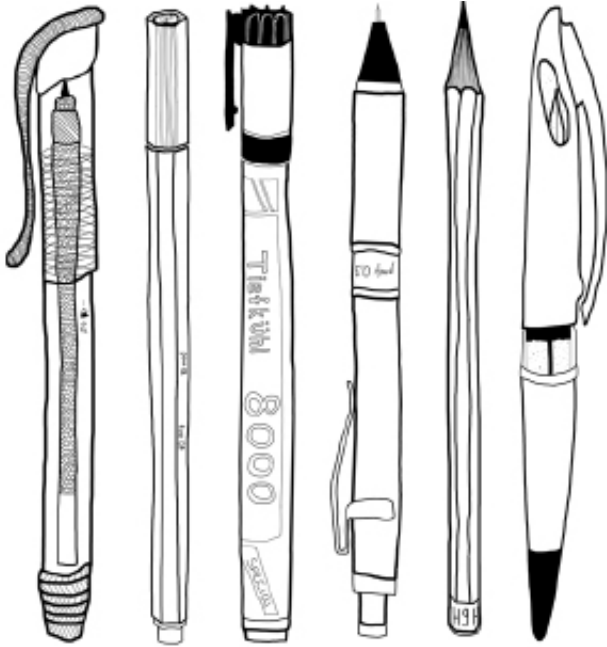


NOTED

— THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT JOURNAL —



WEAPONS OF MASS
CREATION

— SPRING 2015 —

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**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**

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Letter from the Editor

BRYN SKIBO-BIRNEY

While flying to Geneva for the first time some years ago, I was drawn into conversation with my aisle-mate about the differences between the major Swiss cities. Since I had never been to any of them, he (a *Züricher*) gave me the following cliff-noted version of Swiss urban living: Bern is relaxed, despite being the capital; Zurich is very rush-rush and business-oriented; and Basel is small and *tranquil*, with some bears thrown in for good measure. “And Geneva?” I asked. He responded wryly: “Oh, Geneva isn’t Swiss. It’s French.”

In light of the tragic events in and around Paris this January, this depiction of our city gained a particular poignancy for me as Genevans joined the rest of the world in claiming their own symbolic French-ness. Not so much the right to be particular about champagne or to exude a certain *je ne sais quoi*, but the right to express themselves without fear of censorship or murderous reprisal, though that expression may offend anyone from the *président* to the average Pierre. Effective satire is often polarizing and we all have our own opinions about the value, significance, and “sensible use” (Parks, n.p.) of the work produced at *Charlie Hebdo* (or, for that matter, the tweet that led to Dieudonné M’bala M’bala’s arrest). But what concerns me more – and should concern all of us as writers, readers, and academics – is the now deadly weight increasingly placed on the published word and image, especially when they challenge religious or national beliefs. While some may claim that the humanities are unnecessary and antiquated (see Deborah Madsen’s response to this view in *Noted*, Spring 2014), the attacks on the staff of *Charlie Hebdo* strikingly demonstrated the value and vital need of the work being done by writers and artists every day. This value was seen in the immediate signs of international solidarity, and particularly in the symbols used to express this support: pens and colored pencils. Seeing this manifestation of the pen’s might versus the sword should strike a chord in all of us: no matter the language you speak or the color you fly atop your metaphorical flagpole, we wield a power every time we put our thoughts to the page. We might not kick off an international movement but if our stories and images tickle and/or tug the insides of just one reader, *ça suffit*.

So it was with great pleasure that I read this semester’s contributions to *Noted*: from the cartoonish wit of our Los Angeles-based artist, **Andréas-Benjamin Seyfert**, to the seering drumbeat poetics of first-time contributor **Waqas Mirza** in “Morning Bash.” **Aza-**

mat Rakhimov takes us abroad to Italy and Russia in his translation of Joseph Brodsky's "Sonnet" while **Arnaud Barras** offers a flowing meditation on the local rivers and the poetic self with "Confluence." Keeping with the watery theme, **Misha Meihsl's** multi-valent musings on relations in "Tides and Tidings" will have you spinning in meaning while newcomer **Lorraine Devillard** offers a stark rebuttal in her haunting poem, "Obscurity." **Manon Guignot** extends her characteristically keen investigation of personal connections to the human-feline relationship in "Mistresses" while **Marlon Ariyasinghe** considers the intertwining of current events with already-entwined bodies in "Cinq Jours en Mars." Turning towards the screen, **Olivia Lindem** offers another nuanced "reading" of contemporary television in her analysis of the romance genre in *Merlin* and **Anna Iatsenko** takes you to the front row of the recent Black Movie Festival with her ever-insightful and humorous reviews. Meanwhile, **Sam MacDuff, the Film Club Crew,** and **Emmet** all offer different ways for you to take an active role among your fellow readers, viewers, and players around the University, leading, as **Deborah Madsen** explains, to a vibrant English department community.

While writing this "Letter," I came across Philippe Lançon's article, published just two weeks after he survived the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, and which I found encapsulated perfectly the vital importance of our work as writers, artists, and readers:

This is all I wanted to say to you: if there is one thing that this attack reminded me about, or even taught me in the first place, it's why I practice this profession at these two papers [*Charlie Hebdo* and *Libération*] – out of a spirit of freedom and the sheer fun of expressing it, whether in the form of news or caricature, in good company, and in every way possible, however unsuccessful, without feeling the slightest need to judge the result" ("My 'Charlie Hebdo'" n.p.).

The pleasure in reading the contributions to *Noted* this semester is only surpassed by the pleasure in creating these pieces and sharing them with your friends and colleagues.

On that note, happy reading, happy writing, and *à bientôt*,
Bryn

Lançon, Philippe. "My 'Charlie Hebdo.'" Antony Shugaar, trans. *The New York Times Review of Books*. 21 January 2015. Web. 21 January 2015. www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2015/jan/21/my-charlie-hebdo/?insrc=wbl

Parks, Tim. "The Limits of Satire." *The New York Times Review of Books*. 21 January 2015. Web. 21 January 2015. www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2015/jan/16/charlie-hebdo-limits-satire/?insrc=rel

Note from the Director

DEBORAH MADSEN

Although we are in the middle of the academic year, the Spring semester will bring a number of significant changes to the English Department. Our new Professor of Modern English, Simon Swift, will take up that post this summer, in time for the September *Rentrée*. Until then, he remains a member of the School of English at the University of Leeds. However, he will join us in the capacity of *Chargé des cours suppléant* in February and in the Spring semester he will be teaching an MA seminar on Romanticism. His early arrival in the Department will allow him to get to know the way that the Department works (and I think we all have experienced, in one way or another, that particular learning-curve) and will also provide opportunities for students and his fellow-colleagues to get to know him before he joins us full-time. I remain deeply grateful to the many students who assisted in the process of selection that resulted in Dr Swift's appointment to this post, and I'm sure that you will join me and the staff of the Department to welcome him very warmly to his new academic home.

There will be some changes in the Writing Lab this semester; Anna Treiman is leaving her post as Monitor – and she leaves with our thanks for the great work she did throughout the Autumn semester – to be replaced by Olivia Lindem. A further change arises from Kimberly Frohreich's maternity leave this semester: Aleida Auld-Demartin will take Kimberly's place as the Writing Lab Co-ordinator. Since Aleida did a great job as a Monitor before her appointment as an Assistant in Early Modern English, she is perfectly placed to take over this role.

