



JANUARY NOTED 2007

Newsletter of the English Department

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Editors:

Emma Depledge
Michael Rösli
Conradin Schwarzenbach
Lydia Sonderegger
Cornelia Togeia

Layout:

Michael Rösli

Title Page Design:

Bettina Schwarzenbach

Contributors:

Adwoa Bart-Plange, Sophie Cadène,
Emma Depledge, Anna Iatsenko, Kareen
Klein, Erzsébet Kukorelly, Kristijan Marinkovic,
Sarah-Jane Moloney, Michael Rösli, Erika
Scheidegger, Conradin Schwarzenbach,
Lydia Sonderegger, David Spurr, Alan
Sternberg, Shirine Tavakoli, Clare Tierque,
Cornelia Togeia, as well as The Smashed
Pumpkin and various anonymous writers.

Logo

©

By You!

LOGO CONTEST

NOTED is looking for a logo and needs your help! Your ideas are greatly appreciated and can be of any shape. The only restrictions are that they should be printable in the next issue of NOTED, meaning they should be black and white, as well as of a size that will fit the format indicated above. Of course there is an incentive for you as well! Your logo will be printed in every further issue of NOTED! The best ideas will also be rewarded with vouchers sponsored by:

 **OffTheShelf**
The English bookshop in Geneva

Please send your logos or ideas to Michael.Roosli@lettres.unige.ch or leave them at Michael's staff box.

Editorial

The newsletter of the English Department has lost a great editor and driving force in Agnieszka Soltysik, who is now working as an assistant professor at the University of Lausanne. However, this is not the end of *NOTED*. In the meantime, a new crew has formed: the students Lydia Sonderegger, Cornelia Togeia and Conradin Schwarzenbach, as well as the assistants Emma Depledge and Michael Rööslü are happy to present with this January 2007 edition the most extensive issue of *NOTED* since its revival by Agnieszka and Michael in June 2005. This is due to the enthusiasm of all the students and staff who decided to share their ideas with other members of the Department, and thus fuelled the newsletter with greatly varied contributions. A warm 'thank you' to all contributors, who gave us their time despite all other obligations which the beginning of a new academic year brings along. But of course all these efforts would be in vain if it wasn't for an interested readership – thanks for encouraging this lively exchange!

But *NOTED* is not the only social activity among the members of the Department. The present issue includes an account of *Barbe à Papa's* adventures at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival as well as an interview with Jessica Mistovski, the new head of the theatre group. The recently revived ADEA (*association des étudiant-e-s en anglais*) announces the first party, and our film cycle successfully started off its third year. Furthermore, Emma Depledge, Anna Iatsenko, and Ioana Balgradean are setting up a second-hand book sale which allows students to exchange texts that are usually rather expensive.

Having been a student at the English Department during a period when almost no social activities existed, I'm extremely happy to witness all these developments, and start wondering whether it can be a coincidence that the term 'English Department' is an anagram of 'Permanent Delights!'

Book Sale at the English Department

by Anna Iatsenko

The English Department would like to inform all students that it will soon be possible to sell – and therefore buy – second-hand books and brochures at second-hand prices.

We kindly invite all students wanting to get rid of unread, unwanted, or unloved books to contact the following assistants via email:

Ioana.Balgradean@lettres.unige.ch

Emma.Depledge@lettres.unige.ch

Anna.Iatsenko@lettres.unige.ch

Please indicate the prices for your books along with your coordinates and you will receive your money once the books have been sold.

Temporarily and until further notice, the list of books available will be posted on the Department notice board at the Comédie.



Department News

Examination News

The *décanat* of the *Faculté des Lettres* has decided that, on an experimental basis, the September 2007 examination session will be reserved for *rattrapages* and *soutenances de mémoire*. This means that graded papers written hors-session cannot be validated in this session, although attestations may be obtained and validated. For the current (Winter 2006) semester, the deadline for taking examinations or having graded papers evaluated will thus be extended to the examination session of January-February 2008. Should the reduced September session become permanent Faculty policy, the deadlines for evaluation announced in the English department's *plan d'études* will be amended accordingly.

Students are once again reminded that of the two modules BA5 and BA6, one must be validated by means of study in early modern (16th-18th century) literature, the other in modern or contemporary (19th-21st century) literature.

The Department Newsletter announces the departure of its excellent and dedicated editor Agnieszka Soltysik. Michael Rösli will do his best in assuming her former function and is happy to welcome his new co-editors, the students Lydia Sonderegger, Cornelia Tögea, and Conradin Schwarzenbach, as well as Emma Depledge, a member of the teaching staff.

The Language Assistant Program is looking for students who would like to teach French in the UK for a year. Please consult the departmental website under > Scholarships.

The ADEA (*association des étudiant-e-s en anglais*) invites you to a party on March 15, 2007 at the Datcha. There might be another event earlier in the year, so keep your eyes open for posters at the Comédie and Philosophes!

Barbe à Papa, the theatre group of the English Department is now headed by Jessica Mistovsky (see interview on page 24). If you are curious about seeing *Barbe à Papa* at work or would like to join them, you are welcome at their weekly meetings on Fridays from 2 to 4 p.m. at the *salle de danse* (S140) in the basement of UniMail.

The English Department Film Cycle will be shorter this year, because the number of attending spectators seems to drop radically during the second half of the spring semester, when we are all seduced by the smells of barbecues and the warm rays of the evening sun (or busy with preparations for the June exam session). The screenings will continue as usual during the fall and the first half of the spring semester. The film cycle crew would like to thank all its spectators, and especially its regular guests, for making the cycle possible.

SANAS 2006

On the 10th and 11th of November 2006, the University of Geneva hosted the biennial conference of the Swiss Association for North American Studies (SANAS) on the theme of "American Aesthetics." Organized by Prof. Deborah Madsen, the conference took place at Uni-Bastions, the Philosophes as well as the conference room of the Café des Philosophes. Gerald Vizenor was the keynote speaker and delivered a compelling lecture on "Genocide Tribunals: Native American Rights and Survivance."

Troisième Cycle 2007

The Department is also proud to announce the *Troisième Cycle de la Suisse Occidentale*, which will take place on May 25th and 26th, 2007, and which is hosted by the University of Geneva. David Spurr is the organiser of this conference on the topic "Theory after 'Theory'". Invited scholars are Vivian Liska, Ned Lukacher and Jean-Michel Rabaté.

New/Absent Staff Members

The department is very pleased to be able to welcome a number of visiting faculty members this year.

Prof. Allen Reddick, of the University of Zurich, is teaching an autumn semester seminar on Samuel Johnson, the great eighteenth-century poet, essayist, and lexicographer, whose work has had a lasting impression on the way we define the English language and its literature. Prof. Reddick, a leading authority on the life and work of Johnson, has published notably on the making and the content of Johnson's dictionary.

Dr. Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, of the University of Zurich, is teaching a seminar in the autumn semester on seventeenth-century poetry. She is no stranger to Geneva, as her doctorate is from the University of Geneva's *Institut d'Histoire de la Réformation*.

Dr. Regina Schneider, of the University of Fribourg, is giving an autumn seminar on the Renaissance poet Philip Sidney. Dr. Schneider received her D.Phil from Oxford, and has recently published her thesis on Sidney's pastoral romance, the *Arcadia*. Prof. Reddick, Dr Bevan Zlatar and Dr Schneider are together replacing **Prof. Lukas Erne**, who is teaching Shakespeare at Yale University this semester. Another department member currently in North America is **Genoveva Puskas**, who is a visiting researcher in linguistics during this year at McGill University in Montreal.

In the spring semester, **Prof. Neil Forsyth**, of the University of Lausanne, will be giving a seminar on "Shakespeare at Stratford." The seminar will include a trip to the poet's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon. Prof. Forsyth is a renowned authority on the life and work of John Milton, though he has also written on subjects as diverse as Fielding, Dickens, and Salman Rushdie.

Also in spring, **Dr. Phillip Schweighauser** of the University of Berne will give a seminar on "Approaches to the American Renaissance." Dr. Schweighauser earned his doctorate from the University of Basel, and has recently published his thesis on the highly original subject of noise in American literature.

The department has also had the good fortune to hire two new assistants this year. **Anna Iatsenko**, assistant in American literature, has replaced **Agnieszka Soltysik**, now assistant professor at Lausanne. Ms Iatsenko, who earned her *licence ès lettres* in our department, is writing her doctoral thesis on the works of Toni Morrison. **Marco Nievergelt** is our new assistant in medieval literature. Mr Nievergelt, who has a *licence* from Lausanne, has more recently studied at Oxford, where he began writing his thesis on "Spiritual Knighthood" in medieval and Renaissance English literature.

We also have two new monitors for the Writing Lab. **Donald Armbricht**, a B.A. student originally from Philadelphia, has taught English in commercial schools in Geneva. **Jennifer Wong**, who already has a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley, is studying for her second B.A. at Geneva.

David Spurr

Leaving Staff Members

Agnieszka Soltysik has been appointed Assistant Professor of Anglo-American Literature at the University of Lausanne.

Fabienne Michelet is currently a visiting scholar at the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto.

Myriam Perregaux, who defended her PhD last February, is now in the process of revising it for publication. At the moment, she is teaching English essay writing at Webster University, and is also substituting for one semester in the English Department of the University of Lausanne.

Jocelyn Moren, former tutor of the writing lab, has in the meantime finished her *licence* in English and Comparative Literature and is working as a teacher of French and English in a private language school in Geneva.

Camilo Gomez, who also worked at the writing lab, is currently finishing his *mémoire*, so you might still meet him in the halls of the Philosophes. He will continue his studies at the *Conservatoire* of Geneva University.

A Note from the Director

A difference between the English Department today and what it was not very long ago is the manner in which we communicate with one another. When *NOTED* reappeared in 2005 after more years of hibernation than anyone could remember, it was not just printed but published on the department website as well. The website itself is an impressive — I was going to say document, but I believe the proper word is *space*, as in *cyberspace*. Largely the work of Michael Rööslī, it is artfully composed in cool shades of blue, and goes several pages deep into staff biographies, course descriptions, exam regulations, theatre and film announcements, etc. If every page were printed out it would make a hefty volume, not counting the links to other websites, which if printed out in turn would make several hundred more pages—or perhaps several thousand: one of the effects of working in cyberspace is that one loses the ability to make quantitative comparisons between electronic and print media.

Judging by some of the e-mails I receive, the website is read by people from all over the world: students in Morocco, Glasgow and Taiwan, professors in Miami and Malmö, editors, publishers, writers, journalists and diplomats. Plunging into the individual websites of department staff members, one finds a formidable array of course and course-related materials in various genres and media: not just course descriptions and bibliographies, but actual texts of publications, photographs, book covers, and videos. A certain degree of creativity is manifest as well. Emma Depledge's

website on *King Lear* is illustrated with a photograph of an authentically blasted heath, and provides a path to, among other things, Charles Lamb's 1818 essay on *The Tragedies of Shakespeare*, which begins, "Taking a turn the other day in the Abbey..." A few clicks of the mouse, and the adventurous *internaut* is there with Lamb in Westminster Abbey, contemplating a statue of David Garrick erected on the actor's tomb. It is like time travel. For those who want to wander, virtually, the streets of London in the eighteenth century, Erzsi Kukorelly's site has a street map. Annick Challet's website is bathed in the aquamarine of the Caribbean. Karen Klein provides a complete schedule of Shakespearean performances in Switzerland, making me realize that, given world enough and time, I could see a different production of his plays every week of the year without crossing an international border. If there were a prize for the best personal website, it would have to go to the above-named Michael Rööslī, whose site approaches what Joseph Tabbi has termed the "technological sublime." For that reason I will not attempt to describe it, but will simply mention that among its features are a documentary film on "The World's First Time Machine," and an impossibly intricate time diagram to Robert Heinlein's story "All You Zombies."

