons. Most of us opted to have lunch immediately after the morning session, and then head out on the 12.40 vaporetto to the main island, where we undertook marathon sight-seeing sessions to make the most of our museum passes.

On Monday afternoon, there was a scheduled guided tour in which we were shown the aspects of Venice that would have been of interest to Shakespeare, had he visited in the sixteenth century: various depictions of Moors around the city, the Rialto Bridge and surrounding areas, and the Jewish Ghetto. Monday night's evening session was instead replaced with a traditional Venetian fish dinner. →



Other attractions that many of us saw over the course of the week, in the afternoons, included the Doge's Palace, the Campanile (which offered a panoramic view of the city and a few outlying islands), the Correr Museum, the Accademia gallery, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, the Museum of Modern Art at Palazzo Grassi, the Basilica San Marco, and the Glass Museum at Murano.



On Tuesday night, a day earlier than scheduled, we found ourselves called upon to put on our dramatic reading, due to a technical hitch which prevented our scheduled movie viewing. And so it was that the greatest dramatization of *La Venexiana* never taped came to pass, as Professor Erne and KJ took the spotlight in their provocative sex scene, with much talk of tits and stroking, while the rest of us, in a bid to distance ourselves from the whole affair, stifled our giggles behind our copies of the script. When it was over, we gathered the tattered shreds of our dignity about us as we graciously accepted the applause from the appreciative Munich audience,

and later shared many a glass of wine with them far into the night.

Regrettably, Kareen Klein and Emma Depledge, the PhD students from Geneva, had to leave on Wednesday afternoon, but I cannot doubt that they took fond memories of our performance with them.

Wednesday's and Thursday's evening sessions were taken up with viewings and discussions of *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* on film, during which Annie Fee made the university proud by putting her previous film studies courses to good use. On Friday night, the Munich group treated us to their own carefully-rehearsed staging of Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's original.

The final evening session was made complete by the presentation to both professors, from the grateful students, of matching souvenir T-shirts and gondoliere hats, as well as the ingredients necessary for a traditional Venetian spritz: dry white wine, Aperol, and carbonated mineral water.

On Saturday morning, we bade tearful goodbyes to our new friends from Munich, and after a last look around town, boarded the 12.50 train to Milan where we would take another for Geneva. Without the pressure of having to rehearse a play or make a presentation, this was a much more relaxed train ride, during which we abandoned all pretence of scholarly discussion and



instead debated hotly on who was the better-looking prince: William or Harry, while Professor Erne hid behind a large German newspaper and pretended, in his turn, not to know us.

As the token male student, Raphael was well-rewarded when the practical female students pulled out an assortment of cookies and sweets, and, throwing finesse out the window, he declined nothing, helping himself to heaping fistfuls of all that was offered, much to our amusement. Janice Leveris was not to be outdone in the comedy department, however, interjecting non sequiturs that never ceased to provoke raucous laughter, although she spent much of the

time resting as she had picked up a bad cold during our trip.

No train ride would be complete without KJ badgering a stranger into conversation, and she didn't disappoint, recruiting our compartment-mate into contributing to an article she was preparing for NOTED. We lost half of the party in Lausanne, but the rest of us continued on to Geneva, where Flavia Severino's parents came to meet her at the station. While we had all very much enjoyed our week in Venice and our in-depth appreciation of the course material as a result, all agreed that perhaps a reprieve from Shakespeare was in order, and we are eager to apply our new skills to the remainder of our classes in Geneva! ●



The Wound of a Name

anonymous



As Mark Lawson states in his article, the title of Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* is now seen as preferable to the title 'Catch-18' which it was given prior to publication. Indeed, people would have confused it with another novel, *Mary 18*, and perhaps linked them to each other. This is the reason why Joseph Heller changed the title which was given to the novel when it was first published. Many would have liked to have had such a choice about their own title too, but they haven't had that chance...

Thus, some parents thought that it was beautiful to name their beloved baby 'Virginie' when she was born. Indeed, I am a Christian name which derives from the Latin pure word 'virgo', that is to say 'young woman' or 'virgin' in English.

The baby in question disagrees... her past, her childhood taught her to hate me. As Heller's readers would have linked the two titles, her young classmates thought that

I carried sexual connotations because of my similarity with 'virgin' and the sex of women... She was only a child in this period and her immaturity didn't enable her to understand these technical words.

But she must now confess that they violate a part of her personality as well as ruining my apparent beauty and purity. Something is lacking in her, there is an internal injury, a profound wound; there is a wrench which keeps on tearing every time she hears me: when anyone calls on her, she can't help feeling the shiver in her heart... Virginie is not hers; I am an object, a bad connotation, a taboo in her society. I am the thing destroyed when a 'virgo' is raped...

Heller's readers are no longer confused in bookstores thanks to the change of the title. She is confused in hers, she is lost in the library of her memories. She is because she has to be Virginie, she is me, she belongs to me. Indeed, when she reads what I mean, what my personality is, she realizes that I correspond to hers, that I possess her, that I summarize her as *Hamlet* sums up Shakespeare's masterpiece for Mark Lawson. I am lunatic, imaginative, authoritarian, generous... She changes, she imagines, she orders, she gives...



like me, like us, because *we are* Virginie.

My name is Virginie and my parents thought it was beautiful to name me so when I was born. I disagree, I hate it... I hate us... I hate me. It confuses my life, influences my point of view on myself and the way I look ... I feel ill at ease when I hear my name

and try to hide it behind a nickname. Nevertheless, I can escape neither its beautiful personality nor my memories. I now accept it with its difficulties and share its definition and its personality *with* it. But I would have liked a Joseph Heller to change the title of my own story before my publication ...

●
V.

It's a Jungle Out There

by Elsa Carron

Dear Readers,

In one of my many forays into internet forums I encountered a sexist comment. This is not the first time I've seen such and will not be the last. However, it brought me to the issue of feminism: an ever-burning topic that is surely on all your tongues at this time of year.

As I clicked from one link to the next, burying myself deeper and deeper under opinions, definitions, and bingo cards (more about that later), I stumbled on any number of statements that made me rage, laugh helplessly or simply blink in amazement.

Here are two ripe for the picking:

➡ "Women use the 'equality for sexes' statement when it suits them."

➡ "You want equal rights but I don't see *you* being recruited in the army."

I have bones to pick with both of these. I might list them all and burn myself with my own heated diatribe but I would prefer the cooler waters of your fresh and nimble minds.

I've noticed that when talking about gender issues (with both men and women present) it often happens that discussion trails off due to an awkward undercurrent of tension.

As for the bingo, any bingo-lovers out there should check out a different variety of bingo cards available online by placing 'bingo cards' and any of the following into an internet search engine: 'anti-feminist', 'anti-fat', 'anti-comics'. You will be met with a variety of bingo cards with, for example, common arguments against feminism and playing gives you the pleasure of placing a great big cross through them! See which arguments you've already encountered. Same rules apply as for normal bingo, get five in a row and you've won. ●



Etymology



As students of English literature, we spend (or read the work of others who have spent) massive amounts of time pouring over individual words. When Shakespeare says ‘crown’, does he mean the ‘headdress’ itself? The reigning monarch? The title? To be a scholar is to accept these superfluous meanings, and to find the one that befits the situation. One way to tether these somewhat fluid, ambiguous words, is to understand their ‘etymologies’, their origins and transformations. This article’s topic is ‘grammar’.

Ampersand, a contraction of ‘and per se’, is the name for the ‘and’ symbol, &. While the symbol – as well as the Latin word from which it derives, ‘et’ – is thousands of years old, the word itself only dates from 1837. The & is not a letter, but rather a pictograph, or logogram. It is at this point where hypothesis enters into the equation. The *Online Etymology Dictionary* ascribes the origin of the symbol to an ‘old Roman

system of shorthand signs (ligatures), attested in Pompeian graffiti’.

Etymologist Charles Hodgson goes a step further in attributing this system of shorthand signs to a companion of the Roman orator Cicero, Marcus Tullius Tiro. As ‘one of the original stenographers’, he invented a sort of shorthand in the eponymous ‘Tironian Notes’, when recording speeches. When politicians would give speeches, they would have certain turns of phrase, certain rhetoric that they would use repeatedly. To save time, Tiro invented a kind of shorthand to represent much-repeated groups of words in a single symbol. One such compression was ‘&’, for ‘et’; according to Hodgson, squishing ‘e’ and ‘t’ into a single character yields ‘&’. (The etymology-dictionary claims that these notes were a *different* form of shorthand, and that Tiro’s symbol was ‘something like a reversed gamma’.)

This symbol, very useful in Tiro’s time, was so useful in the last few

hundred years that it was included in the alphabet as the last letter. When children recited their ABCs, they would say ‘w, x, y, z and per se and’; they *named* the symbol (‘and’), saying that it means ‘and’ all by itself, except, instead of saying ‘it means it all by itself’, they used a Latin phrase meaning ‘by itself’: ‘per se’. ‘And per se and’, after years of recitation, was compressed into one word: ‘ampersand’.

Metaphor

The *OED* defines ‘metaphor’ as ‘a figure of speech in which a name or descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object or action different from, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable’. A metaphorical expression is ‘All the world’s a stage’ or ‘My love is a red red rose’, because, of course, ‘the world’ is not a stage, nor is ‘love’ a rose. The word first appears in English in Thomas Norton’s 1477 work ‘The Ordinal of Alchemy’: ‘Thei made theire bokis to many men ful derk, In poyses, parabols, & in methaphoris alle-so, which to scolers causith payne and wo’. The poem focuses on the secrets of alchemy, which appropriately brings in the ‘metaphor’; writings on alchemy by alchemists were notoriously obscure, and favoured veiled, metaphorical speech over straightforward expression – they had many secrets to protect, after all. Hodgson notes how the author explains the nature of alchemists of remaining reticent about their practice to all but one deser-

ving pupil who they would train, and how it was ‘forbidden among the secret sect of alchemy to write down their formulas and spells’. The metaphor serves this end, by describing something by saying what it is *not*, which serves the purpose of confusing those who lack an understanding in alchemy, while providing clues for those who do.

‘Metaphor’ came to English from the French of the Norman Conquest – *metaphore* – and Latin before that – *metaphora*. But originally the word came from ancient Greek where it literally meant ‘a carrying over’ from *metapherein*, ‘meta-’ (‘over, across’) + ‘pherein’ (‘to carry, bear’); applied thus, the idea is that a metaphor can carry a concept across from one word to another. In Greece, says Hodgson, because the word retains its meaning of to ‘carry across’ or ‘transfer’, moving vans are labelled ‘metaphor’.