A more abstract but important change is the modification of the *plan d'études* for the MA in English, which was approved in December 2014 but will come into effect only for the *Rentrée* 2015. Despite the delayed introduction of the new *plan d'études*, it is worth keeping in mind these changes while making preliminary plans about which MA seminars to follow next year. The new *plan d'études*, which will come into effect on 1 September 2015, defines a module as two seminars taken in either English Literature or English Linguistics. This replaces the old definition of a module as two seminars taken in the same historical domain. Thus, the range of choice of seminars will be significantly expanded for students and, by removing the barriers between historical periods, greater opportunities to offer seminars that cover extended periods of literary history will become available to teachers. This change also brings the structure of the MA *plan d'études*

into greater alignment with that of the BA in English. All MA students should consult the *programme des cours* closely when it is published this summer, keeping in mind these changes to the ways in which seminars are combined into modules.

These are all changes that will take place in the Department this coming semester. However, I will allow myself to describe a change that I *wish* would happen in our Department: I wish to see a greater degree of involvement by students in the various extracurricular activities that are offered by the Department. Activities with a more social orientation such as the theatre group (Emmet), the Film Club – which, if you look at its page on the departmental website, you will see is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, having been established in 2004-05 by Michael Rösli and Valerie Fehlbaum – and, of course, *Noted* itself all offer the chance to engage socially with other students and members of staff. These opportunities also offer practical benefits like using and improving one's English in enjoyable ways while becoming involved in the life of the Department. It is through this kind of interaction that the Department becomes a community rather than just another administrative unit in the Faculty and it is my wish for the new year (perhaps it could be your New Year's Resolution?) that more students will take advantage of these activities – each of which has a page on the departmental website; all events are announced in the monthly email bulletin sent to students – and become more involved in the community that is our English Department.

Deborah Madsen

Departmental News

The new year in the English Department got off to an unfortunate start with the discovery that during the break the secretariat and staff offices in the Comédie had been burgled. So I would like to remind everyone to be vigilant with all belongings and specifically to avoid leaving anything in staff mail trays: leave any books, DVDS, etc. in the secretariat with a note indicating the name of the person for whom the package is intended.

The *Prix Thomas Harvey 2015* has been awarded to Adrien Mangili to support a research visit to the University of Wisconsin at Madison as part of his *mémoire* research project.

Sam MacDuff and Oliver Morgan will both be on research leave in the spring semester.

Assemblée générale

The annual meeting of the English Department will be held on Tuesday 31 March, at 7.00pm in room B111. All members of the department, staff and students, are cordially invited to attend.

Commission Mixte

The members of this important departmental committee are Deborah Madsen (president) on behalf of the *corps professoral*; Valerie Fehlbaum and Amy Brown on behalf of the *corps intermédiaire*; Linda Hinni and Mee Ji (MA); and Elio Correia-Fonseca, Anne-Laure Danville and Gioia Cacchioli (BA). If you are interested in becoming involved with the *Commission mixte*, please attend the departmental *Assemblée générale* when membership of the committee for 2015-2016 will be decided.

Following the suggestion made at a recent meeting of the *Commission mixte*, the department now prepares a monthly bulletin of important upcoming dates (lectures by visiting speakers, Film Club screenings, deadlines for applications such as for the Thomas Harvey Prize, etc.) which is distributed via the BA- and MA-email lists. Thanks are due to Oliver Morgan for preparing these bulletins, Clare Tierque for sending them out and posting them on the departmental noticeboards, and to the members of the *Commission mixte* for making such a valuable suggestion.

FEATURES

Lots of Fun at Finnegan's Wake

SAM MACDUFF



Tim Fin- ne- gan lived in Walk- in' Street, A gent- le- man I- rish, might- y odd,



He had a brogue both rich and sweet, and to rise in the world he car- ried a hod. Now



Tim had a sort of a tip- pl'n way, with a love of the whis- key he was born, To



help him on with his work each day, He'd a "drop of the cray- thur" ev- 'ry morn.



Whack fol the darn O, Dance to your part- ner, Whirl the floor, your trect- ters shake,



Was- n't it the truth I told you, Lot's of fun at Fin- ne- gan's wake! 1

¹ "Finnegan's Wake." Traditional Irish Song. For music and lyrics, see <http://www.8notes.com/scores/4482.asp> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6CHq9mXkJ8a>

If you'd like to join in the fun, we resume "Our Exagmination" of "the book of Du-blends Jined" (*FW* 20.15-16) at book 3, chapter 1 (pages 403-428) on **February 16, 12.15-13.30, in room B108.**

And if you're not sure what it's all about, here's what Samuel Beckett had to say:

Here form *is* content, content *is* form. You complain that this stuff is not written in English. It is not written at all. It is not to be read – or rather it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and listened to. His writing is not about something; *it is that something itself.* (Beckett 14)

All are welcome! We hope to see you there!

Beckett, Samuel. "Dante... Bruno. Vico... Joyce." In *Our Exagmination Round His Fac-tification for Incamination of Work in Progress*. Shakespeare and Company: Paris, 1929.

Rewriting Legendary Characters for Twenty-First Century Screens: *Merlin's* Guinevere

OLIVIA LINDEM

Earlier this autumn, after *Merlin* briefly and very casually came up in an in-class discussion on “Romance and its Remediation” and Morgan le Fey, I decided to do what I’d long been putting off and started watching the BBC drama. Having a long-standing history of immersing myself in television shows that “complement” my interests of the moment, I hoped that the show would allow me to casually question the topics we’d discussed in class while focusing on its interpretation of traditionally underdeveloped female characters. An Arthurian retelling in its own right, *Merlin* challenges the romance genre by revisiting many of the characters and themes found throughout literary and cinematographic history and turning them on their heads. The show ultimately adheres to the genre, cleverly adapting the chivalric heroes, supernatural quests, and politics that grace the pages of literature to contemporary television screens.

This successful remediation is largely due to fact that *Merlin* is a character-driven adaptation. The show stays true to Arthurian legends in essence, but distances itself from them by giving less importance to the actual quests embarked upon by the characters and more to the motives that guide them through their actions. Though *Merlin* is focalized through the eponymous warlock, equal importance is given to Arthur, Morgana (the renamed Morgan le Fey), and Guinevere, and all four characters are rewritten to both fit the medieval setting of the show and adopt modern attitudes. They are thereby allowed development that was not possible within the medieval context and are adapted to resonate with contemporary viewers. Arthur acts as the traditional hero and is depicted as being just as good and kind as he’s known to be throughout literary history, but he learns to question the established truths of his society. He upsets outdated laws, devalues the importance of noble birth, and continues to act in ways that would make him an appreciated young leader today. Rather than being a well-known and trusted advisor to the king, the protagonist, meanwhile, appears as a young warlock who works as Arthur’s manservant and is just learning how to control his magical powers. No longer willing to commit dubious acts to please those in power, as he does when aiding Uther to dupe

Igraine in Monmouth and Malory, Merlin presents himself in a more sympathetic light and serves to question the powers of magic and destiny.