The creative and informational material being produced in electronic form by members of the English department is very much worthy of encouragement. It contributes to better →

communication between instructors and their students, and to the lively and informative presentation of material for study. The more deeply I dive into our department's website, however, the more I am afraid of trespassing on private territory, uncovering layers of the institutional subconscious. I might justify this by claiming to be in some way responsible for the website's content. But then what exactly constitutes content in this case? Does it include the links, and then the links from those links, and so on? To what degree am I responsible for showing a video of "The Worst Police Dog in the World," immediately viewable via a link from our department's website, and featuring a crazed German shepherd zigzagging down a city street while being pursued by police officers to the sound of the frenzied music that usually accompanies cartoons of Bugs Bunny?

Writing about the internet, I am beginning to realize, is a bit like writing about *Finnegans Wake*, which Jacques Derrida has described as a "hypermnesiac machine," that is, a system designed to anticipate all one can possibly say in any language and to exhaust every conceivable combination of verbal elements. In writing about such a system, there is a tendency to veer into frivolity and inconsequence, because given the nature of the space to be navigated, anything one might choose to say is immediately confronted by evidence of the contrary, or if not precisely the contrary then something else that nonetheless invalidates what one started with. Take the example of the spatial metaphors I have used here for our website. On one hand I have relied on the figure of depth, as if diving into the website were like plunging toward

the bottom of the sea. But the figure of links refers to an entirely different order, a chain or a network, and therefore is more properly conceived in terms of extension rather than depth. The incompatibility of the notions of depth and net has produced the term *cyberspace*, which is neither a figure nor a space, but something like an empty signifier for a phenomenon which nonetheless has its place in the vertiginous universe of simulacra that we call the real world. In Deleuzian terms, the internet is rhizomatic, a body without organs. *Il n'y a pas de hors-net*. You see what I mean about skidding out of control.

When it comes to electronic teaching resources, I have some catching up to do. A colleague in whose course I am to lecture next week told me that if I liked, I could post my materials in advance on Dokeos. I could only pretend to know what he was talking about. I am therefore in awe of colleagues who start the semester prepared with an array of power-point presentations, videos, transparencies, recordings, illustrated syllabi, annotated bibliographies, and other learned materials published on the internet. Only recently have I become dimly aware of the pedagogical opportunities afforded by WWW.PUBLIC, Moodle, and other web-related resources.

When I think about it, it is amazing that I managed to acquire a tolerable university education entirely without benefit of audiovisual aid. I do remember a professor who brought a harpoon to class for his lecture on *Moby-Dick*, but do harpoons count? As students in the pre-wired days, we listened politely to more or less interesting, more or less boring professors go on about negative capability or the intentional fallacy.

Any one of these tweeded, pipe-smoking sages was about as likely to show us pictures of anything as to rise from his chair, dance the jitterbug, sprout wings and fly around the quadrangle. For me, the real action was in the library, a cavernous, labyrinthine place where time seemed to stop, and one got pleasantly lost for hours in the company of books. Allow me to put in a brief word for the book. It is really an amazing technical achievement: compact, portable, durable, in most cases much lighter than a laptop computer, and requiring neither electrical power, batteries, nor the presence of a wireless network. I have spent weeks on an island in Maine without electricity or running water, doing nothing but reading Heidegger, with only temporary damage to my sanity.

The codex was invented in the second century, and has not changed its essential form since then. In the thirteenth century paper replaced parchment, and block printing replaced manuscript writing. But these innovations in material support and symbolic systems did not fundamentally alter the nature of the object: a volume of rectangular sheets bound on one side in such manner that they can be turned over, from the opposite side, one by one. In computer terms, the book has a random access memory: it can be opened immediately to any place in the text. But consider the other qualities of the book: each has its own history in time and place. Turning to my bookshelf, I take down at random an early edition of Byron's *Letters and Journals*. [Frankfurt am Main: H. L. Brönnner, 1833: octavo, marbled boards, leather spine with gilt

decoration, some wear to edges and corners, light water marks, moderate spotting, good to very good condition]. I found this in a bookshop in the little street that winds its way up to the Château in Neuchâtel. It is not a particularly rare find, but it surely has a history. It was published nine years after the poet's death, and four years before the 18 year-old Victoria ascended the throne of England. I open the book to page 202 and read Byron's letter to Hobhouse, sent from Ouchy on June 27, 1816: "I am on my way back to Diodati [in Cologny] near Geneva from a voyage in my boat round the lake; and I enclose you a sprig of Gibbon's acacia and some rose-leaves from his garden." Sailing a little skiff, Byron and the 24 year-old Shelley have survived a violent storm on the lake; they have made a pilgrimage to Clarens to visit the scenes of Rousseau's *Julie*, then to the garden of the Gibbon's villa in Lausanne. Two young poets paying homage to the great minds of the previous century.

I wonder how many readers, paying their own homage to Byron, have held this same book in their hands over the past 173 years, how many imaginations have been stirred, in how many drawing rooms or gardens? *Habent sua fata libelli*. I turn once more to the page. The paper is thick and durable, though foxed with little red spots, like points of blood showing through the skin of a living body. It smells like the autumn leaves fallen to the forest floor. It has passed from the hands of those long dead to my own. I close the covers. There is nothing like a book.

David Spurr

Teaching French in London

by Shirine Tavakoli

My name is Shirine and I am currently working as an Assistant Teacher in French language in a boys' high-school in North London. I have to be honest and tell you that this is proving to be bit of a challenging way of jumping into my first professional work experience. But it is also a rewarding experience. Although I had lived in the suburbs of London when I was a young child, living and working on my own all of a sudden and earning a living in unfamiliar surroundings was a bit of a shock to the system! Compared to Geneva, London is a fast-moving, all glittering Cosmopolitan monster of a city. There are so many people everywhere and at any hour of the day. It is also so huge: getting from A to B (e.g. just two stops apart on the Circle Line tube) is like going from the Geneva University to the top of the Mont Blanc (a bit of an exaggeration but I am sure you get my point)! And, boy, is it expensive! Not only does the taxman help himself to a large portion of earnings, a daily pass on public transport costs £ 6 (the equivalent of CHF 13 in Geneva). And there are lots of boutiques that are too happy to gobble up all your hard-earned salary in just a few minutes!

Having said all that, the experience is really good and I am sure that it will do me a world of good in preparing for future challenges that we will no doubt all have to face. I believe life is all about choices and what we do with these choices. I therefore encourage all of you with a sense of adventure (not to say an itching to get away from your parents for a little while) to give it a go and apply for a similar programme.

I am trying to make the most out of the whole experience and encourage each and every one of you to "take the plunge". As they say over here "it'll make a man out of you!"

I could go on and write pages and pages about my experience here but I must run and do a bit of prep work for my tomorrow's class. Busy, busy!

Tarah!

(slang for saying "au revoir" over here)



Language Assistantships in the UK

Shirine Tavakoli participates in the Language Assistantship Program (LAP) which sends students for a year to the UK to teach French. Applicants need to be native speakers of French, be aged between 21 and 30, and have studied at the University of Geneva for at least four semesters. Requirements are a good general education, a certain amount of eloquence in French and English and good contact with young people. The deadline for applications is January 30, 2007 at the very latest for an assistantship in 2007-2008. However, there are still a few gaps open for the second semester of the current academic year.

For information and application forms, consult our departmental website under >Scholarships. If you wish to spend the second semester of the current academic year teaching French in the UK, please contact Mr. Erhard, the coordinator of the program, as quickly as possible:

peter.erhard@bluewin.ch

Interview: *complément d'études*

by Lydia Sonderegger

Last fall, Kathryn-Jane Müller-Griffiths aimed to complete the English part of a BA in only one academic year.

Dear KJ, what made you decide to resume your studies, and why the rush?

I had to do this *complément d'études* to go on teaching. It was supposed to give me the equivalent of a Swiss *licence* (I already have a British BA in Applied Language Studies). However, it turns out that this might not be the case after all. The reason for the rush was so that I could start teacher training the following year. Luckily, I was excused from the introductory module in Linguistics (BA2), so that my schedule only consisted of six modules.

Would you have resumed your studies if you hadn't been requested to?

Yes – it just happened faster than planned! I had thought of studying English and History once my three children had grown up.

How did it feel to go back to school?

At first I was overwhelmed by the whole experience: being with young people, seeing how bright they were. I was scared that I wouldn't be up to the mark.

Nevertheless, my greatest advantage was being a native speaker. My major problem was separating university from teaching and family life, and managing the three. In addition, I hadn't studied for a long time, and as I was doing the three years in one, I didn't have the prerequisite knowledge for some of the seminars. I regularly put my foot in it and continue to do so. Conversely, as time went on, I could use the knowledge of the first year (already half-forgotten by second- and third-year students) in more advanced courses.

Socially, it is nice being with young people with a common interest. Nonetheless, I tend to be drawn to more mature students, native speakers, or fellow foreigners.

Does the use of the present tense imply that you have enrolled for another challenge?

Of course! I've started attending MA classes, but I'm taking things easy: I think I might try to beat the record for the longest time spent on an MA.

21 November 2006

In the Proverbial

by Emma Depledge

Proverbs and idiomatic phrases are among the hardest things to get to grips with when learning a foreign language. I would therefore like to offer you one of my favourite English proverbs along with its possible origins.

**"Don't cut off your nose
to spite your face."**

This little saying is basically advising us not to overreact to a particular event or

situation, not to respond in a way which will cause greater harm or damage to ourselves than to the object of our anger or annoyance.

Many believe that this phrase refers to the decision of nuns in 9th Century England to mutilate their faces in a bid to deter the lustful desires of invading Viking soldiers. St. Aebbe, who went on to be canonized, is said to have cut off her nose and upper lip during a Viking raid on the monastery of Coldingham.

Sooner

by Adwoa Bart-Plange

He lined up the pills, one for each year of life
Fifty in all, a small orderly white row
A pitcher of water near, full to the brim
An empty glass at hand, ready to be filled.

It was quite dark outside – perhaps 10 pm?
His partner came in and stood in the doorway
He did not notice pills, nor pitcher, nor glass
Merely straightened his tie, said ‘kids are asleep.’

Drew nodded, countenance gave nothing away
‘Enjoy the party!’ bade his partner goodbye
Knew he could not go, and knew naught could be done
Was resigned to his fate, picked up the first pill.

He caressed it between thumb and forefinger
He wondered if perhaps he should change his mind
But despair took hold, he grew rather somber
If he’d failed all else, this, at least, would redeem.

He’d had a conversation the previous day
A friend insulted men who loved other men
Called them failures, freaks of nature, and outcasts
Said they deserved a public death by stoning.

Upon contemplation, Drew agreed with this
He could not win them all, did not care to try
Did not know what life held, cared not to find out
Had just left college, the real world overwhelmed.

Drew had lost a lover when school had ended,
He looked at his life, and little brought him joy
A love his own parents scarcely understood
Wishing their son anyone else but himself.

Drew knew all this, he grew ever more sullen
Unhappy at work, misery rife at home
He thought quite frequently of ending it all
The weight lifted, no more worries or concerns.

At fifty, he knew he had accomplished much
Much more than he’d ever dreamed at twenty-three
Two children adopted, a loving husband
Life had beamed; the skies suddenly shone brighter.

Swallowed pill after pill, wished he’d known sooner
That perhaps life wouldn’t always be so cruel
No signs were forthcoming, and so he emptied
And refilled the small glass, over and over.

Fifty-year old Drew had been through challenges
Had faced them squarely, and emerged triumphant
Twenty-three year old Drew despised existence
Fervently wished it to end, so took tablets.

He soon grew sluggish, groggy and lethargic
Movements deliberate, he felt rather drowsy
Still he poured and swallowed; took pill after pill
He was almost done; there were only three more.