Sentence is a multivalent word; from circa 1290, it meant ‘doctrine, authoritative teaching’ from the Latin *sententia* ‘thought, meaning, judgment, opinion’, from *sentientem*, of *sentire*, ‘to be of an opinion’. But how does this word go from this, to a ‘punishment imposed by a court’, from c.1300, to that of a ‘grammatically complete statement’, from 1447?

Hodgson traces the earliest meaning of ‘sentence’ to a 1225 document: an etiquette guide for nuns. In the *Ancrene Riwe*, ‘sentence’ (quite remarkably with the same spelling) is an ‘ex- →

pression of *thought*: ‘Nime nu god eme, vor hit is alмест Seint Beornardes sentence’. The *OED* is careful to point out the significance of the ‘thought’, implying that the original English ‘sentence’ was closer to its Latin derivative than either of our contemporary meanings.

It then becomes a logical step to go from ‘opinion’ to the ‘official opinion’ rendered by a judge. If a judge opines that ‘you must go to jail’, his opinion, or the ‘sentence’ is that you must be jailed. It was therefore a natural step for ‘an expression of thought’ to become a ‘collection of words expressing a thought’.

Because I have just defined a sentence as being comprised of *multiple* words, it is worth pointing out that a single word can in fact be a sentence, although the *OED* only gives as an example the Latin word *algeo*, meaning ‘I am cold’. (If one ignores the requirements of a sentence having a subject and a verb, then I suppose imperatives such as ‘Stop’, and questions, as well as expressions of affirmation or negation, could apply.)

I end with a non-grammatical word, but a word nonetheless relevant to any student of English or other: **deadline**. Etymology-online qualifies this word as ‘American English newspaper jargon’, dating it at 1920. The word has a much more sinister connotation, perhaps one more appropriate to the dread of an approaching attestation or exam. Dating from the American Civil War, in 1864 it is used to mean

the ‘do-not-cross’ line in Civil War prisons; the line beyond which a prisoner would be shot: ‘Seventeen feet from the inner stockade was the “dead-line”, over which no man could pass and live’ (1868). ●

Anna Gebhardt

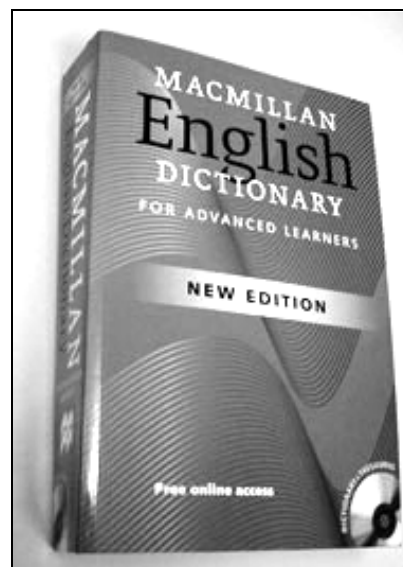
Sources:

Oxford English Dictionary

Hodgson, Charles. *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

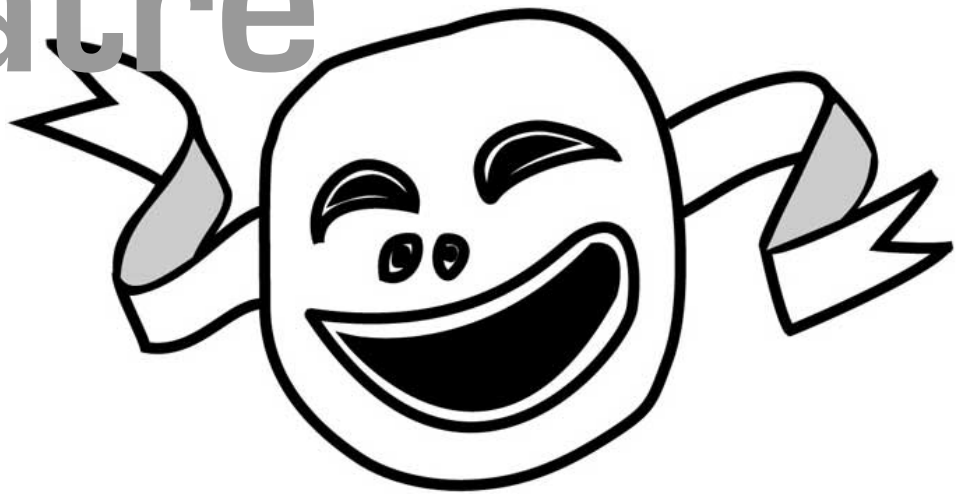
Etymology Competition

To celebrate the launch of the new etymology section, NOTED will award a brand new *MacMillan English Dictionary* for the best etymology article printed in the next issue of NOTED. So get writing!



NOTED would like to thank Prof. Richard Waswo for donating the dictionary.

Theatre



NOTED is currently looking for an enthusiastic editor to look after the theatre section. For more details, please send an email to noted@lettres.unige.ch.

In this issue, Nicolas Weeks updates us about the exciting activities of the Department's very own theatre group, Barbe à Papa, Anja Siouda treats us to a sample of her thespian talents, Rachel Nisbet offers fragments of her family history as a gateway to the fascinating world of Eco Theatre, and Kareen Klein provides a helpful theatre calendar with information about upcoming performances and play-readings in the Geneva area.

Emma Depledge
& Ioana Balgradean



FRAGMENTS: Barbe à Papa's 2007-8 Production & Workshops by Nicholas Weeks

"Language is a highly ambiguous business. So often, below the word spoken, is the thing unknown and unspoken. My characters tell me so much and no more, with reference to their experience, their aspirations, their motives, their history. Between my lack of biographical data about them and the ambiguity of what they say lies a territory which is not only worthy of exploration but which it is compulsory to explore. You and I, the characters which grow on a page, most of the time we're inexpressive, giving little away, unreliable, elusive, evasive, obstructive, unwilling. But it's out of these attributes that a language arises. A language, I repeat, where under what is said, another thing is being said."

Harold Pinter, *Speech at the National Student Drama Festival, Bristol, 1962*

The English Department's theatre group Barbe à Papa is going into its 4th year. Before talking about its latest project entitled *FRAGMENTS*, perhaps a little introduction might prove useful for those who have not heard about us or seen our past productions.

Barbe à Papa was founded in 2004 by Rachel Nisbet, and has been developing and renewing itself every year since then, producing *Amphitryon* 38 in

2005, *Shakes-sheared* in 2006 (the play was performed at the FRINGE festival in Edinburgh), and *The Man Who* in 2007, directed by Jessica Mistovski. Our productions in Geneva have taken place in the little theatre "Le Contretemps" as well as in the theatre room S180 of Uni Mail, and our space for rehearsal moved from a simple room in the "Bâtiment des Philosophes" to a proper theatrical space, the dance room S140 of Uni Mail, in 2006.

For me, acting has been a very rewarding experience. The workshops created and tried to sustain a sense of discovery in the simple things (sensitivity, awareness of space, the ability to experiment with language and expression), and were also an opportunity to make new friends.

In preparing this year's workshops, one of my main influences was Clive Barker's book *Theatre Games* where I do not think he overstates the case when he says that 'actor training deals with the whole human personality and all its interactive processes, mental, physical and emotional. Its aim is the individual development of personality'. During the sessions, it was fascinating to see a collaboration grow with everyone contributing through their comments and opinions at different stages of our work.



Barbe à Papa's theme for this year is based on what Martin Esslin termed 'the Theatre of the Absurd'. Seven new student-actors have decided to embark on this project which is due to appear at the beginning of March, in the theatre room S180 of Uni Mail. *FRAGMENTS* is a series of seven sketches, interwoven with three mimes. The texts are by Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard. We hope you will share our enthusiasm for this project, and

we will provide further information as dates are confirmed. In the meantime, if this article has piqued your curiosity, why not have a look at the pictures of our previous performances on our web site:

<http://web.mac.com/nickweeks1>
or through the Department's web-site at:

www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/

> Activities and Services

> Barbe à Papa



Jonas Hauert



The Old Couple

A One-Act Play by Anja Siouda

CHARACTERS:

He, She

The two of them are sitting on the tiny balcony on the 20th floor, basking in the heat of the dog days. They are quite long in the tooth.

HE *[tenderly patting her wrinkled hand]* Do you remember?

SHE *[in a bored tone of voice]* What?

HE *[putting her hand in his]* The day-

SHE Ssh! Put a sock in it, will you?

HE *[dropping her hand]* What's up?

SHE Listen! The neighbours, they are bickering again! *[approaching the balustrade, all eyes and trying to catch what is said]* And she's throwing the book at him. Come and get an eyeful of this!

HE Who cares? So do you remember the day-

SHE *[suddenly giving him the hairy eyeball]* Your hair could do with a wash!

HE Listen! You've got your mind on others things, as usual!

SHE That's not true, but you really look like something the cat brought in!

HE Then just turn a blind eye to it!

SHE *[looking daggers at him]* Gosh, it's always the same old story with you!

HE What old story?

SHE You make fun of my well-intentioned advice, just for the hell of it.

HE You know, I remember the time when love was blind, five decades ago...

SHE That must have been before my time-

HE *[looking as sick as a parrot]* What?? So you really don't remember the day I-

SHE *[cutting him short and bending over the balustrade again]* Shh! Shut up! Can you hear them? Now he's crying his eyes out. Come over here and take a gander at them!

HE *[disheartened, pulling a pipe out of his pocket and starting to stuff it with tobacco]* I don't give a damn about their falling-out!

SHE *[in an irritated tone of voice, without turning round to him]* Do you really have to smoke just now? Leave it out! They'll smell it and think that somebody's listening.

HE I haven't lit it yet, but for a moment I forgot that you have eyes in the back of your head.

SHE I smelt the fresh tobacco. You know it gets up my nose.

HE *[with irony]* Does it? Do you think it doesn't get up my nose that you can't keep your nose out of other people's private matters?



SHE *[turning round to him]* Oh no, not that old chestnut again!

HE It's not an old chestnut. I've had enough of your enjoying other people's trouble and of your lack of interest in our own relationship.

SHE You are a dirty old man!