The female characters especially stand out in the rewrite and benefit more than their male counterparts from the consequent development, as they are no longer primarily defined by their romantic interactions with men. Not only do they stand on their own two feet, but they also assert significant power over their male counterparts. Morgana acts as the antagonist of the story, turning against Camelot and its allies, but she does so not because of an upset love affair and a spat with Guinevere, as in the *Estoire de Merlin*, but because Uther persecutes those who, like her, have magic. She is seen to struggle with her powers and questions the importance of identity and belonging, before ultimately deciding to fight for the rights of her people.

Guinevere, however, as a character goes through the most significant transformation. No longer the nobly born princess of an allied kingdom, *Merlin's* Guinevere, or Gwen as she is often referred to on the show, is the daughter of a local blacksmith who interacts with the rest of the cast through her role as Morgana's handmaiden. In her work on *King Arthur's Enchantresses*, Carlyne Larrington reminds readers that "medieval romance is set in a strictly hierarchical culture where noble birth is integral to success, and there is no interest in the lives of other classes," and that fact is important to keep in mind when considering the changes made to *Merlin's* ensemble (2). Women "live in a fictional society where the supreme value is male honour, gained on the battlefield" and are subject to a world where they can "win honour only vicariously, by association with a great knight" (*ibid*). Larrington's book serves to show how enchantresses such as Morgana attempt to overcome these constraints, but it also helps to understand better that women in romance, in general, were traditionally given three options: to act as the ultimately powerless virginal ideal, such as Heurodis in *Sir Orfeo*; to embody the sexually cunning seductress, such as Lady Bertilak in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; or to learn to master the art of magic, such as Morgan le Fey in the same work.

Gwen turns away from all three of these options and asserts her independence of thought and action throughout the course of the show. She is orphaned early on, which, despite dabbling in the "orphaned heroine" trope, frees her from filial obligations and allows her to act of her own accord. This independence, paired with the fact that she is a member of the serving class rather than a princess, upsets the established order of romance and displaces the center of power in *Merlin*. Though Guinevere is only one of the four main characters of the show, she, along with Merlin and Morgana, repeatedly proves to be more powerful than the prince. Arthur serves as the story's traditional hero, going

on quests and doing his best to protect Camelot with the help of his knights, but the show subverts romance norms by simultaneously making him the reigning “damsel” in distress. Though Arthur does not seem to know it, he often needs to be pushed by Gwen or Morgana to take stands against his father and is constantly saved by Merlin and his magic. Thus, despite his best intentions and status as a fair and beloved ruler, Arthur proves to be the weakest of the four characters, and Gwen is the only one both to survive all five series of the show and to avoid succumbing to failure.

This survival is due to the fact that the other characters are only allowed one or two means of expressing their power. Arthur is physically and politically strong but is blinded by a sense of duty and a naïve belief in the good of others. Morgana is magically gifted but does not make use of rational thought and often fails because her actions are emotionally driven. Merlin is the most powerful sorcerer of his time but believes so strongly in destiny that he limits his potential and unknowingly drives those he loves to their dooms. Gwen, meanwhile, is the only character to distance herself from destiny and duty. Free from the constraints of the aristocratic and magical worlds, she is often seen questioning the choices of her friends and reminds them of their duty not to follow in the footsteps of history and fate but to forge their own paths by following their own beliefs. Speaking up even when it isn't her place to do so, Gwen establishes herself and wins the honor of which Larrington speaks in *King Arthur's Enchantresses* not through her association with Arthur, but through her own merit comes to Arthur's attention. She chastises him for his poor decisions, raises his consciousness to the issues that plague the laboring classes of Camelot, campaigns for the right of women to bear arms alongside men, and eventually acts, albeit unofficially, as the advisor whose opinion Arthur values “above all others” (“The Wicked Day,” deleted scene). Her lack of magic and distance from the noble court thus prove not to be the weaknesses they might once have been considered, but to be strengths which allow her to gain independence and authority.

Gwen thereby uses her wit to rise above her station and then goes on to use her physicality to further subvert romance norms. Rather than turning to her sexuality to assert her power over Arthur and his knights, as her character is known to do in past versions of legend, she uses her physicality through combat without letting go of her femininity in the process. She convinces Arthur that women ought to be allowed to bear arms in the first season, and she claims this right on multiple occasions. In only the second episode of the show, Gwen reveals that she “know[s] pretty much everything there is to know about armor” and teaches Merlin how to assemble Arthur's armor (“Valiant”). Later on, she displays her knowledge of weaponry by selecting the sword that Merlin then has turned into Excalibur and, as the series continues, she takes up arms on multiple occasions and

fighters alongside the knights to defend Camelot, even when she is discouraged from doing so. She even single handedly saves the day with her sword in the fourth season and is deemed to be “equal to any knight of Camelot” by Arthur (“Lamia”). This development in her character places her in opposition to female knights that have graced romances in the past, such as Britomart in *The Faerie Queene*, who fights with the aide of a magical spear. Even though Gwen’s talent is not equal to Britomart’s, she is allowed to take part in combat without magical aide.

Gwen then goes on to upset long-established romance tropes by physically saving Arthur on numerous occasions. The second season of the show, for instance, is cyclically structured, opening with an episode where Camelot is under attack by animated, flying gargoyles and closing with one where it is targeted by a fire-breathing dragon. In the first episode, Gwen saves Arthur not once but twice by physically pushing him out of the gargoyle’s way and shielding him from the attacks. In the last, Arthur intends to save Gwen by physically removing her from the dragon’s path, but fails when Gwen hears his warning and runs away on her own. Not only does he fail at directly saving her, but he gets hit by the dragon in his attempt and ungallantly knocks Gwen over in the process. The contrast between the two parallel scenes thereby allows for the sentimental trope of the knight in shining armor who attempts to save his loved one, while simultaneously serving to question its value by allowing the female character to assume the superior position by saving herself while the knight is shown to fail.

Gwen saves Arthur from a similar position by reversing the “true love’s kiss” trope after he is enchanted midway through the second series. Gwen frees him from its effects and goes on to save herself from similar enchantments. In season four, for instance, she is placed under a far more serious curse when Morgana wishes to get in the way of Gwen and Arthur’s marriage by having an enchanted bracelet placed on Gwen’s arm and manipulating her into cheating on Arthur with Lancelot. Though Morgana temporarily succeeds and the show descends into a troubling story arc where Gwen is banished from Camelot for her actions, Gwen is ultimately the one to save herself by ripping the bracelet off of her arm, physically lifting the curse. This storyline contrasts with Malory’s “The Tale of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenivere” where Guenivere has agency in conducting her affair with Lancelot, but is unable to save herself from punishment and is only spared after Lancelot takes up arms on her behalf.

Indeed, though Gwen asserts her independence on many occasions and upsets numerous tropes, she is later subjected to several problematic storylines which appear to place her in submissive positions where she temporarily loses agency. One such storyline is a season

five story arc, beginning with “The Dark Tower” and ending with “With All My Heart,” where Gwen is subject to a curse that paralyzes her will and turns her into an “empty vessel” compliant to Morgana’s demands (“With All My Heart”). In order to save her, Arthur and Merlin transport her to a magical lake outside of Camelot where a sorceress will be able to lift the curse. It therefore seems that her fate lies in the hands of others, yet it is established that the only way for her to be freed from the effects of the curse is for her to initiate the process by entering into the lake by her own accord, unguided by anyone. This seems to be an impossible feat, as her will is said to no longer exist, but Arthur manages to reach out to her by quoting something she had told him in the past: “Do you remember what *you said*? *You said*, ‘with all my heart.’ That’s what *you said* Guinevere. No subterfuge, no trickery” (“With All My Heart,” emphasis added). The repetition of her own words awakens Gwen’s will, and she then steps into the lake to reclaim her agency. Thus, though Gwen is robbed of her independence for several episodes and needs to be guided to safety by Arthur and Merlin, she ultimately reclaims power through her own means and arguably saves herself.