The door was cracked open, Drew’s mother approached
At the foot of his bed, asked ‘you asleep yet?’
He mumbled inarticulately, turned over,
She said, ‘right then, sleep well,’ closed the door and left.

Arm trembling, Drew picked up the very last pill
He had come this far, had to complete this task
Pitcher almost empty, but still, no matter
Just enough remained – the last pill taken down.

Drew closed his eyes, and saw fifty-year-old Drew
Laying in calm repose, also in his bed
His children asleep, his partner out for work
His life openly led; accepted, content.

At twenty-three he could not have known sooner
Saw the whole world against him and all like him
Own parents wished he would deny his nature
The cocoon of college was lost to the real world.

Slipped ever deeper, sleep numbing, engulfing
Felt in his heart the joy of the older him
Suddenly wished to meet him, make it that far
Fought to wake up but his eyes did not open.

Down the hall, Drew’s mother felt something was wrong
She rushed to his room and threw open the door
Switched on the lights, hastening to Drew’s bedside
Wiped foam from his lips, sobbed as she dialed the phone.

Drew’s eyes fluttered open, he felt rather drained
Saw tube in his arm, concern in mother’s eyes
The tears that cascaded down her tired face
Her lips as they spoke, said ‘I love you for you.’

He smiled, closed his eyes, grateful to have made it
In his heart, could still see fifty-year-old Drew
Path ahead would be hard, he could face it now
Each new day came closer to fifty-year-old Drew.

Improve Your Writing...

It's as Easy as Learning to P.E.E.

by Emma Depledge

I often find it useful to compare a literary essay with a mathematical problem. If a maths teacher asked you to solve the simultaneous equations:

Equation 1: $x + 2y = 3$

Equation 2: $x^2 + y^2 = 5$

and you simply told them that:

$x = 2 \frac{1}{5}$ $y = \frac{2}{5}$

$x = -1$ $y = 2$

they would wonder how you had reached your conclusion/answer. Whilst this may be the correct answer, you would not have demonstrated how you came to that conclusion. Although English literary essays (like certain equations) do not have set 'right' or 'wrong' answers, you should always show how you have reached your conclusion; provide the evidence on which your arguments are based.

This is where the P.E.E. method comes in. The 'working out' stage in maths can be replaced by: P=Point, E=Example/Evidence, E=Explain. I have divided the following examples into the P.E.E. structure.

Example 1:

Point	'This extract does not simply provide advice for male and female writers, it also functions as a kind of warning.
Example	This may be illustrated by the use of words such as 'fatal', 'doomed' and 'death'
Explain	as such words have threatening overtones.'

Example 2:

Example	'The decision to refer to the "art" of "creation" is also interesting as one usually refers to the "act" of creation.
Explain	This highlights the narrator's desire to compare literary reproduction with human reproduction, thereby continuing the narrator's procreative metaphor.
Example	This extended metaphor is aided by the use of words such as "fertilized", "grow", "creation".
Point	The fact that each of the words associated with procreation is accompanied by an antonym
Example	(e.g. "fertilized/doomed to death", "grow/withered" and "creation/fatal")
Point	reflects the narrator's decision to warn her readers/audience of what will happen to their work if they ignore her advice.'

The P.E.E. structure may vary so long as you include evidence to support your points and vice versa. The final E (Explain) often poses the greatest problem for students of literature. It is not enough to simply identify a literary device e.g. hyperbole and give examples of it. You also need to Explain what effect/impact this use of exaggeration has on the way in which we read the text. Think about why the author has chosen to use this particular literary device.

Happy P.E.E.ing everybody!!

Which School of Literary Criticism Do You Most Relate To?

by Erika Scheidegger

Part One - Earlier Twentieth Century Inheritance: Formalism, New Criticism and Reader-Response Criticism

I In a literary extract, what do you keenly look out for?

- ♣ My attention is attracted by grammatical and rhetorical structures. Spotting patterns also strikes me as a fulfilling activity: yum... many repetitions and metaphors! Yum... interesting symbolism! Yum, this is – almost – as good as chocolate.
- ♦ I look out for some unity, some meaning to extract; a relation between form and content.
- ♠ I'm interested in what reflects my own experience. I wonder: "What does this narrative 'incite' (Wolfgang Iser) in me and, in turn, how does this help me provide an interpretation?"
- ♥ All the above.

II Affective fallacy

- ♣ I can provide a definition for this term, and make sure that my awareness prevents me from falling into its trap.
- ♦ Is it the same as intentional fallacy? Is it similar to a pathetic fallacy?
- ♠ I do not believe it to be a fallacy – the merit or value of a literary work is not always inherent to the narrative itself.
- ♥ I have never heard this notion before, but will look out for the definition of this term – I'll also make sure not to spend another day without understanding notions such as intentional fallacy and pathetic fallacy.

III Aesthetic qualities honored by New Critics were inspired by the critical writings of:

- ♣ T.S. Eliot
- ♦ Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- ♠ Woodrow Wilson
- ♥ Aristotle

IV Coleridge was considered as one of the first authors to elaborate...

- ♣ on an understanding that a poem acts as a unified whole, achieving balance and harmony.
- ♦ on how a work of literature is an attempt of representing the world.
- ♠ on how the literary text possesses no fixed meaning or value.
- ♥ on how literature is a performative act. Indeed, just like a musical work or a drama, that request recitalists or actors, literature exists only thanks to readers and their interpretations.



V According to you, works of literature contain...

- ♣ Objectivity – and if you provide a correct interpretation, you touch its core.
- ♦ Diversity – there is no single and correct interpretation.
- ♠ Temporality - depending on when in history it is read, interpretations vary greatly.
- ♥ Two last propositions.

VI You eschew anything NOT related to...

- ♣ elements external to literary works – for instance, to cultural and historicist approaches. Maybe you've read all of Bakhtin's work, and even contemplate a pilgrimage to Siberia during the winter break.
- ♦ the form of a literary work.
- ♠ your own emotional experiences.
- ♥ You don't really shun any discourse related to literature, and find positive sides to all approaches.

VII Poetry is the genre you...

- ♣ relate to least.
- ♦ love most – it's the highest form of literary expression.
- ♠ I like all genres, indistinctly.
- ♥ merely appreciate.

VIII If as a gift, you were offered to choose one of the following paintings, you'd opt for:

- ♣ a cubist work – one that attempts to affect familiar perception of everyday objects and people.
- ♦ an impressionist work – one that strives to record visual scenes using color to create transient effects of light.
- ♠ an expressionist work - seeking to depict not objective reality but subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse in the artist.
- ♥ a work of abstract expressionism – that demands attention towards surface qualities, but also emotional ones.

Count your points:

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
♣	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	1
♦	1	3	1	4	4	1	1	2
♠	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	4
♥	3	4	4	2	3	3	1	3

Please turn page after counting your points →

Evaluation: Which School of Literary Criticism Do You Most Relate To?

Up to 9 points

You appear most interested in **formalist** aspects of a narrative, and this includes approaches set forth by **New Critics** that stress the importance of close readings and structural analysis of poetry, fiction, drama or other literary forms, as representative of the content of a work. Being able to master techniques of close reading (as often practiced in AT meetings) and relating form with content is essential groundwork to ensure understanding of literary studies. However, you might consider this as merely groundwork – once you feel you are familiar with how to apply formal devices to your readings, you might want to consider exploring other critical approaches too, even those that purport that a literary text does not necessarily achieve harmony and balance.

From 10 to 14 points

Reader-Response criticism seems to appeal to you most. If you are already familiar with Wolfgang Iser's work, you might also want to explore Stanley Fish's approach, now termed **Reader-Oriented Criticism**. The latter considers a literary narrative not only as a reflection of a reader's personal emotional needs, but also as the expression of larger social groups that he calls "interpretative communities." This approach is an interesting tool, but might also be limiting and centered too much on a reader's subjectivity (look up works by David Bleich or Norman Holland.) Consider using it in conjunction with other critical approaches.

From 15 to 21 points

You are very open minded, and will probably never lose face during an oral exam – you appear interested in close readings, but do not merely consider a literary work as a self-referential object. Mr. or Ms. Chameleon, your Zelig-like qualities and curiosity should allow you to enjoy literary studies thoroughly. Make sure however that your reading practices, by roaming so wide, do not border on superficiality.

More than 22 points

You appear more interested in contemporary modes of analysis. Without giving up on such fruitful interests, why not brush up on traditional approaches to literature, too? They can provide you with some sturdy foundations.

Sources:

For more information on **New Criticism** (mainly an American export), **Formalist** and **Reader Response criticism** approaches, you can start out by exploring some of the following sources:

Murfin, Ross, and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Boston: Bedford Books. 1997. (Good summaries and practical examples from this edition can also be found online at: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/virtualit/poetry/critical.html>)

Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

Quiz in the next NOTED issue:

Part Two - New Historicism, Structuralism and Post-Structuralism

Overcoming Shyness

by Lydia Sonderegger

Dear fellow students,

When I was very young, I was extremely shy and awkward. For many years, speaking in public seemed as impossible as catching a star. This all changed when my colleagues delegated me to defend a project in front of a panel of politicians. Perhaps it is because this particular project meant so much to us that the miracle happened – anyhow, when I started speaking, I suddenly realized that I was actually ENJOYING it!

As you may have guessed, this story has direct relevance to the present: from what I have noticed so far, you all have brilliant ideas, strong arguments and clever insights, but some of you are too modest to REVEAL them in class.

Please do not let Grammar, Pronunciation or inner censorship inhibit your spontaneity! Nobody will laugh at you if you make mistakes: we all learn by trial and error. Indeed, maybe this is what studying literature is all about – acknowledging that we shall never reach perfection and realising that what really matters, in the end, is that we voice our sensitivity and share it with other human beings until we discover the ultimate truth: "*...que ce qui nous sépare / n'est que l'encadrement du miroir*"¹.

With my very best wishes,

Lydia Sonderegger

¹ These lines are part of a beautiful poem in Oria's *L'Evangile de la Colombe*.

Chains

Anonymous

The first link is the wedding band
Soon followed by each tiny hand
And those lifelong umbilical cords
Which bind a mother to her wards.
Long years spent at the kitchen sink
Add weary shackle upon link.
Romantic love died long ago;
Slave bonds are all that's left to show.
Her husband and in-laws together
Unseeing reinforce the tether.
Career escape may keep her sane
Yet really duplicates her chain.
Her presence everywhere is sought
And for herself there is no thought.
Youth lost, she hopes old age is better
Till ill-health adds the final fetter.
And as they lower her into the ground
She screams out with a noiseless sound:
Free me from these chains!

28.11.06



**"Sh-- happens, Jane":
Report of Police Investigation into Premier League Bout,**

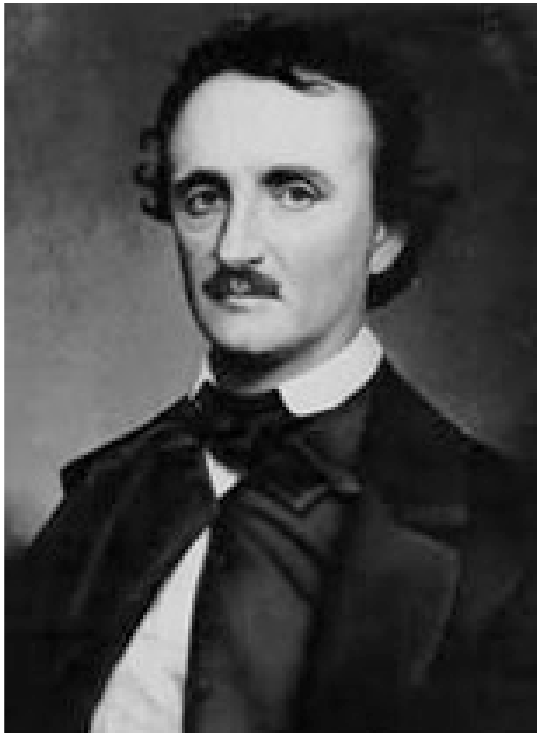
Poe vs. *Austen*

by Alan Sternberg

DATE AND LOCATION:
23 May 2006, Phil. 017

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

The Premier League Referee, Mme. Fehlbaum, wasn't there. That was a problem. She wears red skirts and fluorescent hats -- she's big on decorum and dignity and so on -- and literary bouts need dignity because otherwise certain innate urges get out of control. If she wasn't in London shopping for the spring fashions or whatever she was doing, this whole thing probably wouldn't have happened. Mr. Sternberg was the replacement referee. He's got about as much dignity as a polecat.