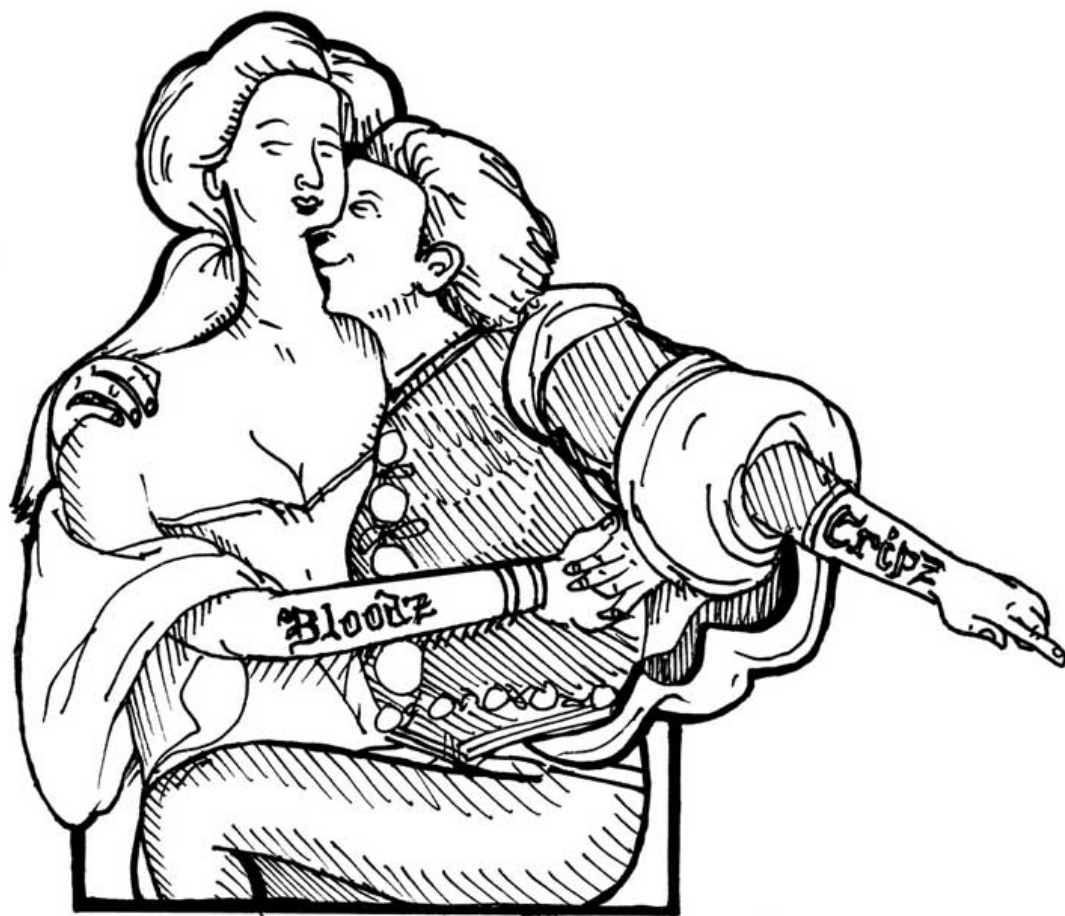
HE *[in a frightening tone of voice]* Is that what you think of me?

SHE *[suddenly becoming aware that she's gone too far and withdrawing to the balustrade again]* Let's switch to another subject, all right? So, actually, what did you want to tell me? *[looking at her watch]* But make it snappy, you know my favourite soap opera starts in two minutes!

HE *[standing up from his chair, with a sinking heart]* Nothing.

SHE *[yelling at the top of her voice]* Nothing? You're *nothing* but a liar! I know you wanted to say something to me when you were grabbing my hand! Spit it out now!

HE *[surprisingly calmly]* Actually, I lost heart. I don't want to say it anymore *[approaching his wife who's still leaning against the balustrade]* but let me show you then what I did the day you can't remember! *[and with a quick sweep of his right foot he makes her fall head over heels into the void while he screams bitterly after her]* I swept you off your feet! ●



Jonas Hauert



Eco Theatre

by Rachel Nisbet

Towards an eco-theatre:

I was born into a family of diverse origins, related by interconnected trade histories. If I split myself in two, one of my hands descends from a line of Indians, employed as a sort of imperialistic polyfiller. Thus we sailed from Calcutta in the 1860's as indentured labourers bound for the West Indian sugar plantations. Subsequently, we were groomed to provide the middle class strata in a racially prescriptive society (black-beige-white).

Our education enabled mobility. Thus, working as teachers we were instrumental in disseminating Western civilisation in Canada. Later, in an age of so-called political correctness, we advanced multicultural education in the English Lake District. My other hand, however, roots in the Calder Valley of Yorkshire: land of the Brontës and Ted Hughes. Despite the distance between them, I somehow feel my *manos sinister et dextra* are related, as much through economics as blood. The market for cotton, also known as *Indienne* cloth, rapidly developed in nineteenth century Britain. Industrial production of velvets, corduroy and moleskins boomed in the Calder Valley. Grandfather ran a spindle factory. I sense Grandmother's cherished, sugar-loaded cake-stand provided some solace after it fatally blew up.

What's the link with eco-theatre?

Well it's a demonstration, on a personal level, of how complex our relationship with the environment is. Human dramas are intimately connected to natural environments. Sugar cane doesn't grow in Yorkshire; however, the soft waters running through gritstone and moorland are perfect for the dye trade. Thus, trade niches have provoked dramas of interrelated hardship and privilege in many global settings. Nevertheless, environmental agency can be overlooked in scripts. *Deus ex Machina* plots; Shakespeare, c.f. *Macbeth*; Beckett, *Endgame*; Shepard, *Buried Child* and Churchill, *Rafts and Dreams* being notable exceptions.

HAMM Look at the earth.
 Look at the sea.
 And the sun?

CLOV Damn the sun.

(Beckett, *Endgame*)

So, what's your idea of eco-theatre anyway?

Perhaps a theatre that can open our eyes to the fact that Earthly drama operates on timescales that are generally beyond human perception? A theatre that shows our existence is informed by, and yet also affects, the environment?

There are several elements I would like to explore:



➡ Whether patterns and rhythms for story can emerge from outside the literary canon. Perhaps biological or geologically inspired structures such as folding; juxtaposing, mirroring, compressing, extending, doubling, mutating can influence story. *Goat Island Performance* experiments with some of these frameworks, arguing that they give access to "wider narratives".

➡ Whether story maps can be created through performance in a theatre space.

➡ If the juxtaposition of micro and macro scale structures in a performance space (e.g. film projection or shadow) could provoke the interrogation of received ideas about place/space.

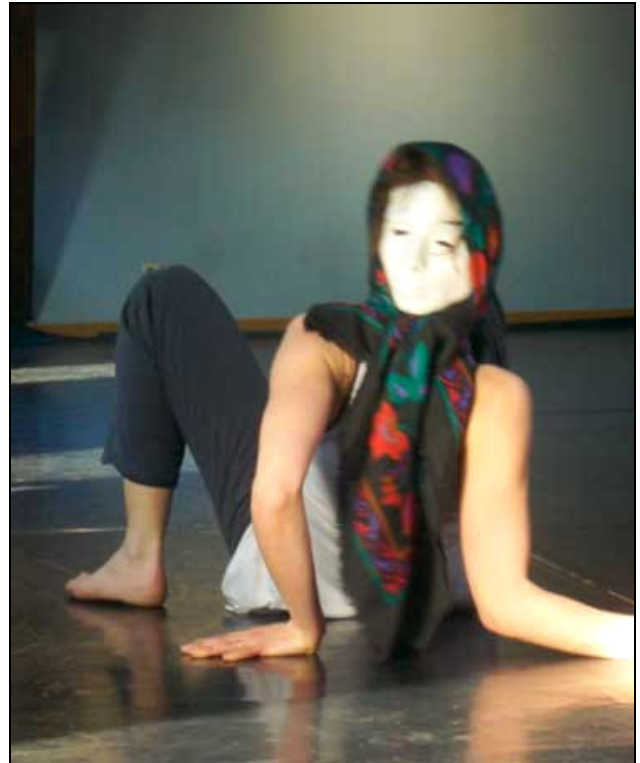
➡ How corporal narratives of movement, or dance can objectify the body, thereby interrogating the perceived binaries of subject-object / noun-verb: seeming barriers between humans and their environment.

➡ Whether using the body as "our first technology" can interrogate the humanness of perception. We possess a rotating larynx, like dogs, enabling us to bark; like birds, we derive pleasure from song. So what are the boundaries between the human and the non-human?

... and more concretely?

This year I've participated in several inspiring workshops including:

➡ At the Juncture of Body and Object: International Puppetry Institute / *Théâtre du Mouvement*



Matiled Henry: Chimera

"An object should not be consumed. One should be consumed by the object"
(*Théâtre du Mouvement*)

"It is not an object that is being manipulated but a memory, a thought."
(*Théâtre du Mouvement*)

Some *Théâtre du Mouvement* themes:

Identity	-	transience
doubling	-	multiplication
life	-	death
presence	-	absence
hiding	-	revealing



☛ Environment Theatre: Insitu Theatre

Using the *Goat Island Performance* template of creative regeneration, one section of work on this course was generated from a tripartite research walk around Llandudno. During the walk's first section we registered the impressions we received from our feet to knees; in the second section, from our knees to thoraxes; and in the third section, from our thoraxes to the tops of our heads. We were especially attentive to textures and rhythms. At the three stopping points during the walk we recorded our impressions. While stopped we also generated similes from sounds heard; and recorded visual, olfactory and kinaesthetic stimuli.

Printed below is my plastic, creative response to the tripartite research walk. Another participant performed a movement piece in my installation space.

This performance was in turn a response to a third actor's 2-minute presentation based on the research walk.

Also, with much help, I've created a 40m² performance space, complete with hemp and lime insulated walls; hand dyed organic linen curtains and eco light bulbs. At last, a space to make works!

Finally, my Poetry-Performance project, *Erratics: Greenland, photographed – with poetry*, has been accepted as an International Polar Year Event 2007-2009. To this end, I've recently attended a sci-art conference, *Polar: Field-work and Archive Fever*. Inspired by the talks of science historian, Sveker Sorlin, artist-activist, David Buckland and the curator Rachel Weiss, I am beginning to develop my first solo.