The most telling change to Guinevere’s storyline occurs at the very end of the series. At the end of Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, Guenivere confines herself to a convent, after her husband is killed at Camlann, until she succumbs to grief and dies soon after. In *Merlin*, Gwen is clearly grieved by the events at Camlann but is shown acting as Queen, both tending to the wounded and fighting off attackers in the medical tent and at Camelot while waiting for Arthur to return from battle. When it is made clear that Arthur will not return, he expresses his wishes for Gwen to be his successor, and Gwen’s final appearance is made on Camelot’s throne. Though this ending is hardly revolutionary from the perspective of the contemporary female character because it deprives her character of a personal happy ending, it is still important when compared to earlier accounts of Arthur’s death and Guinevere’s grief. It also places Gwen in a final position of power that upsets established order in romance. Gwen proves to be wittier and more strategic than her husband, and she is left on the throne when he dies. Not only does the queen thus survive her king, but the handmaiden and the manservant are the only two left behind to preside over Camelot as Queen and as the most powerful sorcerer to walk the earth while their aristocratic counterparts succumb to death.

By thus rewriting the character of Guinevere and replacing a character who traditionally has little agency with one who questions established order, *Merlin* adapts the demands of the romance genre by beginning to answer to those of our contemporary world. Though she is given less screen time than Merlin and Arthur, Gwen embodies the successful remedial aspects of the show. As the character best suited to the contemporary world,

she ultimately acts as its most powerful character and is rewarded accordingly, standing ahead of her friends and her knight in not-so-shining armor.



“The Diamond in the Day.” *Merlin*. BBC. 24th December 2012.

Larrington, Carolyne. *King Arthur's Enchantresses*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

“Valiant.” *Merlin*. BBC. 27th September 2008.

“The Wicked Day.” *Merlin*. BBC. 15th October 2011.

“With All My Heart.” *Merlin*. BBC. 1st December 2012.

WHY MY PARENTS WATCH...



THE WEATHER FORECAST



FILM AND THEATRE

News from the Film Club

THE FILM CLUB CREW

We laughed. We cried. We screamed. We will never eat custard ever again. In short, last semester was a ride, *man*. Indeed, that was the very point: to examine how films tap into the emotional roller-coaster within our limbic systems to produce physical, sometimes all *too* physical (see: custard), reactions. What's more, do we derive pleasure from watching these films, in particular these *scaaaaaary* films, together? After the success of last semester's theme, the Film Club would resoundingly respond: YES!

With this in mind, the Film Club continues its cinematic investigation; this semester, we're throwing our analytical light onto a topic we all know and love in the English department: the study of narratives. Well...not just any narratives, but the mind-bending, double-take inducing, and catharsis-rejecting complex plots of "Puzzle Films." William Buckland describes "puzzle films" as filled with "non-linearity, time loops, and fragmented spatio-temporal reality" which are "riddled with gaps, deception, labyrinthine structures, ambiguity, and overt coincidences" and are "populated with characters who are schizophrenic, lose their memory, are unreliable narrators, or are dead" (*Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema* 6). As to be expected from this impressive pedigree of complexity, the films we've selected this semester are not your average popcorn-popping screenings. Rather, you may find yourself so engrossed, so desperate to keep up and not be fooled but knowing that you're definitely missing *something*, that you may forget all about the popcorn (or cookies) long after the credits have rolled. Indeed, you won't be alone if you think: "Play it again, Sam!" for each film revels in the necessity to watch it again and from the top.

But lo, lucky cinephiles, you're in for yet another treat for, aside from the fascinatingly entangled nature of the stories themselves, these films will light up the brainwaves long after you've left the cozy confines of our wooden theatre. From traveling across the outer plains of the moon to traveling upon the equally unreal seats of a trans-Pacific first-class plane cabin (so spacious!), from questioning the reality of dreams and the dreamy nature of reality to questioning the nature of love and immortality, each screening will feature fantastical, apocryphal, and downright philosophical topics that will provide plenty to hash out in our post-screening discussions.

Interested? Did we mention there will be cookies?

As always, you can find us on select Thursday evenings (see program on facing page) in B112, from 19:00 onwards. Friends, family, pillows, dinner, and pets are always welcome (just don't confuse one for the other...).

So, come one and all and help us answer this semester's burning question: "Wait...what just happened?"

Buckland, William, ed. *Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.



26 February
Moon

12 March
Inception

26 March
Being John Malkovich

16 April
12 Monkeys

30 April
Fight Club

21 May
Students' choice

PUZZLE FILMS

 ASSOCIATION DES ÉTUDIANTS DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

 UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

English Dept. Film Club
Free Entry from 19.00
B112, Uni-Bastions

Black Movie Festival 2015: Film Reviews

ANNA IATSENKO

This year's edition of the Black Movie Festival brought its new selection of thrills. Although this year I didn't manage to go to as many films as I would have liked (work, back problems, etc., etc....), I have nonetheless attended a few screenings and I must say that the films I saw were incredible and I am measuring my words carefully here, believe me!

I suppose that the most incredible thing about all the incredible screenings I went to is probably the fact that the films I saw all had something in common: they all shared a certain flow either in terms of pace of filming, or editing, or narrating. From the opening of the festival with *Una Nocha Sin Luna* (dir. Germán Tejera) to the last film *Hard to be a God* (dir. Aleksei German) I was lulled by the tranquility and peacefulness of the images on-screen. That is not to say that the films were slow. On the contrary they were terribly exciting and gave plenty of food for thought. It's just that I sincerely appreciated getting away from the mind-numbing speed of big Hollywood productions. That's what Black Movie is for – something different.

Una Nocha Sin Luna (dir. Germán Tejera, 2014)

I suppose that I would call this film a triptych: 3 stories which weave together towards the end of the film, which tell 3 different tales, which are related in the plot through the mildly annoying event of a power cut. This could all be a little tragic, had something not worked out in each of the 3 cases: each character, from each section, sees a part of his life come more clearly into focus. I am not using a lens metaphor here gratuitously – rather, because there is so little dialogue (or at least the dialogue seems to be backgrounded in this tale), most of the “working out” happens through the image, in a soft and unspoken kind of way.

OK, this may all be a little predictable – the stories happen on the brink of a New Year. But what this film does create is a possibility that somewhere out there, those wishes that we so desperately try to formulate at the stroke of midnight, actually come true. Perhaps this is the tip for the next New Year wishing tradition: think in images because, as I have

found out, they are really worth a thousand words!