Also, the coaching staffs were. . . I mean, just look at the. . . Mr. Poe was coached by Zourdos, Michniewski, Garcia Duran, Quintero & Cima, Esq., "Violence and Perversion Our Specialty, in Business since 2006." Miss Austen had Cortes, Corbaz & Pont, Lady Literary Consultants. These consulting firms have been recruiting lit students -- I looked into it -- and you think, well, fine, no problem there, a bunch of sissies. . . their idea of excitement is if the heroine shows a little ankle. But apparently these kids have been spending too much time reading books and not enough time doing the boy-girl stuff that *normal* college kids do. They got repressed urges, and when kids like that got repressed urges, they don't have a lot of principles controlling them. Zourdos, Michniewski *et al* were bringing implements of destruction into the room before the fight started. You could tell there was going to be trouble.

SKIRMISH DURING INTRODUCTIONS IN CENTER OF RING:

Austen: Mr. Poe, emotionally you are about eight years old. Isn't it time you grew up? Don't you think there are more important things in life than your inner feelings and obsessions? Don't you or your characters have any self-control?

Poe: F--- you, Jane.

ROUND ONE

Poe: Have you re-read your stories, Jane? Who's really eight years old? You're living in a *pink world*. Do you think people like Fanny and Edmund (editor's note: see *Mansfield Park*, all 450 endless pages) exist in real life? What I write about is representative of behavior that really exists. People kill each other, Jane. Shit happens. Do you really think people take 300 pages to find out they should be happy and live together in a beautiful house with a garden? If you need sensation, call me. I won't need 300 pages to give you a thrill you've never experienced.

Austen: Pray, kind sir, perhaps you should choose to do something important and desist with these perverse imaginings and horrendous experimentations and find a lady to marry. Also a brand new barouche to buy. God save the cats. May I be so bold as to suggest that it's better to be happy after 300 pages than to be dead after 20 pages? I hope you're remembering to take your medication.

ROUND TWO

Austen: Where do you get your Satanic inspiration? From the bottom of a bottle? Oh, begging your pardon, you pervert -- is it from the mental hospital where you're a regular client, in fact their most illustrious customer?

Poe: Her sentences are always long.

Austen: It seems to me your feelings kill your thinking. Open a window and look out at society for a change. How would it

be if everybody was as alcohol-addicted as you are? If people acted as you wish they would, fighting and killing each other? But sorry -- maybe you're too drunk to see.

(Pause while Austen adjusts her hoop skirts.)

Stop masturbating, you silly boy. What do you know about love? You'd rather strangle or entomb a girl than make love to her. Have you ever had a female character you didn't kill with an axe?

Poe (after a moment's reflection): What's wrong with that?

Austen: You criticize Fanny Price, but I think you'd like to go out with her. Oh, did you wet yourself again? It was just a nightmare, Edgar. Wake up.

Poe: I'd rather be dead at 20, after a life full of real emotion and experience, than live until 80 being emotionally frustrated.

(Referee deducts 5 points for inaccuracy; Austen died at 42.)

Poe: You're so emotionally stunted, Jane, that you should have asked the husband you never had to wall you up. Maybe in a cellar with rats. You could try my medications to see if you write any better, but I doubt it would help. You call me perverse, but who wrote a book where two cousins get married to each other? Did you ever hear of incest, Jane?

(Cortes, Corbaz & Pont, Lady Literary Consultants, raise an objection on grounds of hypocrisy, pointing out that Poe married his 13-year-old cousin. Referee deducts 5 further points. Austen is now ahead on the referee's scorecard, but she has a nasty cut over her right eye.)

Poe (continuing): Hear that annoying noise? I'm sharpening my knives.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY BETWEEN ROUNDS



Zourdos, Michniewski, *et al* to Austen: We get bored just looking at you.

AUSTEN IS LATE ANSWERING THE BELL FOR ROUND 3

Zourdos, Michniewski, *et al.*: Hurry up, Jane.

Austen: I can't. I'm writing 300 pages.

ROUND THREE

Poe: My schizophrenia has gotten worse since I met you! There you go again -- talking and talking! That's enough! Calamity Jane, I'm glad your life is coming to an end. (Sound of Poe pulling the cord on a chain saw. It doesn't start.) Look into the future and see how my perverse kingdom has spread all around the world: Hannibal Lecter, serial killers. . . How many students chose my "Black Cat" over your endless *Mansfield Park* to write their exams on? How many of them even finished your book, Jane?

Austen: Stop acting like a spoiled brat and be a real man. Don't hide behind your horrible characters. Admit you have a serious psychiatric disorder and *get help*. I will be more than happy to give you a free consultation as long as we stay in separate rooms and you wear a straightjacket. You can't spend your entire life throwing temper tantrums. There's such a thing as civilization, you mentally stunted little twerp. Also maturity. *Get some*.

POE SUCCEEDS IN STARTING CHAIN SAW, WINS IN THIRD ROUND BY DECAPITATION.

REMARK BY REFEREE: Not a fair fight. It doesn't pay to be a lady.

AFTERMATH: Poe peeks up Austen's skirt. He's always wondered about the difference between men and women. He's always wondered what he was supposed to *do* with his 13-year-old cousin. They strangled cats together, but apparently there's more to married life than that.

Poe is taken into custody. He insists he is sane; he says that if everyone will just leave him alone, he'll write a story demonstrating that his actions were perfectly reasonable. This conflicts with the legal strategy of Zourdos, Michniewski, Garcia Duran, Quintero & Cima, Esq., who are planning to claim he is innocent of murder by reason of insanity.

The Lady Literary Consultants, mopping up the blood, remark sadly that Austen will never again write 300 pages.

PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENT OF THE EVENING: Whither society?

FURTHER REMARK BY REFEREE:

I couldn't help noticing that the good little girls worked for Austen and the ones with the tattoos chose Poe.



Dialogue is taken from a joint Analysis of Text session of the classes of Mrs Fehlbaum and Mr Sternberg, edited and slightly enhanced for context by the replacement referee.

Editor's Note

Mrs Fehlbaum would like to clarify that she wasn't swanning around London, but on a study trip to Stratford with students of Shakespeare englobing no shopping at all!

Quoted for Noted

by Kareen Klein

For there is nothing either good or bad
but thinking makes it so.

Shakespeare
Hamlet, F II.ii.249-250

- ✎ ✎ -

Ships are safe in harbour. But they
were never meant to stay there.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

I myself have never been able to find
out what feminism is; I only know that
people call me a feminist whenever I
express sentiments that differentiate
me from a doormat or a prostitute.

Rebecca West, 1913

- ✎ ✎ -

If you're looking for sympathy, look
between shit and syphilis in the
dictionary.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

Love - another one of those problems
that Marx didn't solve.

Jean Anouilh

- ✎ ✎ -

When the wind of change blows, some
build walls, and others build windmills.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

Women trust men too little in general
and too much in particular.

Flaubert

- ✎ ✎ -

A classic is something that everyone
wants to have read and nobody wants
to read.

Mark Twain

"The Disappearance of Literature"

You have to realize that some days
you're the statue and some days you're
the pigeon.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

Le je ne sais quoi de la littérature est le
sine qua non de la critique.

Ross Chambers

- ✎ ✎ -

When your dreams turn to dust, vacuum.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

Unfortunate family, those Hamlets.

Anonymous Dublin theatregoer

- ✎ ✎ -

Ideas don't stay in some minds very
long because they don't like solitary
confinement.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

It is not everyone's business to let
himself be convinced.

Alexander Schmidt

- ✎ ✎ -

If you're not living on the edge, you're
taking too much space.

Anonymous

- ✎ ✎ -

I often quote myself; it adds spice to my
conversation.

George Bernard Shaw

- ✎ ✎ -

You never know what is enough unless
you know what is more than enough.

Blake

Reactions to *Barbe à Papa's Shakes-Sheared!*

Sophie Cadène

It was a pleasure to be part of the audience at the English Department Theatre Group's performance of *Shakes-sheared!* last July. I would like to congratulate all those involved in the creation of this entertaining performance.

I was first amazed by the stage design. It was driven by a strong "Zen" - by which I mean expressive of the essential - sense of aesthetic and beauty. This look was achieved via the lighting and colors used, the overall simplicity of the design and the choice of objects and their innovative re-appropriation (remember the trees?!). I particularly liked the mobility of the moon-shaped table (different positions for different usages or meanings).

I was surprised by my own English (where had it all gone?) until I realized that I was lacking some Shakespearean references (numerous and as precise as they were hijacked, thus hard to understand for a non-initiated reader). Thanks to the good logistics, I had two leaflets which aided my comprehension of the play's plot.



I think that the play would be of interest to a large English speaking public, such as ETI students (*École de Traduction et d'Interprétation*), who are mostly Anglophiles. I think they would be glad to be informed about the next performance of *Barbe à Papa*.

It was a great pleasure to witness a brand-new theatre group emerge (I was myself part of a theatre group at the English Department a few years ago). Let me wish you GOOD LUCK for your next rehearsals and plays!



Michael Rösli

Shakes-Sheared! was indeed an intense experience. The elaborate lighting and the clever, highly efficient, and multifunctional props immediately plunged the spectator into another universe. Although the various and smart connections between different works by Shakespeare sometimes pushed my poor contemporary neurons to the limit, I was completely immersed in the enthusiasm of the actors and creators of the play and wished I could have been a fly on the wall to witness their passionate discussions, brainstorming sessions and experiments at the rehearsals!





Lydia Sonderegger

I know some of the actors, so maybe I'm not being very objective, but each and every member of the company deserves high praise: even the non-native speakers had learned their lines to perfection and managed the difficult Shakespearean tongue beautifully.



Erzsi Kukorelly

Having spent the previous day making like potatoes on my mum's couch (the 9th of July was a red-letter day for spectator *sportifs*: Federer vs. Nadal in the Wimbledon final, and that heart-wrenching *coup de boule* later in the evening) it was with some desire for cultural redress that I dragged my (extended) family, minus spouse, along to get a bit of Shakespeare. Son and daughter (aged 11 and 13 respectively), mother and sister (ages not to be revealed in the media, stupid!) and I

dutifully trooped along to Uni Mail to see *Shakes-sheared!*. Of course, Uni Mail being Uni Mail, we got lost in the utterly illogical room numbering scheme, but made it to our destination with a bit of time to spare. I'm happy to say, nobody fell asleep, not even my old mum, who is rather prone to dropping off in mid-evening when in dark warm spaces such as theatres (but perhaps not in bum-numbing auditoria?). The production was a sampling of Shakespeare's best, strung along a rather meandering story line involving sexuality questioning and vicious prima-donnas, all set against a backdrop of show-biz machinations (*star-ac* meets *Texas Chainsaw Massacre?*). On the whole, it was quite difficult to follow, and the transition from Bard to *Barbe (à Papa)* was not always smooth. Having said this, there were some excellent performances and a smattering of riotous moments. I particularly liked Rachel Nisbet's horripilant Lady M, and Patrick Riley's cringe-worthy yellow-stockinged *habilleur*. Another touch that had me laughing into my programme was the sound-track: a sort of early Depeche Mode, executed on what sounded convincingly like a Hammond Organ. Outrageous!