(With thanks to Martin Leer, for all the insights gained from his 2008 ecocriticism seminar) ●



RRH Nisbet: Diptych, Eternity of Last Suppers?



Theatre Calendar for NOTED

compiled by Kareen Klein

19.02.2008	<i>The Deep Blue Sea</i> by Terence Rattigan	GEDS
26.02.-01.03.2008	The Constant Wife by W. Somerset Maugham	GEDS
04.03.2008	<i>The Grass is Greener</i> by H & M Williams	GEDS
18.03.2008	<i>Butley</i> by Simon Gray	GEDS
01.04.2008	<i>Pack of Lies</i> by Hugh Whitemore	GEDS
04.04.-05.04.2008	[To be announced] EDGE, the youth section of GEDS	
15.04.2008	<i>Shakers</i> by John Godber & Jane Thornton	GEDS
06.05.2008	<i>Home (Act II) & Bazaar and Rummage</i> by David Storey by Sue Townsend	GEDS
20.05.-24.05.2008	Night of the Iguana by Tennessee Williams	GEDS
27.05.2008	<i>The Crucible</i> by Arthur Miller	GEDS
10.06.2008	<i>Round and Round the Garden</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	GEDS
[June]	Look out for the Shakespeare in a château event!	Howard Productions

Full productions are printed in bold. *Playreadings* are printed in Italics. Please check the websites for info about venues and times:

The Geneva English Drama Society (GEDS): www.geds.ch
 Howard Productions: www.howardprod.ch
 The Geneva Amateur Operatic Society (GAOS): www.gaos.ch



Film



The NOTED film column offers you a colourful panorama. From now on, each new issue will feature a different kind of quiz – a great opportunity for old film buffs to test their knowledge of the cinematic world, and a great way for wannabe film buffs to explore the field. Our calendar keeps you up-to-date on any interesting event – including, of course, our department's very own film cycle...

Those who think one cannot play an active part in the world of cinema will be interested in our interview with a student who became a jury member for the last *Cinéma tout écran* festival. We are also inviting you to offer your critical eye and connoisseurship to the NOTED film competition – participate in our quest for the holy reel!

Finally, a review of *Across the Universe* provides you with one possibility among many of how to turn our film section into a lively forum. However, you needn't limit yourself to sharing ideas and responses to films with the readers of NOTED – you could also invite them to explore your favourite festivals, introduce them to people in the local film business, make them ponder the relationship between cinema and literature, baffle them with a storyboard or a short film script, and so on and so forth. Share your ideas and enthusiasm for the 7th art with your fellow students and make them cry for more!

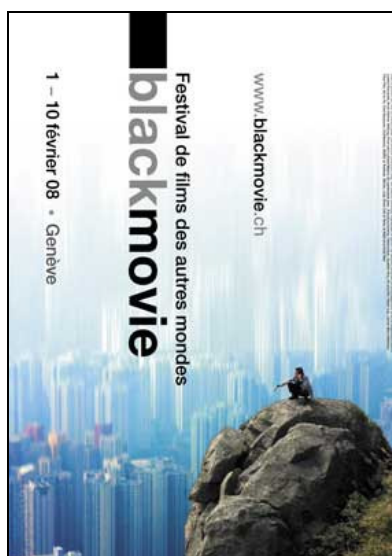
Gabrielle Dayer
& Michael Rösli



Upcoming Events, Cycles, and Festivals

compiled by Michael Rösli

- 14.01 – 07.04.2008 **Ciné-Club Universitaire: Let the Music(als) Play**
<http://www.a-c.ch/index.php> >Rendez-vous AC >Ciné-club
- 01.02 – 10.02.2008 **Blackmovie: Festival de films des autres mondes**
<http://www.blackmovie.ch/>
- 21.02 – 22.05.2008 **English Department Film Cycle**
http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/activites/film_en.html
- 01.03.– 08.03.2008 **Festival International de Films de Fribourg (Fribourg)**
<http://www.fiff.ch/>
- 07.03.– 16.03.2008 **Festival du film et forum international sur les droits de l'homme**
<http://www.fifdh.ch/>
- 26.03.– 30.03.2008 **Schweizer Jugendfilmtage (Zurich)**
<http://www.jugendfilmtage.ch/>
- 14.04.– 23.06.2008 **Ciné-Club Universitaire: les films d'Alain Resnais**
<http://www.a-c.ch/index.php> >Rendez-vous AC >Ciné-club
- 17.04.– 23.04.2008 **Visions du Réel: International Film Festival (Nyon)**
<http://www.visionsdureel.ch/agenda.html>
- 02.05.– 06.05.2008 **Rose d'Or: Television Festival (Lucerne)**
<http://www.rosedor.com/content/festival2008.php>
- 01.06.– 06.06.2008 **Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival**
<http://www.niff.ch/>



The Department's Spring Cycle

compiled by Valerie Fehlbaum and Michael Rösli

Schedule: Our 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 also displayed on the notice boards of the Philosophes and of the English Department at the Comédie and it is available online on our departmental website, together with more detailed information about the film cycle:

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

Date:	Film Title:	Director:
21/02/2008	<i>The Merchant of Venice (2004)</i>	Michael Radford
28/02/2008	<i>Prospero's Books (1991)</i>	Peter Greenaway
06/03/2008	<i>Chimes at Midnight / Falstaff (1965)</i>	Orson Welles
13/03/2008	<i>Cromwell (1970)</i>	Ken Hughes

Easter Break

03/04/2008	<i>Henry V (1944)</i>	Laurence Olivier
10/04/2008	<i>Henry V (1989)</i>	Kenneth Branagh
17/04/2008	<i>King Kong (1933)</i>	Merian C. Cooper
24/04/2008	<i>The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover (1989)</i>	Peter Greenaway
01/05/2008	<i>The Innocents (1961)</i>	Jack Clayton
08/05/2008	<i>Presence of Mind (1999)</i>	Antoni Aloy
15/05/2008	<i>The Scarlet Letter (1995)</i>	Roland Joffé
22/05/2008	<i>Death in Venice (1971)</i>	Luchino Visconti



Film Quiz

by Michael Rösli

What films are the following stills extracted from?
(solutions on page (44))

Still #1



Still #2



Still #3



Still #4



Still #5



Still #6



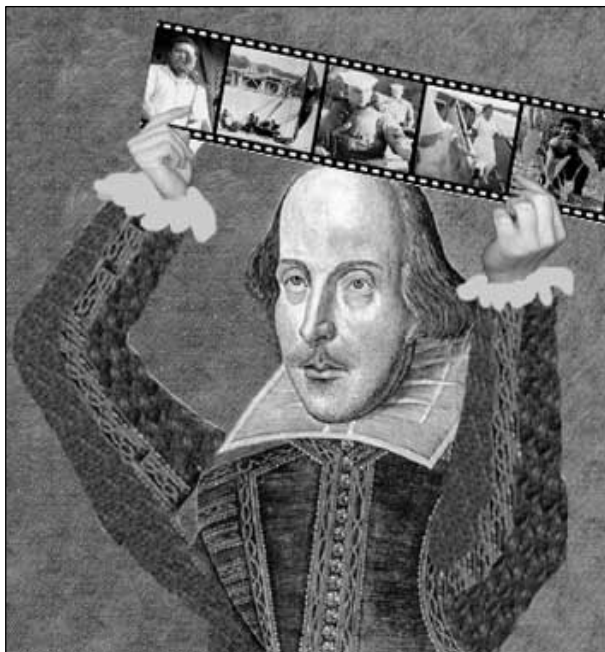
Still #7



Still #8



Competition: The Quest for the Holy Reel



The NOTED film column is looking for the all-time favourite film of the students in the English Department. Any feedback is welcome: please send your list of up to ten of the best films you have ever seen to noted@lettres.unige.ch. You need only mention their title(s) and director(s), but you can of course add a brief note about the reasons of your choice, or a mini-review of what your favourite film is all about. The top ten films will be published in the next issue of NOTED.

Solutions to the Film Quiz (p. 43)

1. *Mulholland Drive* (2001) by David Lynch.
2. *The Graduate* (1967) by Mike Nichols.
3. *The Shining* (1980) by Stanley Kubrick.
4. *Cabaret* (1972) by Bob Fosse.
5. *Donnie Darko* (2001) by Richard Kelly.
6. *The Meaning of Life* (1983) by Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam.
7. *The Gold Rush* (1925) by Charles Chaplin.
8. *Fight Club* (1999) by David Fincher.



Cinéma Tout Écran

by Gabrielle Dayer

This is an interview with Antoine Harari, a student in international relations and history of cinema. He participated in the festival Cinéma tout écran as a youth juror.

Why did you decide to be a juror at Cinéma tout écran?

I have always been really interested in the world of movies and I wanted to be involved in something and to meet people that worked in this area every day. This was a perfect opportunity to meet directors for example. Moreover, being in this world, even for only a week, is motivating, it makes you think that you could do this later. It was also interesting because there were two aspects, the artistic aspect, but also a marketing aspect, like the movie market for example. Also, *Cinéma tout écran* is the most reputed festival in Switzerland, and it is really "tout écran" in the sense that it presents different sorts of movies (for television, cinema and even an anecdotic contest for cell phone movies). That is a good thing because television movies are given more and more credit.

How did you enter this youth jury?

Usually the jury is composed of students that are still at the *collège*, but I just talked to one of the organizers and we sympathized, so he said that I could be part of the jury. If you want to be involved in the festival, you have to ask them if they need anyone. Students can also work there as volunteers, which is great because you can see a lot of movies for free and meet a lot of interesting people.

How was your experience there?

It was great! There were three different juries: the youth jury, the official jury and the press jury. We were watching the movies together so it was a good occasion to meet lots of different people. It was also interesting to notice the difference in point of view between me and first-year *collège* students. We did not like the same films. Sometimes it was a bit difficult to watch four or five films a day, especially as these days we do not get a lot of comedies! It was an intense week but the atmosphere was really good. ●



Review: *Across the Universe*

by Michael Rösli

The musical is back on the silver screen! While the *ciné-club universitaire* will open the new semester with a film cycle on the genre and its wonderfully diverse manifestations – including Jim Sharman's *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996) and Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) – a new work of epic dimensions is hitting our Geneva screens: if you liked Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge*, you're going to love *Across the Universe*!