10 Minutes (dir. Lee Yong-seung, 2014)

As much as we don't like it, we do live in a highly hierarchical world! However, have you noticed that in the past decade, or perhaps even less than a decade, our world has become even more hierarchical because there are more and more managers around? There are top managers, bottom managers, managers of managers, and managers of managers who manage managers. Anyways... by the time you get to the top of this managerial chain, and find THE manager who has the magic answers to all your questions, you forget what it was that you were looking for or were meant to do in the first place.

Now, I wouldn't have a problem with this approach to management if the people in question actually did their jobs or somehow helped to diffuse the general sentiment of despair which travels throughout all ranks of the corporate world: if, as working individuals, as people, we actually stood by each other, then we would really know the meaning of the phrase "strength in numbers." However, what the story of *10 Minutes* shows us is that in this great big world out there, the opposite actually happens. Rather than diffusing tensions, or looking for solutions to problems collectively, the management actually participates in creating these very tensions by constantly dumping on those below them in a variety of unpleasant ways. It is ultimately the trainees who get the worst of it because they are the most dependent on the company and, coincidentally, the easiest to replace because they find themselves in the position of cheap and unskilled laborers.

This is how the main character – the young Ho-Chan – finds himself in a situation where his life simply hangs on a set of empty promises for a promotion. He realizes this when a new girl is hired in his place; she is beautiful, young, and completely incompetent. Oh, and guess what? The girl is a relative of the chairman! So what does this do to Ho-Chan? Well, he correctly identifies the situation as bullying, but it also costs him a lot in self-assurance, dignity, and mental health.

So here's a lesson from the film: before applying for a job, do check the hierarchical structure of your future employer or ask the following question at the job interview: "So, how many managers have you got?"

The Tribe (dir. Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy, 2014)

The Tribe takes a look at the world of the deaf and the mute. The film is in Ukrainian sign language and it is not subtitled, therefore, we have the impression of being immersed into a doubly foreign culture: not just geographically, but also linguistically – *The Tribe* gives us sound, but we have to pay attention to identify the words and their meanings.

The Tribe doesn't paint a romantic picture of the deaf and mute community. On the contrary: from petty crime to prostitution, the older students of the boarding school seem to be running a number of illegal businesses that, unsurprisingly, result in violent outcomes. In short, the plot does not attempt to describe a difference through a handicap. But it is the way that the story is told that makes all the difference. The film plays with sound and the soundtrack to the film is magnificent: muffled noises, footsteps, strong vocalized sounds, the lack of the voices of the non-mute characters, all these create a kind of crescendo in the moments when violence is portrayed. On the other hand, when one of the characters is run over by a reversing truck, we hear nothing but the beeping and the engine noises. Thus, the soundtrack constantly experiments with sound by either immersing us in it or withholding it from us.

The camera also does a few tricks which participate in the viewers' sensorial immersion. The camera travels often, especially when it follows the various characters on their brisk walks. The characters walk very quickly, so the camera travels are neither smooth nor slow. Rather, the camera seems to be flying alongside the characters. At times, the camera also runs down rather steep hills and suddenly levels, and we plunge down with it and briskly level to a halt. The effects of the camera paired with the peculiarity of the soundtrack constantly solicit us physically; sitting in the movie theatre I couldn't help but feel this physical alertness.

However, it was the reaction of the audience which impressed me. It is interesting to note the extent to which cinema still completely absorbs us into its medium and to which the immediacy of the visual still confers a deep impression of reality. One particular question impressed me the most and it went along the lines of "But how is such violence possible in the Ukraine?" For me this question reveals the extent to which we accept what we see on the big screen as the ultimate truth and from which we completely abstract the fictional elements of the filmic story telling.

Castanha (dir. Davi Pretto, 2014)

Advertised by the organizers of the festival as a “portrait Queen,” this lyrical documentary traces a few moments in the life of Castanha – a male transformist artist. Swinging between moments of deep psychological and physical violence and immense love, human frailty and strength, despair and hope, the film doesn’t hide anything of the messiness and beauty of life.

Castanha opens with a striking image of the main character staggering down the road. He is naked, covered in blood, groping his private parts in an attempt to safeguard some sort of privacy. But despite all this mess, he is advancing. Like this opening image, the whole of the film offers us a beautiful and respectful lesson in human resilience.

A Corner of Heaven (dir. Zhang Miaoyan, 2014)

I am not sure what I saw when I watched *A Corner of Heaven*. No, seriously, there must be some cultural aspect of Chinese contemporary art that completely escapes me and to which I can’t relate any story-telling or cinematographic codes. I suppose that the occasional subtitles didn’t quite help either, because I have a feeling that the characters said more to each other than what the subtitles translated.

The story in itself is quite simple: a young boy sets out on a trip to find his mother who disappeared suddenly from the family home. The boy encounters all sorts of unpleasant adventures during his journey, including a visit to an opium den. It’s this moment that revealed to me one of the most beautiful instances of camera work. The camera travels through the den focusing on the smokers’ faces who intently stare back into the camera. The camera moves so slowly from one face to another that the faces practically merge. On top of that, the director added a sort of doubling effect which creates auras around faces and objects, setting them further into their environments. The result of this technique is that of simultaneous beauty and fright.

The director, who was present at the screening, emphasized an interesting detail of the filming process. Apparently, none of the actors were, really, actors. He employed local children and adults for his film. Moreover, the child playing the main character was, according to Zhang Miaoyan, practically illiterate. The director’s work was quite difficult because he had a lot of trouble explaining to the boy not stare directly into the camera all the time. Well, I don’t know what the director had planned for his actors, but I found the moments when the actors actually stare directly into the camera to be the best moments

of the film. Such close ups on the big screen are immensely effective because they make us feel like the characters are trying to establish a link with the audience.

Over Your Dead Body (dir. Takashi Miike, 2014)

Miike – the grand master of the fantastic – what bliss he sent my way in the shape of *Over Your Dead Body*! This man really knows how to tell a story!

Over Your Dead Body is a metafiction. While the cast members are rehearsing a play about betrayal and honor, they simultaneously engage with the same issues in their daily lives. This gives a green light to all sorts of cross-overs between fiction and “reality” portrayed by Miike.

I suppose that what made me particularly appreciate this film is my sudden hyperawareness of the fictional elements of my own life. Indeed, sitting in the movie theatre and watching a fiction about fiction, I started to wander about the fictionality of my own life and the stories I tell myself about myself, others, the universe, and life in general.

Yes, you would be right if you point out that Miike’s films are very often deeply realistic, and I would agree with you. However, Miike’s personal signature appears in how quickly this realism deteriorates into horror. The film offers an incredibly rich pallet of personal, internal horrors which almost become characters in their own right whereas the human bodies become either background material or simple vehicles for the dramatization of the horrific.

Please don’t misunderstand what I am writing: we are not talking gore or slasher films *per se*. No. Miike’s horror is much closer to the everyday and despite the fact that sometimes these moments become aestheticized into the grotesque, his films, or the issues he discusses in them, speak to all of us on a variety of different levels.

Hentai Kamen: Forbidden Superhero (dir, Yuichi Fukuda, 2013)

So, for this review I am tempted to give you just three carefully chosen words: “superhero,” “panties,” “pervert.” I suggest that you throw these words into a hat, shake it up a little, and see what comes out. Oh, you are missing verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and articles? Never mind that – any of the three nouns above can fulfill any of the desired

functional categories! Go ahead – try it!

On a more serious academic note – don't we take superheroes a bit too seriously?