We had a pleasant evening, and young Osric was duly impressed. It may have been that not knowing Shakespeare actually enhanced appreciation of the piece, given that my son's ignorance meant that he did not have to keep trying guess 'whose line is it anyway?'



Theatre on the Edge: *Barbe à Papa* at Edinburgh's Fringe Festival

by Sarah-Jane Moloney

In the last issue of *NOTED*, I told you that *Barbe à Papa*, the theatre group of the English Department, would be taking its production to the Edinburgh Fringe – the biggest English-speaking arts festival in the world! Our show, entitled *Shakes-Sheared!*, was a collage of several Shakespeare plays, transposed into a contemporary music-industry context. It was created by Rachel Hosein Nisbet, the founder of *Barbe à Papa*. This is how our trip turned out...



You might remember this summer's terrorist threats – the reason you can't take liquids on board airplanes anymore. Well, these occurred the day before our scheduled departure for Edinburgh! Mild panic ensued. We were especially worried about our main prop – a very big crescent-shaped table, entirely hand-crafted, impossible to replace and indispensable to our production! However, the person in charge of checking our baggage didn't seem to think the table was a bomb, so we were able to board the plane, heaving an enormous sigh of relief.

We landed in Newcastle, where the most fantastic minibus ever was waiting for us. On our way to Glasgow, where we would be staying, we managed to squeeze in a few Scottish sights. Gretna Green, for example, on the border of England and Scotland, was where young English couples would go to marry against their parents' wishes (Jane Austen mentions it in *Pride and Prejudice*!).

The next two days were a whirl of technical rehearsals at the venue and taking in other shows at the Fringe – an outdoor production of *Cymbeline* in the Royal Botanical Gardens, tap-dancing Argentine twins, etc.

The morning of our first performance was spent handing out flyers, hanging up posters and putting on mini-performances on the street to attract potential viewers. The atmosphere was amazing – Edinburgh was buzzing and heaving! Actors parading through the town in outrageous costumes, street performers on every corner, flyers everywhere, posters constantly being put up and covered by others five seconds later, music, shouts, laughter... The energy was infectious and we couldn't wait to start!





Finally, the evening of August 14th arrived, and with it came stage fright. We had got wind that a critic from the *Scotsman*, Scotland's leading newspaper, would be attending the show! The nervousness backstage was palpable, but we managed to give a good first performance – minus a few technical glitches. To our surprise, however, the review that appeared in the *Scotsman* two days later was, shall we say, not very flattering. Naturally, we were disappointed, and it was reflected in our performance that night. Luckily, Rachel called a meeting the very next day to discuss what had happened so far. We decided that, although we were slightly disappointed with the review, we should not let it get in the way of our performance. Our duty lay towards the audience!

We entered into our remaining performances with renewed zeal. Our enthusiasm paid off, for we were rewarded with a full house on the last night! The audience was mostly made up of teenagers, and they must have been studying the Shakespeare texts in class because they laughed their heads off at all the right moments – and even in places we didn't expect! When our play was over, they gave us a standing ovation. It was the best way that our string of performances could have ended, and the whole group was on a high.

We spent the remainder of our stay taking in shows in Edinburgh and visiting Scotland in the minibus – we even went swimming in a freezing cold river in our underwear!

However, it was soon time to bid goodbye to Scotland and its cities, people, lochs, and Fringe...

This experience was unforgettable and eye-opening for all of us in *Barbe à Papa*. We feel truly privileged to have been able to embark on this project with the support of the English Department. We urge you, if you have the opportunity, to take part in the Fringe Festival someday – as actors, viewers, or both!



P.S. Our founder and director, Rachel Hosein Nisbet, is currently doing a Masters course in stage writing at the Central School for Speech and Drama in London. Her friend and theatre professional, Jessica Mistovski, has agreed to take over the running of the group, much to our excitement! You will find an interview with her on the next page.

Barbe à Papa is always open to new members, so please feel free to come along to one of our sessions, even if you only want to look! We meet every **Friday** afternoon, from **2 to 4 pm**, at the **salle de danse (S140)** in **UniMail** (sous-sol).

Interview with Jessica Mistovski, the New Head of *Barbe à Papa*

by Sarah-Jane Moloney



1. First, where are you from?

I was born in London and blessed with half Swiss nationality. I spent the majority of my life in London, amongst the hustle and bustle of the city.

2. When did you first realise that you wanted to be a part of the theatre world?

Theatre has always been apparent in my life from birth. At 12 months, 6 years, 11 years old ... my dramatic nature was already bubbling up inside me and at the age of 12 I was auditioned and accepted to sing opera in Sir and Dr. Johnathon Miller's production of *Carmen* in London's largest theatre – The London Coliseum (where I continued acting till age 18). From this moment onwards I was truly star struck and there was absolutely no chance of looking into another profession ...

3. Tell me about your experience in theatre (formation, schools, troupes that you have been in/are directing, etc...)

I am lucky enough to have led a very eclectic theatrical career. I started with opera and ended with the Fringe! I trained in London's Brit School for Performing Arts followed by the acclaimed drama school Rose Bruford where I trained on a three-year BA Honours Degree in European Theatre. During this sought-after degree I was sent on a placement to Barcelona for 3 months which opened my eyes to the beauty and exciting theatre going on in Europe. I started to feel intrigued by theatre that crosses linguistic barriers. The idea of making theatre visual and sensorial took my fancy and I started to explore this avenue as a "practitioner." Now, I realise that all this must sound pretentious but it is purely "London Theatre Language" that I'm finding hard to shrug off! So, after a mini-panic about what I was going to do with the rest of my life after graduating I co-founded my own theatre company – Usanu Theatre (www.usanu.co.uk) with a fellow graduate. We share the same principles but different interests within theatre and so have a healthy artistic balance and relationship where we can bounce off each other's creativity. After concentrating intensely on devising¹ as a base for theatre I decided to turn my interest to directing. I directed a sold-out show called "Dreams in a Pink Glass" at three London Theatres earlier this year and am currently bringing a new performance party piece, "Sourires Grillés," or "Toasted Smiles," to central Geneva in December. I am also teaching Theatre at two private schools in Geneva and have previously taught at the École Internationale.

¹ For more information on 'devising,' see: <http://devised.hku.nl/handbook.php>

4. How did you end up in Geneva?

I was invited by Simply Theatre Company to be based in Geneva for some months and be in charge of their Theatre Academy, teaching all their students for a term. I introduced my own methods and techniques, as I prepared all classes independently. After the term ended I'd fallen in love with Geneva and decided to give my Swiss roots a chance to flourish...

5. How do you find cultural life in Geneva (especially theatre) compared to where you have lived before?

This is a tricky question. London is obviously a capital for creativity, with culture and the arts in a 360-degree sphere around you. Geneva does have an interesting and diverse culture, both historically and artistically, which has inspired me enormously. However, one key reason for resting in Geneva is that I believe Switzerland has a long way to go to catch up with the modern theatre scene and I hope to help it progress as there is a gap worth exploring.

6. Any favourite playwrights? Current? Why?

Umm ... Beckett, Sarah Kane, Cocteau ... to be honest I am much more into devised theatre where the creativity and text comes somewhat from the actors... I can get extremely inspired by playwrights but I'll get back to you on that one... However, practitioners are a totally different matter!

7. What is your best experience/favourite memory (in theatre) up to now?

Favourite memory? Ooo! So many. Probably Usanu Theatre's first production, *The Poor Room*, as it was our first challenge as a company. We arranged, devised, directed... did everything ourselves, gaining a sold-out show which was a hugely fulfilling and rewarding process. We chose a steam museum to do our show site-specifically, which added an extra dimension to our work which proved fascinating.

8. How did you meet Rachel Nisbet?

It was a surreal meeting. Rachel came to watch a production I was helping with at Les Salons Theatre and we bumped into one another after she'd heard about Usanu Theatre. We gelled immediately and started bouncing off creative theatrical ideas together, resulting in a healthy friendship and theatrical partnership; resulting in my connection with *Barbe à Papa*.

9. You came to one of *Barbe à Papa*'s rehearsals last year to give us advice.

What was your first impression of the group, and what did you think of our end-of-year production *Shakes-Sheared!* ?

Yes, I thoroughly enjoyed being an outside eye for *Barbe à Papa*. Watching their rehearsal made me realise what a talented group they were and how promising their future looked. Their performance was detailed and original, keeping me thoroughly entertained and intrigued.

10. What is your plan for *Barbe à Papa* this year? In which direction would you like to go?

I am very excited to be working with the company and being part of this strong ensemble. I plan to introduce various Practitioners' methodologies and techniques, opening up the company's experience and knowledge of European Theatre, whilst encouraging the voice and body to work as one. I propose doing a selection of performances within the year offering new people the chance to join and bringing life, new energies and ideas into the company. This year will be packed with creativity and the company members will have a strong collaborative and creative input into the performances and rehearsals. We will be working on new scripts, creative writing, mime, visual and inspirational stimuli to be a catalyst to the performers.

The Taming of the Shrew

in the Courtyard of the Château de Prangins, on June 15th 2006
by Kareen Klein

The Taming of the Shrew is a play which bears many dangers in it, in our days. From a strictly feminist point of view, there are two main decisions to be made in a production. Will the performed play be *The Taming of a Shrew*, or *The Taming of the Shrew*? The latter is the Folio (F) version, the former the Quarto version (Q). Q picks the framing device of Sly up at the end, F doesn't. If we see Sly wake up at the end, and see him announce triumphantly that he now knows "how to tame a shrew" (Conclusion 16)², then we can suppose that the play we have seen was "no more yielding but a dream" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Epilogue 6). As it was, the TNT Theatre Britain/American Drama Group of Europe co-production performed *A Shrew* and used this opportunity to make Sly's wife appear at the end. As soon as he had announced his intention of taming her, she flung him on her back, and carried him off, his legs wildly kicking over her shoulder, just as Petrucchio had earlier done with Katherine. (This was possible because his wife was played by a male actor, only grossly disguised as a woman, as was the widow that Hortensio marries at the end of the play.)



The company thus successfully fulfilled my expectations concerning the first difficult decision. But I must say that after the interval, I feared for Katherine. She was driven to tears by her newly wed husband's cruelty, with methods that a member of the audience compared to Guantanamo... Although that association

did not occur to me, I was afraid that they were going to play it "straight".



This brings me to the second difficult decision: it concerns Katherine's speech at the end of the play. When she tells Bianca and the Widow to "place [their] hands below [their] husband's foot" (V.ii.182) – is she speaking in earnest, or with more or less strong ironic undertones? I was not quite sure which was the case, to be honest, though I tended to the latter, as my neighbour did. (My thanks to her by the way, for putting up with my non-stop laughter through the whole play.) Yet another member of the audience did not see any irony in the last important speech.

What was however clearly in favour of a modern production was the fact that although Katherine put her hand under Petrucchio's foot, he did not step on it, but instead stooped down to catch her hand and draw her into a dance. In contrast, Bianca's husband, Lucentio, and the Widow's husband, Hortensio, did quite literally stamp on their wives' hands when these reluctantly followed Katherine's example.

In addition to this small but significant proof of Petrucchio's good intentions, I had the feeling that there was an underlying sexual tension between the two, and this from the very beginning (although during the "Guantanamo procedures" it vanished ...). This was especially apparent when Petrucchio asked Katherine to kiss him in public (the public was the audience, as a (male) member of the audience was the young maiden/old man who is discussed in the sun-and-moon-speech). After some hesitation, she flung him back in what is

² Quotes from the *Oxford Complete Works* (First edition), which quote Q's additional passages separately.

generally described as a lingering kiss, switching gendered stereotypes, and adopting Humphrey Bogart behaviour, and he seemed quite stunned by the kiss.