Julie Taymor, having left quite an impression on her spectators with *Titus* and *Frida*, presents her latest film which is a glimpse at the 1960s in the United States in the form of a highly imaginative musical comedy. Rather than being viewed as a historical period, in the collective memory, the 60s have acquired mythical status. The collision of the Vietnam War, student risings, the struggle for civil rights, racial issues and Martin Luther King's assassination, hippies and flower power led to a cultural critical mass. Instead of seeking a way to access this period through a realistic approach, *Across the Universe* embraces and focuses on the myth of the 60s as it is haunting the popular memory of the early 21st century.



The film acknowledges the dream-like status of its subject and treats it accordingly: very much like in Freud's notion of the dream-work, it picks up on a wealth of fragments of the period, then transforms, displaces and condenses them, before weaving them into a breathtaking filmic fabric. Witness, for instance, Janis Joplin turn into Sadie, the landlady of the protagonist, and Jimi Hendrix as Jojo, a guitarist who joins her band and soon becomes her lover. In a row between the two, carried out on stage during their performance, Jojo's guitar expresses his discontent and echoes Hendrix's distortion of the national anthem at Woodstock – this is just a small example from the rich network the film sets up. The present also infiltrates this fabric through various cameo appearances by stars like Bono (as Dr. Robert), Selma Hayek (as five nurses in a surreal sequence at a hospital ward for Vietnam soldiers), Joe Cocker (after being live on stage at Woodstock, appearing here as a hippy, pimp and tramp) and the British comedian Eddie Izzard (as Mr. Kite, director of the magic circus).

The major force at work in the film are the Beatles. All characters emerge straight from their song texts ("Hey Jude", "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds", "Maxwell's Silver Hammer", "Sexy Sadie", Jojo from "Get Back" etc.), and the film offers over thirty re-orchestrated Beatles songs which are brilliantly interpreted by the actors themselves and drive the plot while being recontextualised at the same time. A rare treat for any Beatles fan, who will not only enjoy the music, but will also find song lines embedded in the dialogue, camera angles and



settings from Beatles video clips, and manifold parallels (such as to the bands' Magical Mystery Tour in '67 with Dr. Robert and his Kool-Aid charged with LSD, their encounter with Maharishi and much more).

Don't let yourself be put off by the plot, which clearly is not the primary focus of this production, and draws on more general conventions of the musical, with a love story and immediately identifiable character types. Jude, a worker at a Liverpool factory, embarks on a quest for his father whom he locates in New York. Arriving in the Big Apple, he befriends Max (a university student who abandons his studies and will be drafted by the US army), and falls in love with Max's sister Lucy. Their relationship, however, will be put to the test when Lucy (*bourgeoise, gauche caviar*) gets more and more involved in an anti-war movement, while Jude enters the *bohème* world as a painter and insists on remaining apolitical.

The genre of the musical also boosts the impressive visual style of the film which has pompous and unforgettable surrealist, dadaist and psychedelic sequences chasing each other. Among them are Max's medical examination for the Army (with an Uncle Sam poster coming to life and the soldiers-to-be carrying the Statue of

Liberty across a model of the Vietnam jungle), Mr. Kite's magic circus, Jude's creation of a CD cover for Sadie's band edited in parallel and merging with TV footage of war bombings (strawberries dropped from fighter planes), or the sequence at the hospital ward of wounded soldiers. This intriguing and larger-than-life visual firework is accompanied by excellent choreographies that freshen up the genre, but also underline the dream-like character of the film.



Across the Universe, though already under fire from several critical voices who dread the idea of a reprise of Beatles material, or dismiss the film for its naivety (thus probably more expressing their ignorance of the genre than offering productive criticism), is definitely worth a cinema ticket. Let yourself be drawn into a kaleidoscopic patchwork of this contemporary dream and decide for yourself! ●



Music



In addition to actors, writers, poets, artists and photographers, we also have a number of talented musicians and musicologists in the English Department and NOTED looks forward to celebrating their work and ideas in a new music section. Estrange Waters have set the ball rolling, relating their musical journey and treating us to their fantastic lyrics, so why not tell us about your own musical experience? Alternatively, you could tell us about your favourite song, a concert or gig you've attended, or even explore the relationship between music and other arts or the interdependence of poetry and music.

Conradin Schwarzenbach



Creativity in the English Department: Estrange Waters by Viviane Reber

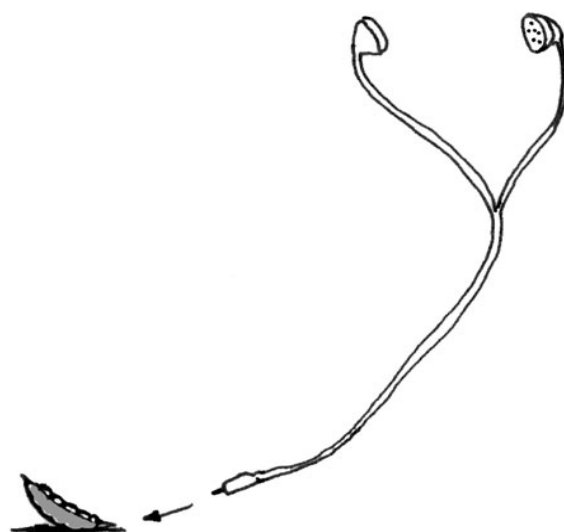
I have always known that many students in *Lettres* are also talented in artistic fields, be it theatre, writing, painting or music. It's not always easy, however, to find out the nature of our fellow students' creativity. NOTED gives us the opportunity to do that, which is why I'm writing this article about how my friend and I express ourselves in music. I hope that other students and staff members will take the same initiative, because I think that we would all enjoy finding out more about everyone's artistic endeavours. In the meantime, I'd like to share my musical story with you.



Kiwi and I met 9 years ago, on the Internet. She lived near Marseille, I was in Geneva; she was a student of *Arts Plastiques*, I was a prospective English student. Over the years, thanks to our many tastes in common, we have created a rich and eclectic artistic universe of our own. We started by drawing and writing stories together, and then branched out into writing music and lyrics. We wrote our first song during a meeting in March 2006, entirely composed on a computer, but close enough to the instrumental sounds

that we both enjoyed. We found that our voices blended well and that it was a pleasure and a relief to express our innermost feelings and anxieties in song. We continued composing and arranging our pieces during online chats and exchanging recordings over the Internet, and our repertoire grew steadily despite our being separated by hundreds of kilometres. We finally published a few demos of our finished songs on the Internet under the band name "Estrange Waters". Our style is varied, reflecting our changeable personalities, and it's probably not a type of music that you've heard anywhere else, as it's a strange mixture between pop, rock, Celtic folk, electronica and new-age music. Well, at least we like what we do, but we also hope that you'll visit our site and tell us what you think about our work. Our address is:

<http://www.wat.tv/Estrangewaters>



Illustrations by Jennifer Wong



Ghost Song

by Estrange Waters

Voices of memories I'd never heard before
Talk about me, float around me
Silent sounds of shadows ask me what I'm looking for
And tell me I'm not really here

And I open my eyes
And I stare at the sun
It takes a while to realise
My spirit is among them

Visions of memories I'd never seen before
Eyes on me, smiling at me
Silent forms pass me by, looking deep into my soul
Asking me how I've come to be here

And I open my eyes
And I stare at the sun
It takes a while to realise
My spirit is among them

It takes a while to realise
My heart hadn't ever been here before
It takes a while to realise
That I had left this world behind long ago

Now I've opened my eyes
And I stand in the sun
It took a while to realise
I've always been among them

It takes a while to realise
That I had left this world behind long ago
And I'm leaving behind
Cold, fears and loneliness I never want to feel anymore



Siren's Song

by Estrange Waters

Set out on the high seas, sail across the waters
Leave the safety of your shores
You may see a shadow
Of what hides down below

Lost in our abode, you're in search of your home
Silence surrounds you; you're alone
But the sound of sorrow
Rises from far below

Our voices roam the ocean
Come to us, listen to our secrets
Hear us deep under the sea
Sing a siren's song

Suddenly a shudder, sharp rocks shatter your ship
And it sinks in the shadows
Trapped in the undertow
Sharp teeth hide down below

Your soul sinks in the ocean
Hear our voice, slip into nothingness
Join us deep under the sea
Sing a siren's song

Deep asleep under the sea
Sing a siren's song
Your last home under the sea
Sing a siren's song

Eyes in the Machine

by Estrange Waters

Looking at me, a critical lens
Eyes flashing pictures through my self
Puppet caught in a pantomime
Mirrored glass around me
Under scrutiny

And I know from their looks I'm broken
Aimless smiles won't change anything
There's a shadow on the photograph
A speck of dust in me
A ruined machine

So I'll never be like their poster
Had no choice, I wasn't made better
Guilty of being their doll, damaged
Nothing good comes from me
Now recycling me



Creative Writing



Poetry is a well loved genre in the Geneva English Department. From melancholy to wittiness, our authors will move you with their words. We feel fortunate to have received such enjoyable contributions. You will dive into GO and GET's love life and learn all about that enigmatic Lem. However, we don't want to divulge too much about these delicious bits of writing as we wouldn't want to spoil your appetite.

Now, without further delay, dig in!

Aisha Ali
& Alexandra Borgeaud

P.S. Don't worry if you ate too much chocolate over the holidays, these mouthwatering delights will only feed your mind.



The Wind

by Ola Serhan

When we played from afar,
Growing inland flowers,
Only their thousand scents
Could travel beyond the unknown,
And the seas would then
Whisper
Where is the poetry?

When our passions grew wild
Uncontained in their youths
And their love twisted our throats
Until we could not breathe,
Our boiling blood would then
Roar
Where is the poetry?

Shall we watch together one day
Grow from the smoking ashes
Of our soothed hearts
The scent of wisdom,
And let the riding wind
Blow
Where the poetry is?

A Drabble

by Elsa Carron

I dream of him constantly; and when awake I daydream. Who? Lem, of course. What? No, Lem isn't a stupid name. Stop saying that. I don't care if it reminds you of leprechauns. Go away. Thank you. Finally a moment of silence. As I was saying, he's so cute and – what? HE DOES NOT LUST AFTER HALF THE CLASS. You're lying and I'm not in denial.

Okay, so maybe he does. I feel slightly... irritated that he doesn't lust after me first and foremost. I am obviously – wait. Repeat that. No, before that. The *male* half of the class? He – I – Damn. ●



Proposed Additions to the Text

by Alan Sternberg

Text to be added to: Donald Barthelme's story "Overnight to Many Distant Cities"

Excerpt from original story:

In Barcelona the lights went out. At dinner. Candles were produced and the shiny langoustines placed before us. . .