Hard to be a God (dir. Aleksei German, 2013)

OK, to tell you the truth, I was super skeptical about this film for about the first 30 minutes (well, if you consider the fact that this epic lasts for 170 minutes, it's not much)!

The film opens with a type of Tarkovsky-like travelling, or what I prefer to call, an exploratory shot. Basically, the camera shows you the setting. In the line of traditional Russian cinema (sorry, I just keep thinking about Tarkovsky here!), a voiceover tells you a story of this planet – Arkana – which is exactly like Earth, but which got lost somewhere (you do end up finding out where!) and is now about 800 years behind the development of Earth. Everything gets lost in the Renaissance... On Arkana, the Renaissance took the form of a witch-hunt on intellectuals. Indeed, the Arkanians (?) just kill them off. With the intellectuals out of the picture, the rest of the characters just wallow in excrement (I mean literally – they are covered in shit which seems to be the primary material of their lives).

But let me stop telling you the story here because, quite frankly, it's still working on me. Yes, I admit, I didn't really get it. What I think I did get, though, are the images. Imagine being thrust into a living Hieronymus Bosch painting. The intensity of the ugliness of the characters, the graphic eviscerations, the texture of excrement that the characters endlessly squish through their finger – hell, you can practically smell it – is unnerving, disturbing, disgusting. But the story, or the novella, was written by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky – yes, the two brothers who also wrote the story for Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (and a whole bunch of other Soviet-era films that we don't hear much about in the West – and that's a shame!). Anyways... The stories that these brothers tell belong to a very specific genre of Russian fiction: a type of science fiction which mixes technology and folklore. The films that are generally made from these fictions also display a peculiar relationship to genre – oscillating between realism and science fiction which the films gesture towards. As you know, at no time in *Stalker* does a spaceship take the travelers away to an unknown planet. *Hard to Be a God* operates on a similar level; we know that we've entered a fictional land and we know that a spaceship is needed to travel from Earth to Arkana. But the realism in the portrayal of late-medieval life on the planet is so incredibly realistic that we believe it without second thought.

I was very glad to see a Strugatsky-inspired film and I was even happier to note some gestures towards the great names of Russian cinema: Tarkovsky was definitely an inspiration for German. Despite its almost 3-hour length the film is very interesting and asks us a lot of important questions. Mainly, how did the Renaissance really change us as thinking, speaking, art-creating human beings?

Le Petit Black Movie Pour Adultes

This year's selection was advertised as "surreal." Quite frankly, I failed to see what was so surreal about it: it all made perfect sense! Perhaps this very fact is, in itself, a little surreal.

Love at First Sight (dir. Veronica Kocourková, 2011)

What happens when a man falls in love with a building and they elope together? What happens to the tenants who rent flats in this building? Poor souls... They all die, but love continues to live forever.

Quinto Andar (dir. Marco Nick, 2012)

How does one talk about suicide in a cartoon? Perhaps by creating a character who wears a wolf-mask? Who makes exactly the same movements day in and day out? But then, suddenly, the different layers which make up the strange world of this character separate and, likewise, the cartoon mimics this separation: we get glimpses of acetate layers which compose a single image. One of these layers is formed only with ink stains. There is a glitch in the system. The character jumps out of the window.

Blame it on the Seagull (dir. Julie Engaas, 2013) Tourette's syndrome is often presented as a completely erratic, nonsensical verbalization. This short animation film, however, uses off-camera voiceover and comic book frames in order to create a perfectly understandable and logical narrative of the onset of Tourette's episodes. Frame by frame, *Blame it on the Seagull* takes us through the completely logical fears and anxieties of the main protagonist. Most importantly, however, it explains the connections between the triggers of the symptoms. This is a very thoughtful and didactic piece on an individual's struggle with the world.

Emmet's Latest Production: Anne Carson's Antigonick

EMMET – THE ENGLISH DEPT. THEATRE GROUP

Last semester, Emmet focused on Anne Carson's play *Antigonick* (2012). The English theatre workshop, which began in October 2014, culminated in three productions of *Antigonick* in the final week of December. The casting for the play took place on October 10th and a cast of 13 actors were selected for the production. As a prelude to the final production, Emmet took part in "Version Originale," during La Fête du Théâtre 2014, on October 31st, where an excerpt from *Antigonick* was performed in front of a full crowd.

Anne Carson's rendition of Sophocles' timeless tragedy *Antigone*, goes beyond translation. Carson not only updates the language and quickens the pace, she reinterprets the play. Though a tragedy, the text is very playful. Carson uses absurd one-liners that emerge at strange times in the play. Judith Butler remarks that "the lines often stand alone, as if broken off from the original text, stricken monuments" ("Can't Stop Screaming" n.p.).

Antigone has been reworked by a number of dramatists: Sophocles, Euripides, Jean Anouilh, Bertolt Brecht, Antonio D'Alfonso. Throughout the ages, she is fashioned by a male gaze. *Antigone*, lying in her "burial chamber" (signified by a square on stage), addresses the chorus. She proclaims that she doesn't want to talk about any of the male dramatists who have portrayed her: "Oh, I don't want to talk about him, or him, or Him" (*Antigonick*).



The play is a series of conflicts, which stem from the major theme of the play: the conflict between the man-made laws and the “unwritten, unfailing, eternal ordinances of the Gods” (*Antigonick*). Carson makes the staccato dialogues between the Guard and Kreon, Antigone and Kreon, Haimon and Kreon, Teiresias and Kreon, razor sharp. In one conflict, Kreon asserts, “enemy is always enemy, alive or dead,” to which Antigone responds, “I am born of love not hatred.” Emmet’s production explored the nuances of these conflicts, and brought these give-and-take exchanges to life with great intensity.

“WE ARE STANDING IN THE NICK OF TIME”

Carson’s version of the play begins with the mute character Nick, who does nothing but measure throughout the play. It has been suggested that Nick is a representation of time: how time measures the human world by seconds, minutes, hours, and days. Emmet’s “Nick” started his measurements with the audience, measuring the distance between audience members; some were bewildered, some were partly amused (if they were uncomfortable they hid it well). Nick, invisible to the characters of the play, appeared from time to time (no pun intended) to measure things like the raised eyebrow of Kreon, the distance between Kreon and Antigone, and the height of the Guard. One of the most striking still images of the play features Nick’s handiwork when he ran around Kreon and Haimon, and tied them together with tape.



“HOW IS A GREEK CHORUS LIKE A LAWYER? THEY ARE BOTH IN THE BUSINESS OF SEARCHING FOR A PRECEDENT.”

In Greek tragedy, the chorus can be regarded as an additional character. The chorus is the voice of reason, the moral compass, the public opinion, and mirrors to/of the characters.

The chorus of *Antigonick* was made up of four cast members, identically attired, with their faces painted in abstract shapes. Between scenes, they came together as a collective unit to deliver the choral odes on varied themes: Victory, Man, Love, Fate, and Time. The four members of the chorus marked the boundaries of the theatrical space, at times invading the space of the audience. Emmet's production explored the simultaneous individuality and collectiveness of the chorus.