It also appeared to me that Katherine saw all of Petrucchio's sun-moon, maid-old man, come when you're called, etc. business as a game, a game which she happily accepted once she had learned the rules, playing along with much enthusiasm and fun, so that the two shared a kind of complicity.

Having got the important business out of the way, I can now tell you a little bit more about the performance in general. I can highly recommend this "Shakespeare in a château" experience to anyone, especially if the weather plays along, as it did every time I've been there (touch wood). This is the first time I've seen the group do a comedy, the preceding plays belonging to the tragic genre (*Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear*). They handled the comic genre marvellously, using elements of the Comedia dell'Arte (including stock characters and masks) and quite a bit of slapstick. (At least one member of the audience was slightly offended by this, and I started the second half of the play with a somewhat guilty conscience, for having whooped thoughtlessly at the onstage clowning beforehand, not considering that my intellect might have been challenged rather less than it should have been. But I quickly pushed those thoughts back to the right half of my brain and refused to let anyone spoil the fun.) The production also featured a few pantomimes, such as a battle at sea (much to the amusement of the audience), accompanied by a *capella* singing and resulting in Petrucchio's arrival to Padua, "to wive it wealthily" (I.ii.74), and a mimed horse, complete with (human-made) sound effects.

The cast of this drama group usually consists of few actors, six in this case (two women, four men), so there is much doubling going on, which was, however, well handled in this case. For example, the actress who took on Bianca's part also played the Hostess in the beginning and one of Petrucchio's servants. For each character, she adopted an entirely different posture, walk, attitude and voice, not to mention costume.

I must say, that I was somewhat shocked by a drunk English football fan who was running, or rather stumbling through the crowd before the play actually started, singing loudly – a known tune which probably included the word "England", but sounded to me like "It's

great to be ignorant, it's greeeeaaat to be ignorant ...", and sporting a Beckham shirt. He unfortunately did not stop when the play started and I was waiting for whatever authority to silence him. I was all the more shocked, when he approached the stage, and the penny only dropped when he jumped onto it. Yours truly, Christopher Sly. The first few lines were appropriately played in modern English, and only when Sly broke a glass did they slip into the Shakespearean text. Sly also doubled as Petrucchio, a doubling I had actually expected, knowing the restricted number of actors usually present in the group.

The costumes for the framing device were contemporary, and those of the actual play more or less traditional, kept simple, yet colourful. The set was extremely simple (just the Shakespearean way I prefer it), a three-part structure with windows and attachable curtains, which could represent a wall, a church, a tower or a chamber. The sun-and-moon speech was set in a gondola, and Petrucchio would stop the boat whenever there was disagreement from the seat opposite him.

A trademark for the TNT Theatre Britain / American Drama Group of Europe is their a capella singing and humming. The pantomimes are usually underlined by vocals, and the play also featured a few songs in Italian, as well as live piano music.

After the final applause, the senior actor asked the audience: "If you liked the show, please tell your friends, if you hated it please tell your enemies." I'm telling my friends.



Don't miss the next production!

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury, 1-3
February 2007, Théâtre Pitoëff

See www.howardprod.ch for more information.

The Bouncy Castle Hamlet **at the Edinburgh Fringe (15 August 2006)** by Kareen Klein



The whole of *Hamlet* performed on a bouncy castle – sounds like a fun idea. It is, actually. Everyone moves in a, well, bouncy manner. All props and scenery are necessarily made of plastic (for example the throne was an inflatable pool-armchair), fights include somersaults, and the occasions when actors fall to their knees are not always planned.

The whole of *Hamlet* is something of an exaggeration, and this for any performance of the play (with the possible exception of Branagh's film version, but let's not go into details), yet for this performance it quite clearly was exaggerated, since Hamlet was unable to get one monologue right. Nobody really minded though, because he took his missing lines and subsequent improvisations quite light-heartedly, and so the audience laughed with him when he embarked on his third attempt at "To be or not to be". The audience were again amused when he interpolated while enumerating his faults to Ophelia: "I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious – I got the 'To be or not to be'-speech wrong, etc." When it came to the "How all occasions do inform against me" speech, he simply said: "I never actually learned this speech." We wondered whether all of this was planned, but it didn't seem to be. Too much went wrong, and the actors seemed quite surprised and were having way too much fun with all the hiccups.

Along with most of the soliloquies, the occasional prop also went missing. To take another example from the nunnery sequence, Ophelia faced the prince with empty hands as she said: "My Lord, I have remembrances of yours / That I have longed long to redeliver, / I pray receive them – later", before adding, with a shrug: "My father has them."

Ophelia's father had an ingenious prop. Since Polonius constantly seems to spy on everyone, he had his very own portable arras with him in this production. Each of his entrances saw him concealed behind it, scaring the others upon his entry with a "Boo!"

The particular note that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (who doubled as Horatio and Laertes) brought to this production was that while the King seemed to have a certain dislike for Guildenstern, Hamlet clearly tried to avoid Rosencrantz – or was it the other way around? Either way, I found this a simple and effective way of differentiating the King from Hamlet.

The Ghost was represented by a plastic doll, which popped up behind the castle (at times also when uncalled for) in order to feed Hamlet some lines or to inform him that they were running overtime and that the graveyard scene would, unfortunately, have to be skipped.

So, this bouncy (in several respects) production came to its end, presenting the last scene in the usual hubbub, with: Hamlet and Laertes trying to remain on their feet during the duel; the King trying to escape over the bouncy castle's walls; the actress who had played Ophelia (now playing the role of a servant) trying not to laugh; Hamlet trying to remember his lines; and Horatio trying to make his final speech heard over Hamlet's prolonged death sounds ("O, o, o, o" is, after all, scripted in the Folio), before finally putting his hand over Hamlet's mouth to ensure that the rest really was silence. The audience did not have to *try* to enjoy themselves: they clearly did so without any great effort.

Anglophone Geneva: Theatre Calendar for Spring Season 2007

by Karen Klein

Date(s)	Title	Author	Company
09.01.	<i>Address Unknown</i>	Katherine Kressmann Taylor	GEDS
23.01.	<i>Crimes of the Heart</i>	Beth Henley	GEDS
24.01.-10.02.	Sleuth	Anthony Shaffer	Simply Theatre
01.02.-03.02.	Fahrenheit 451	Ray Bradbury	Howard Productions
06.02.	<i>The Bald Soprano and The Lesson</i>	Eugène Ionesco	GEDS
20.02.	<i>Flow my Tears, the Policeman</i>	Linda Hartinian Said	GEDS
06.03.	<i>Look Back in Anger</i>	John Osborne	GEDS
13.03.-17.03.	Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)	Ann-Marie MacDonald	GEDS
20.03.	<i>Equus</i>	Peter Shaffer	GEDS
30.03.-31.03.	[To be announced]		EDGE
03.04.	<i>The Skin Game</i>	John Galsworthy	GEDS
17.04.	<i>Translations</i>	Brian Friel	GEDS
15.05.	<i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i>	Muriel Spark	EDGE
29.05.-10.06.	The Twits	Roald Dahl	Simply Theatre
05.06.	<i>Busy Day</i>	Fanny Burney	GEDS
10.06.	<i>Blithe Spirit</i> (at the Château de Prangins)	Noël Coward	GEDS
14.06.-16.06.	A Midsummer Night's Dream	William Shakespeare	Howard Productions
19.06.	<i>Agadir</i>	David Lewis	GEDS

Full productions are in **bold** type, playreadings in *italic*.

For venues, times etc. see the following websites:

The Geneva English Drama Society (GEDS): ...www.geds.ch

Howard Productions.....www.howardprod.ch

Simply Theatre.....www.simplytheatre.com

These links are also on our departmental website under > News & Links.

NOTED's Favourite Novel

by Emma Depledge

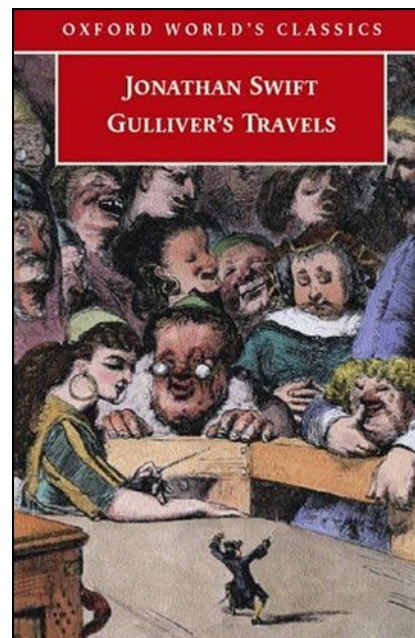
In 2003, the BBC launched a campaign to find the British nation's favourite novel of all time. The great success of the Beeb's campaign, which saw young and old scrambling to cast their votes by email, SMS, snail-mail, even carrier pigeon (well, maybe), inspired me to launch a similar search here at the English Department. Who better to ask (quoth I) than those who dedicate their time and energy to the study of literature? I fully expect impassioned responses from the teaching staff, but would like to stress my great desire to hear which novels you, the students, the backbone of this department, are passionate about. Which novel, in any language, should be saved when all else are cast aside? Which novel(s) make you laugh, cry, feel alive? I will be placing a voting box by the notice board of the English Department so that those of you who want to vote anonymously may do so. The editors here at *NOTED* also welcome arguments (the more animated the better) and reviews in favour of your favourite novel(s). To kick-start the campaign, Cornelia Togeia and I have decided to tell you about our own favourite novels. I, being egotistical, have provided you with my personal "top ten."

Emma's Top Ten:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> | by Jonathan Swift |
| 2. <i>Jane Eyre</i> | by Charlotte Brontë |
| 3. <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> | by George Orwell |
| 4. <i>Anna Karenina</i> | by Leo Tolstoy |
| 5. <i>Wuthering Heights</i> | by Emily Brontë |
| 6. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> | by Harper Lee |
| 7. <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> | by Jane Austen |
| 8. <i>Great Expectations</i> | by Charles Dickens |
| 9. <i>Brave New World</i> | by Aldous Huxley |
| 10. <i>Frankenstein</i> | by Mary Shelley |

Gulliver's Travels

by Emma Depledge



One book which I simply cannot tire of is Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Strictly speaking, *Gulliver's Travels* is not a 'novel' as it contains events which are too fantastical to be considered 'realistic'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that a novel is 'a long fictional prose narrative, usually filling one or more volumes and typically representing character and action with some degree of realism and complexity'. It is perhaps more accurate to label *Gulliver's Travels* as a 'parody on a traveller's tale' as it is presented as a genuine account of a traveller's adventure to different lands and is narrated by a man who claims to be 'captain Lemuel Gulliver'. I will, however, allow myself to include this wonderful book in my top ten 'novels' as its astonishing events are narrated with such circumstantial detail that they often appear perfectly plausible.

Many of you will have encountered Gulliver's travels to Lilliput, where the inhabitants are only five or six inches tall, and Brobdingnag, where they are a whopping sixty or seventy feet tall, in childhood. Adaptations aimed at children usually omit Gulliver's additional journeys to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib, and Japan along with his voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms. As a child I both knew and loved to read of Gulliver's adventures but it wasn't until I returned to the book as an undergraduate that I began to fully appreciate the book's rather unique offerings. *Gulliver's Travels* is not simply a fantastic tale of mesmerising adventures, it is also full of profound reflections on human life, scarily accurate predictions about the future (our present), insights into 18th century politics and side-splitting satire.