Lunching with the Holy Ghost I praised the world, and the Holy Ghost was pleased. "We have that little problem in Barcelona," He said, "the lights go out in the middle of dinner."

Second excerpt from original story (in response to popular demand):

In San Antonio we walked by the little river. And ended up in Helen's Bar, where John found a pool player who was, like John, an ex-Marine. How these ex-Marines love each other! It is a flat scandal. The Congress should do something about it. The IRS should do something about it. You and I talked to each other while John talked to his Parris Island friend, and that wasn't too bad, wasn't too bad. We discussed twenty-four novels of normative adultery. "Can't *have* no adultery without adults," I said, and you agreed that this was true.

Source of proposed added material: Class on "short stories from the authors' point of view"

Methods: Raw primary copy was submitted to committee. Some shifting and settling of contents occurred during processing. Sterilization chamber halted further reproduction of text. Post-industrial drying and cleaning. Shake thoroughly and add Brussels sprouts.

Quote from Barthelme:

"Fragments are the only forms I trust."

Response of Barthelme (1931-1989) to proposed additions:

Nothing audible.

In Osaka the room became empty and clean. The files and boxes, messily heaped on the shelves behind the manager, were taken away. We peered curiously through the suddenly clear window. What were moon bears doing on the sidewalk? And why were they wearing sunglasses?

In New York she was late. When he was younger, he wouldn't have waited more than ten minutes, but the clock ticks faster when you're older. He passed the time building a prostate gland out of coffee spoons.



In Geneva the envelopes were found at the edge of the bridge. Random names and addresses. More than ten letters, each handwritten. It's hard to buy stamps when you're stuck in traffic. Clearly the hope was that the right people would simply find them.

In Quito we stood on the roof and looked at the recently awakened Pichincha volcano. We got on well that night, I thought. Eventually you spilled wine on my underpants. "If a volcano erupts," you pointed out, "nobody notices if somebody spills wine on somebody else's underpants." You spoke with such conviction that I had the impression you'd been in this situation before.

The American actor invited us to the house he had bought in Sydney. "I love Australia, it's California without the random violence." You and I toasted the fresh salt air -- and this feeling I had that I could marry repeatedly.

Again in New York, you kept closing your eyes.

"But that's dangerous!"

"But maybe I don't want to see anything!"

We were safer twenty stories up in the hotel, the rain falling outside, our two wet noses pressed against the mini-bar.

In the high peaks, we heard the mountains sigh. Were they unhappy or something? Couldn't they see we were busy? We had

our arms around each other. Also, Matt Damon had just handed us two pumpernickel bagels.

We strolled through the illuminated streets of Strasbourg and decided to buy our first house. It was made entirely of gingerbread. We asked the stork to bring us a baby for Christmas but his schedule was full up for the next forty-five years. He recommended that we order it online.

In Dublin, you had terrific hiccups. The woman selling T-shirts was concerned. We reassured her. "She's just getting warmed up. Wait 'til five minutes from now."

J. was sick in Hamilton. Finally she went to the hospital. They told her it was only a thyroid problem -- not throat cancer.

"But my throat's still sore."

The nurses made some attempt to make her feel better. "Listen," they said, "it's a good thing you're not a giraffe."

The theatre in Ginza was very crowded. The previous movie had finished, yet still it showed a woman in a kimono with an umbrella on the riverbank under a blue sky. When I got out of the stuffy basement, Tokyo had disappeared. It was a more attractive city that way.

In Meriden you threw up at the Petunia Festival.

→



"Why do they have fried dough?
What do they have fried dough
for if I'm not supposed to eat it?"

A pause while a certain activity
was resumed.

Eventually you gasped, "What
was I supposed to eat? Petunias?"

When we finally made it to the
parking lot, we found the car
covered with red splotches. They
were all over the hood and
windshield. Farther up the row,
two teenagers were swatting
ketchup packets with tennis
raquets.

A state trooper leaned against
the hood of his car, the better to

be admired in his uniform. The
yellow stripe up the leg. . . High
school students thronging past
offered compliments. "Where's the
f--ing costume party?"

We all watched as a ketchup
packet sailed halfway across the
street.

"You can do better than that,
sucker."

Thunderstorms expected, traffic
backed up on I-91.

*We hitchhiked all the way to
Portland. And still a little kid tried
to sell me a wristwatch.*

*In Vienna the conference was so
boring our socks melted.* ●

The Hen's Philosophy II

by Anja Siouda



My fellow hens
With their problems
And idle small talk
On corn and yolk

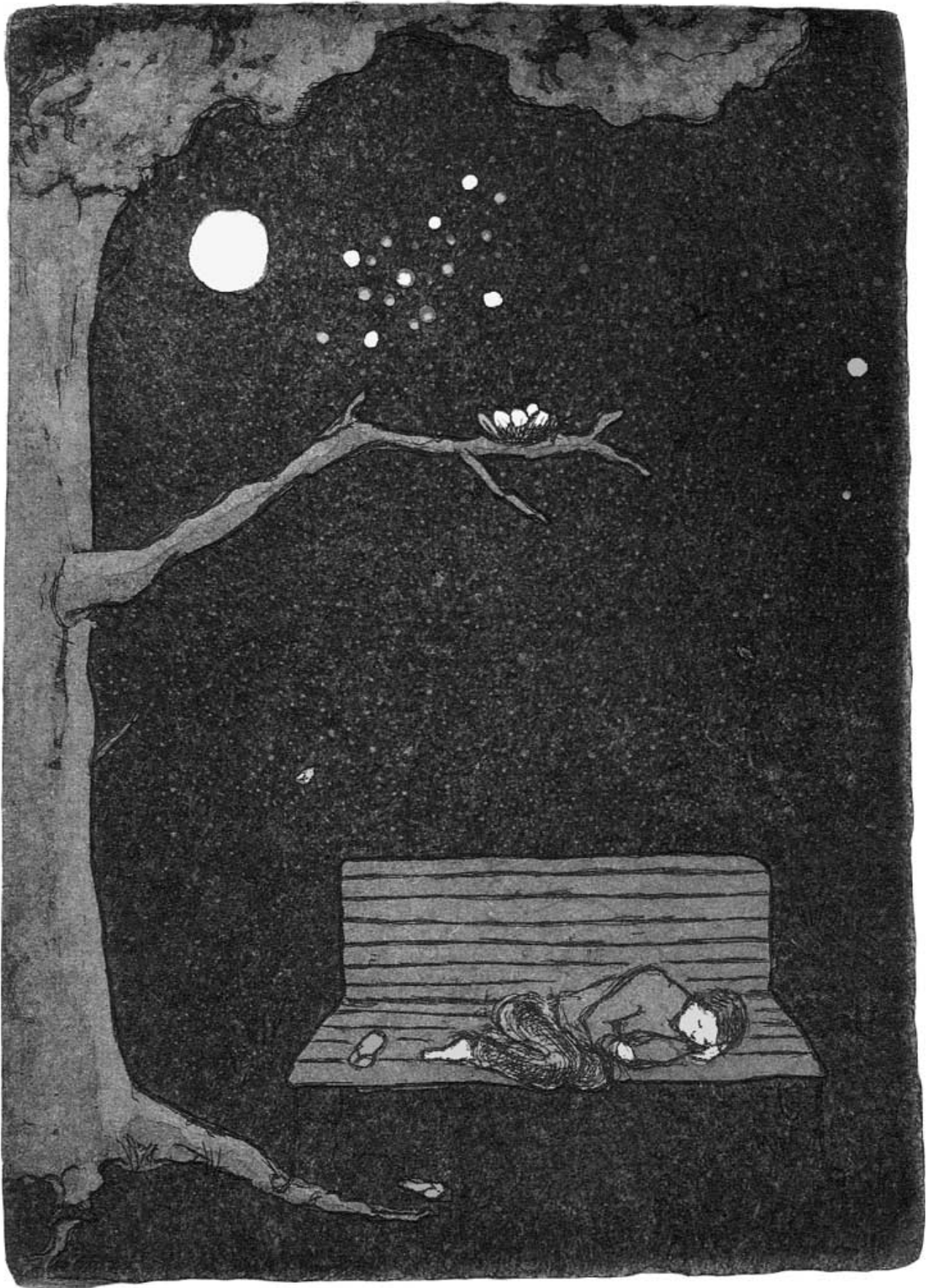
Now make fun of me
And my poultry-poetry
Yet their jealousy
Cannot hurt me

For I have been quoted
In the newsletter NOTED!

I feel so proud
Sitting on cloud
Nine as the first
Hen with a thirst

For chapter and verse
Metaphors and letters
Juggling with words
Instead of worms!





Jennifer Wong, Untitled 2003.
Etching and Aquatint, 10.5 x 7.5 cm



Go and Get Together: Free Fiction with Phrasal Verbs

by Anja Siouda

'Sweetheart, I really don't know what to put on!' GO shouts out of the bedroom.

'What? What's the matter?' GET shouts back, with a sleepy voice, as he had just dozed off in front of the telly.

'I don't know how to dress up for the fancy-dress ball! Can you help me please, darling?'

'Can't you make up your mind? You're a grown-up, aren't you?' GET lets out an almighty sigh, but finally stands up from his chair and makes for the bedroom, where GO has just set about sorting out the entire contents of her wardrobe. The whole lot is spread out on the floor, the bed, or hung up on hooks on the door and the window frame. GET suddenly has to bottle up strong feelings of anger springing from the mere sight of this incredible mess. For how many years has he been putting up with his messy wife?

But it is as if GO had become aware of his thoughts. She suddenly gives him a bear hug, kissing him tempestuously and GET's anger just wears off. She has always been so charming and extremely gifted in twisting him around her little finger. Finally he can't help but chill out.

'You should really tidy up all this! Or rather, sort it out!' he simply advises her, as he looks more closely at the scattered items.

'Of course, darling, that's exactly why I turn to you, isn't it?' GO says giving him an irresistible smile.

'So then, first of all, you should put them in the right order, so you may find them more easily.'

'Right order? I don't know what you're getting at, GET!' GO bursts out.

'In alphabetical order, of course!' GET spells out. 'Start with the first one. Just let me think about it. Yes, for you GO, *about* is the first one, then comes *after*, *against*, *ahead*, *along*, *around*, *at*...'