Additionally, Emmet's production was inspired by Carson's *NOX* (2010). The production incorporated several extracts from this text, which was written as an epitaph to her estranged brother who died in 2000. The story behind *NOX* bears an almost eerie resemblance to the plot of *Antigone*. Recordings of two telephone conversations between Carson and her brother were used to begin and end the play. Moreover, Carson problematizes the notion of translation in both *NOX* and *Antigonick*. Emmet's production integrated Carson's attitude towards translation by using the Roman elegy "Catullus 101." Carson devotes the whole of *NOX* to the translation of the Catullan elegy from Latin to English. It could be argued that the production itself was a translation of Carson's (Sophocles') words into performance. During the production, "Catullus 101" was recited in Latin and English, and it was signed using the French sign language, indicating to the audience the different layers of translation that were present within the text. The play ended with the whole cast signing Antigone's penultimate line: "I am born of love not hatred," which gave new meaning to the expression "signing off in style."



If you missed Emmet's production of *Antigonick* last December, fear not; more shows are yet to come this year. Emmet will perform on May 8th, at the Festival d'Ateliers-Théâtre 2015, to be held at the Théâtre la Comédie. We are also hoping to perform at the Festival Fécule, in Lausanne. In the spring semester, the English Theatre workshop will kick off February 20th. We will continue to work on *Antigonick*, along with a variety of theatre games and exercises based on the teachings of Sanford Meisner and Konstantin Stanislavsky.

Students, alumni, and outside participants who would like to join Emmet can register for the workshop at <http://www.a-c.ch/>.

For more details please go to <http://emmet.ch/> or contact marlon.ariyasinghe@gmail.com.

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CREATIVE WRITING

Morning Bash

WAQAS MIRZA

I woke up like this, broken and bearded.
Elder trees bend over.
Drip drop, steam builds up.

Blade the hairs. Down the stairs.

Filling up a cuppa tea, I cut a finger
Lime. It opens up. I pop and pop
Its tiny juicy brains out.

Gulping down my drink, I hear the papers say,
Flashing headlines, dropping bombs, let there be
Breaking news! "Here they go again," I say...
Why the wait...? Switch it on! "The kettle, *silly*" says Polly.

Channel cruise, hit the news;
Brain fuse, it just switched off.
You know the rules, you lose
Focus. Then it all goes soft.

The teapot whistles. Misleading media
Infects me like bacteria.
Oh dear, oh dear, a war is near, I hear
It knocking at our door!
Oh please, oh please, my greatest fear...
Don't let it be a moor!

Channel cruise, hit the news;
Brain fuse, it just switched off.
You know the rules, you lose
Focus. Then it all goes soft.

*But stay tuned in, no need to stress,
All is covered by the press.*
I do not like thee, Doctor Sell,
Your big bells send my thoughts to Hell.

Then comes rage, then comes hate.
Subtly, they operate.
Some say two, some say ten.
Some are set on seven. Tea.

Sonnet

JOSEPH BRODSKY

Translation by AZAMAT RAKHIMOV

We're living by the gulf again,
and the clouds float above us,
and the contemporary Vesuvius rumbles,
and dust clothes the streets,
and the windows of the streets rattle.
One day we'll be covered with ashes as well.

So I would like at this bad hour
to take a tram to the suburbs,
enter your house,
and if in a hundred years
they come to unearth our town,
I'd want to be found
eternally in your arms
covered with new cinders.

Сонет

ИОСИФ БРОДСКИЙ

Мы снова проживаем у залива,
и проплывают облака над нами,
и современный тарахтит Везувий,
и оседает пыль по переулкам,
и стекла переулков дребезжат.
Когда-нибудь и нас засыпет пепел.

Так я хотел бы в этот бедный час
приехать на окраину в трамвае,
войти в твой дом,
и если через сотни лет
придет отряд раскапывать наш город,
то я хотел бы, чтоб меня нашли
оставшимся навек в твоих объятьях,
засыпанного новой золой.

Obscurity

LORRAINE DEVILLARD

Dark forest of hopelessness

A thorn in your soul, no less

Inexpressible pain, nameless torment

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And now gone.

Tides and Tidings

MISHA MEIHSL

She watches the waves that crash on the shore.
They whisper and rave about old stories,
But whether they're glad or sad is unsure.
The water is clad in shining garments
Of lies; in our own reflection we see
No one but ourselves, and only fragments.

You read in the trees the leaves and the wind,
And while you feel well, you open the book,
You lie on the grass, and try to be one.
But seasons must pass and treason is clear;
The seeds you had sought are lost in the brook:
You threw them all there, when Reason was near.

I sing to the sky, the bird and the star.
My spirits are high, because I believe
That weather and I both share the same art.
But suddenly rain and snow wash this claim
Away. And I know the pain, and I grieve
For, lost in my voice, it sounded the same.

She draws in the sand the name of the land,
The name of the Man. She asks then: "Please, Sea,
Erase what I wrote. Help me understand.
Reveal me the names, written in your hand."
The sea leaves a castle with many stories,
A maze in the sand, then waves: Goodbye.

Expecting the tidings to make a stand,
She waded and waited—to no avail.

Confluence

ARNAUD BARRAS

The reunion of these rivers inspires in me
a breath of renewal.

The beauty of this scene
fuels my body
and sets fire to my memory.

The confluence of past and present
anchors my thoughts in the in-between.

On the surface
the porosity of my being plays itself out
in a musical storm
where in counter-
points
the dreams of my childhood
spin round
and wind.

The meeting of these currents
puts me to flight
in the future.

With my gaze I follow
their spiraling perspective
that spins in a hypnotic
to-
and
-fro
that finally goes to rest on the bottom
of the horizon.

The Jonction of Rhone and Arve spells itself
out
and in a smooth invite
embraces my soma.

With my arms I act out their dance
forward
and with my fingers
I trace their exhilarating erosion.
The semantic creation that forces itself onto me
fuses my consciousness
into a dance of the future:
this unstopping friction of words
deposits my soul in jargons of silt
on the all-encompassing environs.

The liminality of the interstice reveals itself
in these self-encountering processes:
where does the reunion begin?
and where do the singularities
end?
There are no answer to these questions
of the artist;
there is only this coda
where lines
align
and I
conclude
these reflections:
on the line of becoming,
where schism translates
into
oneness,
I project myself
and through this projection
in a substantive
I interpret myself
a writer.

Mistresses

MANON GUIGNOT

Light escapes from a screen and disturbs the darkness of the room. It caresses the faces of Thomas and the cat huddled on his lap. It used to belong to the recently deceased neighbour and since Dario was often at Thomas's anyway, petted and sometimes fed, her daughter thought he might as well keep it.

The garish colours of the abstract cartoon figures prevent the cat from sleeping. Behind his heavy eyelids, Dario's gaze follows the wanderings of the birds' shimmering plumage and the felines' silky fur. They seem to be talking but he cannot hear anything except the whistling of Thomas' headphones. Dario nestles against him tighter. He does not smell like his mistress but he smells like a friend. An actual foster home would be much worse.

The closing credits roll as Thomas, with soft movements, turns on the lamp on the bedside table and takes his journal to scribble a few lines.

Intimacy is made of soft murmurs and great laughs, of intertwined legs, minds and guts. This story was not simple but it was good, as much love as hurt. I have no regrets yet will this ever change?

He pauses under gleaming eyes.

I need time. Time to grasp and assess meaning. But for now, to Hell with it all. To Hell with it all. A day not too far, I will live a different story. That thought is enough for now.