One of the greatest features of this book is its comment on human nature. Gulliver's travels to different lands enable us to view humanity from four very different points of view. From the perspective of a giant, mankind's arguments, such as the wars between the small and Big-endians over the way in which they break their eggs, appear ridiculously small and petty; from the perspective of one who is comparably smaller in stature, human kind appears huge and grotesque; from that of common sense, Man's desire for scientific advancement and his misapplication of reason appear both

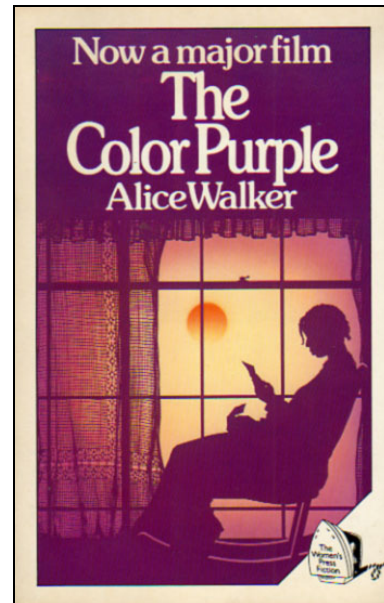
comical and wicked; and from the point of view of rational animals, Man appears to be no more than a base beast. Moving from land to land, from utopia to dystopia and even mock-utopia, *Gulliver's Travels* remains both entertaining and thought-provoking throughout.

In its satirical discussion (most likely aimed at the research of the real Royal Society) of the discoveries and inventions of the 'Academy of Lagado', *Gulliver's Travels*, as the editor of the Oxford World's Classics edition correctly points out, has 'as much appeal for our period as [it] had for the eighteenth century' (x). Here we find discussion of satellites whose movements bear striking similarity with discoveries made in the late 1870s and thinking machines which clearly resemble early prototypes of the computer. Elsewhere in the book we find more depressingly accurate foresight, such as the Laputian technology capable of depriving Balnibarbi of 'the Benefit of the Sun and the Rain', afflicting its inhabitants with 'Dearth and Diseases' (161). It is not difficult to draw links between such inventions and current fears about nuclear and biological warfare. Equally, the book's discussion of the Struldbrugs' desire to prolong the lives of those who are no longer able to enjoy life is a moral issue which our own age's medical advances make extremely topical, speaking to controversial debates about euthanasia. →

Having told you something of the wonders of this book, I would have to say that, if forced to sum *Gulliver's Travels* up in one word alone, that word would have to be 'shit'. 'Shit?' I hear you ask. I am sure it must sound odd to hear me use such an adjective to describe my favourite book of all time but this really is a rather accurate description of the book's content. Whether enormous or tiny, in the land of Lilliput, Laputa or that of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver always returns to the same topic...excrement! In fact, during his time in Lilliput, the narrator dedicates a whole paragraph to telling us how he 'had been for some Hours extremely pressed by the Necessities of Nature; which was no Wonder, it being almost two Days since [he] had last disburthened [him]self' and of how the tiny inhabitants used wheel-barrows to carry off his 'offensive matter' (15). This is just one of the many features of the narrator's hilarious love for detail. Likewise, when describing the Yahoos (yes, this is where the name comes from) in the land of the Houyhnhnms, he feels the need to tell us that 'they had no Tails, nor any Hair at all on their Buttocks, except about the *Anus*' adding that he presumes that 'Nature had placed [the anal hair] there to defend them as they sat on the Ground (215). Great stuff!

Whether young or old, misanthrope or philanthropist, adventure junky or sci-fi fan, this book has something for everyone. As for those of you who don't fit into one of the above categories, remember, the production of 'offensive matter' is something which we all have in common. Happy reading!

The Color Purple by **Cornelia Togeia**



It's hard to pick 'one' favourite novel I think. There are so many good novels out there, and most of them I haven't even read yet. One of my favourite books though is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The plot is set in rural Georgia in the first half of the twentieth century and depicts the struggle of several black women. The novel consists of a series of letters written by the protagonist, Celie, to God, and later to her sister Nettie from whom she has been separated by the man Celie's stepfather forces her to marry. Although it starts rather violently with Celie being raped by her stepfather, and continues with many years of hardship, the story is captivating as the reader can feel, through the personal tone of the letters, how the characters evolve, acquire wisdom and change for the better. Steven Spielberg adapted *The Color Purple* and the film with the same title was nominated for 11 Academy Awards. Enjoy!

A Note from Morag Margaret McCready, Teacher from Hell

Anonymous

Dear Students,

I know that most of you have oodles of free time, which you should be filling with self-enhancing activities and NOT shopping, drinking and msn-ing. And what, I ask you, could be more self-enhancing than extending your general Anglo-Saxon literary culture? Which you can either do by taking my extra-extra-curricular English seminar (which begins early on Sunday mornings with a bracing run around the Plaine de Plainpalais, followed by a cold bath), or you could read one of the novels listed below. Personally, I find them a bit shallow, but then my favourite work in English literature is the Authorized Version of the *Bible*.

Hard Times, by Charles Dickens. 1842.

A worm's eye view of the industrial revolution. Hard-hitting satire and mawkish melodrama.

Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Brontë. 1847.

Get caught up in the rags-to-riches story of orphan Jane. Fuming outrage and tearful empathy guaranteed.

A Room with a View, by E.M. Forster. 1908.

Gentle social critique. Prim and proper meets working class passion. A crash-course in English humour.

The Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck. 1939.

Harsh social critique. Unrelentingly grim story of dust-bowl migrants in 1930 USA.

1984, by George Orwell. 1948.

The ultimate dystopia. Animal Farm for grown-ups.

Of course, I would prefer you to come along to my extra-extra-curricular English seminar. Next semester, we will read Samuel Richardson's most instructive (and longest) novel, *The*

History of Sir Charles

Grandison, the first and last truly serious novel in the English language.

If any of you does read

one of the above novels, please tell me about it by dropping me a line c/o *NOTED*. Pah! I'll eat my hat. Now, don't be rude. I am not a curmudgeon, a kill-joy or a bitter woman. I like to have a wee dry sherry of an evening, and don't let it get around, but I do own, and sometimes use, a furry hot-water bottle – what a hedonist!

Well, must get back to weaving my new hair-shirt. The old one is just about worn out, I wear it so often.

Yours sincerely,

Morag Margaret McCready
(and that's Ms!)



Orange by Clare Tierque

Let's arrange
a rhyme for orange.
It mismatches
porridge or borage.
Or ingest it whole
to rhyme with binge
and make us cringe!
Adoring orange
Let us just dispense
with rhymes to
match its hue intense
Eat, *or enjoy*!

27.11.06

News from the ADEA

by Kristijan Marinkovic

Dear students of the English Department and beyond!

How are you? Are the words of Shakespeare and Morrison weighing heavy on your shoulders? Trust me, I know how you feel; after three years of studying at the English Department I must say that I have finally realised that student life is not all fun and games, oh no, there is also serious work to be done and some big books to be read. In fact, I have come to realise that very little “fun and games” actually comprises the definition of studying at the University of Geneva. I do not wish, by any means, to say that reading and plunging into literature is not fun or entertaining, but rather that life at the university does not resemble very much the student life we are used to seeing in movies like *American Pie* and such. Come to think of it, this could be a good thing... Hmm, never mind, my point is that an average student is well provided for concerning reading material, lecture and seminar courses, and teacher support, but not so well off regarding social life. Of course, people get along fine, one can make friends in class, and one often stays in touch with folks from high-school and simply continues to hang out with them. This is all very well, but in my opinion, it is important to meet new people, to create fresh connections, and kind of mix with this milieu that shares the same professional interests and will one day be working in a similar field as you. In order to make this easier, students get organised and form associations, who then take care of getting people together and thinking up ways for people to socialise.

The English Department Student Association has been formed some years ago with just this notion in mind, and has been reactivated last year with pretty much the same motive. ADEA is here to try and make your bleak and grim student existences... just kidding! Our association is here to make your student life more interesting and to add a deeper social dimension to the already existing, and very challenging, intellectual one. So, do you feel like participating in this endeavour and having a good time? I suppose the easiest way to do this is to simply come to our parties or events and do your best to enjoy yourself! Your first opportunity to do this is our

**upcoming ADEA party
on 15 March 2007
at La Datcha,**

the student “party-space” if you will. If you do not know where it is or would like to have some general info about it, you can check out their website at:

www.asso-etud.unige.ch/datcha/index.htm

Also, we are constantly looking for other venues in which to organise events so there is a distinct possibility something might take place before the date indicated and this time not at La Datcha. Any such information is always displayed on the bulletin boards of the *Faculté des Lettres* and spread orally by our under-paid marketing personnel. Therefore keep your eyes and ears open!

In case you have some further ideas and motivation to participate in the association’s activities, feel free to

contact me and talk to me about it! My email address is

kristijan_m@bluewin.ch

and I am open to all propositions, from reading and discussing literature together to organising study trips. If you have ideas that have something to do with theatre, do not forget that an English Department drama group exists and is welcoming new members as we speak; the person to contact is my good friend, Nicholas Weeks, and you can reach him at

nickweeks@hotmail.com

Finally, if movies are your weapon of

choice, please keep in mind that the Department is already offering movie screenings every Thursday as part of the movie cycle. This fabulous activity is managed by Michael Röösl and Valerie Fehlbaum and you can find information about the movie cycle on the English Department website.

I believe this would be all for now. I hope that I have given you some idea of what ADEA is and also something to think about in general. Always remember that thinking is good! So, I encourage you to keep reading the rest of *NOTED*, and hope to see you soon.

Kristijan Marinkovic
President of ADEA

Vampire **by The Smashed Pumpkin**

In the black of the night, I watched its pale shadow roam the streets,
I know it is thirst that keeps this being awake at night,
In hallucination I felt it drink life away,
Felt a black veil cut along my skin;

This is where the moon hides from viewing the world,
This is where everything looks away,
This is where even death itself turns away,
For this is the night of the undead,
Drugged by fear I walk amongst them,
In the zero between waking and sleep,
White eyes can no longer see,
Only the taste of the fickle nightbreath drives to the source of existence;

We became the ones locked out of life,
Beings loved by no one,
Driven on only by a never satisfiable thirst for what we don't have.

Detached from emotion we walk as empty machines,
(Silent carriers),
As disease devours the remains of us.

The Smashed Pumpkin
Anno 2004

When I Do Count the Clock...

Anonymous, title suggested by the editor

I had a dream last night. I nodded off while reading Shakespeare's sonnet 12 in endless iteration, two lines down then jumping one back, unable to concentrate. Starting over again. 'When I do count the clock that tells the time...' Damn, if only I could talk to Shakespeare himself; how am I supposed to know how to read this? I needed to get the paper done by the following Thursday, and the more I started to panic, the more the weight of every passing second could be felt on my shoulders, and the more Will's sonnet started to mock me: 'When I do count the clock, tic-toc, tic-toc...' The burden grew heavier and heavier, drawing my head toward the open book. I don't remember whether the tip of my nose touched the surface of the sonnet before I suddenly jumped up from my chair.

I was in a pub. In the sudden silence after my jerky movement, heads turned around and fixed me. I sat back down, and banter continued around me. Only then did my glance fall upon the man seated opposite at the same table, bent over a laptop. His face looked strangely familiar. In my dream I wasn't astonished at all at finding William Shakespeare typing away on his computer at my table. The only thing I could think of to say was 'You're not supposed to use a laptop, Sir!' He didn't look at me, not even the faintest passing glance. He pushed his computer across the small table and turned it around so I could see the display. I could see the unfinished version of sonnet 12 and suddenly became all excited. 'I need your help, Sir. I'm working on a paper about your sonnets and need to know why you...' But he had already turned the laptop back round to him and resumed his writing. I looked down at my open book of sonnets on the table and, in a flash of anger, closed it. At the very same moment, Will disappeared. I looked around the room and the whole pub gradually gave way to the familiar setting of my small stuffy room. Only three seconds later, my radio alarm clock went off with a click, and I was convinced, in a sudden state of terror, that it was going to blare Sonny and Cher's oldie 'I Got You Babe' at me, like in *Groundhog Day*. It didn't. But since I started work on this paper, every day

seemed the same, the only thing which changed was the growing heap of crumpled paper balls that had missed the bin and started to turn my room into a moonscape.