'Stop it. Not so quickly, I can't keep up,' GO says, picking up and reaching down the different particles in the order GET has given. But when she picks up *ahead*, she hesitates.

'Shouldn't we make a separate pile for this one? It's just an adverb, isn't it?'

'Yes, you're right, and the others are mostly prepositions, but let's not make it more complicated than necessary and, anyway, *about*, *around* and many of the others can be considered as prepositions or adverbs, for example. It simply depends on the context, so just fold the longer ones together in order to save space. Then go on with *away*, *back*, *before*.'

GO goes on as she is told. But suddenly, GET breaks off.

'What's up?' GO asks, surprised.

'Hold on!' GET says, astonished, picking up *arse*. 'What the hell is that?'

'Oh, you know, I just snapped it up. It was very cheap.' GO says, blushing.

'Listen up! That's not a particle!!' GET points out almost getting cross.

'I know, but you don't need to jump on me for this. I just wanted to sex the idioms up a little bit.'

'Did you? When did you want to put on such rubbish then?' GET nearly goes ballistic.



'Well, you never know. I may go out, for example, and then just *go arse over tip*.'¹

'I wish you'd stop arsing around with such awful nouns, GO! Get rid of this trash immediately!

'We could take it to the dry cleaner's-' GO vainly tries to banter him.

'I'm not joking! It's out of the question my dear. Just stick to your adverbs and prepositions!'

'But that's horrible! I go together with an awful lot of nouns and adjectives. I can't just restrain myself to the particles. And anyway, just look at yourself, you get *cross* and go *ballistic* in front of me, so why do you want *me* to stick to the particles?'

GET becomes aware that GO's right. GO gets on with many nouns and adjectives, as well as GET going together with many of them. It finally dawns upon him that he has no choice but to give in.

'All right, I'll have to face up to your going together with the other nouns, but you'll go without your bargain! It's definitely too vulgar.'

'OK, GET. Let's move on then,' she says conciliatorily, 'what else can we sort out?'

'Well, I think it makes no sense to keep words double. I mean the particles in my wardrobe which both of us put on, such as *about*, *after*, *ahead*, *along*, *around*-'

'But that's almost the same list we had before,' GO moans, 'Couldn't you have said that before I folded the whole lot together? Now we have to go through it again, and I still don't know what I may put on for the fancy-ball!'

'Well, there's still plenty of time left, isn't there? Let's go about this and finish it first. By the way, are MAKE and TAKE coming to the fancy-ball as well? Somebody passed on to me that they have paired off now-'

'Mind out before you make up such rumours!'

'It's not just a rumour! I saw him chatting her up when he chanced on her in the library, last week. I think they really get on!'

'I didn't like him from the get-go. He's such a show-off and anyway, I think he takes in MAKE and she's too gullible not to take to him. She'd be better off if she saw through his behaviour.'

'Indeed, sometimes I don't know what to make of TAKE, either. But I don't let on. I'm sure they hit it off together.'

'Yeah, maybe you're right, GET, darling, so what about my get-up?'

'Do you know what? Actually, I'd like you to go like this, without any of these silly particles. You'd feel so light and walk on air, I'm sure. And you'd look incredibly sexy like that!'

'You're sweet, darling, but you know, actually I couldn't help but going red in that case and the fancy-dress ball is only for phrasal verbs. Other idioms are not admitted.'

'And if we dressed up together?'

'How could we do this?'

'It's easy, I put on the particle *up* and you smuggle in the conjunction *and* as well as three hyphens, and then we are the perfect *get-up-and-go*. We will look like a noun, though we are basically phrasal verbs and nobody will be able to recognize us anymore. I'm sure we'll win the first prize of the fancy-dress ball contest!' ●

¹ Note from the editor: the author is playing with the phrase 'to go arse over tit / tip' (i.e. bottom over breast, a cruder version of 'head over heels') here, with the noun 'tip' (a place where refuse is left) linking back to the word 'rubbish' in the preceding line.



The Break

by Ola Serhan

Gently my love,
Come clean.
Soft as a dove
Is what a kiss may mean.

The vibe, my soul,
Is taking over.
The sweet sorrow
Crushes me, unfolds.

Delicate as ice,
The elegant faint
Drifts me away
From us.

So, love,
Die deftly
Without a sound,
On my cheek,
On your lips.

How Many Times?

by Anja Siouda

How many times have you seen
God ambling down to the Earth
On the iridescent bow over snow

How many times have you felt
The gently playful breeze of spring
Tenderly stroking and waking your skin

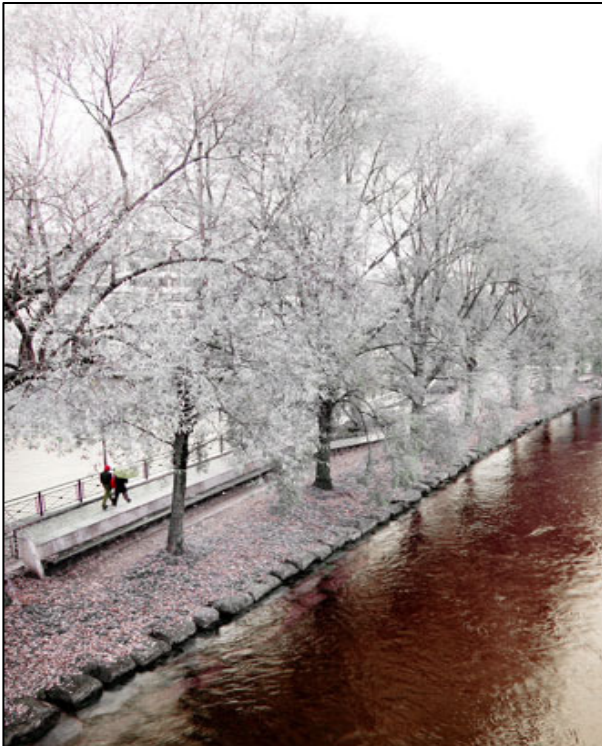
How many times have you smelled
The soil exhaling its earthy perfume
After the heavy summer rain spell

How many times have you been
Charmed and disarmed by the birds'
Amazing concerts at dawn in autumn

Sitting in front of your screen?

On a Certain River Bank

by Cornelia Togeia



On a certain river bank
Where my love loves walking –
I cannot but be frank:
The photographer went stalking.

And there from behind a wall
I saw my love appear:
He was so fine, so slim, so tall
As he approached the pier.

He stopped, looked at the time,
My heart cried “I am here,
My dear, darling, love sublime...”
Till I saw her draw near.

She paused. They smiled. I froze.

On a certain river bank
Where my love loves walking
He found himself another rose
And I gave up stalking.



Fifteen Years Ago

by Lydia Sonderegger

Fifteen years ago, she was a Shadow.
Not even a shadow, more like a zero.
A ghost, human-looking yet almost dead inside.

Shadow's name was Despair, how very unfair.
Too much dismay had crossed her way,
And a dark, heavy burden
Had wrecked her inner garden.

Crushed were the crimson roses,
Slashed were the slim birches,
And silenced was the singing spring.

Shadow was my friend.
Fifteen years ago, she lost everything
Yet nobody noticed her suffering,
For her surname was Fight, how absolutely right.

Fifteen years later, she is still my friend
And has taught me almost everything,
Only she's not a shadow anymore.

Her inner garden is filled with shining flowers,
Solid trees, Nature's beautiful towers,
And the Shadow sleeps soundly and soundlessly
Amidst the memories of dismay.

Muck

by Anja Siouda

The teacher swears
In English there's
A quite versatile word
You might have heard

You'll find it here
And there as well
In daily speech
But I won't spell

The word for you
It's out of luck
And shocking too
You may be struck

And have no truck
With such offending
Words that duck
You in effing

Linguistic muck



Night on Stage

by Conradin Schwarzenbach

The awaited announcer appeared
Let the play begin, the curtains are raised
Dark shadows dance across the stage
A two-faced reveals his side of rage

A choir of silents sings the song of nights
While somber clouds control the footlights
Words spoken during the day are fading in the sky
Thoughts transform into dreams and learn to fly

Silent screams tear a bleeding heart
On the stage, melancholy starts its part
Stealing smiles and drinking tears
Erasing security and breeding fears

Dances in its colorless coat, emotionless
Ponder the night in numbing loneliness
Countless faces seem to be watching me
Glowing and screaming as I cannot see

Stumbling through the middle of the park of night
Paranoid of lost shadows as clouds swallow the moonlight
And I cannot go on, did a hundred-thousand steps
Threw out and pulled in countless nets
Trying to catch a swarm of wisdom
And now I will never be who I wanted to become

Night lays its hand on my restless thoughts
Freed from reality I am caught by escapist dreams
Darkness enters and dances the closing dance
Followed by imaginary applause

The actors depart, my song is sung
A final farewell, as I slip into oblivion.



Microcosm: A Dream at Best

by Keith McDonald

The boy has somebody new sit by him on the train home. A young woman; the surrounding perpetual field sings it, as if to draw the melancholic anguish out in force tonight. He half thinks about looking to view this sensation-drawn stranger, the forbidden act of turning from where glazed eyes try to see beyond the condensation into only darkness beyond. And the eyes try to see, to angle beyond him, but the dim lights of the train offer shady reflections just too terrifyingly tempting to avoid. Angle the head slightly this way and that - that's right. Someone, somewhere, is watching; the burning of their gaze is tangible, and irrefutably they notice the difference. There is wincing in shame with every laugh on the train, which must be, of course, about him. How could it not be? How we prefer these features in the dim shadow of the train window - he would gratefully adopt that image which is really not there. Lonely journeys have revelled in the comforting security of something stable, which is the company and amusement on offer: to stare, and connect, and to loathe.

With exhaustive effort, an excusive reflex is found -

scratching of the head, a polite cough, reaching for the bag... something - something to manoeuvre the head until just level straight ahead, but for no fighting will it turn further - there is no force of will to compete. What is wrong? Something is wrong. Nay, *Everything* is wrong. The hair, the skin, the scars in the eye - any, each, or all, it matters not. They are all that are seen, and therefore all that one is: 'Beauty is Truth; Truth Beauty', all we need to know. Back out of the window then, no expression: absorbing everyone else and not stopping there. To others, he doesn't feel; to him, they don't either. We survive trying to find a life saying no right now, and I do not know what that means any more.