He lets out a sigh, which, to his surprise, the cat reacts to. Dario purrs louder and Thomas pets his head. He doesn't understand but there is no need; his presence already makes a difference. A man and a cat, both without mistresses and both with heavy hearts, watch cartoons in the middle of a sleepless night. This is not the worst beginning.

Cinq Jours en Mars

MARLON ARIYASINGHE

Premier Jour

Inaudibly mumbling, mundane thoughts
Under a blinding-bright light,
We stare at an empty, white ceiling
In a cheap windowless hotel room.

While the world outside revolves,
Measured by seconds and minutes,
We gyrate in a counter-direction
In a space removed from time.

Deuxième Jour

Bodies entwined, raw heat
To keep each other warm.
We smoke Chinese cigarettes
In a cheap windowless hotel room.

We fuck like animals
Sweating, panting, orgasming.
Meaningless, meaningful sex
In a space removed from time.

Troisième Jour

The fight for freedom,
The freedom to fight.
We talk of politics in bed
In a cheap windowless hotel room.

Bombs fall on Baghdad.
Shells, bullets rain.
Brown Limbs, white heads fly
In a space removed from time.

Quatrième Jour

An army of youth fills the streets,
Protesting, marching, menacing.
We don't hear them
In a cheap windowless hotel room.

Bombs still fall on London,
Moscow, New York, Beijing.
We reminisce about our childhood
In a space removed from time

Cinquième Jour

"Let's leave Earth.
Let's go to Mars," I say.
"We are in mars," you reply
In a cheap windowless hotel room.

We come out of mars.
I stare at you with love.
You name your price
In a space not removed from time.

The Particle Chronicles

WAQAS MIRZA

I

BOSON

Years and years, the invisible God Particle,
Hidden like the dangling gardens of Babylon,
I'm the mass merchant, none other than Higg's Boson.
Everywhere, I am. My aura's universal!

I make the world go round, and their heads go round too.
They don't see me, but they feel me, so they watch me,
So closely. I'm a must see. Essential like A B C.
But wait awhile! What's that whizzing out of the blue?

The colossal Collider's been on forever,
However, whenever, they get him... they'll get him.
They got him! Oh my! What a clever endeavour,
Like in the beginning, bigbanging was nothin.

Trapped! It's like I'm swimming among Quarks.
Stuck! It's like I'm swimming among sharks!
Now's your chance, take a pic quick! In two, I'll scatter.
For a spark, you can enter. No more a stranger.

II

PROTON

I'm central too! And was essential before you!
Calling me 'Déjà vu'?! Alright that may be true...
Enlightening as I am, why can't I be enough?
Why, oh why, does it have to be so tough?

Whizzing day and night at the speed of light,
 Riding rays, round and round. We sit tight alright!
 The Collider riders, me and my martyr mates,
 Heating up like Cactuses on a blazing day.

The colossal Collider's been on forever,
 However, whenever, they get him... they'll get him.
 They got him! Oh my! What a clever endeavour,
 Like in the beginning, bigbanging was nothin.

I'm tired of running, tired of hunting,
 My own kind; it's just never ending.
 Caught up as a used up pawn
 In a photon marathon.

III

RESEARCHER

Another day, and another pile of data.
 More data, more data, we're closer and closer.
 Where is it? We've seen neither hide, nor hair!
 It's now or never, I can feel it in the air!

It's everywhere, in your surrounding atmosphere!
 All I need is one spark, all I need is Higg's pic!
 Speed up! Speed up! And set up a shooting stick, quick!
 Get ready, be prepared, for a big world premiere!

The colossal Collider's been on forever,
 However, whenever, they get him... they'll get him.
 They got him! Oh my! What a clever endeavour,
 Like in the beginning, bigbanging was nothin.

Eureka! The picture's a victor, grand and great!
 At long last we hold he who answers for our weight.
 Would you do us the honour to hang around...?
 Hand me Mr Higg's wig, once lost, now found!



"When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not
a pastime to her more than she is to me?"
(Michel de Montaigne)

SUMMER WRITING CONTEST

In honor of the scientific tilt seen in recent films (*Gravity*, *Under the Skin*, *The Theory of Everything* and *Interstellar*), books (*The Peripheral*, by none other than William Gibson, Grand High Elder of Cyberpunk), poems (as seen in Waqas Mirza's spectral "Particle Chronicles") and, of course, current events (no less than Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, and Bill Gates have all recently urged caution in the development of artificial intelligence), *Noted's* latest writing contest is all about:

SCIENCE!

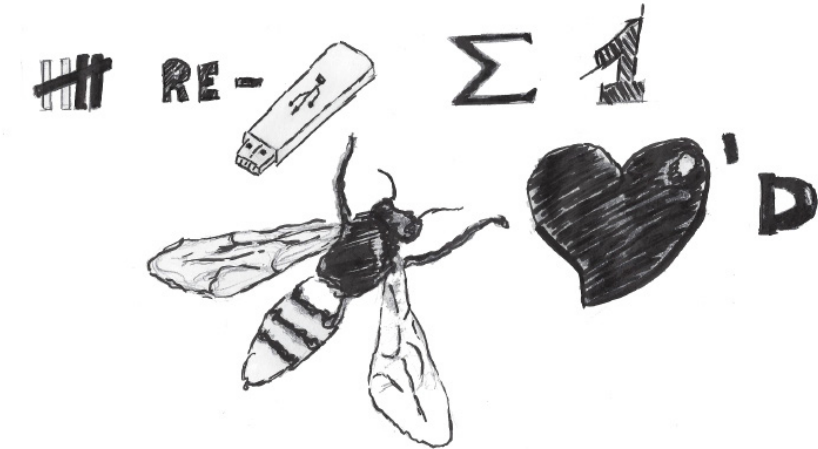
This topic affords a rich variety of events, places, and characters upon which to set loose your literary imagination: from the boundless reaches of the microscopic and extragalactic worlds to stunning moments of sheer luck and shocking acts of injustice (Rosalind Franklin, anyone?). So why not put your creative minds to work and let the judges know, for example, if Charles Darwin led an unknown double-life as a private detective (perhaps he was on the trail of something even more mysterious than the finches of the Galapagos?) or take us into the life and trials of being the only AI student in an otherwise human-populated *collège*? You have the world and beyond to work with!

Details: Entries can take any literary form (poems, flash fiction, short stories, plays, etc.) but must address the contest topic of "science" and should not exceed 3,000 words. Please send your entries to noted-lettres@unige.ch by **1 August 2015**. Please also note in your email that the piece is specifically for the writing contest. Prizes to be awarded.

PUZZLE-ING

The Spring Semester Rebus Puzzle

Following the success of our previous puzzles (see: the "Fall-ing" crossword and the "Vvorde" search and cryptic puzzle), *Noted* is pleased to offer the third installment of our semestrial puzzle series: a rather tricky rebus, designed by our very own departmental artist and champion puzzler, NAKama.



HINT: The rebus phrase sums up a concept in a famous novel.

QUESTION: What is the rebus phrase and to which novel does it refer?

Details: Please send your answers to noted-lettres@unige.ch by **18 May 2015**; the first correct answer received, wins. The winner and the awarded prize will be announced in the next edition of *Noted*.