I went to the English Department to see my instructor. The office hour was late in the afternoon and almost over. I paced the corridor between the lift and the door on the opposite side of the staircase. What would I say? That I still had no idea how to start my paper, even though the deadline was in two days? It was hopeless. I didn't know what to do. I went to the bathroom and crouched down in a corner under a comforting veil of self-pity. How long I was there I don't know, but I faintly recall having heard at some point several hushed-up voices. The ray of light under the door had disappeared. I groped my way out of the bathroom and along the rough plaster of the wall, until I could see a dim light, the source of which I couldn't make out. I advanced carefully, knowing that I was approaching the stairs in darkness. The light came from the open door of what looked like the twin of the lift shaft on the other side of the hallway. The silence was complete, as I slowly went round the door and peeked inside a very small room. It was filled by a machine with blinking buttons and several displays in different colours. I sat down on the steel chair in the middle of the device and noticed too late that my jumper had got stuck on a lever and had pulled it down. Suddenly, blinding light flared in the small booth-like space. My terrified shriek scared me all the more, being thrown back at me as a seemingly impossible echo from the carpeted hallway of the English Department.

I slowly stepped out of the cabin into the light of dusk. I was in a small alley between stone walls. Suddenly overwhelmed by the smell of faeces and urine, I made my way along the filthy path around a corner and stood in the middle of a darkening street full of people passing by. No one seemed to bother about my inappropriate clothing; they simply went about their business. Prostitutes lined the street and I could see people gambling through bull's eye panes. Then I suddenly saw a familiar silhouette against the dark red sky. It was the Globe Theatre! No one seemed to mind when I walked in through

one of the several entrances and stopped at the back of a crowd facing the stage. 'How did YOU get here?' I jumped and briskly turned to the voice, destabilised by the very fact that I understood it. It was perfectly clear 21st Century English. It was professor Lukas Erne. It must have been a full minute before my spell was broken, enabling me to recognise professor Spurr, Erzsi Kukorelly, Kareen Klein, Emma Depledge and Valerie Fehlbaum next to Mr. Erne, and the latter seemed to be familiar with many other spectators of what must have been the end of Romeo and his stubble-chinned Juliet.

After the play, I was invited along for some ale at a nearby tavern. At first I was surprised that I didn't have to promise not to tell anybody about what I had seen. I was simply told that literary criticism had always been a kind of travel through time. When I objected, stating that the dangers of this approach might be hazardous for the future, I was assured there were no such problems, and that anything one could possibly do in the past had already happened. 'After all,' Mr. Erne told me with a wink of the eye, 'why do you think Shakespeare edited and published his plays to start with?' Suddenly I understood. If it hadn't been for the presence of all these scholars at his plays, Shakespeare probably wouldn't have come to fame in the first place. But then, on the other hand, if it hadn't been for Shakespeare, all these people wouldn't have become the scholars they are. My head started spinning – or was it the ale?

The next day, I woke up at the ringing of the doorbell. But all I found was a note that someone had slid beneath my door. It was written in a strangely familiar hand and asked me to be at the Department at midnight the same day. So I hid in the bathroom again and let myself be locked inside the Comédie once more. At midnight, the door to the strange machinery room opened from within and I could see the outline of two people in front of the dim light. One of them stepped back inside and closed the door again. The other used a flashlight as he put a few candles on the floor and lit them. I realised that sitting on the floor opposite the candles was me. Unmistakably me. I had a goatee and a few wrinkles around the eyes, but it was definitely me, and this other 'me' looked me in the eyes with a mysterious smile. The third person, who had disappeared through the door again, gradually brought back five further

versions of me, before joining us. And of course, this organiser of the meeting, who accompanied everyone to the Department, also turned out to be a later self of mine. They all briefly introduced themselves and I learnt that several of them were still studying, one of them in the US, another was temporarily working at a local theatre, and one of them was already retired. They all had come to support me with my paper, and once my initial surprise had somewhat abated, I felt the briefest pang of anger, since they all seemed to be amused at my current 'professional' distress. It took me some time to realise that they had all already attended this strange meeting before, and had enjoyed appearing each time as another, older version of me. The 'retired me' even told me he loved the meeting more each time. After a moment of socialising, we started to discuss my paper, and my desperation gradually gave way to excitement. Each version of 'me' was working in his respective present time in a different field, had a different background and had heard and read different things, which all found their way into discussion. When I finally felt my ideas on Shakespeare taking shape, I was amused to find it was a colourful tissue of all the different threads contributed by all other me-s. After a hearty goodbye, and when everybody had left the hallway, one after the other, through the door to the machine room, I slipped out of a window and walked down the stairs of the scaffolding on the exterior wall of the Comédie.

Coffee – lots of. Cigarettes. And believe it or not, the colourful tissue had assumed the shape of a paper in time for the noon deadline the following day. No one had told me about the outcome of my work, although all other versions of me clearly must have known. All I had to do now was wait - for the grade, of course, but also for the midnight meeting I was soon to organise at the Department!

Note from the editor:

This bizarre text was left in my staff box anonymously and I decided it might be a funny addition to the present issue of *NOTED*. Strangely enough, two weeks later, the janitor of the Comédie discovered that his pass key was missing, but luckily found it again the following day. I talked to professor Erne, who assured me that this is clearly a story of fiction, but I still think I spied a strange twinkle in the corner of his eye.

Alumni Column

by Michael Rösli



Why don't you start off by telling us what your present occupation is?

Okay, hello Michael. It's a pleasure to be back at the English Department and to see all those familiar places again. What am I doing now? Well, since I graduated in English I did two years of translation studies and two more years of interpretation studies which I haven't finished yet. I've also been working during all my studies. When I was at the *Faculté des Lettres* I was an assistant and translator. Then, as soon as I had my degree, I worked as an English and French teacher at the *cycle* and *post-obligatoire* in Geneva.

You also work as an academic adviser for foreign students at the ETI?

I help ERASMUS students to find their way at the ETI (*École de Traduction et d'Interprétation*). I've been through both these studies recently, so I know the teachers, the *règlement d'études*, the *programme d'études*, the whole process.

Since they're here for a limited time they need to get a very dense program to profit a maximum. I'm like their coach, so to speak. But I don't think it's going to be more than a temporary job. I'm an interpreter and looking forward to working in the booth. The environment is mostly international conferences, and I like the idea of helping people to communicate and being of assistance in the humanitarian sector.

How do you work as a translator and interpreter?

Translation is written. I receive texts in my passive languages and translate them into French. I use dictionaries, the web, online resources and all the tools at the ETI. Translators are trained to write correctly in their own language and how to translate from one culture into another. You're not really a translator, but a linguistic mediator, transferring ideas and concepts between cultures. In interpretation, you interpret orally from your passive languages into your native language. You cannot accept to work the other way round unless you have what we call a *retour*, which means you translate from, say, English into French AND French into English. The training in both translation and interpretation is very short, very technical, and very pragmatic. Interpretation trains you to be efficient in a booth – at the UN, the *Parlement Européen*, the *Commission Européenne*, etc., or in the private sector. Usually, two people are working in a booth for thirty minutes each. I'm not at that point yet, but I'm looking forward to it. If you are not too excited by the booth perspective, this kind of training doesn't prevent you from doing something else – teaching, journalistic activity, writing or else.

How does your degree in English relate to your present work?

I think that the degree brought me a lot. It changed my life completely. I remember I met Professor Blair after my graduation, and he asked me what I thought about my diploma and what I was up to then. And I said nothing had changed, but then, only a month later I found a position as an English teacher at a *cycle d'orientation*. And my life changed completely. I think it was a great diploma after great studies; moreover, it is a very valuable degree on the job market. During my job-search I realised that potential employers were always very happy to see that I graduated from the University of Geneva with my major in English. The only thing that counterbalances this positive opinion in respect of teaching positions is that I'm not allowed to teach in any other *canton* than Geneva. This is the way teaching is still organised in Switzerland.

You said that your degree was very useful for you personally – in what way?

I think those studies are great. They make you a free thinker. They make you more mature, and help you to go deeper into things. I feel less manipulated by media or by what people say in general. It gives you a distance, and the ability to relate things to different domains. I mostly attended seminars by Professor Blair and Agnieszka Soltysik, whose approaches were interdisciplinary, but also seminars given by Professors Godzich and Taylor (with whom I discovered, and fell in love with, Native American writings). This proved very useful at the ETI and in general. It widens your perspective and the way you approach life. You cannot be narrow-minded after these studies if you've done them seriously. As I was focused on the *deuxième cycle* at the ETI, there was no way to enter the

school without the *Licence ès Lettres* (in administrative terms).

When did you decide to go into translation and interpretation?

It has been a dream for a long time. I think it was always something I wanted to do, as far as I can remember.

Do you have any particular memories of the English Department – things you particularly liked or disliked?

Oh, many. Things I didn't like? Let's see. I didn't like the first-year seminars. They were very tough. I also started off studying English because of the language rather than literature. I think I had much more fun after my first year of studies. At first I was terrified by the idea of making presentations on topics I didn't really master in front of a class. After the *demi-licence*, things were going much more smoothly, and I could start to use what I had learned in the first year. I was feeling much better at writing and re-writing than before thanks to the training of the first year. I also could choose my own topics and it became a real pleasure. It's like learning how to ski – at the beginning you're frightened, then you can stand on your feet and start enjoying it, and then you can manage any kind of slope because you are in control of your skis and the skis are no longer in control of you. It was really enjoyable and a really pleasant experience. The *cerise sur le gâteau* was when I saw with how much respect the Geneva job market considered my diploma. If I had anything to say to your students: enjoy your studies as much as you can, because life on the market place is not as pleasant as it is at the University. Good luck!

Thanks a lot, Sophie, for this interesting interview.

Thanks to you, Michael!

Playground

by The Smashed Pumpkin

Wanna go to the rusty playground with me?
Cut the air with knife-sharp swings?
Let's go on the Merry-go-round, spin till nowhere,
Fall from the ladders that reach into zero.

Cut ourselves on a lost nail, dirt in our veins,
Finally thrashed by the thirsty ground,
Drown spiders in the puddle of our blood,
And burn the crawling with acidic tears.

Wanna run over dying rocks, dozed by overdosed pain?
Fall into their bed, become their last meal,
Let's burn some innocence, sacrifice old metal,
See the vampires rise, dressed as black-eyed clowns,
Dance amongst them, as they make your mouth smile.

And then they kiss your neck, playground turns red,
(Quickly, don't let it see, I beg you: just don't let it see!)
Run towards the sky, scorch it with some gasoline,
Let's spin some more on the merry-go-round,
Make pain go away, fall off its broken metal,
Splinters ripping our skin, awakening the spiders within,
We'll let the swings cut along our arms,
Let the rocks drink some of our blood,
And then we will walk with white eyes,
To still our emptiness on the fountain of lies,
The ghosts of poison will lay a black rose into our heart,
And all we'll be is white-eyed hosts of a virus.

Then all is gone, hand in hand to the burning sky,
Infected by rust, our bodies dissolved,
Remains rain on playground, acid burns the metal,
All falls under dying rocks, gone away,
With us, metal screams once more, then,
All is silent, we dream on a cloud.

The Smashed Pumpkin
Anno Semper

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The deadline for contributions for the June issue is April 30th, 2007. You can send your articles, reviews, interviews, musings, fictions, photos, cartoons, or drawings to Michael.Roosli@lettres.unige.ch. Your feedback on *NOTED* is always very welcome and helps us to improve our newsletter constantly.

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