Crushed into the obsequious foil packet of a schoolboy, like the careless youth's empty drink bottle scuttling across the floor; everybody looks with curiosity to see the refuse making the clatter, but nobody will lower themselves to touch it. His sort apparently only thinks once every eight seconds, about one thing. Perhaps it is even worse than that. 'Who is going to be the next *victim*?' perhaps. Of course my boy is sceptical: he bubbles with



uncanny awareness of what everyone must think. "Let them out when they are worth something." Or, "If he's not up talking with the rest of his clan..."

(thoughts begin to merge)

the window is home for hopes even less likely. You expect everyone to notice that you're apart, that you're one of those 'great thinkers', the most emotional being on the planet, festering dark hopes for attention. (One is damned if they do, damned if they don't – caught in the worst kind of vortex imaginable.) You sicken everyone around you with the sight of you.

Empty,

Worthless

Failure.

In one vision, or reality (we suffer both), an angry looking young man, bleached hair in a messy Mohican, many piercings, strikes a girl across the face with the sickening sound like a snapping whip. Scrambling to her feet, she goes running after him, whimpering, tugging at his coat, choking out words amidst sobs. Our heart bleeds, we blink back tears, and we abhor everything that happened. Most of all, we detest ourselves, remembering the scene so well from admiring

the hair. In another... there are just so many others.

The boy prayed to turn dark, then preyed upon all white to fade, like that scarred blindness doubled. The balance was lopsided, with trepidation that could not hold, and the bottom half earthquakes, trying its best to shake off the deadwood. But it could not - something intervened. God, maybe? Anything - who knows? It gets fed up and returns back.

Momentarily, struck by the phenomenon of ecstasies that were about to be at the ends of possibility, the outside dams are unlocked, and oceans of Feeling bless and sweep away everything else. He finds other souls, hearts; who show him his, and let him open. Two perfect circles shimmer in a vision, the key to understanding the deepest mysteries: 'need' and 'asset love' – the latter a symbol of what was given, the former the belief in life's desire. 'Man's reach should exceed his grasp'. Clocks ticked, assets swelled, whilst need stood puzzlingly ahead. He has lived life as a *good* Pandarus; a net catching external happiness for his own. But equally, those quintessential shepherds belong to man as well as sheep. Drawn to the metaworldly, to learn Feeling's depth, he thought - where others find no thought in him - that he found no boundary.



This one fated day, it was time for a lesson entitled *microcosm*. A wondrous visionary guider, an echo of a fourth magic, said that if he opened a secret door, he could find newness, galaxies, paradise, beauty, depths and wonders beyond imagining. Don't you feel stupid for being so wrong, boy? Aren't you elated that you were so wrong? He is wonderfully perplexed about infinity - what a hope - and yet, why learn that there is nothing new to learn? After all, his circles are only circles: they can mean Ptolemaic wonders to me, yet never defeat what they are. For the first time, he knew, and smiled, and the circles joined hands, danced and sang: tear-aqueous spectrum-colourful dreams. Every life teacher might have their door, but the realm beyond was made for him, so why return? Says Brielle, the voice of the heroine: 'Your world would pale in comparison; you could not be happy there'. He would become something beautiful when nobody was required to see him as beautiful in life ever again. He steps through, soul for the collonae above; there is no pain as the grotesque form cracks upon the rocks below. [*]

The boy is on the train home: mellow and poignant. For all the panacea of thought, it is still just a train, where the juxtaposition now between dream and reality, between need and asset-love, is

dangerously painful. And zoom out, and out, and out - we, the train full, are but the tiniest, insignificant blip on a great network, at one with everyone else, through whatever purpose. An insane character prone to flashbacks had said: 'man is not a piece of fruit'. "No", thought the boy, and he knew and smiled, "I am that microcosm". Somebody sat by him on the way home. A young woman; the surrounding perpetual field sang it with more force than ever - a power lent itself to the purpose to shrink the boy so far inside himself that he would never again return. Pledged with a gamble that he himself knew, he knew that he could look this time. Blank, and overcome with nerves, excitement and fear, he found that he was right. It was his visionary guider. She took his hands, the fear was gone; he saw her eyes, the pain was gone; they kissed, and saw Heaven.

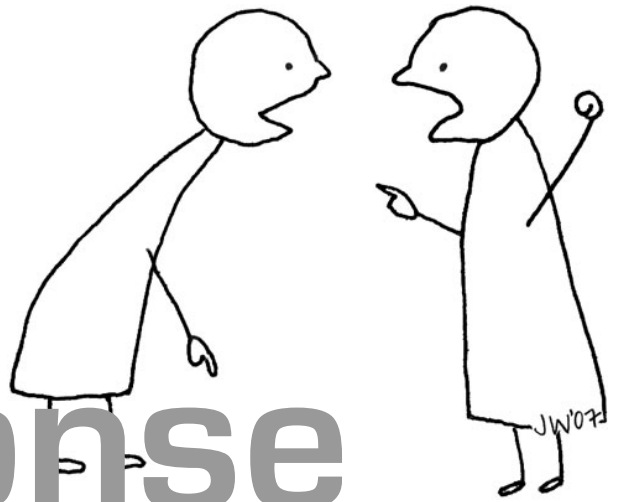
(It is better if you never awaken)



Literary references include John Keats, Robert Browning and Arthur Miller. The passage marked [*] is partly influenced by R.A. Salvatore's *Echoes of the Fourth Magic* (1990).



Reader Response



As NOTED continues to expand, thanks to increased levels of student involvement, we thought we'd take our fantastic newsletter into cyber-space. Just as hit T.V. shows often have little sister shows, spin-offs and fansites, NOTED's success and popularity has inspired us to create a forum so that you can share your responses to articles, ideas for future submissions and your inspirational creative writing whenever you want! If you simply cannot wait until the next issue in September 2008, or if you crave companions to discuss NOTED with, why not create a user name and join the NOTED forum?

The forum topics we hope to receive include: 'I liked this feature article / poem / review / film quiz because...'; or, 'I think

we could improve the layout of NOTED by...'; or, 'would anyone be interested in a review of ___ if I were to write it?' In other words, it is an area for discussion with NOTED at its centre.

We would like to broaden the discussion ground to English Literature as a whole, and there will be boards for discussing favourite books / English films etc. We also welcome students to share helpful tips for essay writing and exam preparation.

The most interesting and intriguing comments, questions and discussion topics from the forum will be included in the next issue of NOTED... so make sure you're in on the action!

Hoping to hear from you,
Elsa Carron



The NOTED Online Reader Response Forum

Visit our forum at:

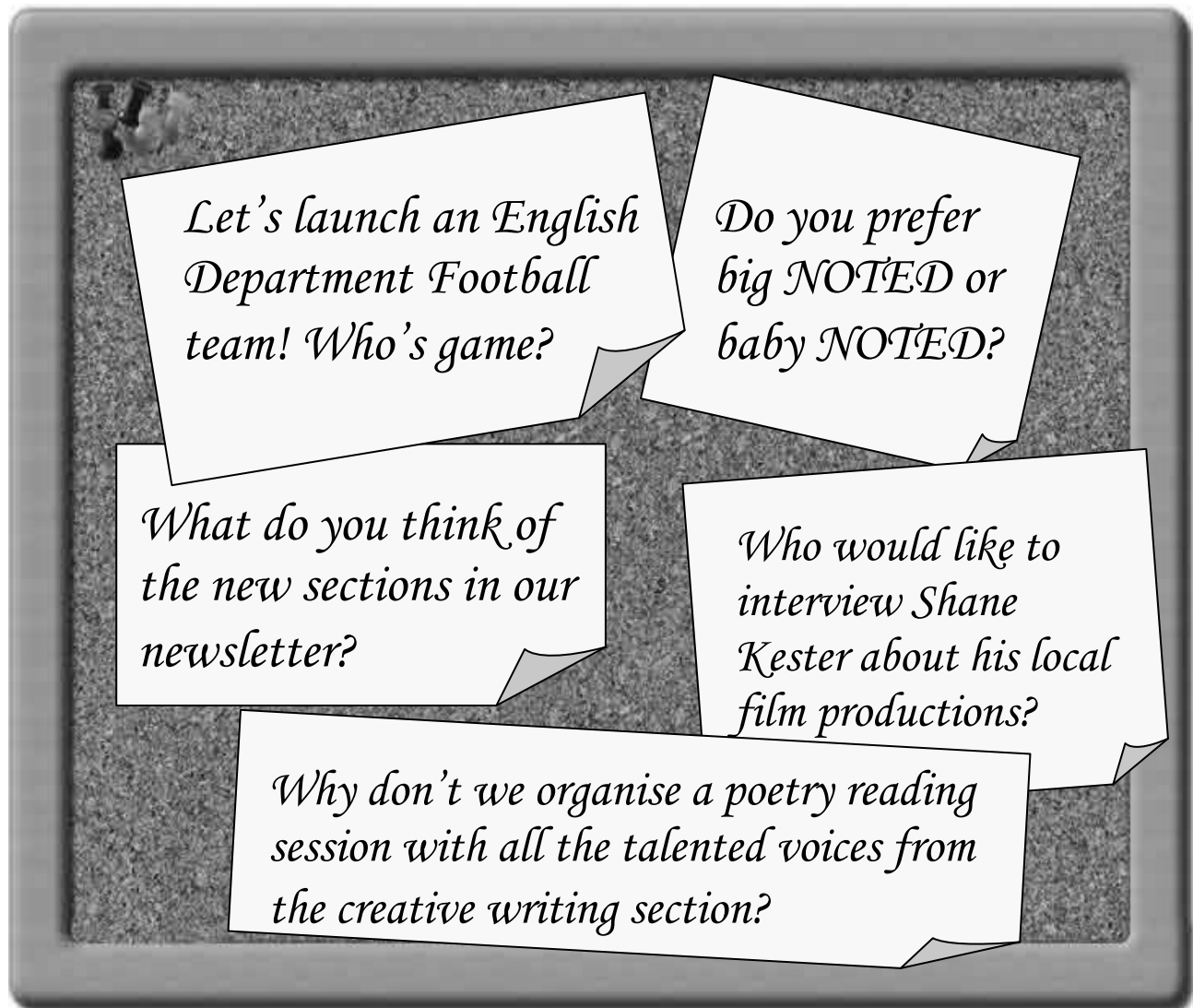
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